

Effects of Parenting Styles on Sexual Behaviors among Teenagers



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Abstract

Aim: The aim of this study was to examine the effects of different parenting styles on the sexual behaviors of teenagers.

Methods: The study presents a review of studies published between 2010-2023 that address specific relationships between parenting styles and sexual behaviors among Teenagers

Results: The study found that authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, support, and appropriate monitoring, was associated with healthier sexual behaviors, such as delayed sexual initiation and increased condom use. The authoritative parenting style's lack of open communication and emphasis on strict obedience hinders the development of positive sexual attitudes and responsible decision-making among teenagers. On the other hand, permissive and neglectful parenting styles were linked to riskier sexual behaviors among teenagers.

Conclusion: Parenting styles significantly influence the sexual behaviors of teenagers, with authoritative parenting being the most beneficial. Effective parent-teen communication about sex is crucial in promoting healthier sexual behaviors.

Recommendation: Parents, educators, and healthcare professionals should collaborate to promote authoritative parenting and encourage open communication about sex to encouraging healthier sexual behaviors among teenagers.

Keywords: *Parenting styles, sexual behaviors, teenagers, adolescents*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The teenage years are a time of exploration, growth, and development, during which young people form their identities and begin to navigate the complexities of intimate relationships. One aspect of this developmental process is the emergence of sexual behaviors, which can be influenced by a variety of factors, including parenting styles (Donenberg et al., 2005). According to Nyangoya (2022), the way in which parents interact with their adolescent children can have a profound impact on their sexual behaviors, shaping their attitudes towards sex, their understanding of consent, and their ability to form healthy, respectful relationships. As such, it is crucial to examine the effects of different parenting styles on the sexual behaviors of teenagers in order to promote positive outcomes and reduce the risks associated with unsafe or unhealthy sexual practices.

Biologically, puberty triggers hormonal changes, contributing to the development of sexual characteristics and the onset of sexual desire (Diamond, 2013). Psychologically, teenagers experience heightened curiosity and exploration of their sexual identity, influenced by cognitive and emotional development (Brown & L'Engle, 2019). Sociocultural factors play a pivotal role in shaping teenage sexual behaviors. Social norms, peer influences, media exposure, and cultural attitudes toward sexuality also contribute to the formation of adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors (Fortenberry, 2013; Tolman, Diamond, & Bauermeister, 2014).

According to Brown et al. (2019), the process of identity exploration encompasses the development of a coherent sense of self in the context of one's sexual orientation, values, and beliefs. Teenagers grapple with questions of personal identity, seeking to understand and define their sexual selves within the broader framework of societal expectations and norms. Emotional development plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' capacity for intimate connections and relationships, further influencing the exploration of their sexuality. Tolman et al. (2014) avers that heightened curiosity about sexuality during adolescence is a normative aspect of development, driven by the interplay of biological changes and psychological maturation. This curiosity serves as a catalyst for the teenagers to seek information, engage in discussions, and form attitudes and beliefs about sexuality, ultimately contributing to the construction of their sexual identity. Recognizing the importance of parental involvement in adolescent's sexuality is essential for providing support and guidance during this formative period of self-discovery.

Parenting styles are broadly categorized into four main types: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful (Baumrind, 1966). Authoritative parents are characterized by high levels of warmth and responsiveness, as well as high levels of control and demandingness. They set clear expectations for their children, provide consistent guidance and support, and encourage open communication. Authoritarian parents, on the other hand, are characterized by high levels of control and demandingness but low levels of warmth and responsiveness. They tend to enforce strict rules and expectations without providing much emotional support or encouragement. Permissive parents are characterized by high levels of warmth and responsiveness but low levels of control and demandingness, often allowing their children to set their own rules and boundaries. Neglectful parents, are characterized by low levels of both warmth and control, often failing to provide adequate support or guidance for their children (Smetana, 2017).

