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PARENTING STYLES AND SIBLING RIVALRY IN CHILDREN AGED 4-6 YEARS

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Abstrak

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Persaingan antar saudara merupakan masalah psikososial yang umum terjadi pada anak usia prasekolah dan dapat mengganggu regulasi emosi, perilaku sosial, serta keharmonisan keluarga. Organisasi Kesehatan Dunia (WHO) memperkirakan hampir 10 juta anak di Asia mengalami persaingan antar saudara, sementara di Indonesia sekitar 75% anak menunjukkan perilaku yang terkait dengan persaingan tersebut, seperti agresi dan ledakan emosi. Di Kabupaten Malang, Jawa Timur, dilaporkan 63,3% anak mengalami persaingan antar saudara, menunjukkan kebutuhan mendesak akan intervensi pencegahan berbasis keluarga. Jenis pola asuh dianggap sebagai faktor penting yang memengaruhi perkembangan emosi anak dan interaksi antar saudara.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara jenis pola asuh dengan kejadian sibling rivalry pada anak usia 4–6 tahun di TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang.

Metode: Penelitian ini merupakan studi observasional analitik dengan desain korelasional dan pendekatan cross sectional yang melibatkan 67 responden dipilih menggunakan teknik accidental sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstandarisasi mengenai pola asuh dan sibling rivalry, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan uji Spearman Rho.

Hasil: Jenis pola asuh demokratis merupakan yang paling dominan (44,8%), sementara sibling rivalry sebagian besar dikategorikan rendah (58,2%). Hasil uji Spearman Rho menunjukkan nilai p = 0,000 (α < 0,05) dan r = -0,436, yang menunjukkan adanya korelasi negatif signifikan dengan

kekuatan sedang. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa jenis pola asuh yang lebih baik berkaitan dengan tingkat sibling rivalry yang lebih rendah pada anak prasekolah.

Kesimpulan: Terdapat hubungan signifikan antara jenis pola asuh orang tua dengan kejadian sibling rivalry pada anak usia 4–6 tahun. Pola asuh yang ditandai dengan komunikasi terbuka, pengawasan yang seimbang, dan responsivitas emosional, khususnya pola asuh demokratis dan situasional, berhubungan dengan tingkat sibling rivalry yang lebih rendah.

Saran: Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk mengkaji intervensi pengasuhan serta menggunakan pendekatan longitudinal guna memahami dinamika sibling rivalry secara lebih mendalam.

Kata Kunci: Jenis Pola Asuh, Sibling Rivalry, Pola Asuh Demokratis, Pola Asuh Situasional, Anak Usia Prasekolah

ABSTRACT

Background: Sibling rivalry is a common psychosocial problem in preschool children that may impair emotional regulation, social behavior, and family harmony. The World Health Organization estimates that nearly 10 million children in Asia experience sibling rivalry, while in Indonesia approximately 75% of children show rivalry-related behaviors such as aggression and emotional outbursts. In Malang Regency, East Java, 63.3% of children have been reported to experience sibling rivalry, indicating an urgent need for preventive, family-based interventions. Parenting style is considered a crucial factor influencing children's emotional development and sibling interactions.

Purpose: This study aimed to determine the relationship between types of parenting styles and the incidence of sibling rivalry in children aged 4–6 years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang.

Methods: An analytical observational study with a cross-sectional correlational design was conducted involving 67 respondents selected through accidental sampling. Data were collected using validated questionnaires on parenting styles and sibling rivalry and analyzed using the Spearman Rho test.

Results: Democratic parenting was the most dominant style (44.8%), while sibling rivalry was predominantly categorized as low (58.2%). The Spearman Rho test yielded a p-value = 0.000 (α < 0.05) and r = -0.436, indicating a significant negative correlation of moderate strength. This finding suggests that better parenting styles are associated with lower levels of sibling rivalry in preschool children.

Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between parenting styles and the incidence of sibling rivalry in children aged 4–6 years. Parenting approaches characterized by balanced control, open communication, and emotional responsiveness, particularly democratic and situational parenting styles, are associated with lower levels of sibling rivalry.

