

# Free research paper on an exploration of the distinguishing features between prim...

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## **Abstract**

Risky behavior contributes to the maladaptive behavior of psychopathic individuals. However, the results gotten from a group of psychopathic individuals in an experiment using the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy (LSRP) and the Angler’s Risk Task (ART) to evaluate their decision making has been equivocal. Different factors of psychopathy may be suitable to explain the findings. We examined the relationship between primary, secondary psychopathy and the performance based on the methods used. Impulsivity was also added to find out its effect as a moderator. In a combined model of the interactions and effects of primary, secondary psychopathy and impulsivity, only secondary psychopathy was found to relate to risky decision making. The effect of secondary or factor 2 psychopathy was not affected by any moderator. The results support the fact that the growing literature states that secondary psychopathy is the best at predicting decision-making problems compared to the factor 1 personality

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characteristics of remorselessness and lack of empathy.

In the cases of highly risky activities, psychopathic individuals tend to make choices disadvantageously. They lack the ability to learn from their past experiences. The main hypothesis of this study was to investigate the influence of the Factor 2 psychopathy in making risky decisions. The results we obtained were explained efficiently using physiological and biological processes to determine possible solutions.

Keywords: Factor 1, factor 2, primary psychopathy, secondary psychopathy, decision-making, impulsivity, risk-taking, institutionalized, non-institutionalized, psychopathy, risk, LRSP, ART, risky behaviors.

## **Introduction**

Psychopathy is similar to sociopathy, but some differences have been brought up. The term refers to a personality disorder that involves antisocial behavior, meagre remorse and bold behavior. The psychopathy checklist constitutes of factor 1 and factor 2 of psychopathy. In this paper, I will dwell on the factor 2 psychopathy and analyze how it influences risky decision making. The other name given to factor 2 psychopathy is the False Psychopathy Characteristics. The difference between factor 1 and factor 2 psychopathy is that, individuals in factor 1 exhibit no remorse, exploitative and selfish in nature while those with factor 2 appear chronically unstable and portray antisocial behavior. They include criminal and violent deviant features, antisocial traits, behaviors and actions. Pleskac (2008).

In general, a psychopath will portray both factor 1 and 2 traits with the higher proportion leaning towards factor 1. Factor 1 traits are referred to as

the True Psychopathic Traits. Examples of factor 2 traits are parasitic traits, impulsivity, irresponsibility, inferior behavioral controls, early behavior problems, promiscuous sexual behavior, criminal versatility, denial of one's actions, short marital relationships and many others. Secondary psychopathy is another name for factor 2 traits. The psychopaths who portray the secondary psychopathic traits, have a lot in common with factor 1 psychopaths, but unlike them they exhibit remorse and fear for their actions (Dean & Altstein, 2013). Risk is likelihood to lose something important. Decisions require making choices between good or bad or a variety of options. Therefore, when one makes the wrong decisions he or she faces adverse effects. Psychopathic people experience difficulties in making decisions due to lack of impulse control and empathy.

Factor 2 relates to impulsivity which is a major factor in aggressive behavior which counts for the negative responses. Antisocial behavior is a major character trait in Factor 2 that creates lack of empathy. This character trait is found in 80 percent of psychopathic while the rest count for 20 per cent. Clinicians use the Hare Psychopathy Checklist to diagnose whether an individual possesses psychopathic traits or not.

## **Method**

The scores they attain are based on the factors of the two psychopathic traits. Engaging in risky behaviors is evaluated using the new version of Angler's Risk Task. The task was carried out on a computer with a mouse. Participants were expected to catch red fish from a pond with blue and red fish. They were unable to select the fish and instead used probability.

Probability calculated the number of times the participants would risk casting the fishing lines in the water to catch blue fish. The type of risk depends on the weather and number of fish. The participants were given two conditions a sunny and a cloudy day. On a sunny day, they would be able to see the color of fish in the pond and on a cloudy day, they would not see the color. This experiment was based on money (Levenson, Kiehl & Fitzpatrick, 1995). Both scales were presented on a computer via an online lab host and the participants given the link so that they can keep checking the progress of the experiment. Their responses were summed up to find out the primary and secondary psychopathy scores. The ART technique was investigated using the amount of money each participant gained. The one with the largest amount proved that he or she took more risks. Two analyses were done to show which psychopathic trait was associated with a lot of risks. LSRP scores in primary psychopathy ranged between 20 and 50 while for secondary ranged from 13 to 40. The higher the score, the higher the psychopathic traits. In ART, the average money earned was \$6700, with participants ranging from \$110 to \$91000.

