

The relationship between parenting styles and premarital sexual attitudes among adolescents

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Abstract

Background: Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by rapid biological, psychological, and social changes. Attitudes toward premarital sex are influenced by various factors, including family and parenting practices.

Purpose: This study aimed to determine the relationship between parenting styles and attitudes toward premarital sex among eleventh-grade students.

Methods: This quantitative study used a descriptive-correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The population consisted of 252 eleventh-grade students at State Senior High School 2 Banguntapan. A total of 77 students were selected using proportional random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires measuring parenting styles and attitudes toward premarital sex. Data were analysed using univariate analysis and the Chi-square test.

Results: Democratic parenting was the most prevalent parenting style, reported by 43 respondents (55.8%), followed by permissive parenting in 25 respondents (32.5%) and authoritarian parenting in 9 respondents (11.7%). Overall, 50 respondents (64.9%) demonstrated a positive attitude toward premarital sex, defined as rejection of sexual activity before marriage. The Chi-square test showed no significant relationship between parenting styles and attitudes toward premarital sex ($p=0.092$).

Conclusion: Parenting style was not significantly associated with adolescents' attitudes toward premarital sex in this study. Adolescent attitudes may also be influenced by other factors, including reproductive health knowledge, religiosity, peer influence, parent-adolescent communication, school environment, and digital media exposure.

Keywords: Adolescents; Parenting Styles; Premarital Sex; Sexual Attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial stage of psychosocial development characterized by the process of identity formation through the exploration of values, social roles, and various life choices. Success in this process leads to a stable identity, whereas failure can result in role confusion. The process of adolescent identity formation is dynamic and heavily influenced by the surrounding social environment, particularly family and peers (Branje, 2022). Adolescence involves rapid biological, psychological, and social changes. These changes can heighten curiosity including regarding sexuality without necessarily being accompanied by the ability to make mature decisions (Wahyuni et al., 2023).

Attitudes toward premarital sex reflect an individual's tendency to evaluate, accept, or reject sexual relations occurring before marriage. These attitudes develop through learning processes and are influenced by various factors, such as knowledge, experience, social and cultural values, and religion. Once formed, these attitudes can influence adolescents' sexual behavior choices (Syafitriani et al., 2022). Premarital sexual behavior among adolescents is a health-risk behavior. It can lead to various physical, psychological, and social consequences, including unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV/AIDS

(Adaramoye, 2025). World Health Organization (WHO) data indicate that premarital sexual behavior remains a significant issue among adolescents. Approximately 9.3% of adolescents report having engaged in sexual intercourse, while about 7% engage in premarital sexual relations annually (Nurdin et al., 2024). In Indonesia, this is also a serious issue, evidenced by high rates of adolescent pregnancy, abortion practices, and HIV/AIDS cases among the youth population (Damayanti & Alnur, 2024). This situation indicates that risky sexual behavior among adolescents remains a public health issue requiring attention. Adolescent pregnancy increases the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth such as anemia, preeclampsia, preterm birth, and low birth weight thereby posing risks to the health of both mother and infant. Adolescent pregnancy and childbirth can also be associated with impaired child growth and development, including stunting, which may impact the child's future health. Beyond pregnancy, risky sexual behavior also increases the likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

The family serves as the primary environment shaping a child's attitudes and behaviors. Parental parenting styles play a role in shaping values, self-control, and the decision-making processes of adolescents regarding sexual behavior. Effective parenting can help protect adolescents from risky sexual behaviors, whereas inadequate parenting may render them more vulnerable to premarital sexual activity (Mokal & Ahmad, 2023). Despite various prevention efforts such as the Generasi Berencana (GenRe) program and Adolescent Information and Counseling Centers (PIK-R) instances of premarital sexual behavior among adolescents persist. This situation indicates that prevention efforts require not only the involvement of programs and the school environment but also greater family and specifically parental engagement (Nurfurqoni & Hastuti, 2022). While numerous studies have examined the link between parenting styles and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors, these studies were conducted in different regions and with different respondent profiles; consequently, their findings may not accurately reflect the situation of adolescents in Bantul Regency, particularly students State Senior High School 2 Banguntapan. Research specifically addressing the relationship between parenting styles

and attitudes toward premarital sex among public high school students in Bantul Regency remains limited. Therefore, research tailored to the specific conditions and characteristics of adolescents in this region is necessary.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The study was conducted at State Senior High School 2 Banguntapan in 2025. The population consisted of 252 eleventh-grade students. A total of 77 respondents were selected using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error.

