

NEGATIVE PERSONALITY PREDISPOSITIONS AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOPATHIC TRENDS AMONG NON-FORENSIC POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the relationship and predictive strength of negative personality predispositions in psychopathic trends among non-forensic population.

Methodology: The current research was carried out in different cities of Punjab province (viz., Lahore, Islamabad, Multan, Sargodha and Faisalabad). The sample consisted of 400 participants from general population. Purposive sampling strategy was used for sample selection. Negative personality predispositions were measured by using Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ; Rohner, 2005) and psychopathic trends were measured by using Self-Report Psychopathy Scale-III-Revised (SRP-III-R; Paulhus, Neuman & Hare, 2009). The data were analyzed by SPSS version 21. Statistical analyses were carried out through correlation analysis, multiple step wise regression analyses and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

Results: There were 400 (221 men; 179 women) participants with age ranging between 20–44 years. Primary and secondary psychopathic trends were positively correlated with negative personality predispositions ($r = .37, p < .01$; $r = .39, p < .01$) respectively. The stepwise regression analyses revealed that negative personality predispositions hostility/aggression and negative world view significantly predicted primary psychopathic trends ($R^2 = .15, p < .01$; $R^2 = .17, p < .01$) respectively; whereas, hostility/aggression, negative self-esteem and dependency significantly predicted secondary psychopathic trends ($R^2 = .17, p < .01$; $R^2 = .22, p < .01$; $R^2 = .23, p < .01$) respectively.

Conclusion: Negative personality predispositions are substantial risk factors in the development of psychopathy among non-forensic population.

Key Words: Negative personality predispositions, Psychopathic trends, Non-forensic sample

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INTRODUCTION

Psychopathy plays a vital role in the development of violent and criminal behavior, so this construct has been rigorously researched by forensic psychologists and psychiatrists in the recent few years¹. Research on psychopathy among incarcerated clinical population is worthwhile having its own salient clinical and forensic implications. It is also worthy at the same time to study this “dark side” of personality characteristics among non-forensic/subclinical population. This sample provides important information on how normal personality segues to pathological condition².

Psychopathy is currently conceptualized as a sub-clinical variable that elicit significant variation within “normal” population. Subclinical psychopathy is known

as constellation of many traits such as high impulsivity, callousness, interpersonal manipulation, exploitation of other’s rights and thrill seeking; whereas, low empathy, anxiety, and remorse are other features. People who have high psychopathic tendencies are more anti-social and negative toward others^{3,4}. The sub-clinical psychopathy constitutes two main factors: primary psychopathy (Factor I) further classified as callous affect (low empathy) and interpersonal manipulation; and secondary psychopathy (Factor II) defined through erratic lifestyle and anti-social behavior like, crime^{3,5}.

A large body of research has been carried out in western countries to investigate the relationship between psychopathy construct, personality factors and personality disorders (psychopathy; antisocial personality disorder). Non-pathological dark triad personali-

ties, amongst sub-clinical psychopathy are the one. It is positively correlated with five factor model personality trait of extraversion and openness to experience. While sub-clinical psychopaths displayed negative correlations on agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism^{5,6}. In a recently conducted study by Dil et al⁷ psychopathic predispositions were evaluated among youth population of three districts of Hazara division: Haripur, Abbottabad, and Mansehra, and also investigated gender differences on psychopathy among criminal and non-criminal groups. Findings displayed significant differences on psychopathic predispositions of male and female criminals. Furthermore, criminals were found significantly different from non-criminal group.

A study was carried out to explore the sub-types of psychopathic traits (primary; secondary) among young male offenders, southeastern United States. The findings of the study saliently revealed that high psychopathic group exhibited more negative personality traits while low psychopathic group exhibited more positive personality traits⁸. Another research aimed at exploring the contributing factors in the personality development of criminals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, revealed difference between two comparative groups (criminals and non-criminals) in terms of personality traits. Results indicated that criminal group was high on hostility, dependence, negative self-esteem and self-adequacy, emotionality, instability and negative world view. On the other hand, non-criminals sample was enjoying good, warm and happy relations with others and also displayed high concern for social approval⁹.

