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The relation between self-confidence and risk-taking among the students

Beyrambibi Bayat, Negar Akbarisomar, Neda Ahmadzadeh Tori, Hamid Salehiniya

Abstract:

INTRODUCTION: Self-confidence means recognizing your abilities, self-interest, and being aware of your feelings. Risk-taking is one of the personality traits that may be affected by confidence. It can be defined as behavior that increases the probability of negative consequences. Considering the importance of students' self-confidence and its relation with risk-taking, the aim of this study is to study the relation between self-confidence and risk-taking among the students of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in 2017.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: This cross-sectional study was done on 363 students of TUMS by stratified sampling. The tool for collecting data is based on a self-confidence questionnaire and a risk-taking questionnaire developed by Moradi *et al.* Data analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

RESULTS: The mean age of participants was 21.86 years and 54.5% of participants were girls and the rest were boys. No significant correlation was observed between risk-taking and self-confidence in students according to the Pearson's coefficient test ($r = 0.05$, $P = 0.29$).

CONCLUSION: The results indicated that there is no relation between self-confidence and risk-taking among students, and students who have higher self-confidence are not exposed to high risks. Therefore, we need more studies in different age groups to validate this exact relationship.

Keywords:

Medical science, risk-taking, self-confidence, students, university

Introduction

Self-confidence means recognition of your abilities, self-interest, and awareness of your feelings. Self-confidence can also be described as feeling goodness as a result of positive emotions. Expressing a good feeling can be along with statements such as agreeing to yourself and the consent of those who are around you, encouragement, and courage.^[1] Self-confidence is in fact the difference between self-perceived (which means an objective image of yourself) and the ideal itself (which means what a valuable person knows), so that the high difference between these two leads to lower self-esteem and a small difference between these two indicates a high self-esteem.^[2]

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Self-confidence is one of the most important factors in mental health. Since it forms one of the essential characteristics of a person's personality, it will also affect other personality dimensions of individuals.^[3] In addition, self-confidence is also defined as an attitude that makes one rely on his/her abilities and have a positive view of himself/herself.^[4] The self-esteem of each individual influences his/her quality of life a lot.^[5] Researches have shown that those who have lower self-esteem are more likely to be affected by the community with higher self-esteem.^[6] Studies showed that the level of self-confidence among students is low.^[7,8] Low level of self-confidence in students is associated with increased risk. A risk is defined as behaviors that increase the likelihood of adverse physical,

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Students' Scientific
Research Center, Tehran
University of Medical
Sciences, Tehran, Iran

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Hamid Salehiniya,
Students' Scientific
Research Center, Tehran
University of Medical
Sciences, Tehran, Iran.
E-mail: [alesaleh70@
yahoo.com](mailto:alesaleh70@yahoo.com)

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psychological, and social consequences.^[9-11] Risk-taking means accepting a risk and placing yourself at a risk of injury or damage as is likely to be harmful to the individual.^[9] There is no one in the world who has not been endangered and at least not enjoyed it a bit. Day-to-day life is exposed with daily dangers. If we risk too much in these times, we will face some problems, and if we do not care about these hazards, we will be destroyed silenced. The human's chance to be at risk is more among other creatures. He/she even has the power to enjoy his/her own risk.^[12] The risk is often considered as a positive feature for the young people, which leads to exploration and evolution in them.^[13-15] On the other hand, young age is a sensitive stage for learning high-risk behaviors, which often leads to problems and young people face it.^[16] In fact, the highest levels of risky behaviors, such as alcohol and medication consumption, often occur during adolescence and youth, especially during the period of being a college student.^[17] A study by Chuang *et al.* suggested that those who have high self-esteem are more likely to be at risk and that they are less likely to choose safe and low-risk options.^[18] Self-confidence has always been a necessary need for a person who has become more important in the last decade of this century.^[19] And, on the other hand, Beeble describes risk-taking as "a situation that each person should decide involving choice between alternatives of different desirability; the result is unspecified; as a result, there is a possibility of failure"^[20] Given the importance of these two variables in people's decisions in life, there has been no studies conducted in Iran that considered both genders. This study was performed with the aim of studying the relation between self-confidence and risk-taking among the students of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS).

Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted on undergraduate and postgraduate students of TUMS during the academic year of 2016–2017. The study samples included 363 students who were selected from seven schools (medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, health, paramedical, nursing and midwifery, and rehabilitation) in stratified sampling method. In the first stage, the faculties were considered as classes and the required sample in each school was calculated due to the proportions of each college, and the number of samples were calculated within each school and selected by simple random sampling method. In this study, two questionnaires were used to collect the data: a self-confidence questionnaire and a risk-taking questionnaire with demographic questions. The self-confidence questionnaire comprised 30 questions and the risk-taking questionnaire that also comprised 30 questions in which the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was

determined using the validity and reliability approved by the Moradi *et al.*'s study.^[21]

The tool for collecting data is based on a self-confidence questionnaire and a risk-taking questionnaire developed by Moradi *et al.*^[21] in a study entitled "The relationship between self-confidence and risk-taking among female dormitory students in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences in 2014." The used questionnaires included demographic variables (age, gender, college degrees, academic course satisfaction, and residence place) and a self-confidence questionnaire containing 30 questions. In the study of Moradi *et al.*^[21], the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 78% for self-confidence questionnaire, and the evaluation of questions has been implemented based on the Likert scale from Grade 1 for certainly not to the score 5 for of course yes, and the range of scores for each section is between 30 and 150. In this questionnaire, self-confidence scores <70 mean low self-confidence, scores of 70–109.9 mean average self-confidence, and scores >110 mean high self-confidence. The risk-taking evaluating questionnaire also contains 30 questions. The Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire was obtained from a study by Moradi *et al.*^[21] as 83%, and in this questionnaire, scoring has been implemented based on the Likert scale from Grade 1 as certainly no to the score 5 for of course yes. Furthermore, risk-taking scores <80 mean low risk, scores of 80–114.9 mean average risk, and scores >115 mean high risk.^[21] After referring to colleges and explaining about the research, people entered the study with agreement and consent about the plan.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (PASW Statistics for Windows, Version 18.0, Chicago: SPSS Inc., USA) and correlation coefficient test at a statistically significant level of 0.05.

