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Is Your Manager a Psychopath? An Evaluation of the Relationship between the Personality Types of Managers and Workers and the Levels of Psychopathy

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Abstract

Psychopathy is a personality disorder characterized by a high lack of empathy (Hare, 1991), behavioral problems, problems in interpersonal relations, and mood-related issues. In psychopathy, interpersonal interactions are shaped and driven by antisocial behaviors, with the person displaying low affectivity, and acting superficially and acrimoniously in interpersonal relations (Rubio et al., 2014). The majority of studies on psychopathy focus on personality. In this study, we investigated the relationship of the personality types of employees with the level of psychopathy. In this context, answers were sought to the following questions:

- Does the level of psychopathy of employees vary according to civil status?
- Does the level of psychopathy of employees vary according to gender?
- Does the level of psychopathy of employees vary according to the position in which they are working?
- Is there a relationship between the level of psychopathy of employees and their personality traits?
- Do the personality traits of employees indicate their level of psychopathy?

The study was performed with the participation of 237 individuals working at different levels and positions within the private sector in the city of Kayseri. Of these individuals, 18 % (42) were upper level managers, 25% (60) were mid-level managers, and 57 % (135) were employees. Study data were collected using a personal information form, a Ten Item Personality Inventory, and the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale. Study data were analyzed using the t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) correlation and regression methods. Based on the study results, it was determined that the psychopathy levels of employees did not vary according to gender or their current position, while it varied according to civil status. In addition, the level of psychopathy showed a negative relationship with sub-dimensions of personality; extroversion, compatibility, responsibility, and

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emotional balance. A number of recommendations were proposed based on these study results.

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1. Introduction

In his book titled “Without Consciousness,” Hare, a scientist well-known for his studies on psychopathy, described that we live in a society based on camouflage, and that traits associated with psychopathy – namely egocentrism and lack of thoughts or concerns for others etc... – are becoming increasingly tolerated, and even valued, by society. Consequently, psychopaths are not just found in prisons, but sometimes also in meeting rooms (Hare, 2002). Psychopaths have little difficulty in finding their way into politics, security forces, government, academia, and other social structures (Babiak & Hare, 2007).

According to Hare (1994), psychopaths are found in all cultures, societies, and races. Hare (1994; as cited by Engeler, 2005) describes that everyone encounters such individuals in daily life. In fact, such encounters serve to break certain assumptions and taboos in our minds, shaking our preconceived beliefs that psychopaths are only found in clinics or prisons. In this context, it is necessary to provide a clearer definition and description of what psychopathy is.

2. Psychopathy

2.1. Studies on the Definition Psychopathy

Studies on the definition of psychopathy began in the 1930s, with the American Psychological Association (APA) defining individuals exhibiting aggressive behaviors as sociopaths. These studies reached an important stage with Cleckley’s (1988) book entitled “The Mask of Sanity.” According to Cleckley, psychopaths share the following traits:

- A superficial charm and good intelligence- the lack of delusions of unrealistic thoughts.
- The absence of psychoneurotic symptoms- Lack of confidence- Lying, insincerity.
- Lack of consciousness and shame- Inadequacy- Inability to learn from experience and poor judgment.
- Pathological selfishness and inability to love- A general lack of emotional responses.
- Lack of insight- Irresponsible behavior in interpersonal relations.
- Fantastic behaviors (sometimes accompanied by alcohol or substance use).
- Suicidal behavior, in rare instances- Random sexual life- Inability to draw a life plan.

Based on these criteria from Cleckley, Hare developed the Revised Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R) (Hare, 1991; Hare et al., 2000). According to Hare, psychopathy is a personality disorder characterized by a high lack of empathy (Hare, 1991), behavioral problems, problems in interpersonal relations, and mood-related issues. In psychopathy, interpersonal interactions are shaped and driven by antisocial behaviors, with the person displaying very low affectivity, and acting superficially and acrimoniously in interpersonal relations (Rubio et al., 2014).

According to Hare (1994), psychopaths are soft-spoken and superficial individuals. They tend to be verbally talented and articulate individuals. They are often witty persons who speak cheerfully and entertainingly, and express themselves in a better light than they really are. They often describe implausible stories in a very convincing manner. Owing to these traits, they can easily deceive others and build relations with them. According to Hare, psychopathy is associated with several dimensions, with each dimension further consisting of certain characteristics (Hare, 2003):

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