

MODERATING ROLE OF PERSONALITY TYPES IN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOPATHY AND EXTREMISM

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Abstract

Psychopathy, as a phenomenon, has been mostly studied forensic concept of the current century. Various studies have linked psychopathy to other concepts such as crimes, aggression, violence, personality. Current study aimed to assess the relationship of psychopathy with extremism and personality traits. Three instruments were used Urdu Psychopathy Scale (Dil & Kazmi, 2016), Extremism Scale (Parveez, in press) and NEO-FFI Urdu (Khan et al., 2013). 954 individuals after. Results revealed that psychopathy is positively related to extremism, neuroticism and extroversion and negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness. Extremism has positive relationship with neuroticism and extroversion and negative relationship with agreeableness and conscientiousness. Age is negatively related to psychopathy and extremism. Significant gender differences exist with respect to psychopathy, extremism, neuroticism, agreeableness, extroversion and conscientiousness. Results also revealed that psychopathy is significant predictor of extremism causing 20.5% variation in extremism. Personality types moderated the relationship between psychopathy and extremism.

Keywords: extremism, extroversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of human personality both on darker side such a psychopathy and normal side as defined by Five Factor Model is really important. The resent trends in rise of extremism and radicalization has shifted the attention to explain the relationship between extremism and related personality traits. There are arguments in explaining extremism, radicalization and terrorism in terms of psychopathy and five factor model.

Babiak, Neumann, and Hare (2010) defined psychopathic construct on the basis of several personality traits such as cold-heartedness, lack of responsibility, impulsivity and rule breaking that result in dangerous behaviors. Neumann and Hare (2008) operationalized psychopathy by interpersonal and affective deficits as well as in terms of impulsivity and a disrespect for the other's rights and societal laws.

Wynn, Høiseth, and Pettersen (2012) characterized psychopathy in terms of emotional characteristics (for example egocentricity, dull affect, lacking empathy, remorse, and guilt); interpersonal characteristics (consist of carelessness, impulsiveness, arrogance, sense of grandiosity, and ability to manipulate); behavioral characteristics (such as disrespect for societal norms and rules, irresponsibility, scary, and fierce behavior.



Jackson, Rogers, Neumann, and Lambert (2002) reported that females showed less psychopathic traits in a sample of forensic psychiatric patients. Carroll et al. (2010) pointed out that women scored lower on psychopathy measures and show lower rates of crimes.

Extremism is derived from the Latin words *extemus* or *extremitas* meaning the outmost and the most dangerous respectively. Extremism is often used to define political attitudes of extreme ends of the left to right wing spectrum. Extremism can be defined as any illegal attempt against the security, government or efforts against the state (Neugebauer, 2010). Extremism is used to define a stance on ideological ground or is based on intentions, and actions, or extreme opinions (Zinchenko, 2014). Extremism can be classified as any attempt that is either politically or religiously motivated, having bases on certain ideologies, and a firm belief that the acts are the only way to bring societal changes or the intentions to radically change the conditions (Kemmesies, 2006).

Zinchenko (2014) pointed out toward the alarming rates of extremism in modern society. He argued that extremist deny basic vested rights and freedoms of citizens or opposed the established order of socio-regularized and legitimized relations. Extremism poses a threat to society. Extremist use it as a way and a means of handling different political, religious, socioeconomic, ecological issues. Extremism is equally dangerous to industrially developed and politically stable countries as well as to third world countries.

Extremism is legally defined as acts such as justifying terrorism and terrorist activities publicly; provocation of enmity based on social, racial, national, or religious affiliations; feeling superior to individual due to social, racial, religious, or linguistic background; having superior feeling or attitude toward religion; violating rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of other individual based on social, racial, religious, or linguistic background or attitude to religion, propaganda about exceptionalism (Zinchenko, 2014).

Coleman and Bartoli (2003) defined extremism as an activity based on beliefs or attitudes towards somebody or something, or extremism refers to feelings, actions, strategies that are far from being common, or socially accepted rules. However, extremist find ways make what is common or generally accepted.

