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Psychopathy Trait of Dark Triad as A Predictor of Counterproductive Work Behaviour

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Abstract: Psychopathy trait of dark triad has gained significant attention related to the literature on work behaviour. It has been scientifically related to an extensive range of undesirable outcomes. It consists of behaviours such as impulsiveness, lack of empathy and lack of remorse. The review of literature shows that there is a paucity of research related to the variable in the Indian context. The aim of the present study was to determine the relationship between psychopathy trait of dark triad and counterproductive work behaviours i.e. sabotage, withdrawal, productive deviance, theft, and abuse as well as to explain the contribution of psychopathy in counterproductive work behaviour. The sample for the study consists of 165 participants working in different organizations i.e. Maruti-Suzuki, Oswal Pumps, and Godrej located in Gurugram, Karnal, Mohali and Haridwar. They were administered Psychopathy Personality Trait Scale, and Counterproductive Work Behaviour-Checklist to collect the data. The obtained data were analysed for correlational analyses. Correlational analyses demonstrated that psychopathy trait of dark triad was significantly positively correlated with counterproductive work behaviours and psychopathy trait of dark triad emerged as a potent predictor of counterproductive workplace behaviours.

Key words: Psychopathy, Counterproductive Work Behaviours

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INTRODUCTION

Psychopathy trait of dark triad personality characterized by impulsivity, lack of shame or regret when one's actions hurt others, and lack of care for other people and social regulation systems (O'Boyle et al. 2012). Individuals who exhibit psychopathy have a habit of being cruel, remorseless, exploiting and manipulating other people. They also exhibit thrill-seeking, high impulsivity, sense of guilt, and lack of empathy. People who hold such views tend to act in ways that are counterproductive at work. Review of literature shows the link between psychopathy and academic dishonesty (Paulhus, & Williams, Nathanson, 2006), violent behaviour (Learn, McAndrew, Williams, Paulhus & Harm, 2001), sexual assault and murder (Megargee, 2009). Boddy, Ladyshewsky, and Galvin (2010), observed that having a psychopath as a leader in an organisation leads to reduction in both the organisational assistance provided to employees and the level of social support provided by the corporation. In addition, it was found that psychopathy had positive correlation with fearless dominance, fearlessness, social influence, stress immunity, ego-centricity, self-centred

impulsivity, rebellious nonconformity, blame externalisation, carefree non-planfullness, and cold-heartedness (Schutte et al., 2018).

Forsyth, and O'Boyle (2011) defined counterproductive work behaviours as deliberate actions that negatively impact an organization and its members. According to Bennett and Robinson, (2000) counterproductive work behaviours are costly, wasting billions of dollars each year and 15% of the employees admitted to stealing from their employers at least once. Furthermore, it is assessed that 33 percent to 75 percent of the employees involved in activities such as theft, vandalism, sabotage, fraud, and voluntary absenteeism. All of these behaviours have one thing in common: the employees want to harm the organizations they work for or the employees. Absenteeism, theft, and similar behaviours, as well as inappropriate physical contact, can be exhibited by employees for a variety of reasons, including personal (personality disorder, psychological issues, and personality traits) and organizational bias (dissatisfaction with management, perceived bias, issues with coworkers, such as pushing, striking, and engraving), verbal (such as insulting and pranking) activities, wasting industrial resources, failing to follow instructions, and acting rudely toward clients or co-workers are all prohibited. These actions are all regarded as counterproductive work behaviours (Spector et al., 2006).

Counterproductive work behaviour is also considered deviant behaviour therefore, negative workplace behaviours might be significantly predicted by negative personality traits (Lebreton & Wu, 2011). More study on the impacts of psychopathy

on workplace habits is required to better understand the potential consequences (Harms, & Spain, 2014). Yin and Cohen (2018), examined the link between counterproductive work behaviours and the dark triad qualities in a sample of Chinese doctors. Except for psychopathy, other dark triad qualities (narcissism and Machiavellianism) were shown to be positively correlated with counterproductive work behaviours in their study on both the interpersonal and organizational levels. In order to contribute new information to the existing literature, this is another crucial justification for conducting more studies to assess the link between psychopathy trait of dark triad and counterproductive work behaviours. Below is a brief overview of the objectives and hypothesis development for psychopathy based on the theoretical background.