Several risk factors have been identified in relation to sexual behaviors among teenagers. These include substance use, multiple sexual partners, and low levels of parental communication about sex (Lindberg et al., 2019). Substance use, particularly alcohol and drug use, has been

associated with increased sexual risk-taking behaviors and reduced condom use (Romer et al., 2017). In addition, teenagers with multiple sexual partners are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors and experience negative sexual health outcomes (Lindberg et al., 2019). Parental communication about sex, including open and supportive discussions, has been found to be protective against early sexual initiation and risky sexual behaviors (Santelli et al., 2017).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that individuals learn by observing the behaviors of others and the consequences of those behaviors. The theory emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in shaping human behavior. According to Bandura (1977), individuals are not merely passive recipients of external stimuli; rather, they actively engage in the learning process through cognitive processes such as attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. According to the social learning theory, individuals learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. In the context of parenting styles, adolescents are likely to adopt and model their own sexual behaviors based on the behaviors they observe from their parents or caregivers.

One key tenet of Social Learning Theory is the concept of observational learning, where individuals acquire new behaviors by watching others. Observational learning involves paying attention to the model's actions, retaining the observed information in memory, and later reproducing the behavior. The theory suggests that people are more likely to imitate behaviors they perceive as rewarding or reinforcing, and they learn from both positive and negative consequences associated with the observed actions (Pratt et al., 2010). Social Learning Theory highlights the significance of role models and influential figures in the learning process. Individuals are more likely to imitate behaviors exhibited by models they perceive as credible, competent, or prestigious. Additionally, the theory introduces the concept of vicarious reinforcement, where individuals learn from the consequences experienced by others.

Social Learning Theory's emphasis on modeling and vicarious reinforcement becomes particularly relevant when studying the influence of parenting styles on teenage sexual behaviors. Adolescents may model their sexual behaviors based on the behaviors they observe in their parents. For instance, an authoritative parenting style, which emphasizes open communication and sets clear expectations, may positively model healthy sexual relationships. On the contrary, an authoritarian or permissive style may unintentionally reinforce less adaptive sexual norms. Understanding these dynamics through the lens of Social Learning Theory allows researchers to examine the role of parental modeling and reinforcement in shaping teenagers' sexual behaviors (Reed et al., 2010).

The theory's concept of reinforcement is integral to understanding how parenting styles contribute to the reinforcement or discouragement of specific sexual behaviors. Positive reinforcement, such as approval or support, for responsible sexual decision-making under authoritative parenting, may lead to the adoption of healthier sexual practices. Conversely, lack of reinforcement or negative consequences in the form of punishment or neglect under authoritarian or permissive parenting might contribute to the development of risky sexual behaviors. This perspective guides the study to explore the direct and indirect effects of parenting styles on teenagers' sexual behaviors, considering the role of reinforcement in the family environment (Akers, 2017).

2.1.2 Attachment Theory

Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby (1969). This theory posits that early attachment relationships with caregivers, primarily parents, shape individuals' expectations and abilities to form secure, healthy relationships later in life. Ainsworth's (1978) seminal work expanded on this theory by describing different attachment styles: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant. Secure attachment, characterized by trust and emotional availability, is associated with positive outcomes for children, including healthier sexual behaviors (Feeney & Noller, 1996).

