

Does Personality of Psychopaths differ from Normal?

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Abstract

Background: Personality of an individual determines his behavior towards others. Psychopaths behave differently. Therefore, study was conducted to know that, which personality dimension of psychopaths differ from normal.

Methods: Study examined personality dimension of 80 subjects selected purposively. Of them 40 were normal subjects (20 male & 20 female) and 40 psychopaths (20 male & 20 female). GHQ-12 negative subjects from the community formed the normal group. Dimension Personality Inventory (DPI-B) was administered on all the included subjects.

Results: Mean scores on DPI-B reveal that normal and psychopath group were significantly ($p < 0.05$) differ on all the six personality dimensions i.e. 'activity-passivity', 'enthusiastic-non enthusiastic', 'assertive-submissive', 'suspicious-trusting', 'depressive-non depressive' and 'emotional instability-emotional stability'. Mean scores were found to be significantly higher of psychopaths compared with normal group.

Conclusion: Personality of psychopath can be differentiated on 'depressive-nondepressive' and 'suspicious-trusting' dimensions on DPI-B. Psychopaths were found to be 'depressive' and 'suspicious' in present study.

Keywords: GHQ-12, DPI, Personality, Psychopaths

Introduction

In general term, personality of an individual may be pleasant, attractive, irritating, rigid, rough-tough, calm and cool, anxious, dependent, avoidant, impulsive, emotional, and dramatic or any other type based on observation. We all make personality judgment about the people whom we know. Researchers tend to define personality in many ways from ancient to modern era (Das, 1987; Mukherjee, 2007; Srivastava,

2012; Shilpa & Murthy, 2012; Ellis et al. 2009; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975; Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 2003). Allport (1937) has mentioned both inner qualities and behavior, but emphasized the inner qualities more as compared with the outer one. According to Allport, "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of that psycho-physiological system that determines his unique adjustments to his environment" (Allport,

1937). Marked deviation in the personality which affects the personal, social and occupational functioning of an individual classified as personality disorder in ICD-10, DSM-IV & V.

Researchers took interest to differentiate personality characteristics of normal healthy individuals from mentally ill (Shaw et al. 1975; Tripathi & Jahan, 2004, 2010; Chandola et al. 2015; Cheung et al. 1997; Fazel and Grann, 2006; Camarena et al. 2014; Angst & Clayton, 1986; Parnas & Jorgensen, 1989; Berenbaum and Fujita, 1994). Study reports show that schizophrenics are paranoid, schizoid, impulsive, anankastic, anxious and dependent (Tripathi & Jahan, 2010), aggressive or violent behaviour (Cheung et al. 1997; Fazel and Grann, 2006; Monahan, 1993; Torrey, 1994; Wessely et al. 1994), passive, non-enthusiastic, submissive, suspicious, depressive and emotionally instable (Chandola et al. 2015). Schizophrenics with assertive, dissocial and impulsive traits were more likely to get involved in criminal activity in comparison to those who have schizoid traits (Tripathi and Jahan, 2004). Hare and Hart (1993) reported psychopathic traits predict violence even among those with psychosis. It was also found that schizophrenics with criminal record were more assertive, less reserved, less conscientious, and more extraverted than Schizophrenics without criminal record (Tripathi & Jahan, 2010). Alcoholics were found to be emotionally instable (Shaw et al. 1975), neuroticism contributes more to depression (Borecki et al. 2010), patients with affective disorder were harm avoidance and novelty seeking (Camarena et al. 2014)

After knowing of the personality which is harmful for people and society we can differentiate them from normal healthy individuals and will be able to take precautionary measures against them. Therefore, this study was planned to study the personality of psychopaths and

compared it with personality of normal healthy controls. Indoor patient of Noormanzil Psychiatric Clinic, Lucknow, U.P. India with any psychopathology were taken as Psychopaths for the study.

It was hypothesized that there will be no difference in personality of psychopaths and normal controls.

Materials and methods

Participants

This study was conducted on 80 subjects. Of them 40 were normal subjects (20male & 20 female) and 40 psychopaths (20male & 20 female). The age range of the participants was 20-50 years with minimum education up to 5th class. There was insignificant difference between mean age (35 ± 9.8 and 34 ± 8.2 years respectively) and year of schooling (10 ± 3.2 & 12 ± 3 years respectively) of psychopaths and normal group. Mean of total duration of illness of psychopaths was found to be 2 ± 0.92 years.

Tools:

General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12):

The 12-Item General Health Questionnaire (Jacob et al. 1997) is the most extensively used screening instrument for common mental disorders, in addition to being a more general measure of psychiatric well-being.

Dimension personality inventory (DPI):

It is constructed by Bhargava (2012) and deals with six dimensions by which ones personality can be evaluated. They are: 'Activity- passivity', 'enthusiastic-non enthusiastic', 'assertive-submissive', 'suspicious-trusting', 'depressive-non depressive' and 'emotional instability-emotional stability'. It is similarly applicable for normal as well as psychotic patients. Score 10 or more indicative of left sided dominated personality on that dimension and score less than 10 indicative of the other side of that dimension. For example if

person scored 15 on the dimension ‘activity-passivity’, he/she is active.