Suggestion: Future research is encouraged to explore parenting interventions and longitudinal approaches to better understand the dynamics of sibling rivalry and to support preventive, family based strategies in early childhood.

Keywords: Parenting Styles. Sibling Rivalry, Democratic Parenting, Situational Parenting, Preschool Children

INTRODUCTION

Sibling rivalry refers to interpersonal tension among siblings that emerges from competition for parental attention and affection, often manifesting as jealousy, conflict, and emotional distress that may interfere with children's social and emotional development (Rimalia et al., 2022; Santina & Hayati, 2021). This condition is particularly prevalent among children aged 4–6 years, as they are in an egocentric developmental stage, during which children tend to prioritize themselves and expect exclusive attention from their parents. When parental attention is divided due to the presence of siblings, children often display negative behaviors such as aggression, defiance, irritability, and tantrums (Putri & Nirwana, 2023).

Advancements in child psychology and pediatric nursing highlight that parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping children's behavior and character. Parenting styles applied by parents have been shown to significantly influence children's ability to regulate emotions and establish social relationships, including relationships with siblings. Previous studies indicate that authoritarian parenting is one of the contributing factors to the occurrence of sibling rivalry. Research by Khasanah and Rosyida found that authoritarian parenting was the second most dominant factor contributing to sibling rivalry after age, accounting for 81.0%. Another study by Dewy and Agustina reported that most children experiencing sibling rivalry were raised under authoritarian parenting, with a prevalence of 30.0% (Rusnoto et al., 2020).

The magnitude of sibling rivalry as a public health concern is reflected in epidemiological data. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are approximately 401 million children aged 1–5 years in Asia, and nearly 10 million of them experience sibling rivalry. In Indonesia, approximately 75% of children exhibit sibling rivalry behaviors, manifested through aggressive actions such as hitting, injuring others, frequent unexplained crying, and refusal to be separated from their mothers (Yuliana et al., 2024). A study conducted in Malang Regency, East Java, also reported that 63.3% of children experienced sibling rivalry (Yektiningsih et al., 2022). These findings indicate that sibling rivalry remains a prevalent and serious issue requiring considerable attention.

Sibling rivalry is generally triggered by children's perceptions that parental affection

decreases following the birth of a younger sibling. Consequently, children may view their siblings as competitors for parental love and attention. Parents' unintentional comparisons between children may further exacerbate this condition (Astuti et al., 2024). The impact of sibling rivalry is not limited to the individual child but also affects sibling relationships and the broader social environment. Children may exhibit aggressive behavior, tantrums, low self-esteem, and even feelings of resentment toward their siblings (Marhamah & Fidesrinur, 2019). Furthermore, sibling rivalry can influence children's social interactions with their surroundings, where negative behaviors may be directed toward individuals outside the family, such as peers, cousins, and caregivers (Astuti et al., 2024). If left unaddressed, these behaviors may become entrenched, leading children to maintain competitive and resentful attitudes into adulthood (Hartati & Qoyyimah, 2021). dd

Efforts to prevent sibling rivalry can be undertaken by understanding its contributing factors, one of which is parenting style. Previous studies on sibling rivalry have primarily focused on three classical parenting styles, namely authoritarian, democratic, and permissive, while giving limited attention to contextual and adaptive forms of parenting that are increasingly common in contemporary families. In particular, empirical evidence examining situational and overprotective parenting styles in relation to sibling rivalry among children aged 4–6 years remains scarce, especially within the Indonesian context and from a health and midwifery perspective. This gap underscores the need for a more comprehensive investigation that captures the complexity of parental caregiving patterns and their implications for children's psychosocial development. Therefore, this study incorporates situational and overprotective parenting styles alongside the classical parenting typologies to provide a more complete understanding of the relationship between parenting styles and the incidence of sibling rivalry.