Research Objectives:

1. To study the relationship between psychopathy trait of dark triad and counterproductive workplace behaviours.
2. To find out the contribution of psychopathy trait of dark triad in counterproductive workplace behaviours.

Hypotheses:

1. Psychopathy trait of dark triad correlates positively with counterproductive work behaviour.
2. Psychopathy trait of dark triad will contribute substantially in counterproductive work behaviours.

Method:

Sample:

The sample for the study consists of 165 participants drawn from different production organizations located in Haryana. The sample was drawn by using the snowball

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sampling technique. The study only included blue-collar workers who provided their agreement to take part and had at least minimum five years or more experience in the same organization. In general, all participants were having good mental health and free from any kind of ailments.

Measuring Tools:

Psychopathy Personality Trait Scale (PPTS): The scale "Psychopathic Personality Trait Scale" was developed by Boduszek et al. in 2016 with twenty items. It is a self-report instrument. Its purpose is to measure the psychopathic tendencies in both non-forensic and forensic populations. The scale uses a response format, with items rated as "agree" (1) or "disagree" (0), indicating whether a trait is absent or present. The scale includes four subscales, each consisting of five items. To evaluate the internal consistency of the scale composite reliability was calculated and revealed adequate to good reliability for all four psychopathy dimensions: Affective

Responsiveness (0.77), Interpersonal Manipulation (0.75), Cognitive Responsiveness (0.73), and Egocentricity (0.61). Boduszek et al. (2016) also reported strong composite reliability and predictive validity for the scale.

Counterproductive Work Behaviours: This scale was developed by Spector et al. in 2006, and consists of 32 items ranked on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (every day). This scale assesses five dimensions: withdrawal, sabotage, productive deviance, abuse, and theft. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency reliability for the overall scale with a correlation coefficient of 0.90, and the author reported strong concurrent validity.

Results:

The obtained data were processed with Pearson's product-moment correlations and regression analyses, specifically the stepwise multiple regression, holding in mind the research objectives of the study.

Table 1

Correlation between psychopathy and counterproductive work behaviour

Variables	SB	PD	WD	TH	AB	TCWB
AR	.15*	.20**	.28**	.19*	.28**	.29**
CR	.11	.09	-.01	.09	.03	.06
IM	.11	.20*	.31**	.17*	.29**	.29**
EG	-.06	.04	.14	.02	.08	.05
TPP	.11	.20**	.28**	.15*	.26**	.26**

*Significant at 0.05 probability level

**Significant at 0.01 probability level

Note- CR- Cognitive responsiveness; AR- Affective responsiveness; EG- Egocentricity; IM- Interpersonal manipulation; SB- Sabotage; PD- Productive deviance; WD- Withdrawal; TH- Theft; AB- Abuse; TCWB- Total Counterproductive work behaviours.

The hypothesis was that psychopathy trait of dark triad will exhibit positive association with counterproductive work behaviours.

Table 1 showing the correlation among the measurements of psychopathy and counterproductive work behaviours. Affective responsiveness has been found to be positively tied and significant with sabotage (r = .15, p < .05), productive deviance (r = .20, p < .01), and withdrawal (r = .28, p < .01), theft (r = .19, p < .05), abuse

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(r = .28, p < .01), and total counterproductive work behaviour (r = .29, p < .01). The strong positive link between the variables shows that participants who are high on affective responsiveness are more likely to engaged in sabotage, productive deviance, withdrawal, theft, abuse and overall counterproductive work behaviours. It may be explained that individuals who are lack of empathy tend to exhibit behaviours like purposefully doing the job imperfectly or letting faults to occur. They may use abusive language, remain absent from job, and shows theft behaviour at the workplace.

