

# The Effect of the Parent-Child Relationship on Alcohol Dependency



Sam Jewett, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

## Introduction

- Adolescents who had been mistreated during their childhood were almost 3% more likely to report binge drinking than those who had not been neglected and mistreated (Shin et al.,2009).
- According to some data, adults 21 years and up who drink alcohol, often consume in large quantities. This is considered dangerous for a growing mind, and among students who binge drank, 44% consumed 5 or more drinks in a row (CDC 2022).
- Decisions made by young adults stem from their relationship with their parents. Positive parenting practices such as open communication, warmth, and parental involvement in their child's life, has been associated with lower rates of alcohol use and abuse in young adults.
- Binge drinking and alcohol dependence in young adults are some of the leading causes of increased violence, suicide, domestic violence, sexual assault (Binge

Drinking, 2022), and many more problems (CDC 2019).

## Research Questions

- Are positive parenting styles associated with a negative relationship with alcohol as an adult?
- Are adolescents who lack a positive parent-child relationship more vulnerable to alcohol dependence as adults compared to the subjects who have a positive one?

## Methods

### Sample

- Respondents (N=6,503) and 16 variables were obtained from The U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, including two representative surveys. Including males (51.6%) and females (48.4%), 13.17% of the sample reported heavy drinking (five or more drinks in a day) more than three times in the past year

### Measures

- The parent-child relationship was assessed using the U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, ADDHEALTH. The relationship to the subject's mother was measured with questions and these variables are scaled and added to an index together to measure the strength parent-child relationship.
- Heavy drinking dependence was measured by the question, During the past 12 months, on how many days did you drink [5] or more drinks in a row?

## Results

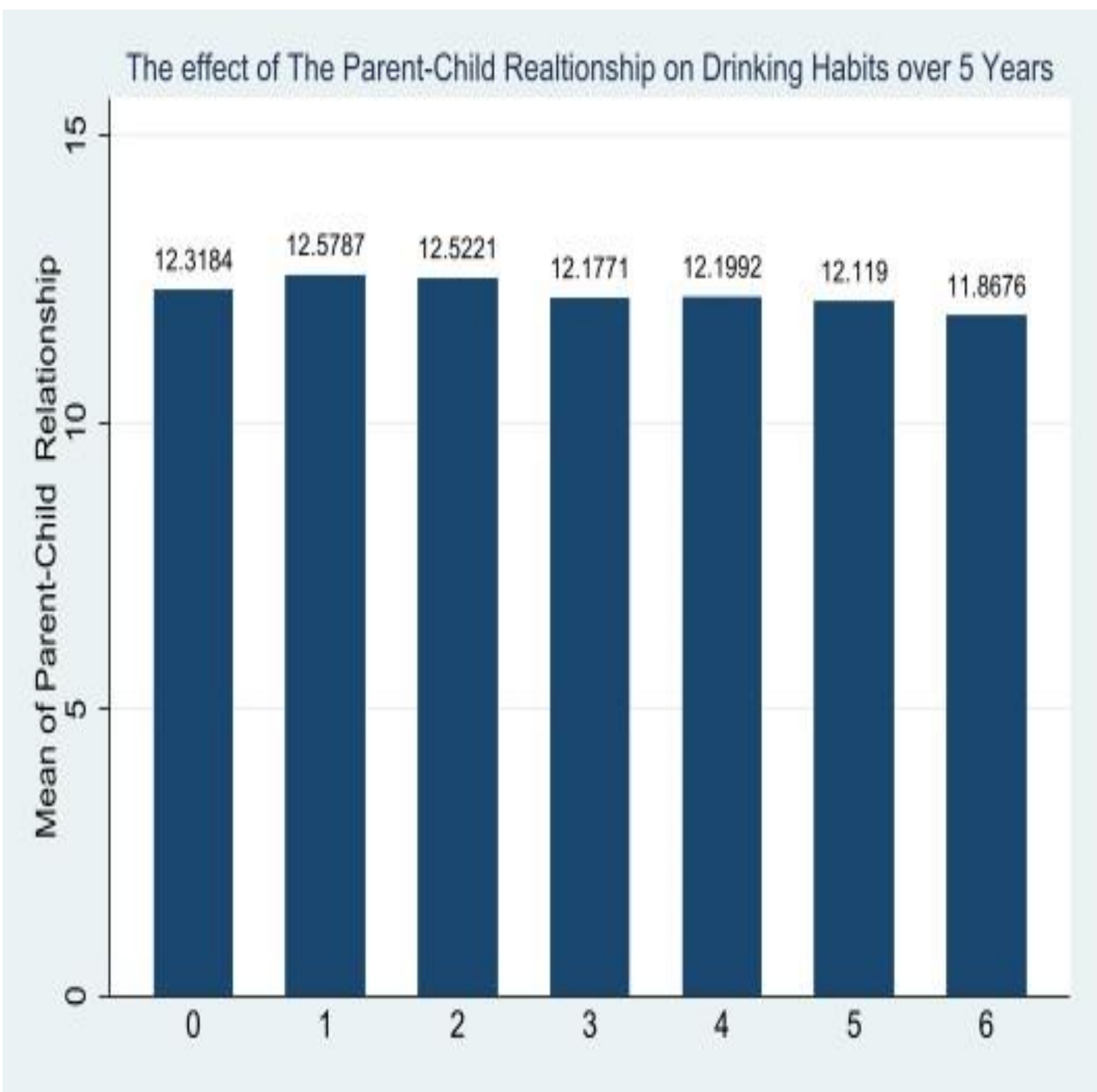
### Univariate

- 21.77% of subjects reported a poor parent-child relationship
- 1.0% of subjects reported a perfect parent-child relationship
- There is a leftward skew in the data.

