

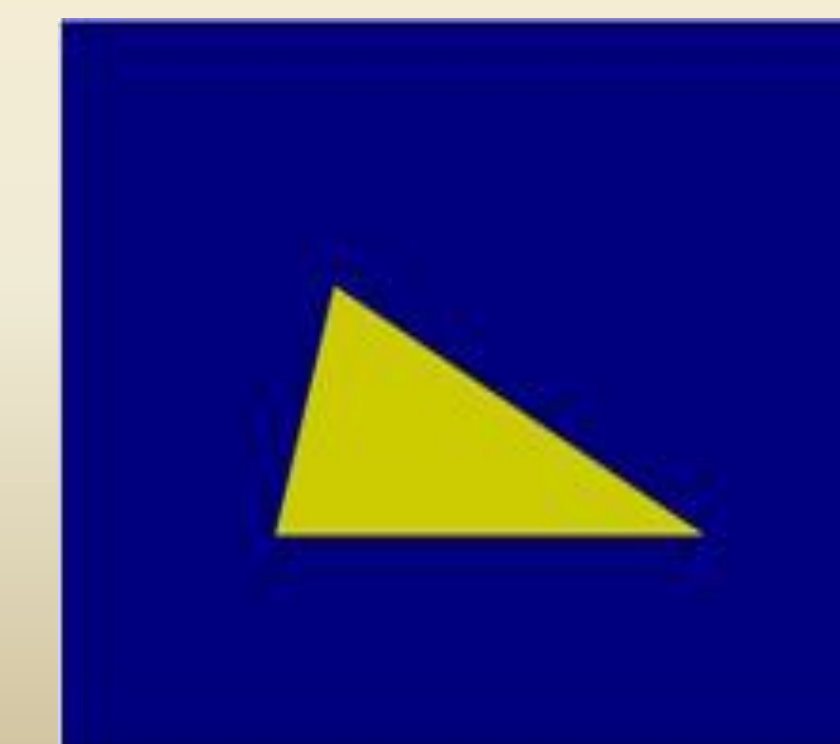
PERCEIVED EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OVER AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR: THE MODERATING ROLE OF GENDER

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IX CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE LA SEAS. September 6th to 8th 2012.



INTRODUCTION

Recent research has indicated that Perceived Emotional Intelligence (PEI) and gender are both associated with aggression. However, these relationships have been mainly demonstrated among adolescents and by means of self-report questionnaires of aggression. Previous research has also found gender differences in the relationship between PEI and relevant social and health outcomes. Thus, the current study aimed to examine the moderator role of gender in the relationship between PEI and aggression dimensions, controlling the effects of age and the rest of PEI dimensions. For that purpose, we used an indirect measure of aggression.

METHOD

Participants

To carry out our study, we used a Spanish community sample. A total of 88 men and 250 women (N = 338) ranging from 19 to 53 yr. old ($X = 24.9$, $SD = 7.2$) participated in the study.

Measures

▪ **Perceived Emotional Intelligence.** The Spanish and reduced version of the *Trait Meta-Mood Scale* (TMMS-24; Fernández-Berrocal, Extremera & Ramos, 2004; original version of Salovey et al., 1995) was used. The TMMS-24 is a 24-item Likert scale of five points (1 = not agree, 5 = strongly agree) that assesses the meta-knowledge of the mood states and provides an index of PEI by three dimensions: Attention, Clarity and Repair. Alpha's cronbach for three dimensions are satisfactory: Attention ($\alpha = .87$), Clarity ($\alpha = .84$) and Repair ($\alpha = .82$).

▪ **Aggression.** The *Aggressive Provocation Questionnaire* (APQ; O'Connor, Archer & Wu, 2001) was used. The APQ consists of 12 hypothetical provoking scenarios in which participants self-report their disposition to respond aggressively. For each situation, participants are asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all, 5 = Extremely) how angry, irritated, and frustrated they would feel. Participants were then asked how they would respond to each situation by choosing one of five action alternatives, categorized as follows: 1) avoid; 2) no response; 3) anger; 4) assertive behavior; or 5) direct aggression.

Table 1. Regression results for the moderating effect of PEI and gender on Assertive behavior, Direct aggression and Angry.

