Title: CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE TRIARCHIC PSYCHOPATHY MEASURE IN JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH: A MULTI-INFORMANT/MULTIMETHOD PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The Triarchic Model of Psychopathy emerged with the aim of reconciling and accommodating previous descriptive accounts of psychopathy. The dimensions of this model, operationalized through the Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM; Patrick, 2010), have shown adequate correlations with respect to other psychopathy measures in adult incarcerated population, but more research is needed with justice-involved youth. The general goal of this research was to analyze the convergent validity of the TriPM, using self -and clinician- rated psychopathy measures, in seventy-two 14-22 years old males (*M* = 18.17; *SD* = 1.18) who were under the most restrictive custodial measure of the Catalonia's justice system (Spain). The results showed that TriPM shows adequate convergent validity in reference to the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL:YV), the Clinical Assessment of Prosocial Emotions (CAPE), the Youth Psychopathy Traits Inventory (YPI) and the Inventory of Callous Unemotional Traits (ICU), specially when using same informants and assessment approaches. The findings provided evidence that the TriPM is an adequate measure to study psychopathy in juvenile justice context and can contribute to elaborate prevention and treatment programs. Nonetheless, further research employing multimethod approaches is needed.

Keywords: Psychopathy, Triarchic Psychopathy Measure, Meanness, Boldness, Disinhibition, justice-involved youth

Introduction

Psychopathy can be characterized as a pathological syndrome including behavioral, affective, and interpersonal features (De Brito et al., 2021). Its significance is particularly noted in forensic and correctional settings due to its association with antisocial and aggressive behavior. Despite the wide amount of literature on psychopathy, debates continue regarding its definition, scope, and assessment. Patrick et al. (2009) introduced the Triarchic Model of Psychopathy to reconcile and integrate modern and historical theoretical approaches by describing three distinct neurobiological phenotypes: Boldness (fearlessness, social dominance, and low stress reactivity), Meanness (encompassing callousness, exploitativeness, and interpersonal detachment), and Disinhibition (impulsivity, poor self-regulation, and low frustration tolerance) (Drislane, Patrick, et al., 2014; Patrick et al., 2009; Patrick & Drislane, 2015).

This model has gained attention since the Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM; Patrick, 2010; the first Triarchic Model assessment tool) showed correlations with other psychopathy assessments. In adult forensic populations, the convergence of the dimensions of the TriPM has been studied with one of the most common assessment tools in these settings, the Psychopathic Checklist Revised (PCL-R) and derivates. The PCL-R operationalizes the construct of psychopathy into four facets: Interpersonal (f1), affective (f2), impulsive lifestyle (f3) and antisocial behavior (f4). All three TriPM dimensions are present within the PCL-R: Boldness is related to f1, Meanness to all PCL-R facets (mostly f2) and Disinhibition to f3 and f4 (Patrick, 2010; Pauli et al., 2021; Sellbom et al., 2018; Yoon et al., 2022). However, results are not conclusive, especially for Boldness (Yoon et al., 2022). Evidence about the TriPM in juvenile justice contexts is almost nonexistent.

Research with undergraduate students using the TriPM demonstrates how this tool relates to other commonly employed self-assessment methods such as the Youth Psychopathy

Traits Inventory (YPI) and the Inventory of Callous-Unemotional (ICU) (Drislane, Patrick, et al., 2014). Additionally, adaptations to the Triarchic Model have been elaborated (e.g., Drislane, Brislin, et al., 2014 with the YPI) expanding its use to the juvenile population. In juvenile forensic contexts, emerging studies are noteworthy. For instance, Semel et al. (2021) adapted the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Adolescent to the Triarchic model, and Luo et al. (2021) adapted the YPI for the Chinese population. These studies further expanded the utility of this framework by demonstrating good convergent validity with respect to other measures. Moreover, Laurinavičius et al. (2020) tested the relationship between Triarchic domains and relevant characteristics associated with psychopathy (e.g., different types of aggression, antisocial behavior and pro-criminal attitudes among others) providing a more detailed understanding of the construct. Since psychopathy seems to have its roots in childhood (Frick & Marsee, 2018), research with justice-involved youth is important for early detection, better adaptation and prevention of chronic externalizing behavior. Therefore, additional studies are required to fully comprehend the application of this model in juvenile forensic populations.

Consequently, this study aims to expand the knowledge of the triarchic model in juvenile offenders. The general goal of this exploratory study was to investigate the convergent validity of the TriPM considering self -and clinician- rated psychopathy measures including the Psychopathic Checklist: Youth Version (PCL:YV), the YPI, the ICU and the Clinical Assessment of Prosocial Emotions (CAPE).

