



Assessment of Male Physical Risk-Taking Behavior in a Sample of Russian Men and Women

Yulia Apalkova¹ · Marina L. Butovskaya^{1,2,3} · Natalia Bronnikova¹ · Valentina Burkova¹ · Todd K. Shackelford⁴ · Bernhard Fink^{5,6}

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Abstract

Research has documented sex differences in risk-taking behavior, and young men in particular are more prone than women to engage in activities associated with physical risks. Evolutionary scientists have proposed that this sex difference is a consequence of male competition over mating opportunities. Thus, mating motives promote risk-taking in men more than in women. Here, we report analyses of assessments of male physical risk-taking in a Russian sample ($n = 546$). Men and women judged vignettes describing men who differed in risk-taking propensity for short- and long-term attractiveness, provisioning quality, and aggression. Risk-taking propensity had an effect on all attributes. Occasional (but not high) risk-takers received the highest ratings on short-term attractiveness. Low risk-takers were judged highest on long-term attractiveness and provisioning quality. High risk-takers were judged as more aggressive than occasional and low risk-takers. Thus, male risk-taking behavior affects assessments of male quality, but high risk-taking is not regarded as positive. We discuss the results with reference to evolutionary investigations of risk-taking behavior and cultural characteristics of masculinity ideology.

Keywords Risk-taking · Perception · Attractiveness · Aggression · Provisioning quality · Men · Russia

Introduction

Risk-taking involves the implementation of actions that can lead to negative consequences. Risk-taking is sex differentiated, with men scoring higher than women on measures of risk-taking behavior and risk assessment (Byrnes et al. 1999; Harris et al. 2006). This sex difference is present in childhood

and increases during adolescence (Apicella et al. 2017; Hillier and Morrongiello 1998). A meta-analysis of sex differences in risk-taking documented that men score higher than women for 14 of 16 types of risk-taking, with nearly half of the effects greater than $d = 0.20$ (Byrnes et al. 1999). Weber et al. (2002) reported sex differences in perceived risk in four of five content domains: Men perceive less risk and are more likely than women to make risky financial, health/safety, recreational, and ethical decisions. Women more than men judge negative consequences as more likely to follow risky behavior and as more severe, especially in contexts of gambling and health (Harris et al. 2006).

Sex differences and individual differences in risk-taking have been investigated from several theoretical perspectives (Byrnes et al. 1999). For example, scholars have suggested that socialization accounts for sex (and age) differences in risk-taking, because girls are socialized to be cautious and concerned with others, whereas boys are socialized to display dominance, show courage, and accept risks (Waldron 1997; Harris et al. 2006). Sex differences in risk-taking are universal (Kruger and Nesse 2004), however, suggesting that they reflect Darwinian adaptations. Kruger et al. (2007) suggested that modern day risk-taking behavior can be conceptualized

✉ Yulia Apalkova
julia.apalkova@gmail.com

¹ Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Leninskij prospekt 32A, Moscow, Russian Federation 119991

² Social Anthropology Research and Education Centre, Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation

³ High School of Economics, National Research University, Moscow, Russian Federation

⁴ Department of Psychology, Oakland University, Rochester, MI, USA

⁵ Institute of Psychology, University of Goettingen, Goettingen, Germany

⁶ Leibniz ScienceCampus Primate Cognition, Goettingen, Germany

as a response to recurrent adaptive problems of our ancestors, and although the cues of analogous risks in modern times may be different from those in ancestral environments, they nevertheless activate the same mental algorithms. This approach has advanced previous conceptualizations of an individual's risk-taking behavior as being risk seeking or risk averse, and it extends it to specific domains that are informed by evolutionary content relating to problems of survival and reproduction. In designing an evolutionarily informed and domain-specific risk scale, Wilke et al. (2014) provided support for the proposal that risk-taking behavior should be regarded as domain-specific rather than as a stable domain-general attitude. This study confirmed sex differences, with men scoring higher than women in the evolutionarily relevant domains (e.g., women were more risk prone in problems relating to food selection and kinship). Wilke et al. further reported that, especially in the domains of mate attraction and mate retention, participants who were single scored higher on risk-taking propensity than those who were married or in a committed relationship.