It has been noticed that cognitive responsiveness and egocentricity have non-significant with the measures of counterproductive work behaviours.

In Table 1, interpersonal manipulation has positive correlation with productive deviance (r = .20, p < .05), withdrawal (r = .31, p < .01), theft (r = .17, p > .05), abuse (r = .29, p > .01), and total score of counterproductive work behaviours (r = .29, p > .01). The positive correlation found that workers with a propensity to superficial charm, grandiosity, and deceitfulness tend to avoid work by being absent or late, insulting someone about their performance, and destroying the physical environment at the workplace.

Overall psychopathy has found to be correlated positively and significantly with theft (r = .15, p >.05), productive deviance (r = .20, p > .01), withdrawal (r = .28, p > .01), abuse (r = .26, p > .01), and total score of counterproductive work behaviour (r = .26, p > .01). The significant positive correlation signifies that employees who score high on psychopathy are more inclined to insult

others about their job performance, intentionally performing tasks incorrectly or letting mistakes happen, as well as avoiding responsibilities by being absent or arriving late.

Regression analysis:

To achieve the objective of the study, stepwise multiple regression was employed to know to what extent psychopathy contributes in predicting counterproductive work behaviours. Stepwise linear regression entails the regression of multiple variables while progressively removing those that are not significant.

Table 2

Summary of Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Sabotage

Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	β	F ratio	Significance
AR	.15	.02	.02	15	4.24	.05

Note- AR- Affective responsiveness

Table 2 presents the outcomes of stepwise multiple regression with sabotage as the dependent variable. The table indicates that affective responsiveness, a measure of psychopathy, emerges as the significant predictor of sabotage, a measure of counterproductive job behaviour. The multiple R is .15 for this variable and R^2 is 0.02. The F statistic for this variable is 4.24, significant at the .05 probability level. R^2 indicates that affective responsiveness accounts for 2% of the variance in sabotage. The beta coefficient for the variable indicates positive correlation (β = .15), suggesting that increased affective responsiveness among employees is associated with a higher incidence of sabotage, and vice-versa.

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Table 3

Summary of Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis Dependent Variable: Productive Deviance

Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	β	F ratio	Significance
AR	.20	.04	.04	.20	7.11	.01

Note- AR- Affective responsiveness

Table 3 shows that affective responsiveness is the predictor of productive deviance. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) for this variable is .20, with R² value of .04. The F statistic suggest that being F ratio = 7.11 is significant at .01 probability level. This R² value indicate that affective responsiveness accounts for 4% of the variance in productive deviance. The positive correlation is shown by the beta coefficient (β =.20), which means that employees with a higher level of affective responsiveness are also likely to have a higher level of productive deviance and the other way around.

Table 4

Summary of Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Withdrawal

Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	β	F ratio	Significance
IM	.31	.09	.09	31	17.87	.01
IM+AR	.36	.13	.04	.19	12.30	.01

Note- IM- Interpersonal manipulation; AR- Affective responsiveness

Table 4 show that interpersonal manipulation emerges as the strongest predictor of withdrawal as entering the equation at the first step. The multiple R for this variable is equal to .31 and R² is .09. The F for this variable is 17.87, which is significant at .01 probability level. R² indicates that interpersonal manipulation accounts for 9% of the variance for

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withdrawal. The beta value (β = .31) indicates that higher level of interpersonal manipulation among employees increases their level of withdrawal and vice-versa.

Affective responsiveness was the second predictor in the regression equation. The multiple R-value went up to .36, the total variance went up to .13 (R² =.13), and the F value was 12.30, which is significant at the .01 probability level. The R² change value (R² change = .04) for variable suggests that affective responsiveness accounts for 4 % of the variance for withdrawal. Beta coefficient value (β = .19) illustrates the positive association with affective responsiveness which reveals that a higher level of affective responsiveness helps to induce withdrawal behaviour at the workplace.

Thus, the linear combination of interpersonal manipulation and affective responsiveness jointly contributes 13 per cent of the variance (R² = .13) for the withdrawal measure of counterproductive work behaviours.

