COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Attitude and Perceived Social Norms Towards Risk-taking Behaviors among Male University Students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes and perceived social norms regarding risk behaviours as well as to ascertain how social context influences their likelihood to adhere to perceived social norms. The study adopted a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological design. The study applied purposive and snowballing sampling methods, and in-depth interviews were conducted among six participants. Findings indicated that students' attitudes towards risk-taking behaviours were mainly positive due to the perception that they knew their limits and were able to restrain their use for social and recreational purposes. Those with negative attitudes had negative experiences due to obsessive engagement in the behaviour. This study suggests the importance of having an open discussion surrounding risk-taking behaviours and the need to educate university students and understand the thought process regarding their attitudes towards risk-taking behaviours.

Keywords: attitude, social norms, alcohol, drug use, risk-taking behaviour

1   INTRODUCTION

It has been well known that university students have a high incidence of health-related risk issues due to their risky lifestyle habits (Auerbach et al., 2018). Impulsivity and risk-taking are characteristic traits of young adults across cultures (Duell et al., 2016), leading them to be involved in risky behaviours (Ekpenyong & Aakpege, 2014). Such involvement makes them more prone to adverse consequences such as health issues, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Moreover, the university environment allows students to be subjected to drug and alcohol use due to the unique social environment of rapid social and cultural transition (Johnston et al., 2015). The transition from high school to university is a high-risk stage in which risk-taking behaviour begins and escalates (Skidmore et al., 2016). In this transition process, students are faced with new schedules, tasks, education, and financial responsibilities, and their social networks are likely to undergo a profound change as they socialise throughout their university life (Arnett, 2000). As university students are free from the restraints of their parental guardians, they consequently face health and social issues due to risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol usage, drug usage, and risky sexual behaviours. Such behaviours have important implications for their safety, academic achievement, and future employment (Deliens et al., 2013).

With the start of the new period of early adulthood life, university students experience physical, psychological, and sexual maturation, as well as the beginning of sexual experimentation (Awang et al., 2014). Risky sexual behaviours such as having sexual intercourse with multiple partners occur due to a lack of practical knowledge and clear perception of the risks associated with such behaviour (Moradmand-Badie, 2020). Sexual education in schools was a contentious topic that sparked disputes about whether it is the responsibility of the schools or their families to educate their children about STDs. Students who reported solely obtaining their knowledge on STDs from their high school were much less educated on STDs, leading to an increase in sexually transmitted infections amongst university students due to their misconceptions about sexual issues (Doster, 2018; Soleymani et al., 2015). Furthermore, due to the influence of the media, such as social media and the entertainment industry, premarital sex has become a common phenomenon that degrades traditional values (Mehrabi et al., 2016). Such a phenomenon results in unwanted pregnancy, which leads to baby dumping, whereby the infants are deceased 64% of the time (Tang, 2019). Undesirable pregnancy results from unprotected sex, low self-esteem and emotional intelligence, and contraceptive failure due to the misconceptions they had heard from the mass media, such as radio and television (Ayalew Tegegne, 2020). Moreover, alcoholism, ignorance of pregnancy risk, and attitudes are the most significant factors leading to unintended pregnancies among students (Erena & Kerbo, 2015). Since risky sexual behaviours are inextricably interwoven with heavy alcohol consumption (binge drinking) and drug use, university students' frequent drug and alcohol abuse trigger frequent unsafe sex (Griffin et al., 2010; Peltzer et al., 2013; Sikkema et al., 2011).

Malaysia being the tenth largest consumer of alcohol, has a drawback for society as there has been an increase in alcohol-related injuries among young adults up to 25 (WHO, 2011). Binge drinking has been linked to increased dissolute and destructive behaviour among students, such as skipping classes, participating in unprotected sex, and being involved in accidents (Connor et al., 2010). Additionally, drunk driving cases have been reported to affect individuals, ranging from injuries to fatal cases (Mesyuarat media, 2018). Subsequently, binge drinking among students causes

societal problems, such as nuisance to neighbours and fellow students around them (Erevik et al., 2017). Aside from that, exposure to alcohol potentially results in depression and anxiety, leading to disrupted emotions and academic performance, affecting their psychosocial development (Sommers & Sundararaman, 2007; Hoyland et al., 2016). Moreover, alcohol has also affected students as it is associated with decreased academic achievement (Myrtveit et al., 2016), deprived coping skills (Bharati, 2017), and condensed social skills (Estevez, 2019).