Several studies have provided evidence that the sex difference in risk-taking propensity is a consequence of sex differences in reproductive potential and parental investment (Trivers 1972), which generate greater challenges for men than for women in competition for access to mates. Wilson and Daly (1985) suggest that variation in risk-taking is a product of male psychology evolved in response to these selection pressures and that male quality derives in part from success in risky competitions. Thus, risky behaviors provide the opportunity to demonstrate characteristics, such as dominance, confidence, ambition, skill, and mental acuity, that are desired by women because these traits facilitated ancestral reproductive success (Buss 1994; Baker and Maner 2008). Bliege Bird et al. (2001) showed that, among the Meriam in Australia, fishing and hunting are costly signals, such that successful male hunters gain social recognition and sexual benefits by having access to higher-quality mates (see also Smith et al. (2001)). Variation in male risk-taking also is evident in everyday behavior. For example, Pawlowski et al. (2008) reported that men are more likely than women to initiate crossing a busy road, and this is exaggerated in the presence of a woman, perhaps because men use risk-taking as a mating display (Hawkes 1991).

Women favor as romantic partners brave, risk-taking men over non-brave, risk-averse men (e.g., Bassett and Moss 2004; Farthing 2005, 2007). Wilson and Daly (1985) further argued that the willingness to participate in risky competitive interactions is the greatest in young men, because selection pressures were ancestrally greater for this demographic group than for other age-sex groups. Young men more than any other age group engage in risky behaviors across various domains, including the practice of unsafe sex, reckless driving, and substance abuse (Greitmeyer et al. 2013). In fact, men have been described as the “vulnerable” sex, because being male is one

of the largest risk factors for early mortality (Kruger and Nesse 2006; Patton et al. 2009). Whether male engagement in risky activities, especially in young men, reflects adaptations to increase ancestral reproductive success is difficult to adjudicate. However, Baker and Maner (2008) have argued that if this were true, mating motives will promote risk-taking in men more than in women, and this includes aggression (Griskevicius et al. 2009) and heroic altruism (Griskevicius et al. 2007), financial risk-taking (Baker and Maner 2009) and sexual behavior (Ariely and Loewenstein 2006). Moreover, Wilson and Daly (2004) reported that viewing the faces of attractive women led men to discount the future, i.e., men assigned greater value to resources that were available immediately compared to resources that would be available in the future (see also Baker and Maner (2008)). Taken together, these studies corroborate the suggestions that male risk-taking behavior is facilitated by mating-related motives and that engagement in risky activities is designed to attract the women's interest.

Several studies have documented that information about male risk-taking behavior influences the women's mate preferences. Kelly and Dunbar (2001) reported that women prefer risk-prone men to risk-averse men, especially as short-term (ST) sexual partners, whereas altruistic men are preferred as long-term (LT) romantic partners. Sylwester and Pawlowski (2011) found that the type of relationship (ST vs. LT) affected the women's assessments of the men's risk-taking behavior: risk-takers are rated as more attractive than risk-avoiders in the context of ST relationships, and the opposite is found for LT relationships (see also, Bassett and Moss (2004)). These studies suggest that risk-taking is a sexually selected display that signals male quality to women, especially in the ST mating context. However, there are limits for male risk-taking being regarded as attractive to women. Women may associate risk-taking with aggression rather than bravery, in which case they may not regard risk-taking as attractive. Very high risk-takers may not be preferred as mates by women, especially when risk-taking does not signal mate quality. Thus, some forms of risk may be more indicative of male quality than others.

The present study focused on physical risk-taking as male display, because this behavior often includes abilities or skills that are more revealing about fitness-related traits—such as strength and athleticism—than other (modern) types of risk (Farthing 2005; Petraitis et al. 2014). We investigated the men's and women's assessments of male risk-taking behavior in a sample of Russian men and women. Previous research on risk-taking behavior has mostly been conducted in samples of Western societies, and although it has been proposed that the observed sex differences in risk-taking and within-sex relationships of risky behavior may be universal, recent research also suggests a cultural influence for mating-related risk-taking, at least in women (Shan et al. 2012). Compared with the USA and the UK, Russia has been characterized by a higher