Procedure:

This study was conducted on 80 subjects of either sex. Indoor patients of Noormanzil Psychiatric Clinic & Hospital, Lucknow, U.P. India with any psychopathology, giving written informed consent were taken as Psychopaths. GHQ negative (score less than 3) subjects from the community formed the normal group for the study. Dimensions Personality Inventory (DPI-B) (Bhargava, 2012) was administered on all included subjects. Uncooperative subjects, having problem in speech and communication which can impede the interview were excluded from the study. Data was analysed using mean, SD and t test.

Results

Table 1 shows that there was significant difference in the mean scores ($p < 0.05$) on all the dimensions of DPI-B between normal and psychopath group. But in the dimension of ‘Depressive-non depressive’ the mean score of normal group was found to be less than 10. It indicates that normal group is ‘non depressive’ however, psychopaths were

‘depressive’. Though, the significant differences were found but both the groups were ‘active’, ‘enthusiastic’, ‘assertive’, ‘suspicious’ and ‘emotionally instable’.

Figure 1 shows that normal group scored below baseline score 10 on only 5th domain that is ‘depressive-non depressive’. It indicates that normal group was ‘non-depressive’. Psychopath group was found to be ‘depressive’ on DPI-B.

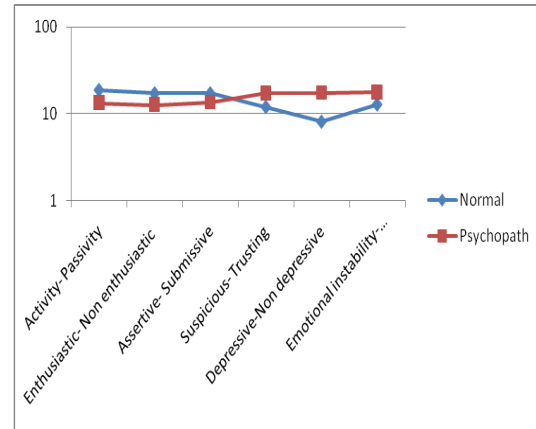


Fig. 1: Comparison of personality between normal and psychopath group on DPI-B.

Table 1: Comparison of personality of normal and psychopath on Dimension Personality Inventory.

DPI –B Dimensions	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t- value
1 Activity- Passivity	Normal	40	18.65	1.51	6.22*
	Psychopaths	40	13.25	5.27	df-78
2 Enthusiastic- Non enthusiastic	Normal	40	17.12	2.45	4.51*
	Psychopaths	40	12.59	5.97	df-78
3 Assertive- Submissive	Normal	40	17.12	2.31	3.64*
	Psychopaths	40	13.42	6.51	df-78
4 Suspicious- Trusting	Normal	40	11.92	5.34	5.26*
	Psychopaths	40	17.15	3.30	df-78
5 Depressive-Non depressive	Normal	40	8.05	5.09	9.33*
	Psychopaths	40	17.3	3.66	df-78,
6 Emotional instability- Emotional stability	Normal	40	12.72	4.69	5.84*
	Psychopaths	40	17.65	2.45	df-78

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ level

Table 2 shows comparison of personality of male subjects between normal and psychopath group on Dimension Personality Inventory. Mean score of male subjects significantly differs between normal and psychopath group on ‘activity-passivity’; ‘enthusiastic- non-enthusiastic’; ‘suspicious-trusting’ , ‘depressive-nondepressive’,

‘emotional instability-emotional stability’ dimensions of personality. Similar difference pattern was found for females in the dimension of personality between normal and psychopath group (Table 3).

Table 2: Comparison of personality of male subjects between normal and psychopath group on DPI-B.

DPI –B Dimensions		Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t- value
1	Activity- Passivity	Normal Male	20	18.55	1.60	3.91*
		Psychopath male	20	13.75	5.25	Df=38
2	Enthusiastic- Non enthusiastic	Normal Male	20	18.00	2.40	3.74*
		Psychopath male	20	12.45	6.18	Df=38
3	Assertive- Submissive	Normal Male	20	17.20	2.48	2.93*
		Psychopath male	20	12.70	6.39	Df=38
4	Suspicious- Trusting	Normal Male	20	11.40	5.76	4.00*
		Psychopath male	20	17.15	2.83	Df=38
5	Depressive-Non depressive	Normal Male	20	7.80	5.16	7.4*
		Psychopath male	20	17.80	3.12	Df=38
6	Emotional instability- Emotional stability	Normal Male	20	12.95	4.68	4.48*
		Psychopath male	20	17.60	2.56	Df=38

*Significant at p<0.05 level

Table 3: Comparison of personality of female subjects between normal and psychopaths group on Dimension Personality Inventory-B.