Drug use is another typical risk-taking behaviour among university students, in addition to excessive alcohol use. (Holloway et al., 2014; Tavolacci et al., 2013). Peer pressure, education, job stress, and curiosity are the most common reasons for drug abuse (Rezahosseini et al., 2014). Students also use substances as a coping mechanism to manage their mental health problems (Hudson et al., 2018). Amphetamines such as methylphenidate are commonly used by students and are referred to as "study drugs" (Vrecko, 2013). These drugs are widely used to improve attention and awareness (Abelman, 2017). Over the last decade, young people have gradually shifted from recreational drug use to hard drugs (National Antidrug Agency, 2013). Drug misuse has been documented to have a severe impact on university students' physical and mental health and social, academic, and legal implications. (Das et al., 2016). One of the seemingly intractable issues on the verge of being addressed in Malaysia is substance use. Nonetheless, the current prevention and intervention programs are not evidence-based, which explains why they have not been successful (Mohd Muzafar Shah Mohd Razali, 2007).

University students presented unhealthy lifestyles as they built new social relationships in a different setting when attending a university (Tesfaye et al., 2014). Despite possessing typical levels of knowledge of the consequences of alcohol and drugs use, most of the students had failed to put the preventative strategies into practice (Folasayo et al., 2017; Samkange-Zeeb et al., 2013). Social norms often implicitly play a role, and individual perceptions of normative behaviour guide behaviour patterns and intentions. Still, they can be based on direct and explicit communication between group members they interact with (Hogg and Reid, 2006). As such, the misconception of drinking norms can be due to pluralistic ignorance (moderate drinkers mistakenly believe that their peers drink more alcohol than they actually drink) and false uniqueness (the abstainer will mistakenly think that abstinence is unique from the actual situation) (Berkowitz, 2004).

Students can evaluate their drinking environment in terms of quantity and the consequences they experience, and how these consequences are consistent with what they believe the norms to be (Lee et al., 2010). It should be noted that the perception of peer alcohol use is a better predictor of drinking than peers' actual use (Bauman & Fisher, 1986; Deutsch, Chernyavskiy, Steinley, & Slutske, 2015; Kenney, Ott, Meisel, & Barnett, 2017). Similarly, significant and positive association between the level of perceived approval and their engagement with risk-taking behaviours (Neighbors et al., 2011). On the other hand, drugs that are considered more dangerous (such as heroin) are used less frequently than those considered less dangerous (such as marijuana) (Marici ˇ cˇ, 2013). The perceived risk associated with cannabis use distinguishes between college students who use cannabis and college students who do not use cannabis (Kilmer et al., 2007; Lopez Quintero et al., 2011). Gender differences also play a significant role as women perceived risk-taking behaviours much riskier than men (Marici ˇ cˇ, 2013; Petronella-Croisant et al., 2013), although both sexes had a similar level of risk perception for cocaine and heroin use (Petronella-

Croisant et al., 2013). Therefore, it is observed that females engage much less in risk-taking behaviour than their male counterparts (Heradstveit et al., 2020).

Based on the literature reviewed, despite numerous studies targeting Malaysian adolescents on risk-taking behaviours, insufficient academic attention has been paid to young adult university students, although they are also subjected to those behaviours. To address the research gap mentioned above, the goal of this study is to determine university students' views about risk-taking behaviours as well as the perceived social norms around risk-taking behaviours among university students. As such, the findings of this research can raise awareness of the profound consequences of risk-taking behaviours and improve current policies and introduce new curriculums in higher education institutions in Malaysia. Furthermore, due to a scarcity of research on environmental influences, this research is relevant in terms of theoretical contribution with academic backing of the theory of planned behaviour, which aids in the contribution to the body of knowledge (Rhodes, 2009).

2   METHODOLOGY

This study interviewed six male Malaysian university students aged 18 to 25 from Kuala Lumpur who had a history of risky behaviour. A qualitative study with a phenomenological methodology was done to understand participants' attitudes further and perceived social norms of risk-taking behaviour. Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to acquire people with difficult-to-recruit target characteristics (Ghaljaie, Naderifar & Goli, 2017).

