



Psychopathy in the workplace: The knowns and unknowns

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ABSTRACT

The influx of attention regarding psychopathy in the workplace by media and scholars alike has increased dramatically over the last two decades. Nevertheless, this attention has greatly outstripped the scientific evidence, and strong claims regarding the toxic effects of workplace psychopathy in the absence of research continue unabated. The present article for the first time brings together the diverse and growing scientific literature on the implications of business psychopathy for (a) occupational and academic differences, (b) workplace aggression and counterproductive behavior, (c) ethical decision-making in the corporate world, (d) white-collar crime, and (e) leadership. Across these domains, there is preliminary evidence that psychopathy is tied to at least some negative outcomes in the workplace, although there are also scattered suggestions of some positive outcomes. Nevertheless, because of numerous methodological limitations, definitive statements regarding the adverse and adaptive correlates of psychopathy in the workplace are premature. We conclude with 10 recommendations for future scholarship in the budding field of business psychopathy.

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1. Introduction

In a 2002 keynote address to the Canadian Police Association, pioneering psychopathy researcher Robert Hare (2002) stated that “Not all psychopaths are in prison. Some are in the board room.” The recognition that psychopathy extends to the workplace and the rest of the business world is not new (e.g., Cleckley, 1941). However, in the wake of recent social and economic catastrophes (e.g., Enron, the housing market crash, bailouts, Wall Street criminals), the elusive corporate psychopath has re-entered the limelight. Western society has confronted Ponzi schemes, internet fraud, embezzlement, insider trading, corruption, and malfeasance; and business psychopathy is increasingly viewed as a prime culprit. More broadly, researchers and social commentators alike have become interested in the implications of psychopathy for the workplace (e.g., Babiak & Hare, 2006).

An internet search using such terms as “business” or “corporate” psychopathy yields hundreds of newspaper articles, blogs, press releases, magazine features, and the like, over the past decade. However, as of October 1st, 2012, a search entering the terms ‘corporate psychopathy,’ ‘business psychopathy,’ ‘business sociopath,’ ‘corporate sociopath,’ ‘business psychopath,’ ‘corporate psychopath,’ ‘corporate psychopathic personality,’ ‘business psychopathic personality,’ ‘workplace psychopathy,’ ‘workplace psychopath,’ ‘workplace psychopathic personality,’ ‘industrial psychopathy,’ ‘industrial psychopath,’ ‘industrial psychopathic personality,’ ‘organizational psychopathy,’ ‘organizational psychopath,’ and ‘organizational psychopathic personality’ into the scholarly database PsycInfo returned fewer than 50 published manuscripts on workplace psychopathy. Using these search terms, Fig. 1 displays the cumulative number of publications per year from 1990 to October 1st, 2012, separated by scholarly publications (measured by PsycInfo) and publications in popular sources (measured by LexisNexis). As can be seen, the number of popular publications on business psychopathy greatly exceeds that of academic publications,

with approximately zero in 1990, increasing to approximately 260 by October 1st, 2012.

Consistent with Fig. 1, the concept of business psychopathy first received widespread attention in the late 1990s, when a number of researchers conjectured that psychopathy bears important implications for the workplace. The speculation was followed by the publication of a now influential case study on psychopathy in the workplace (Babiak, 1995) and an outpouring of media attention on the topic. Business psychopathy has also been the subject of several successful books (Babiak & Hare, 2006; Boddy, 2011; Clarke, 2005) that provide advice on spotting and dealing with business psychopaths. These books have often referred to business psychopaths in extreme or even sensational terms, such as “snakes in suits,” “corporate destroyers,” or “monsters.” Without exception, they have assumed that psychopaths routinely wreak havoc in the workplace, engaging in dishonesty, verbal aggression, crime, and pitting employees against each other.

The gap between popular coverage and scientific research on business psychopathy is both substantial and troubling. Although the problems posed by psychopathy in the workplace have been discussed widely in popular publications, this theoretically and pragmatically important issue has been the subject of relatively little systematic research. The present article is the first attempt to comprehensively review and integrate the extant research on business psychopathy, a construct that may bear important implications for aggression and other counterproductive behaviors in the workplace. Psychopathy is a well-known correlate and predictor of violence and aggression in other settings (Hare, 2003; Salekin, Rogers, & Sewell, 1996). Nevertheless, its implications for aggression and other antisocial behaviors are poorly understood.

In our review, we address one overriding question: How much of the popular lore concerning business psychopathy is hype, and how much is well supported? We attempt to bridge the growing gulf between popular writings and data concerning workplace

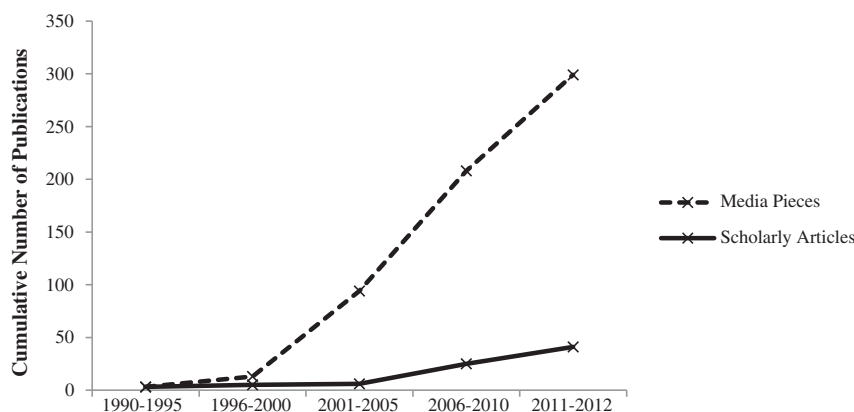


Fig. 1. Scholarly vs. media publications on workplace psychopathy across time. Note: Number of articles for both scholarly and media sources are presented cumulatively for five year time periods beginning on January 1st, 1990 through October, 1st, 2012.

psychopathy by addressing the scientific knowns and unknowns. Just as important, we delineate fruitful future directions for research on business psychopathy.

1.1. Business psychopathy: clinical lore

Until fairly recently, the business psychopath was almost exclusively the stuff of clinical lore. In recent years, the public has been bombarded with headlines from the media touting toxic bosses, the kind we all know and hate, the screamers, the charmers, and the manipulators. With few exceptions, these are individuals who are purportedly destructive to subordinates and companies alike.

Arguably the first major author to describe psychopathy systematically, *Hervey Cleckley* (1941), wrote of a business psychopath in his classic book, "The Mask of Sanity." In his case history, 'The Psychopath as a Business Man,' he described a prosperous businessman who displayed pronounced psychopathic personality features, including marital infidelity, callousness, wild drinking sprees, and risk-taking. At the same time, Cleckley observed that he exhibited a number of successful features, noting that "except for his periodic sprees, he works industriously" and that "he has contributed foresight and ability to the business" (p. 193). More recently, *Lykken* (1995) wrote of a psychopathic client who harnessed his superficial charm to launch a successful company in the building trade while partaking in numerous extramarital affairs (one with his business partner's wife) and fathering illegitimate children. In the case study described earlier, *Babiak* (1995) speculated that an organizational climate of chaotic transition, which affords stimulation and excitement, may be conducive to allowing psychopathic individuals to achieve success. He hypothesized that the tendency of psychopaths to manipulate and deceive others may predispose to their rise in the ranks of corporations. The subject of Babiak's case study, Dave, was later the centerpiece of a successful and influential (cited 263 times as of October 1st, 2012) book entitled *Snakes and Suits: When Psychopaths Go to Work* (*Babiak & Hare, 2006*), which is advertised as a tool for educating readers on how to identify and defend against psychopaths in the workplace.