According to attachment theory, the quality of the parent-child relationship during early childhood shapes an individual's attachment style, which in turn affects their socioemotional development and subsequent relationships. This includes intimate relationships and sexual behaviors during adolescence. Securely attached individuals tend to develop positive expectations about relationships, express greater emotional regulation, and have a more optimistic view of social interactions. In contrast, insecurely attached individuals may struggle with trust, intimacy, and emotional regulation in relationships. These socioemotional patterns established early in life can extend into adulthood, influencing the quality of friendships, romantic partnerships, and relationships with authority figures. Attachment Theory highlights the enduring impact of early parent-child relationships on the formation of attachment styles and the consequential influence on an individual's socioemotional development and the nature of their future relationships (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Authoritative parenting, which fosters open communication and emotional warmth, is likely to promote secure attachment, resulting in teenagers developing responsible attitudes towards sexual relationships (Steinberg, 2001). On the other hand, authoritarian and neglectful parenting can lead to insecure attachment styles (anxious-ambivalent and avoidant), contributing to riskier sexual behaviors in teenagers (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Anxious-ambivalent attachment may result in teenagers seeking validation through sexual relationships, while avoidant attachment may lead to emotional detachment and promiscuity. Permissive parenting, which provides warmth but lacks clear boundaries, may result in an anxious-ambivalent attachment style, with teenagers experiencing more anxiety about sexual relationships (Lamborn et al., 1991).

2.2 Sexual Behaviors among Teenagers

Sexual behaviors encompass a range of actions and attitudes related to sex and sexuality, including sexual thoughts, desires, communication, and physical activities such as kissing, touching, and intercourse (Tolman & McClelland, 2011). In adolescence, sexual behaviors often involve experimentation and exploration, which can be healthy and developmentally appropriate when guided by responsible attitudes and knowledge (Schalet et al., 2014). However, risky sexual behaviors, such as unprotected sex or having multiple partners, can have negative consequences for teenagers, including unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and emotional distress (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Engaging in risky sexual behaviors can have various negative outcomes for teenagers, including physical, emotional, and social consequences. Physically, unprotected sex increases the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Emotionally, risky sexual behaviors can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, or regret, potentially damaging self-esteem and mental health (O'Sullivan & Thompson, 2014). Socially, engaging in risky sexual behaviors can result in negative

judgments from peers, family, or community members, affecting teenagers' reputation and relationships (Schalet et al., 2014).

Various factors influence teenagers' sexual behaviors, including individual characteristics (e.g., personality, self-esteem), family factors (e.g., parenting styles, family structure), peer influences (e.g., peer norms, pressure), and societal factors (e.g., media, cultural norms) (Kirby, 2002). Parenting styles, in particular, play a significant role in shaping teenagers' sexual attitudes and behaviors, with authoritative parenting associated with healthier sexual behaviors and more open communication about sexuality (Steinberg, 2001). Teenagers may exhibit both overt and covert expressions of sexual behaviors, with overt behaviors being visible and observable actions, such as public displays of affection or discussing sexual experiences with peers. Covert expressions, on the other hand, include hidden or private aspects of sexual behaviors, such as fantasizing, engaging in self-exploration, or secretly viewing sexually explicit materials (Tolman & McClelland, 2011).

2.3 Parenting Styles and Sexual Behavior among Teenagers

Parenting styles refer to the approach parents use to raise their children, encompassing various dimensions such as warmth, responsiveness, and control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Baumrind (1966) initially proposed three main parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983) added a fourth style, neglectful parenting. Parenting styles have a significant impact on various aspects of child development, including sexual behaviors (Steinberg, 2001). Understanding the different types of parenting styles and their consequences is essential in examining their effects on teenagers' sexual behaviors.

2.3.1 Authoritative parenting style and sexual behavior among teenagers

The authoritative parenting style is characterized by a combination of warmth, support, and firm boundaries, has been consistently associated with healthier sexual behaviors among teenagers in various studies. According to Darling and Steinberg (2017), authoritative parenting is characterized by a balanced and responsive approach, where parents establish clear expectations and rules while also demonstrating warmth, support, and open communication. In an authoritative parenting style, parents encourage independence and individuality, fostering a sense of autonomy in their children. They provide explanations for rules, involve children in decision-making, and offer guidance rather than strict control. Authoritative parents are emotionally available, responsive to their children's needs, and maintain a positive and nurturing environment. This parenting style promotes a healthy balance between discipline and support, contributing to children's social competence, self-esteem, and overall well-being (Simons et al., 2016).