DPI –B Dimensions		Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t- value
1	Activity- Passivity	Normal Female	20	18.4	1.72	4.50*
		Psychopath Female	20	12.75	5.37	Df=38
2	Enthusiastic- Non enthusiastic	Normal Female	20	17.55	2.79	2.74*
		Psychopath Female	20	13.5	5.98	Df=38
3	Assertive- Submissive	Normal Female	20	17.6	2.18	2.47*
		Psychopath Female	20	14.1	5.53	Df=38
4	Suspicious- Trusting	Normal Female	20	12.45	4.98	3.14*
		Psychopath Female	20	16.35	3.78	Df=38
5	Depressive-Non depressive	Normal Female	20	7.8	5.25	6.50*
		Psychopath Female	20	17.3	3.89	Df=38
6	Emotional instability- Emotional stability	Normal Female	20	13.2	4.76	3.46*
		Psychopath Female	20	17.4	2.58	Df=38

*Significant at p<0.05 level

Table 4: Age group wise comparison of personality on Dimension Personality Inventory-B.

DPI –B Dimension		Age Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t- value
1.	Activity- Passivity	20-35 years	40	13.1	6.57	0.94
		36-50 years	40	14.32	4.82	df=78
2.	Enthusiastic- Non enthusiastic	20-35 years	40	12.92	5.55	0.93
		36-50 years	40	11.77	5.98	df=78
3.	Assertive- Submissive	20-35 years	40	12.67	4.77	1.38
		36-50 years	40	11.0	5.95	df=78
4.	Suspicious- Trusting	20-35 years	40	13.15	4.75	4.6*
		36-50 years	40	8.05	5.03	df=78
5.	Depressive-Non depressive	20-35 years	40	10.32	6.14	0.23
		36-50 years	40	10.0	6.26	df=78
6.	Emotional instability- Emotional stability	20-35 years	40	11.37	6.43	0.13
		36-50 years	40	11.2	5.05	Df=78

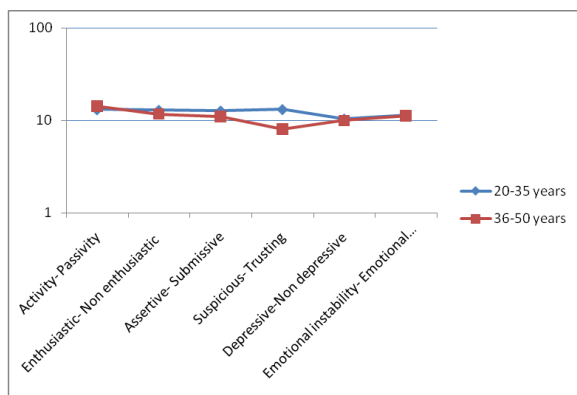
**Fig. 2: Age group wise comparison of personality on Dimension Personality Inventory-B.**

Table 4 shows that age group wise there was insignificant difference on all the dimensions except 'suspicious-trusting' on DPI. The subjects of 20-35 years of age group were found to be 'suspicious' however 36-50 years were 'trusting'. Subjects with both the age groups were found to be 'active', 'enthusiastic', 'assertive', 'non-depressive' and 'emotionally instable'.

Discussion

The study was conducted to explore the difference of personality between normal and psychopaths (admitted psychiatric patients in a psychiatric hospital for treatment). The results show that there was significant difference in the mean scores

($p < 0.05$) on all the dimensions of DPI-B between normal and psychopath group. Though, significant differences were found in the mean scores but both the groups were found to be 'active', 'enthusiastic', 'assertive', 'suspicious' and 'emotionally instable' because the mean score was found to be more than 10 cut off score on these dimensions (Table 1 & 2). Thus, both the groups fall in the same dimension of personality. However, it was observed that mean scores of psychopaths were higher as compared to normal. It means psychopaths are significantly more 'active', 'enthusiastic', 'assertive', 'suspicious' and 'emotionally instable' as compared with normal subjects. Some studies reported similar findings that 'assertiveness' and 'enthusiastic' personality characteristics commonly shared by normal and psychiatric patients. (Tripathi & Jahan, 2004, 2010; Chandola, Shukla and Tripathi, 2015). Alcoholics were found to be emotionally instable (Shaw et al. 1975).

But in the dimension of 'Depressive-non depressive' the mean score of normal group was found to be less than 10. It indicates that normal group is 'non depressive' however, psychopaths were found to be 'depressive'. Neurotics, alcoholics and schizophrenics were found to be depressive in previous studies (Borecki et al. 2010, Chandola,

Shukla and Tripathi, 2015; Shaw et al. 1975). But it was also reported that after recovery these patients returned to near control means.

Early age group found to be 'suspicious' and later age group 'trusting'. It may be explained as experienced person had exposures to good and bad circumstances of life and gain self confidence to deal with the situations. Hence they were 'trusting' and their counter parts were 'suspicious'.

Neither premorbid nor post morbid personality of psychopaths was assessed in the study and thus we can draw inference for personality at morbid state only. There is need to study those persons who are normal and share common personality with psychopaths and later develop any kind of mental illness longitudinally. There is study limitation that we could not control clinical variables of psychopath group.

Conclusion

Personality of psychopath can be differentiated from normal on 'depressive-nondepressive' and 'suspicious-trusting' dimensions on DPI-B. Psychopaths were found to be 'depressive' and 'suspicious' in present study.

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Conflict of Interest

The paper is based on the ongoing PhD work of the first author.

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