

Unhealthy Risk Taking Behaviour in the classroom. How Teachers can deal with it?

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Abstract:

The present study aimed at providing holistic understanding about unhealthy risk taking behaviours and how a teacher can overcome these behaviours in the classroom. The study used explanatory research methodology and the sample of the study consists of 100 participants (20 Assistant professors and 80 secondary and senior secondary school teachers). The sample has been selected by making use of purposive sampling and the data from the participants has been collected by making use of self constructed open ended questionnaire. The study revealed that teachers play an important role in handling the overall classroom environment as well as in controlling the unhealthy risk taking behaviours in the classroom. The study also confirmed use of technologies, supervision and monitoring by teacher, active teaching learning classroom are some of the methods which a teacher can use to deal with the unhealthy risk taking behaviours in the classroom.

Key words: Unhealthy, Risk taking, Behavior, Classroom, drugs, Teacher-student, Peers, Friends.

Introduction:

The effectiveness of classroom interaction between teacher and student is directly related with the overall success of educational institutions (Christie, 2000). A positive teacher-student relationship is very helpful for students' learning and outcomes because it is a significant factor in determining the classroom atmosphere (Davis, 2003) & (Den Brok et al., 2004). Behavior and academic performance of students can be strongly predicted by patterns of student-teacher interaction in the classroom (Fowler et al., 2008). In past, teachers dominated the classroom interactions and were more active as compared to students. Students were only passive listeners and contribute very little to classroom interactions. But with the passage of time and with the advancement in technology this classroom pedagogical trend has changed and now a new approach has emerged in which both teacher and students are equally active (Queiroz-Neto et al., 2015). In modern times, the pedagogical approach used in classroom is student-centric. This student-centric pedagogy has greatly benefited the overall school environment. Classrooms have become more lively and interactive, explosion of knowledge has seen great surge, Students actively engage in the teaching learning process to increase their knowledge and develop their abilities and skills. But with this technological advancement and pedagogical shift many negative aspects has also come to the fore. The teacher-student relationship has greatly deteriorated from the past few decades. Ethical considerations both in terms of pedagogy and teacher-student relationship has also got affected (Jefferies & Stahl, 2005). Apart from this, students have also more frequently engaged in many risk taking behaviours in classroom. Risk taking behaviours can be both healthy and unhealthy. Sports including rock climbing, competitive team sports like basketball or football, visiting new places, and taking calculated risks are all examples of healthy risk taking behaviours. On the other hand, unhealthy risk taking behaviours are the propensity to participate in actions that have the potential to be harmful but also present chances for results that could be perceived as favourable. However, the risk or injury connected with unhealthy risk-taking behaviour overshadows the possibility of a particular favourable result. There has been a great surge in unhealthy risk behaviours from the past few decades. Unhealthy risk taking behavior in general may include smoking, drug abuse, unprotected sex, tobacco chewing etc. (Protogerou et al., 2020), and in classroom it may include tobacco chewing, eve teasing, misconduct, indiscipline etc. Unhealthy risk taking behaviour in the classroom does not affect only those who indulge in these behaviours but it can also seriously affect those in the classroom who abstain from these behaviours. Unhealthy risk taking behaviours can affect many areas of a student's lives like lowering their standard of living, level of academic success, level of physical health, level of cheerfulness with

the college experience, and it can also have a disadvantageous effect on friendships and family ties. These unhealthy behaviours may also influence students' long-term work financial stability and overall health (Eisenberg et al., 2007).

In order to make sure that the students with these unhealthy behaviours do not affect themselves and the overall classroom and to make teaching learning process joyful and healthy, teacher has to play a very crucial role (Martinez et al., 2016). If teachers are equipped with the knowledge of psychology and with the knowledge of how to deal and channelize these behaviours that could potentially help in reducing these behaviours and it could also be very helpful in saving a large number of careers and lives (Castrén et al., 2017). In the present paper the researchers has made a dedicated effort to present before the audience the expert opinion about how to deal with unhealthy risk taking behaviours in the classroom and how to manage such classrooms.

