SCIENTIFIC ANNALS OF „ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA" UNIVERSITY OF IASI
VOLUME XVIII/2, SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK, 2025

DOI: 10.47743/asas-2025-2-826

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRIVING STYLE, EMOTIONAL REGULATION, AND FORGIVENESS, IN CASE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMITTED TRAFFIC OFFENSES

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Abstract. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between driving style, emotional regulation difficulties, and practicing forgiveness in the case of people convicted of traffic offenses. Data were collected from 60 people in the records of the Suceava Probation Service (20-66 years old), who were in different periods of sentence execution. From the data analysis, we found that people convicted of traffic offenses with impulse control difficulties adopt an irrational driving style, and the dissociative driving style correlates most with emotional regulation difficulties. Practicing situational forgiveness correlates with a patient's-attentive driving style, and the specifics of the driving style adopted differ depending on the period of supervision in which the convicted person is found. Difficulties in emotional awareness and an angry driving style correlate negatively with age, and unmarried people have a more angry and irrational driving style. The present study concludes that for people convicted of traffic offenses, the probation counsellor's interventions should aim to encourage the practice of situational forgiveness, as an emotional regulation strategy that favors the patient-attentive driving style, but also to support young people and unmarried people, the most vulnerable categories, in situations where they adopt an angry and irrational driving style.

Keywords: driving style, traffic offense, emotional regulation difficulties, self-forgiveness, situational forgiveness.

Résumé : L'objectif de cette étude était d'examiner la relation entre le style de conduite, les difficultés de régulation émotionnelle et la pratique du pardon chez les personnes condamnées pour des infractions routières. Les données ont été recueillies auprès de 60 personnes (âgées de 20 à 66 ans) inscrites au registre du Service de probation de Suceava, à différentes périodes d'exécution de leur peine. L'analyse des données a révélé que les personnes condamnées pour des infractions routières présentant des difficultés de contrôle des impulsions adoptent un style de conduite irrationnel, et que le style de conduite dissociatif est le plus corrélé aux difficultés de régulation émotionnelle. La pratique du pardon situationnel est corrélée à un style de conduite patient et attentif, dont les spécificités varient selon la période de surveillance de la personne condamnée. Les difficultés de conscience émotionnelle et la conduite colérique sont négativement corrélées avec l'âge, et les personnes célibataires ont davantage un style de conduite

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colérique et irrationnel. La présente étude conclut que, pour les personnes condamnées pour des infractions routières, les interventions du conseiller de probation devraient viser à encourager la pratique du pardon situationnel, comme stratégie de régulation émotionnelle favorisant un style de conduite patient et attentif, mais aussi à soutenir les jeunes et les personnes célibataires, catégories les plus vulnérables, lorsqu'ils adoptent un style de conduite colérique et irrationnel.

Mots-clés : style de conduite, infraction routière, difficultés de régulation émotionnelle, pardon à soi-même, pardon situationnel.

Rezumat. Obiectivul studiului a fost de examinare a relației dintre stilul de conducere, dificultățile de reglare emoțională și practicarea iertării, în cazul persoanelor condamnate pentru infracțiuni rutiere. Datele au fost colectate de la 60 de persoane aflate în evidențele Serviciului de Probațiune Suceava (20-66 ani), aflate în perioade diferite de executare a pedepsei. Din analiza datelor am constatat că persoanele condamnate pentru infracțiuni rutiere având dificultăți de control a impulsului adoptă un stil de conducere irațional, iar stilul de conducere disociativ corelează cel mai mult cu dificultățile de reglare emoțională. Practicarea iertării situaționale corelează cu un stil de conducere răbdător-atent, iar specificul stilului de conducere adoptat diferă în funcție de perioada de supraveghere în care se regăsește persoana condamnată. Dificultățile de conștientizare emoțională și stilul de conducere furios corelează negativ cu vârsta, iar persoanele necăsătorite au mai mult un stil de conducere furios și irațional. Concluzia studiului de față este că pentru persoanele condamnate pentru infracțiuni rutiere, intervențiile consilierului de probațiune ar trebui să vizeze încurajarea practicării iertării situaționale, ca strategie de reglare emoțională care favorizează stilul de conducere răbdător-atent, dar și sprijinirea tinerilor și a persoanelor necăsătorite, categoriile cele mai vulnerabile, în situația în care adoptă un stil de conducere furios și irațional.