The literature is also replete with theoretical expositions on business psychopathy. Some authors suggest that psychopaths who are attracted to the glamour of the business world may appear to outsiders as ideal leaders, concealing their dark side with poise and charm (e.g., *Boddy, 2006; Furnham, 2007*). Others go further in claiming that the business world is a virtual magnet for psychopathy, suggesting that the base rate of psychopathy in the upper ranks of corporations may be as high as 3% compared with 1% in the general population (*Boddy, Ladyshevsky, & Galvin, 2010a*). This figure, which derived from a study by *Babiak, Neumann, and Hare (2010)*, was misreported in the *New York Times* (*Deresiewicz, 2012*) and the *Atlantic* (*Silver, 2012*) by authors who stated mistakenly that 10% of business people were psychopathic.

Overall, the clinical lore surrounding psychopathy in the workplace imparts the story of ruthless bullies who rise to the top echelons of organizations, lying in wait to destroy not only companies and lives, but also economies (*Boddy, 2005, 2006; Boddy, Ladyshevsky, & Galvin, 2010a*). Nevertheless, as we will discover, these strong claims remain premature given the paucity of empirical corroboration. Before examining the body of extant research on business psychopathy; we lay out key conceptual and definitional issues relevant to psychopathy more broadly.

2. Psychopathy: Key conceptual and definitional issues

2.1. Psychopathy versus antisocial personality disorder

Psychopathic personality, or psychopathy, is a constellation of personality traits and associated behaviors characterized by superficial charm, dishonesty, egocentricity, manipulateness, risk-taking, and a lack of empathy and guilt masked by apparent normalcy (*Cleckley,*

1941; *Hare, 1991; Lykken, 1995*). Psychopathy is related to the DSM-IV-TR diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), a disorder marked by a lifelong pattern of manipulation and violation of others' rights (*American Psychiatric Association, 2000*). Although psychopathy and ASPD are similar in some ways, they are hardly synonymous. Specifically, an ASPD diagnosis requires a history of antisocial and criminal behavior that is not necessarily present in psychopathic individuals. In addition, dimensional indices of psychopathy and ASPD tend to be only moderately (e.g., $r = .50$) correlated (*Lilienfeld, 1994*).

2.2. The dark triad

Psychopathy is intertwined into the "dark triad" (*Paulhus & Williams, 2002*), a constellation of three theoretically separable, albeit empirically overlapping, personality constructs that are typically construed as interpersonally maladaptive: psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism (*Fehr, Samsom, & Paulhus, 1992; Gustafson & Ritzer, 1995; Hart & Hare, 1998; McHoskey, 1995; McHoskey, Worzel, & Szyarto, 1998*). Narcissistic personality is marked by grandiosity, a sense of entitlement, and a lack of empathy. Machiavellianism is associated with a disregard for the importance of morality and the use of craft and dishonesty to pursue and maintain power. All three constructs entail some degree of emotional detachment, self-promotion, aggression, and dishonesty (*Paulhus & Williams, 2002*), although they differ in significant respects as well. For example, narcissism is not necessarily marked by the absence of guilt that characterizes psychopathy, and Machiavellianism is not necessarily associated with the risk-taking typical of psychopathy. Given the moderate to high associations among the members of the dark triad, it is important to ascertain whether the relations between psychopathy and outcome variables in the workplace are specific to psychopathy per se as opposed to narcissism, Machiavellianism, or both.

2.3. Psychopathy: competing conceptualizations

There are several competing conceptualizations of psychopathy. In one of the first systematic clinical descriptions of psychopathy, *Cleckley (1941)* delineated 16 features he believed to be characteristic of psychopathy. These features include superficial charm, lack of anxiety, absence of psychotic/neurotic symptoms, egocentricity, lack of remorse or empathy, incapacity for love or close relationships, poor impulse control, irresponsibility, and unmotivated antisocial deviance. *McCord and McCord (1964)* described the condition in more sinister terms, emphasizing the psychopath as violent, manipulative, and cold. They considered "lovelessness" and "guiltlessness" to be the crux of the disorder. More recently, psychopathy has been conceptualized using a two factor model derived from factor analyses of widely used psychopathy measures (*Benning, Patrick, Blonigen, Hicks, & Iacono, 2003; Harpur, Hare, & Hakstian, 1989*). In this model, Factor 1 consists largely of the affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy, such as guiltlessness, lack of empathy, grandiosity, egocentricity, and superficial charm, whereas Factor 2 consists largely of such traits as impulsivity, irresponsibility, and a lack of behavioral controls (*Hare, 1991, 2003*).

2.4. Successful psychopathy

Despite the widely held view that psychopathy is invariably maladaptive, some researchers have argued that some of its component traits can be adaptive in certain settings, including the business world (*Lilienfeld, 1994; Lykken, 1995*). *Cleckley (1941)* delineated several features of psychopathy that are often associated with positive adjustment (e.g., superficial charm, intelligence, lack of psychotic/neurotic symptoms, and low rates of suicide). Later, a number of authors proposed that psychopathy can sometimes manifest itself in successful, or at least, subclinical presentations (*Lykken, 1982; Sutker & Allain, 1983; Widom, 1977*), perhaps predisposing to

adaptive functioning in such occupations as law enforcement, military combat, politics, high-contact sports, and entertainment (Skeem, Polaschek, Patrick, & Lilienfeld, 2011).

The controversial construct of successful psychopathy (Lilienfeld, 1998; Widom, 1977) can be understood within one of three competing models: *subclinical manifestation*, *moderated expression*, and a *dual process perspective* (Hall & Benning, 2006). The subclinical model suggests a mild expression of the disorder in which less severely affected individuals exhibit fewer social transgressions, but the core personality features are the same as in more severely affected individuals. In contrast, in the moderated expression model, both successful psychopathy and unsuccessful psychopathy stem from the same etiology, but moderating factors, such as intelligence, impulse control, socialization, and socioeconomic status, influence the expression of the disorder. Finally, the dual process model proposes that the interpersonal and affective components of psychopathy (e.g., guiltlessness, lack of empathy, superficial charm, grandiosity) are distinct from the antisocial deviant components (e.g., impulsivity, irresponsibility) (Fowles & Dindo, 2009). In this latter model, psychopathy is conceptualized as a hybrid condition comprising an amalgam of traits, such as fearlessness, grandiosity, and charm that may predispose to either or both maladaptive and adaptive behaviors, depending on yet unknown personality and situational moderating variables (Hall & Benning, 2006).

Nevertheless, with a few exceptions (e.g., Patrick, Edens, Poythress, & Lilienfeld, 2006), relatively little systematic research regarding successful psychopathy exists. As a consequence, most of the theorizing regarding this presumed condition is based on speculation and clinical lore. Despite this limitation, a number of studies have found that individuals in community settings display marked psychopathic traits (Belmore & Quinsey, 1994; Widom, 1977). Furthermore, studies suggest that psychopathic individuals in the community, in contrast to those in prisons, exhibit the interpersonal and affective traits of psychopathy more than the behavioral components (DeMatteo, Heilbrun, & Marczyk, 2006).

