




## The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Risky Behaviors in Adolescents: A Narrative Review Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Article Type:</b> Review Article	<p>Risky behaviors among adolescents and young adults have emerged as significant social concerns. This narrative review investigates the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent engagement in risky behaviors. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using Persian keywords such as “parenting style,” “adolescents,” “risky behaviors,” and “parents” across national databases (SID, Magiran) and international databases (PubMed, Scopus, Elsevier, Wiley Online Library, Web of Science), as well as Google Scholar. The search encompassed studies published between 2000 and 2023. Following the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria and quality assessments, 18 articles were selected for final analysis. The findings indicate a significant association between parenting styles and adolescent involvement in risky behaviors. Adolescents raised by authoritative parents are less likely to engage in such behaviors. Authoritative parenting emerges as the most effective approach for mitigating adolescent exposure to risk. In conclusion, the literature review underscores the critical role of parenting styles in the emergence of risky behaviors among adolescents. Individuals who experience authoritative parenting are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors. Consequently, educational planners, developmental psychologists, and counselors should consider the impact of parenting styles and provide parents with adequate training in effective child-rearing practices.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Risky behaviors; Parenting styles; Adolescents; Parents</p>
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### Introduction

Adolescents constitute approximately 18% of the global population, with the majority residing in developing countries, where access to sexual education, guidance, and information on pregnancy

prevention and protection against HIV is severely limited [1]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence is defined as the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years [2]. Given that one-fifth of the world's population consists of adolescents and that 85% of these 1.2 billion demographics resides in developing nations, public

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health authorities must prioritize adolescents as a central focus in their strategic health interventions [3]. A 2021 study in Ethiopia reported that among the 36.9 million individuals living with HIV, 1.8 million were under 15 years of age [4]. Early adolescence is marked by profound physical, sexual, psychological, and cognitive changes and evolving social expectations. During this period, the demands placed on adolescents by society increase substantially. These social, cognitive, and biological transitions provide numerous developmental opportunities that may foster healthy lifestyle behaviors or, conversely, expose adolescents to risks that threaten their well-being [5]. Given these challenges, adolescents are considered vulnerable to behavioral problems and psychological distress [6]. Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by heightened curiosity and a tendency to experiment with risky behavior. In this context, parental interactions play a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' inclination toward such behaviors [7]. Contemporary society presents adolescents and their families with a wide array of demands. Rapid technological advancements and social transformations have contributed to the increasing involvement of adolescents in diverse high-risk behaviors.

A primary preventive strategy involves identifying risk factors within high-risk populations, focusing on addressing the root causes of problematic behaviors and targeting individuals with the highest risk profiles [8]. The promotion of adolescent health necessitates consistent emotional support from responsible and informed parents, alongside a balance between autonomy and parental supervision.

The family's role in shaping personality development is predominantly concentrated in three domains: parenting style (particularly maternal), the influence of family members, and birth order [9]. The family represents the most fundamental institution of socialization within society. Parents are the initial individuals with whom a child interacts, and their behaviors and parenting styles exert a profound influence on the child's developmental trajectory. In instances where parents adopt inappropriate or ineffective parenting practices, children are more inclined to seek external influences, thereby increasing their vulnerability to deviant and high-risk behaviors [7].

Alarmingly, only 22% of Filipino American adolescents have reported engaging in regular conversations with their parents about sexual matters [10]. Adolescents who feel consistently supported and monitored by their parents are significantly less likely to engage in early sexual activity or experience

unintended pregnancies [11]. Maternal communication regarding values and beliefs has been shown to delay or even prevent adolescent involvement in risky sexual behaviors [12].

The parent-adolescent communication style can serve as an indicator of a broader parenting approach. Parenting styles are defined as a set of behaviors that characterize parent-child interactions across various contexts [13]. These styles are regarded as essential components in the upbringing and development of children, often influencing critical outcomes such as cognitive and social competencies and shaping multiple dimensions of personality, attitudes, emotions, and habits [14].

Parenting styles are influenced by a range of factors that can be categorized into three domains: (1) child-related characteristics, including temperament, personality traits, and cognitive abilities; (2) parent-related factors, such as personality, expectations, beliefs about motivation and ability, cultural background, and social experiences; and (3) the broader social context in which parent-child relationships occur, encompassing marital dynamics, social networks, and occupational experiences [15].

