Introduction

BACKGROUND
- Antisocial decision making is the conscious thought process that gives rise to and justifies conduct (Clarke & Cornish, 1985).
- Criminal decision making is made up of broadly rational choices and decisions. It is an important factor in rationalizing antisocial behaviors. (Cornish & Clarke, 1987).
- When making risky decisions, a person is given the possibility of gaining or losing something (Huizinga, Esbensen, Weihar, 1991).
- Self reports are the most widely used methods for identifying a person’s own criminal behaviors in criminology (Huizinga, Esbensen, Weihar, 1991; Piquero et al., 2002).
- They are great indicators of committing illegal activities (Knight et al., 2004).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (RQ)
- RQ1: Is antisocial decision making a predictor self-reported offending among men and women college students?
- RQ2: Is there a difference in self-reported offending between sex?

Methods
- N = 377 undergraduate students from Introductory Psychology classes at Texas Tech University. Predominantly female (N = 250); males (N = 127).
- Participants completed an online survey, including an informed consent, measures, and debriefing for class credit.
- Self-Reported Offending (SRO): 15-item SR questionnaire that assesses the frequency a person committed an antisocial behavior (e.g., How often have you cheated on an exam). Participants indicated how often they engaged in the 15 offenses on a scale from none (1) to more than ten times (5; Huizinga, Esbensen, Weihar, 1991). A sum of the scale was acquired for analysis.
- Antisocial Opportunities Survey: 15-item self-report measure of three hypothetical situations (i.e., cheating on a test, stealing $50, selling marijuana). The participants were asked to indicate their likelihood of engaging in each act at a 50%, 10% and 1% chance of getting caught, for a total of 9 items. Participants’ response options ranged from very low likelihood (1) to very high likelihood (5). A sum of the scale was acquired for analysis. The other 6 items were not relevant to the current study.

ANALYSIS
- We tested for potential covariates (gender, age, race and ethnicity) using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and linear regression analyses. Gender was a significant covariate and was included in the model for the overall sample (RQ1).
- RQ1: A linear regression was conducted to test the correlation between the self-reported offending scales and the sum of the antisocial decision-making vignettes.
- RQ2: We split the sample by gender and conducted a linear regression analysis, to test differences in self-reported offending between sexes.

Results

RESEARCH QUESTION 1
Higher levels of self-reported antisocial decision making are significantly associated with frequency of self-reported offending (β = .42, p < .001, R² = .24).

When split by gender, the relation is significant for men (n = 127, β = .43, p < .001) and women (n = 250, β = .44, p < .001).

Although men had significantly higher frequencies self-reporting antisocial behavior than women (β = .43, p < .001), the strength of the relation was roughly equal for women (R² = .20) and men (R² = .19).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Conclusions
- People who self report higher levels of antisocial decision making have higher frequencies of self-reported offending.
- Men and women are about equally likely to commit antisocial behaviors due to antisocial decision making.
- Men are more likely to report higher frequencies of self-reported offending even though the likelihood due to antisocial decision making is similar to women.
- Lower likelihoods of getting caught in a decision-making scenario reported a great chance of committing the antisocial act.

Limitations:
- The demographic of all the participants were generalized to college students around the ages of 18-22. Thus, we cannot generalize the data to justice-involved samples.
- The vignettes are hypothetical and may not replicate to real-life situations.

Future research:
- Further research should test differences IN WHAT between justice-involved and college undergraduate samples.
- Future studies can also explore if the current findings replicate in real-life risk-taking experiments.

References