2.5. Psychopathy: the triarchic model

Patrick, Fowles, and Krueger (2009) reviewed varied and often confusing efforts throughout history to describe psychopathy, arriving at three reoccurring themes. They emphasized the utility of conceptualizing psychopathy in terms of three core phenotypic constructs: disinhibition, boldness, and meanness. Their “triarchic model” of psychopathy can serve as an organizing framework for differing conceptions of psychopathy, including those relevant to the workplace. *Disinhibition* is a predisposition towards deficits in impulse control. Individuals with high levels of this trait are characterized by a lack of planfulness and foresight, impaired affect regulation, failure to delay gratification, and behavioral restraint deficits (Patrick et al., 2009). Behaviorally, disinhibition manifests itself as irresponsibility, untrustworthiness, impulsivity, alienation and distrust of others, and aggressive behavior (Krueger, Markon, Patrick, Benning, & Kramer, 2007). *Boldness* refers to an ability to remain calm in threatening situations. Individuals high on trait boldness recover quickly from stressful life events, are self-assured, persuasive, socially efficacious, fearless, and accepting of unfamiliar or dangerous situations (Patrick et al., 2009). Interpersonally, boldness is characterized by dominance, reduced stress reactivity, and interpersonal thrill seeking (Benning et al., 2003). Finally, *meanness* is marked by a lack of empathy and attachment, disdain towards others, and rebelliousness. Mean individuals strategically exploit others and gain empowerment through their cruelty. They are arrogant, aggressively competitive, and defiant. They may verbally or physically abuse others, lack close personal relationships, or seek stimulation through their destructiveness.

In summary, the triarchic model provides a helpful framework for the conceptualization of psychopathy, especially in the business world. Some authors have conjectured that such traits as boldness

may sometimes be adaptive in business settings, perhaps predisposing to leadership success (Lilienfeld, Waldman et al., 2012; Patrick et al., 2009), whereas traits such as disinhibition and especially meanness may be related to maladaptive behavior in business settings, including workplace aggression and conflict. Importantly, because the triarchic model posits that psychopathy is a configuration of conceptually and empirically separable traits, it implies that studies of the relation between global psychopathy, as operationalized by total scores on psychopathy measures, and workplace performance may obscure the differential relations between psychopathy subcomponents and business success or failure (see O’Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2011). Hence, one recurring theme of this review is the need to parse the broad construct of psychopathy into its constituent elements to better understand the implications of psychopathic personality traits for workplace behavior, both adaptive (e.g., leadership) and maladaptive (e.g., stealing, verbal aggression).

3. Workplace psychopathy: assessment considerations

The assessment of psychopathy is a formidable challenge, especially considering the tendency of individuals with high levels of psychopathic traits to be dishonest and to lack insight into their condition (Lilienfeld & Fowler, 2006). Despite this limitation, researchers have used several measures to detect psychopathy in business settings. Most are general-purpose psychopathy measures, but several are designed specifically to detect psychopathic traits in workplace settings.

3.1. The Psychopathy Checklist—Revised

The Psychopathy Checklist—Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003), the best known measure of psychopathy, assesses the construct using a detailed semi-structured interview in conjunction with file information. It consists of 20 items measuring personality and behavioral indicators of psychopathy; items are scored 0 (item does not apply to respondent), 1 (item may apply to respondent), and 2 (item definitely applies to respondent). Early factor analyses of the measure revealed two correlated factors (Harpur, Hakstian, & Hare, 1988; Harpur et al., 1989). As noted earlier, Factor 1 consists primarily of the affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy, whereas Factor 2 is associated with behavioral indicators, such as criminal deviance and other antisocial activities (Harpur et al., 1989). Some more recent factor analyses have subdivided these two factors into narrower facets. For example, the most recent edition of the PCL-R manual subdivides Factor 1 into separable affective and interpersonal facets and Factor 2 into separable impulsive lifestyle and antisocial history facets (Hare, 2003).

Numerous studies support the construct validity of the PCL-R; for example, total PCL-R scores correlate moderately to highly with indices of violence and recidivism, and with laboratory measures of passive avoidance learning (Douglas, Vincent, & Edens, 2006; Hare, 1991, 2003). In addition, the two major PCL-R factors display clear-cut convergent and discriminant validity with external criteria. For example, Factor 1 tends to be associated negligibly or negatively with anxiety measures, whereas Factor 2 tends to be positively associated with these measures; in addition, Factor 1 tends to be negligibly or weakly positively correlated with verbal intelligence, whereas Factor 2 tends to be negatively correlated with verbal intelligence (Harpur et al., 1989).

3.1.1. Use in business settings

The PCL-R is a well-validated measure of psychopathy that provides excellent coverage of a variety of traits relevant to psychopathy. Nevertheless, its substantial reliance on file information may limit its utility in business and other workplace settings. In addition, because the PCL-R contains a number of items assessing explicitly

antisocial behaviors, it may be weighted towards detecting the largely unsuccessful manifestations of business psychopathy (see Skeem & Cooke, 2010; but see Hare & Neumann, 2010, for a different view).

3.2. Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale

In an effort to develop an efficient index of psychopathy, Levenson, Kiehl, and Fitzpatrick (1995) created a 26-item self-report measure modeled largely after the PCL-R. Their widely used measure, the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (LSRP), consists of two scales; one assessing primary psychopathy and the other secondary psychopathy (see Karpman, 1941, for the primary-secondary psychopathy distinction). According to Levenson et al. (1995), the Primary Scale is designed to assess “a selfish, uncaring, and manipulative posture towards others” (p.152). Conversely, the Secondary Scale aims to measure “impulsivity and a self-defeating lifestyle” (p. 152) and presumably a disposition towards antisocial and criminal behavior. The LSRP scales show promising construct validity. For example, the Primary Scale correlates negatively with five factor model (FFM) agreeableness, whereas the Secondary Scale correlates negatively with FFM agreeableness and conscientiousness, but positively with neuroticism (Lynam, Whiteside, & Jones, 1999). Nevertheless, some authors (e.g., Lilienfeld & Fowler, 2006) have criticized the Levenson Primary Scale on the grounds that it appears to operate largely as a measure of secondary psychopathy; for example, in several studies this scale has correlated just as highly, if not more highly, with measures of antisocial behavior than the Levenson Secondary Scale (e.g., McHoskey et al., 1998).

3.2.1. Use in business settings

Rather than assessing overt antisocial behavior, as does the PCL-R, the LSRP inquires about relatively mild deviance – and attitudes towards such deviance – that are reasonably prevalent in nonclinical populations. As a consequence, it may be more appropriate than the PCL-R for use in business settings. Nevertheless, because the LSRP does not contain indices of response styles, it may be susceptible to aberrant forms of responding that could be especially problematic in business settings, such as positive impression management.

