

The Development of a Psychopathy Content Scale for the MACI

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Introduction

Previous Research

- Psychopathy is a meaningful construct as it is a significant predictor of institutional adjustment, recidivism, and violence.
- Murrie and Cornell (2000) devised a psychopathy content scale by selecting 20 items from the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI) and compared those results with ratings on a well validated measure of psychopathy, Hare's (1991) Psychopathy Checklist - Revised (PCL-R).
- Results indicated a strong relationship between their rationally derived content scale and Total Psychopathy scores on the PCL-R ($r = .60$).

Goals

- Conduct a follow-up investigation comparing Psychopathy Content Scores from the MACI with Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version ratings given Murrie and Cornell's limited sample size ($N=92$).
- Determine if the Psychopathy Content Scale is useful in verifying Psychopathy scores and/or identifying discrepant information from comparisons with the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version.
- Identify benefits of the development of a Psychopathy Content Scale for the MACI.

Methods

Participants

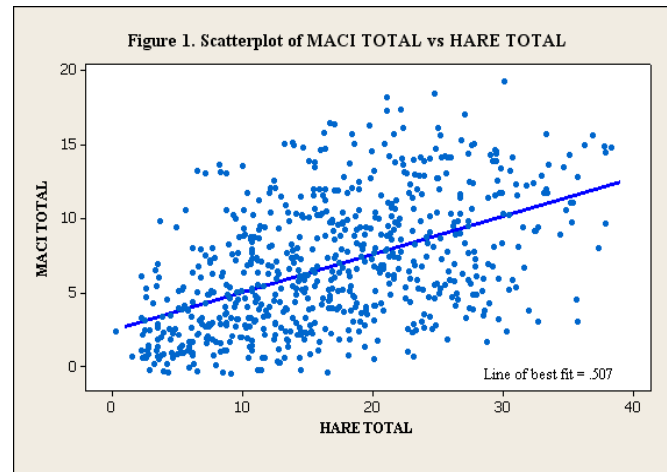
- Juvenile youth-offenders incarcerated at an Alabama Department of Youth Services correctional facility.
- Youth from throughout the state of Alabama were housed within this correctional facility for a variety of criminal offenses.
- Average age = 15.86 ($SD = 1.86$ years).
- $N=704$
- Demographic Breakdown: Caucasian $N=373$ (53%), African-Americans $N=331$ (47%).

Instruments

- Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI; Millon 1993).
- The MACI is a 160-item, self-report inventory specifically targeted to assess trouble adolescents.
- The MACI was designed to measure unique concerns, pressures, and situations adolescents face.
- Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL:YV)
- The Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version assesses psychopathy using a standardized, semi-structured interview.
- The 20-item checklist is completed by the clinician and supplemented with a

Results

- Strong relationship between MACI Psychopathy Content Scale scores and total PCL:YV scores ($r = .507$; $p < .001$) were measured (see Figure 1).
- Additionally, Factor 2 scores were strongly related ($r = .525$; $p < .001$), and Factor 1 scores shared a weak association ($r = .287$; $p < .001$).



Discussion

- The MACI Psychopathy Content scale appears to be a useful measure as results indicate a strong relationship between measures of psychopathy for Total and Factor 2 scores while Factor 1 associations were weak.
- Furthermore, despite their limited sample size, results support Murrie and Cornell's (2000) finding that the development of a MACI Psychopathy screening measure may be both effective and valid.
- Therefore, as an additional measure of psychopathy, the MACI Psychopathy Content scale may provide additional collateral information to better inform treatment professionals.
- Based on the strong association with Total Psychopathy scores, implementation of the MACI Psychopathy content scale in a correctional setting with male, juvenile offenders appears to have demonstrated utility.

Future Directions:

- Further research in a variety of clinical settings (e.g., inpatient, outpatient, etc.) could further inform the usefulness and sensitivity of the MACI Psychopathy Content scale as a screener to identify characteristics of psychopathy.
- Investigate the weak associations measured between Factor 1 variables.

Psychopathy Content Scale Items from the MACI

5. I do my very best not to hurt people's feelings. (false)
8. I would never use drugs, no matter what. (false)
9. I always try to do what is proper. (false)
21. Punishment never stopped me from doing whatever I wanted. (true)
23. I like to follow instructions and do what other expect of me. (false)
28. I sometimes scare other kids to get them to do what I want. (true)
40. I used to get so stoned that I did not know what I was doing. (true)
42. I see myself falling far short of what I'd like to be. (true)
45. I've never been called a juvenile delinquent. (false)
52. I don't see anything wrong with using others to get what I want. (true)
62. I enjoy thinking about sex. (true)
75. I've gone through periods where I've smoked pot several times a week. (true)
92. I'm very good at making up excuses to get out of trouble. (true)
111. I've had a few run-ins with the law. (true)
117. I do what I want without worrying about its effects on others. (true)
120. There have been times when I could not get through the day without some pot. (true)
128. I don't mind pushing people into giving me almost anything I want. (true)
135. I can charm people into giving me almost anything I want. (true)
150. I often have fun doing certain unlawful things. (true)
152. When we're having a good time, my friends and I can get pretty drunk. (true)

Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version Items

Factor 1: Selfish, Callous, and Remorseless Use of Others

1. Impression Management
2. Grandiose Sense of Self-Worth
4. Pathological Lying
5. Manipulation for Personal Gain
6. Lack of Remorse
7. Shallow Affect
8. Callous/Lacking Empathy
16. Failure to Accept Responsibility

Factor 2: Chronically Unstable and Antisocial Lifestyle

3. Stimulation Seeking
9. Parasitic Orientation
10. Poor Anger Control
12. Early Behavior Problems
13. Lacks Goals
14. Impulsivity
15. Irresponsibility
18. Serious Criminal Behavior
19. Violations of Probation

Contact Chrystal Boyles with any questions at cboyles@aum.edu or visit the Burkhart laboratory webpage to view additional completed and ongoing projects at www.auburn.edu/~burkhbr