Cuvinte cheie: stil de conducere, infracționalitate rutieră, dificultăți de reglare emoțională, iertare de sine, iertare situațională.

1. Introduction

Traffic offenses represent one of the most common forms of law violation, with major implications in the occurrence of accidents, resulting in injuries or fatalities, the driving style correlating to a great extent with the non-compliance of road legislation (Holman & Popușoi, 2020). Thus, in Suceava county in the year 2021, 182 serious accidents (90 deceased persons, 118 seriously injured persons, 106 lightly injured persons) and 766 minor accidents resulted in 987 persons slightly injured (Synthesis of the Suceava county Policy Inspectorate, the number 85.593/21.01.2022).

Driving style is defined as the usual way of a person to drive a vehicle (Hăvîrneanu, 2013), referring to the choice of speed, compliance with traffic laws (Navon-Eyal & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2020), level of assertiveness, and attention (Holman & Popușoi, 2020). Referring to the typology of driving style, specialized literature indicates the existence of two major categories: *maladaptive driving style*, that includes: *the irrational driving style*, associated with the disregard for road legislation, driving under the influence of alcohol, *risky driving style*,

characterized by taking on dangerous situations in traffic, *the furios driving style*, characterized by a violent behaviour in traffic and intense negative emotions, *anxious driving style*, when the driver has a hesitant behaviour, *dissociative driving style*, when the driver commits mistakes in traffic due to the speed of obtaining fun and *adaptative driving style*, that includes: *the driving style of distress avoidance,* when the driver engages in relaxation activities aimed at reducing stress and *the patient-attentive driving style* when the driver is cautious and polite in traffic (Holman & Popușoi, 2020). In other studies, driving styles are divided into four categories: reckless and negligent, angry and hostile, anxious, patient, and attentive (Navon & Taubman -Ben-Ari, 2019).

Referring to theoretical models of driving styles, *The hierarchical Model of driving styles* highlights the role of emotions in relation to driving style and presents three levels: first level is represented by the feelings of the driver who exerts influence over the second level, represented by the state of the driver, and the two levels act upon the third level, represented by the driving style (Aguilar *et al*, 2017; Cordero *et al*, 2020).

Emotional regulation is defined as a set of strategies that individuals use to influence the emotions they experience, the timing of when they express them, and how they manage and express them (Fischer *et al*, 2016). In turn, difficulties in emotional regulation refer to engaging in impulsive behaviours that contradict a person's values, as well as the inability to integrate into one's life the undesirable situations they face (Kalantar, 2017). Referring to the Emotion Regulation Model, emotional regulation involves a set of skills such as *emotional acceptance, impulse control, emotional awareness, emotional clarity, the ability to engage in desired goals, emotional regulation strategies*, and the absence of these skills leading to difficulties in emotional regulation (Trógolo *et al*, 2014).

On the other hand, emotional regulation is associated with a high level of forgiveness. Forgiveness represents the motivation to let go of feelings of anger and the desire for revenge against the person who has offended us, while also serving to restore the dimension of morality or even improve it compared to how it was before the offensive situation occurred (Worthington & Wade, 2007). Referring to the source of the transgression, three types of forgiveness are identified*: self-forgiveness*, in which the source of the transgression is oneself; *forgiveness of others,* in which the source of the transgression is others; and *situational forgiveness*, in which the origin of the transgression is an external situation (Zmău & Cuza, 2018).

1.1. Driving style, emotional regulation, and forgiveness

1.1.1. Driving style and emotional regulation

Emotion is an important factor that affects the driver´s behaviour (Wang *et al.*, 2018). Thus, drivers who experience anger are more prone to aggressive, risky behaviours in traffic; those who experience fear choose a cautious driving style, anxious drivers resort to aggressive behaviour in traffic, drivers with feelings of helplessness exhibit conservative behaviour, and drivers with feelings

of contempt will adopt radical driving strategies (Wang *et al.*, 2018). Regarding negative emotional states, studies show that they influence the increase in drivers' desire to engage in risky driving and commit traffic errors, such as decreased perception of dangers and direction while driving (Navon & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2019).