Preliminary observations conducted on December 19, 2024, at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang among parents of children aged 4–6 years revealed that all five parents interviewed reported signs of sibling rivalry in their children. Observed behaviors included frequent conflicts, irritability, crying, hitting, throwing objects, comparing themselves with siblings, and reluctance to play together. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in examining the relationship between parenting styles and the incidence of sibling rivalry among children aged

4–6 years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an analytical observational design with a cross-sectional approach and a correlational design to analyze the relationship between parenting styles and the incidence of sibling rivalry among children aged 4–6 years. The study was conducted at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang from December 2024 to January 2025. The independent variable was parenting style, which included authoritarian, democratic, permissive, situational, and overprotective parenting, while the dependent variable was the incidence of sibling rivalry among children aged 4–6 years. The study population consisted of all parents who had children aged 4–6 years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang, with a total sample of 67 respondents selected using accidental sampling based on the established inclusion criteria. Data were collected using structured questionnaires to measure parenting styles and sibling rivalry, which had been tested for validity and reliability. Data collection was conducted directly after respondents provided informed consent. Data analysis included univariate analysis to describe the distribution of respondents' characteristics, parenting styles, and levels of sibling rivalry, as well as bivariate analysis to examine the relationship between the variables using the Spearman Rho test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. All stages of the research were conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, including confidentiality and respondent anonymity.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1 Respondents Characteristics

Variable	Category	N	%
Parental role	Father	15	22,4
	Mother	52	77,6
Parental age	20-35 years	42	62,7
	>35 years	25	37,3
	Junior high school	3	4,5

Parents' highest educational level	Senior high school	13	19,4
	Higher education	50	74,6
	Others	1	1,5
Parents occupation	Laborer	1	1,5
	Private sector emloyee	13	19,4
	Farmer	1	1,5
	Civil servant	14	20,9
	Self-employed	10	14,9
	Unemployed	21	31,3
	Others	7	10,4
Number of children	2 children	39	58,2
	>2 children	28	41,8
Child's gender	Male	32	47,8
	Female	35	52,2
Child's birth order	Younger sibling	36	53,7
	Older sibling	31	46,3

Based on Table 1, most respondents were mothers (77.6%), aged 20–35 years (62.7%), had completed higher education (74.6%), and were not employed (31.3%). In addition, most respondents had two children (58.2%), the majority of the children were female (52.2%), and most children had the position of being the younger sibling in the family (53.7%).

Univariate analysis

Table 2 Distribution of Parenting Styles at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang

Parenting Style	N	%
Authoritarian	5	7,5
Democratic	30	44,8
Permissive	5	7,5

Situational	15	22,4
Overprotective	12	17,9
Total	67	100

Based on Table 2, the majority of respondents applied a democratic parenting style, accounting for 30 respondents (44.8%). Meanwhile, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were the least applied, with each style reported by 5 respondents (7.5%).

Table 3 Distribution of Sibling Rivalry Incidence among Children Aged 4-6 Years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang

Level of Sibling Rivalry	N	%
High	6	9,0
Moderate	22	32,8
Low	39	58,2
Total	67	100

Based on Table 3, most of the children experienced sibling rivalry at a low level, with 39 children (58.2%). In contrast, only a small proportion of children were categorized as having a high level of sibling rivalry, accounting for 6 children (9.0%).

Bivariate analysis

Table 4 Correlation between Parenting Styles and the Incidence of Sibling Rivalry among Children Aged 4–6 Years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang

Parenting Style	Incidence of Sibling Rivalry								P- Value	r
	High		Moderate		Low		Total			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Authoritarian	1	20,0	3	60,0	1	20,0	5	100,0	0,000	-0,436
Democratic	0	0,0	2	6,7	28	93,3	30	100,0	(α = 0,05)	

Permissive	2	40,0	3	60,0	0	0,0	5	100,0
Situational	0	0,0	5	33,3	10	66,7	15	100,0
Overprotectiv e	3	25,0	9	75,0	0	0,0	12	100,0