Up till now most of the researches regarding psychopathic trends have been done in the west. There is gap in the perspective of the impact of factors (personality traits /predispositions) on the development of psychopathic trends among Pakistani general population including students and community sample. Pakistani culture is characterized as collectivistic culture¹⁰, therefore, the psychological determinants/predictors such as some negative personality predispositions involved in the development of psychopathic trends may vary from the western cultural context. The study is a ground work for future research work in the area of psychopathy as a sub-clinical construct in the Pakistani cultural context.

The study hypothesized the following: H1): There would be positive relationships among negative personality predispositions and psychopathic trends among non-forensic population; H2): Negative personality predispositions would significantly predict primary psychopathic trends among non-forensic population; H3): Negative personality predispositions would significantly predict secondary psychopathic trends among non-forensic population; and H4): There would be gender differences on psychopathic trends (primary and secondary) among non-forensic population.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional research design was used in the current study. Four hundred participants (students= 31.5%) and (community sample= 68.5%) with the age ranging between 20-44 years (mean 28.32 ±6.64 years) were selected by using convenient sampling technique. The sample size for the current study was determined by keeping in view the proposed statistical analyses. VanVoorhis et al¹¹ suggested a minimum sample size of (104+k), therefore by keeping in view current study statistical analyses there are 7 predictors/independent variables (7 sub-scales of Adult PAQ), the calculated sample size was (104+7= 111). In current research, three times more of the proposed calculated sample size was utilized to enhance the generalizability of the research findings with reference to general population. Further to manage the problem of data loss during data collection; the data of present study was collected from various cities of Punjab province and there was a chance of data loss therefore more data than the estimated size was collated to handle this issue as a precautionary measure.

The student sample was taken from various educational institutes (colleges and universities) of different cities of Punjab province. The community sample was diverse in nature: individuals with various professions e.g. teachers, doctors, IT professionals, managers, research officers, lawyers and businessmen etc. were selected from the general population of educational and research institutes, hospitals, banks, judiciary and business settings of various cities of Punjab province i.e. Lahore, Islamabad, Multan, Sargodha and Faisalabad.

With reference to the current study, the negative personality predispositions were operationally defined in terms of individual's scores on Adult PAQ, sub-scale scores i.e., hostility/aggression, dependency, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability and negative world-view measuring self-perception (personality and behavioral based). High scores on negative personality predispositions revealed higher levels of negative personality traits while lower scores on Adult PAQ revealed individual's having lower levels of negative personality traits.

The psychopathic trends were operationally defined in terms of individual's scores on SRP-III-R with two sub-types: primary and secondary psychopathy. Individual's scoring high revealed higher levels of psychopathic trends while those scoring low have lower levels of psychopathic trends. The non-forensic population was characterized as general population (students and community samples) working in various professional settings without the history of any conviction/ imprisonment.

The Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP-III-R)¹² consists of 64 items measuring primary and secondary psychopathic trends. The participants have to respond on five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale comprised of total four sub-scales namely: interpersonal manipulation (IPM), callous affect (CA), erratic life style (ELS) and antisocial behavior (ASB). Alpha reliabilities for the scale have been reported as: for IPM (.81), CA (.79), ELS (.74), ASB (.82) and overall SRP (.81). The scale was translated into Urdu language for the current study by (Habib & Batool)¹³. The alpha reliabilities for the Urdu translated version are as follows: IPM (.84), CA (.84), ELS (.82), ASB (.85) and overall SRP (.82) respectively.

Negative personality predispositions were measured by Adult PAQ¹⁴, a 63 items self-reported questionnaire with seven sub-scales to assess individual's perception of themselves on personality and behavioral dimensions of hostility/aggression, dependency, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability and negative world view. It provides rating on four points rating scale ranging from almost always true (4) to almost never true (1). Reliability coefficients (alphas) of Adult PAQ ranged from .73 to .85. Urdu translated version of Adult- PAQ by Munaf et al¹⁵ with .96 reliability coefficient was used in the current study. The alpha reliability of this scale in the current study was .76.