Emotional regulation difficulties are positively and significantly correlated with reckless, negligent, anxious, angry, and hostile driving styles and negatively and significantly correlated with the patient's-attentive driving style (Navon & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2019). Difficulties in emotion regulation correlate with different driving styles, except for the stress-reducing driving style, which does not significantly correlate with any of the difficulties in emotional regulation (Trógolo *et al.*, 2014). Thus, the angry driving style correlates with difficulties in impulse control, the dissociative driving style correlates with difficulties in engaging in goal-oriented behaviour, the anxious driving style correlates with the non-acceptance of emotional responses, the risky driving style correlates with difficulties in impulse control, and the attentive driving style correlates with a lack of emotional awareness (Trógolo *et al.*, 2014).

If related to the variable age, it has been identified that between age and driving style adopted, younger drivers adopt a maladaptive driving style: anxious, reckless and careless, angry and hostile, compared to older ones (Long & Ruosong, 2019; Padilla *et al.*, 2020; Navon &Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2019). Studies explain this aspect through the fact that, in the case of young drivers, emotions influence behaviour in traffic (Cerniglia *et al.*, 2015; Navon-Eyal & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2020).

1.1.2. The driving style and forgiveness

Focusing on the connection between forgiveness and driving style, studies show that the higher the level of forgiveness, the greater the tendency to adopt a patient-attentive driving style and the less tendency to adopt a reckless and neglectful, angry, hostile, and anxious driving style (Navon & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2019). There are also studies showing that forgiveness (situational and towards others) has a significant indirect effect on traffic offenses, through the mediating variables of aggressive and reckless driving style that has a significant indirect effect on traffic offenses, through the mediating variables of aggressive and risky driving style (Bumgarner *et al.*, 2016).

Regarding the population in Romania, studies indicate that the level of self-forgiveness, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations is higher among young people than among the elderly (Zmău & Cuza, 2018), in contrast to the results of other studies suggesting that older individuals are more forgiving compared to younger ones.

1.1.3. Forgiveness and emotional regulation

Forgiveness is closely related to emotions, as the process of forgiving requires the regulation of emotions towards the transgressor, which involves replacing negative emotions (anger, hatred, contempt) with positive emotions

(empathy, love, etc) (Ho *et al.*, 2020). The lack of forgiveness is associated with aversive emotions and physiological changes, such as an increased heart rate and blood pressure (Oyen Witvliet *et al.*, 2001), while the practice of forgiveness correlates positively with well-being, life satisfaction, general mental health, and negatively with anxiety, depression, suicide tendencies, alcohol consumption, feelings of anger, guilt, and shame (Worthington & Wade, 2020).

The present study aimed to identify persons convicted of traffic offenses who had a high level of emotional regulation difficulties because this category is more vulnerable to adopting a maladaptive driving style, which could represent a risk factor, both for themselves and for road safety.

These steps could have implications for discouragement of maladaptive driving style, for their behavioural rehabilitation, for discouraging road crime and increasing traffic safety, and also including forgiveness as a strategy for emotional regulation.

Taking the results of previous studies as a reference point, the following hypotheses have emerged**:**

1. There is a significant negative correlation between emotional regulation difficulties and adaptive driving style (patient-attentive, distress-avoidant style) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
2. There is a significant positive correlation between emotional regulation difficulties and maladaptive driving styles (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
3. There is a significant positive correlation between forgiveness (of self and situational) and adaptive driving style (patient-attentive, distress avoidance style) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
4. There is a significant negative correlation between forgiveness (of self and situational) and maladaptive driving style (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
5. There is a significant negative correlation between emotional regulation difficulties and forgiveness (of self and situational) in the case of individuals convicted of tragic offenses.
6. There is a significant negative correlation between age and emotional regulation difficulties in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
7. There is a significant negative correlation between age and forgiveness (of self and situational) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
8. There is a significant negative correlation between age and maladaptive driving style (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses.
9. There are significant differences regarding driving styles among individuals convicted of traffic offenses, depending on the supervision period.

9.1. There are significant differences regarding the adaptive driving style (patient-attentive, avoidance of distress) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses, depending on the supervision period.

9.2 There are significant differences regarding the maladaptive driving style (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative) in the case of individuals convicted of traffic offenses, depending on the supervision period.

10. There are significant differences regarding driving style depending on marital status.

10.1. There are significant differences regarding adaptive driving style (patient-attentive, avoidance of distress) depending on marital status.

