

**The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Risky Behaviors among Adolescents in Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Nekemte Town**

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**Abstract**

The main objective of this study was to determine the relationship between parenting styles and risky behaviors among adolescents in secondary and preparatory schools in Nekemte town. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select secondary and preparatory schools found in Nekemte town. 368 adolescents (190 male and 178 female) were sample data sources. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The data were as analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation coefficient. The finding revealed that 30.97% of respondents' families practiced authoritative parenting styles followed by neglectful, authoritarian and indulgent 25.2%, 24.1% and 19.5%, respectively. While both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles were negatively correlated with adolescent risky behaviors, both neglectful and indulgent parenting styles were positively correlated with adolescent risky behaviors. Statistically significant differences were found between male and female adolescents in their involvement in risky behaviors; females were found to involve more in risky behaviors than males. The study also showed there were statistically significant differences among early, middle and late adolescents in their involvement in risky behaviors. Middle adolescents were found to be more engaged in risky behaviors than early and late adolescents. Statistically significant difference was found among adolescents coming from different parenting styles. Adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful and indulgent participated more in risky behavior than who perceive their parents as authoritative, and authoritarian. To alleviate the existing problem, Nekemte secondary and preparatory schools should develop and implement a project which works on youth professional counseling and communicate with parents; parents should use authoritative parenting style to reduce adolescents risk behaviors.

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is commonly understood as the period of life between childhood and adulthood. This time frame, however, not only describes a very diverse reality, but adolescence varies considerably across cultures, over time, and within individuals (Kaplan, 2004). Therefore, one developmental term or stage marked “adolescence” clearly fails to provide the best frame of reference for this diversely experienced developmental period of life. The task of defining adolescence remains a confusing one due to the fact that adolescents themselves are influenced by various factors that determine when childhood ends and adulthood begins (Brooks, 1994).

Adolescence is a critical period for the development of healthy behaviors and lifestyles. It is a transitional period of growth and change including the development of mature forms of thought with emotional, biological, psychological, and social changes that can be quite challenging (Baumrind 1991). Adolescents are thought to lack mature skills to cope with these changes and, therefore, they may experience a high degree of what has been referred to as “transitional stress (Henock, 2014). In the same citation, it is indicated that transitional stress is likely to have an impact on family relationships, but for the most part the stage of adolescence is not likely to cause the development of serious family problems.

Many research findings (e.g. Baumrind, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) revealed that the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship has significant impact on the development or prevention of risky adolescent health behaviors. Despite the common knowledge of the health risks involved, many adolescents choose to adopt behaviors such as unplanned sexual intercourse, smoking, alcohol consumption, and other drug use (Dawit, 2015). A greater understanding of young people’s motivations

to engage in these behaviors will put us in a better position to design programmes that tackle this major public health problem. These behaviors are often established in early childhood and may continue and intensify through the adolescent period (Skaar, 2009).

Researchers studying human development have assumed that variations in parents' disciplining style, warmth, attention to the needs of the child, and parenting attitudes and beliefs can all be characterized in terms of consistent patterns of child parenting styles (Baumrind, (1989). The assumption is that these parenting styles are systematically related to children’s competence and development (Henock, 2014).

Baumrind (1991) identified four patterns of parenting styles based upon two aspects of parenting behaviors: control and warmth. Parental control refers to the degree to which parents manage their children’s behavior from being very controlling to setting few rules and demands. Parental warmth refers to the degree to which parents are accepting and responsive of their children’s behavior as opposed to being unresponsive and rejecting. Examining the interactive and combined effects of the two dimensions of parenting (i.e. control and warmth), Baumrind (1991) developed four types of parenting styles: namely, authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful parents. Authoritative parents are warm but firm and they encourage their adolescent to be independent while maintaining limits and controls on their actions; Authoritarian parents display little warmth and are highly controlling. They are strict disciplinarians, use a restrictive, disciplinary style, and be firm that their adolescent follows parental directions; Indulgent parents are characterized by high responsiveness (acceptance, supportiveness and warm relationship) with low demandingness (Control and supervision) and uninvolved; and Neglectful Parents do not oversee the

behavior of their adolescents or support their interest. These parents seem uninvolved in the parenting responsibility.