level of power distance (i.e., how a society addresses inequalities among people) and uncertainty avoidance (i.e., how a society addresses uncertainties in life), but lower preference for masculinity in men (i.e., the preference in society for male achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success) (Hofstede 2001). Whether differences in such national scores can account for variation in risk-taking and assessment across societies remains to be demonstrated. Hofstede's cultural dimensions were obtained from business contexts and have been criticized for not being sufficiently representative of other contexts (McSweeney 2002). In addition, Hofstede's model may not accurately capture cultural changes in times of rapid technological development and globalization (McSweeney 2002). However, on the national level, high uncertainty avoidance may be associated with lower risk-taking. On the individual level, differences have been reported between Russia and the US (Levant et al. 2003) with regard to masculinity ideology, with Russian participants endorsing traditional masculinity ideology more than US participants. Interestingly, Russian women are more similar to Russian men in their views of masculinity ideology compared to their US counterparts. Related to this are differences in lifestyle habits. In Russia, rates of alcohol consumption and associated violence are twice as high as in the USA (Pridemore 2002). Heavy drinkers are especially found among single and divorced men (Stack and Bankowski 1994), and male mortality is higher than in many other countries (Zardidze et al. 2014).

We investigated the Russian men's and women's assessments of vignettes describing men who vary in physical risk-taking, for ST and LT attractiveness, provisioning quality, and aggression. We hypothesized that low risk-takers, relative to occasional and high risk-takers, would be judged less attractive by men and women, but would receive higher scores on provisioning quality. In addition, we expected a difference in attractiveness assessments depending on context (ST vs. LT), with high risk-takers being particularly unattractive as long-term partners (see also Butovskaya and Smirnov (2004)). For aggression, we predicted that high risk-takers would be assessed as more aggressive than low risk-takers. Given previous reports on the men's and women's similarity in assessments of masculinity ideology, we did not expect to detect an effect of participant sex on risk-taking assessments.

Material and Methods

Participants

Our sample comprised 546 participants (100 men, 446 women) in four age groups: 18–29 years: 22 men, 115 women; 30–39 years: 35 men, 202 women; 40–49 years: 36 men, 100 women; 50+ years: 7 men, 29 women. Participants were recruited from the Moscow (Russia) area through email contact

and via Facebook announcement on the personal page of the first author. Thus, most of the respondents were members of the undergraduate and graduate student communities of the local academic institutions. Participants reported the following occupational or study backgrounds: humanities or social sciences ($n = 241$), business or management ($n = 115$), technology ($n = 77$), artistic or creative work ($n = 64$), natural or medical sciences ($n = 41$), housewives ($n = 6$), and military personal ($n = 2$). Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and not compensated.

Stimuli

We created three vignettes (Finch 1987), each describing a situation in which a 25-year-old woman who graduated from a university and works in a small, stable company dates a 27-year-old man; the man's risk-taking propensity varied across the three vignettes, with a focus on physical risks and exposure to dangerous situations. Vignette 1 (low risk-taker) described a man who exposes himself to risky situations only very rarely. He avoids such situations and prefers stability. Vignette 2 (occasional risk-taker) described a man who exposes himself to risky situations occasionally. His hobby is rock climbing, he likes to travel, and is open to thrilling activities. Vignette 3 (high risk-taker) described a man who is a military journalist attracted to dangerous flashpoints and likes to travel, especially in sparsely populated regions. The specific vignettes were as follows:

1. Low risk-taker: "Anna, 25 years old, graduated from university. She has worked in a small, stable company for a year. She is not involved in a romantic relationship with when she meets Dmitry and begins casually dating him. Dmitry is 27 years old, and also graduated from university. He has worked for five years in a stable company. Dmitry regularly trains in the gym. Dmitry finds relaxation in peace and quietness. It can be on the seaside or in the mountains. Sometimes he spends his holidays in ski resorts. He likes the feeling that mountain skiing gives; he likes speed. But he tries to avoid external factors that increase risk: for example, he skis only on well prepared ski slopes and never off the well-prepared ski slopes."
2. Occasional risk-taker: "Alena, 25 years old, graduated from university. She has worked in a small, stable company for a year. She is not involved in a romantic relationship when she meets Sergey and begins casually dating him. Sergey is 27 years old, also graduated from university, and recently changed jobs. The new job interested him because of the opportunity to acquire new skills and because it promised changes that accompany the transition to another company. Sergey's main hobby is rock climbing. In his spare time in the city, he trains on artificial climbing walls. Usually he spends his holidays in the

mountains with friends. From time to time he likes to gain the exhilarating experience of participating in dangerous situations or activities. He loves to travel. He likes to try new things, especially if they are thrilling: skiing, diving, parachute jumps.”

