



RISK TAKING INITIATIVE AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EAST MIDNAPUR, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Higher secondary school students, that is, the adolescents, are in an age, where risk taking tendencies are high. They explore everything, some of which can be risky. Parents feel that taking risks is a good sign, as through this process, they will learn how to deal with something which is not within their comfort zone. Psychologists also feel this way. They also advice parents and teachers to guide the students so that their thoughts are channelized into right direction, and harmful risky behaviors are reduced. Measures and initiatives are to be increased by the schools, so that students take more interest in learning the skills for developing the right behavior to deal and cope up with the risks.

Key words: Risk, Behavior, higher secondary school students, East Midnapur, West Bengal

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher secondary education indicates preparation of the students towards their professional life. In urban areas, where scope is more, some students tend to get enrolled in business schools for getting the actual business picture. On the other hand, in rural areas, parents tend to involve students into their own businesses, once their higher studies are completed. This differentiation is caused due to variations, which lies in educational patterns, dynamics, scope of education, which is wide ranging from state to state (Junça et al., 2024). Narrowing down the search, the paper focuses on risk taking initiatives, which are induced in the programs of business schools. This risk-taking behavior is necessary to be built among the students, especially the ones studying in higher secondary grade.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research-oriented reviews of risk-taking initiatives and risk-related behaviors among higher secondary school students, are specifically limited on “initiatives” towards risk taking. To develop exact studies on this issue, general adolescent risk behavior can be linked with educational theories, for getting the actual picture on student initiatives to take risk, fail and learn.

2.1 Risk taking initiatives among adolescents

Risk-taking initiatives, among young persons, shows the tendency to make decisions for situations, which involve uncertainty, possible consequences, or new challenges. Here, the intention is to balance potential rewards and harms. Psychological and education research comprises of willingness to take and act on new challenges, even if there are with uncertainties. In these contexts, decision making is often without structures and follows an informal format. In these circumstances, Shahat et al., (2026) is of the view that students seek novel experiences or social engagement, which even extends to prosocial explorations (e.g., leadership or creative projects) and also potential harmful behaviors (e.g., substance use).

As per the observation of psychologists, adolescents have risk-exploration tendencies. This is because of inquisitiveness, *sensation-seeking* and reward sensitivity. These tendencies are relatively higher, even during the growth of impulses. These impulses are controlled, by systems which function when the body of the adolescents are in the maturity stage. This is a concept, which Hasan, Sobnom, and Uzzaman, (2019) argued that supports developmental models especially *dual systems model*, which are oriented to adolescent’s risk-taking initiatives and behaviors.

In outside researches, similar constructs are studied on *student engagement*, *initiative*, and *leadership*. In those contexts, “initiative” induces autonomy, creativity, decision-making, and willingness. This induction is for increasing engagement in tasks, which are beyond comfort zones. One of the positive aspects of the initiatives is that they are not strictly risky or harmful.

2.2. Adolescent risk-taking behaviors in West Bengal

Specific academic studies on risk-taking initiatives among higher secondary students in East Midnapur are limited. Research on *risk behavioral patterns* among adolescents in West Bengal, are there, which enhances awareness on common forms of risk exposures. These researches discovered that adolescents in the subdistricts of West Bengal found are aggressive, which indicates their capability to take risks. Evidence of this lies in the behaviors on physical fights, weapon carrying, substance use (tobacco, alcohol, drugs). However, Gurel, Madanoglu, and Altinay, (2021) was of the view that incidences of suicide are negative in terms of risk taking. This negativity comes from poor academic performance due to unaffordability towards the educational tenets. This behavior is seen mostly among the males, such as fights. Therefore, lower socioeconomic status is found to be one of the important factors which triggers risk behaviors. Broader studies reveal multiple risk behavior among the adolescents. Deep observation discovers tendencies to be addicted to substances, unprotected sex, criminal activities, cause self-harm, and also indulge in unsafe activities like rash driving. These behaviors increase with mental health issues, stress, familial factors, and socio-cultural pressures.