The interview questions were devised and produced based on the study questions and the notion of planned and reasoned behaviour. Before the pilot test, subject matter experts validated interview questions. The RT-18 questionnaire (Verster et al., 2009) and the Arnett Inventory of Sensation Seeking (1994) were used to adapt and amend questions s to determine university students' attitudes about risk-taking behaviours. To determine the perceived social norms associated with risk-taking behaviours among university students, researchers used the Social Context of Drinking Scale - College Version (Beck et al., 2008) and open-ended questions designed to study the social context of substance use (Criss et al., 2016). There were three portions to the interview questions: information on the participants' demographics, and the attitudes of university students about risk-taking

Individual participants were interviewed in a semi-structured in-depth interview that lasted about 30 to 60 minutes. The participants were given the interview dates and times based on their availability and convenience. The interview took place over the internet via password-protected Zoom meetings, ensuring privacy. In addition, for individuals who wished to meet in person, a face-to-face interview was held. The interview session was recorded with the permission and approval of the participants to increase the validity of the data collection process. The interviewer also took notes when a participant refused to be recorded throughout the interview. After the interview with all the participants, the data analysis process took place afterwards, in which the themes and codes were identified.

The collected data were analysed through thematic analysis, which was applied using the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify critical patterns in the transcript data through manual coding. This process involves. The phases of the framework are provided in Table 1. This analysis was chosen because of its inductive process. It does not rely on existing frameworks to interpret the data, which allows the creation of new knowledge suitable for this emerging and under-researched field (Willig, 2013).

Table 1. Six-phase thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase		**Description of process**
1.	Familiarising oneself with data	Transcribing data, reading, and rereading data, noting down the initial idea
2.	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the dataset, collating data relevant to each code
3.	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4.	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset; generate a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5.	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, generation of clear names for each theme
6.	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis, selecting appropriate examples; discussing the analysis; relating to the research question, producing a report of analysis

The two key themes are attitudes toward risk-taking behaviours (containing what people think and how they interact with risk-taking behaviours) and perceived social norms, according to the general inductive technique (how they think others view risk-taking behaviours). The example in Table 2 shows a snapshot of an analysis to show how the theme is developed.

Table 2. Illustrative analysis example, indicating the pathway from the initial quote to the theme.

Transcribed quotes	Codes	Sub-themes	Theme
"I'm not like a huge drinker, but I do it socially. I'm a social drinker." (Participant 3)	Drinks to socialise	Alcohol as a social tool	Attitudes towards risk-taking behaviours

"Like my old friends…they engage in this risk-taking behaviours. So like, they sort of pull away from you…less shared common activities." (Participant 5)	Isolated from not engaging in risk-taking behaviour	Drug usage as a social activity	
"Helps with my insomnia…weed helps me to get a good rest…" (Participant 6)	Using weed to treat insomnia	Drug usage as a coping mechanism	
"But I have a feeling that if they knew I would be a lot of trouble. Yeah, my family's very traditional." (Participant 5)	The belief of parents disapproving of risk-taking behaviours	Views among parents	Perceived social norms
"I hide from my close friends about drugs…. I'm afraid of judgement and what they will think of me." (Participant 6)	The belief of close friends disapproving of risk-taking behaviours	Roles among peers	

3 RESULTS

Based on the thematic analysis, the study results were divided into two main themes: attitudes towards risk-taking and perceived social norms. Attitudes towards risk-taking are divided into six subthemes (Alcohol as a social tool, Drug usage as a social activity, Drug usage as a coping mechanism, Drug usage as a recreational activity, Risky sexual behaviour as an enhancer, Drug usage as an obsession), which answer the first research question of this study (What is the attitude of university students towards risk-taking behaviour?). Perceived social norms are divided into three subthemes (Views among parents, Roles among peers, Influences among media) which answers the second research question (What are the social norms regarding risk-taking behaviours among university students?).

3.1 Attitudes of university students towards risk-taking behaviours

There was a significant variation in university students' attitudes about risk-taking behaviours. Positive and opposing points of view could be distinguished between the two. (a) Alcohol as a social tool, (b) Drug usage as a social activity, (c) Drug usage as a coping strategy, (d) Drug usage as a leisure activity, and (e) Risky sexual behaviour as an enhancer are the sub-themes covered in the positive viewpoints. The conflicting viewpoints have a common theme: (a) drug use as an obsession.

