



Active VS Passive Risk Perception: How do I see myself VS others?

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INTRODUCTION

Passive risks are risks brought on, or magnified, by inaction, as opposed to active risks, which are incurred by actions².

It was found that people perceive that others take more risks than they are, when the scenarios they encountered with referred to taking active risks³.

However, it is yet to be investigated how people perceive themselves VS others in terms of passive risk “taking”.

Moreover, previous studies demonstrated that people tend to underestimate passive risks. Decreased perceived severity may influence the willingness to reduce them⁴.

Given their different perceivable characteristics, it is also possible that one may perceive his VS others probability of “taking” active and passive risks of the same nature, differently⁴.

That is why the current exploratory study aimed to examine to what level people perceive themselves VS other as “risk seekers” in terms of passive VS active risk “taking”.

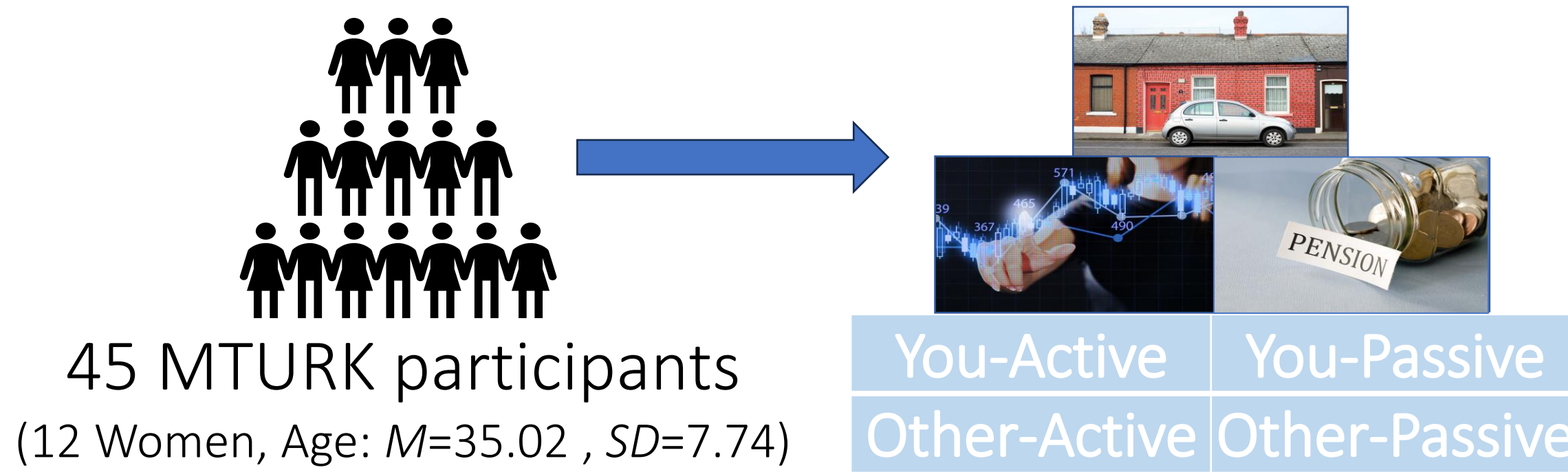
METHODS

Validated scenarios from former studies were used and adjusted according to the terms of this study^{2,5}.

We used a mixed factorial experimental design, of two risk types (active vs. passive), two perspectives (self vs. others), and three scenario themes (stocks vs. pension vs. parking).

After assigned randomly to one of the following conditions: You-Active, You-Passive, Other-Active, or Other-Passive.

Participants were presented with 3 different scenarios about: stocks, pension, or parking.



Once reading a scenario, participants were asked to estimate the likelihood that the person described in it (themselves/ John [in the “Other” condition]) will choose to act in a risky way, on a scale from 1 (not at all likely) to 7 (very likely).

THE CURRENT RESEARCH

Based on previous findings, we hypothesized that:

- ✖ The mean likelihood of engaging with passive risks would be higher than for engaging with active risks of the same nature
- ✖ The trend known about the perception of self VS others regarding engagement with active risks will be noticeable in the results; participants will perceive others as more risk takers than they are, when the scenarios are about active risk taking.
- ✖ A similar/different trend (regarding the perception of self VS others) will be seen for passive risks (the exploratory part).

RESULTS

A three-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of Risk Type (Active vs. Passive), Perspective (Self vs. Others), and Scenario (Parked Car, Pension, Stocks) on the perceived likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. Only one significant effect was found, as presented in *Table 1*:

- ✖ Main effect for Risk Type – active risk-taking was rated significantly higher than passive risk-taking ($F(1, 176) = 1774.653, p < .001$). Thus, people perceive themselves and others as more active than passive risk takers.