Based on Table 4, the results indicate that under authoritarian parenting, high sibling rivalry occurred in 1 respondent (20.0%), moderate sibling rivalry in 3 respondents (60.0%), and low sibling rivalry in 1 respondent (20.0%). Under democratic parenting, no respondents experienced high sibling rivalry (0.0%), while 2 respondents (6.7%) experienced moderate sibling rivalry and the majority, 28 respondents (93.3%), experienced low sibling rivalry. In permissive parenting, high sibling rivalry was found in 2 respondents (40.0%), moderate sibling rivalry in 3 respondents (60.0%), and no respondents experienced low sibling rivalry (0.0%). For situational parenting, no respondents experienced high sibling rivalry (0.0%), 5 respondents (33.3%) experienced moderate sibling rivalry, and 10 respondents (66.7%) experienced low sibling rivalry. Meanwhile, under overprotective parenting, high sibling rivalry occurred in 3 respondents (25.0%), moderate sibling rivalry in 9 respondents (75.0%), and no respondents experienced low sibling rivalry (0.0%).

Based on the Spearman's Rho rank correlation test, the obtained p-value was 0.000, which is lower than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

Furthermore, the Spearman's Rho test yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of -0.463. The negative direction of the correlation indicates that an increase in one variable is associated with a decrease in the other variable, and vice versa. The correlation coefficient value of 0.463 indicates a moderate correlation strength (0.4 to <0.6). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant moderate relationship between parenting styles and the incidence of sibling rivalry.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that democratic parenting is the most dominantly applied

parenting style among parents at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang, accounting for 44.8%. This finding illustrates that the majority of parents have adopted a parenting approach that is relatively adaptive and aligned with the principles of early childhood development. Democratic parenting emphasizes respect for children's perspectives and needs while maintaining appropriate guidance, supervision, and parental authority (Nurjanah, 2022; Setyaningsih, 2023).

The present findings support earlier evidence reported by Purwaningrum, which emphasized democratic parenting as the most supportive approach for preschool children's social and emotional development (Purwaningrum, 2024). The similarity of these findings demonstrates empirical consistency between the present study and previous research, thereby strengthening the validity of the conclusion that democratic parenting tends to be the preferred choice among parents who possess a high level of awareness regarding children's developmental needs. However, this study offers a more specific context, namely within a public early childhood education setting, indicating that democratic parenting is not only prevalent among urban or highly educated families but has also begun to be adopted across diverse social backgrounds.

The predominance of democratic parenting in this study cannot be separated from the characteristics of the respondents, particularly parental age, educational level, and number of children. Most parents were within the 20–35-year age range, which is considered a productive age associated with relatively strong emotional maturity and cognitive capacity. Parents in this age group tend to be more receptive to modern parenting information and more capable of adjusting their parenting practices to contemporary developmental demands (Monalisa et al., 2023). This finding reinforces the theory proposed by Riadi (2021), which states that age influences lifestyle, communication skills, and parental flexibility in managing children's behavior (Ika & Ketfiyah, 2023).

According to the researchers, parents who are relatively young and in their productive years are more likely to engage in continuous learning processes related to parenting. Rather than relying solely on parenting patterns inherited from previous generations, parents tend to integrate traditional values with new knowledge acquired through media exposure, education, and social experiences. This condition encourages the adoption of parenting practices that are

more democratic, rational, and responsive to children's emotional needs.

In addition to age, parental education level also plays a significant role in determining parenting style. The majority of respondents had completed senior high school or higher education. Higher educational attainment enables parents to develop a more comprehensive understanding of children's developmental stages as well as the long-term consequences of parenting practices. This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by Monalisa and friends, which emphasizes that education influences parents' capacity to implement communicative and positive reinforcement–based parenting strategies (Monalisa et al., 2023). It also aligns with Riadi's theory (2021), which categorizes education as an ideological factor shaping parental perspectives on child-rearing (Ika & Ketfiyah, 2023).

When compared with previous studies that reported a dominance of authoritarian parenting among parents with lower educational backgrounds, the results of this study indicate a paradigm shift in parenting practices. This shift represents an important contribution of the present study, demonstrating that increased access to education and parenting-related information contributes to changes in parenting styles toward more democratic and child-centered approaches.