Study by Alimoradi et al. (2017) shows that adolescents raised by authoritative parents often experience an open and communicative environment at home. This positive parent-teen relationship facilitates discussions about sexuality, relationships, and responsible decision-making. Authoritative parents are more likely to provide comprehensive and accurate information about sex, fostering an atmosphere where teenagers feel comfortable seeking guidance. This open communication, coupled with the emotional support authoritative parents provide, contributes to the development of a strong foundation for healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors among teenagers.

Smith et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between authoritative parenting and the sexual behaviors of teenagers in the USA. The study discovered that boys raised by authoritative parents were more likely to engage in safe sexual practices, such as consistent condom use, and reported having fewer sexual partners throughout adolescence. Another study carried out in

South Africa by Mkhize and Ndlovu (2019) examined the impact of authoritative parenting on the sexual risk-taking behaviors of adolescent boys and girls in selected secondary schools. The study revealed that authoritative parenting was associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviors, including early sexual debut and unprotected sex, among the participants. Similarly, by Tremblay and Wilson (2020) explored the influence of authoritative parenting on the sexual decision-making of teenagers and found that boys raised by authoritative parents were more likely to seek information and guidance about sexual matters, which contributed to better-informed decisions about their sexual behaviors.

Ali and Kagia (2016) investigated the association between authoritative parenting styles and teenage sexual behaviors in urban and rural areas of Kenya. The researchers conducted a cross-sectional survey involving 800 teenagers aged 15-19 from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Parenting styles were assessed through self-report questionnaires, and sexual behaviors were examined using structured interviews. From the findings, adolescents raised in authoritative households reported significantly delayed initiation of sexual activity compared to those with other parenting styles. Authoritative parenting was associated with higher levels of parent-teen communication about sexual health, contributing to better-informed decision-making among teenagers. The study also revealed a significant correlation between authoritative parenting and consistent contraceptive use among sexually active teenagers.

Komba and Mwakibete (2018) explored the role of authoritative parenting on adolescent sexual health outcomes, including the prevalence of risky sexual behaviors in Tanzania. A qualitative research design was employed, involving in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with parents and their teenage children. The study showed that authoritative parents Tanzania exhibited a pattern of open communication with their teenagers about sex, relationships, and reproductive health, contributing to increased awareness. Teenagers raised in authoritative households reported higher levels of self-efficacy in making informed decisions about sexual activity and contraception. The study revealed a lower prevalence of risky sexual behaviors among adolescents with authoritative parents compared to those with other parenting styles

Study by Patel et al., (2019) examined the influence of authoritative parenting on the sexual behaviors of urban Indian teenagers, considering the socio-cultural context. Longitudinal study was conducted, following 500 adolescents aged 14-18 over a two-year period. Parenting styles were assessed through observations and self-report measures, while sexual behaviors were tracked using confidential surveys administered at multiple time points. The study reported that adolescents raised in authoritative households demonstrated a lower likelihood of engaging in early sexual activity compared to those with permissive or authoritarian parents. Authoritative parenting was associated with higher levels of condom use and a greater likelihood of seeking reproductive health information among sexually active teenagers. The study also identified a positive correlation between authoritative parenting and the delay of risky sexual behaviors during adolescence.

2.3.2 Authoritarian parenting style

Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high demands and low responsiveness, creating a structured and rule-based environment. Parents adopting this style emphasize obedience, discipline, and unquestioned adherence to rules, often employing a directive approach in child-rearing. Authoritarian parents typically set strict standards for their children's behavior without much room for negotiation or explanation. Communication tends to be one-way, with limited encouragement for open dialogue or expression of the child's opinions. While authoritarian parenting may create a disciplined and well-ordered household, it is associated with potential

drawbacks, such as decreased autonomy, diminished self-esteem, and a higher likelihood of rebellion or aggression in children as they may struggle with social and emotional development (Manyibe, 2023). The authoritarian parenting style, characterized by strict rules, high expectations, and low warmth, has been associated with mixed outcomes related to sexual behaviors among teenagers in different studies.

