PARENTING STYLES AS DETERMINANTS OF ADOLESCENT RISK BEHAVIOR

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Abstract
Presented study examines the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' propensity toward risk behavior. The primary aim was to analyze how different parenting approaches are associated with the occurrence of various forms of adolescent risk behavior. A quantitative research design was employed using a survey method, incorporating two standardized instruments: the Risk Behavior Inventory (RSI) and the Parental Parenting Style Questionnaire. The research sample consisted of 132 secondary school students aged 16–19 years from southern Slovakia. Data were analyzed using non-parametric tests and Spearman's correlation analysis. The findings revealed statistically significant gender differences in selected domains of risk behavior, with boys reporting higher levels of externalizing behaviors, particularly bullying and delinquency, online risk behavior, and substance use. In contrast, girls showed slightly higher levels of problematic eating habits, although these differences were not consistently statistically significant. Regarding parenting styles, the results indicated that authoritarian and neglectful parenting were positively associated with higher levels of adolescent risk behavior. The strongest associations were found between authoritarian parenting and bullying, delinquency, and suicidal or self-harming behavior. Similarly, neglectful parenting showed significant relationships with self-harming behavior and delinquency. Conversely, the democratic parenting style was negatively associated with risk behavior, particularly in the domain of suicidal and self-harming behavior, suggesting its protective role. Overall, the findings highlight the crucial role of parenting style as a significant factor in adolescent development and risk behavior. The study underscores the importance of supportive, communicative, and balanced parenting practices in the prevention of maladaptive behaviors and provides valuable implications for educational and preventive interventions.

Key words
parenting styles, adolescent risk behavior, family environment, authoritarian parenting, democratic parenting, neglectful parenting, gender differences, substance use, bullying and delinquency, self-harming behavior

1. Introduction

The issue of adolescent risk behavior is highly relevant and increasingly pressing, especially as more young people engage in such behaviors. Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by heightened psychological vulnerability, making mental health particularly fragile. Therefore, it is essential that adolescents receive adequate support, understanding, and stability from their family and immediate social environment. A strong relationship has been identified between adolescent risk behavior and parental parenting style. Research consistently confirms the interconnectedness of these factors in adolescent development. The family is the primary environment of socialization, where children first experience social interactions and adopt behavioral patterns and norms that shape their personality. These patterns—both positive and negative—are later applied in everyday life. For this reason, parental priorities and behavior are crucial, as children tend to imitate what they observe within the family.

A stable family environment, based on clear cultural norms and ethical values, acts as a protective factor, particularly during adolescence. It helps protect young people from risks such as substance abuse, prostitution, and other forms of socially pathological behavior (Ondrikova, 2017).

Research by Ceresnik (2019) identified several types of adolescent risk behavior, with unhealthy eating habits and substance dependence being the most common. These were followed by family-related risks, bullying, school-related problems, and delinquency. Baska and Mackova (2017/2018) found that adolescents raised in authoritarian family environments were more likely to use addictive substances compared to those from more liberal backgrounds. Between 2010 and 2018, marijuana use among 15-year-old boys declined, while other trends remained relatively stable. Early marijuana use (before age 13) was most common (4.7%) among adolescents from authoritarian families, whereas in ambivalent parenting styles it appeared more frequently after age 13 (6.3%) (Ceresnik & Ceresnikova, 2019).

Research Methodology

During adolescence, parents represent one of the most influential factors in a young person's development. However, if the family environment is unstable or dysfunctional, or if parents fail to adequately understand and support their adolescent child, various difficulties may arise that increase the likelihood of engagement in risk behaviors. The present study focuses on examining the relationship between parental parenting style and adolescent risk behavior.

The primary aim of the study was to analyze the relationship between the predominant parenting style within the family and adolescents' propensity toward risk behavior, as determined through survey findings. A quantitative research design was selected to enable objective measurement of relationships between variables and to facilitate data collection from a relatively large sample within a limited timeframe. The survey method was chosen due to its efficiency in accessing a broad adolescent population while ensuring anonymity—an essential factor given the sensitive nature of risk behaviors and parental evaluation.

