“IT RAISES MORAL CONCERNS, SO IT MUST BE RISKY”

INVESTIGATING RISK AND MORALITY

We assume that the more people perceive a risk issue to be controversial and disputed, the stronger the association between their risk and moral judgments.

METHOD

Experimental Manipulation: We created three different conditions by priming participants (word sorting task) according to scientific dispute.

I. High-dispute condition: science as preliminary, ambiguous, etc.
II. Low-dispute condition: science as clear, unambiguous, etc.
III. Control Condition: neutral priming

Dependent Measures: We measured risk and morality judgments.

STUDY 1

- Between-subjects measurement of variables: Participants gave either risk or morality judgments
- Implicit and explicit measurement of variables: Participants gave both implicit and explicit judgments (of either risk or morality), implicit judgments were measured using a single-category IAT (see Figure 1).

STUDY 2

- Within-subjects Measurement: Participants gave both risk and morality judgments
- Implicit Measurement: Risk and morality judgments were measured using implicit measures (two adaptations of the single-category IAT)

RESULTS

In study 1, explicit risk-morality correlations did not differ from zero in any of the three conditions.

Aggregated implicit risk-morality correlations found in Study 1 [●] and in Study 2 [▲] are displayed in Figure 2.

In line with our assumptions, risk-morality correlations were in both studies high in the high-dispute condition. However, the pattern of risk-morality correlations across all three conditions differs between Study 1 and Study 2. Even though it seems that on an aggregated level risk and morality judgments are highly related with each other, this does not seem to be affected by the general perception of scientific dispute.

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