Alcohol as a social tool. The predominant view of alcohol within the sample was viewed as a critical role in socialising with peers. Although most participants reported not particularly enjoying alcohol, it was still considered the cornerstone of a university student's social life.

> *"Alcohol I very rarely drink seldom. I would say I'm more of a social drinker." (Participant 1)*

Even though participants admitted to not enjoying alcohol because of the taste, they do, however, enjoy the effect of being more open and confident in themselves after they consume it, as they found alcohol to be a boost their social skills.

> *"…being intoxicated with your friends rather than being sober. Because you tend to be more relaxed, and you tend to be more… outspoken, in a way…" (Participant 4)*

Drug usage as a social activity. The participants had noted that they indulge in drug usage only within a specific group of people as a way for them to socialise due to shared common activity.

> *"Depending on the friends. Yeah, so drinking friends, drugs friends as well as for sex I think friends as well… there's friends for everything so..." (Participant 3)*

Peculiarly, the group of people were not necessarily their close friends, as some participants reported not having any relationships with them outside this activity.

> *"I have a specific group of friends that I do weed with who are not my close friend." (Participant 6)*

Drug usage as a recreational activity. Most of the participants had reported taking drugs as a recreational activity for their enjoyment during their leisure time. Boredom is the most common reason they turn to drugs for recreational purposes.

> *"If I have goals, other activities other healthier activities like exercise then I would indulge in risks seeking activities less." (Participant 3)*

Moreover, most of the participants also revealed to take precautionary measures whenever they decided to indulge in drug usage. Such measures include doing intensive research on the side effects of the drugs they decided to take and ensuring that it does not affect the responsibilities they need to fulfil.

> *"Make sure that all work needed to be done is already done before…" (Participant 2)*

> *"I did research on it for a whole year about the like, the addiction if there's any addiction or defects. I asked a lot of people and I until now I still see it's pretty much harmless." (Participant 1)*

Drug usage as a coping mechanism. Furthermore, all participants disclosed that they would also use drugs to cope with life's negative emotions. Such negative situations range from daily stress and insomnia to escaping from reality and depression.

> *"I sort of got like depressed so like, it became like an escape kind of thing. it wasn't recreation anymore." (Participant 5)*

> *"Helps with my insomnia…weed helps me to get a good rest…" (Participant 6)*

Risky sexual behaviour as an enhancer. Participants had relayed risky-sexual behaviours to amplify their experience. It is the only reason they would indulge in such behaviours as they had also added that it was not particularly something they needed but mainly for the feeling of thrill.

> *"Ideally it is just for the thrill, for fun. For weed for now, like twice a week. But I just smoked mainly whenever I **fuck**. Because just makes it better. But I don't need it." (Participant 3)*

Drug use as an obsession. Participants who reported indulging in hard drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines developed an unhealthy addiction and side effects compared to those who engage in soft drugs such as marijuana. Most participants do their research before indulging in such drugs, so they stay clear from them due to the side effects.

> *"Two years ago…really bad, withdrawal effects on basically drugs…but when it becomes very unbearable, you sort of have the urge to take that drug again. But if you take that drug, then the cycle repeats. So what I do is I would drink myself to sleep." (Participant 5)*

3.2   Perceived social norms of risk-taking behaviours among university students

There was a difference in the social norm towards risk-taking behaviours among university students. The norms include both positive and negative norms for distinct groups of people. From the result of the analysis, the sub-themes are (a) Views among parents, (b) Roles among peers, and (c) Influences among media.

Views among parents. The differences could be identified in the interviews reported by participants in how their parents approach the topic. Some parents are more open and offer advice. Unsurprisingly, parents were reported to have an overall negative view of their children engaging in risk-taking behaviours.

> *"They just want me to make sure that I did not bring shame to the family and would advise in a friendly manner rather than being aggressive about it." (Participant 2)*

While some parents appeared to educate their children on the negative effect of risk-taking behaviours, some were entirely against it without further explaining and educating their children due to their traditional views.