Henock (2014) stated that parenting doesn't have a manual of what to do, when, how and why and the more we understand about a child's development and needs, the more we can be aware of what our roles should be as parents and how we can contribute to the well-being of our children and into creating a healthy environment for them to thrive in. Parents play an integral part in the total development of the child. It has been said that parents are the 'architects' or the 'conductors' of a child's development. With many synonyms going around, it is both easy and difficult to describe the central tasks of parenting. Said simply, the central tasks of parenting are those actions parents must take to assure survival and promote optimal development in their offspring.

Dawit (2015) indicated that in many Sub-Saharan Africa young people between ages of 10-24 are most at risk of early child-bearing, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), sexual exploitation and violence, substance abuse, crime, poverty and unemployment.

Various local studies revealed different reasons for why adolescents engage in risky behaviors. For example, Ababaw, Atalay and Charlotte (2007) pointed out that the socio-economic situations like poverty, cultural and religious factors and availability of the substances for the reason why adolescents engage in risky behavior such as substance abuse.

A study by Anteneh, Telake and Solomon (2014) revealed that social norms, family history, poor understanding of the effects of substance abuse and peer influence were the basic reasons which are highly linked with substance abuse and other related risky behaviors among adolescents. These scholars found out that an adolescent from a family who use substances is more prone to use those

substances. Moreover, this research finding pointed out that peer influence and poor understanding of the effects of substance abuse and other risky behavior have strong relationship with substance abuse and other risky behaviors. In the same way, Wakgari and Aklilu (2011) found that, exposure to friends who use substance is directly associated with substance abuse behavior among adolescents.

Yigzaw, et al., (2005) indicated different reasons why Ethiopian adolescents engage in substance abuse and other risky behaviors. These factors include: easy and low cost availability of substances, genetic predisposition, psychiatric disorders, previous experience, social setting and community attitude, peer influence, pleasure seeking and lack of awareness.

Even though, different local studies show various reasons for substance abuse and other risky behaviors among adolescents, the relationship between parenting styles and risky behavior was not given much emphasis. There seem a clear gap on the research area to show the link between parenting styles and risky behavior among adolescents.

So, evaluating the relationship between parenting styles and risky behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol, unsafe sex, using "shisha" and other substances) among adolescents' life might be helpful for social and behavioral scientists to develop ways of better understanding their behaviors, predict behavior, controlling and decreasing risky behaviors. It may help to design better educational and other social settings.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was conducted on secondary and preparatory school adolescents in Nekemte town. Hence, the population of this study included all the secondary and preparatory school students enrolled in 2015/16.

### **Sampling Technique**

To undertake the study, the total population of students in the three schools was obtained

from the Nekemte town education office. Accordingly, 8,600 students were enrolled in Derge, Dire Jato and Kesso secondary and preparatory schools in 2015/2016 i.e. 3116, 2717, and 2767 students, respectively. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula from the total population of 8,600 in a sampling frame the researcher took 368 students. The total number of students that took part in this study from each school and sections was determined using proportional sampling technique. Hence, 134, 116, and 118 students participated in the study from Darge, Dire Jato, and Kesso schools, respectively. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of the data was performed on responses from 368 participants (178 female and 190 male students).

### Data Gathering Instrument

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire had three parts. The first part consisted of participants demographic information, comprised structured item mainly about participants' sex, age and grade level. The second part of the questionnaire consisted items related to parenting styles, and the third part consisted items on adolescents risky behaviors.

The parenting styles questionnaire was adapted from Henock (2014), which consisted

of 12 items in which students were asked to rate their parents using a five -point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, neutral=3, agree=4 and strongly agree=5). The questionnaire related to risky behaviors was adapted from Adugna (2015).