The number of children within the family also contributes to the dominance of democratic parenting. Most respondent families had two children, allowing parents to distribute attention, affection, and supervision more evenly. This condition facilitates the implementation of two-way communication and encourages children's involvement in simple decision-making processes (Ika & Ketfiyah, 2023). According to the researchers, having a relatively small number of children provides parents with greater emotional capacity to understand each child's unique characteristics, thereby reducing conflict and stress within the parenting process.

Situational parenting, identified in 22.4% of respondents, indicates that some parents apply a flexible parenting approach that adapts to the child's condition and situational demands. This finding is consistent with the study by Kusmawati and friends, which describes situational parenting as a reflection of parents' efforts to adapt to children's behavioral dynamics (Kusmawati et al., 2023). According to the researchers, situational parenting represents a realistic manifestation of parents' ongoing learning processes in fulfilling their parenting roles. However,

flexibility that is not accompanied by consistency may lead to confusion in children regarding boundaries and rules.

The researchers further argue that situational parenting, which emphasizes flexibility, can be considered an appropriate parenting approach in the current era. Parenting is a role that entails substantial challenges and responsibilities, and it is natural for parents to continuously strive to grow and improve. As parental knowledge expands, experiences accumulate, and children's characteristics evolve over time, situational parenting supports the concept of humans as dynamic beings. Nevertheless, excessive flexibility without clear limits may result in inconsistency that confuses children. Therefore, appropriate boundaries, balance, and adequate parental knowledge are essential in implementing situational parenting effectively.

Overprotective parenting, identified in 17.9% of respondents, indicates that some parents excessively restrict children's activities. This finding is consistent with theoretical perspectives indicating that overprotective parenting may hinder children's independence and foster emotional dependency (Kusmawati et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the relatively low prevalence of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, each at 7.5%, suggests that extreme parenting approaches are gradually being abandoned. This finding contrasts with earlier studies reporting a high prevalence of authoritarian parenting, thereby contributing empirical evidence of shifting parenting trends (Setyaningsih, 2023). According to theory, authoritarian parenting requires children to strictly comply with their parents' commands. Parents impose rigid rules and limitations while providing little or no opportunity for children to express their opinions. Parents who apply this parenting style tend to raise children who are suspicious, experience lower levels of happiness, and feel socially awkward when interacting with their peers. In contrast, permissive parenting is characterized by a caregiving approach in which parents tend to allow their children to do whatever they want with minimal control or boundaries (Panggabean, 2021).

The results further reveal that the majority of sibling rivalry cases among children aged 4–6 years fall into the low category (58.2%). This finding indicates that most preschool children in the study setting demonstrate relatively good emotional adaptability in managing sibling relationships. Sibling rivalry is defined as competition accompanied by jealousy and conflict arising from the struggle for parental attention (Rimalia et al., 2022).

These findings are more favorable compared to the WHO report indicating that approximately 75% of children in Indonesia experience sibling rivalry manifested through aggressive behaviors (Yuliana et al., 2024). This discrepancy suggests that contextual factors, particularly parenting styles, play a substantial role in suppressing the occurrence of sibling rivalry. According to the researchers, the low level of sibling rivalry observed in this study reflects parents' success in managing sibling dynamics through more equitable and communicative parenting practices.

Children aged 4–6 years are in an egocentric developmental phase, making them vulnerable to sibling rivalry when parental attention is divided (Putri & Nirwana, 2023). Birth order also influences the likelihood of sibling rivalry, as both older and younger siblings are susceptible to feelings of jealousy (Astuti et al., 2024; Hartati & Qoyyimah, 2021). Although the proportion of younger siblings in this study was relatively high, which theoretically increases the risk of sibling rivalry, the predominance of low levels of rivalry suggests that effective parenting practices play a protective role in mitigating such risks.

According to the researchers, sibling rivalry among younger children is also influenced by relatively close age spacing, particularly 1–3 years. In such conditions, both older and younger siblings still require intensive parental attention. When parents are insufficiently sensitive to each child's emotional needs, conflicts may escalate and be mistakenly interpreted as typical tantrum behavior.