### Bivariate

- ANOVA analysis showed that there is **not a significant association** between parental relationship and alcohol dependency where all levels had a p-value >.05.

Figure 1. The Effect of the Parent-Child Relationship on Drinking Dependency over 5 years



- The bivariate graph showed the average means across the levels of parental relationship and showed a somewhat constant distribution with a limited amount of variability.(Figure 1)
- Additionally, ANOVA analysis showed that there was not a significant relationship between variables. The respondents drinking habits with a positive parent relationship did not indicate a significant relationship when compared to those who have a negative parent relationship. (p>0.05).

### Multivariate

- Sex does not act as a moderator for the association between binge drinking habits and parent-child relationship(Figure 2).
- After controlling for sex, the plot for females and males did not differ across the levels of binge drinking relative to their parental relationship. Relationship between child-parent and their sex is not significantly associated with binge-drinking (p>.05).

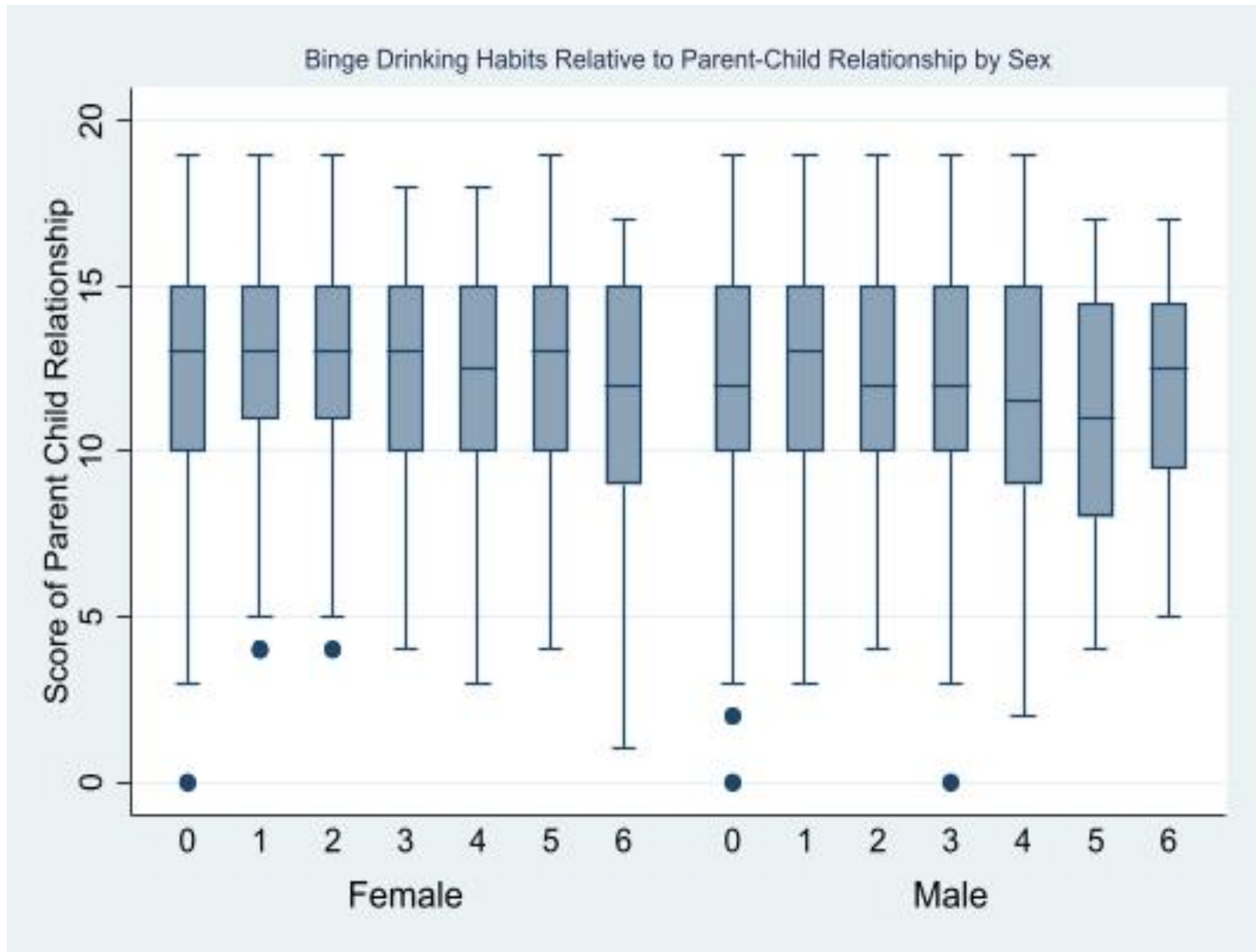


Figure 2. Binge Drinking Habits Relative to Parent-Child Relationship by Sex

## Discussion

- A parent-child relationship may not affect the outcome of binge drinking occurrences in young adults.
- Regardless of sex, individuals who binge drink could have a positive parental relationship.
- Family counselors and child psychiatrists might use this information to address the present parenting style's and increase parents' willingness to use authoritative (positive and corroborative) parenting.
- Further research is needed to determine if a positive and supportive parent-child relationship can act as a crucial protective factor against alcohol dependence in young adults, while a negative or dysfunctional relationship can elevate the risk..