In order to check the feasibility of the study and the adequacy of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted. The overall reliability of risky behaviors scale was Cronbach's alpha .79 and the reliability of parenting styles scale was Cronbach's alpha .85.

### Data Analysis

After the essential data were collected and coded, quantitative analyses were performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for windows 20. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test and one way ANOVA were used in the analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to determine the dominant parenting style; independent sample t-test was used to determine if there is sex difference in practicing risky behaviors; and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for multiple comparisons (age group, education level, types of parenting styles).

## RESULTS

This section is divided into two parts. The first part discusses information regarding participants' demographics data, while the

second part is concerned with presentation of major findings, mainly to answer research questions of the study.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics' of Participants**

		<i>Demographic characteristics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Sex</i>	Male		190	51.6
	Female		178	48.4
<i>Grade level</i>	9 <sup>th</sup>		92	25.0
	10 <sup>th</sup>		93	25.3
	11 <sup>th</sup>		91	24.7
	12 <sup>th</sup>		92	25.0
<i>Age groups</i>	Early adolescence		132	35.9
	Middle adolescence		187	50.8
	Late adolescence		49	13.3

As can be seen from Table 4.1 the proportion of males and female adolescents was somewhat balanced (i.e. males 51.6% and females 48.4%). Concerning grade level almost equal numbers of students participated in the study from grade 9 up to grade 12. The participants' age ranged from 12- 19. The

classification was done based on the literature and the overall situation of the participants. Based on this, the majority of respondents (187 or 50.8%) were middle adolescents, 132 or 35.9% were early adolescents, and the remaining 49 or 13.3% respondents were late adolescents.

### Percentage of Adolescents Perceived Parenting Styles

**Table 2: Percentage of Perceived Parenting Styles**

Parenting styles	N	%
Authoritative	114	30.97
Authoritarian	72	19.5
Indulgent	89	24.1
Neglectful	93	25.2

As can be seen from Table 2, the majority of parents of adolescents practice an authoritative parenting style, which accounts 114 (30.97%) followed by neglectful, indulgent and authoritarian 93 (25.2%), 89

(24.1%) and 72 (19.5%), respectively. This implies that most parents from the study area were practicing authoritative parenting style.

### Correlations between Parenting Styles and Adolescents Risky Behaviors

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the degree, strength and directions

of association between parenting styles and risky behaviors.

**Table 3: Correlations between Parenting Styles and Risky Behavior (N=368)**

Correlations	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Neglectful	Indulgent	risky behavior
Authoritative	1	-.014	-.128*	-.086	-.210**
Authoritarian		1	-.095	.069	-.198**
Indulgent				1	.095
Neglectful			1	.113*	.179**
risky behavior					1

\* P < 0.05

As can be seen from Table 3, there is statistically significant negative correlations between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles and adolescent risky behaviors ( $r = -.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = -.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), respectively. This means that the more parents are authoritative and authoritarian in their parenting styles adolescents' engagement in risky behaviors tends to decrease. On the contrary, there were positive correlations between neglectful and

indulgent parenting styles and adolescent risky behaviors; while there was statistically significant correlations between neglectful parenting style and adolescents risky behaviors ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), there was no statistically significant correlations between indulgent parenting style and adolescent risky behaviors ( $r = .09$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

Independent T- test Result on the Difference between Male and Female Adolescents' Involvement in Risky Behaviors:

In order to determine whether there is statistically significant difference between male and female adolescent in involving in

risky behaviors, independent t -test was conducted and the result is summarized and given in the table below:

**Table 4: Independent T- Test Result on Sex Differences in Involvement in Risky Behaviors**

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Risky behavior	Male	183	1.40	.492	366	-2.212	.028
	Female	185	1.52	.501			

**Note:** significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In order to find whether the involvement of adolescents in risky behaviors differ as a function of sex, independent t-test was performed and the result is given in Table 4. The result showed that there was statistically significant difference in mean scores for males

(M =1.40, SD= .49) and females (M= 1.52, SD=.501 t (366) = -2.21, P=.028 < .05). This implies that adolescents' engaging in risky behavior was varying on account of their sex; females were found to involve more in risky behaviors than males.