Sotlar (2004) defined extremism in terms of acts of terrorism, racism, racial intolerance, interethnic and inter-religious hatred, political radicalism and religious fundamentalism. Extremism is fundamentally a political term, consisting of activities that deviate from written (legal and constitutional) and non-written norms of the state and are considered morally, ideologically or politically away from norms and rules of society. Extremist are intolerant toward others and reject the existing social order.

McCrae and John (1992) proposed five-factor model of personality based on hierarchical organization of personality. Five-factor model consists of five basic dimensions that is extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Özsoy et al. (2014) argued that the five-factor model of personality is widely used models for measuring personality traits.

Srivastava (2010) reported that there is empirical evidence that the Big Five personality traits (Goldberg, 1993) or Five Factors of Personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992) are five dimensions of personality. The FFM or Big Five can be written as OCEAN or CANOE to represent Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Goldberg (1993) coined the term Big Five, the term was originally associated with studies of personality traits used in natural language. People usually described themselves using Big Five personality traits therefore these are universal (Passini & Norman as cited in Fayombo, 2010). John and Srivastava (1999) argued that big five are associated with behavioral predictions and social outcomes. Five Factor Model (FFM) also used to indicate big five, the concept was earlier described by Thurstone (as cited in Fayombo, 2010). Most of studies used personality questionnaire based on Five-Factor Model (McCrae & Costa 2003). John and Srivasta (1999) argued that personality theorists believe that the five-factor model is best in describing personality as compared to two, three, sixteen or forty factor model. Fayombo (2010) stated that it is asserted that the five factor model covers factors that are a cluster of more specific traits and have statistical correlation with each other.



Costa and McCrae (1992) proposed that each of five major domains has six lower level facet scale scores. According to Costa & McCrae (1992) Neuroticism is a measure of individual's tendency to experience negative affect and the cognitive and behavioral styles. Neuroticism is further categorized in sub-facets that are anxiety, depression, angry hostility, impulsiveness, self-consciousness, and vulnerability. Costa & McCrae (1992) defines extroversion in terms of dominance, sociability, activity level, and cheerfulness. The six sub facets covered under this domain are gregariousness, warmth, activity, assertiveness, positive emotions and excitement seeking. Openness consists of facets of aesthetics, fantasy, actions, feelings, ideas, and values (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to Costa and McCrae (1992) Agreeableness describes interpersonal tendencies, characteristics such as sympathy, altruism, trust and gentle nature underlie agreeableness. Trust, altruism, straightforwardness, modesty, compliance, and tender-mindedness are encompassed under agreeableness sub-facets. Conscientiousness includes a sense of control, such as achievement motivation, planning, and organizability. Conscientiousness measures facets of order, competence, achievement-striving, dutifulness, self-discipline, and deliberation (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Edens, Campbell, and Weir (2006) found that there is relationship between extremism and psychopathy. Lindberg et al. (2009) reported that extremists have inclination of psychopathy. According to Merari (2000) there is a high percentage of Palestinian terrorists with psychopathic traits such as impulsivity and emotional un-stability. He reported that 25% of the terrorists have psychopathic tendencies.

METHOD

Objectives

1. The study aimed to assess levels of psychopathy, extremism and personality type of participants.
2. Study intended to explore the moderating role of personality types in relation between psychopathy and extremism.

Hypotheses

To fulfil the objectives of the current study following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There is positive relationship between psychopathy and extremism.
2. Psychopathy is negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness.
3. Psychopathy has positive relationship with openness, neuroticism and extroversion.
4. Extremism is negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness.
5. Extremism is positively related to openness, neuroticism and extroversion.
6. Psychopathy positively predicts extremism.
7. Personality types moderates the relationship between psychopathy an extremism.

Sample

For the current study a sample 954 individuals was approached, age range of 13-40, both males and females. The sample comprised of the individuals who volunteered for the participation. The sample was taken from schools, colleges, universities and organizations from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The sample comprised of the non-clinical, non-incarcerated individuals from Pakistan.

Definition of Variables

Psychopathy. Psychopathy is defined as personality type having characteristics such as pathological lying, lack of remorse, lack of empathy, stimulation seeking, manipulation for personal goals, poor anger control, early behavior problem, irresponsibility, lacking goals, unstable interpersonal relationship, serious criminal behavior and criminal versatility (Hare, 2003). In current study, it was operationally defined on the scores obtained on psychopathy scale (Dil & Kazmi, 2016). Higher scores reflect higher levels of psychopathy.