The demographic sheets along with two selected research measures were administered on the targeted sample. The Urdu translated versions of PAQ-Adult version and SRP-III-R were used for the better understanding of the study sample. The student sample was approached by seeking permission from the principals and head of the departments of various colleges and universities of Punjab province. A convenient sampling strategy was used for selecting the student and community sample. Both questionnaires with separate test instructions were given to them in individual and group settings.

The study participants were briefed about the purpose of the research and were included after getting their consent to participate in the study. Ethical considerations by American Psychological Association (APA) like informed consent, confidentiality and debriefing were kept in view while conducting the research.

Person-product moment correlation (to find out the correlation among negative personality predispositions and psychopathic trends), step wise regression analyses (to assess the predictive strength of negative personality predispositions) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to measure gender differences on psychopathic trends were applied for statistical analysis of the research data. The statistical analyses have been done

through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.

RESULTS

There were 400 (221 men; 179 women) participants with age ranging between 20-44 years. Table 1 shows correlations of primary and secondary psychopathy with sub-scales of PAQ. Primary psychopathy was positively correlated with hostility/aggression ($r = .39$, $p < .001$), negative self-esteem ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), negative self-adequacy ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), emotional instability ($r = .21$, $p < .01$) and negative world view ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). While, low correlations were found on the factors of dependency ($r = .13$, $p < .01$) and emotional unresponsiveness ($r = .16$, $p < .01$).

Secondary psychopathy was positively correlated with hostility/aggression ($r = .41$, $p < .001$), negative self-esteem ($r = .41$, $p < .01$), negative self-adequacy ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), emotional unresponsiveness ($r = .21$, $p < .01$) and negative world view ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). While, low correlations were found on emotional instability ($r = .17$, $p < .01$) and on the factor of dependency, the correlation was non-significant ($r = .04$, $p = ns$).

Stepwise regression analysis showed that two negative personality predispositions significantly predicted primary psychopathic trends. Hostility/aggression was identified as the most significant predictor in step 1, predicting 15% of variance in the primary psychopathic trends, $R^2 = .157$, $F(398) = 73.96$, $p < .01$. It reached up to 17% in step 2, when the factor of negative world view was added, $R^2 = .174$, $F(397) = 41.71$, $p < .01$. Rest of the PAQ sub-scales were automatically excluded during the step-wise regression analysis.

Table 3 indicates that in step 1 hostility/aggression was proved to be the most significant predictor accounting for 17% of variance, $R^2 = .174$, $F(398) = 83.84$, $p < .01$ in the outcome variable of secondary psychopathic trends. When negative self-esteem was added it increased up to 22%, $R^2 = .222$, $F(397) = 56.57$, $p < .01$ in step 2. While dependency was also proved to be another significant predictor of secondary psychopathic trends accounting for additional 1% of the variance respectively leading the model variance up to 23% in step 3 as $R^2 = .234$, $F(396) = 40.42$, $p < .01$.

Table 4 indicates the gender differences on the sub-scales of self-report psychopathy. Significant main effect of gender was found on the sub-scales of interpersonal manipulation, $F(1, 398) = 5.893$, $p < .01$, callous affect, $F(1, 398) = 5.433$, $p < .01$ and primary psychopathy, $F(1, 398) = 7.808$, $p < .01$. Whereas, non-significant effect of gender differences were found on erratic life style, $F(1, 398) = .621$, $p = ns$; antisocial behavior, $F(1, 398) = .087$, $p = ns$ and secondary psychopathy, $F(1, 398) = .872$, $p = ns$, respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations for the total score and sub-scales of SRP and PAQ

