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Personality and Individual Differences 42 (2007) 1311–1321

PERSONALITY AND
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

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Zuckerman's personality model predicts MCMI-III personality disorders

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Received 26 June 2006; received in revised form 25 September 2006; accepted 3 October 2006

Available online 15 November 2006

Abstract

The current study explores the relationships between the basic dimensions of the Zuckerman personality model (measured through the ZKPQ) and the 14 personality disorder scales of the millon clinical multiaxial inventory third edition (MCMI-III). The total sample comprised 673 subjects, of whom 50% were university students and 50% were subjects from the general population. Statistical analysis followed a similar methodology used by [Dyce and O'Connor \(1998\)](#) and [O'Connor \(2005\)](#). The principal component analysis showed that the five ZKPQ dimensions were associated with the personality disorder scales in different patterns. Linear regression analyses indicated that ZKPQ scales were very good predictors of the three DSM personality disorder clusters, and in particular of cluster B. Also, the global prediction power of Zuckerman's dimensions was highly similar to that demonstrated for the NEO-PI-R in previous studies. LOESS graphical analysis showed additional information about nonlinear relationships between normal personality and personality disorders. The discussion focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of Zuckerman's approach to account for personality disorders.

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Keywords: ZKPQ; MCMI-III; Zuckerman–Kuhlman personality questionnaire; Personality disorders; Alternative five-factor model

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1. Introduction

DSM Axis-II personality disorders are defined as “rigid and maladaptive traits” (DSM-IV-VR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Following this definition, these disorders may be understood as extreme and maladaptive variants of normal personality traits (Widiger & Costa, 1994). In fact, personality dimensional models have always emphasized relationships between normal traits and personality disorders (PDs). Within this tradition, the five-factor model (FFM) began to look prominent as an alternative to the categorical model in the classification of PDs (Costa & Widiger, 2002).

Two meta-analyses developed by Ostendorf (2000) and Saulsman and Page (2004) have supported relationships between personality disorders and the FFM, with special attention to the studies using the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Personality disorders were assessed through different procedures: structured interview based on DSM criteria, scales derived from the Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory (MMPI), or different inventories like the millon clinical multi-axial inventory (MCMI). The results indicated that: (1) disorders defined by emotional distress such as Paranoid, Schizotypal, Borderline, Avoidant and Dependent are positively associated with Neuroticism, (2) disorders linked with high gregariousness like Histrionic and Narcissistic correlate positively with Extraversion, (3) disorders characterized by shyness and reclusive qualities such as Schizoid, Schizotypal, and Avoidant are negatively related to Extraversion, (4) disorders implying interpersonal difficulties (Paranoid, Schizotypal, Antisocial, Borderline and Narcissistic) correlate negatively with Agreeableness, (5) conscientiousness shows positive associations with disorders characterized by orderliness such as Obsessive–Compulsive, and negative associations with recklessness disorders like Antisocial and Borderline, and (6) the Openness dimension is associated with no personality disorders (Saulsman & Page, 2004). In general, it is demonstrated that the broader NEO-PI-R scales (i.e. dimensions) account for around 34% of the variance in personality disorders, this percentage being larger when the narrower NEO-PI-R subscales (i.e. facets) are used as independent variables (Dyce & O’Connor, 1998).

In contrast with the research effort in the area of the relations between personality disorders and the FFM or other normal personality models such as Eysenck’s PEN (Jang, Livesley, & Vernon, 1999) and Cloninger’s Temperament and Character (Svrakic, Whitehead, Przybeck, & Cloninger, 1993), Zuckerman’s Alternative Five-Factor Model has attracted little attention with regard to this topic. Zuckerman developed his model as an alternative to the FFM (Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Teta, Joireman, & Kraft, 1993; Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Thornquist, & Kiers, 1991), including five basic personality dimensions: impulsive-unsocialized sensation seeking (ImpSS), neuroticism–anxiety (N-Anx), aggressivity–hostility (Agg-Hos), activity (Act) and sociability (Sy).

Impulsive-unsocialized sensation seeking has been the most studied dimension in relation to the question of personality disorders. In fact, the Antisocial Personality Disorder is supposed to be the extreme pathological end of this trait dimension (Zuckerman, 1999). Also, some research has related this dimension to other cluster B personality disorders due to the shared broad characteristic of impulsiveness of these disorders. Thus, for instance, Ball, Carroll, and Rounsaville (1994) found that sensation seeking correlated with antisocial personality and life-

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