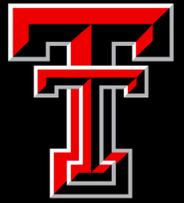




Risky decision-making as a predictor of antisocial behavior among male and female college students



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Introduction

BACKGROUND

- Antisocial decision making is the conscious thought process that gives purpose 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, Weiher, 1991).
- Self reports are the most widely used methods for identifying a person's own criminal behaviors in criminology (Huizinga, Esbensen, Weiher, 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, Weiher, 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.

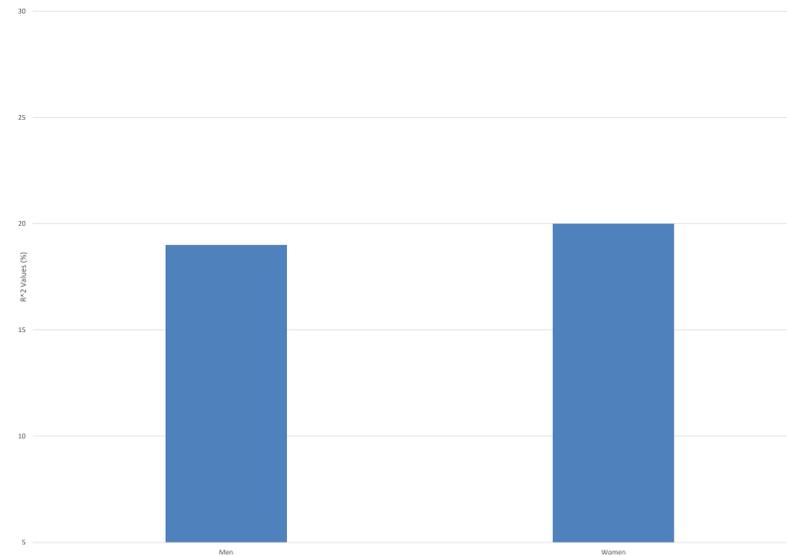
Results

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Higher levels of self-reported antisocial decision making are significantly associated with frequency of self-reported offending ($\beta = .42, p < .001, R^2 = .24$).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

R² Values Between Men and Women



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

Although men had significantly higher frequencies self-reporting antisocial behavior than women ($\beta = .43, p < .001$), the strength of the relation was roughly equal for women ($R^2 = .20$) and men ($R^2 = .19$).

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.

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