Parenting styles are widely regarded as universal constructs that capture the emotional dynamics and overall communication patterns between parents and children. One of the most influential frameworks in this area is Baumrind's parenting typologies. In 1978, Baumrind conceptualized parent-child relationships along two fundamental dimensions: parental responsiveness to the child's needs and parental control over the child's behavior [16].

Baumrind emphasized that parenting styles play a decisive role in shaping children's personalities. Her extensive research on parenting styles and their outcomes identified three primary styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting. Authoritative parents are both responsive and demanding; authoritarian parents are demanding but not responsive; and permissive parents are responsive but not demanding. In her early studies, Baumrind found that authoritative parenting was associated with higher self-esteem, greater social and moral maturity, and enhanced academic performance in childhood and adolescence. These styles may foster positive or negative behavioral outcomes in children [17].

Some researchers have introduced a fourth category of parenting—neglectful parenting—characterized by low levels of both responsiveness and demandingness [18]. A study conducted in Mashhad, Iran, aimed to predict perceived parenting styles and demographic variables in relation to loneliness among high school

girls. The findings revealed that authoritative parenting—particularly the dimensions of warmth, supportiveness, and autonomy—along with socioeconomic factors, significantly mitigated feelings of loneliness in adolescent girls [11].

Numerous parental behaviors and characteristics are conveyed to offspring through distinct parenting styles [19,20]. Empirical research has established that authoritative parenting is linked to reduced behavioral deviations in peer interactions, whereas permissive parenting is associated with early sexual activity and sexual misconduct among adolescents. Conversely, authoritarian parenting is correlated with internalizing and externalizing issues and diminished emotional regulation [17].

In various countries, including Iran, premarital sexual activity frequently transpires in contexts marked by inadequate knowledge and restricted access to reproductive health services. These conditions elevate the risk of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV, among young individuals [20]. Among the diverse familial influences on adolescent risk-taking, parenting style exerts a particularly significant impact and holds substantial implications for adolescents' social adjustment [21]. A notable association has also been identified between permissive parenting and children's behavioral problems [22].

Given the critical nature of adolescence as a developmental stage and the heightened prevalence of risky behaviors during this period, parenting styles are pivotal in shaping adolescents' psychological well-being, behavioral tendencies, and decision-making processes across various situations. Consequently, understanding the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' engagement in risky behaviors is of considerable importance. Therefore, the present study was conducted as a narrative review to investigate the association between parenting styles and adolescent risky behaviors.

## Materials and Methods

This narrative review explored the relationship between parenting styles and risky behaviors among adolescents. A comprehensive literature search was conducted for studies published between 2000 and 2023 using Persian keywords such as “parenting style,” “adolescents,” “risky behaviors,” “risky sexual behaviors,” “HPV,” “HIV,” and “parents.” The search was performed across national (SID, Magiran) and international (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science) databases, as well as the Google Scholar search engine.

Both individual and combined keyword strategies were employed.

During the initial screening, studies that aligned with the objectives of this review were selected for further evaluation. Duplicate records were removed, and the full texts of the remaining articles were retrieved for review. Final inclusion and exclusion decisions were made based on predefined criteria, including publication date range, access to full-text articles, and relevance to the review topic. Studies published in languages other than Persian or English and conference papers without accessible full texts were excluded.

The selected studies encompassed cross-sectional, observational, qualitative, and cohort designs. Two researchers independently assessed the relevance of the articles. Data extraction was conducted using a pre-designed checklist that captured the study type, research objectives, year of publication, study location, sampling method, sample size, type of intervention, and key findings. Ultimately, 18 studies were included in the final review.

## Results

In the initial search, 460 articles were identified. After removing duplicates and excluding irrelevant studies, 80 articles were selected for further evaluation. Following a comprehensive assessment based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria and quality appraisal, 18 articles were included in this narrative review.

### a) Risky Sexual Behaviors

Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' engagement in risky behaviors, yielding significant findings. Argys and colleagues, for instance, demonstrated that parenting styles play a crucial role in reducing adolescents' involvement in high-risk behaviors [23].

In a study conducted by Poulsen et al. in Kenya and the United States, parent-child communication regarding HIV/AIDS was examined among two populations disproportionately affected by the virus. Computer-assisted surveys were completed by parents of preadolescent children, including 1,115 African American parents of children aged 9–12 years in the southeastern United States and 403 parents of children aged 10–12 years in Kenya. Researchers reported that adolescents exposed to authoritative parenting exhibit lower levels of risk-taking behavior [24].