- High risk-taker: “Marina, 25 years old, graduated from university. She has worked in a small, stable company for a year. She is not involved in a romantic relationship when she meets Andrey and begins casually dating him. Andrey is 27 years old, and also graduated from university. On one of their first dates, Marina learns that Andrey’s job is very dangerous. He is a military journalist and spends much time in military flashpoints. He confesses to her that the dangerousness is one of the main things that attracts him to his job. He tells stories about war and death very calmly. Andrey shares that he loves to spend time alone. In particular, he likes to travel alone and chooses sparsely populated regions where in case of any incidents you must rely only on yourself.”

Procedure

Each participant judged the three vignettes on the four attributes with the order of attributes randomized across participants. Female participants were instructed to read each vignette carefully and assess the man in each scenario in terms of his attractiveness for a short-term relationship, attractiveness for a long-term relationship, provisioning quality, and aggression on five-point Likert-type scales (one = low on attribute, five = high on attribute). Male participants were asked to judge the male characters in the vignettes from the female point of view (i.e., whether women would consider this man high/low on attribute).

Results

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for the men’s and women’s assessments of risk-taking profiles (vignettes). A 3 (risk-taking) × 2 (sex) mixed-model ANOVA was performed to test for differences in the men’s and women’s assessments

of the three risk-taking profiles, with attractiveness for a ST and for a LT relationship, provisioning quality, and aggression as dependent variables. Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated (attractiveness ST $\chi^2(2) = 35.22$, attractiveness LT $\chi^2(2) = 13.19$, provisioning quality $\chi^2(2) = 18.12$, aggression $\chi^2(2) = 18.57$, all $p < .01$), and, therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity.

There were main effects of risk-taking on perception of attractiveness for a ST ($F(1.88, 1032.71) = 50.50, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.09$) and for a LT ($F(1.95, 1062.50) = 250.47, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.32$) relationship, provisioning quality ($F(1.94, 1053.44) = 262.65, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.33$), and aggression ($F(1.94, 1052.61) = 75.29, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.12$). Occasional risk-takers were judged highest on ST attractiveness, followed by high risk-takers and low risk-takers. Pairwise tests (Bonferroni adjusted) indicated differences for each group comparison (all $p < .001$). LT attractiveness assessment was higher for low risk-takers than for occasional risk-takers ($p < .001$), and both profiles received higher ratings than high risk-takers (both $p < .001$). Low risk-takers were judged highest for provisioning quality, followed by occasional risk-takers and high risk-takers, with each group rated differently from the others (all $p < .001$). Aggression perception was highest for high risk-takers, and different from assessments of occasional and low risk-takers (both $p < .001$), whereas low and occasional risk-takers did not differ from one another ($p = 0.99$) (Fig. 1).

Sex differences were found for (combined) assessments of risk-taking profiles with regard to ST attractiveness ($F(1, 544) = 17.84, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.03$) and LT attractiveness ($F(1, 544) = 5.72, p < .05, \eta^2_p = 0.01$), provisioning quality ($F(1, 544) = 6.43, p < .01, \eta^2_p = 0.01$), and aggression ($F(1, 544) = 7.53, p < .01, \eta^2_p = 0.01$). Pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni adjusted) revealed that the men’s ratings were higher than those of women for ST ($p < .001$) and LT ($p < .05$) attractiveness, provisioning quality ($p < .05$), and aggression ($p < .01$).

There were interaction effects of risk-taking × sex for assessments of attractiveness for a ST relationship ($F(1.82, 1032.71) = 7.02, p < .01, \eta^2_p = 0.01$), but not for other dependent variables (all $F < 2.06, p > .13$). The men’s ratings were

Table 1 Descriptive statistics (*M* and *SD*) of the men’s and women’s assessments of risk-taking profiles