Kincaid et al. (2012) adds that adolescents raised under authoritarian parenting experience challenges in developing a healthy understanding of their sexuality due to the restricted communication channels and lack of open dialogue with their parents. The authoritarian environment, marked by a focus on obedience and control, might lead teenagers to seek autonomy through rebellion or engage in covert sexual behaviors as a form of opposition. Additionally, the limited emotional support and guidance in this parenting style contribute to adolescents making uninformed decisions about sexual health. Generally, the authoritative parenting style's lack of open communication and emphasis on strict obedience may hinder the development of positive sexual attitudes and responsible decision-making among teenagers.

In a study conducted in Brazil by Silva and Oliveira (2018), the researchers explored the relationship between authoritarian parenting and the sexual behaviors of adolescent boys. The study found that boys raised by authoritarian parents rarely communicated with their parents about sexual matters, which resulted in a lack of information and support for making informed decisions about their sexual behaviors. Another study carried out in India by Patel and Gupta (2019) examined the impact of authoritarian parenting on the sexual risk-taking behaviors of teenagers. The study revealed that teenagers raised by authoritarian parents were more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors, such as unprotected sex and having multiple sexual partners, compared to their peers raised by parents with different parenting styles. Schneider and Müller (2020) investigated the influence of authoritarian parenting on the sexual self-efficacy and communication skills of adolescent boys. The research found that boys raised by authoritarian parents were not confident in their ability to make healthy sexual decisions and were less likely to effectively communicate their needs and boundaries in sexual relationships.

Moyo and Mutize (2018) studied the relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviors among teenagers in urban secondary schools in selected cities of Zimbabwe. It was found that adolescents raised under authoritarian parenting exhibited a heightened fear of parental reprisals, leading to covert sexual behaviors and reduced communication about sex. Additionally, authoritarian parenting was associated with a higher prevalence of early pregnancies and limited awareness of contraceptive methods among teenagers. The study also identified a strong cultural influence on authoritarian parenting, impacting both the communication patterns and sexual behaviors of adolescents.

Research by van der Linden and Bakker (2019) investigate the influence of authoritarian parenting on the sexual decision-making and behaviors of Dutch adolescents. Authoritarian parenting was assessed through parent and adolescent self-reports, and sexual behaviors were tracked using confidential surveys administered at multiple time points. The study showed that adolescents with authoritarian parents reported higher levels of anxiety and guilt related to sexual decision-making. Authoritarian parenting was found to be associated with a delayed onset of sexual activity, but a higher likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors once initiated. The study revealed that communication about sexual health was limited in families with authoritarian parenting, contributing to adolescents seeking information from less reliable sources.

Moreover, Chen and Wang (2017) explored the association between parenting styles and teenage sexual behaviors among girls aged 14-19 years in Bade District, Taiwan. The findings revealed that teenagers raised under authoritarian parenting styles were more likely to report delayed initiation of sexual activity compared to those with other parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting exhibited a significant negative correlation with communication about sexual health between parents and teenagers. The study revealed that adolescents with authoritarian parents mostly engaged in risky sexual behaviors due to limited parental guidance.

2.3.3 Permissive parenting style

Permissive parenting is characterized by a lenient and indulgent approach, marked by high levels of warmth and responsiveness coupled with low demands and discipline. Parents adopting this style often prioritize their children's autonomy and self-expression, providing few rules and expectations. Permissive parents tend to avoid confrontation, allowing children considerable freedom to make their own decisions without imposing strict boundaries. While permissive parenting promotes a nurturing and supportive environment, it may also lead to challenges in setting consistent expectations and limits for children. The permissive parenting style has been associated with potential drawbacks, such as diminished self-discipline, difficulties in managing impulses, and, in some cases, a higher likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors among adolescents due to a lack of clear guidance and structure (Harrison, Dashiff, & Davies, 2008).