The questionnaire format provided respondents with the opportunity to reflect on their behaviors and experiences honestly and without fear of potential consequences. To ensure reliability and validity, two standardized instruments were employed based on available scholarly literature. An additional practical advantage of this method was the possibility of online administration, allowing efficient data collection and rapid statistical processing using modern technological tools. The research design included a brief introductory anamnesis questionnaire along with two contemporary standardized instruments.

With the consent of Lovasova (2021), her research instruments were administered. The first instrument was the Risk Behavior Inventory (RSI), derived from Lovasova (2021) and based on Jessor's psychosocial theory (1991, as cited in Lovasova, 2021). This instrument quantifies adolescent risk behavior and consists of 35 items measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The items assess experiences over the past year across the following domains: bullying and delinquency, online risk behavior, problematic eating habits, substance use, risky sexual behavior, radicalization and extremism, and suicidal and self-harming behavior. This instrument enabled a comprehensive analysis of adolescent risk behavior and facilitated examination of its relationship with parental parenting styles.

The second instrument was the Parenting Style Questionnaire (Lovasova, Lovas & Dzimkova, 2022), consisting of 20 items measured on a 4-point Likert scale. The questionnaire reflects four primary parenting styles: authoritative, democratic, permissive, and neglectful. Specific items correspond to each parenting style and allow identification of the predominant style as perceived by the adolescent. This instrument

provided essential data for analyzing the relationship between parenting practices and adolescent risk behavior.

The research sample consisted of high school students from southern Slovakia. No specific age category was predetermined, as the study focused broadly on high school populations, encompassing students aged 16–19 years. The final sample comprised 134 adolescents; however, two responses were excluded due to incompleteness, resulting in a final sample of N = 132 respondents. The introductory anamnesis questionnaire collected basic demographic information, including gender, age, and type of high school.

H1: There are statistically significant gender differences in the forms and levels of adolescent risk behavior.

This hypothesis is grounded in previous empirical findings (e.g., Veresova & Husvethyova, 2005; Veresova & Tomsik, 2019; Ceresnik, 2019), which consistently demonstrate that female adolescents tend to report lower overall levels of risk behavior compared to male adolescents. Gender differences have been observed particularly in externalizing forms of risk behavior, such as substance use, delinquency, and aggression, which are more prevalent among boys.

These disparities are frequently attributed to differences in parental perceptions and child-rearing practices, including variations in supervision, expectations, and socialization processes applied to boys and girls. Based on these theoretical and empirical considerations, statistically significant gender-based differences in adolescent risk behavior are expected.

H2: There is a statistically significant association between an authoritarian parenting style and higher levels of adolescent risk behavior.

Empirical evidence consistently indicates that authoritarian parenting is associated with elevated levels of alcohol consumption (Becona et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2008), tobacco use (Newman et al., 2008), illicit drug use (Alizadeh, 2011), and aggressive as well as bullying behaviors (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2019). Findings from Slovak research further corroborate these associations (Ceresnik & Ceresnikova, 2019; Veresova & Tomsik, 2019).

Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high levels of control, strict enforcement of obedience, and limited bidirectional communication. Such an environment may contribute to social withdrawal, reduced autonomy, dependency tendencies in girls, and increased externalizing behaviors, including aggression, particularly among boys. Based on these theoretical and empirical foundations, a positive relationship between authoritarian parenting and adolescent risk behavior is expected.

H3: There is a statistically significant association between a democratic parenting style and lower levels of adolescent risk behavior.

Previous research (Veresova & Tomsk, 2019) has demonstrated that adolescents raised in democratic family environments report the lowest average levels of risk behavior. Democratic parenting is typically characterized by balanced parental control combined with warmth, emotional support, responsiveness, and open communication.

These relational qualities foster trust, autonomy development, and effective internalization of norms, thereby serving as protective factors against engagement in risk behaviors (Steinberg, 2014; Garcia & Gracia, 2009). Accordingly, a negative association between democratic parenting style and adolescent risk behavior is anticipated.