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
IPM	1													
CA	.46**	1												
ELS	.41**	.46**	1											
ASB	.42**	.42**	.49**	1										
PP	.86**	.84**	.51**	.49**	1									
SP	.48**	.51**	.80**	.91**	.58**	1								
PAQ1 HOST/AGG	.33**	.34**	.33**	.38**	.39**	.41**	1							
PAQ2 DEP	.19**	.04	.01	.05	.13**	.04	.32**	1						
PAQ3 NEG. SE	.26**	.28**	.35**	.35**	.32**	.41**	.54**	.23**	1					
PAQ4 NEG. SA	.22**	.26**	.33**	.29**	.28**	.35**	.51**	.23**	.72**	1				
PAQ 5 EM. URP	.07	.19**	.19**	.17**	.16**	.21**	.43**	.22**	.47**	.49**	1			
PAQ6 EM. ISTB	.18**	.18**	.16**	.13**	.21**	.17**	.47**	.33**	.43**	.45**	.43**	1		
PAQ7 NEG. WV	.21**	.27**	.30**	.21**	.28**	.28**	.41**	.12*	.58**	.54**	.39**	.30**	1	
PAQ TOT	.31**	.32**	.35**	.33**	.37**	.39**	.77**	.50**	.81**	.80**	.67**	.67**	.69**	1
Variables	M		SD		Range		Skewness		Kurtosis					
IPM	37.93		7.10		41		-.098		.081					
CA	39.13		6.61		38		.252		.056					
ELS	38.06		6.85		37		.114		-.121					
ASB	29.07		10.21		50		.661		-.229					
PP	77.06		11.71		70		-.049		-.033					
SP	67.13		14.82		76		.483		-.273					
PAQ1 HOST/AGG	19.59		5.01		23		.270		-.588					
PAQ2 DEP	22.07		4.50		24		-.366		-.089					
PAQ3 NEG. SE	18.29		4.35		20		.071		-.593					
PAQ4 NEG. SA	17.75		4.07		21		-.104		-.583					
PAQ 5 EM. URP	19.71		3.39		19		.144		-.195					
PAQ6 EM. ISTB	21.28		3.55		21		-.284		-.153					
PAQ7 NEG. WV	16.65		4.64		22		.180		-.570					
PAQ TOT	135.33		20.82		118		-.224		-.391					

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

Note: SRP= Self- Report Psychopathy Scale; PAQ= Personality Assessment Questionnaire; IPM= Interpersonal Manipulation; CA= Callous Affect; ELS= Erratic Life Style; ASB= Antisocial Behavior; PP= Primary Psychopathy; SP= Secondary Psychopathy; HOST/AGG= Hostility/ Aggression; DEP= Depression; NEG. SE= Negative Self- esteem; NEG. SA= Negative Self- adequacy; EM. URP= Emotional Unresponsivity; EM. ISTB= Emotional Instability; NEG. WV= Negative World View; PAQ TOT= Personality Assessment Questionnaire Total.

Skewness up to 3 and kurtosis less than 7 could be acceptable according to the research studies in social sciences 16. The table indicated that skewness is less than 3 and kurtosis is also less than 7 that indicated data were normally distributed.

Table 2: Stepwise regression analysis to predict primary psychopathic trends (n = 400)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2		
	B	S.E	β	B	S.E	β
HOST/AGG	.924	.107	.396	.785	.117	.336
NEG. WV				.361	.127	.143

Note: Only significant results are reported; $R^2 = .157$, $\Delta R^2 = .155$ for Step 1; $R^2 = .174$, $\Delta R^2 = .169$ for Step 2

Table 3: Stepwise regression analysis to predict secondary psychopathic trends (n=400)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	S.E	β	B	S.E	β	B	S.E	β
HOST/AGG	1.233	.135	.417	.814	.156	.275	.913	.160	.309
NEG. SE				.887	.180	.261	.917	.179	.269
DEP							-.392	.153	.119

$R^2 = .174$, $\Delta R^2 = .172$ for Step 1; $R^2 = .222$, $\Delta R^2 = .218$ for Step 2 and $R^2 = .234$, $\Delta R^2 = .229$ for Step 3

Table 4: MANOVA showing gender differences on sub-scales of self-report psychopathy scale