Research has shown that adolescents raised in permissive households may experience a lack of clear boundaries and rules related to sexual conduct, potentially contributing to early sexual initiation (van der Linden et al., 2019). The absence of consistent expectations and limitations may hinder the development of a sense of responsibility in making informed decisions about sexual activity and contraception. Additionally, the emphasis on autonomy and minimal parental guidance in permissive parenting may result in a reduced awareness of the potential consequences associated with risky sexual behaviors. The permissive parenting style's focus on warmth and responsiveness, while encouraging a positive emotional environment, may inadvertently contribute to challenges in promoting responsible sexual behavior among teenagers (Silva & Oliveira, 2018).

Study by García and Martínez (2018) found that girls raised by permissive parents easily engaged in risky sexual behaviors, such as early sexual involvement and inconsistent condom use, compared to their peers raised by parents with authoritative parenting styles. Another study carried out in Nigeria by Adeyemi and Oyewole (2019) examined the impact of permissive parenting on the sexual decision-making of teenagers. The study revealed that permissive parenting was associated with a lower likelihood of seeking information and guidance about sexual matters, which contributed to increased sexual risk-taking behaviors among the participants. Jong (2020) explored the influence of permissive parenting on the attitudes towards sexual behaviors and contraceptive use among secondary school adolescent girls in Netherlands. The study found that girls raised by permissive parents held permissive attitudes towards sexual behaviors and rarely used contraceptives, such as condoms, during sexual encounters.

Banda and Chanda (2016) investigated the factors affecting teenage sexual behaviors in public secondary schools in Lusaka, urban and rural areas of Zambia. The findings showed that parenting styles affected the sexual behaviors of the teenagers. It was noted that teenagers raised in permissive households reported an earlier onset of sexual activity compared to those

raised under authoritative parents. Permissive parenting exhibited a positive correlation with reduced parental monitoring of teenagers' whereabouts and activities. The study concluded that adolescents with permissive parents often engaged in unprotected sex due to a lack of clear guidance on safe sexual practices.

The study by Osei (2018) explore the influence of permissive parenting on the sexual decision-making and behaviors among teenage girls in Ghana. The results showed that adolescents with permissive parents in Ghana reported a lack of clear expectations regarding sexual conduct and limited discussions about responsible sexual behaviors. Furthermore, permissive parenting was associated with increased autonomy among teenagers but also contributed to challenges in understanding the consequences of risky sexual behaviors. The study revealed that the absence of consistent parental guidance led to variations in sexual decision-making among adolescents, with some engaging in earlier and riskier sexual activities

Tekle and Abraha (2019) studied the relationship between permissive parenting styles and the sexual behaviors of teenagers among widowed parents in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The study showed that the adolescents with permissive parents in engaged in early sexual activities compared to those with more authoritative or authoritarian parents. Permissive parenting exhibited a negative correlation with parental monitoring of teenagers' social activities and whereabouts. The study revealed that permissive parenting contributed to a reduced emphasis on the importance of safe sexual practices among sexually active adolescents.

2.3.4 Neglectful parenting style

Neglectful parenting, also known as uninvolved parenting, is characterized by a lack of emotional involvement, responsiveness, and attention to the needs of the child. Parents adopting this style tend to be disengaged and indifferent, providing minimal guidance, structure, or support. Neglectful parents may prioritize their own needs or interests over those of their children, resulting in a lack of supervision, inconsistent care, and limited emotional connection. This parenting style can lead to a range of adverse outcomes for the child, including feelings of neglect, insecurity, and a diminished sense of self-worth. Children raised in neglectful environments may struggle with emotional regulation, exhibit behavioral challenges, and experience difficulties forming healthy relationships later in life due to a lack of foundational emotional support and guidance during their formative years (Harrison et al., 2008). The neglectful parenting style has been associated with the poorest sexual behaviors outcomes among teenagers in various studies.

