Abstract

Identifying personality traits that coincide with everyday deception is crucial to understanding how individual differences relate to antisocial tendencies. The current study tested the hypothesis that psychopathy and sensation seeking predict everyday deception. Seventy-nine undergraduate students participated in an online study to assess these personality measures. Linear regression found that disinhibition psychopathy is a strong predictor of everyday deception, with impulsive sensation seeking as the only other significant predictor.

Introduction

Few studies have examined everyday deception and how it relates to personality traits. The purpose of this research is to create a measure of everyday deception, and to examine whether sensation seeking and psychopathy are associated with such deception.

Everyday deception is deliberately giving information different from the truth, or omitting pertinent information within the scope of normal daily life.

Sensation seeking is defined as the desire to partake in varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences while accepting the physical, social, legal, and financial risks that may follow (Zuckerman, 1994). Four sub-trait is thrill and adventure seeking, boredom susceptibility, disinhibition, and experience seeking.

Psychopathy is a personality disorder characterized by bold, mean, and disinhibited. A key behavior of psychopaths is intentional deception.

Hypothesis: Sensation seeking and psychopathy subscales will uniquely predict everyday deception.

Method

Seventy-nine participants (61 females and 18 males) completed six online surveys through Eastern Kentucky University’s SONA system measuring personality traits that relate to everyday deception. The entire study took around an hour to complete. Students received one SONA credit, which are required as outside activities for some classes, as proof of participation.

Surveys:
- Sensation Seeking (Form V): Consisted of four subscales, totaling in 40 paired statements
- Impulsive Sensation Seeking: Consisted of 18 True or False Statements
- Triarchic Psychopathy Scale: Consisted of three subscales, totaling in 58 True Or False statements.
- Everyday Deception Survey: Consisted of three subscales, totaling in 60 True or False statements.

Results

- All analyses were conducted using SPSS. Bivariate correlation analyses and simultaneous linear regression analyses were ran to obtain results.
- Everyday deception was positively correlated with sensation seeking subscales thrill and adventure seeking (TAS) and boredom susceptibility (BS). Only some forms of psychopathy and sensation seeking were correlated with one another and everyday deception (table 1).
- Disinhibition Psychopathy was the only significant positive predictor of everyday deception (table 2).

Everyday Deception, often referred to as “white lies”

Deception is disinhibited

Discussion

The current study used two different kinds of disinhibition subscales in relation to everyday deception. Results revealed that disinhibition psychopathy had a stronger correlation with everyday deception than the sensation seeking disinhibition. Upon closer examination, differences between the two scales divulged that everyday deception is more relevant to acts toward others than oneself.

Disinhibition psychopathy was also a better predictor of everyday deception than disinhibition sensation seeking. Disinhibition psychopathy had several questions that fell under an impulsiveness category which matched the Everyday Deception Survey. This explains why this scale was a better predictor of everyday deception. On the other hand, disinhibition sensation seeking had questions that referenced criminal behaviors, such as drug use. The Everyday Deception Survey did not have a criminal behavior focus and explains why disinhibition sensation seeking was not a key predictor in everyday deception.

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