3.3. Self-Report Psychopathy Scale—III

The Self-Report Psychopathy—III Scale (SRP-III; Paulhus, Hemphill, & Hare, in press) is a 64-item self-report measure intended to detect psychopathy. The measure consists of two scales designed to mirror Factors 1 and 2 of the PCL-R, with the first assessing primarily interpersonal and affective traits and the second assessing antisocial and impulsive behavior. The SRP-III demonstrates promising construct validity. The measure (or earlier versions thereof) correlates positively with an abbreviated version of the PCL-R (Widiger, Frances, Pincus, Davis, & First, 1991) and is moderately to highly correlated with other self-report measures of psychopathy (Lilienfeld, 1990; Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996) and indices of Machiavellianism (Tapscott, Vernon, & Veselka, 2012). Furthermore, Factor 1 of the SRP-III is negatively correlated with trait anxiety and positively correlated with narcissism. Factor 2 is also positively correlated with narcissism and a negative self-presentational style (Zagon & Jackson, 1994).

3.3.1. Use in business settings

The self-report format of the SRP-III affords users an efficient and economical method for assessing psychopathy. Thus, like the LSRP, the SRP-III may be a viable option for the assessment of business psychopathy. Nevertheless, like the LSRP, this measure does not contain explicit response style indicators.

3.4. Psychopathic Personality Inventory

Using a combination of rational–theoretical and factor analytic techniques, Lilienfeld and Andrews (1996) developed a self-report measure of psychopathy, the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI), to detect the core traits of psychopathy in noncriminal samples without explicit coverage of antisocial or illegal behavior. About a decade later, the PPI was revised (PPI-R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) to lower its reading level, eliminate psychometrically problematic items, and enhance its cross-cultural generalizability. The PPI-R consists of 154 items in a 1–4 Likert-type format. It comprises 8 factors and three validity scales designed to detect aberrant response styles, such as positive impression management, malingering, and careless/random responding.

Factor analyses of the PPI-R have often revealed a two factor solution (Benning et al., 2003; but see Neumann, Malterer, & Newman, 2008, for a competing factor structure). PPI-R Factor I (PPI-I), called Fearless Dominance, consists of three subscales: Social Influence (formerly called Social Potency), Fearlessness, and Stress Immunity. These subscales assess physical and social fearlessness as well as emotional resilience, and map closely onto the construct of boldness as conceptualized by Patrick et al. (2009) within their triarchic model (Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005). In contrast, PPI-R Factor II (PPI-II), called Self-Centered Impulsivity, consists of four subscales: Rebellious Nonconformity (formerly called Impulsive Nonconformity), Blame Externalization, Carefree Nonplanfulness, and Machiavellian Egocentricity. These subscales assess personality traits associated with poor impulse control and negative emotionality, and map closely onto the Disinhibition dimension of the triarchic model. An eighth subscale, Cold-heartedness, does not load highly on either higher-order PPI-R factor, and is sometimes treated as a standalone dimension in analyses; this dimension appears to map onto the meanness dimension of the triarchic model.

The PPI and PPI-R have displayed an impressive pattern of construct validity across multiple samples. For example, in college students, total PPI and PPI-R scores correlate positively with measures of narcissism and Machiavellianism, as well as with indices of mild antisocial behavior (Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005). In addition, its two major factors display strikingly different correlates. PPI-I tends to be negatively associated with Axis I symptoms associated with distress, such as anxiety and depression, whereas PPI-II tends to be positively associated with these symptoms (Benning et al., 2003).

3.4.1. Use in business settings

Because it is designed to detect relatively mild levels of psychopathic traits in nonclinical and noncriminal samples (Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005), the PPI-R may be well suited for business settings, especially those in which high-functioning individuals are well represented. In addition, PPI-I tends to be associated with several adaptive interpersonal correlates, including effective leadership and perhaps heroism (Lilienfeld, Patrick et al., 2012). Hence, it may help to detect potentially successful manifestations of psychopathy in the business world. Nevertheless, the extent to which PPI-I is an intrinsic component of psychopathy (as opposed to a moderator of its behavioral expression) remains controversial. In particular, a few authors argue that the adaptive external correlates of PPI-I call its construct validity into question given that psychopathy is presumably largely or entirely maladaptive (Miller & Lynam, 2012; but see Lilienfeld, Patrick et al., 2012, for a rebuttal).

3.5. Workplace-specific psychopathy measures

In contrast to the aforementioned general-purpose psychopathy measures, several additional measures are designed explicitly to detect psychopathy in business settings. Most consist of traditional psychopathy items tailored largely to the workplace.

3.5.1. Logical Inference Exercise

The Logical Inference Exercise (LIE) is an implicit measure of subclinical psychopathy modeled after other conditional reasoning tasks (James & LeBreton, 2012). According to Gustafson (2000), the LIE is designed to detect 'aberrant self-promotion', a subclinical variant of psychopathy that may be especially common in business organizations. Like other conditional reasoning tasks, this measure consists of brief vignettes about which respondents answer a series of questions; as a consequence, it appears to respondents as a logical reasoning test. Nevertheless, it is actually designed to assess implicit biases that ostensibly underlie subclinical psychopathy. These biases include an assumption of superiority over others and an exemption from the moral codes followed by ordinary people. Although this measure appears promising, it is still in preliminary stages of development and requires construct validation. In addition, the LIE may be limited in that it appears to assess biases relevant primarily to narcissism, with little explicit coverage of the core affective deficits of psychopathy, such as lack of guilt and empathy.

3.5.1.1. Use in business settings. The LIE is a unique measure with potential utility in the business world. The measure is based on self-report and therefore inexpensive and efficient. More important, because the measure lacks face validity, it may be largely free of common shortcomings of self-report measures, namely, susceptibility to social desirability response styles. Nevertheless, to our knowledge, the LIE has received no published construct validation, rendering use of this measure premature for selection purposes in the business world.

3.5.2. Psychopathy Measure – Management Research Version

The Psychopathy Measure – Management Research Version (PM-MR V; Boddy et al., 2010b) is an 8-item observer-report measure modeled after the PCL-R Factor 1 criteria deemed to be particularly relevant to the identification of corporate psychopathy. The measure asks respondents to rate their current managers and a dysfunctional manager (if they have had one) on psychopathic traits, including glibness and superficial charm, grandiose sense of self-worth, and pathological lying. Mirroring the scoring of the PCL-R, managers are given a score of 0 (not present), 1 (somewhat present), or 2 (present) on each item. Although the internal consistency of the measure is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$; Boddy et al., 2010b), to our knowledge there have been no attempts to validate this measure using external criteria, such as the PCL-R or self-report indicators of psychopathy (e.g., LSRP, PPI-R).

3.5.2.1. Use in business settings. The explicit focus of the PM-MR V on interpersonal and affective features of psychopathy makes this measure potentially well-suited for assessment purposes in business settings. Because the items are closely modeled after PCL-R Factor 1 criteria, it seems plausible that the two measures have comparable psychometric properties. However, without explicit construct validation, the use of the PM-MR V to detect psychopathic traits in business settings must be viewed with caution.

3.5.3. Business Scan 360

The Business Scan 360 (B-Scan 360; Babiak & Hare, 2012) attempts to address the paucity of options for assessing psychopathic personality traits in corporate and organizational settings, and is based on Hare's (2003) four factor model of psychopathy. The precursor of the B-Scan 360, entitled the Psychopathic Thoughts Questionnaire (Babiak, Hare, & Hemphill, 1999), was developed by examining biographies of infamous business people (although these individuals went unnamed by the authors). Factor analysis of this initial 12-item measure revealed two factors, one assessing leadership-oriented thought and the other a "caustic" attitude towards others (Babiak, 2007, p. 423). The test developers then compiled descriptions of

managers from several organizations outlining important features contributing to or hampering upward mobility in a company. Characteristics that were identified as potential examples of psychopathic behavior were compiled into a collection of 200 items, and rated by business executives and experts in the psychopathy field for their relevance to psychopathy and business performance. Items considered pertinent to both psychopathy and business performance were retained.

