

The Examination of Psychopathic Personality and Academic Misconduct Through the Lens of the Triarchic Psychopathy Model

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The Triarchic model proposes that psychopathic personality can be defined by three dimensions, *boldness*, *disinhibition*, and *meanness*, and previous research has linked these traits to academic misconduct (Baran & Jonason, 2020; Ljubin-Golub et al., 2019; Patrick et al., 2009). Research has also shown that boldness is conceptually similar to Cleckley's conceptualization of primary psychopathy (fearlessness, low anxiety, and low empathy; Cleckley, 1976; Patrick et al., 2009; Skeem et al., 2011). Moreover, previous research has shown that primary psychopathy correlates with various forms of academic misconduct (Ternes et al., 2019).

This study used an online survey of undergraduate students to examine if the association between the triarchic psychopathic traits and academic misconduct is similar for North American and European university samples. It further explored whether boldness is similar to the conceptualization of Levenson's primary psychopathy within the context of academic misconduct, and how the triarchic psychopathic traits correlate with different forms of academic misconduct. This study was correlational; participants were given academic misconduct and psychopathy measures. Ninety-nine participants completed questionnaires measuring demographics, academic misconduct, and psychopathic traits (Triarchic Psychopathy Measure; TriPM; Patrick, 2010). Analyses found that academic misconduct was common, with 76% reporting committing at least one academic misconduct behavior in the past twelve months. Psychopathic personality total and subscale scores all show significant positive correlations with each other and different forms of academic misconduct. These results show that different conceptualizations of psychopathy and psychopathic personality traits are associated with academic misconduct and different academic misconduct behaviors.

If you have any questions regarding the study, you can reach the faculty supervisor by email at patrick.carolan@smu.ca.