

**PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS AS DETERMINANTS OF RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOUR  
AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE**

**BY**

**Omowunmi Busola ADENAIKE  
EDP12/13/H/0631**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATIONS AND COUNSELLING FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY ILE-IFE, NIGERIA  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION  
(GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING)**

**2016**

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**Author:** OmowunmiBusola ADENAIKE

**Title:** Psychosocial Factors as Determinants of Risk-taking Behaviour  
among Undergraduates of ObafemiAwolowo University, Ile-Ife.

**Department:** Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling.

**Degree:** Master of Arts in Education (Guidance and Counselling)

**Year:** 2016

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This is to certify that this thesis titled “Psychosocial Factors as Determinants of Risk-taking Behaviour among Undergraduates of ObafemiAwolowo University” written by ADENAIKE OmowunmiBusola has been read, approved and adjudged to meet the requirements for the award of M. A. Ed. (Guidance and Counselling)of the ObafemiAwolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

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Dr. A. A. Shobola  
Supervisor

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Date

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Dr. (Mrs.) S. A. Ehindero  
Acting Head of Department

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Date

## DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to the Almighty God, the 'All Sufficient', the 'Beginning and the End', for giving me the grace to complete my study and for His faithfulness throughout my stay in ObafemiAwolowo University, and to my parents, Mr.&Mrs. A. A.Adenaike.

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I offer my appreciation to the Rose of Sharon, the Beginning and the End, loving Father; the best Father one can ever have in life, the Most High God; who kept me in His care against all odds. The smooth-running of this programme is much more of a testimony to His mercy and grace than my own efforts.

My profound gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. A. A. Shobola for the guidance, tolerance, support and assistance rendered in putting me through this thesis writing. I also appreciate the Head of the Department, Dr. (Mrs.) S. A. Ehindero for the encouragement and support she gave in the process of the thesis writing.

I am also grateful to all my lecturers who taught me one course or another: Prof. K. A. Alao, Prof. E.R.I.Afolabi, Prof. S. V. Kobiowu, Prof. B. I. Popoola, Prof. (Mrs.) O. O. Ojo, Prof. S. O. Bandele, Prof. (Mrs.) B. A. Omoteso, Dr. S. A. Oluwatosin, Dr. B. A. Faleye, Dr. O. A. Ojebiyi, Dr. A. A. Adediwura, Dr. (Mrs.) E. O. Adeyemo, Dr. F. O. Adebowale, Dr. W. O. Adeniyi, Dr. T. O. Ajeigbe, Dr. (Mrs.) A. O. Anuodo, Dr. A. G. Akintomide, Dr. O. O. Olatomide, Mr. M. A. Omoyemiju, Mrs. F. T. Fatoki and Miss. R. M. Quaye. They also read through and corrected the thesis at one stage or the other; I appreciate them all.

I appreciate my parents, Mr and Mrs Adekunle Adenaike, for their support throughout this programme and my siblings: Ganiu, Seun, Toyin, Yinka and Korede. I am equally indebted to my aunty, Mrs. F. O. Afolabi, and cousins Taiwo, Kehinde, Fiyin, Damola; also, to my

spiritual parents Mr and Mrs Wale Olurounbi, and the Revd. and Dr. (Mrs.) Richard Ogunlusi, may God bless them all.

In my daily work I have been blessed with a friendly and cheerful group of fellow students: Mrs. Ojo-Olajide, Mrs. Obisakin, Mrs. Atilade, Mrs. Adeyemi, Pastor Olabiyi, Mrs. Faluyi, Abidemi, Bunmi, Precious, Bukunmi, Tunji, Gloria, Fatimat, Lizzy, Becky, Janet, and Abigail Grace, Jumoke, Peju, Kemi, Busayo, Solih, Ebun, Kemi, Praise, Victor, Tolu, Tosin, Demola, Feyi, Bose, Sarah, Abiodun, Bose, Abiodun, Kunle, Idowu, Sanya, O.A.U. students, have been compatible housemates, church members and friends for many years I appreciate them all.

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### **List of Abbreviations/Acronyms**

1. Risk-taking Behaviour (RTB)
2. Social Factors (SF)
3. Psychosocial Factors (PF)
4. Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)
5. Diagnostic Statistical Manuel (DSM)
6. United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
7. Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)

## ABSTRACT

The study identified the prevalence of risk-taking behaviour among undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University. It also examined the influence of family type and peer influence on risk-taking behaviour among the students. It further investigated the influence of self-esteem and personality types on risk-taking behaviour of the students and ascertained the relative contributions of psychological factors (self-esteem and personality types) and social factors (family type and peer influence) to the risk-taking behaviour of the students. These were with a view to providing information on factors that determined risk-taking behaviour of the students.

The study adopted the survey research design. The population for the study comprised Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) undergraduates. The sample consisted of 1,040 undergraduates selected using multistage sampling technique. A total of 1,040 copies of questionnaire were given, but 976 copies were found valid for the analysis. Two Departments each were selected from 13 faculties in OAU using simple random sampling technique to give a total of 26 departments. Forty students were selected from each department using convenience sampling technique. Three adapted instruments were used to collect data, namely: Questionnaire on Risk-taking Behaviour (QRTB) of Blais, Weber and Betz (2013); Questionnaire on Social Factors (QSF) of Steinberg (1987) and Questionnaire on Psychological Factors (QPF) of Rosenberg (1965), Goldberg (1999) and Elegbeleye (2008). Data collected were analysed using simple percentages, chi-square and multiple regression statistics.