The B-Scan 360 currently consists of both self- and observer-report formats, and assesses psychopathic attitudes and behaviors that are maladaptive in business settings (e.g., threatening co-workers). The measure requires individuals to specify how descriptive each item is of a co-worker (or themselves if using the self-report version) on a 0 (Not descriptive), 1 (Somewhat Descriptive), and 2 (Descriptive) scale.

A recent factor analysis on the observer-report version of the B-Scan 360 (Mathieu, Hare, Jones, Babiak, & Neumann, *in press*) on two samples using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (an online system through which researchers pay subjects in the online community to participate in studies), revealed a factor structure consistent with the four factor model of psychopathy (Hare, 2003). Starting with a 113 item version of the measure, exploratory factor analyses initially revealed a six factor structure. Nevertheless, the authors deemed two factors (i.e., ability and disruptive behavior) to be unrelated to psychopathy, leading them to drop the items on these factors. The measure was further reduced to 20 items to create four evenly distributed 5 item scales. The items require respondents to rate their current or most recent managers on psychopathy-relevant statements (e.g., "Comes across as smooth, polished and charming"; "Shows no regret for making decisions that harm the company shareholders or employees"; p. 3). Confirmatory factor analyses of this measure on a fresh sample revealed a four factor structure: Manipulative/Unethical, Callous/Insensitive, Unreliable/Unfocused, and Intimidating/Aggressive.

The analyses leave several questions unanswered. First, it is unclear why the disruptive behavior dimension of the original six factor model was deemed unrelated to psychopathy. Second, no data comparing the B-Scan 360 with external criteria relevant to psychopathy have been published (and attempts to obtain these data by the present authors have been unsuccessful). Third, the future status of the B-Scan 360 remains unclear, as Mathieu et al. (*in press*) reported a substantially reduced version of the measure; yet the B-Scan 360 website (www.b-scan.com) presently reports a much lengthier version.

3.5.3.1. Use in business settings. The B-Scan 360 may be a promising psychopathy measure for use in business settings, especially because its items are tailored explicitly to the workplace. Initial analyses reveal a factor structure paralleling the well-established four factor model of psychopathy. Nevertheless, because the B-Scan 360 has received no published construct validation using external criteria, its use in clinical and research settings must be viewed as preliminary.

3.6. Other psychopathy measures

A number of researchers in the field of management have relied on older self-report indicators of psychopathy, especially the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) Psychopathic deviate Scale (McKinley & Hathaway, 1944) and California Psychological Inventory (CPI) Socialization scale (Gough, 1960), the latter of which is sometimes scored in reverse as an indicator of psychopathy (Hare & Cox, 1978; Lilienfeld, 1994). Both measures were derived empirically by comparing the item responses of offender with non-offender groups, and are positively correlated with other self-reported indices of antisocial and criminal behavior, as well as substance abuse (Lilienfeld, 1998; Lilienfeld & Fowler, 2006). Nevertheless, the use of these measures as proxies for psychopathy is questionable, because they correlate almost exclusively with PCL-R Factor 2 rather than with PCL-R Factor 1 traits, suggesting

that they do not adequately assess the core interpersonal and affective features of psychopathy (Harpur et al., 1989; Lilienfeld, 1998).

3.6.1. Use in business settings

The MMPI Pd and CPI So scales may be useful in business settings for detecting current and future risk for antisocial behavior in the workplace. Nevertheless, because of their focus on nonspecific behavioral deviance (Hawk & Peterson, 1974), these measures may neglect key components of the broad psychopathy construct. In addition, they may be ill-suited for detecting potentially adaptive features of psychopathy.

4. Implications of psychopathy for occupational and academic differences relevant to business

In the forthcoming sections of the manuscript, we examine the current state of the literature on the implications of psychopathy for workplace behavior and misbehavior. The first question we address is whether psychopathic personality traits are overrepresented in certain occupational and academic groups, especially those relevant to the business world. Numerous authors have argued or implied that psychopathy is especially common in management settings, particularly in the upper echelons of corporations. For example, Boddy et al. (2010a) claimed that 3–4% of individuals in business settings are psychopaths (compared with about 1% in the general population). Nevertheless, this estimate was derived from a study in one sample of corporate managers of unknown representativeness (Babiak & Hare, 2006). Hence, this now commonly cited figure (e.g., Sullivan, 2012) is difficult to evaluate with confidence. Moreover, only two published studies have compared the prevalence of psychopathy in either business employees or business-related majors with that in other groups.

Board and Fritzon (2005) compared personality profiles of business executives to those of psychiatric and forensic populations. The authors examined samples of 36 senior business managers, 768 mental health patients, and 317 incarcerated individuals with a legal classification of psychopathic personality disorder. Nevertheless, individuals in the lattermost group were not formally assessed using psychopathy measures. Personality disorder data on the participants were collected using the Morey, Blashfield, Webb, and Jewell (1988) scales. These scales are derived from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Hathaway & McKinley, 1951) and are designed to assess features of DSM-III (American Psychiatric Association, 1980) personality disorders.

The authors found that senior business managers scored significantly higher on the histrionic personality disorder scale than both mental health patients and psychopathic incarcerated individuals. The senior business managers also scored higher than both comparison groups on the narcissistic personality disorder scale and the obsessive compulsive personality disorder scale, although these differences were not statistically significant.

The authors interpreted these findings as evidence for an elevated prevalence of psychopathic personality traits in senior business management settings. Because the business executives exhibited higher mean levels of histrionic personality traits and approximately equal levels of narcissistic personality traits than individuals in the other two groups, the authors concluded that business executives possessed higher levels of traits associated with the affective and interpersonal (Factor 1) components of psychopathy (e.g., superficial charm, manipulativeness, grandiosity, insincerity, egocentricity, lack of empathy, and exploitativeness) than either forensic or psychiatric samples. Furthermore, in line with research suggesting that Factor 1 and Factor 2 are separable dimensions (e.g., Benning et al., 2003; Harpur et al., 1989); business executives showed significantly lower rates of traits associated with antisocial personality disorder, such as physical aggression, lack of remorse, and irresponsibility. These findings are particularly relevant in light of claims that psychopathy, which overlaps moderately with antisocial personality disorder (Hare, 2003), is

related to organizational destructiveness. They also suggest that the presence of the affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy, in the absence of antisocial behaviors, is associated with senior management level positions in the business arena. Considering the higher prevalence of such affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy in high status business positions, such traits could aid these individuals in acquiring and maintaining those positions.

Nevertheless, Board and Fritzon's (2005) findings are difficult to interpret for several reasons. First, the assumption that a conglomeration of narcissistic and histrionic personality disorder traits is largely synonymous with Factor 1 psychopathy is questionable. Although these three constructs overlap, they are hardly identical empirically (Torgersen et al., 2008). Second, the authors did not measure psychopathic personality traits per se, limiting the implications of their findings for psychopathy. In fact, the one disorder Board and Fritzon measured that is presumably most closely aligned with psychopathy, namely antisocial personality disorder, displayed significant differences in the wrong direction. Third, because the authors did not administer a well-validated measure of psychopathy (e.g., the PCL-R) to the forensic sample, it is unknown how many individuals in this sample would have met research criteria for psychopathy. Despite these marked ambiguities, Board and Fritzon's results have been widely cited as evidence for a heightened prevalence of psychopathic personality traits in business settings (e.g., Clow & Scott, 2007; Coyne & Thomas, 2008).