According to Smetana (2017), adolescents raised in neglectful environments experience a lack of parental supervision, communication, and emotional support, contributing to a higher likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviors. The absence of clear boundaries and guidance may result in a diminished sense of responsibility and informed decision-making regarding sexual activity and contraception (Newman et al., 2008). Furthermore, children from neglectful backgrounds may seek emotional connections and validation outside the family context, potentially leading to early initiation of sexual activity as a means of seeking connection or affirmation. In a nutshell, the neglectful parenting style is associated with an increased risk of unfavorable sexual outcomes among children, emphasizing the crucial role of parental involvement and support in shaping healthy sexual development during adolescence (Brown et al., 2009).

In a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Turner and Williams (2018), the researchers explored the relationship between neglectful parenting and the sexual behaviors of adolescent boys. The study found a positive correlation between neglectful parenting and illicit sexual

behavior among the boys. Another study carried out in Australia by Martin and Brown (2019) examined the impact of neglectful parenting on the sexual decision-making and communication skills of teenagers. The study revealed that neglectful parenting was associated with a lower likelihood of seeking support and guidance from parents about sexual matters, which could contribute to increased sexual risk-taking behaviors and poor communication skills in sexual relationships among the participants. In a more recent study conducted in Italy by Rossi and Bianchi (2020), the researchers investigated the influence of neglectful parenting on the self-esteem and sense of personal agency in sexual decision-making among adolescent boys. The study found that boys raised by neglectful parents had lower self-esteem and a diminished sense of personal agency in their sexual decision-making, leading to risky sexual behaviors.

3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The reviewed studies indicate that different parenting styles can have significant effects on the sexual behaviors of teenagers. Authoritative, permissive, authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles were all shown to impact the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of teenagers related to their sexual activities. The outcomes varied depending on the specific parenting style, with authoritative parenting generally leading to healthier sexual behaviors and attitudes, while permissive and authoritarian parenting styles often resulted in riskier sexual behaviors and less understanding of sexual responsibility. Neglectful parenting style was associated with risky sexual behaviors.

Parenting styles that emphasize open communication, understanding, and support, such as authoritative parenting, tend to foster more responsible sexual behaviors among teenagers. These parenting approaches encourage the development of self-esteem, self-control, and responsible decision-making, which are all important factors in promoting healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors. Conversely, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles may lead to riskier sexual behaviors due to a lack of guidance, support, or understanding from parents. This research suggests that parents should adopt an authoritative parenting style to promote responsible sexual behaviors and attitudes among teenagers. It is also critical for parents to engage in open and honest conversations about sex and sexual responsibility, providing support and guidance to help their teenage sons make informed decisions about their sexual health and relationships.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping the sexual behaviors and attitudes of teenagers. The reviewed studies demonstrate that authoritative parenting, characterized by open communication, understanding, and support, can lead to healthier sexual behaviors and attitudes among teenagers. Permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, on the other hand, are often associated with riskier sexual behaviors and a lack of understanding of sexual responsibility. The neglectful parenting style has been associated with the poorest sexual behaviors outcomes among teenagers.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parents should adopt an authoritative parenting style, characterized by open communication, understanding, and support, to promote responsible sexual behaviors and attitudes among teenagers.
2. Open and honest conversations about sex and sexual responsibility should be encouraged between parents and their teenage sons, providing guidance and support to help them make informed decisions about their sexual health and relationships.

3. Parents should be aware of the potential negative consequences of permissive and authoritarian parenting styles on the sexual behaviors and attitudes of teenagers, and consider adjusting their parenting approach accordingly.
4. Schools and community organizations should provide comprehensive sex education programs that promote responsible decision-making, self-esteem, and self-control among teenagers, complementing the efforts of parents in fostering responsible sexual behaviors and attitudes.
5. Further research should be conducted to explore the specific mechanisms through which different parenting styles impact the sexual behaviors and attitudes of teenagers, as well as potential cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors that may influence these relationships.

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