Bivariate Analysis

Correlation between Parenting Styles and the Incidence of Sibling Rivalry among Children Aged 4–6 Years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang

The results of the Spearman's rho statistical test indicate a significant relationship between parental parenting styles and the occurrence of sibling rivalry among children aged 4–6 years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang, with a negative direction and a moderate correlation strength ($r = -0.436$; $p = 0.000$). This negative relationship suggests that the more appropriate the parenting style applied by parents, the lower the likelihood of sibling rivalry occurring among children. These results highlight parenting as an active and influential component in shaping sibling interactions, rather than merely a contextual background in child development.

Specifically, the distribution of data shows that in families applying democratic parenting, the majority of children (93.3%) experienced sibling rivalry at a low level. This finding reinforces the concept of democratic parenting, which emphasizes a balance between affection, control, and two-way communication (Setyaningsih, 2023). Such a parenting approach allows children to feel valued, treated fairly, and provided with opportunities to express their emotions in a healthy manner, thereby minimizing the potential for jealousy and conflict among siblings (Fitri & Hotmauli, 2022).

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Ainunnisa and Rachmawati, who reported that democratic parenting is significantly associated with lower levels of sibling rivalry (Ainnunnisa & Rachmawati, 2024). Their study explains that parents who practice open communication, equitable distribution of attention, and emotional validation are able to create a secure emotional environment for children. This consistency between the present study and previous research demonstrates empirical coherence and further strengthens the theoretical validity of democratic parenting as the most effective parenting style for reducing psychosocial problems among preschool-aged children. This finding is in line with the statement by Mota et al, who emphasized that children's emotional responses toward their siblings are strongly influenced by parental sensitivity, consistency in caregiving, and parents' ability to balance attention among children. Parents who are able to provide responsive and emotionally attuned caregiving tend to foster healthier sibling relationships by reducing feelings of jealousy and competition (Mota et al., 2024).

According to the researchers, the lower incidence of sibling rivalry observed under democratic parenting is also related to parents' ability to recognize and respond to each child's emotional needs. Children are not merely viewed as objects of caregiving but as individuals with feelings, opinions, and needs that must be understood. This approach reduces perceptions of unfairness, which are frequently identified as a primary trigger of sibling rivalry (Rimalia et al., 2022).

In contrast, authoritarian parenting was associated with a higher tendency toward sibling rivalry, with most children falling into the moderate to high categories. Authoritarian parenting is characterized by rigid rules, minimal two-way communication, and dominant parental control

(Setyaningsih, 2023). Such conditions may generate emotional pressure, feelings of being unheard, and jealousy toward siblings perceived as receiving differential treatment. This finding aligns with the theory proposed by Rimalia and friends, which suggests that authoritarian parenting can trigger sibling conflict as children express emotional discomfort through aggressive or competitive behaviors (Rimalia et al., 2022).

Permissive parenting also demonstrated relatively high levels of sibling rivalry. Under this parenting style, children are granted extensive freedom without clear boundaries, leading to low self-regulation and difficulty understanding social rules (Setyaningsih, 2023). Within the context of sibling relationships, this condition may foster unhealthy competition, as children strive to fulfill their own needs without considering the presence of siblings. According to the researchers, permissive parenting fails to provide sufficient emotional structure for children to learn sharing, turn-taking, and adaptive regulation of jealousy.

Overprotective parenting in this study likewise showed a tendency toward moderate to high levels of sibling rivalry. This parenting style is characterized by excessive supervision and restrictions on children's activities, which may hinder independence and emotional regulation development (Kusmawati et al., 2023). Children raised in an overprotective environment tend to become highly dependent on their parents and exhibit a strong need for attention. When parental attention is divided among siblings, these children may respond with jealousy and conflict. This finding reinforces previous research indicating that overprotection increases children's vulnerability to emotional and social problems (Kusmawati et al., 2023; Nabilah Artha Dinda Zalianty et al., 2024).