Extremism. Extremism may refer to the highest intensity or highest level of violent behavior exhibited to other individuals and groups. Sometime this behaviour is exhibited to the weakest individuals. Sometimes it happens that one does not care whether the concerned object or person is weakest or strongest (Ahmad as cited in Qazi, 2012). In current study, it was operationalized on



scores obtained on Extremism Scale (Parveez, in press). High scores indicates higher levels of extremism.

Personality Type. Personality is defined as inner dynamic organization of psychophysical systems within the person that generate the person's distinctive patterns of behavior, thoughts, and feelings (Allport, 1961). In current study, personality type was defined on the basis of scores obtained on following sub-facets of NEO-FFI Urdu (Khan et al., 2013).

Neuroticism. According to Costa Jr, Terracciano, and McCrae (2001) neuroticism is a broad domain of negative affect. Neuroticism includes tendencies to experience negative emotional states such as anger, anxiety, depression etc. In current study, it is operationalized on scores obtained on subscale neuroticism of NEO-FFI Urdu.

Extroversion. Extroversion is defined as tendency to enjoy and interact generally with talkative and self-assured company. Individuals with high levels of extroversion are involved actively in a wide variety of activities (Khan et al., 2013). In current study it is operationally defined on scored obtained on subscale extroversion of NEO-FFI.

Openness to experience. Openness to Experience is defined as individual's ability to be imaginative, aesthetic sense, behavioral flexibility, and intellectual curiosity (McCrae & Sutin, 2009). In current study it is operationally defined on scored obtained on subscale openness to experience of NEO-FFI.

Agreeableness. Agreeableness is related to kindness, cooperativeness, sensitivity to and concerned about others (Khan et al., 2013). In current study it is operationalized on scores obtained on subscale of NEO-FFI.

Conscientiousness. Individual with high conscientiousness desire orderliness, are organized, and efficient in their responsibilities and duties. They make considerable effort to become dependable, through and achievement-oriented (Khan et al., 2013). In current study it is operationalized on scores of subscale of NEO-FFI.

Instruments

Urdu Psychopathy Scale. Urdu Psychopathy Scale (Dil & Kazmi, 2016) is used to measure psychopathy. The scale consisted of 70 items. The items are scored on a five point likert scale, responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Items are scored as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for uncertain, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Items 7, 9, 12, 16, 17, 25, 36, 37, 39, 42, 52, 55 and 59 are reversed scored that is 5 for strongly disagree and so forth.

Extremism Scale. Extremism scale was developed by Parveez (in press). The scale consists of 124 items with five points likert scale response categories, responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

NEO-PI FFI Urdu. NEO-PI FFI is translated by Khan et al. (2013). It consists of 120 items. Items are scored on a five point likert scale. Items 9, 19, 24, 30, 39, 40, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 60, 62, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90, 92, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120 are reversed keyed. The questionnaire consists of five subscales. Neuroticism consists of following items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46, 51, 56, 61, 66, 71, 76, 81, 86, 91, 96, 101, 106, 111, 116. Extroversion is measured on items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 57, 62, 67, 72, 77, 82, 87, 92, 97, 102, 107, 112, 117. Openness to experience consists of items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48, 53, 58, 63, 68, 73, 78, 83, 88, 93, 98, 103, 108, 113, 118. Following items constitutes agreeableness 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49, 54, 59, 64, 69, 74, 79, 84, 89, 94, 99, 104, 109, 114, 119. Conscientiousness consists of following items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100, 105, 110, 115, 120

Research Design

In current study, correlational research design was used to collect data through cross-sectional survey.



RESULTS

Results were calculated using SPSS. Descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated on the collected data.