H4: There is a statistically significant association between a neglectful parenting style and higher levels of adolescent risk behavior.

Neglectful parenting is characterized by low parental involvement, limited emotional support, insufficient communication, and weak behavioral monitoring. Such an

environment may hinder the development of self-regulation and adaptive coping strategies. Prior research indicates that adolescents raised in neglectful family contexts are more likely to demonstrate emotional dysregulation, lower academic engagement, truancy, and an increased likelihood of substance use (Sturak, 2005, as cited in Veresova, 2020). On the basis of these findings, a positive relationship between neglectful parenting and adolescent risk behavior is hypothesized.

Analysis and Interpretation of Research Results

According to first hypothesis, the Mann-Whitney test indicated significantly higher levels of risk behavior among boys in bullying and delinquency ($U = 1114$, $p < 0.001$), online risk behavior ($U = 1421$, $p = 0.02$), and substance use ($U = 1445$, $p = 0.03$). Effect sizes were medium for bullying (rrb = 0.39) and small for online behavior (rrb = 0.23) and substance use (rrb = 0.21). No significant differences were observed in sexual risk behavior or radicalization. The comparison of mean scores across gender revealed several notable differences in the distribution of adolescent risk behaviors. Boys consistently reported higher levels of externalizing behaviors, particularly in bullying and delinquency ($M = 19.20$, $SD = 10.90$) compared to girls ($M = 12.82$, $SD = 8.16$), as well as in online risk behavior (boys: $M = 29.90$, $SD = 14.80$; girls: $M = 24.87$, $SD = 13.50$) and the use of psychoactive substances (boys: $M = 17.30$, $SD = 9.56$; girls: $M = 13.71$, $SD = 8.44$). These findings suggest a higher tendency among boys toward outwardly directed forms of risk behavior. In contrast, girls demonstrated slightly higher scores in problematic eating habits ($M = 7.40$, $SD = 4.66$) compared to boys ($M = 6.65$, $SD = 4.69$), indicating a greater inclination toward internalizing or health-related risk behaviors. A similar pattern, although less pronounced, was observed in risky sexual behavior, where boys had higher mean scores ($M = 8.78$, $SD = 7.34$) than girls ($M = 6.54$, $SD = 4.96$); however, distribution characteristics suggest greater variability among girls, including the presence of a subgroup with elevated levels of risk. Gender differences in radicalization and extremist tendencies were relatively modest, with boys reporting slightly higher scores ($M = 10.25$, $SD = 6.31$) than girls ($M = 9.24$, $SD = 4.91$). In contrast, suicidal and self-harming behavior showed almost identical mean values for boys ($M = 7.70$, $SD = 4.94$) and girls ($M = 7.75$, $SD = 5.04$), indicating minimal gender differences in this domain. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Risk Behavior Domains by Gender (Mann–Whitney U Test)

Risk Behavior Domain	U Value	p-Value	Effect Size
Bullying and delinquency	1114	< 0.001	0.39
Online risk behavior	1421	0.02	0.23
Problematic eating habits	1600	0.14*	0.13
Substance use	1445	0.03	0.21
Risky sexual behavior	1567	0.06	0.15
Radicalization and extremist behavior	1709	0.26	0.07
Suicidal and self-harming behavior	1815	0.45*	0.01

* – Tested the opposite one-tailed hypothesis, i.e., assuming higher scores for girls; statistically significant comparisons are highlighted in bold.

The descriptive statistics for boys indicate some interesting patterns across the four domains. Bullying and delinquency scores show a moderate mean (19.2) and median (16), with a slight positive skew (0.704), suggesting a few higher extreme values. Kurtosis is slightly negative (-0.584), indicating a somewhat flatter distribution than normal. Online risky behavior exhibits a higher mean (29.9) and median (25.5), with a more pronounced positive skew (0.930), suggesting several boys engage in particularly high-risk online activities. The positive kurtosis (0.614) indicates a slightly more peaked distribution. Problematic eating habits present the highest skew (1.741) and kurtosis (2.807), pointing to a highly asymmetric distribution with some extreme cases. The mean (6.65) is higher than the median (5), confirming right skewness. Finally, use of psychoactive substances shows near symmetry (skew 0.241) and negative kurtosis (-1.187), suggesting a fairly even distribution with light tails. Overall, these descriptive statistics highlight areas where extreme behaviors are present and suggest that interventions may need to target specific high-risk individuals rather than the general population (Table 2).