Additional findings indicate that authoritarian parenting styles are associated with lower sexual self-efficacy in children compared to authoritative parenting. Similarly, permissive parenting styles are linked to diminished sexual self-efficacy. In contrast, authoritative parenting is correlated with a reduced likelihood of engagement in risky sexual behaviors compared to authoritarian approaches [25]. While parental monitoring may be significantly related to adolescent risk-taking, a study by Namisi et al. found no meaningful association between parent-child sexual communication and adolescents' engagement in risky behavior. Furthermore, the results indicated that gender, socioeconomic status, family structure, and overall family functioning did not significantly influence the relationship between parental monitoring and adolescent risk-taking behaviors [26]. Shabani et al. reported that both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles were associated with adolescent engagement in risky behaviors. Their findings underscore the significant role of parenting styles and identity formation in shaping adolescents' behavioral tendencies [27]. However, Pourmazaheri's study in Iran found no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and overall risky behaviors or their subscales. In contrast, permissive parenting is positively and significantly correlated with behaviors such as running away from home and engaging in romantic relationships with the opposite sex [7]. Similarly, Shirafkan et al. reported a significant positive correlation between permissive parenting and risky behaviors among students, as well as a significant negative correlation between authoritative parenting and such behaviors. Their findings further suggested that authoritative and rational parents are more likely to raise children with higher levels of spiritual intelligence, which may serve as a protective factor against engagement in risky behavior [28]. Adolescents who maintain strong emotional bonds with their parents and families tend to delay the onset of sexual activity and sexual intercourse. These individuals also reported lower levels of depression and anxiety and higher self-confidence [29]. A negative correlation was observed between parental support and adolescent depression, as well as between behavioral control and engagement in risky behaviors. Specifically, greater parental support is associated with reduced depression, and increased parental control is linked to lower levels of adolescent risk-taking [30]. In a descriptive correlational study conducted by Zarei in Bandar Abbas, the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' engagement in risky behaviors was examined. The study population included adolescents aged 11–18 years and their parents, with a sample size of 150 participants selected through random sampling. The research instruments consisted

of the 30-item Baumrind Parenting Style Questionnaire and the 50-item Cloninger Risky Behavior Questionnaire, which included nine items assessing family characteristics and 41 items evaluating risky behaviors. The findings revealed a significant inverse relationship between permissive parenting and the risky behavior harm avoidance subscale ( $p = 0.035$ ). Additionally, authoritative parenting was significantly and inversely associated with the novelty-seeking subscale of risky behaviors ( $p = 0.022$ ). These results underscore the pivotal role of the family in facilitating or preventing adolescent engagement in risky behaviors [31].

Abbasi et al. conducted a descriptive study in Qom, Iran, with the objective of predicting adolescents' propensity for engaging in risky behaviors based on parenting styles and dimensions of a healthy lifestyle. This research focused on high school students in the second cycle of education. The findings demonstrated significant correlations between adolescents' risk-taking tendencies and two dimensions of parenting style—control and affection—as well as three dimensions of a healthy lifestyle: spiritual growth, health responsibility, and physical activity. According to the reported coefficient of determination, parenting styles and healthy lifestyle factors collectively accounted for 30% of the variance in adolescents' risk-taking behaviors [32]. In another study, Shokri investigated the correlation between risky behaviors and parenting styles among 220 pre-university students (120 boys and 100 girls) in Hamedan. The results indicated a significant negative correlation between adolescents' engagement in risky behaviors and both authoritative parenting and parental education level. Furthermore, the prevalence of risky behaviors was significantly higher among male students compared to female students. However, no significant differences in the prevalence of risky behaviors were observed across socioeconomic strata [33]. Young individuals have identified parenting styles as negative factors in HIV prevention efforts. For instance, many adolescents reported that their parents tended to employ fear-based tactics when discussing sexual issues with them. Additionally, parents were perceived as unwilling to dedicate time to meaningfully engage with their children on these topics. Most of these parents employed authoritarian parenting styles [34].

#### **b) Substance Use and Behavioral Addictions**

Zahabion and Sadat Hosseini examined the causal model of family, school, and self-esteem in relation to drug addiction susceptibility among 518 female high school students in Abadan. The findings revealed that specific components of parenting style were

significantly associated with addiction vulnerability: intimacy showed a negative correlation (-12%), overprotection a positive correlation (13%), and rejection a strong positive correlation (21%) with addiction readiness ( $P < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, within family communication patterns, both the dialogue and conformity dimensions were significantly and inversely associated with addiction susceptibility ( $P < 0.001$ ) [35]. In another study, Zamani and Abedini explored the structural model of parenting styles and video game addiction in relation to academic performance among 254 male second-year middle school students. The results indicated significant direct effects of age at gaming onset and socioeconomic status on prior knowledge and addiction. Additionally, an authoritative parenting style had a significant positive effect on prior knowledge and a negative effect on gaming addiction. Neglectful parenting was positively associated with gaming addiction, while inattentive parenting had a significant negative impact on students' prior academic knowledge. The researchers concluded that authoritative parenting, by fostering self-regulation and time management, can effectively reduce adolescent dependence on video games [36].

