

Title: Altruistic excuse to risk: An experiment on prosocial risk-taking

In this experiment, we analyzed the relationship between risk and pro-social behavior while trying to disentangle other effects, such as belief in karma and optimism, capable of explaining these behaviors. To do so, we employed a laboratory experiment with two treatments that allowed us to shed light on this phenomenon with important economic consequences.

We explore how altruism influences risk-taking behavior through a model and lottery experiment. Participants are divided into three groups: a control group that completes a standard Holt and Laury lottery, a "karma belief" group in which participants can donate to a charity (a “good behavior”) before the task, and a "prosocial risk" group with a modified task that includes both risky payoffs and charitable donations. Results show that men in the prosocial risk group take more risks, viewing altruism as an excuse, while women tend to take fewer risks, possibly using altruism as an excuse to avoid giving.