The results showed that 15.8%, 69.6% and 14.7% of the undergraduates in OAU demonstrated low, moderate and high risk-taking behaviour respectively. The results also showed that family type significantly influenced risk-taking behaviour of the undergraduates ( $\chi^2=38.35$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The results further showed a significant influence of peers ( $\chi^2=215.68$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and self-esteem ( $\chi^2=12.76$ ,  $p=0.02$ ) on the risk-taking behaviour of the students while there was no significant influence of personality types ( $\chi^2=0.62$ ,  $p=0.733$ ) on their risk-taking behaviour. Finally, the results showed that psychological factors (self-esteem and personality types) had a relative contribution to risk-taking behaviour of the undergraduates ( $\beta=0.10$ ,  $t=3.04$ ,  $p<0.002$ ) while social factors (family type and peer influence) had no relative contribution to their risk-taking behaviour ( $\beta=0.31$ ,  $t=9.85$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

The study concluded that students were influenced by such psychosocial factors as family type, peer influence and self-esteem in their risk-taking activities while personality type did not.

**Supervisor:** Dr. A. A. Shobola

**No of Pages:** 138

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

Risk-taking is a behaviour that is peculiar to all human beings. All actions and inactions that the human beings engage in contain some element of risks. Therefore, whether they take decisions or not, elements of risks are not exempted. It can, therefore, be said that human beings are involved in risk-taking throughout life; the youths are not left behind in this behaviour. Among the stages of human development, the youths seem most prone to risk-taking. The youths have been found more likely to engage in this type of behaviour when compared with children and adults (Steinberg, 2008).

Risk-taking behaviour has some potential for danger or harm while also providing an opportunity to obtain some forms of reward. These behaviours involve activities that are volitional, purposive and goal-oriented, but having uncertain and unpredictable outcomes. Risks entail a conscious awareness of these uncertain outcomes that are involved and deliberately engaging in risk-taking activities. Risk-taking encompasses a broad range of behaviours that fall along both negative and positive dimensions. Positive risk-taking behaviour is generally understood as activities that are socially acceptable in the society which bring benefits in terms of independence and well-being, and may also involve an element of risk either in terms of health or safety. While negative risk-taking behaviour are behaviours that are socially frowned at in the society which have the tendency of harming the individual taking the risk and/or others around him/her. Yet, youths still find it comfortable taking negative risks even when the society

frowns at such behaviours or when the outcome of such risks may lead to an outright failure. The failure from such behaviour could have an adverse effect on their health, education, employment prospects, and so on.

The youths today engage in so many negative risk-taking activities such as kidnapping, militancy, terrorism, armed robbery, internet theft, and so on (Adebayo, 2013). The spate of these problems could affect the prospect of the country. Kidnapping, as one of these social ills, has drawn larger attention. Owing to the frequency of abduction, insecurity remains one of the greatest problems in the country. Also, cyber-crime such as hacking and scam are parts of illicit activities youths engage in, as a result of the 'get-rich-quick' syndrome that plagues the country.

Furthermore, the university undergraduates are not left out of these risky activities that have engrossed the Nigerian youths. The undergraduates do not only engage in negative risk-taking behaviour but also engage in positive risk-taking activities which are in form of studying hard so as to graduate with good grades. In addition, some of them combine their academics with trade learning, acquiring various skills, engaging in business activities, politics, helping and providing assistance to others, and so on. Many youths today in the university are supporting themselves through school. The undergraduates engage in risk-taking activities as a way of planning for the future, however, the activities have to be managed properly in order to have a fruitful future. Even with the idea that the future can be affected, these undergraduates still participate in negative and positive risk-taking behaviours. In other words, there are reasons for these behaviours, and factors propelling them. These factors could be psychosocial or social and one of them is family type.



All the youths are from families and these families could either be a monogamous, polygamous or single parent family. The monogamous family is a family type that consists of the father, mother and their children (Bernard, 1964). It mostly a small family type whereby it will be convenient for the family to provide all that the student in this family will need throughout school. Thus, the child from the family will not need to engage in risk-taking activities. Furthermore, a monogamous family with an only child will be able to care for the need of that child. However, when these parents do not have time for their children, and don't show them love. These children may end up doing what they think is right and may engage innegative risk-taking behaviour.

On the other hand, the polygamous family type is a family that is made up of father, mothers and their children. This is a large family that encourages competition among the siblings of different mothers and may involve struggles for success at the highest level, which can encourage a youth to engage in risk-taking behaviour in order to out run his or her siblings. Also, these youths might not engage in negative risk-taking activities. The youths in this family type may not really get all that he/she needs from home therefore need to look for others means of meeting this need may make them to engage in risk-taking activities. These youths are aware that they have everything to lose by engaging in risk-taking activities therefore, they will be conscious of the type of behaviour they take part in. stake for him/her and the mother and as such will not want to drag the family name in mud. It may not always be this way since youths from polygamous family will always want to achieve more than their step brother or sister. This may cause them to engage in negative risk-taking activities.

The single parent family is a family that has only one parent either the father or the mother. This could be as a result of divorce, separation, the death of one of the parents or not ever being married. This parent is considered as the primary caregiver of the child or children. In a family whereby one of the parents is not available, this has impact on the behaviour of the youths from such homes. The disruption of family life due to parental death

For more information, please contact [ir-help@oauife.edu.ng](mailto:ir-help@oauife.edu.ng)

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