Drawing from previous research and the theoretical underpinnings of the triarchic model, we formulated three hypotheses. Firstly, we hypothesized that the overall TriPM score would significantly correlate with the total scores of the other psychopathy measures (H1). Secondly, we expected that TriPM Boldness would predict interpersonal subscales of psychopathy as measured by the PCL:YV and the YPI (H2.1), that TriPM Meanness would primarily predict the affective components of these instruments (H2.2), and that TriPM

Disinhibition would be predominantly linked to impulsive-antisocial traits (H2.3). Lastly, we expected that TriPM Meanness would predict higher scores on ICU and CAPE, both of which assess CU traits (H3).

Method

Sample

The study involved 72 incarcerated male youths under the most restrictive custodial sentence in Catalonia (Spain) at two long-term secure penal facility: "*L'Alzina*" in Barcelona (*N* = 46) and "*El Segre*" in Lleida (*N* = 26). Ages ranged between 14-22 years (*M* = 18.17; *SD* = 1.18). For complete details, see Molinuevo et al. (2020).

Measures

TriPM (Patrick, 2010; authorized Spanish version by Poy et al., 2014). A 58-item self-report questionnaire, adapted for youth, that measures three dimensions of psychopathy: Meanness, Disinhibition, and Boldness. The analyses revealed the following consistency indices: Meanness (McDonald's omega Ω = .85), Disinhibition (Ω = .87), Boldness (Ω = .63), and total score (Ω = .90).

The Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL:YV; Forth et al., 2003; authorized Spanish version by González et al., 2003). A semi-structured interview with 20 diagnostic criteria that assesses four facets and a total score: Interpersonal (Ω = .76), Affective (Ω = .82), Behavioral (Ω = .75), Antisocial (Ω = .71), and total score (Ω = .90).

YPI (Andershed et al., 2002; authorized Spanish version by Hilterman et al., 2006). A self-report inventory consisting of 50 items that assesses three factors and a total score: GM-YPI (Ω = .90), CU-YPI (Ω = .70), II-YPI (Ω = .69), and total score (Ω = .90).

ICU (Frick, 2003; authorized Spanish version by Ezpeleta et al., 2013). A self-report inventory consisting of 24 items that evaluates the callous-unemotional traits (Ω = .78).

CAPE (Frick, 2013; authorized Spanish version by Molinuevo et al., 2020). A semi-structured interview that assesses Callous-Unemotional traits through the presence/absence of the limited prosocial emotions (LPE) clinical specifier using collateral information. It was administered to the youths and social educators (Ω = .82).

Procedure

This study was approved by the Animal and Human Experimentation Ethics Committee of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Nº 3260). The participants underwent testing in three sessions, mostly spaced (due to the needs of the centers) one week apart: the first two through an individual format and the third in a group format, which included 4-5 youths whenever possible. The following measures were administered: ICU, TriPM, and CAPE in the first session; PCL:YV in the second session; and YPI in the third session. The field study was performed between February 23, 2016, and March 8, 2017. For more information about the administration of interviews and interrater reliability, see Ivanova-Serokhvostova et al., (2022) and Molinuevo et al. (2020).

Data Analyses

The Software for Statistics and Data Science version 14 was used to calculate the internal consistency index. The Statistical Software Package for the Social Sciences, IBM SPSS Statistics version 29.0, was used for multiple regression analyses. Age, TriPM's dimension scores or TriPM total score were entered as predictor variables, and independent models were computed for each subscale and measure (PCL:YV, YPI, ICU, and CAPE).

Results and Discussion

The goal of this research was to investigate the convergent validity of the TriPM by employing a multi-informant, multi-method approach in assessing psychopathy. Overall results indicate that the TriPM exhibits adequate convergent validity with other measures, particularly

when young individuals serve as informants. Table 1 displays the results of multiple regression analyses.

