

Relationship between Adolescents' Perceived Parental Attitudes and Substance Use Risk

Adölesanların Algıladıkları Anne-Baba Tutumları ile Madde Kullanım Riski Arasındaki İlişki

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aimed to determine the relationship between the adolescents' perceived parental attitudes and substance use risk.

Methods: This study employed a descriptive research design. A total of 36 schools were divided into nine clusters based on the neighborhood in which they were located. Seventh-grade students studying in these nine schools were included in the sample. The study sample consisted of 486 adolescents. Personal Information Form, Parental Attitude Scale (PAS), and Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS) were used.

Results: It was determined 52.0% of the participants in the study were female and their mean age was 13.0±0.36 (min: 12, max: 15). Adolescents' responses to the PAS, 36.2% of the adolescents perceive their parents as authoritative, 22.4% as neglectful, 20.8% as indulgent, and 20.6% as authoritarian. The total SURPS score is 57.17±8.98. It was determined that adolescents scored above the mean in all four sub-dimensions of SURPS. Even a high sub-dimension indicates a risk for substance use. It was determined that the adolescents who perceive their parents as authoritative and indulgent have higher scores in total SURPS and its sub-dimensions: lack of self-contentment, and impulsivity when compared to those perceiving their parents as neglectful and authoritarian ($P<.05$).

Conclusion: It was determined that adolescents are at risk for substance use because it is assumed that the individual's risk of substance use increases when at least one of the subscale scores is high. In addition, adolescents who perceive their parents as authoritative and indulgent are at a higher risk in terms of substance use.

Keywords: Parents, attitude, adolescent, substance use, risk

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu araştırma, adölesanların algıladıkları anne-baba tutumlarının ile madde kullanım riski arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amacıyla yapılmıştır.

Yöntemler: Bu araştırma tanımlayıcı tiptedir. Toplam 36 okul, bulundukları mahalleye göre dokuz kümeye ayrılmış, her kümeden bir okul seçilmiş ve bu dokuz okulda öğrenim gören yedinci sınıf öğrencileri örnekleme dahil edilmiştir. Çalışmanın örneklemini 486 ergen oluşturmuştur. Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Ebeveyn Tutum Ölçeği (PAÖ) ve Madde Kullanım Risk Profili Ölçeği (SURPS) kullanılmıştır. Veriler 2022 yılı Mart-Mayıs ayları arasında toplanmıştır.

Bulgular: Adölesanların %52,0'i kız olup, yaş ortalamaları 13,0±0,36'dır (min: 12, max:15). Adölesanların Anne-Baba Tutum Ölçeğine verdikleri yanıtlara göre, adölesanların %36,2'si ebeveynlerini demokratik, %22,4'ü ihmalkar, %20,8'i hoşgörölü ve %20,6'sı otoriter olarak algılamaktadır. Toplam madde kullanım risk profili ölçeği puanı 57,17±8,98'dir. Adölesanların madde kullanım risk profili ölçeğinin dört alt boyutunda da ortalamanın üzerinde puan aldıkları belirlenmiştir. Bir alt boyutun bile puan ortalamasının üzerinde olması madde kullanım riskinin olduğunu göstermektedir. Ebeveynlerini demokratik ve hoşgörölü olarak algılayan adölesanların, ebeveynlerini ihmalkar ve otoriter olarak algılayanlara kıyasla toplam madde kullanım risk profili ölçeği (KW:34,555) ve alt boyutları olan öz memnuniyetsizlik (KW:53.624) ve dürtüsellik (KW:23,934) puanlarının daha yüksek olduğu belirlendi ($P<.05$).