A relationship was found between the money and primary psychopathy showing a high positive correlation between risk taking and primary psychopathy. The results portray that an increase in primary psychopathy garnered an increase in money. No significant relationship was established between secondary psychopathy and the money, hence, indicating no correlation in risk taking and secondary psychopathy. The results have, however, not indicated consistency in showing expected decision-making impairments (Pleskac, 2008).

## **Discussion**

Studies evaluate psychopaths to show the number of risk selections and others find performance of psychopaths directed towards controlling subjects. Differences between personality traits of a psychopath and antisocial behavior can assist to expound on the inconsistent results of the experiment involving ART and LSRP. Diagnosis showed that psychopaths with antisocial behavior were more advantaged than those without antisocial personalities. Antisocial personality is most related to risky decision making. This is a contrast to primary psychopathy that shows no relation to antisocial behavior, Pleskac (2008).

In addition to this, impulsivity explains non-consistent link between risky decision-making and psychopathy. Impulsivity also plays a role in the experiment among the participants, where they cannot resist the money. It plays a central role in a psychopaths' inability to learn from past experiences and delay gratification. Measures of secondary psychopathy try to tap the rash behavior and impulse using questions. Results from the study show that the relationship between impulse and performance in non-psychopathic disciplines is mixed up with some declaring the relationship true and others denying its existence. This leaves as wondering whether impulse is related to performance, alone or together with traits of psychopathy, in healthy people (Dean et al., 2013).

## **Conclusion**

The study extends the relationship between decision making and psychopathy through the following ways: evaluating major and social effects

of impulse and psychopathy on performance, in secondary and primary psychopathy on performance and using a sample that is non-institutionalized. Despite the fact that psychopathy has been based in crime settings, it has come to be understood as a phenomenon present in all areas of population. The two studies carried out; LSRP and ART found out that psychopathic features were related to risky decisions. It is, therefore, a general hypothesis that the impulse is a major determinant of risky decision making (Pleskac, 2008).

The major group affected by impulsivity is gamblers, whose practice involves a lot of risky decisions. Alcoholics have a big problem and are most likely to make impaired decisions. Highly impulsive individuals have a difficult time in making advantageous decisions. Impulsive antisocial traits reflect a lot on undeliberate and rash behavior. Psychopathic traits do not influence decision making, in contrast. Individuals with high impulse rate fail to evaluate available information to avoid risks. Therefore, they are likely to suffer harsh effects from their risky behavior, for example, bodily harm, incarceration and social isolation (Dean et al., 2013).

People with high psychopathy levels have an attraction to strengthen their desires regardless of the risk involved, for example, they may involve themselves in promiscuous sexual behavior. The promiscuity shows impersonal and parasitic lifestyles, with sexual relations as a way to manipulate others. Manipulation involves narcissism and grandiosity that portray inflated ego, lying and insincere charm. The two are negatively related to self-conscious feelings of embarrassment and guilt. Results state that the best option is to instill fear about the harsh effects to avoid rash and

delinquent behavior amongst psychopathic individuals. With the change of times, nowadays, it is easier for psychopathic individuals to access naïve victims. They cheat them to manipulate the naïve individuals to do as they wish.

A large number of disciplines state that emotional shallowness and lack of guilt may be a major personality trait in psychopaths. With the advance of technology, research explains that environmental factors in the development of a person are responsible for changes in gene expression. This alters the functioning of the brain leading to behavior change. After understanding the scientific question about the association of factor 2 psychopathy with risky decision making, we should try to create prevention and intervention programs (Pleskac, 2008).

One way of preventing antisocial traits is to change biological factors that may cause risks and influence the environment factors. This can be done through: more physical exercise, environmental enrichment e. g. nutrition and stimulation at early ages. Early enrichment prevents an adult from engaging in criminal activities. The programs if applied at an early age will enhance the functioning of the brain and make a contribution in a reduction of criminal activities all over the world.

The use of two concepts ART and LSRP has made the research outcomes to be more efficient as compared to using one concept alone. Psychopathic individuals are mainly attracted to an organization where they can manage to use others to gain high rewards e. g. money, power and status. If one is aware that his or her organization is attractive to these individuals, he should be in a better position to handle them. The best way to prevent their



unacceptable behaviors is to base the organization on principles such as integrity, honesty and ethicality. This will make the behaviors of psychopathic individuals easily noticed.

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