10.2. There are significant differences regarding maladaptive driving style (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative) depending on marital status.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

Data were collected from 60 individuals, registered in Suceava Probation Service, convicted of traffic offenses: 65% (n=39) driving under the influence of alcohol, 16.7% (n=10) driving without license, 8,3% (n=5) refusal to provide biological samples to determine blood alcohol concentration, 3.3% (n=2) leaving the scene of an accident, 3.3% (n=2) driving an unregistered vehicle, 3.3% (n=2) negligent bodily injury. In the case of 66.7% (n=40), the execution of the sentence under supervision was suspended, while in the case of 33.3% (n=20), the application of the sentence was postponed. The participants are at distinct stages of serving their sentences: 53.3% (n=32) are at the beginning of the supervision period, 35% (n=21) are in the middle of the period, and 11,7% (n=7) are at the end. All participants are male, with different marital statuses: 41,7% are married (n=25), 58.3% are unmarried (n=35), 10%, with ages between 20-66 years (M = 36.1, SD=11.8).

2.2. Procedure

Participants received information regarding the purpose of the research, expressed their consent to participate, and were assured of the confidentiality of the information. They were also informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The instruments were completed individually, with some participants requiring additional explanations regarding the completion procedure.

2.3. Instruments

*Multidimensional Driving Style Inventory (*MDSI-RO) (Taubman-Ben-Ari *et al.*, 2004; Holman & Havârneanu, 2015) has a total of 41 items, measured on a 6-point scale, ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 6 (*almost always*)**.** Item 10 is

reversed. It contains 7 subscales: Irrational-6 items (e.g. „In the city, I speed over the legal limit"), Anxious- 4 items (e.g." I feel stressed while driving"), Patient-Cautious -7 items (e.g. „I drive carefully"), Risky - 6 items (e.g." I like to feel the power of the engine"), Angry - 8 items (e.g. „I argue with other drivers or pedestrians"), Distress - 4 items (e.g. „I listen to music to relax while driving), Dissociative- 6 items (e.g." I drive to a different destination than the one I intended to go initially"). In the sample of this study, the 7 subscales of the MDSI show good internal consistency (α=.83).

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) (Victor & Klonsky, 2016) has a total of 18 items, with response options on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*almost never)* to 5 (*almost always*). Items 1, 4, and 6 are reversed. It contains 6 subscales: Awareness - 3 items measuring lack of emotional awareness(e.g. „I pay attention to my feelings"), Clarity - 3 items measuring lack of emotional clarity (e.g. „I find it difficult to figure out my feelings"), Goals - 3 items measuring difficulty engaging in goal-oriented behaviour (e.g. „When I am upset, I have not control at all"), Impulse, contains 3 items measuring difficulty controlling impulses (e.g." When I am upset, I become irritable with myself for feeling this way"), Non-acceptance, with 3 items measuring non-acceptance of responses (e.g. „When I am upset, I feel guilty for feeling that way"), Strategies - 3 items measuring limited access to emotional regulation strategies (e.g. „When I am upset, I find it difficult to focus on other things"). In the sample of this study, the 6 subscales of the DERS show good internal consistency (α=.82).

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) (Thompson *et al.*, 2005) contains 3 subscales: Self Forgiveness, Forgiveness of Others, and Situational Forgiveness. In the present research, the Self-Forgiveness and the Situational Forgiveness. The Self-Forgiveness Subscale contains 6 items and measures self-forgiveness (e.g.," Although I feel bad at first when I make mistakes, over time I can offer myself leniency"). The items have response options on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*almost always false for me*) to 7 (*almost always true for me*). Items 2, 4, and 6 are reverse-scored. The Situational Forgiveness Subscale contains 6 items and measures forgiveness of situations (e.g., „Over time, I can be understanding of the bad circumstances in my life"). Items 7, 9, and 11 have been reverse-scored. In the sample of this study, the two subscales of the HFS show acceptable internal consistency (α=.60).

3. Results

The data were collected following the application of the aforementioned instruments and were analysed and interpreted using the statistical program Jamovi (Version 1.6).