Table 1
Summary of Intercorrelation among Psychopathy Scale, Extremism Scale and NEO-FFI subscales (N=954)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD
1. PS	-	.45***	.29***	-.04	-.57***	.09**	-.39***	-.08*	194.81	32.78
2. ES		-	.16***	-.02	-.32***	.11***	-.11***	-.18***	343.84	53.14
3. N			-	.11***	-.19***	-.16***	-.54***	.03	72.09	10.82
4. O				-	.11***	.14***	.01	-.05	74.42	7.43
5. A					-	-.01	.36***	.05	84.81	10.88
6. E						-	.28***	.02	82.35	8.19
7. C							-	-.05	80.03	11.75
8. Age								-	20.90	3.28

Note. PS = Psychopathy Scale; ES = Extremism Scale; N = Neuroticism; O = Openness to Experience; A = Agreeableness; E = Extroversion; C = Conscientiousness.
p > .05. *p < .05. ***p < .001.

The results of inter-correlation among study variables revealed that there is significant positive correlation between psychopathy and extremism. Similarly, psychopathy is positively related to neuroticism and extroversion. Psychopathy has negative correlation with agreeableness and conscientiousness. Whereas extremism is positively related to neuroticism and extroversion and negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness. Age is negatively related to psychopathy and extremism.

Table 2
Psychopathy as Predictor of Extremism (N = 954)


Variable	Extremism	
	B	95% CI
Constants	201.83***	[183.6, 220.0]
Psychopathy	.729***	[.637, .821]
R ²	.202	
F	241.25***	
ΔR ²	.202	
ΔF	241.25	

Note. N=200, CI= confidence interval
***p < .001.

The result in above table indicate that psychopathy is the significant predictor of extremism. The psychopathy explains 20.2% variation in extremism.

Table 3
Hierarchical Regression Using Psychopathy as Predictor and Personality Types as Moderator (N = 954)

Variables	B	95% CL		SE B	B	R ²	ΔR ²
		LL	UL				
Step 1 (Constant)	201.4***	183.6	220.3	9.72		.202***	.202***



Psychopathy	.729***	.637	.821	.047	.450***		
Step 2						.224***	.022***
(Constant)	161.3***	95.52	226.9	33.49			
Psychopathy	.654***	.528	.763	.060	.398***		
Openness	-.045	-.459	.369	.211	-.006		
Extrovert	.361	-.035	.757	.202	.056		
Neuroticism	.463***	.128	.798	.171	.094		
Agreeableness	-.571***	-.914	-.227	.175	-.117		
Conscientiousness	.569***	.233	.905	.171	.126		
Step 3						.239**	.015**
(Constant)	157.9***	92.31	223.6	33.43			
Psychopathy	.685***	.566	.804	.061	.422***		
Openness	-.126	-.543	.291	.212	-.018		
Extrovert	.306	-.092	.705	.203	.047		
Neuroticism	.526**	.192	.861	.170	.107**		
Agreeableness	-.507**	-.854	-.159	.177	-.104**		
Conscientiousness	.507**	.171	.842	.171	.122		
P*O	-2.06	-5.08	.953	1.54	-.040		
P*E	-2.66	-5.38	.847	1.59	-.045		
P*N	-1.09	-4.43	2.25	1.70	-.023		
P*A	1.47	-1.55	4.49	1.54	.033		
P*C	-6.30**	-10.2	-2.34	2.02	-.127		

Note. P*O = Product of Psychopathy and Openness; P*E = Product of Psychopathy and Extroversion; P*N = Product of Psychopathy and Neuroticism; P*A = Product of Psychopathy and Agreeableness; P*C = Product of Psychopathy and Conscientiousness.

The results in above table indicated that psychopathy explained 20.2% variation in the dependent variable. Personality traits additionally explained 2.2% variation is extremism and neuroticism and conscientiousness explained positive variation and agreeableness negatively explained variations. Interaction effect additionally explained 1.5% variation and interaction of psychopathy and conscientiousness explained the variation negatively.

DISCUSSION

Current research is a step towards bridging the gap of assessing the relationship among psychopathy, extremism and personality type. Resent rise in extremist activities has focused the attention of the researcher in understanding extremism and its causal factors. One of the most controversial such factor is considered psychopathy. The construct that has been widely used to assess the violence and crimes. Personality dimensions, largely based on five factor model, are also said to relate to both. Studies have demonstrated that five factor model can be used to predict psychopathy. The current study was first of its kind to explore the interrelationship among the three.