Sonuç: Madde kullanım risk profili ölçeğinin alt ölçek puanlarından en az birinin yüksek olması durumunda bireyin madde kullanma riskinin arttığı varsayıldığından adölesanların ortalamanın üzerinde puan aldığı dolayısıyla madde kullanımı açısından riskli oldukları belirlendi. Ebeveynlerini demokratik ve hoşgörölü olarak algılayanların madde kullanımı açısından daha yüksek risk altında olduğu belirlendi. Bu nedenle ergenlerin aileleri tarafından yakından izlenmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anne-baba, tutum, adölesan, madde kullanımı, risk



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, during which individuals develop physically and sexually and gain psychosocial maturity, as well as a sense of identity, is one of the most critical periods in an individual's life.^{1,2} During this period, adolescents experience a range of emotions, including uneasiness, restlessness, excitement, love, shyness, and a desire to be alone. Role confusion and identity crisis may be observed among adolescents who have to cope with conflicting roles, cannot integrate their roles, and have poor patterns in their family and other social relationships.^{1,3}

During adolescence, individuals often experience various psychological and social challenges. Psychological problems generally emerge as depression and anxiety, while social issues consist of disciplinary problems, substance abuse, and aggression.⁴ Out of these problems, substance use spreads rapidly, especially among the young, and leads to severe and sometimes irreversible damage in both personal and social contexts.^{5,6} It was noted in the World Drug Report⁷ that drug use peaked among the young aged 18-25. The World Health Organization announced that substance use is the leading cause of three-quarters of the deaths due to unintentional injury, suicide, and homicide among individuals aged 15-24. Moreover, it is also reported that substance use increases the likelihood of engaging in other risky behaviors such as violence, unintended pregnancies, and unsafe sex.⁷ To avoid the emergence of these problems, it is rather essential to determine the substance use risk at an early stage.

Several reasons were determined for the substance use in adolescence. One of these reasons is the adolescents' peer relationships, and it was revealed that experiencing problems with peers affects substance use.⁸ Another reason that may affect substance use is parental attitudes.⁹⁻¹¹ Former research has revealed that parents' involvement in their children's lives and keeping informed about them decreases the substance use risk among these children.¹² Moreover, it has also been pointed out that adolescents whose parents supervise their children's lives closely and disapprove of substance use are less likely to use substances.^{13,14} Examining the ages of university students to start smoking and alcohol use and the ages of their parents, it was identified that parents who smoke and use alcohol are more tolerant towards their children, and these children start smoking and alcohol use at an earlier age.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Similarly, it was found that adolescents growing up in indulgent families display high self-confidence but are more likely to become substance abusers.¹⁸ A meta-analysis study analyzing the effect of parents on the anxiety

of children revealed a negative, low-level relationship between the positive parenting style and social anxiety; and a positive, low-level relationship between the negative parenting style and social anxiety of the children/adolescents.¹⁹ Positive parental attitudes and behaviors toward adolescents decrease the likelihood of misbehaviors and problems among them.^{18,20}

Substance use is a serious public health problem with an adverse effect not only on the individual but also on the family and the social environment of the individual as well as the society as a whole.^{21,22} Substance use starts in a period between late adolescence and youth.⁷ Therefore, determining the substance use risk among adolescents in the early adolescence period is essential in terms of preventive approaches. Public health nurses, especially school nurses, should be informed about the risk factors that may cause mental illnesses; closely supervise adolescents who are at risk in terms of these factors and display risky behaviors; and provide training and counseling to individuals for the development of positive mental health and healthy lifestyle behaviors.²³ Public health nurses also work with the parents. Being informed about adolescents' perceptions of their parents may help inform initiatives to be taken for the parents. Moreover, assessment of adolescents' perceived parental attitudes and substance use risks is vital for the relationship of adolescents with their parents and the rise of possible problems and their solutions.

AIM

This research aims to determine the effect of adolescents' perceived parental attitudes on substance use risk.

Research questions

In the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do the adolescents perceive parental attitudes?
2. What is the level of substance use risk among adolescents?
3. Is there a relationship between adolescents' perceived parental attitudes and substance use risk?

METHODS

Study design

This study employed a descriptive design. Researchers have adhered to the relevant "STROBE" reporting method.