Guided by the assumption that individuals who rise in the ranks of the workforce must first attend college and receive a degree, Wilson and McCarthy (2011) sought to identify differing levels of psychopathy in varying fields of study within a university. Using 903 undergraduates in a psychology laboratory course, the authors assessed psychopathic personality traits using the LSRP (Levenson et al., 1995). The authors hypothesized that levels of subclinical psychopathy would be especially elevated among students majoring in commerce, a close approximation to a business major. The results partially supported this hypothesis: Students majoring in commerce obtained significantly higher scores on the LSRP primary psychopathy scale, which assesses the core affective and interpersonal features of psychopathy (e.g., ability to manipulate others, lack of empathy). In contrast, students majoring in commerce did not differ significantly from other students on secondary psychopathy, which assesses an impulsive and destructive lifestyle. The authors took these findings as tentative evidence that individuals with high levels of psychopathic traits, particularly the affective and interpersonal traits of Factor 1, may be attracted to degrees in commerce. Specifically, they speculated that certain traits relevant to primary psychopathy, such as narcissism and callousness, may draw people to business-like majors given their general acceptance in many organizational cultures. Nevertheless, because these traits were not assessed explicitly, this conjecture requires empirical corroboration.

4.1. Summary

These two studies raise the possibility that individuals in business-related professions may exhibit higher rates of certain psychopathic traits than do individuals in other occupations. However, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from these studies in light of methodological limitations. In particular, the widely cited study of Board and Fritzon (2005) lacked any direct assessment of psychopathy. Further research in industry settings will be necessary to compare the prevalence of psychopathic traits in business professions with those of other professions; furthermore, work in university samples will be needed to ascertain whether psychopathic traits are especially pronounced among business-related majors. Pending such additional research, widespread assertions that psychopathy is rampant in the business world are premature.

5. Implications of psychopathy for workplace aggression and counterproductive behavior

Much of the media attention surrounding psychopathy in the workplace stems from the assumption that psychopathic individuals promote organizational destruction and irresponsibility through aggressive tactics and deviant behavior (e.g., Clarke, 2005). Nevertheless, this belief, which has attained the status of a truism in some quarters, has been investigated only relatively recently.

In an effort to address the recent media attention given to so-called toxic or psychopathic bosses, Jonason, Slomski, and Partyka (2012) sought to elucidate negotiation tactics utilized by individuals with high levels of personality traits in the dark triad of psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism. The authors administered the “Dirty Dozen” measure (Jonason & Webster, 2010), which consists of 4 items of each dark triad trait, to 419 employed individuals, 277 psychology students, and 142 volunteers from the U.S. and Canada. Participants also received a series of single items assessing the frequency of their engagement in various manipulation tactics. The authors found that the use of hard tactics (e.g., threats of appeal or punishment, manipulation of a person or situation) was positively associated with psychopathy scores. Moreover, moderation analyses revealed that in men, but not women, composite scores on dark triad personality traits were significantly associated with a greater use of assertiveness. Overall, the findings suggest that individuals with high scores on dark triad traits, including psychopathy, tend to use aggressive tactics of social influence.

Boddy et al. (2010b) investigated the relation between corporate psychopathy and employee perceptions of corporate social responsibility (e.g., conducting environmentally friendly business, conducting business in ways to benefit local community) and commitment to employees (e.g., acknowledging good work, showing appreciation for, and rewarding employees). Data were collected from 346 white collar employees in Australia using the PM:MR V, which as noted earlier, asks participants to rate their current and past managers on a number of statements designed to assess psychopathic personality traits. Employees were also asked to respond to a series of statements regarding the social responsibility of corporations. The authors found that the presence of psychopathic managers in the workplace was associated with a significant decrease in respondents' perceived social responsibility of a corporation and that corporation's commitment to its employees.

In a similar study on senior white-collar employees in Australia, Boddy (2011) examined the associations between psychopathy and aggressive behavior in the workplace. Such behaviors include bullying, public criticism and harsh treatment of employees, rudeness, coercion, dangerous working conditions, and violation of human rights or employment laws. He found that the presence of a psychopathic manager was associated with a greater frequency of aggressive behavior in the workplace. For example, when corporate psychopathy (as ascertained by a cut-off score) was present in a corporation, 93.7% of employees reported unfavorable treatment of others in the workplace compared with 54.7% of employees who reported such behavior when corporate psychopathy was absent. Additionally, Boddy concluded that corporate psychopaths accounted for only 1% of the workplace population, but 26% of aggressive workplace behavior.

Boddy's studies are among the first to examine the implications of psychopathy for counterproductive behavior and interpersonal aggression in the workplace. Nevertheless, this research is marked by several methodological limitations. Boddy's research on corporate psychopathy relies on unvalidated questionnaires that ask respondents to report on psychopathic traits of previous and current managers while reporting on management practices of those individuals and practices of the relevant corporation. Despite the convenience of this method, it is subject to mono-method and rater biases (see Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). For example, if respondents hold

a particularly negative view of their bosses, they may also rate their bosses and corporations in a negative light as a result of a negative halo or “pitchfork” effect (Koenig & Jaswal, 2011). In addition, respondents with high levels of negative emotionality, a higher-order trait often tied to criticality and cynicism (Watson & Clark, 1984), may be prone to rating both their bosses and their corporations negatively, leading to spurious correlations between perceived employer psychopathy and perceived organizational outcomes.

In an attempt to integrate the disparate literature on personality and workplace deviance, O'Boyle et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis examining the relationships among dark triad traits, job performance, and counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB), operationalized as activities destructive to organizations (e.g., employee theft, absenteeism). The authors hypothesized that because performance evaluations depend on how well one works with others, psychopathy would be negatively associated with ratings of job performance. Furthermore, because psychopathy is associated with impulsivity and criminal activity, the authors predicted that it would be positively associated with CWB. The meta-analysis included 68 studies ($n = 10,227$) examining the relationship between psychopathy and job performance and 27 ($n = 6058$) examining the relationship between psychopathy and CWB. The studies used a wide range of indicators of psychopathy, including the MMPI Pd scale, CPI So scale, PPI, and the PCL-R, although the number of studies using each measure was not provided. Indicators of job performance consisted of either observer-reports (e.g., peer, supervisor, or subordinate ratings) or self-report measures of presumably objective information (e.g., sales for the quarter). CWB was measured using self-report scales (e.g., Bennett & Robinson, 2000) or workplace disciplinary records (e.g., number of complaints filed against employee, unexcused absences from work).