This study was approved in 2015 at the Students' Scientific Research Center of TUMS and has a code of ethics IR. TUMS. REC.1394.2220. It has also been a cross-sectional study and individuals participated with a tendency to the study, and their information was confidentially reserved for the researcher. Therefore, this study did not have any problems about ethical considerations.

Results

In the study, 363 students were included. The mean age of the students was 21.86 years and the standard deviation was 2.62; the lowest age was 18 years and the highest was 40 years; and girls constituted 54.5% (198) of the students and the rest were boys. In terms of college degrees, 52.1% (189) of students were general PhD and 45.5% (16) were bachelor students. In this regard,

81.3% (295) of students were satisfied with their field of study and 18.7% (68) were not satisfied with their field of study. A high percentage of people lived in the dormitory (50.7%;184 students), 43% (156 students) of students live with their family, and 6.3% (23) live alone.

The mean score of self-confidence in the students was 88.84, the standard deviation was 88.12, the minimum score for self-confidence was 30, and the maximum score was 128. In this regard, 5.5% of the students had low self-confidence, 90.9% had moderate self-confidence, and 3.6% had high self-confidence. In the case of risk-taking, the mean score of individuals was 117.48, and the standard deviation was 31.58.

According to the correlation test, a significant positive correlation was observed between age and self-confidence ($r = 0.21, P = 0.001$), and self-confidence increases with aging. According to the same test, no significant correlation was noted between risk-taking and age ($r = 0.04, P = 0.43$), and also no significant correlation was observed between risk-taking and self-confidence in students according to the Pearson’s coefficient test ($r = 0.05, P = 0.29$). Table 1 shows the relationship between self-confidence and risk-taking.

Discussion

In this study, the relationship between self-confidence and risk-taking of students of TUMS was studied. Considering that one of the basic psychological needs in people is the need for self-esteem, which, if it is formed and satisfied correctly, will have positive and functional consequences such as self-esteem, worthiness, feeling of ability, sense of power, or competence and life adequacy; disregarding proper attention to this need leads to significant negative consequences such as feeling of worthlessness and inadequacy and weakness in human life.^[22] Personality characteristic that may also be affected by self- confidence is the individual risk-taking and is defined as the behavior that increases the likelihood of adverse consequences and physical, psychological, and social harms. In fact, accepting a risk is placing yourself at the risk of damage or harm, as harm is possible.^[9-11] A study by Chuang *et al.* showed that people with

high self-confidence are more confident about making decisions and are more likely to be risk-taking, making them less likely to choose safe and moderate choices in a set of choices.^[18] In our study, 20 (5.5%) students had low self-esteem, 330 (90.9%) had moderate self-confidence, and 13 (3.6%) had high self-esteem; comparing this to Moradi *et al.*'s study (1.1% of people with poor self-esteem, 59.4% with average self-esteem, and 39.5% with high self-esteem),^[21] our study showed that it had more normal distribution and the majority of our students had moderate self- confidence Therefore, the number of people with high self- confidence was lower in our study. In this study, 42 (11.6%) of people had low risk-taking, 135 (37.2%) had moderate risk-taking, and 186 (51.2%) had high risk-taking. In the study by Moradi *et al.*, the risk-taking of 10% of female students was low, 68.9% was moderate, and 21.1% was high;^[21] thus, considering these results, the risk-taking has been higher in our study.

The findings indicate that the self-confidence of all students is high at their moderate level of risk-taking. As a result, in our study, self-confidence and risk-taking were not correlated to each other and were independent. These results are not consistent with Moradi *et al.*'s study^[21] because their study results suggest a reverse correlation between self- confidence and risk-taking; in other words, in this study, people with higher self- confidence had less risk-taking. The level of self- confidence and risk-taking of students did not differ in our study that this was correlated with Farhadi *et al.*'s^[8] and NazarZade *et al.*'s^[23] studies. However, it did not match the findings of the Seal *et al.*'s study,^[24] because in this study, it was found that boys with higher self- confidence have higher risk-taking. Shrier *et al.* did not find any correlation between self- confidence and high-risk behaviors, which was consistent with our study.^[25] In the study of Ziaee *et al.*, students had a moderate level of risk-taking and there was a negative and reverse correlation between self- confidence and risk-taking,^[26] which did not match with our study.

Among the limitations of this study, we can point out to the limitation of educational degrees that include undergraduate and general PhD, low studies conducted in the country, and the unwillingness of some students to participate in this study. Therefore, it is suggested that similar studies should be implemented in other universities, other educational degrees, and other age groups.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, there were no significant correlations between self- confidence and risk-taking among male and female students, meaning

Table 1: The correlation between self-confidence and risk-taking and age in students

Variable	Age	Risk-taking
Self-confidence		
Correlation	0.21**	0.05
P	0.001	0.29
Risk-taking		
Correlation	0.04	1
P	0.43	
n	363	363

**P<0.01

that with increasing self-confidence of individuals, their risk-taking was not reduced or increased.

In this study, the self-confidence of most of the participants was moderate that sounds good. We can maintain and promote this self-confidence planning for students. In this study, the risk was higher in most people. Also, some were moderate and few people were at low risk.

Therefore, it is suggested that we can determine the risk factors and do some actions for its improvement in order to control students' risk-taking and reducing it.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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