Study Sample

In Türkiye, a 4+4+4-year education system is implemented, and students begin their education at the age of six. The first 4-year period is primary school, the second is

secondary school, and the third is high school. Early adolescence starts in the third year of secondary school (7th grade).²⁴ There are 36 secondary schools in the city center of Kırıkkale, a province of Türkiye. Out of these, nine schools were selected, and the research data were collected between March and May 2022.

The research population comprises seventh-grade students (3454 students) studying at secondary schools in the central district of Kırıkkale province. Based on their neighborhood, schools were divided into nine clusters, one school was selected from each cluster, and seventh-grade students (602 students) studying in these nine schools were included in the sample. All the students in the selected schools were tried to be included in the research, but some parents and students refused to participate. These students, as well as those who were not at school at the time of data collection, were excluded from the sample. The research was completed with a total of 486 adolescents (80.7% of the sample).

Data Collection Tools

Data for this study were collected based on self-reporting. Data collection tools consisted of a Personal Information Form, the Parental Attitude Scale (PAS), and the Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS).

Personal Information Form: The researchers drafted this form. It consists of nine questions in total, including age, sex, the number of people in the household, the parents' education level, their profession, and the number of siblings.

The Parental Attitude Scale (PAS): This scale was developed by Lamborn et al.¹⁸ and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz.²⁵ The scale consists of 21 items in total. While these items are evaluated in themselves, the first 18 items are assessed with a 4-point likert scale (1: not at all similar, 2: not identical, 3: somewhat similar, 4: identical), the following two items with multiple choices, and the last six items with a 3-point likert scale (1: displays no effort at all, 2: displays minimal attempt, 3: displays great effort/1: does not have much knowledge, 2: has little knowledge, 3: has a lot of knowledge). The scale is used in two ways. In the first one, there are three sub-dimensions. These are the acceptance/involvement, psychological autonomy, and strictness/supervision dimensions. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.72 for the Acceptance/Involvement dimension, 0.76 for the Psychological Autonomy dimension, and 0.82 for the Strictness/Supervision dimension.²⁵ This research calculated the internal consistency coefficient as .71 for all the sub-dimensions. In the second way, evaluation is made based on the two sub-dimensions of the scale. Primarily,

within the Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Supervision sub-dimensions, those scoring above and below the median are identified. Later on, the parents of the adolescents who score above the median in the Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Supervision dimensions are described as "authoritative"; those who score below are described as "neglectful." In contrast, the parents of the adolescents who score below the median in the Acceptance/involvement dimension and above the median in the Strictness/supervision dimension are described as "authoritarian", and the parents of adolescents who score above the median in the Acceptance/involvement dimension and below the median in Strictness/supervision are described as "indulgent" (Table 1). In this research, evaluation was conducted according to the aforementioned second method. Table 1 displays the description of the parenting styles.²⁶

Table 1. Description of parenting styles and measurement of the levels and the sub-dimensions of the PAS

Parenting style	Description	Acceptance/ involvement		Strictness/ supervision	
		High	Low	High	Low
Authoritative	High parental responsiveness and high parental demandingness; warm and caring, thoughtful, participation of each individual at any age at home in the decision-making	X		X	
Neglectful	Low parental responsiveness and low parental demandingness		X		X
Authoritarian	Low parental responsiveness but high parental demandingness; strict parental authority, unquestioning obedience, and punitive strategies		X	X	
Indulgent	High parental responsiveness but low parental demandingness; tolerance, general acceptance of the child's decisions, and tendency to ignore the child's misbehavior	X			X

Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS): This scale was developed by Woicik et al.²⁷ and adapted into Turkish by Uygun et al.²⁸. These authors also assessed the scale's suitability for measuring personality traits. In the scale, four sub-scales - anxiety sensitivity, lack of self-contentment, sensation seeking, and impulsivity - were evaluated using a 4-point Likert scale, where each item was scored between 1 and 4. The minimum score that can be obtained from the total scale is 26, and the maximum score is 104. When at least one of the sub-scale scores is high, it is assumed that the individual has an increased risk of substance use. The Cronbach's alpha value of the total SURPS score was determined as .73. In contrast, the Cronbach's alpha values of the sub-scales: lack of self-contentment, sensation seeking, impulsivity, and anxiety sensitivity were determined as .76, .71, .67, and .66, respectively.^{28,29} In this research, the Cronbach alpha value of the total SURPS score was determined as .74. In contrast, the Cronbach alpha values of the sub-scales: lack of self-contentment, sensation seeking, impulsivity, and anxiety sensitivity were determined as .80, .70, .66, and .68, respectively.

Data Collection

Data were collected by 4th-year nursing students (3 people). They were not familiar with the middle school students beforehand. The nursing students visited the middle schools and collected data in collaboration with the school administrators. The data collection process took approximately 3 months. The nursing students developed this application in partnership with other researchers as part of the project course.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Approval was obtained from Kirikkale University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee with the decision numbered 2022.03.05 and 27.04.2022. Written permission was obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kirikkale. Written consent was obtained from the parents or guardians of the adolescents. Adolescents from consenting families were provided with appropriate information, and those unwilling to participate were excluded from the sample.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used for the distribution of scale scores. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine whether the scale scores were normally distributed, and it was observed that the distribution was not normal. Therefore, median and percentile values were given in the scale comparisons, and Kruskal-Wallis Analysis

was used. Tukey test, one of the post hoc tests, was used to determine the cause of the statistical significance. The level of significance was set at $P < .05$.

RESULTS

The mean age of the adolescents is 13.0 ± 0.36 (min=12, max=15), and 52.5% of them are female. 37.1% of the mothers and 37.5% of the fathers are high school graduates. It was determined that 69.5% of the mothers are not working, and 61.7% of the fathers are self-employed. Five of the adolescents are motherless, 11 are fatherless, and one has neither a mother nor a father. It was determined that 91.4% of the adolescents have siblings, with 40.3% having one sibling, 38.3% living with three people, and 33.7% living with four people at home (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of adolescents' socio-demographic characteristics (n = 486)

Socio-demographic characteristics		Frequents (n)	Percent
Age	12	29	6.0
	($\bar{x}\pm sd= 13.0\pm 36$)	428	88.0
	min-max: 12-15)	14 and above*	29
Sex	Female	255	52.5
	Male	231	47.5
Education level of the mother	Deceased	5	1.0
	Illiterate	10	2.1
	Primary school graduate	179	36.8
	High school graduate	181	37.1
	University graduate	112	23.0
Profession of the mother	Deceased	5	1.0
	Unemployed	338	69.5
	Public officer	64	13.2
	Self-employed	79	16.3
Education level of the father	Deceased	11	2.3
	Illiterate	7	1.4
	Primary school graduate	122	25.1
	High school graduate	182	37.5
	University graduate	164	33.7
Profession of the father	Deceased	11	2.3
	Unemployed	40	8.2
	Public officer	135	27.8
	Self-employed	300	61.7
Sibling presence	Yes	444	91.4
	No	42	8.6

*2 of the adolescents are 15 years' old; \bar{x} , Mean; sd, standard deviation

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According to the data based on the adolescents' responses to the PAS, 36.2% of the adolescents perceive their parents as authoritative, 22.4% as neglectful, 20.8% as indulgent, and 20.6% as authoritarian. It was determined that in terms of the sub-scales of SURPS, adolescents scored 20.72 ± 4.52 in the Lack of self-contentment, 13.80 ± 3.32 in Impulsivity, 14.24 ± 4.34 in Sensation seeking, and 14.34 ± 3.59 in Anxiety sensitivity. The total SURPS score is 57.17 ± 8.98 . It was determined that adolescents scored above the mean in all four sub-dimensions of SURPS (Table 3). A comparison of the sub-dimensions of the PAS according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the adolescents and the distribution of the mean scores of the SURPS is provided in the attached tables. It was determined that there is no statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of the adolescents and the PAS sub-dimensions, or between the socio-demographic characteristics of the adolescents and the total mean score of the SURPS (see attached Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 3. Distribution of the adolescents' scores in the PAS and SURPS and its sub-scales