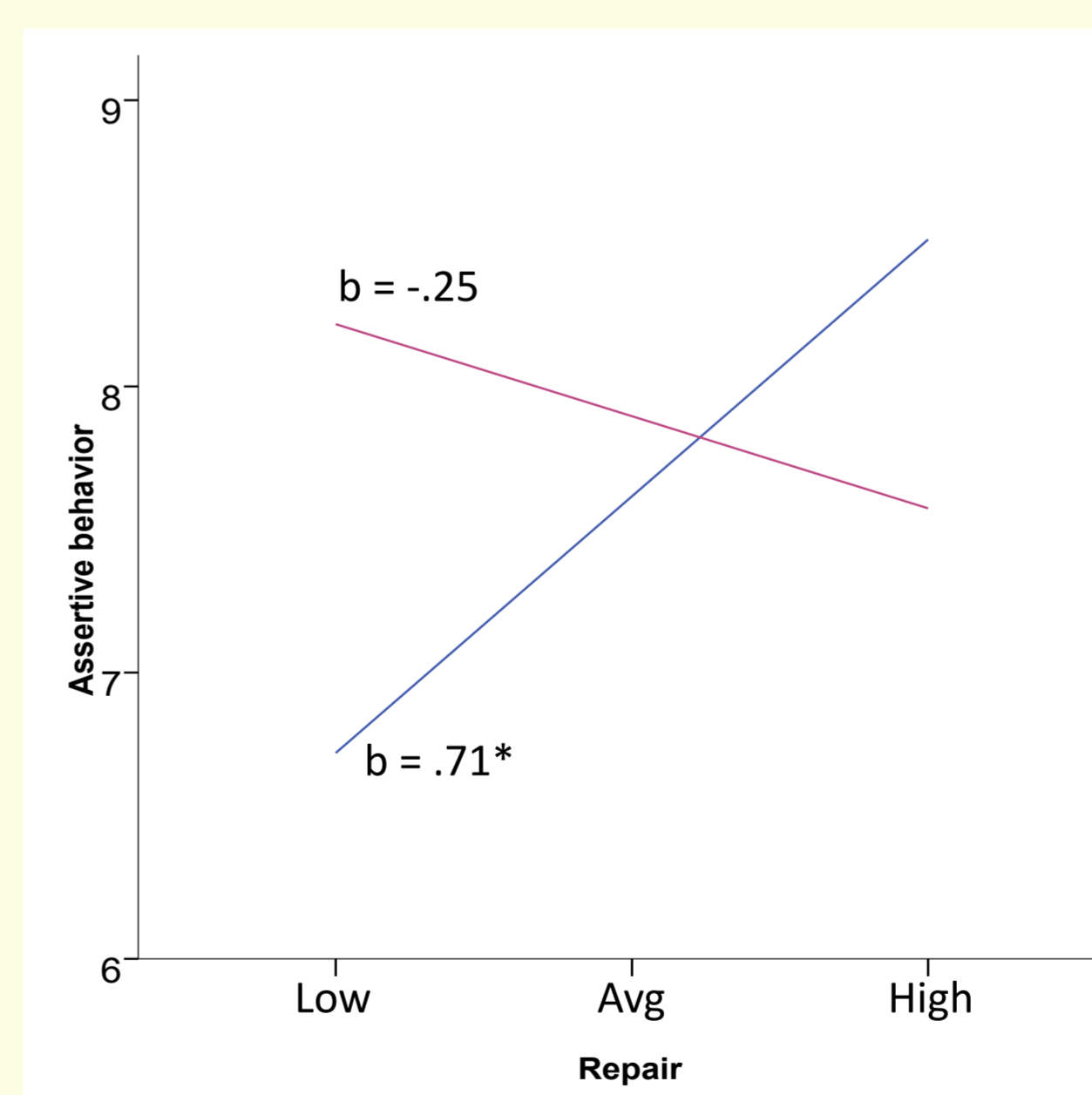
	R ²	F	β
Assertive behavior			
Step 1	0.03	5.65**	
Step 2	0.05	2.55 [†]	
Step 3	0.08	3.10*	
Age			.17**
Gender			-.01
Attention			.16
Clarity			-.19
Repair			.72**
Attention x gender			-.18
Clarity x gender			.34
Repair x gender			-.76**
No response			
Step 1	0.01	.86	
Step 2	0.04	3.63*	
Step 3	0.06	2.25 [†]	
Age			-.03
Gender			-.06
Attention			-.20
Clarity			-.26
Repair			-.49 [†]
Attention x gender			.13
Clarity x gender			-.40
Repair x gender			.64*
Angry			
Step 1	0.14	27.34**	
Step 2	0.19	6.59**	
Step 3	0.21	2.40 [†]	
Age			-.33**
Gender			.03
Attention			-.04
Clarity			.16
Repair			.41 [†]
Attention x gender			.21
Clarity x gender			-.08
Repair x gender			-.56*

RESULTS

Table 2. Gender differences in PEI and O'Connor dimensions.