	Low risk-taker		Occasional risk-taker		High risk-taker	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Attractiveness short-term	3.23 (1.07)	3.20 (1.20)	4.32 (0.83)	3.86 (1.23)	4.07 (1.01)	3.39 (1.42)
Attractiveness long-term	4.15 (0.85)	4.11 (1.07)	3.35 (1.09)	3.21 (1.15)	2.48 (1.08)	2.12 (1.12)
Provisioning quality	4.31 (0.72)	4.28 (0.81)	3.28 (0.97)	3.04 (1.07)	2.76 (1.07)	2.48 (1.19)
Aggression	2.63 (0.91)	2.41 (0.92)	2.62 (0.97)	2.40 (1.01)	3.39 (1.05)	3.25 (1.14)

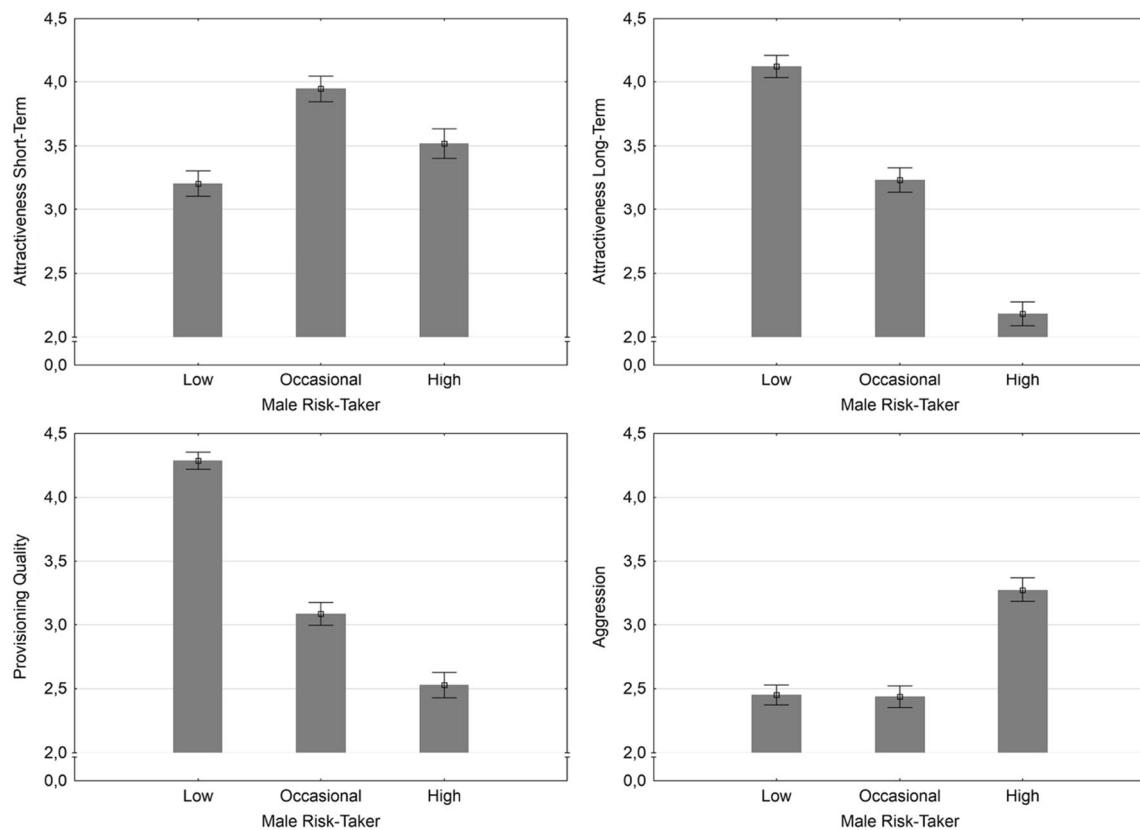


Fig. 1 Group comparisons (M and 95% CI) of the men's and women's (combined) assessment of male risk-takers

higher than those of women for assessment of ST attractiveness of occasional ($t(209.30) = 4.54, p < .001$) and high risk-takers ($t(198.21) = 5.57, p < .001$), but not for assessment of low risk-takers ($t(544) = 0.23, p = .82$) (Table 1).

Tests for differences in the men's and women's (combined) assessment of dependent variables between age groups did not reveal any significant effects (all $F(3, 546) < 2.13$ all $p > .10$).