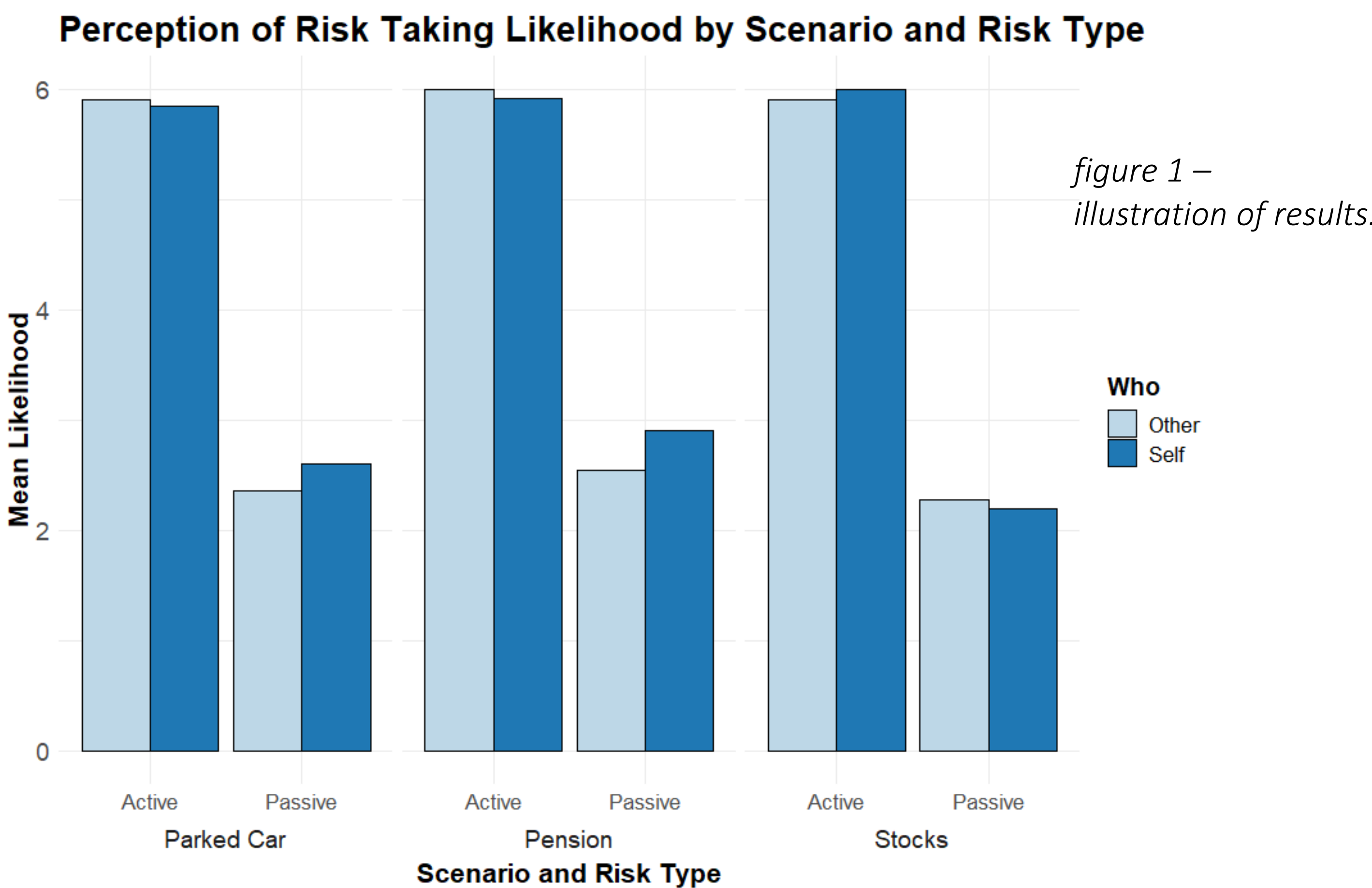
- ✖ No significant interactions were found.

Table 1 – a three-way ANOVA test:

ANOVA Results for Perception of Risk Taking					
Source	df	Sum sq	Mean sq	F	p
RiskType	1	1202.8	1202.8	1774.653	<0.001 ***
Who	1	0.5	0.5	0.773	0.3797
Scenario	2	3.5	1.8	2.59	0.0763
RiskType:Who	1	0.9	0.9	1.323	0.2508
RiskType:Scenario	2	4	2	2.925	0.0548
Who:Scenario	2	0.2	0.1	0.152	0.8587
RiskType:Who:Scenario	2	1.6	0.8	1.205	0.3008
Residuals	393	266.4	0.7		

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings did not support what was hypothesized. Overall, opposed to what we suggested based on prior studies, participants perceived themselves and others, as more likely to engage with active risks, than with passive risks (see *figure 1*). Surprisingly, that was the only significant effect.



The trend previously demonstrated regarding perception of self VS others in the context of active risk taking, was not apparent here.

It should also be noted that no difference between the perception of self and of others in terms of passive VS active risks, was found.

Although it might mean people perceive themselves and others the same in the context of passive risks, as they are in the context of active risks, it should be further looked in to, as this study was a pilot, with only 45 participants, and did not manage to replicate former significant results.

References

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