Theoretical framework

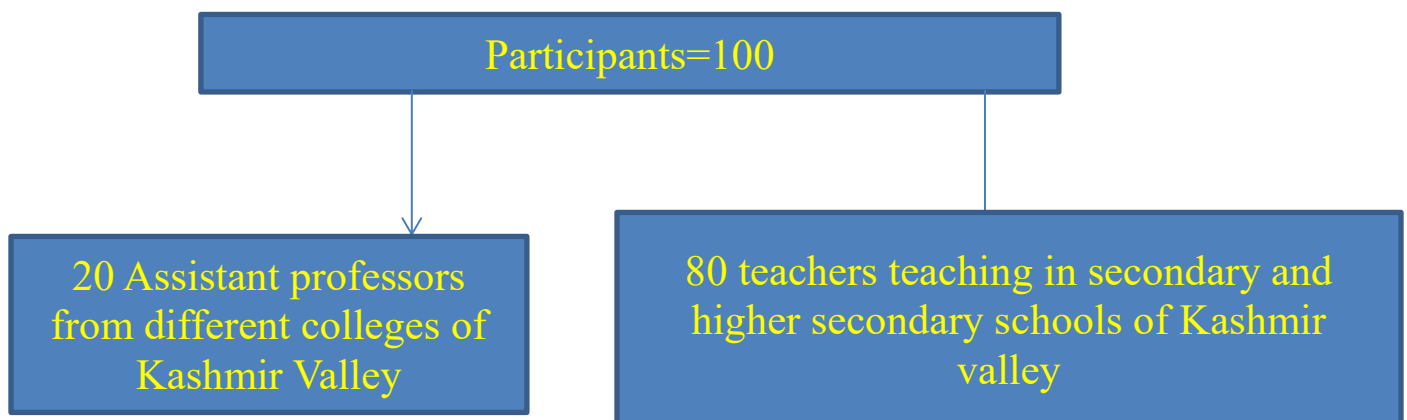
A study was conducted by (Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000) to see the link between religiosity and sexual risk taking behavior. According to the study's findings, reduced condom use and sexual activity were linked to intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Study conducted by (Buck & Frosini, 2012) showed that Smoking, drinking, being sedentary, and eating poorly all significantly co-occur among people. In other words, these behaviours seldom occur independently of one another. Another study conducted by (Kipping et al., 2012) titled “Multiple risk behaviours in adolescence” revealed that any individual who engages in any one risky behaviour is likely to engage in such behaviours again. The study also revealed that men are more likely to involve in such behaviours as compared to women. (Reininger et al., 2012) conducted a study which outlined that a juvenile’s sense of empowerment plays a defensive role for unhealthy risk taking behaviours like tobacco and alcohol use among boys. Another study confirmed that there is a positive correlation between risk taking behaviours and emotional intelligence (Joshi, 2013). A study conducted by (SHAH & KHAN, 2014) revealed that parentally accepted children are low on unhealthy risk taking behavior as compared to parentally rejected children. Furthermore, a study by (Oktan, 2015) indicated a significant and favourable correlation between problematic internet use and risk-taking behaviour. The study also demonstrated a strong correlation between self-harming and risk-taking behaviours and problematic internet use. (Räsänen et al., 2016) study revealed that unhealthy risk taking behaviours are associated with gambling. Another study conducted by (Ansari et al., 2016) outlined that unhealthy risk taking behaviours like higher rates of drifting, fast driving, and inactivity

were strongly related with ages between 18 and 20. (Uzaina & Srivastava, 2016) conducted a study which showed that as compared to male adolescents, the desire for risk-taking behaviour including substance use and sexual activity was lower in female adolescents. (Protogerou et al., 2020) conducted a study titled “How best to reduce unhealthy risk-taking behaviours? The study focused on finding ways and means to reduce unhealthy risk taking behaviours like drug abuse, alcohol, smoking etc. The study revealed that self-regulation is an important factor in maintaining health and reducing unhealthy risk taking behaviours. Furthermore, another study conducted by (Nguyen-Phuoc et al., 2020) on effects of unhealthy lifestyle behaviours on risky riding behaviours. The study revealed that riders who regularly drunk alcohol and smoke were more likely to engage in unhealthy risk taking behaviours while driving. On the basis of the above review of literature the investigators have found that a very limited work has been done on how unhealthy risk taking behaviours affect classroom and how teachers can deal with such behaviours. So in the present study investigators have collected expert opinion and opinion of teachers about how unhealthy risk taking behaviours of students in the classroom can be dealt with?

Methodology and Sampling Procedure:

The study is explanatory in nature. The study has been delimited to Kashmir valley only. The sample of the present study has been selected by making use of purposive sampling. The sample consists of 100 participants (N=100) which includes 20 assistant professors from different colleges of Kashmir Valley. The rest 80 participants are the teachers teaching in different secondary and higher secondary institutions of Kashmir valley. The data from the participants has been collected through a self-constructed open ended questionnaire. The breakup of the sample for the study is shown in fig. 1.1.

Fig. 1.1 Shows breakup of participants for the research study



Objectives of the study:

1. To gather opinion of participants about unhealthy risk taking behaviours in classroom.
2. To generate themes on how to deal with unhealthy risk taking behaviours in classroom.

Themes generated from the response of participants:

The participants of the study provided their opinions regarding unhealthy risk taking behaviours and how such behaviours can be dealt with. From the response of the participants the following themes have been generated.