#### **Differences in Engaging in Risky Behaviors among Early, Middle and Late Adolescents**

Table 5: One way ANOVA for mean differences in adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors by age category

ANOVA					
Risky behavior	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.055	2	1.028	4.62	.010
Within Groups	81.116	365	.222	4	
Total	83.171	367			

To examine the impact of adolescents' age groups on risky behavior, one-way analysis of variance was conducted. Participants were divided into three groups according to their age level 12-13 or early adolescents; 14-16 or middle adolescents; and 17-19 or late adolescents. There was a statistically significant differences among adolescents in their involvement in risky behaviors as a function of their age categories (f (2, 365) =4.62, p=.05).

This implies that adolescents' were varied on account of their age categories in practicing risky behaviors. In other words, the results revealed that age category difference has its own impact on adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors. Thus, in order to see the specific age category of adolescents which is more involved in risky behaviors, further analysis was done using Post-hoc comparison test and the result is shown in table below.

**Table.6: Post-Hoc Comparison in Engaging in Risky Behaviors among Adolescents in terms of Age Category**

		Multiple Comparisons				
		Dependent Variable: risky behavior				
(I) age categorized	(J) age categorized	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Early adolescents (12-13 years)	14-16 years	-.160*	.054	.009	-.29	-.03
	17-19 years	-.049	.079	.812	-.23	.14
Middle adolescents (14-16 years)	12-13 years	.160*	.054	.009	.03	.29
	17-19 years	.111	.076	.308	-.07	.29
Late adolescents (17-19 years)	12-13 years	.049	.079	.812	-.14	.23
	14-16 years	-.111	.076	.308	-.29	.07

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As can be seen from Table 6, the difference that is statistically significant was observed between middle adolescents and early adolescents. This implies that middle adolescents were engaged more in risky behaviors than early adolescents.

### Adolescents' Involvement in Risky Behaviors as a Function of Parenting Styles

**Table 7: Adolescents' Involvement in Risky Behaviors as a Function of Parenting Styles.**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.625	3	1.208	5.007	.002
Within Groups	87.843	364	.241		
Total	91.467	367			

As can be seen from Table 7, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of adolescents from different parenting styles in their involvement in risky behaviors ( $F(3,364) = 5.01, p = .00$ ). This implies that adolescents varied on account of their parenting style differences. Thus, in order to see the specific risky behavior differences among adolescents coming from different parenting styles, further analysis was computed using Post-hoc comparison test.

**Table.8: Post-hoc Comparison of Adolescents' Involvement in Risky Behaviors in terms of Parenting Styles**

(I) parenting	(J) parenting	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Authoritative	Authoritarian	-.056	.074	.904	-.26	.15
	Indulgent	-.011	.069	.999	-.21	.18
	Neglect	-.207*	.069	.031	.01	.40
Authoritarian	Authoritative	.056	.074	.904	-.15	.26
	Indulgent	.044	.078	.955	-.17	.26
	Neglect	-.262*	.077	.010	.04	.48
Indulgent	Authoritative	.011	.069	.999	-.18	.21
	Authoritarian	-.044	.078	.955	-.26	.17
	Neglect	.218*	.073	.032	.01	.42
Neglect	Authoritative	.207*	.069	.031	-.40	-.01
	Authoritarian	.262*	.077	.010	-.48	-.04
	Indulgent	-.218*	.073	.032	-.42	-.01

**Note:**\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Post-hoc analysis revealed that adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful were more participated in risky behaviors than adolescents who perceived their parents as authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent. Similarly, adolescents who perceived their parents as indulgent were more participated in risky behaviors than adolescents who

perceived their parents as authoritative and authoritarian.