With regard to the hypotheses, TriPM total score (H1) was a significant predictor for all total scores of the PCL:YV, YPI, ICU, and CAPE, suggesting that it captures other psychopathy theoretical models. Results related to H2 showed that Boldness was a significant predictor for scales assessing the Interpersonal psychopathy dimension (PCL:YV and YPI), as hypothesized, and YPI total score, indicating good convergent validity of this dimension. These findings are consistent with previous work with juvenile offenders (Sellbom et al., 2018), although a recent meta-analysis (Sleep et al., 2019) describes limited correlations between Boldness and other psychopathy measures. Therefore, this effect might be specific to juvenile offenders' samples. Meanness was a significant predictor for the YPI affective dimension, as expected, and the YPI total score, but not for the Affective facet of PCL:YV. Finally, Disinhibition was a significant predictor for scales assessing the behavioral dimensions of psychopathy assessed by YPI and PCL:YV, as expected, and both total scores. Unexpectedly, it was also a significant predictor of the Interpersonal facet of the PCL:YV. This result does not align with previous literature (Sleep et al., 2019) Further studies are needed to better understand this finding. Finally, results partially supported H3; TriPM Meanness emerged as a significant predictor for CU traits assessed by ICU, as expected, but not for CAPE. The inconsistencies related to Meanness outcomes (H2.2 and H3) might stem from differences in the employed methodology and sources of information (self-report vs. clinical interview). Only when using self-report measures (ICU or YPI) Meanness relates to the affective dimension of psychopathy (as described in Drislane, Patrick, et al., 2014) suggesting that future studies should employ different evaluation approaches to better understand these features.

This study is a preliminary and exploratory study and presents some limitations such as the small all-male sample, which may have led to non-significant results (including statistical

suppression). Future research should replicate these findings in larger, gender-mixed, and cross-cultural samples.

In consonance with the literature, this study has generally shown the expected pattern of associations between TriPM and other psychopathy measures in a sample of juvenile offenders, providing support for convergent validity. The main results indicate that Boldness, Meanness, and Disinhibition represent, respectively, the interpersonal, affective, and behavioral dimensions of psychopathy in support of the theoretical framework of the model. These findings aligns closely with other works such as Drislane, Patrick, et al. (2014) using the YPI; Yoon et al. (2022) using the PCL-R in adult populations; and other studies employing adaptations of the Triarchic Model (e.g. Semel et al., 2021). Additionally, results provided evidence for the use of multimethod/multi-informant assessments as well as novel insights regarding the value of TriPM in juvenile justice contexts.

To conclude, this study has further broadened the understanding of the psychopathy construct through the Triarchic Model, and current findings have generally indicated that the TriPM self-report measure can effectively describe psychopathy and can promisingly be an effective measure for the early detection of youth at-risk and potentially enhance preventive therapeutic interventions.

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Table

Table 1. Relationships between TriPM and psychopathy measures

	Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (*n* = 72)											
	Meanness			Boldness			Disinhibition			Total Score		
	T	β	Partial r [a]	T	β	Partial r [a]	T	β	Partial r [a]	T	β	Partial r [b]
Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (*n* = 62)												
Interpersonal	-.766	-.102	-.101	2.305	.284	.292*	2.651	.345	.331*	2.756	.336	.338**
Affective	-.390	-.054	-.052	1.593	.206	.206	1.592	.217	.206	1.871	.233	.237
Behavioral	1.090	.130	.143	.882	.098	.116	4.193	.492	.486**	4.907	.535	.538**
Antisocial	.387	.050	.051	1.262	.150	.165	3.452	.434	.416**	3.924	.454	.455**
Total Score	.236	.030	.031	1.723	.201	.222	3.708	.456	.441**	4.232	.482	.483**
Youth Psychopathic Traits Inventory (*n* = 72)												
Grandiose/Manipulation	1.724	.214	.209	2.570	.286	.304*	1.468	.181	.179	4.208	.454	.457**
Callous/Unemotional	3.509	.444	.399**	.721	.082	.089	-.400	-.050	-.050	3.099	.351	.354**
Impulsive/Irresponsible	1.960	.217	.236	.807	.080	.100	4.327	.475	.473**	6.107	.595	.598**
Total Score	3.068	.352	.356**	2.156	.222	.258*	2.173	.247	.260*	5.924	.586	.586**
Inventory of Callous Unemotional Traits (*n* = 72)												
Total Score	5.904	.638	.603*	.078	.008	.010	.594	.064	.076	5.206	.548	.548**
The Clinical Assessment of Prosocial Emotions (*n* = 72)												
Total Score	1.876	.238	.223	.397	.045	.048	.759	.095	.092	2.628	.288	.302*

Zo = Zero Order correlations; p* ≤ .05; p** ≤ .01;

partial r [a] = partial correlations where age of participants and TriPM's dimensions score were entered as predictor variables for these analyses

partial r [b] = partial correlations where age of participants and TriPM's total score were entered as predictor variables for these analyses