

DOES EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE HAVE THE SAME ROLE IN EACH RISK BEHAVIOUR?

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Introduction

Risk behaviour is understood as any behaviour that results in a significant loss –objective or subjective– for the individual (Yates & Stone, 1992).

Some common examples: consuming illegal substances reckless driving, betting large amounts of money, having sex without precaution, practicing extreme sport, giving an unpopular opinion.

Risky contexts are often characterised by a strong emotional charge, which often drives our decision-making process and determines our final behaviour (Slovic et al., 2012).

Given that emotion plays an important role in the risky decision-making process, our ability to perceive, use, understand and manage our emotions appropriately, that is, Emotional Intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), should be act as a protective factor against risky behaviour.

Although the literature is still scarce and not sufficiently clear, the relationship between emotional abilities and risk behaviour seems to depend on the environment in which the behaviour is emitted.

Present study

AIM: exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence (Attention, Clarity, and Repair) and risk behaviour in its different domains (Ethical, Health & Security, Financial, Social, and Recreational domains), and examining whether there were gender differences in both variables.

Methods

Participants: A Spanish community sample of 1435 participants ($M_{age} = 29.84$, ranging from 18 to 70 years old; 61.9% women).

Instruments: Trait-Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS-24) and Domain Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT-30).

Statistical analyses: Mann–Whitney U tests comparisons for gender for each variable, and Spearman’s correlation analyses to determine the relationships between TMMS and DOSPERT.



Results

Table 1. Spearman’s correlation of the TMMS dimensions and the DOSPERT domains.

	Attention	Clarity	Repair
Ethical	.00	-.08**	-.07**
Financial	-.01	-.03	.03
Health/safety	.01	-.09**	-.02
Social	.18**	.11**	.09**
Recreational	.05*	.02	.11**

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$

	Mean for men (SD)	Mean for women (SD)	Mann–Whitney U	Cohen’s d
TMMS Attention	2.92 (0.90)	3.39 (0.86)	173237.50**	0.50
TMMS Clarity	3.13 (0.82)	3.17 (0.85)	236379.00	0.04
TMMS Repair	3.19 (0.78)	3.17 (0.80)	237782.50	0.03
DOSPERT RT Ethical	15.79 (6.10)	14.28 (5.62)	207618.00**	0.25
DOSPERT RT Financial	17.25 (7.54)	14.03 (5.77)	182157.50**	0.43
DOSPERT RT Health/safety	21.24 (6.75)	18.43 (6.77)	185796.00**	0.40
DOSPERT RT Social	29.71 (5.85)	31.02 (5.46)	200581.00**	0.30
DOSPERT RT Recreational	23.91 (9.20)	21.07 (9.27)	208882.00**	0.24

$< .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for sample divided by gender, and Mann–Whitney U tests for gender comparisons of the TMMS and DOSPERT.

Discussion

Emotional intelligence was positive related with Social and Recreational domains, and negative related with Ethical and Health domains.

- Women showed higher scores for Attention and Social risk-taking domain than men, and men showed higher scores for Ethical, Financial, Health/Safety, and Recreational risk-taking domains than women.
- These findings show and support that emotional intelligence is differentially related to risk behaviour depending on the risk domain studied.
- Higher levels of emotional intelligence could be adaptive for risk behaviour regardless the directionality of the relationship.
- Considering the impact of health-related risky behaviours on public health and individual well-being, the development of effective risk prevention programs that train emotional abilities could reduce the incidence of these behaviours in our society.

Sources

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