> *"But I have a feeling that if they knew I would be a lot of trouble. Yeah, my family's very traditional." (Participant 5)*

Roles among peers. The perceived social norms among their peers are both positive and negative. Those with positive perceptions are mainly open-minded about it as participants reported their peers to also indulge in risk-taking behaviours regularly with them. Some participants had revealed that their social circles respected their decisions if they refused to indulge in certain risky behaviours.

> *"They're quite nice people, they understand that each of us has a preference. There were occasions when this occurred when I was in the room someone was like, I don't feel like smoking today, stuff like that, we very humbly accepted it and obliged we respect them." (Participant 1)*

However, participants also reported two distinct types of people who indulge in risk-taking behaviours—one who uses it sparingly for recreational purposes and others who did not know their limits.

> *"...the ones who do it recreationally like we do psychedelics… to just experience that specific drug. We actually want to get something out of it. But when comes to drugs such as ecstasy or cocaine kind of **shit**, the people who sort of take it to escape from certain things right? They don't really have limits, so they just keep taking." (Participant 4)*

On the negative side, some peers were reported to be more closed-minded due to their traditional beliefs. There is also a negative side to peers who indulge in risk-taking behaviours. Some participants had reported losing friends if they refused to indulge in risk-taking behaviours with their peers.

> *"I hide from my close friends about drugs…. I'm afraid of judgement and what they will think of me." (Participant 6)*

> *"...like my old friends, they still do it like, they engage in this risk-taking behaviours. So, like, they sort of pull away from you, I guess? Common activities. Yeah. So, it is highly unlikely that they will call you out to, like, do stuff like this, because I'm already sober…they would try to convince me." (Participant 5)*

Participants also reported that their drug usage for socialising had diminished in their subsequent academic years due to having experience with drug usage and the growing commitments they faced as they got older. Although there was a decrease in the usage of drugs as a social activity, participants indicated that they still indulge in drug usage when they are alone. Most commonly, marijuana.

> *"I'm kind of more selective when I pick people to hang out with because I realised that your social circle is going to influence your thinking and what you do." (Participant 3)*

Influences among media. The perceived social norms of drug usage are common in pop culture, hip hop culture, and social media, prompting the viewers to explore it. The glorified image of drug usage in media was one of the reasons for drug usage among university students.

> *"...see if drugs are as glorified as the media made it, you know? It's like pop culture and social media and you know, you just want to see if it matches that. To see if it matches the kind of expectation you have." (Participant 3)*

The attitudes of Malaysian university students vary. All the participants had agreed that alcohol was consumed as a means of social interactions with other people. Risk-taking behaviours were viewed to be positive except for addiction to drugs. Furthermore, the perceived social norms of risk-taking behaviours were viewed positively and negatively by parents, peers, and the media. It was also discovered that both the parents and media played a vital role in determining the students' attitudes towards risk-taking behaviours.

4   DISCUSSION

In this study, alcohol and drug usage were viewed as a social lubricant and to be the most students' centre of social life whether they enjoy it, as the participants adapt their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours accordingly to their social context, which is consistent with findings of other studies conducted on university student (Staff et al., 2014; Willis et al., 2019). The participants reported gaining a sense of belonging when they drink with their friends as they become more open toward each other. This is also consistent with a study done by Davoren and his colleagues (2016). Although other researchers indicated that popular media and social networking sites contribute to the usage of alcohol among university students due to their deceptive glorification of the usage (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2015; Lyons et al., 2015), the findings of this current study contradict with those researchers as participants reported to only drink to socialise. However, the present research provides preliminary support for the view that media and social networking sites play a role in the contribution of drug usage among university's students.

Participants noted that drugs were common among specific groups, which is in line with past researchers (Moyle & Coomber, 2019; Willis et al., 2019). In comparison to alcohol usage, the participants in this study implied that the group with whom they indulge and engage in social supply activity in drug usage were not their close friends. In addition, marijuana was the most common choice of drug among the participants, mainly when they were alone, supported to Holloway and his colleagues (2014).

Participants commonly reported marijuana as a recreational activity to instantly be entertained and fill in their boredom without putting much effort, which aligns with what Makanjuol and colleagues (2007) pointed out. Marijuana was also a coping mechanism among university students, especially for negative emotions such as stress and insomnia. Although this study contrast with other researchers as they had reported alcohol to be a common way to cope rather than drug usage (Chen & Feely, 2015; Digdon & Landry, 2013) and marijuana was reported to not aid in improving sleep (Conroy et al., 2016).