Sampling was conducted using proportional random sampling. Respondents who met the inclusion criteria were identified, after which the number of respondents from each class was determined proportionally. Respondents were subsequently selected using simple random sampling.

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires. The parenting style questionnaire consisted of 20 statements measuring three parenting styles: authoritarian, democratic, and permissive. The questionnaire measuring attitudes toward premarital sex consisted of 21 statements covering cognitive, affective, and conative components and used a four-point Likert scale.

Parenting style was determined based on the highest score among the three parenting-style dimensions, and respondents were classified as having authoritarian, democratic, or permissive parenting. Attitudes toward premarital sex were classified into positive and negative categories based on the mean score. In this study, a positive attitude represented rejection of premarital sexual activity. The research instruments were tested for validity using Product-Moment correlation and for reliability using the Split-Half method and Cronbach's alpha. The results indicated that the instruments were valid and reliable for use in the study.

Data collection was conducted after respondents provided informed consent. The researcher explained the purpose and procedures of the study before distributing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed through class representatives, with the researcher accompanied by the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs. Data processing consisted of

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editing, coding, data entry, cleaning, and tabulation using statistical software. Univariate analysis was used to describe respondent characteristics and the distribution of study variables using frequencies and percentages. Bivariate analysis was conducted using

the Chi-square test to examine the relationship between parenting styles and attitudes toward premarital sex. Statistical significance was established at $\alpha=0.05$.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Results
Father's Employment (n/%)	
Employed	65/84.4
Unemployed	12/15.6
Mother's Employment (n/%)	
Employed	32/41.6
Unemployed	45/58.4
Gender (n/%)	
Male	24/31.2
Female	53/68.8
Place of Residence (n/%)	
With parents	75/97.4
With guardian	2/2.6

Table 1. shows that most respondents had employed fathers, accounting for 65 respondents (84.4%), while 12 respondents (15.6%) had unemployed fathers. Regarding mothers' employment status, 32 respondents (41.6%) had employed mothers, while 45 respondents (58.4%) had unemployed mothers. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female, with 53 respondents (68.8%), while 24 respondents (31.2%) were male. Regarding place of residence, almost all respondents lived with their parents, comprising 75 respondents (97.4%), while 2 respondents (2.6%) lived with a guardian.

Table 2. Relationship between Parenting Styles and Attitudes toward Premarital Sex among Adolescents

Parenting Style	Positive Attitude (n/%)	Negative Attitude (n/%)	p-value
Authoritarian	7/77.8	2/22.2	0.092
Democratic	31/72.1	12/27.9	
Permissive	12/48.0	13/52.0	
Total	50/64.9	27/35.1	

Based on Table 2 a higher proportion of positive attitudes toward premarital sex was found among adolescents raised under authoritarian and

democratic parenting styles compared to those raised under a permissive style. However, the Chi-Square test yielded a p-value of 0.092 ($p > 0.05$), indicating

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no significant relationship between parenting styles and attitudes toward premarital sex among adolescents.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the democratic parenting style is the most prevalent among the respondents, accounting for 55.8%. This style is characterized by open communication between parents and children, rules accompanied by understandable explanations, and opportunities for adolescents to express their opinions and participate in decision-making appropriate to their developmental stage. Such an approach is considered conducive to fostering independence, responsibility, and self-control in adolescents when facing various situations, including those related to reproductive health. These results align with another research which shows that democratic parenting remains widely practiced due to the balance it strikes between parental supervision and the freedom granted to the child (Wijono et al., 2024).

A total of 32.5% of respondents experienced a permissive parenting style. This style is marked by limited parental supervision and significant freedom given to the child in making choices. While this environment may allow adolescents greater freedom, the absence of clear boundaries can make it difficult for them to consider the consequences of their actions. A lack of parental communication and guidance may also increase the likelihood of adolescents engaging in behaviors that deviate from prevailing norms. Meanwhile, the authoritarian parenting style was applied to only 11.7% of respondents, making it the least common category. This style involves strict rules, demands for obedience to parents, and predominantly one-way communication. In various theories of adolescent development, authoritarian parenting is often associated with limited opportunities for children to express their views or make independent decisions. However, in Indonesian society where respect for parents remains a highly valued principle the enforcement of strict family rules can still cultivate behavior that adheres to established norms.