Keshavarz et al. conducted a study in Qazvin Province to examine the mediating role of moral intelligence in the relationship between perceived parenting styles and Internet addiction among 270 university students. The findings indicated that moral intelligence significantly mediated this relationship. Specifically, moral intelligence was negatively and significantly associated with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and with Internet addiction. Conversely, it demonstrated a positive and significant association with authoritative (democratic) parenting and the absence of Internet addiction [37]. Findings from multiple studies have suggested that adolescents whose parents exhibit neglectful or authoritarian parenting styles are at a greater risk of engaging in substance use behaviors, including alcohol consumption, smoking, and drug use [38–40]. However, it is important to note that the classification of parenting styles may differ between parents and adolescents, as their perceptions of parental behavior are not always aligned [18]. In a study conducted by Komijani and Maher involving 282 students in Tehran, the findings revealed that parents of adolescents with behavioral disorders more frequently employed authoritarian parenting compared to parents of typically developing adolescents ( $p < 0.001$ ). Conversely, authoritative parenting was more prevalent among parents of adolescents without behavioral disorders ( $p < 0.001$ ). Male adolescents were influenced by both parents' parenting styles ( $p <$

0.01), whereas female adolescents were primarily influenced by their mothers' parenting style ( $p < 0.05$ ) [41]. In another study, Aghdasi et al. compared the parenting styles of parents of delinquent and non-delinquent male adolescents in Tabriz. The sample included 120 adolescents. The mean level of parental warmth was  $111.86 \pm 24.49$  in delinquent adolescents and  $124.49 \pm 17.01$  in non-delinquent adolescents. Statistical analysis indicated that parental warmth was significantly higher among non-delinquent adolescents ( $p = 0.039$ ). Parents of delinquent adolescents were predominantly permissive, followed by authoritarian, whereas non-delinquent adolescents were mostly raised by authoritative parents, with a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.025$ ). The strength of this association was measured using Cramér's V, yielding a value of 0.416, indicating that identifying whether an adolescent is delinquent or non-delinquent can reduce prediction error in determining parenting style by approximately 42% [42].

In a descriptive study conducted by Karegar et al. in Qom, the antecedents and consequences of executive functioning in adolescents with conduct disorder were examined. The study included 451 male middle school students who had been diagnosed with conduct disorder using the Child Symptom Inventory (CSI-4). Participants were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Parenting Style Questionnaire, Executive Function Questionnaire, and Callous–Unemotional Traits Scale. Correlation matrix analysis revealed that callousness was significantly associated only with permissive and authoritarian parenting styles ( $p < 0.05$ ). Overall, executive functioning and parenting styles were identified as key factors in assessing callous–unemotional traits [43].

## Discussion

This review aimed to explore the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent engagement in risky behaviors. A synthesis of the reviewed studies revealed a consistent association between parenting styles and adolescent risk-taking, with authoritative parenting linked to lower involvement in such behavior.

Parenting style is a pivotal determinant in the emergence of risky behaviors among adolescents. Parental approaches are instrumental in shaping personality development and social adaptation. Positive parent–child relationships significantly enhance adolescents' psychological well-being. Parenting encompasses a set of behaviors and

