Parents’ and peers’ contribution to risky driving of male teen drivers

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Highlights –

- The study examines parents’ and peers’ contribution to young male drivers’ driving behavior.
- Measurements are based on in-vehicle data recorders and self-report questionnaires.
- Parents’ and especially fathers’ personality is associated with teens’ risky driving.
- Family cohesion and adaptability mitigate parents’ model for risky driving.
- Perceived popularity of risky driving among peers is associated with teens’ risky driving.

Abstract

The current study joins efforts devoted to understanding the associations of parents’ personality, attitude, and behavior, and to evaluating the added contribution of peers to the driving behavior of young drivers during their solo driving. The study combines data gathered using in-vehicle data recorders from actual driving of parents and their male teen driver with data collected from self-report questionnaires completed by the young drivers. The sample consists of 121 families, who participated in the study for 12 months, beginning with the licensure of the teen driver. The current examination concentrates on the last 3 months of this first year of driving. The experimental design was based on a random control assignment into three treatment groups (with different forms of feedback) and a control group (with no feedback). Findings indicate that the parents’ (especially the fathers’) sensation seeking, anxiety, and aggression, as well as their risky driving events rate were positively associated with higher risky driving of the young driver. In addition, parents’ involvement in the intervention, either by feedback or by training, led to lower risky driving events rate of young drivers.
compared to the control group. Finally, higher cohesion and adaptability mitigated parents’ model for risky driving, and peers norms’ of risky driving were associated with higher risk by the teen drivers. We conclude by claiming that there is an unequivocal need to look at a full and complex set of antecedents in parents’ personality, attitudes, and behavior, together with the contribution of peers to the young drivers’ reckless driving, and address the practical implications for road safety.

**Keywords**
Teen drivers; Parental effect; Family relations; Aggression; Anxiety; Sensation seeking

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