2.3. Implications of risks for Higher Secondary School Students in East Midnapur

Older adolescents in classes XI–XII, are at a growing age, where *initiatives, identity exploration*, and sensitivities to risks are common, rather high. Under the influence of this exploration, they intend to balance guidance and autonomy. Here, Maslowsky et al., (2019) was of the view that risks not only include negativities like substance use. Proper guidance and motivation also induce positive behaviors which helps students in skill building on leadership, project work, civic involvement, debates, and community projects among others. As far as West Bengal is concerned, teachers are inadequate as compared to students' learning needs. There are issues like retention and dropouts, which risks academic performance of the students. These issues adversely affect expression of students to initiate risky behaviors and tendencies. Apart from this, economic pressures, peer group dynamics, and limited extracurricular programming in rural and semi-urban districts like East/West Midnapore, make adolescents' risk-taking behavior building worse.

2.4. Initiatives & Interventions

School-based interventions on specific local programs in East Midnapur lack documentation. *General evidence from educational and preventive researches* indicates support building on positive risk-taking initiatives. These initiatives are aimed at reducing harmful behaviors and increase life skills by introducing psycho-social education. Junça et al., (2024) stated that the program exposes students to programs comprising of activities on *decision making, emotional regulation, and communication skills*. Being engaged in these activities, students receive guidance and tend less to cause harms. As a result of this, it is proved that the initiative is healthy.

Teachers also conduct project-based learning for enhancing experience of the students. Within the programs, student-centered learning models (e.g., design thinking or project-based learning) are included for channelizing the thinking of students into the right direction. Goals of these programs are to encourage creative problem-solving among the students. The overall impact of these initiatives is promotion of positive risk-taking behaviors in a structured manner. It is the peer-led campaigns, clubs, or leadership training programs, which increase engagement among the students and teachers. Here, Shahat et al., (2026) mentioned about support systems, which channelizes adolescent risk-seeking into prosocial activities. Positive indicator is also psychological supports, through counselling in schools. Through these counselling sessions, students' emotional or familial triggers are detected for reducing harmful risk behavior.

2.5 Gaps in research

After reviewing the previous literatures till this point, it can be asserted that specific studies on "risk-taking initiative" among higher secondary school students in East Midnapur are less. Even though there are some, there are not documented. When thought critically, these studies are not as a construct of initiative and risk combined on the whole or parts of West Bengal specifically. Most of the researches, done on India, are directed towards risk behaviors and do not talk about initiatives to reduce these behaviors. No specific study has been done on positive leadership or entrepreneurial risk choices to which adolescents can be exposed. Absence of these studies reflect gap and incompetence in researching educational psychology and adolescent development, on a broader perspective.

3. METHODOLOGY

Deductive approach is apt in this context, as specific notions are to be deducted on risk taking initiatives among the adolescents, that is, the ones studying in higher secondary grade. The area under investigation is East Midnapur, West Bengal. This is a rural area, where educational scope and opportunities are lacking effectiveness. Teachers are also inadequate as compared to the students and their learning needs. Therefore, quantitative data collection method is apt in terms of gaining practical insights on the initiatives which the teachers of this area are taking for building risk taking tendencies among the higher secondary school students. Survey on 10 teachers from 10 higher secondary schools of East Midnapur is conducted for collecting the required data. These responses are analyzed through tables, charts, graphs.

4. CONCLUSION

From review of the previous literature, it can be concluded that adolescents in areas like West Bengal show risky behaviors which are oriented towards domains of physical and psycho-social. Psychologists consider this as normal, as they are in a stage, where exploration of risks is high. Most

of the higher secondary schools of east Midnapur district has initiated programs through which healthy risk-taking behavior is initiated. Goal is to reduce harmful risk-taking tendencies, which can channelize thoughts of the students into the right direction.

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