	F	p	
Attention	18.07	< .01	> Females
Clarity	0.45	n.s.	
Repair	4.31	< .05	> Males
Feelings (O'Connor)			
Angry	1.83	n.s.	
Irritated	2.32	n.s.	
Frustrated	4.47	< .05	> Females
Response situation			
Avoid	16.03	< .01	> Females
No response	1.70	n.s.	
Anger	0.65	n.s.	
Assertive behavior	0.47	n.s.	
Direct aggression	9.04	< .01	> Males

Figure 1. Effects of Repair and gender on Assertive behavior



CONCLUSIONS

Results showed gender differences in Attention, Repair, direct aggression, avoidance and frustration, with higher levels of Attention, avoidance and frustration in women, and higher levels of direct aggression and Repair in men. Interaction analyzes showed that gender moderated the PEI-aggression relationship. In short, low levels of Repair were related to lower levels of assertive behavior in men; and to higher levels of Angry and lower levels of No response in women.

These data suggest that PEI might be a significant resource for men and women in the prediction of relevant social competencies. It allows them to reach a better understanding and a more efficient management of their feelings through aggressive provoking scenarios. Specifically, Repair (i.e., perceived ability to manage one's emotions) gives rise among men to an increased assertiveness (possible caused by the emotional regulation following the awareness that other people are responsible for the conflict). In the case of women, lower scores in Repair were significantly associated with higher feelings of anger and lower scores of no-response, while no significant associations were found in men. These results are consistent with previous studies that found higher levels of indirect aggression in women than in men. PEI seems to help women to better manage their anger. In sum, these preliminary findings suggest the importance of incorporating gender analysis into study designs investigating the relation between PEI and aggression.

