

FEEDBACK REPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Conditional Reasoning Test for Workplace Problems and Career Interests in Post-Secondary Students

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Research Project conducted by:

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The Issue:

Decades of research has shown that employees or leaders with high psychopathic tendencies can be harmful within a workplace: They can bully, harass, manipulate, and de-humanize other employees whenever they see fit, usually to serve their own purpose. However, we do not yet have a test which can be used in the hiring/selection process to screen out these people with high psychopathic tendencies. All the existing self-report measures of psychopathy contain questions such as “I like to see my co-workers cry” which is very overt and highly susceptible to faking behaviour and socially desirable responding. As a solution, we developed the CRT-WP, which is an implicit measure of workplace-related psychopathy. The specific objective of this study was to examine how CRT-WP scores are related with job/career preference in post-secondary students.

The Research:

You were given the CRT-WP (22 scenarios which were disguised as workplace problem-solving questions) and a RIASEC-based job interest inventory (i.e., O*NET™ Interest Profiler) and told to respond honestly without other instructions. The purpose of this study was to examine the potential relationship between participants' scores on this psychopathy assessment and their job/career preferences, as well as the role of gender and socio-economic status. Post-secondary students were chosen because this is a demographic who will soon be joining the workforce, so gathering this data can provide insight about future employees as well as employers.

The final sample included 101 participants recruited from a student pool. The average participant was 20.65 years old ($SD = 3.11$). 86.1% of participants identified as female, 10.9% as male, and 3.0% as non-binary. The sample was 81.2% Caucasian, 8.9% Black, 1.0% East Asian, 1.0% South Asian, 2.0% Middle Eastern, 1.0% Hispanic, 4.0% Native/Aboriginal, and 1% were from other ethnicities. The average socioeconomic status (SES) for participants was 5.96 ($SD = 1.69$). This information was gathered by asking participants to rank where they think their family would be on a theoretical ladder scaling up from 1 to 10 compared to the rest of Canada in regard to SES.

The Findings:

We found a negative and significant correlation between psychopathy (i.e., CRT-WP scores) and the Realistic career type. We also found negative correlations between psychopathy and both Artistic and Conventional careers approaching significance. Neither gender nor socioeconomic status were found to significantly influence these relationships.

The Implications:

This research suggests, as previous research also found, that those higher on psychopathy are less interested/less likely to be found in careers that can be described as more “boring” (i.e., Realistic and Conventional interest – which include jobs like building, repairing, or assembling) or more artistic. Interestingly, we found no relationship for Enterprising interest, which include management or leadership jobs (generally of interest to people higher on psychopathy). But these results might be impacted by the fact that the respondents were university students, and mostly psychology majors.