Generally, it can be concluded that adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful were more prone to participate in risky behavior followed by adolescents who perceived their parents as indulgent, authoritarian and authoritative, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

The specific purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between parenting styles and risky behavior among adolescents of secondary and preparatory school in Nekemte town. Thus, the results of the current study are discussed in detail in line with these specific objectives and compared with previous research findings.

This study revealed that an authoritative parenting style was found to be the most commonly practiced parenting style, followed by a neglectful parenting style. The result of this study is consistent with Henock (2014), who reported that authoritative parenting style is the dominant parenting style in Ethiopia followed by neglectful parenting styles.

Pearson correlation was computed to see the strength and directions of association between parenting styles and adolescent risky behaviors. The result of this study revealed that there are statistically significant negative correlations between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles and adolescent risky behaviors. On the other hand, statistically significant positive correlations were found between indulgent and neglectful parenting styles and adolescent risky behaviors.

The current study supports Baumrind's (1991) claim that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles reduces the likelihood of substance use and indulgent and neglectful parenting styles increases the likelihood of substance use.

This study compared male and female secondary and preparatory school

adolescents to determine if there were significant sex differences in their practicing risky behaviors. Results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female adolescents from different parenting styles in practicing risky behaviors. This means, adolescents participating in risky behaviors have varied on account of their sex; slightly more female adolescents practiced risky behaviors than males. This result is inconsistent with Dawit's (2015) finding, who reported that a difference between female and male students in experimenting substances is very minimal. According to Dawit (2015) regular consumption is much higher among male adolescent than female adolescents.

In this study there was a statistically significant difference in the level of engagement in risky behaviors among age group of adolescents. Post-hoc comparison test showed that middle adolescents participated more in risky behaviors than early and late adolescents. This finding is consistent with Pamela's (2003), who found that middle adolescents were more vulnerable to risky behaviors than early and late adolescents. Contrary to this finding, Steinberg (2006) discovered that late adolescents are more likely to engage in different risky behaviors and take more risks than adults. This could show the context and the time one study takes place may influence the result even in the same construct to be measured.



As can be seen from one way ANOVA result, there is a statistically significant difference in the scores on risky behaviors among adolescents coming from different parenting styles. Adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful were more involved in risky behaviors than adolescents who perceived their parents as authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent. In the same way, adolescents who perceived their parents as indulgent were more involved in risky behaviors than adolescents who perceived

their parents as authoritative and authoritarian. Similar to this finding, Henock (2014) found that adolescents who perceived their parents as indulgent and neglectful participated more in sexual risky behavior than those who perceived their parents as authoritative and authoritarian. Likewise, according to Baumrind (1991) authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles reduce the likelihood of substance use; however, indulgent and neglectful parenting styles increases the likelihood of substance use.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Parenting styles and risky behaviors may have strong relationship depending on types of parenting styles. An authoritative parenting style was found to be the most commonly practiced parenting style in the families of adolescents participated in this study, followed by a neglectful parenting style. Pearson correlations revealed that both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles have statistically significant negative correlations with adolescent risky behaviors, while both neglectful and indulgent parenting styles have statistically significant positive correlations with adolescent risky behaviors. This shows that adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful and indulgent engaged more in risky behaviors than those who perceived their parents as authoritative and authoritarian.

Statistically significant sex difference was found between male and female adolescents in participating in risky behaviors. Females were more practicing risky behaviors than male adolescents. Statistically significant

difference was found among adolescents of different age groups in their involvement in risky behaviors. The involvement in risky behaviors was higher among middle adolescents than early and late adolescents.

Statistically significant sex difference was found between male and female adolescents in participating in risky behaviors. Females were more practicing risky behaviors than male adolescents. Statistically significant difference was found among adolescents of different age groups in their involvement in risky behaviors. The involvement in risky behaviors was higher among middle adolescents than early and late adolescents.

A statistically significant difference was found among adolescents coming from different parenting styles. Those who perceived their parents as neglectful and indulgent participated more in risky behaviors than those who perceived their parents as authoritarian and authoritative.

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