Figure 2. Effects of Repair and gender on Angry

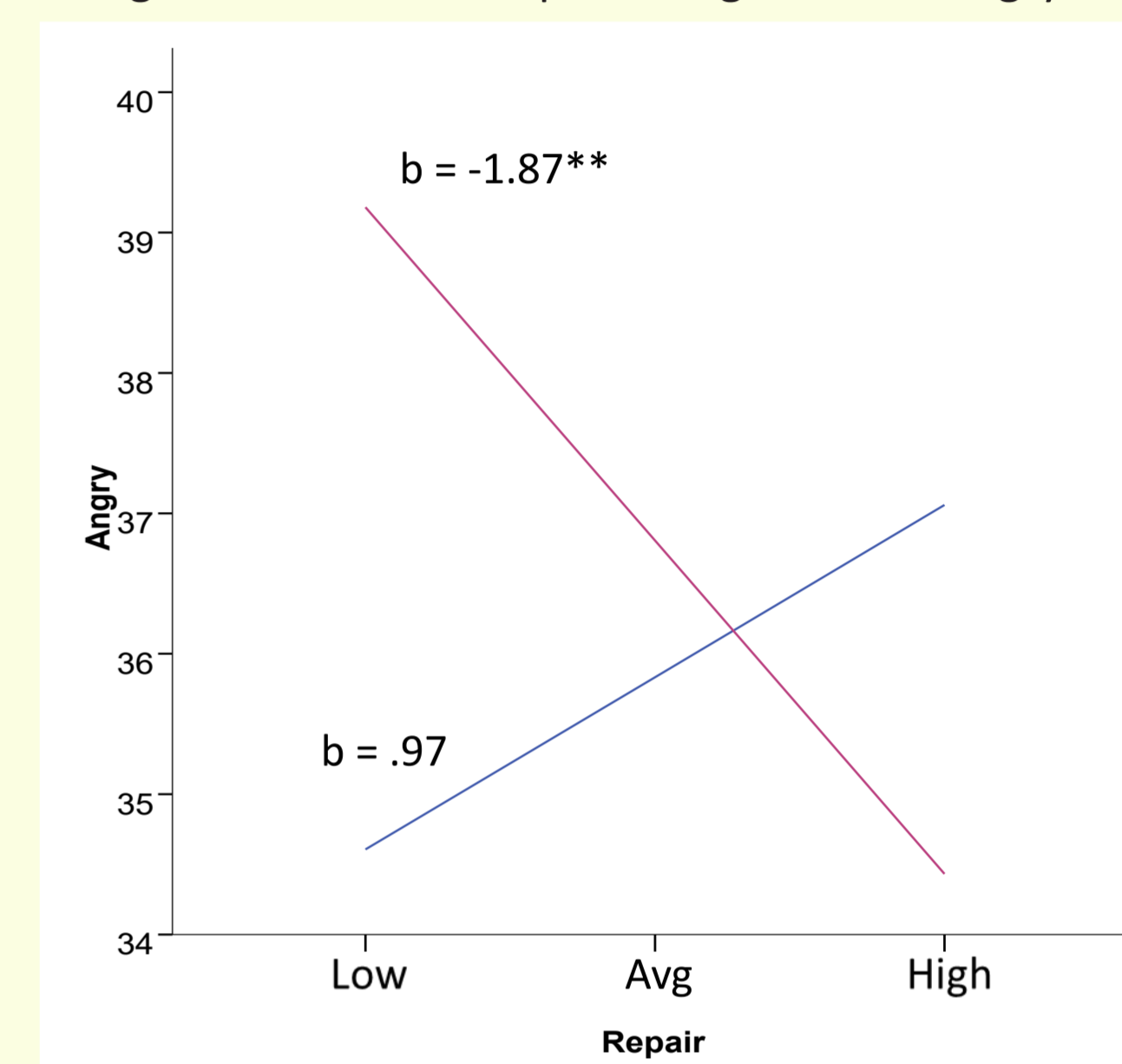
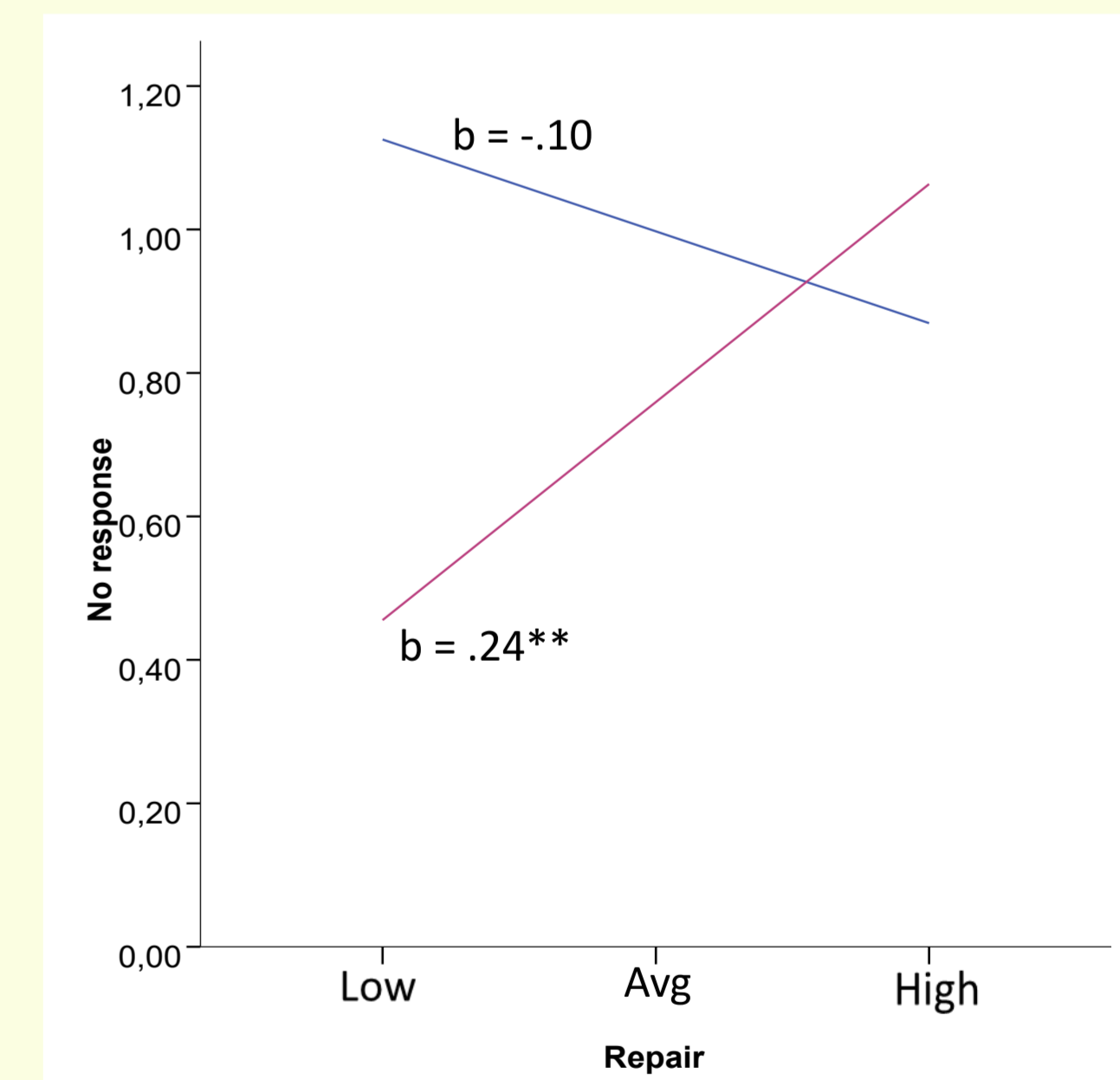


Figure 3. Effects of Repair and gender on No response



Note: [†] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

— Male — Female