While participants are conscious of the health threats they face from risk-taking behaviours, it appears that in some instances, some may lack the experience or expertise to make a genuinely accurate judgement or may lack the capacity to assertively indicate that they do not want to participate in a specific behaviour for fear of being excluded. The current study does, however, offer preliminary confirmation for the view that university students make rational choices based on risk perception, which changes as they get mature since they have more experience (Abdullah et al., 2003; Steinberg, 2017; Evans-Polce et al., 2016). Participants were more independent in determining whether to partake in certain risk behaviours without feeling socially pressured as they got older.

Contrary to O'Brien and colleagues (2011) study, he found that the preference for impulsive, risky behaviours was associated with the preference of their peers. This study discovered that most participants have preferences that are not necessarily the same as their peers. They reported that their peers understand and respect everyone's decisions without pressuring anyone to do something

they feel uncomfortable doing. While some participants reported that their peers did display negative feedback when they refused to indulge in risk-taking behaviour, the participant claimed to stick to what they believe in and refuse to give in to the peer pressure.

Most of the participants had reported their families to be strict and traditional. The findings are not consistent with past studies conducted. They discovered that parents who are more liberal towards drug use increased the likelihood of their children indulging in alcohol and marijuana (Moore et al., 2010; Olsson et al., 2003). The findings are also inconsistent with Calafat and colleagues (2012). They discover that children who perceive their parents as more permissive are more likely to indulge in risk-taking behaviours.

Overall, some of the findings are supported by previous studies, particularly on risk-taking behaviour as a social tool. However, some of the findings are found to contradict studies conducted in the past. Such as the likelihood of adhering to their peer and how the social norms surrounding them, including their parents and peers, play a role in determining their attitudes towards risk-taking behaviour.

5   CONCLUSION

To conclude, university students' risk-taking behaviours vary depending on several distinct aspects of their surroundings. Their education and knowledge of risk-taking behaviours were found to be necessary. Concretely, those who were not educated on the topic were discovered to have a negative experience regarding risk-taking behaviour due to their proneness towards peer pressure. Those who research the behaviours tend to be more cautious with what they indulge in. Despite reducing their risk-taking behaviours when they get older, drug usage was still the most predominant risk-taking behaviour among the students in terms of the frequency of usage as they view marijuana to be harmless. The perceived social norms surrounding them also vary with negative and positive views. Participants whose parents educate on those behaviours were found to take lesser risks than those whose parents did not.

By conducting this research, some limitations had emerged. First, selection bias is possible as the sample was obtained through purposive and snowballing techniques, so it might not represent Malaysia's young adults and students population. Overrepresentation of students who indulge in risk-taking behaviours occurs due to the non-random sampling. Even though the guidelines for sample size vary and are debatable in qualitative research (Marshall et a., 2013), qualitative research typically involves a small group of people for intensive study. It tends to focus on depth rather than breadth (Emmel, 2015). Therefore, a mixed approach is recommended for future research on this topic as qualitative findings could be used to explore the significant quantitative findings. In this way, quantitative data will complement and support the results of the qualitative data, as the sample being used will increase the reliability of the research.

Another significant disadvantage of this study is the participant's lack of cultural and family history. Despite the required demographic information being provided, there is a lack of cultural and family history, which could have influenced the outcome. Based on the finding of the research,

since the sample includes the three races in Malaysia (Malay, Chinese, Indian), it is recommended that a comparative study be carried out in the future to ascertain the similarities and differences between the data according to the race and background of the participants as it is found to be one of the significant roles that contribute towards their attitude towards risk-taking behaviours. The way the participants were brought up and their socioeconomic factors were significant attributes of their thought process on risk-taking behaviours. Past researchers focus on the role of their peers rather than other factors, which leaves a gap in the knowledge of how other factors contribute to university students' risk-taking behaviours.

Overall, several factors influence the mindsets of university students who do not substantially rely on their classmates. This study emphasises the necessity of having an open dialogue about risk-taking behaviours and educating university students about risk-taking behaviours, as well as understanding their thought processes.

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