In addition, situational parenting in this study demonstrated a relatively lower tendency toward sibling rivalry compared to authoritarian, permissive, and overprotective parenting styles, although not as low as democratic parenting. Situational parenting reflects parental flexibility in adjusting caregiving practices to children's conditions and situational demands (Kusmawati et al., 2023). According to the researchers, such flexibility may serve as a protective factor when accompanied by consistency and clearly defined boundaries. However, when flexibility is applied excessively without a stable structure, children may experience confusion that can ultimately trigger sibling conflict.

From the perspective of respondent characteristics, most children were positioned as younger siblings, and the majority of families had two children. Both younger and older sibling positions carry the potential for sibling rivalry due to differing emotional demands (Astuti et al., 2024; Hartati & Qoyyimah, 2021).

In addition to birth order and number of siblings, child gender may also contribute to the occurrence of sibling rivalry. The results of this study show that slightly more than half of the respondents were female children (52.2%), while male children accounted for 47.8%. The higher proportion of female children may represent an additional risk factor for sibling rivalry. This finding is consistent with theoretical perspectives suggesting that girls tend to experience sibling rivalry more frequently due to stronger emotional dependence on their mothers. Female children are generally more emotionally sensitive and tend to form closer emotional attachments to maternal figures, making them more vulnerable to perceived changes in parental attention. Furthermore, sibling rivalry has been reported to be more intense among siblings of the same gender, particularly between sisters, compared to mixed-gender sibling pairs or between brothers. Such emotional sensitivity may increase feelings of jealousy and competition when parental attention is perceived as unequal (Rusnoto et al., 2020).

However, the findings of this study indicate that parenting style plays a more decisive role in shaping sibling interactions than individual child characteristics. Appropriate, consistent, and emotionally responsive parenting appears to mitigate the influence of factors such as birth order, gender, and number of siblings. In particular, the low levels of sibling rivalry observed under democratic parenting suggest that parenting style may function as a dominant protective context within the family .

According to the researchers, these findings demonstrate that variations in parenting styles are closely associated with differences in the levels of sibling rivalry among preschool-aged children. Parental approaches that encourage effective communication, provide appropriate monitoring, and ensure equitable attention among siblings are associated with more adaptive and harmonious sibling interactions. Therefore, parenting practices within the family environment constitute an essential framework for interpreting the emergence or prevention of sibling rivalry among children aged 4–6 years, while still acknowledging the role

of other contributing factors.

CONCLUSION

In line with the research objectives, this study concludes that parental parenting styles are significantly associated with the incidence of sibling rivalry among children aged 4–6 years at TK Negeri Pembina 1 Malang. Parenting styles characterized by balanced affection, appropriate parental control, and open two-way communication—particularly democratic parenting—are associated with lower levels of sibling rivalry, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting styles tend to be linked with higher levels of rivalry. These findings indicate that parenting style plays an important role in shaping sibling relationship dynamics during the preschool period, a developmental stage that is highly sensitive to emotional regulation and parental attention.

A key contribution of this study lies in the inclusion of situational and overprotective parenting styles in the analysis, which have been less frequently examined in previous research on sibling rivalry. The findings show that situational parenting demonstrates a relatively more adaptive pattern in relation to sibling rivalry when applied with consistency and clear boundaries, whereas overprotective parenting is associated with higher levels of rivalry due to increased emotional dependency and heightened competition for parental attention. By incorporating these additional parenting styles, this study extends existing evidence and provides a more comprehensive understanding of how variations in parental caregiving approaches influence psychosocial outcomes in early childhood.

Overall, this study contributes to the development of health sciences by broadening the conceptual framework of parenting styles associated with sibling rivalry and by highlighting the importance of family-based approaches in supporting children's emotional and social adjustment during the preschool years.

SUGGESTION

Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to capture changes in parenting practices and sibling rivalry dynamics over time, allowing for a

deeper understanding of causal relationships. Further studies may also incorporate additional variables such as parental stress levels, parental mental health, age spacing between siblings, and family communication patterns to address limitations of the current study. Expanding the research setting to include diverse educational institutions and socio-cultural backgrounds is suggested to enhance the generalizability of findings and to provide broader insights into parenting styles and sibling rivalry across different family contexts.

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