It was hypothesized that there would be positive relationship between psychopathy and extremism. The results in table 1 indicate that psychopathy is significantly positively related to extremism ($r = .45, p < .001$). Duspara and Greitemeyer (2017) reported that psychopathy is related to political orientation and extremism. Jonason (2015) reported that psychopathy influenced the racism, right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance.

To test the hypothesis regarding the relationship between psychopathy and neuroticism correlation was computed. The results in table 1 indicate that psychopathy is positively related to neuroticism ($r = .29, p < .001$). The results are in line with the previous literature. Lynam et al. (2005) reported that psychopathy is related to higher levels of neuroticism (see also Douglas et al., 2012)

It was hypothesized that psychopathy was negatively related to agreeableness. The results in table 1 confirmed the hypothesis. Previous research indicated the similar relationship between



psychopathy and agreeableness. Kajonius et al. (2015) also reported that there was negative relationship between psychopathy and agreeableness.

The results of the study revealed that there is negative relationship between conscientiousness and psychopathy. The results are in line with previous researches. Kajonius et al. (2015) reported that psychopaths have lower levels of self-discipline, unable to control impulsivity, that are core characteristics of conscientiousness.

The results in table 1 indicate that there is positive relationship between psychopathy and extroversion. Douglas et al. (2012) reported that psychopathy is positively related to extroversion.

Present study did not reveal any relationship between psychopathy and openness. The results are contrary to most literature available about the relationship between psychopathy and openness. As Douglas et al. (2012) observed that psychopathy related negatively to the openness to experience.

The results in table 1 indicate that extremism is positively related to neuroticism ($r = .16$, $p < .001$). Alizadeh et al. (2017) reported that extremist score low in neuroticism.

The results in table 1 revealed that extremism is negatively related to agreeableness. Alizadeh et al. (2017) found that extremism is negatively related to agreeableness.

It was hypothesized that conscientiousness was negatively related to extremism. The results in table 1 indicate negative relationship between extremism and conscientiousness. Marcus et al. (2007) also reported that there is negative relationship between extremism and conscientiousness.

The results in table 1 revealed no relationship between extremism and openness ($r = -.02$; $p > .05$). However, the previous researches indicated the relationship between the two. Fannin and Dabbs (2003) found that there is negative relationship between extremism and openness.

Results in table 1 indicated that extremism and extroversion are positively related. Research evidence suggest that extremism tend to have positive relation with the extroversion. It was also found that extremist and non-extremist were similar in extroversion (Alizadeh et al., 2017).

The results in table 1 revealed that there is negative correlation between psychopathy and age.

The results in table 1 revealed that age is negatively related to extremism. The results are in line with previous researches as Jost et al. (2007) reported that younger participants inclined toward ideologically extreme.

The results in table 2 shows that psychopathy is significant predictor of extremism. Psychopathy accounts for 20.2% variation is extremism. Duspara and Greitemeyer (2017) reported that psychopathy is a significant predictor of extremism. ($\beta = .14$, $p = .008$) and it is positively associated with political extremism.

The results in table 3 indicated that psychopathy explained 20.2% variation in the dependent variable. Personality traits additionally explained 2.2% variation is extremism and neuroticism and conscientiousness explained positive variation and agreeableness negatively explained variations. Interaction effect additionally explained 1.5% variation and interaction of psychopathy and conscientiousness explained the variation negatively.

CONCLUSION

Present study investigated the relationship among psychopathy, extremism and personality type. Psychopathy is positively related to extremism, neuroticism and extroversion, whereas it is negatively related agreeableness and conscientiousness. Extremism is positively related to neuroticism and extroversion and negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness. Psychopathy positively predicted extremism and personality types moderated the relationship between psychopathy and extremism.

LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS

As in the case of social science researches, present study has following limitations

1. Self-report measures were used in current study, that may have effect on social desirability. Other techniques such as criminal records, projective techniques should be used to assess the variables.



2. The present study accessed only literate population who can read and write *Urdu*. For further studies it is recommended that illiterate population be included to get more diversity in population thus increasing its generalizability.
3. Due to financial limitations and time limits, population was taken from Kyber Pakhtoonkhaw only. Including other areas will have more insight into the factors.
4. Due to limited access to criminal population, the criminals were not studied. Future study should be conducted on normal as well as incarcerated individuals to compare both.

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