Theme 1- Interaction with students:

A large proportion of the participants have expressed that in order to save students from the disadvantages and negative effects of unhealthy risk taking behaviours teachers need to be aware of unhealthy risk-taking behaviours in order to respond sensitively, keep students safe and help them to grow and utilize their potentials to the optimum level. The one of the ways to do it is to have interactive sessions with them. Discussion between teachers and students about the healthy and unhealthy risk taking behaviours, its effect on them and the people around them need to be highlighted through discussion sessions (this statement is in tune with the research findings done by (Thomas, 2003) and (Davis, 2003)). Students with any unhealthy act in classroom need to be sensitized about the effects of their behaviour on themselves and on other students through discussions and interactions. While discussion use appropriate language expressions such as "risky" and "may happen" might give the impression that anything is possible, which can lead to students acting more rashly. Use terms like "hazardous" or "uncertainty" instead. (Marzano et al., 2003) conducted a study that revealed the importance of appropriate management of classroom by teachers to overcome any unhealthy risk taking behaviour from students.

Theme 2- Active teaching environment:

The participants of the study opinioned that making the classroom teaching and learning active and lively could be a possible way to deal with unhealthy risk taking behaviors in classroom. One of the ways to do this is to make use of latest technologies to deliver content to the students. A study conducted by (Cuban, 1986) approximately highlighted the same thing. One of the participants said:

“Chalk and talk method need to be abolished, lecturing need to be reduced if not eliminated at all. Focus should be on providing content through smart gadgets. Involve your students in the classroom; make sure that everyone in the classroom has something constructive to do for at least 30 minutes each day to assist them in breaking harmful behaviours”

With the help of active teaching and learning environment students will develop confidence and self-possession as they become more at ease discussing their views, defending their conclusions, and building on one other's opinions (Jakobsson, 2006). This will be a great step towards developing healthy risk taking behaviours and reducing unhealthy risk taking among adolescents in classroom.

Theme 3- Adequate supervision and Guidance:

It is well known that a traditional school environment imposes rigid restrictions on students and they often resort to unhealthy risky taking behaviours due to insufficient guidance and supervision. Participants suggested that if proper supervision is provided to students at an early age this could provide a great boost in helping them to reduce their unhealthy risk taking behaviours. Supervision and monitoring should form an integral part of overall educational system in general and especially for those students who manifest symptoms of unhealthy risky behavior. To quote one of the participants of the study he said:

“Supervision and guidance is important. If supervised and guided properly any individual can be helped to achieve their optimum development. With guidance and supervision healthy risk taking behaviours can be enhanced and optimized and students can also be helped to unlearn unhealthy risk taking behaviours through supervision and guidance.”

Theme 4- Improvement in self-efficacy among students:

Many research finding has proved a direct relationship between self-efficacy and risk taking behaviours. A study conducted by (Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2006) revealed that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and risk taking behavior. Many psychological disorders, lowered levels of self-control and lack of self-efficacy contribute towards unhealthy risk taking behaviours among adolescents. Participants of the study opinioned that self-esteem, confidence and what psychologists call self-efficacy plays a very important role in lowering unhealthy risk taking behaviour among adolescents. Therefore, teachers should use techniques like verbal persuasion, motivation, emotional support and other such

techniques to enhance self-efficacy and self-esteem among students. Once self-efficacy and self-esteem is developed among students this will greatly help in reducing unhealthy risk taking behaviour among students and will help in developing their maximum capacity.

Theme 5- Other measures:

Several other participants of the study provided diverse opinions about unhealthy risk taking behaviours and how a teacher can curb them in the classroom. Participants said Teachers can establish appropriate boundaries and keep an eye on students to control unhealthily risk-taking behaviours in the classroom. Teachers can establish rules such as no mobile phone use during class (a research conducted by (Levine, 2013) revealed that use of cellphones in the classroom has a direct relationship with unhealthy risk taking behaviour of students), no unwanted peer talks, and respect for the silent zone. Teachers can display their concern in a variety of ways, such as by asking students whether they are aware about their unhealthy behaviours. Teachers must continuously be alert and keep reminding themselves that there is a chance that kids can act aggressively when they are upset or bored, so that they are always ready to tackle such behaviours.

Conclusion:

Classroom atmosphere determines the overall success of an educational institution (Kadum et al., n.d.). Unhealthy atmosphere in the classroom can create a number of issues not only for students but for teachers as well. Unhealthy Risk-taking behaviour can be a serious issue for students' teachers, and managers in the classroom. In fact, it's one of the main causes of below par academic performance, poor attendance, and other psychological issues of the students in the classroom. The present study provides a holistic understanding of the unhealthy risk taking behaviours and how a teacher can overcome these behaviours in the classroom. The study revealed that classroom environment plays a significant role in determining the overall success of a student. The present study confirmed that unhealthy risk taking behaviours could become a major hindrance in the overall academic achievement of a student. The study confirmed that classroom teacher has a very important role in controlling the unhealthy risk taking behaviour among adolescents. A teacher can use a variety of techniques to help students to overcome the unhealthy risk taking behavior like having interactive sessions with students about unhealthy risk taking behaviour, use of technologies to enhance maximum development of students, proper supervision and

guidance, improvement in self-efficacy and self-esteem among students and formation of certain rules to curb unhealthy risk taking behaviours among adolescents.

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