Hypothesis 1: There is no correlation between emotional regulation difficulties and adaptive driving style (r = .05, p=.657), (r = .05, p= .694), respectively, between emotional regulation difficulties and patient-attentive driving style (r = .19, p= .142), and between emotional regulation difficulties and distress-avoiding style. Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Difficulties in emotional regulation do not correlate with maladaptive driving style (r = .24, p .057) (see Table 1). On the other hand, it is observed that difficulty in impulse control positively correlates with irrational driving style (r = .27, p= .036), that lack of emotional clarity positively correlates with dissociative driving style (r =.35, p<.05), that difficulty in engaging in goal-oriented behaviour positively correlates with dissociative driving style (r=. 41, p= .001), that difficulty in impulse control positively correlates with dissociative driving style (r=. 45, p<.01), that non-acceptance of emotional responses positively correlates with dissociative driving style (r=. 34, p=.008) that limited access of emotional regulation strategies positively correlates with dissociative driving style (r=. 29, p=.022) (see Table 1). Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 3: There is no correlation between emotional regulation difficulties and forgiveness (r = - .24, p= .057) (emotional regulation difficulties and self-forgiveness (r = - .18, p= .155); emotional regulation difficulties and situational forgiveness (r = - .21, p= .098) (see Table 1). On the other hand, it is highlighted that, from the category of emotional regulation difficulties, the difficulty of engaging in goal-oriented behaviour correlates negatively and significantly with self-forgiveness (r = - .25, p= .049) și and situational forgiveness (r = - .27, p= .035) (see Table 1). Hypothesis 3 is partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 4: There is no correlation between forgiveness and adaptive driving style (r = .18, p .166) (see Table 1). On the other hand, it is observed that there is a significant positive correlation between situational forgiveness and patient-attentive driving style (r = .29, p .023). Situational forgiveness and the distress avoidance driving style do not correlate (r = .04, p .719). No correlation was found between self-forgiveness and the patient-attentive driving style (r=.19, p=.146) and between self-forgiveness and the distress avoidance driving style (r=.01, p=.889) (see Table 1). Hypothesis 4 is partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 5: Forgiveness does not correlate with maladaptive driving style (r = -.12, p=.345); self-forgiveness and maladaptive driving style (r = -.009, p= .944); situational forgiveness and maladaptive driving style (r = -.17, p=.178) (see Table 1). Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

Hypothesis 6: Age does not correlate with difficulties in emotional regulation (r = -.18, p .162) (see Table 1). On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between emotional awareness and age, which is statistically significant (r = -.35, p=.005) (see Table 1). No other difficulties in emotional regulation significantly correlate with age. Hypothesis 6 is partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 7: Age correlates positively and significantly with forgiveness (r = .33, p=.010), as well as with self-forgiveness (r = .29, p=.022). There is no correlation between age and situational forgiveness (r = .24, p=.055) (see Table 1). Hypothesis 7 is partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 8: A significant negative correlation was obtained between age and maladaptive driving style (r = -.26, p=.038) (see Table 1). On the other hand, it is observed that, from the category of maladaptive driving style, only the

angry driving style correlates negatively and significantly with age (r = -.31, p=.014) (see Table 1). Hypothesis 8 is partially confirmed

Hypothesis 9: The values of unifactorial F-ANOVA-test show that, from the category of adaptive driving style, only the distress-avoidant driving style according to the supervision period F(4.26), p=.024< .05, being more common at the beginning of the supervision period (Md=7.56), than in the middle (Md=6.29) or at the end of it (Md=4,57 (see Table 2 and 3). There are no significant differences regarding the patient-attentive driving style depending on the supervision period, F(0,14), p=.870> 0.05. There are no significant differences regarding the maladaptive driving style (irrational F(0,96), p=.402> .05, anxious F(0.86), p=.432> .05, risky F(0.45), p=.643> .05, furious F(2,03), p=.167> .05, dissociative F(0,30), p=.740> .05), depending on the supervision period. Hypothesis 9 is partially confirmed.

Hypothesis 10: There are significant differences regarding maladaptive driving style depending on marital status [t(58)= -2.33, p=.024, p<0.05]. Thus, unmarried individuals achieved significantly higher average scores regarding maladaptive driving style (Md=56.8), compared to married individuals (Md=46.4). On the other hand, it is observed that within the category maladaptive driving style, the angry driving style [t(58)= -2.09, p=.041, p<0.05] and irrational driving style [t(58)= -2,39, p=.020, p<0.05] show differences depending on marital status. Thus, unmarried individuals scored significantly higher on average in the angry driving style (Md=14.1) compared to married individuals (Md=10.6). The situation is similar in the case of irrational driving style with unmarried individuals (Md=15.3) achieving significantly higher average scores than married individuals (Md=11.4) (see Tables 4 and 5). There are no differences between adaptive driving style (patient-attentive, distress avoidance), depending on civil status. Hypothesis 10 is partially confirmed.

