

The Dark Triad of Personality: Predictors of on and off line bullying

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Dark Triad

- According to Paulhus and Williams (2002) there are three bad characters in personality

- Machiavellianism
- Narcissism
- Subclinical Psychopathy



- Considered to be problematic but yet possible for normal functioning.

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Dark Triad

- A key issue in the area surrounds the disagreement of the identification of these specific factors
 - Due to the fact that these concepts resemble one another conceptually and empirically
 - Due to the intercorrelations that exist between these traits, some view them as indistinguishable from each other in a normal sample and should be examined together instead of in isolation (McHoskey, Worzel & Szyarto, 1998)

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Dark Triad

- Clinical and Subclinical
 - Clinical: refers to those currently under supervision either clinically or forensically
 - Subclinical: refer to the wider community
 - Covers a wider range of individuals along with those that are considered to be extreme but still based in the community (Ray & Ray, 1982).

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Machiavellianism

- Christie and Geis (1970) identified how one's manipulative nature seen in social interactions mirrored that which was described by Machiavelli in 1513 (1992) in his advice to ruling that "the end justifies the means."
 - Tendency to manipulate and deceive others in social interactions for personal gain.
 - Characterised by a cold, cynical, unprincipled, and manipulative disposition, with the latter being the key to success.



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Narcissism & Psychopathy

- Both stem from the clinical domain where both are located as personality disorders in the DSM-IV-TR
 - Diagnosis in the clinical setting is categorical in nature e.g. In offenders if they attain 30 or more on the Hare's (1991) Psychopath Checklist, they are then categorised as a psychopath.
 - Mainstream personality assessments centre on dimensions of traits such as in Big Five, where these traits are assessed as extremes of normal functioning (Wiggins & Pincus, 1989) and psychopathy is associated with extremely low scores on the dimensions of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985)

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Narcissism

- Emerged with the attempt by Raskin and Hall (1979) to develop a subclinical version of DSM personality disorder
- Multi-dimensional concept consisting of characteristics such as exploitativeness, grandiosity, superiority along other parts (Miller, Campbell & Pilkonis, 2007)



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Narcissism

- Twenge and Foster (2010) reported that narcissism levels have risen over the past 20 years among college students
- Growing phenomenon of the 'Selfie syndrome', and use of social media such as Facebook.



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Psychopathy

- Psychopathy is considered a multifaceted construct consisting of
 - Impulsivity
 - psychopathic narcissism
 - callous unemotional traits
 - Lack of empathy or remorse,
 - poor affect
 - use of others for personal gain



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Overlap

- All three of these traits overlap conceptually and empirically
 - Machiavellianism and psychopathy (McHoskey, Worzel & Szyarto, 1998)
 - Narcissism and psychopathy (Khoo & Burch, 2008)
 - Lowest associations reported for machiavellianism and narcissism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).
- All to some extent concern those individuals who are socially malicious with inclinations of self-promotion, aggressiveness, emotional coldness and deceit (Paulhus & Williams, 2002)

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Dark Triad and Bullying

- Kerig and Sink (2010) reported associations between the dark triad and aggression
 - Narcissism and psychopathy related to physical aggression
 - Machiavellianism related to relational aggression
- Machiavellianism positively associated with adolescent bullying (Peeters, Cillessen & Scholte, 2010)
 - Higher in those that are involved in indirect bullying
- Psychopathy and narcissism found to have positive associations with aggression, but not bullying in some cases (Stickle, Kirkpatrick, & Brush, 2009)

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Dark Triad and Bullying

- However Ang, Tan, and Mansor (2011) has indicated that a positive association exists between narcissism (specifically exploitativeness) and cyberbullying
- Also, when psychopathy is examined through some of its facets, associations emerge for callous unemotional traits (CU) (Ciucci & Baroncelli, 2013).
 - Callous unemotional traits positively associated with direct bullying in preadolescent in Britain (Viding, Simmonds, Petrides, & Frederickson, 2009)



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Aim

- Aim of the research is two-fold
 - Examine the predictors of involvement in bullying behaviour (traditional and cyber) through the examination of the dark triad of personality
 - Research to date has examined these traits in relation to school bullying but not as a triad across both traditional and cyber bullying
 - Examine those effective coping strategies as reported by those victimised on or off line
 - Builds upon the work of Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, and Alsaker (2012)

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Measure of Traditional and Cyber Bullying and Coping

- Report of incidence of traditional and cyber bullying and coping strategies
 - Originally employed by Alsaker and Brunner (1999) and Alsaker (2003)
 - Adapted by Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, and Alsaker (2012)
 - The current study further developed this measure to adapt the recommended coping to include actual reporting of coping strategies used by victims

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Measuring the Dark Triad

- Adult measures
 - The Dirty Dozen (Jonason & Webster, 2010)
 - The Short Dark Triad (D3; Jones & Paulus, forthcoming)
 - However, not developed for the younger population
- Instead:
 - Kiddie Mach (Christie & Geis, 1970)
 - The Childhood Narcissism Scale (Thomas, Stegge, Bushman, Olthof & Denissen, 2008)
 - Inventory of Callous Unemotional Traits (ICU) – Youth (Frick, 2004)

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Anti-bullying policies

- All schools in ROI required to have a new anti-bullying policy in place by April 11th to account for the new forms of bullying
 - Anti-Bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools – Circular 0045/2013
 - Defines bullying as
 - “Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time” (p.8, 2013)



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Implications

- Aims to examine how these traits may be possible risk factors for involvement in bullying behaviour on and off line.
- To establish this, it is important to develop an understanding of the traits that categorise adolescents as at risk individuals.
- Important to identify 'what lies beneath' as predictors of bullying behaviour



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