Discussion

We predicted that risk-averse men would be judged less attractive than risk-taking men, but also that risk-averse men would be judged higher on provisioning quality and lower on aggression than risk-taking men. Our results revealed effects of physical risk-taking propensity on assessments of ST and LT attractiveness and provisioning quality. Low risk-takers received the lowest ST attractiveness ratings but were judged the highest for LT attractiveness. LT attractiveness of occasional risk-takers was less positive than for low risk-takers, and high risk-takers were judged the least positively. The opposite pattern was found for assessments of provisioning quality, with low risk-takers scoring the highest, followed by occasional and high risk-takers. These results corroborate previous reports on perceptions of male risk-taking behavior (e.g., Bassett and Moss 2004; Kelly and Dunbar 2001;

Sylwester and Pawlowski 2011), suggesting that risk-taking may serve signal male mate quality (Wilke et al. 2006). However, high risk-takers were not judged most positively for ST attractiveness. This finding may be explained with reference to the people's aggression perception of risk-taking profiles. High risk-takers were judged more aggressive than occasional and low risk-takers, with no difference between the latter two. Thus, male risk-taking may be regarded as attractive, especially in the ST context (sensu Sylwester and Pawlowski (2011)), but within limits. At least in Russian men, high risk-taking may be associated with unhealthy behavior (alcohol consumption and violence; Cockerham 2000; Pridemore 2002), which does not signal competitiveness but instead is socially, and therefore not judged to be attractive, especially in the LT context. Low risk-takers were judged higher for provisioning quality, relative to occasional and high risk-takers (in that order), which is sensible, given the importance of male provisioning quality, especially in the LT relationship context (Butovskaya and Smimov 2004; Gray and Anderson 2010).

There were sex differences in assessments of physical risk-taking for all four attributes, with the men's assessments higher than assessments provided by women. Importantly, participant sex interacted with risk-taking, although this was significant only for ST attractiveness. Men provided higher ratings than women to occasional and high risk-takers.

Clearly, men thought that women would consider occasional and high risk-takers as attractive in the ST context, whereas this assessment was not always shared by women. Although the vignette did not directly suggest this, high risk-taking Russian men may be evaluated also in terms of potentially coercive behavior, and women assess the trade-offs in relations to the benefits of male protection (Snyder et al. 2011).

Fessler et al. (2014) proposed a signaling function of male voluntary physical risk-taking such that risk-prone men are perceived as more formidable compared with risk-averse men. They showed that risk-prone men were perceived to be larger, stronger, and more violent than risk-averse men. Moreover, these authors suggest that the association of risk-proneness with formidability may explain epidemiological links of these traits with violence. The results of our study do not warrant an in-depth discussion of the risk-taking propensity and formidability association, because we did not secure data on the latter. However, we consider it plausible that, as in Snyder et al. (2011), high risk-taking was believed to be associated with more violence, especially by women. Future studies should investigate whether national (and individual) differences in masculinity ideology affect the men's and women's assessments of risk-taking behavior in relation to measures of male quality, including aggression and violent behavior. Traditional masculinity ideology is more strongly endorsed in Russia than, for example, in the USA, and especially young women in the USA have been described as less traditional (Levant et al. 2003). Our results did not reveal an influence of age group on assessments of male risk-taking, which may be explained by the strong endorsement of traditional dimensions in Russia, including concepts about male masculinity (Meshcherkina 1996).

There are several limitations to the present study. First, the vignettes were designed to present three distinct male characters, with a focus on variation in their physical risk-taking propensity. There may be concern, however, that the vignettes varied in several dimensions and that participants might have obtained information other than physical risk-taking—which could have affected their assessments. For example, the characterization of the “high risk-taker” as a person who “tells stories about war and death very calmly” and “loves to spend time alone” could have created the impression that this man lacks empathy or displays psychopathic traits. This information might have contributed to the low attractiveness rating of the high risk-takers. Studies that have investigated risk-taking behavior in relation to psychopathic traits report positive correlations. Hosker-Field et al. (2016) found that erratic lifestyle is indirectly associated with greater health/safety and recreational risk-taking via lower risk perception. The high risk-taker vignette may have conveyed information about the man's sociability, because he was described as someone who “loves” to spend time alone; however, we do not think that “Andrey” gives the impression of an erratic person. Thus, we

believe that the key information participants derived from this vignette remained on physical/health risks due to the character's profession, which distinguishes him from the two other characters. For example, the “occasional risk-taker” also takes physical/health risks in pursuit of his passion for rock climbing. However, risk-taking in this context is less pronounced due to the typical safety measure in sports.

Second, with regard to provisioning quality, people could have used the information on occupational situation in their assessment, i.e., “Dmitry” (low risk-taker) has worked for 5 years in a stable company, whereas “Sergey” (occasional risk-taker) has recently changed jobs. Again, we do not think that this information could have accounted for the large differences between low- and occupational risk-takers in assessments of provisioning quality. However, we acknowledge that the vignettes could be improved by keeping information on occupational stability constant across vignettes. An ideal vignette varies only in wording of a few key terms. Yet, this standardization is often accompanied by lack of realism, which may be an issue especially in a within-subjects design in which a participant is exposed to all vignettes (which was the case in our study).

Third, the difference in aggression perceptions of the high risk-taker vs. the “low risk-taker” and the occasional risk-taker might be attributable, in part, to military content. The aim with characterizing the high risk-taker was to create a scenario in which it is clear that physical/health risks are uncontrollable in that there are few safety measures. One might argue that this is also the case in some sports. However, when creating the vignettes, we thought that the characters should be clearly differentiated in the type of their risk-taking activities, i.e., and not vary in just the severity of a certain risk (like in some sports).

We cannot rule out the possibility that, for these reasons, the findings of the present study may contain “noise” in that a clearer distinction of male characters should be applied in future studies. Yet, we contend that the findings of the present study will be corroborated in future replication. This extends also to the investigation of national differences in the assessment of risk-taking behavior. Our findings on assessments of male risk-taking behavior in a Russian sample do not suggest marked differences from previous reports. Shan et al. (2012) reported a cultural influence on risk-taking in Chinese women, but not in Chinese men. These authors concluded that there is cross-cultural consistency in the evidence for risk-taking as a male mating strategy and that women prefer risk-taking men who signal high reproductive potential and resources. The Chinese women's assessments of risk-taking may be influenced by different expectations and social status, as compared to those of women in Western countries, perhaps because male dominance remains well established in China (Shan et al. 2012).

Whether such cultural influence on risk-taking occurs for Russian women needs to be investigated in future research. The present study concerned the men's and women's assessments of male risk-taking behavior, but not sex differences and possible moderators of sex-specific influences on risk-taking behavior. Moreover, we focused on mating-related measures in assessments of physical risk-taking. Thus, our data do not permit conclusions about the generalization of risk-taking assessments. It may be worthwhile to extend the investigation of cross-cultural similarities and differences in risk-taking assessment by including domains other than physical risk. Wilke et al. (2014) identified domains relating to adaptive problems of survival and reproduction, including, for example, status/power, competition within and between groups, and mate attraction/retention. It may be that in considering culture in risk-taking behavior and assessment, differences at the national level can be found for some but not all of these domains. That is, while the assessment of risk-taking related to male competition and display may not show cross-cultural differences, this does not rule out the possibility that culture-specific effects occur in other risk-taking domains. As far as it concerns Russian culture, and in considering the high rate of Russian male mortality, the assessment of problems relating to parenting and provisioning could be one of those domains in which cultural differences are found. In the present study, the clearest differences were found for assessments of LT attractiveness and provisioning quality of male risk-takers, with low risk-takers scoring highest on both attributes. However, there was only one interaction effect of risk-taking with participant sex: men thought that women would judge risk-taking more attractive for a short-term relationship than women actually judged it. Thus, there appears to be a discrepancy between the women's assessment of male risk-taking behavior and the men's beliefs about the women's assessments, which needs to be further explored.

In conclusion, the present study corroborates previous suggestions that male physical risk-taking behavior affects mate preference assessments. Russian men and women judged occasional risk-taking as the most attractive in the ST context, whereas low risk-takers received the highest ratings for LT attractiveness and provisioning quality. High risk-taking was not considered most attractive, possibly because of the link of risk-taking with aggression, which may be especially applicable in Russian men. We acknowledge that these findings are preliminary. Future studies should aim to replicate sex differences in risk-taking behavior in Russian samples. Moreover, in addition to extending the current research to other domains of risky behaviors, it may be worthwhile to include information on the cultural background of participants when comparing risk-taking behavior and assessment of risks across cultures.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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