Table 1. The correlation coefficients between variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. Clarity	—																			
2. Consciousness	.19	—																		
3. Objectives	.17	.08	—																	
4. Impulse	.32*	.11	.71***	—																
5. Non-acceptance	.25	-.12	.69***	.65***	—															
6. Strategies	.24	.02	.71***	.64***	.65***	—														
7. Self forgiv.	.07	.008	-.25*	-.13	-.17	-.21	—													
8. Sit, forgiv.	-.05	-.02	-.27*	-.23	-.19	-.18	.32*	—												
9. Irrational d.s.	.05	.22	.16	.27*	.13	.10	-.15	-.20	—											
10. Anxious d.s.	-.03	.04	.02	-.01	-.06	.07	-.17	-.19	.18	—										
11. Patience-attentive d.s.	-.03	-.08	.11	-.006	.20	.02	.19	.29*	-.16	-.23	—									
12. Risky d.s.	.19	.21	-.02	.13	-.04	-.07	.03	-.11	.46***	.06	-.24	—								
13. Angry d.s.	.17	.18	-.09	-.03	-.12	-.04	.12	-.15	.41***	.06	-.30*	.41***	—							
14. Avoidance-distress d.s.	.20	.12	.14	.15	.042	.09	.01	.04	.02	.07	-.11	.23	.28*	—						
15. Dissociative d.s	.35**	.23	.41**	.45***	.34**	.29*	-.11	-.07	.19	-.04	.04	.11	.13	.40**	—					
16. Adaptive d.s.	-.05	-.06	.12	-.01	.17	.06	.09	.18	-.06	.28*	.86***	-.21	-.26*	-.07	.02	—				
17. Maladaptive d.s	.25	.29*	.10	.23	.03	.05	-.009	-.17	.72***	.13	-.28*	.77***	.75***	.49***	.38**	.21	—			
18. Age	-.01	.35**	-.12	-.08	-.13	-.22	.29*	.24	-.13	-.06	.08	-.15	-.31*	-.13	-.11	.05	-.26*	—		
19.Total DERS	.54***	.26*	.84***	.84***	.78***	.82***	-.18	-.21	.25	.01	.05	.10	.01	.19	.50***	.05	.24	-.18	—	
20.Total forgiveness	.008	-.01	-.32*	-.23	-.23	-.24	.77***	.85***	-.22	-.22	.30*	-.05	-.04	.04	-.11	.18	-.12	.33**	.24	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 2. One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)

	F	df1	df2	p
The avoidance-distress driving style	4.26	2	29.6	0.024

Table 3. Group Descriptives

	supervision period	N	Mean	SD	SE
The avoidance-distress driving style	the beginning of the supervision	32	7.56	5.27	0.931
	the middle of the supervision	21	6.29	2.97	0.648
	the end of the supervision	7	4.57	1.51	0.571

Table 4. T-Test

		t	df	**p**
The maladaptive driving style	Student's t	-2.33	58	0.024
The angry driving style	Student's t	-2.09	58	0.041
The irrational driving style	Student's t	-2.39	58	0.020

Table 5. Group Descriptives

	Group	N	Mean	SD	
The maladaptive driving style	married	25	46.4	14.40	2.881
	unmarried	35	56.8	18.90	3.20
The angry driving style	married	25	10.6	4.68	0.936
	unmarried	35	14.1	7.14	1.21
The irrational driving style	married	25	11.4	5.50	1.100
	unmarried	35	15.3	6.77	1.14

4. Discussions

The research results show that the difficulties of emotional regulation faced by individuals convicted of traffic offenses recorded by the Suceava Probation Service do not correlate with the adaptive driving style (patient-attentive and distress avoidance) (Hypothesis 1). These results contradict previous studies, indicating that difficulties of emotional regulation negatively correlate significantly with adaptive driving style; Trógolo *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, it was found that difficulties of emotional regulation positively correlate with