Source	DVs	SS	Df	MS	F	P	η ²
Gender	IPM	293.9	1	293.9	5.893	.016	.015
	CA	234.8	1	234.8	5.433	.020	.013
	ELS	29.2	1	29.2	.621	.431	.002
	ASB	9.2	1	9.2	.087	.768	.000
	PP	1053.9	1	1053.9	7.808	.005	.019
	SP	5.7	1	5.68	.026	.872	.000
Error	IPM	19844.2	398	49.9			
	CA	17198.9	398	43.3			
	ELS	18701.4	398	46.9			
	ASB	41615.8	398	104.6			
	PP	53722.9	398	134.9			
	SP	87720.2	398	220.4			
Total	IPM	595612.0	400				
	CA	629740.0	400				
	ELS	598156.0	400				
	ASB	379709.0	400				
	PP	2429766.0	400				
	SP	1890435.0	400				

DISCUSSION

Positive relationships appeared among various negative personality predispositions and psychopathic trends. The results coincide with Lee et al⁸ that high psychopathy correlates with negative personality traits whereas low psychopathy exhibits positive personality traits. The results are also in line with studies that found non-pathological, sub-clinical psychopathy to be significantly correlated with five factor model of personality (FFM), and the personality types: agreeableness and conscientiousness are the significant predictors of psychopathy and accounted 32% of the variance^{5,17}.

The results of this study revealed that personality predispositions: hostility/aggression and negative world view were significant predictors of primary psychopathy; while, personality predispositions: negative self-esteem and dependency along with hostility/aggression and negative world view were significant predictors of secondary psychopathy among the study sample. The results are consistent with Sing et al¹⁷ and Ross et al¹⁸ that suggested that personality traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness along with other personality factors of extraversion and openness are significant predictors of primary psychopathy.

Personality traits: conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness accounted for 31% of the variance in the other psychopathy facet, secondary psychopathy. Moreover agreeableness and conscientiousness were found to be the significant predictors for the total score of psychopathy and accounted by 32% of the variance in the model. The personality predispositions of hostility/aggression and negative world view are more externalized and behaviorally exhibited personality factors indicative of primary psychopathy while along with these two factors negative self-esteem and dependency are more internalized and emotionally exhibited personality factors indicative of secondary psychopathy.

The literature provides contrary findings on the role of gender differences on psychopathic trends; which may be due to the socio-cultural diversity among different populations. In support of gender differences, the self-reported and other-reported honesty-humility and emotionality dimension of HEXACO model of personality were found to be the strongest predictors of psychopathy across gender, displaying that men have higher psychopathic tendencies as compared to women¹⁹. In another research, non-significant gender differences on primary and secondary psychopathic tendencies were shown which are in line with the current research findings²⁰.

LIMITATIONS

The following limitations minimize the generalizabil-

ity of our findings: Only non-forensic sample was selected for the current study. The forensic sample should also be the part of the study so that comparisons should be drawn on the study variables among the two groups. The study sample was selected from the urban areas; the rural areas of Punjab should also be approached in future studies. Due to time restraint, the data was only collected from different cities of Punjab province. In order to increase the generalizability of the results the sample should be taken from other provinces of Pakistan so that the cultural diversity among different provinces should also be captured in the research findings. In current study the variable of personality constitutes only negative personality predispositions, for highlighting the strengths, the positive personality dimensions should also be measured in future studies to overcome the psychopathic tendencies.

CONCLUSION

Negative personality dispositions were significant risk factors for the development of psychopathic trends in the general population. While working on the relationship of personality dispositions in relation to psychopathic trends, we must not ignore the gender differences on this account.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current research outcomes would be useful in implementing counseling and community based services in various educational and occupational setups and additionally providing guidelines to the general population and government policy makers.

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CONTRIBUTORS

SH conception and research design, translation of research instrument in Urdu language, acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting the manuscript and revision of content. SSB conception and research design, supervision and expert opinion in translation of research instrument in Urdu language, acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting the manuscript and revision and critical analysis of the manuscript. All authors contributed significantly to the submitted manuscript.