A total of 64.9% of respondents demonstrated a positive attitude toward premarital sex defined in this study as an attitude of rejecting sexual relations before marriage. These results indicate that the

majority of adolescents still hold views aligned with the religious norms, social norms, and cultural values prevailing in their community. Adolescent attitudes in this regard are shaped not only by family interaction patterns but also by learning processes and the school environment, reproductive health education, levels of religiosity, and the social environments in which adolescents interact. Conversely, the fact that 35.1% of respondents held a negative attitude toward premarital sex demonstrates that adolescent attitudes are not solely linked to parenting styles. Various other factors also play a role, such as peer environments, social media usage, easy access to information via the internet, and knowledge regarding reproductive health. These factors can interact to shape adolescents' understanding and attitudes concerning premarital sex.

Based on the Chi-Square test results, parenting style did not show a significant relationship with attitudes toward premarital sex among adolescents ($p = 0.092$). Consequently, the differences in attitude distribution across parenting style categories could not be statistically proven to constitute a significant relationship. Nevertheless, cross-tabulation results revealed a tendency for respondents raised under authoritarian parenting styles to exhibit a higher proportion of positive attitudes specifically the rejection of premarital sex compared to those raised under democratic or permissive styles. These findings differ from theories suggesting that democratic parenting is more effective in fostering positive attitudes among adolescents.

This discrepancy can be understood within the social and cultural context of Indonesian society, where parents continue to be viewed as authority figures within the family. In families with authoritarian parenting styles, rules regarding social interactions and sexual behavior are typically conveyed firmly, accompanied by demands for obedience. Such conditions may make adolescents more inclined to exhibit attitudes aligned with family norms, including the rejection of premarital sex. However, this compliance does not necessarily reflect a deep understanding of reproductive health or the adolescents' ability to make independent decisions. Therefore, the higher proportion of positive attitudes observed in the authoritarian parenting group cannot be interpreted to mean that this parenting style is more effective than the democratic style.

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The absence of a significant association in this study indicates that the formation of adolescent attitudes toward premarital sex is influenced by a multitude of factors, rather than solely by parenting styles. Such attitudes can be shaped by various elements, including knowledge of reproductive health, religiosity, parent-adolescent communication, the school environment, peer influence, and information obtained from digital media. These diverse factors may interact with one another, potentially explaining why the role of parenting styles did not appear dominant in this study's analysis. These findings align with research which demonstrated no significant link between parenting styles and premarital sexual behavior among adolescents. That study indicated that adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors are associated with a range of factors and cannot be explained by parenting styles alone (Nurjanah, 2021). Therefore, efforts to foster positive attitudes among adolescents require a multi-stakeholder approach. While the family's role remains essential, it must be complemented by reproductive health education in schools, improved parent-adolescent communication, strengthened Adolescent Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) activities, and enhanced adolescent skills in selecting and interpreting information from digital media. Such efforts are expected to help adolescents access accurate information and make responsible decisions regarding their reproductive health.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. One limitation is the relatively small sample size (77 respondents), which may reduce the statistical power to detect relationships between variables. Additionally, data were collected via self-administered questionnaires, raising the possibility of social desirability bias where respondents provide answers that align with socially accepted norms or views. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design captures the state of variables at a single point in time, precluding the determination of a causal relationship between parenting styles and adolescent attitudes toward premarital sex.

CONCLUSION

The most common parenting style among respondents was democratic parenting (55.8%), followed by permissive parenting (32.5%) and

authoritarian parenting (11.7%). Overall, 64.9% of respondents demonstrated a positive attitude toward premarital sex, defined in this study as rejection of sexual activity before marriage. The Chi-square test showed no significant relationship between parenting style and attitudes toward premarital sex ($p=0.092$). These findings indicate that adolescent attitudes toward premarital sex may involve multiple factors beyond parenting style, including reproductive health knowledge, religiosity, family communication, peer influence, school environment, and digital media exposure.

SUGGESTION

Parents are encouraged to maintain open and age-appropriate communication with adolescents, particularly regarding reproductive health, relationships, and responsible decision-making. Schools can strengthen reproductive health education and counselling programmes and optimise PIK-R activities through collaboration with families and health professionals. Future studies should consider larger and more diverse samples and examine other factors potentially associated with adolescent sexual attitudes, including reproductive health knowledge, religiosity, parent-adolescent communication, peer influence, and digital media exposure.

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