Table 5

Summary of Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Theft

Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	β	F ratio	Significance
AR	.19	.03	.03	.19	6.13	.01

Note- AR- Affective responsiveness

The above table shows that affective responsiveness emerged as potent predictor for the dependent variable of theft with multiple R equal to .19 and R² = .03. The F ratio being 6.13 is significant at .01. The R² value (R² = .03) indicate that affective responsiveness accounts for 3% of the variance for theft. The positive beta coefficient (β = .19) shows that high level affective responsiveness among employees

contributes significantly to inducing theft behaviour at the workplace.

Table 6

Summary of Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis Dependent Variable: Abuse

Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	β	F ratio	Significance
IM	.29	.08	.08	.29	15.91	.01
IM+AR	.35	.12	.04	.20	11.70	.01
IM+AR+EG	.39	.15	.03	.22	9.90	.01

Note- IM- Interpersonal manipulation; AR- Affective responsiveness; EG- Egocentricity

The perusal of Table 6 suggest that interpersonal manipulation, affective responsiveness and egocentricity emerged as potent predictors for abuse, a measure of counterproductive work behaviour.

It was found that interpersonal manipulation was the best indicator of abuse. The multiple R is .29, and R^2 is .08. The F ratio 15.91 is significant at .01 probability level. The R^2 =.08 means that interpersonal manipulation explains 8% of the variation for theft. The variable's beta value (β =.29) shows a positive link with the dependent variable. As a result, there may be more abusive behaviour at work if workers are more likely to manipulate others.

Affective responsiveness came out as the second predictor in the regression equation with multiple R increased to .35 and total variance increased to .12 (R^2 = .12) and F value being 11.70 is significant at .01 probability level. The R^2 change value (R^2 change = .04) suggest that affective responsiveness accounts for 4% of the variance for theft. The positive beta coefficient value (β = .20) for affective responsiveness reveals that a higher level of affective responsiveness helps to induce abusive behaviour at the workplace among employees.

The third predictor that entered in equation is egocentricity which emerged as potent predictor for abuse. The multiple R rose to .39 and it accounts for 3% of the variance (R^2 change = .03). F value being 9.90 significant at .01 probability level. The beta load for this predictor (β = .22) indicates a positive relationship with abuse, it depicts that an individual's tendency to focus on one's attitudes, beliefs and interests increases the abusive behaviour among employees.

Therefore, the linear combination of interpersonal manipulation, affective responsiveness, and egocentricity (R^2 = .15) collectively accounts for 15% of the variance for the dependent variable abuse and it can be concluded that above three predictors contribute significantly for abusive behaviour among employees.

Discussion:

Counterproductive work behaviours represent the dark side of behaviour at workplace i.e. negative toward the organization (Weitz & Vardi, 2003). Researchers have long recognized the importance of investigating not just the positive elements of organizational behavior, but also the terrible consequences of poor conduct in the workplace (Schyns, 2015). Considering the existing empirical findings, it can be concluded that affective responsiveness is the most important measure for counterproductive work behaviours along with interpersonal manipulation and egocentricity. The findings of the current study align with the study finding of Scherer et al. (2013). They reported that psychopathy significantly correlated with counterproductive work behaviour, and using regression they found

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that psychopathy significantly predicts counterproductive work behaviour.

Conclusion:

It has found that psychopathic measures, particularly the interpersonal and behavioural aspects (e.g., affective responsiveness), are strong predictors of counterproductive work behaviours. Higher levels of psychopathy increase the likelihood of unethical behaviour or harmful workplace behaviours due to their disregard for social norms and lack of concern for others (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Employees high on psychopathy measures may use manipulation to achieve personal goals at the expenses of coworkers or the organization (Spain et al., 2014). It is recommended that individuals with psychopathic trait of dark triad may not be selected during the selection process of manpower for any organization to reduce deviant behaviour, i.e. sabotage, withdrawal, productive deviation, theft and abuse.

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