PAS Sub-dimensions	Frequents	Percent
Authoritative	176	36.2
Neglectful	109	22.4
Indulgent	101	20.8
Authoritarian	100	20.6
SURPS and its sub-dimensions		
	Min-max	Mean\pmSD
Lack of self-contentment	7-28	20.72 ± 4.52
Impulsivity	5-20	13.80 ± 3.32
Sensation seeking	6-24	14.24 ± 4.34
Anxiety sensitivity	5-20	14.34 ± 3.59
SURPS Total	23-92	57.17 ± 8.98

PAS, Parental Attitude Scale; SURPS, Substance Use Risk Profile Scale; Min, minimum; Max, maximum; SD, Standard Deviation

Table 4. Comparison of the adolescents' scores in the Parental Attitude Scale and in SURPS and its sub-scales (n = 486)

		SURPS Sub-scales									
		Lack of self-contentment		Impulsivity		Sensation seeking		Anxiety sensitivity		Total	
Parental Attitude	n	Min-max	Median (25th-75th percentile)	Min-max	Median (25th-75th percentile)	Min-max	Median (25th-75th percentile)	Min-max	Median (25th-75th percentile)	Min-max	Median (25th-75th percentile)
Neglectful	109	8-28	19(16-22) ¹	6-20	13(11-15) ¹	6-24	14(11-17)	5-20	14(12-17)	41-81	59(54-66) ¹
Authoritarian	107	8-27	19(17- 2.75) ¹	5-20	13(11-15) ¹	6-23	14(10-17)	5-20	15(12.25-17)	39-82	61(55-67) ¹
Indulgent	100	7-28	22(19-25) ²	5-20	14(11-17) ²	6-24	14(11-17.5)	5-20	15(12-18)	41-84	65(58-71.5) ²
Authoritative	176	10-28	23(20-25) ²	5-20	15(11-7.75) ²	6-24	15(11-17.75)	5-20	14.5(11-17)	71-88	65(60-72) ²
Test value (P)		KW:53.624(.001**) 1<2*		KW:23.934(.001**) 1<2*		KW:6.285(.099)		KW:3.846(.279)		KW:34.555(.001**) 1<2*	

*Tukey; **P < .05; SURPS, Substance Use Risk Profile Scale; Min, minimum; Max, maximum; KW, Kruskal Wallis

Comparison of the parental attitudes and SURPS revealed that sensation seeking (KW: 6.285). Anxiety sensitivity (KW: 3.846) were not related to adolescents' perceived parental attitudes ($P > .05$), and the difference between parental attitudes and lack of self-contentment (KW: 53.624), impulsivity, (KW: 23.934) and total score of the scale (KW: 34.555) was statistically significant ($P < .05$). Tukey test was applied to determine the cause of the difference. It was determined that adolescents who perceive their parents as authoritative and indulgent have higher scores in total SURPS and its sub-dimensions, specifically lack of self-contentment and impulsivity, compared to those who perceive their parents as neglectful and authoritarian (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

A description of parenting styles was first made in Baumrind's³⁰ article. In this article, three parenting styles

(authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) are mentioned; inspired by this categorization, Lamborn et al.¹⁸ set forth four additional styles (authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful). It was asserted that the authoritative parenting style is the most appropriate for parents when raising their children, and that children should be able to express and develop themselves within certain limits.³¹ This research identified that adolescents perceive their parents as authoritative at most (36.2%) and as authoritarian at least (20.6%) (answer to question 1). It was found that the adolescents' perceived parental attitudes, as revealed in other studies, are again similar to those indicated in this study. Studies suggest that there has been a shift from authoritarian to authoritative parenting styles over the years. However, according to studies conducted abroad,³² the number of parents with an authoritarian parenting style is still higher in Türkiye. The

reason for this is considered to be related to the role of cultural differences and norms in parenting.³³ In general, there is a patriarchal family structure in Kırıkkale, and authoritarian parenting is still an acceptable parenting style.