The results partially supported the authors' hypotheses. Psychopathy was significantly and negatively associated with job performance, and significantly and positively associated with CWB. However, the effect sizes were very small in magnitude ($r_c = -.07$; $r_c = .07$, respectively), suggesting that psychopathy may be less associated with workplace misbehavior and deviance than often believed. One potential criticism of this meta-analysis is the inclusion of a wide variety of indicators of job performance and CWB. However, the effect sizes for both relations were homogeneous ($I^2 = 6.3$; 76.8, respectively). Despite this homogeneity, the authors analyzed the role of two theoretically-predicted moderators (i.e., authority and in-group collectivism) in accounting for the relations among psychopathy, job performance, and CWB. Specifically, the authors predicted that in jobs that afforded authority (e.g., boss), the relationship between psychopathy and CWB would be significantly weakened given that individuals who rise to leadership positions have presumably learned to mask the negative behavioral correlates of their psychopathic traits. The data supported this hypothesis. Furthermore, the authors predicted that in organizations with high levels of in-group collectivism, CWB would be tolerated less, so that the relationships between psychopathy and both job performance, and CWB would be amplified. However, this hypothesis was not supported.

The O'Boyle et al. (2011) meta-analysis provides valuable information regarding the behavioral implications of psychopathy for the workplace. Nevertheless, many or most of the studies included in their meta-analysis are marked by several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, many of these investigations relied largely on psychopathy measures (e.g., MMPI Pd scale, CPI So scale) that are almost exclusively measures of Factor 2 traits, or general antisocial behavior (see Harpur et al., 1989). Thus, the finding that general measures of antisocial behavior correlate positively with specific types of antisocial behavior in the workplace (e.g., CWB) is arguably at least partially tautological given the best predictor of future behavior is typically past behavior. Second, because a number of external criteria in the meta-analysis were based on self-report, the psychopathy-CWB

associations may have been inflated by shared method covariance. Third, the authors examined only global levels of psychopathy, and did not report associations for different psychopathy factors. Factors 1 and 2 of the PCL-R and PPI exhibit differing correlates and behavioral implications; in particular, Factor 2 traits tend to be more closely tied than Factor 1 traits to physical and sexual aggression (Leistico, Salekin, DeCoster, & Rogers, 2008). In addition, because PPI-I (Fearless Dominance) has been linked to adaptive interpersonal behaviors in some studies (Lilienfeld, Patrick et al., 2012; Lilienfeld, Waldman et al., 2012); it may be associated with superior performance in at least some jobs. As a consequence, it will be essential for future studies and meta-analyses to separate these dimensions when examining the relations between psychopathy and both job performance and CWB.

These caveats notwithstanding, O'Boyle et al.'s findings, especially their weak effect sizes, suggest that extremely strong assertions regarding the implications of psychopathy for workplace deviance (e.g., Boddy, 2005) may have been overstated. This concern is amplified by the fact that many or most of the psychopathy measures examined by O'Boyle et al. are heavily saturated with generalized antisocial and criminal behavior, which may actually overestimate the relation between psychopathy and CWB.

Because counterproductive workplace behavior is damaging to organizations, many employers attempt to screen out this behavior in recruitment stages by means of workplace integrity tests. Integrity tests are self-report measures inquiring about individuals' past dishonest behavior, such as cheating and stealing, as well as their attitudes towards such behavior (Sackett & Harris, 1984). Connelly, Lilienfeld, and Schmeelk (2006) examined the relationship between psychopathy and scores on several integrity tests. One hundred and twenty five undergraduates were administered the PPI (Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996) and three widely used integrity tests: the Stanton Survey, the Security Aptitude Fitness Evaluation – Revised (SAFE-R), and the Personnel Reaction Blank (PRB). The first two are largely “overt” integrity tests that inquire explicitly about dishonest behaviors in the workplace and attitudes towards dishonesty; the latter is largely a “covert” integrity test designed to assess personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness) ostensibly tied to workplace dishonesty. Total psychopathy scores were significantly and negatively correlated with all three integrity tests. Overt measures of integrity were most strongly related to the PPI subscale Machiavellian Egocentricity, whereas the covert measure was more strongly related to PPI subscales Blame Externalization and Impulsive Nonconformity (see also Lilienfeld, Andrews, Stone-Romero, & Stone, 1994, for evidence that overt integrity scales are positively associated with scores on the CPI So scale in both prisoners and undergraduates).

These results suggest that at least some of the traits associated with psychopathy, especially those tied to PPI-II (Self-Centered Impulsivity), are correlated with decreased scores on workplace integrity scales. Broadly comparable results were reported by Blonigen et al. (2011) in an investigation of 770 undergraduates. They found that scores on the Personnel Reaction Blank, a well-known covert integrity scale, were positively associated with externalizing tendencies as measured by the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ; Tellegen, *in press*), in particular propensities towards high negative emotionality (e.g., alienation, aggression) and low constraint (e.g., low harm avoidance, impulsiveness). These findings broadly mirror those of Lilienfeld et al. (1994), who found that scores on an overt integrity measure are associated with elevated negative emotionality and low constraint. Taken together, the findings of Connelly et al. (2006) and Blonigen et al. (2011) suggest that workplace integrity scales are tied to psychopathic tendencies towards poor impulse control, disinhibition, and negative emotions (e.g., externalization of blame, anger). At the same time, they suggest that integrity tests may be related primarily to the antisocial propensities sometimes associated with psychopathy rather than with psychopathy's

distinctive affective and interpersonal traits (see also Lilienfeld et al., 1994).

5.1. Summary

Understanding the relations among psychopathy, aggression, and counterproductive workplace behavior is crucial given that most of the media attention surrounding workplace psychopathy focuses on “toxic bosses.” However, the literature is not sufficiently well developed to draw strong conclusions. Although the extant research is reasonably consistent in suggesting that psychopathy may be related to aggression and counterproductive workplace behavior, this conclusion derives from studies with methodological limitations. For example, most studies do not subdivide psychopathy into its component dimensions and are characterized by potential problems with method covariance. Future research in this area should use well-validated measures of psychopathy that permit examination of its separable dimensions, as well as designs in which psychopathy and criterion variables, such as workplace aggression and CWB, are assessed by different individuals.

6. Implications of psychopathy for ethical decision making in the workplace

Ethical decision making bears important implications for counterproductive and illegal behavior in the business world. Understanding the nature of psychopathy and how its subcomponents (e.g., dishonesty, manipulateness) may predict ethical decision-making should shed light on the potential negative implications of psychopathic personality traits for workplace settings.

Driven by the assumption that psychopathy is related to unethical decision making in the workplace, Stevens, Dueling, and Armenakis (2012) examined how psychopathic individuals deal with ethical dilemmas in business settings. The authors predicted that global levels of psychopathy would be positively related to unethical decision making and that this relationship would be mediated by moral disengagement (e.g., an ability to distance oneself from one's moral standards through the use of justification mechanisms). A sample of 272 undergraduates received four ethical scenarios involving a range of typical organizational dilemmas (e.g., cutting corners in production, failing to disclose errors in financial reports) and were asked to indicate their willingness to engage in the unethical behavior presented in the scenario. Following each scenario, participants rated their agreement with eight justifications for the action in the scenario, each of which assessed a different strategy of moral disengagement. Participants also completed the SRP-III (Paulhus et al., *in press*).

As predicted, psychopathy was significantly and positively correlated with self-reported willingness to engage in unethical behaviors, and this relation was mediated by moral disengagement. Nevertheless, the study is marked by several limitations. First, although the authors extrapolated their findings to business settings, they relied on an undergraduate sample, so generalizability of their results to the workplace cannot be assumed. Second, the authors examined only global levels of psychopathy and did not subdivide it into its component factors, which as noted earlier often display substantially different correlates.