Table 2: Results of Risk Behavior in Boys (N=40)

Risk Behavior Domain	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Bullying and delinquency	19.20	16	10.90	6	42	0.704	-0.584
Online risk behavior	29.90	25.5	14.80	10	70	0.930	0.614
Problematic eating habits	6.65	5	4.69	3	21	1.741	2.807
Use of psychoactive substances	17.30	17.5	9.56	5	35	0.241	-1.187
Risky sexual behavior	8.78	4	7.34	4	28	1.419	0.813
Radicalization and extremism	10.25	8	6.31	4	28	1.413	1.665
Suicidal and self-harming behavior	7.70	7	4.94	3	21	1.106	0.769

The descriptive statistics for girls reveal slightly different patterns compared to boys. Bullying and delinquency scores have a moderate mean (15.7) and median (14) with slight positive skew (0.512), indicating a few higher-scoring cases. Kurtosis (-0.321) suggests a slightly flatter distribution. Online risky behavior shows a higher mean (27.1) with positive skew (0.871), reflecting some girls engaging in notably risky online activities. Kurtosis is slightly positive (0.482), suggesting a mild peak. Problematic eating habits present pronounced skewness (1.532) and kurtosis (2.314), indicating strong asymmetry and some extreme cases, similar to boys but slightly higher on average (mean 7.85). Use of psychoactive substances shows near symmetry (skew 0.296) and negative kurtosis (-0.987), reflecting a fairly even distribution with light tails. These results suggest that, as with boys, extreme behaviors exist in specific individuals, particularly in eating habits and online risk behaviors, highlighting areas for targeted interventions (Table 3).

Table 3: Results of Risk Behavior in Girls (N=92)

Risk Behavior Domain	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Bullying and delinquency	12.82	9	8.16	6	42	1.772	2.793
Online risk behavior	24.87	20.5	13.5	10	65	1.134	0.515
Problematic eating habits	7.40	6	4.66	3	21	1.353	1.485
Use of psychoactive substances	13.71	10	8.44	5	32	0.608	-1.058
Risky sexual behavior	6.54	4	4.96	4	28	2.282	4.998
Radicalization and extremism	9.24	8	4.91	4	26	1.087	0.964
Suicidal and self-harming behavior	7.75	6	5.40	3	21	0.933	-0.078

In second hypothesis we assumed that there is a statistically significant association between an authoritarian parenting style and higher levels of adolescent risk behavior. When assessing the degree of association between authoritarian parenting style scores and specific forms of adolescent risk behavior, the strongest positive correlation was found with bullying and delinquency ($r_s = 0.350$), which is interpreted as a moderate correlation (i.e., r_s in the range 0.3–0.5). Within the same category, the relationship between authoritarian style and suicidal and self-harming behaviors was also observed ($r_s = 0.300$). Both correlation coefficients were evaluated as highly statistically significant, thus differing from zero ($p < 0.001$). Two additional significant correlations were identified with substance use ($r_s = 0.240$, $p = 0.006$) and risky sexual behavior ($r_s = 0.230$, $p = 0.007$). However, in terms of strength, both results are interpreted as weak positive correlations (i.e., r_s in the range 0.2–0.3). The remaining three relationships between forms of risk behavior and authoritarian parenting style were assessed as very weak (all r_s in the range 0.1–0.2) and statistically nonsignificant ($p > 0.05$). In conclusion, authoritarian parenting style has a statistically significant influence on higher risk behavior in the domains of bullying and delinquency, substance use, risky sexual behavior, and suicidal/self-harming thoughts and behaviors. Conversely, this parenting style does not appear to significantly affect online risky behavior, problematic eating habits, or radicalization and extremist tendencies. A summary of all relationships between forms of risk behavior and authoritarian parenting style is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship Between Authoritarian Parenting Style and Risk Behaviors (N = 130)

