Racial Differences on the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI)

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Introduction

Previous Research

- An extensive literature exists examining adult personality measures across racial classification.
- A consistent finding among adult literature indicates that racial differences on personality measures (e.g., MCMI, MMPM) are commonly observed.
- To date, research attention examining racial differences on measures of adolescent personality is relatively non-existent.
- An examination of the MMPI-A normative sample across racial classification reveals T-score differences ranging between 3 to 5 points on the clinical scales.
- Barry and Grilo (2002) examined a small sample of individuals on the MACI; however, they only reported results from scales related to eating disorders.

Goals

- Determine if racial differences exist on the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory utilizing a relatively large sample size.
- If differences exist, identify those personality scales and subsequent profiles.

Methods

Participants

- Male juvenile youth-offenders incarcerated at an Alabama Department of Youth Services correctional facility.
- Youth from throughout the state of Alabama were housed within this correctional facility.
- Average age = 16.04 (SD = 1.46 years).
- Average grade = 9.08 (SD = 1.49).
- N= 663.
- Demographic Breakdown: Caucasians (52.3%) and African-Americans (47.7%).
- Individuals incarcerated for a variety of offenses including sexually inappropriate behaviors, assault, property offenses, and drug offenses.

Instrument

- Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI; Millon 1993).
- The MACI is a 160-item, self-report inventory specifically targeted to assess troubled adolescents.
- The MACI was designed to measure unique psychosocial concerns, personality styles, and clinical symptoms via a true-false format.
- The normative sample is comprised of male and female adolescents selected from a variety of mental health settings including outpatient mental health clinics, private practice settings, inpatient psychiatric and general medical units, and residential treatment units.

Results

- Significant MACI mean scale differences across racial classification were measured as determined by a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA); Wilks’ Lambda = 0.772, F(30, 630) = 6.197, p < .001.
- Age and grade were entered as covariates (avg. age = 16.04; avg. grade = 9.08).
- Subsequent univariate analyses indicated significant mean scale score differences between racial groups based on the following 18 scales:
  - Desirability, F(1,659)=9.41, p=.002; Inhibited, F(1,659)=11.51, p=.001; Doleful, F(1,659)=4.69, p=.03; Submissive, F(1,659)=7.23, p=.007; Dramatizing, F(1,659)=8.99, p=.003; Egotistic, F(1,659)=13.82, p=.001; Forceful, F(1,659)=5.53, p=.02; Oppositional, F(1,659)=4.01, p=.04; Self-Demeaning, F(1,659)=6.04, p=.01; Self-Devaluation, F(1,659)=10.58, p=.001; Body Disapproval, F(1,659)=13.13, p<.001; Peer Insecurity, F(1,659)=5.58, p=.02; Social Insensivity, F(1,659)=32.24, p=.001; Childhood Abuse, F(1,659)=21.00, p<.001; Substance Abuse, F(1,659)=5.49, p=.02; Delinquent Predisposition, F(1,659)=5.87, p=.02; Depressive Affect, F(1,659)=9.37, p=.002; and Suicidal Tendency, F(1,659)=4.179, p = .04.

Discussion

- Mean scale score differences across racial classification were measured on 18 scales in an adolescent forensic sample.
- These differences across racial classification indicates a meaningful relationship between the reported level of psychopathology and race.
- These measured differences suggest, if confounding variables are minimized, the accuracy of MACI Base Rate scores may be improved with the inclusion of race-specific data.
- Overall, Caucasians provided responses indicative of a greater level of self-deprecation (e.g., Submissive, Self-Demeaning, Body Disapproval) while African-Americans reported responses suggestive of a greater level of insensitivity (e.g., Forceful, Oppositional, Social Insensitivity).
- Furthermore, these findings support those presented by Barry and Grio (2002) as Caucasian adolescents reported greater negative attitudes regarding their physical development based upon responses from the Body Disapproval scale.
- Gynther (1972, 1981) offered a general explanation of the observed differences on personality instruments by postulating that African-Americans’ scores are not a measure of an increased level of psychopathology; rather, elevations are indicative of “life experiences in an oppressive culture wherein cynicism, lack of trust, and alienation are adaptive responses.”

Contact Patrick Cook with any questions at cookpat@auburn.edu or visit the Burkhart laboratory webpage to view additional projects at www.auburn.edu/~burkhbr