strategies that influence child development, either individually or interactively. Fundamentally, parenting styles reflect parents' efforts to control and socialize their children [7]. Moreover, having at least one authoritative or permissive parent is associated with more favorable outcomes for adolescents. In contrast, neglectful parenting is linked to the poorest outcomes, including increased vulnerability to depression and anxiety [45]. Steinberg's research identified authoritative parenting as the most effective approach for fostering adolescent development [22]. Importantly, delinquent adolescents are more likely to come from authoritarian and coercive family environments and tend to have lower self-esteem [46]. A significant relationship exists between parenting styles and juvenile delinquency. Permissive parenting may also contribute to alcohol use among Native American youth. Parents of delinquent adolescents are more likely to adopt authoritarian or permissive styles, whereas parents of non-delinquent adolescents predominantly employ authoritative parenting [38]. Shirafkan explained the relationship between parenting style and risky behaviors by suggesting that authoritative and rational parents tend to raise children with higher levels of spiritual intelligence, which, in turn, protects them from engaging in risky behaviors [28]. Both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles involve a degree of strictness; however, authoritative parents promote independence in a logical and flexible manner, encourage open communication, and help their children understand the reasoning behind decisions. Similar to authoritative parents, permissive parents foster an environment rich in acceptance, dialogue, and emotional connection. However, in permissive households, when children fail to fulfill their responsibilities, there are no enforceable rules to ensure compliance. Parents transmit cultural values, family norms, and social models to their children through their behavior and lifestyle. Parenting style, parental supervision and control, quality of family relationships, emotional climate (whether supportive or conflictual), family value systems, socioeconomic status, and the amount of time parents spend with their adolescents all contribute to shaping either balanced or harmful adolescent behaviors [47]. Rahmani et al found that adolescents with permissive parents exhibited the highest levels of behavioral problems, while those with authoritative parents showed the lowest [48]. Another study revealed that alcohol and tobacco use among eighth- and ninth-grade students was associated with lower perceived parental authority and higher perceived parental neglect. Interestingly, no significant relationship was found between parents' self-reported parenting styles and their children's substance use. The researchers

concluded that understanding adolescents' perceptions of parenting styles—regardless of potential bias—can be a valuable predictor of substance use [49]. In a study conducted by Seifi Gandomani et al., the combined effects of maternal and paternal parenting styles on anxiety and depression in male adolescents were examined. The findings indicated that having at least one authoritative parent or both parents with permissive styles was associated with more favorable outcomes. Conversely, neglectful parenting by both parents resulted in poor outcomes for the children. Among combinations involving one neglectful parent, maternal neglect was linked to more adverse effects [50].

Effective Parenting is a family-centered support program grounded in the principles of social learning. Its primary objectives include preventing severe developmental, emotional, and behavioral problems in children by enhancing parents' knowledge, skills, and self-confidence [51]. When parents equip their children with tools for assertiveness and self-expression, adolescents are less likely to engage in risky behaviors to attract attention.

Families that practice healthy parenting grant their children autonomy in a reassuring and firm manner. These environments promote intellectual independence while maintaining appropriate boundaries and parental supervision. Such parenting styles are characterized by open verbal communication, warmth, emotional closeness, and high levels of affection [52].

Children raised under authoritative and supportive parenting tend to exhibit stronger academic performance, healthier social behaviors, and fewer problems. These parents assert their adult perspectives while acknowledging their children's personal interests and communication preferences. Authoritative parents are both responsive and empowering; they establish clear behavioral expectations and maintain consistent oversight, thereby reducing the likelihood of deviant or risky behavior [32]. In Iran, families hold prominent religious, legal, and social positions. However, due to ongoing economic and social challenges, practical strategies and effective planning to reinforce this role have been limited in the past. Recognizing and strengthening the family's influence as the primary institution for reducing adolescent risk-taking is both essential and worthy of deeper consideration [53].

Overall, parenting styles play a critical role in the emergence of risky behavior in adolescents. As demonstrated by the reviewed studies, the more appropriate and rational the parental approach, the

lower the incidence of risky behavior among adolescents.

## Conclusion

A review of the literature indicates that parenting styles play a significant role in the emergence of risky behavior among adolescents. Adolescents who experience authoritative parenting are less likely to engage in such behaviors and demonstrate greater resilience in the face of risks. In light of these findings, educational planners, developmental psychologists, and counselors should prioritize the role of parenting styles in adolescent development. Providing adequate, targeted training for parents on effective parenting strategies is essential for promoting healthy behavioral outcomes and reducing risk-taking among youth.

## Authorship contribution statement

All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript. HS, PP, and MH conceived and designed the study. MH and ZO conducted the study and collected the data; HS, and MH performed the data analysis and interpretation; and MH guided the study design.

## Ethical Consideration

The authors avoided data fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, and any form of misconduct.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors have no conflict of interests related to this article

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## Data Availability

This study is a narrative review and does not include any new, primary data. All data supporting the findings of this study are derived from previously published articles and sources, which are cited within the manuscript.

## Declaration of Generative AI

The authors declare that they have not used any type of generative artificial intelligence for the writing of

this manuscript, nor for the creation of images, graphics, tables, or their corresponding captions.

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