Form of Risk Behavior	Spearman's rs (Authoritarian Style)	df	p-value	Significance
Bullying and delinquency	0.350	130	< 0.001	***
Online risky behavior	0.170	130	0.06	NS
Problematic eating habits	0.130	130	0.13	NS
Substance use	0.240	130	0.006	**
Risky sexual behavior	0.230	130	0.007	**
Radicalization and extremist behaviors	0.140	130	0.12	NS

Suicidal and self-harming behavior	0.300	130	< 0.001	***

Notes: rs – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, df – degrees of freedom, NS – not significant

In evaluating the degree of association between the scores of the democratic parenting style and individual forms of adolescent risk behavior (hypothesis 3), a negative correlation was confirmed in all cases. This indicates that the level of risk associated with each form decreased, to varying degrees, with increasing scores of the democratic parenting style. Three relationships were found to be statistically significant. The strongest correlation was identified for suicidal and self-harming behavior ($rs = -0.330$, $p < 0.001$), which was the only relationship that can be interpreted as moderate in strength. A weak but still statistically significant negative relationship was observed between the democratic parenting style and bullying and delinquency ($rs = -0.230$, $p = 0.008$), as well as a very weak relationship with problematic eating habits ($rs = -0.18$, $p = 0.04$). In contrast, the remaining four forms of risk behavior were influenced by the democratic parenting style only minimally, and no statistically significant relationship with this parenting style was observed. A summary of the relationships between all forms of risk behavior and the democratic parenting style is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationship Between Democratic Parenting Style and Risk Behaviors (N = 130)

Form of Risk Behavior	Spearman's rs (Democratic Style)	df	p-value	Significance
Bullying and delinquency	−0.230	130	0.008	**
Online risk behavior	−0.120	130	0.170	NS
Problematic eating behaviors	−0.180	130	0.040	*
Substance use	−0.120	130	0.160	NS
Risky sexual behavior	−0.100	130	0.260	NS
Radicalization and extremist manifestations	−0.130	130	0.140	NS
Suicidal and self-harming behavior	−0.330	130	< 0.001	***

The last parenting style evaluated in relation to forms of adolescent risk behavior was the neglectful style (hypothesis 4). The results indicate that higher scores in this style are positively correlated with all forms of risk behavior, meaning that the more this style is present, the higher the levels of risk in each domain. However, only two individual correlations were statistically significant: the relationship with suicidal and self-harming behavior ($rs = 0.333$, $p < 0.001$), which can be interpreted as a moderate correlation (rs in the range 0.3–0.5), and the relationship with bullying and delinquency, which showed a weak correlation ($rs = 0.255$, $p = 0.003$). All other forms of risk behavior were influenced by neglectful parenting only minimally and were statistically nonsignificant, with very weak correlations (rs in the range 0.1–0.2), or negligible, as in the case of radicalization and extremist behaviors ($rs = 0.097$). A summary of all relationships between forms of risk behavior and neglectful parenting style is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Relationship Between Neglected Parenting Style and Risk Behaviors (N = 130)

Form of Risk Behavior	Spearman's rs (Neglectful Style)	df	p-value	Significance
Bullying and delinquency	0.255	130	0.003	**
Online risky behavior	0.111	130	0.206	NS
Problematic eating habits	0.114	130	0.193	NS
Substance use	0.147	130	0.093	NS
Risky sexual behavior	0.147	130	0.093	NS
Radicalization and extremist behaviors	0.097	130	0.268	NS
Suicidal and self-harming behavior	0.333	130	< 0.001	***

Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyze the relationship between the predominant parenting style in the family and adolescents' propensity for risk behavior based on the results obtained from the questionnaires. We believe that this research aim was achieved, as correlation analyses allowed us to evaluate and analyze the relationships between parental parenting styles and specific forms of adolescent risk behavior. The research sample consisted of 132 students (N = 132) from the southern Slovakia, all attending secondary schools. Based on the collected data, online risk behavior was the most frequently observed form of risk behavior, which is an expected finding considering the characteristics of contemporary society and the widespread use of social networks. Lovasova (2021, p. 90) notes: "one of the protective factors against online risk behavior in children and adolescents is parental control and safe internet practices." The author also points out that contemporary school environments are composed of adolescents from Generation Z, while their parents mostly belong to the Millennial or Generation X cohorts. However, many parents and professionals in the field of education still lack sufficient digital competencies, which significantly limits their ability to effectively support children in navigating online spaces safely. We have examined which parenting style predominates in families, focusing on how children perceive their parents rather than the parents' self-assessment. Results showed that from the students' perspective, the democratic parenting style is dominant. It is important to note, however, that this evaluation was provided by the children, which may differ from parental self-assessment. Veresova and Tomsik (2019) confirmed that boys exhibit higher levels of risk behavior than girls. Comparing different areas of risk behavior, boys scored higher in bullying and delinquency, substance use, risky sexual behavior, radicalization and extremist behaviors, and suicidal and self-harming behavior. Conversely, girls scored lower in these areas, with the exception of risky sexual behavior, where they demonstrated significantly higher scores.

Furthermore, online risk behavior and problematic eating habits were more pronounced among girls, with higher scores than boys. These findings indicate that although risk behavior is generally more pronounced in boys, girls show specific areas of higher prevalence, particularly in risky sexual behavior and problematic eating habits. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. These findings also align with Veresova and Tomsik (2019) and Ross and Heath (2002), who report that girls are more prone to problematic eating habits than boys. Ceresnik's research (2019) similarly confirms that girls are more susceptible to issues with eating habits. Our questionnaire also revealed that suicidal and self-harming behavior is similar in both genders, with minimal differences. The family environment plays a crucial role in adolescents' self-harming

behavior. Studies suggest that parents of these individuals more frequently exhibit neglect, rejection, insufficient care, or excessive criticism (Lieberman, 2004). Kriegelova (2008) reports that self-harming individuals often faced serious problems in parental relationships during childhood, including having their cries dismissed or achievements undervalued. Conteriova (1998, in Kriegelova, 2008) emphasizes that such parental behavior reflects an inability to respect emotional experiences.

Hypothesis 2 examined the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and adolescent risk behavior. Correlation analysis confirmed that the authoritarian style had the strongest positive correlation with bullying and delinquency, reaching a moderate correlation ($rs = 0.350$) and statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). A similar correlation was found for suicidal and self-harming behavior ($rs = 0.300$, $p < 0.001$). Weaker but still statistically significant correlations were observed for substance use ($rs = 0.240$, $p = 0.006$) and risky sexual behavior ($rs = 0.230$, $p = 0.007$). No statistically significant correlations were observed for online risk behavior, problematic eating habits, or radicalization. These findings indicate that the authoritarian parenting style is associated with higher levels of risk behavior, especially in aggression, delinquency, and self-harming behaviors. Norton and Duke (2021) examined the effect of authoritative parenting on bullying but did not confirm this hypothesis, finding that adolescents perceiving permissive parents showed more aggressive behavior and involvement in bullying than those perceiving authoritative or authoritarian parents. Thus, hypothesis 2 is confirmed: the authoritarian style shows the strongest correlations, particularly with bullying and delinquency, as well as self-harming and suicidal behavior, and substance use.

Hypothesis 3 focused on the democratic parenting style, which predominated in our sample. Analyses revealed negative correlations between democratic parenting and various risk behaviors: the higher the democratic style, the lower the risk behavior. This aligns with Steinberg (2014), who states that positive emotional bonds lead to greater parental support and care, which in turn reduces adolescent risk behavior.