Parental attitudes may cause adolescents to get accustomed to several favorable and unfavorable behaviors.^{19,20} Gradual increase in substance use, one of the unfavorable behaviors, constitutes a social problem. In this research, the substance use risk of adolescents was measured through SURPS. High scores in even one of the sub-scales of SURPS reveal that adolescents are at risk regarding substance use.²⁸ It was found in this research that the adolescents scored above the mean in all four sub-dimensions of SURPS (answer to question 2). A study conducted in Slovenia indicated that 25.7% of adolescents, whose mean age is 16, smoke marijuana at least once in their lifetime.¹³ Another study revealed that children aged 9-13 use more substances than they had stated.³⁴ Information obtained from the literature shows that substance use begins at an early age. This situation can be considered similar in terms of risk. This indicates that this issue is a public health problem and that all institutions and organizations dealing with this issue should act with awareness of the dangers of substance use.

Studies revealed that parents' use of substances, parents' attitude towards substance use, and their parenting styles affect substance use.^{8,12-14,16,17,35} Moreover, it was also indicated that dysfunctional family environments increase substance use risk.^{13,21} For example, children of families that use substances use more substances than those who do not. Reasons such as the low socioeconomic status of the family, low level of education, divorce, and family conflicts put adolescents at greater risk for substance use. Parental behavior that facilitates substance use and inconsistent disciplinary practices may be related to adolescent substance use. While authoritarian and oppressive attitudes in the family increase the likelihood of trying cigarettes and alcohol, the opposite is true for substance use.^{36,37} In this research, similar to the literature, results of the comparison of the perceived PAS scores and the SURPS scores displayed that adolescents perceiving their parents as authoritative and indulgent are at higher risk in terms of substance use (answer to question 3). In the research carried out by Lamborn et al.¹⁸ it was pointed out that an indulgent parental attitude enhances the self-respect of children while also increasing the risk of substance use. It supports the idea that one of the factors that helps reduce the risk of substance use is that families should monitor their adolescent children more closely.

Adolescents may need rules and restrictions.³⁸

Limitations of the study: Despite the positive outcomes of this intervention, this study has some limitations. First, the research covers only one province of Türkiye. It is not possible to generalize the results to the whole country. However, this settlement is situated on the main road connecting many provinces, and its residents have migrated from various areas. The second limitation is that the adolescents answered the research questions by themselves in the class under the supervision of the researchers and expressed parental attitudes based on their perceptions. However, parents' opinions about themselves were not identified. Moreover, as the consent of both parents and the students was taken, only more tolerant parents might have approved the participation. Therefore, those having problems with their parents might have been left out. In addition, in research on substance use, hair samples taken from children aged 9-13 revealed that the students use more substances than they had stated.³⁴ It should be taken into account that this research is based on only adolescents' statements. Another limitation might be that this research has only addressed parental attitudes and substance use risk. Considering that the factors affecting substance use, such as adolescents' peers, environment, school life, and psychological structure, are very comprehensive, the research results should be assessed only in the context of adolescents' perceived parental attitudes and substance use risk.

This research indicated that the parental attitudes perceived by the adolescents who are at risk of substance use are a factor increasing that risk among the adolescents. For this reason, it is believed that adolescents should be closely monitored by their families. Families with authoritative and indulgent family attitudes need to be informed by public health nurses. It should be explained to these families that adolescents require closer monitoring. It may be suggested to determine adolescents' perceived parental attitudes and to develop activities for those perceiving their parents as authoritative and indulgent. Moreover, it may also be recommended to inform parents about the adolescents' substance use risk and the contribution of their attitudes to this risk.

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