maladaptive driving style (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative (Hypothesis 2). Thus, it can be observed that, from the category of emotional regulation difficulties, impulse control positively correlates with the irrational driving style, a fact supported by previous studies (Totkova, 2020). Also, the lack of emotional clarity, difficulty in impulse control, non-acceptance of emotional responses, limited access to emotional regulation strategies, and the difficulty in engaging in goal-oriented behaviour positively correlate with the dissociative driving style, the latter correlation being confirmed by other studies (Trógolo et al., 2014) . The fact that emotional regulation difficulties partially correlate with the maladaptive driving style indicates that there may be other variables capable of influencing this style, such as age (Long & Ruosong, 2019; Padilla *et al.*, 2020; Navon & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2019). Regarding the correlation between emotional regulation difficulties and forgiveness (self-forgiveness and situational forgiveness), it has been found that the difficulty of engaging in goal-oriented behaviour negatively correlates significantly with self-forgiveness and situational forgiveness (Hypothesis 3). Analyzing the correlation between forgiveness (self and situational) and adaptive driving style, it is noted that situational forgiveness positively correlates with the patient-attentive driving style (Hypothesis 4), a finding also confirmed by previous studies (Navon & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2019). Concerning the correlation between maladaptive driving style and forgiveness (self and situational), the results are statistically insignificant (Hypothesis 5). Age represents a variable that correlates negatively with difficulties in emotional regulation, more specifically, only with the lack of emotional awareness (Hypothesis 6). This aspect is contradicted by other previous studies that highlight the existence of a significant positive relationship between the two variables (Fischer *et al.*, 2016). No significant correlation was identified between age and forgiveness (of self and situational) (Hypothesis 7), which contradicts the results of other previous studies that show that, regarding the population in Romania, there is a significant negative correlation between age and forgiveness, both self-forgiveness and situational forgiveness (Zmău & Cuza, 2018). A significant negative correlation is noted between age and maladaptive driving style, with the mention that, from the category of maladaptive driving style, only the angry driving style significantly negatively correlates with age (Hypothesis 8). The adaptive driving style (patient-attentive, distress avoidance) varies depending on the supervision period. Thus, the distress-avoidance driving style is practiced more in the early part of the supervision period, while the patient-attentive driving style and the maladaptive one (irrational, anxious, risky, angry, dissociative) do not differ during the supervision period (Hypothesis 9). Referring to civil status, the results indicate that there are differences regarding the maladaptive driving style, the angry and irrational driving style being more commonly encountered than among married individuals. On the other hand, it seems that adaptive driving style does not differ by civil status, as it can occur among both young people and adolescents or seniors (Hypothesis 10).

4. Conclusions

The research results indicate that individuals who are convicted for traffic offenses face difficulties in emotional regulation (such as poor impulse control, low emotional responsiveness, difficulties in understanding emotions and identifying solutions to regulate them, and engaging in goal-oriented behaviour) and exhibit a higher vulnerability in terms of adopting a maladaptive driving style (irrational and dissociative). Individuals who practice situational forgiveness (are more lenient regarding their legal situation) resort to an adaptive driving style (patient-attentive). Regarding emotional awareness, younger individuals show more deficits, and this category also more frequently adopts a maladaptive driving style (angry). It is noteworthy that the adaptive driving style (of distress avoidance) is practiced more at the beginning of the supervision period by the target group, which raises questions about its evolution throughout the execution of the sentence. The likelihood of practicing an angry driving style, which correlates with traffic offenses, is more pronounced among unmarried individuals compared to those who are married.

Therefore, the categories identified above will represent the subject of interest in the professional activity I carry out within the Suceava Probation Service. Thus, I express my intention to develop specialized programs (mainly aimed at young people), in partnership with the National Probation Directorate, psychological offices, representatives of the religious communities, focusing on identifying difficulties in emotional regulation and practicing forgiveness as an emotional regulation strategy, there efforts converging towards adopting an adaptive driving style which, as studies show, has a negative correlation with traffic offenses.

4.1. Strong points and limitations

A primary strong point of the research is represented by the category of persons investigated, considering that, until now, a limited number of studies have been conducted on this sample. A second positive aspect that should be noted is related to the research results, which can serve as a starting point for initiating efforts to prevent traffic offenses and increase traffic safety.

As limitations of the study, I would point out the predominantly low to medium educational level of the individuals who are part of the target group, which complicated the data collection process. Another limitation relates to the fact that the individuals in the target group are serving a sentence, which could make some responses insincere or formulaic.

Nevertheless, the research reveals significant information about the specifics of the activity of the Suceava Probation Service, an institution with an impact on discouraging criminal phenomena, an institution that deserves to be better known.

4.2. Future research directions

Because the results of the present research indicate a high number of correlations between emotional regulation difficulties and dissociative driving style, I express interest in further exploring the association between these two variables in future studies.

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