The strongest negative correlation was observed for suicidal and self-harming behavior ($rs = -0.330$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that adolescents with higher democratic parenting scores have lower risk, a moderate correlation. Bullying and delinquency showed a weaker but still significant negative correlation ($rs = -0.230$, $p = 0.008$), while problematic eating habits showed a very weak negative correlation ($rs = -0.18$, $p = 0.04$). Prior research (Verešová & Tomšík, 2019; Steinberg, 2014; Piko & Balázs, 2012; Garcaa & Gracia, 2009) supports the notion that strong emotional bonds between parents and children are associated with lower risk behavior. Hence, hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 4 examined neglectful parenting. Consistent with Veresova and Tomsik (2019), adolescents raised in neglectful environments exhibit higher risk behavior. Neglectful parenting, characterized by minimal support and low control (Hoeve, Dubas & Eichelscheim, 2009; Manniova, 2007), triggers risk behavior. Only two statistically significant correlations were identified: suicidal and self-harming behavior ($rs = 0.333$, $p < 0.001$, moderate) and bullying and delinquency ($rs = 0.255$, $p = 0.003$, weak). Thus, hypothesis 4 is confirmed: neglectful parenting is associated with increased likelihood of adolescent self-harming and suicidal behavior, as supported by previous studies (Santos, Saraiva & De Sousa, 2009; Linehan, 1993; Pooravari et al., 2015; Popelkova & Sebokova, 2015).

Although this study only partially addressed the broader topic, the findings underscore the significance of parenting style and relational bonds as key determinants of adolescent risk behavior, highlighting their importance in prevention and support of healthy adolescent development.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between the predominant parenting style within the family and adolescents' propensity toward risk behavior. Based on the results of the quantitative analysis, it can be concluded that parenting style represents a significant determinant in shaping various forms of adolescent risk behavior.

The findings confirmed that gender differences exist in selected domains of risk behavior, with boys generally exhibiting higher levels of externalizing behaviors, such as bullying, delinquency, online risk behavior, and substance use. In contrast, girls demonstrated slightly higher tendencies in specific internalizing domains, particularly problematic eating habits, although these differences were not consistently statistically significant across all areas. Thus, gender appears to play an important, though domain-specific, role in the manifestation of adolescent risk behavior.

With regard to parenting styles, the results clearly indicate that authoritarian and neglectful parenting are associated with higher levels of adolescent risk behavior. The authoritarian parenting style showed the strongest associations, particularly with bullying and delinquency, as well as with suicidal and self-harming behavior. These findings suggest that excessive control combined with low emotional responsiveness may contribute to maladaptive behavioral outcomes in adolescents. Similarly, neglectful parenting, characterized by low involvement and insufficient emotional support, was linked to increased risk, especially in the domains of self-harm and delinquent behavior.

Conversely, the democratic parenting style emerged as a protective factor. Negative correlations between this parenting style and multiple forms of risk behavior indicate that higher levels of parental warmth, communication, and balanced control are associated with lower levels of adolescent risk behavior. These findings support existing theoretical frameworks emphasizing the importance of supportive and responsive parent–child relationships in promoting healthy development and preventing maladaptive behaviors.

Overall, the results highlight the critical role of the family environment in adolescent development. Parenting practices not only influence behavioral outcomes directly but also shape the emotional and social competencies that enable adolescents to cope with developmental challenges. From a practical perspective, these findings underscore the importance of promoting positive parenting strategies — particularly democratic parenting — in preventive and intervention programs aimed at reducing adolescent risk behavior.

Despite its contributions, the study is subject to several limitations. First, the exclusive use of self-report questionnaires may limit the depth and accuracy of the data, as responses are subject to social desirability and subjective perception. Second, the study relied solely on adolescents' perspectives, which may differ from parental self-assessments. Third, the research sample was geographically limited to one region, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Future research should consider incorporating multiple sources of data, including parental reports and qualitative methods, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of family dynamics. Expanding the sample to include a more diverse population would also enhance the generalizability of the results. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insight into the causal relationships between parenting styles and the development of risk behavior over time.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence emphasizing the importance of parenting style as a key determinant of adolescent risk behavior. Strengthening family relationships and promoting adaptive parenting practices should therefore be considered essential components of prevention strategies aimed at supporting healthy adolescent development.

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