Heinze, Allen, Magai, and Ritzler (2010) examined the associations among psychopathy, Machiavellianism (MACH-IV; Christie & Geis, 1970), and cognitive moral development in a sample of 92 MBA students. Cognitive moral development, as conceptualized by Kohlberg (1964), was measured by the Defining Issues Test–2 (DIT-2; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999), which asks participants to respond to five hypothetical moral dilemmas. The authors hypothesized that psychopathy would be negatively associated with cognitive moral development and positively associated with a subjectivist ethical

attitude (e.g., use of personal values/perspective rather than universal moral principles for ethical appraisals). As predicted, total psychopathy scores were negatively associated with cognitive moral development and positively associated with subjectivist ethical attitudes. Furthermore, psychopathy predicted low cognitive moral development better than did a measure of Machiavellianism. However, the association between psychopathy and low cognitive moral development appeared to be driven largely by the PPI Machiavellian Egocentricity subscale, but not other subscales. These findings suggest that certain components of psychopathy (e.g., Machiavellian Egocentricity), but not others, may be associated with low levels of moral development. Thus, exclusive reliance on global measures of psychopathy to detect low levels of moral reasoning may be inadvisable.

6.1. Summary

Currently, there is a dearth of knowledge about how psychopathy relates to ethical decision making. Although psychopathy may be related to unethical decision making, current studies rely heavily on hypothetical ethical scenarios rather than ethical (or unethical) decisions in the real world. Further research would benefit from the use of criterion measures of actual workplace decisions with ethical consequences, including cheating and stealing.

7. Implications of psychopathy for white collar crime

White collar crime costs the United States an estimated \$1 trillion dollars a year (Friedrichs, 2007). It typically includes such offenses as embezzlement, bribery, and fraud, which are of serious concern in the business world. Famous white collar criminals such as Bernie Madoff, who duped investors out of billions of dollars, and Jeffrey Skilling, former president of Enron, have spurred questions surrounding the personality correlates of white collar crime. Speculations regarding the relationship between psychopathy and white collar crime are being picked up by media sources and researchers alike (Boddy, 2006; Pardue, 2011; Perri, 2011). Famed white collar criminals have been labeled as “poster boys for successful corporate psychopathy” or “high functioning psychopaths” (Ibrahim, 2012; Sullivan, 2012). Prominent psychopathy researcher Robert Hare featured a chapter entitled “The White-Collar Psychopath” in his book *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of Psychopaths Among Us* (1993). Nevertheless, the relationship between white collar crime and psychopathy is poorly understood.

Ragatz, Fremouw, and Baker (2012) conducted one of the few studies to examine the relations between psychopathy and white collar crime. They hypothesized that white collar offenders would exhibit higher levels of PPI-I (Fearless Dominance) than other offenders because of this factor's relationship to interpersonal dominance, a trait ostensibly exhibited by many white collar criminals. They also hypothesized that white collar offenders would exhibit lower PPI-II (Self-Centered Impulsivity) scores than other offenders because of this factor's association with antisocial behavior, which is exhibited more frequently by nonwhite collar offenders (Benson & Moore, 1992).

To test these hypotheses, three groups of offenders were compared on the PPI-R (Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005): criminals with only white collar offenses ($n = 39$), criminals with both white collar and non-white collar offenses ($n = 88$), and criminals with no white collar offenses ($n = 86$). Contrary to prediction, the three offender groups did not differ significantly in their scores on either PPI factor; nevertheless, the white collar offenders displayed a trend towards higher scores on both PPI factors than other offenders. Exploratory analyses using the PPI-R subscales revealed that offenders who engaged in both white collar and nonwhite collar offenses as well as white collar-only offenders scored significantly higher on PPI Machiavellian Egocentricity than nonwhite collar offenders. White collar-only offenders scored significantly higher on PPI Social

Potency than nonwhite collar offenders. It is worth noting, however, that the sample of nonwhite collar offenders was composed primarily of drug offenders. Therefore, the results may be more indicative of differences between white collar offenders and drug offenders, rather than between white collar offenders and nonwhite collar offenders.

Ray (2007) examined the association between psychopathy and attitudes towards white collar crime in 181 undergraduates who received the PPI-R and a questionnaire of attitudes towards white collar crimes (e.g., “Temporarily inflating the value of stock is okay if future profits are expected”). The participants received a number of fictional scenarios in which a character acted out a white collar crime, and were asked to indicate the degree to which they believed the character's actions were unethical, criminal, and typical of how people would respond in the situation. They also indicated whether they would have acted as the character in the scenario did. Because white collar criminals may possess especially pronounced affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy (e.g., glibness), the author expected PPI-R Fearless Dominance, but not PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity, to be positively associated with intentions to engage in white collar crime and holding attitudes consistent with white collar crime. Additionally, the author predicted that white collar-consistent attitudes would mediate the relationship between PPI-R Fearless Dominance and intentions to commit white collar crime.

The author's hypotheses were partially supported. PPI-R total scores, but not PPI-R Fearless Dominance, were significantly and positively associated with white collar-consistent attitudes. Contrary to expectations, PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity was significantly positively associated with white collar consistent attitudes. PPI-R total scores and PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity, but again not PPI-R Fearless Dominance, were significantly positively associated with intentions to commit white collar crime. Hierarchical linear modeling revealed that white collar-consistent attitudes mediated the relationship between intentions to commit white collar crime and PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity, which the author interpreted as suggesting that individuals with high levels of this trait possess attitudes that justify engagement in white collar crime.

In a study using the same methodology, Ray and Jones (2011) examined the relations among PPI-R-assessed psychopathy, attitudes towards white collar crime, and intentions to commit one specific type of white collar crime, namely, the environmental offense of toxic dumping. Two hundred and sixty-five undergraduates reported on their willingness to engage in white collar crime by indicating whether they would have acted as the actor did in a vignette. In this hypothetical scenario, a business person has a choice to (a) temporarily store waste for proper disposal in the future, thereby incurring a storage fee, or (b) dispose of it illegally for free. The authors measured participant attitudes towards white collar crime with a 7-item measure containing statements referring to corporate responsibility and related considerations (e.g., “Corporations should be held responsible for unknown harm to the environment due to one of their products,” p. 380). PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity and PPI-R Coldheartedness were positively associated with white collar-consistent attitudes. PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity was also significantly and positively associated with intentions to commit white collar crime. Mediation analyses revealed that white collar-consistent attitudes did not mediate the relationship between PPI-R Self-Centered Impulsivity and intentions to commit white collar crime. Analyses using PPI-R subscales revealed a significant positive association between PPI-R Machiavellian Egocentricity and PPI-R Carefree Nonplanfulness, on the one hand, and intentions to commit white collar crime, on the other. The interpretation of the intriguing findings of both Ray (2007) and Ray and Jones (2011) must be tempered by the reliance on the use of hypothetical vignettes, which may not generalize to real-world criminal actions.

7.1. Summary

Few studies have examined the relation between psychopathy and white collar crime, and the results have been mixed. Although psychopathy appears to be related to intentions to commit white collar crime, differential levels of overall psychopathic traits between white collar and regular offenders have not been found. Given that only one study has examined the relation between psychopathy and white collar crime in criminal samples, we recommend that future research examine this relation in larger samples of offenders and subdivide white-collar offenses into more specific and perhaps more homogeneous categories, especially given that some of these categories (e.g., forgery, insider trading, tax evasion) may be especially relevant to the business world.

8. