

Examining Disinhibition at the Trait-Level Shows Differential Associations with Emotion Regulation

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Introduction

- Disinhibition is a lack of inhibitory control, emotional and cognitive, without regard to past learning or consideration of future consequences
- Disinhibition can reflect outwardly in people through behavioral changes like aggression (Edward, 2020)
- Emotion regulation is the ability to exert and control emotional state
 - Those who have externalizing mental health conditions, which involves higher levels of disinhibition, lack the control necessary to adequately regulate their emotions (Schreiber et al., 2012).
 - In the literature, it is less evident precisely which traits of disinhibition play the largest role in emotion dysregulated individuals.

The purpose of this study is to understand how disinhibition, at the trait-level, affect an individual's ability to manage their emotions effectively.

We predict that impulsivity and irresponsibility will negatively impact a person's ability to manage their emotions.

Method

Sample:
281 college-aged adults recruited in Spring 2024 at UNT

- Measures:**
- Level of Personality Functioning- relevant items were used to measure emotion dysregulation
 - Personality Inventory for DSM-5- Disinhibition domain

Distractibility and risk-taking are strong predictors of emotion dysregulation when accounting for other disinhibition traits.

Results

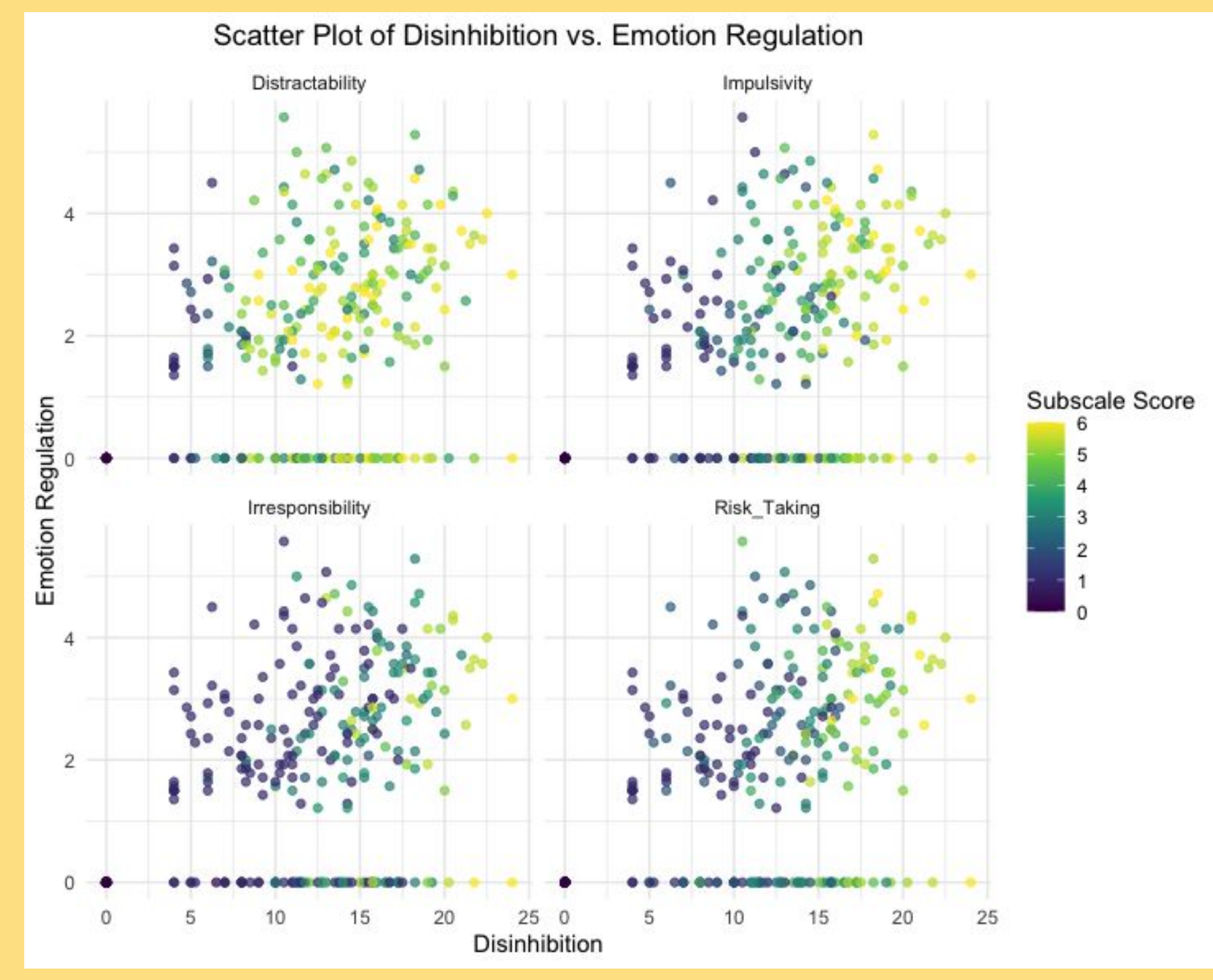


Figure 1. Scatter plots of disinhibition vs. emotion regulation for different traits. Each subplot represents the relationship between emotion regulation and disinhibition for one of four traits: Distractibility, Impulsivity, Irresponsibility, and Risk Taking. Data points are color-coded based on subscale scores ranging from 0 to 6.

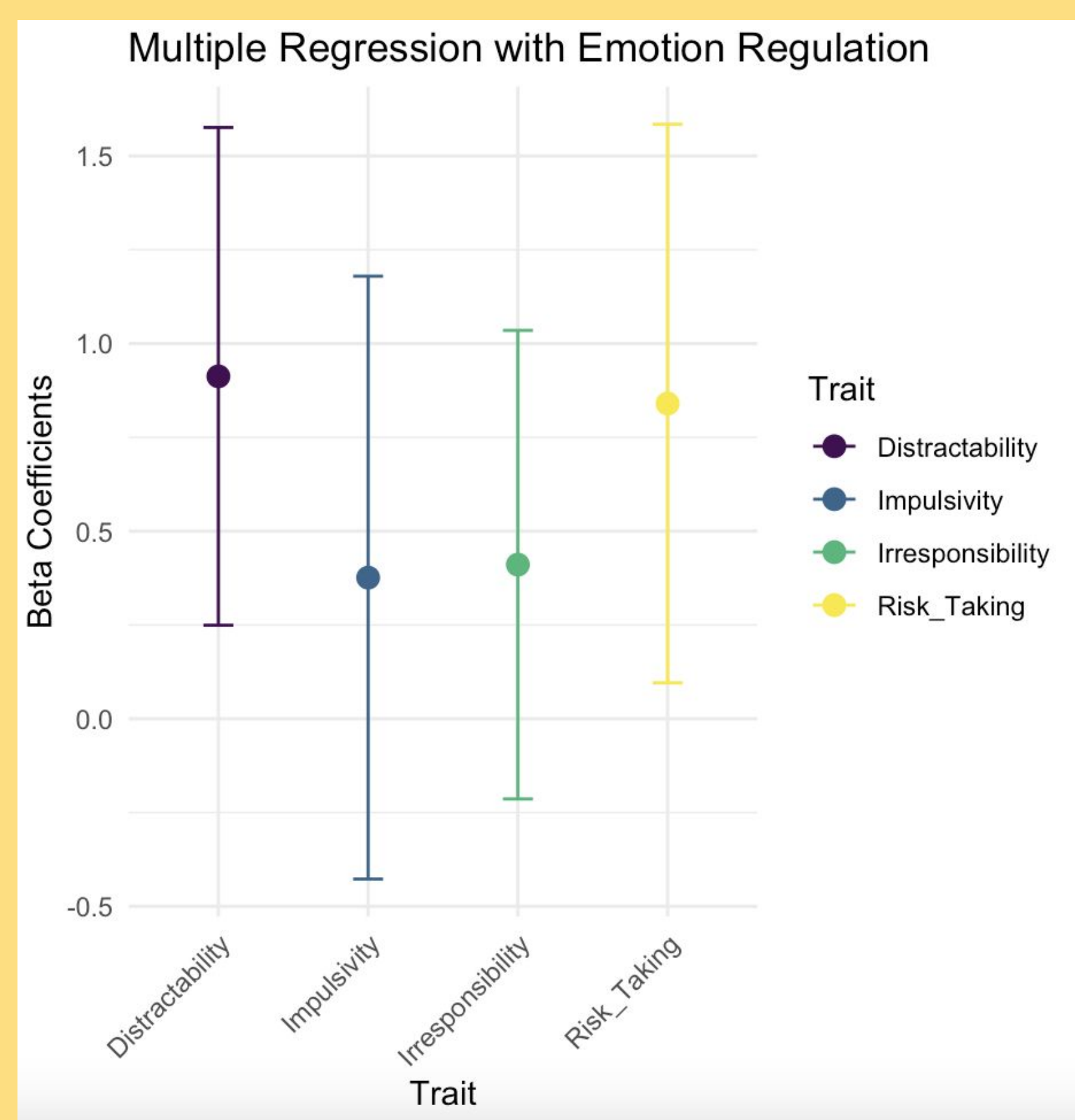


Figure 2. Multiple regression analysis with emotion regulation as the dependent variable and four traits (Distractibility, Impulsivity, Irresponsibility, and Risk Taking) as independent variables. The plot displays the beta coefficients and 95% confidence intervals for each trait.

Domain / Trait	Bivariate Correlations		Multiple Regression	
	r	P-value	Beta Coefficients	P-value
Disinhibition	.41	<.001	-	-
Distractibility	.34	<.001	.91	<.001
Impulsivity	.34	<.001	.37	.35
Risk Taking	.34	<.001	.84	.03
Irresponsibility	.28	<.001	.42	.19

Discussion

When using bivariate correlations, similar effect sizes were observed between various disinhibition traits and emotion dysregulation. However, when these traits were controlled for in a multiple regression model, only distractibility and risk-taking emerged as significant predictors of emotion dysregulation.

- Distractibility emerged as an unexpected result.
- Previous research indicates that impulsivity is closely related to emotion dysregulation in cases of ADHD, as well as other mental illnesses (Joyner, 2021); however, it was not found to be relevant in our study.
- Distractibility is often an automatic, unconscious process that disrupts emotional awareness and regulation by causing abrupt shifts in focus.
- Risk-taking involves conscious decision-making, where potential risks are acknowledged but ignored.
- These traits contribute to emotion dysregulation by undermining the stable management of emotional responses

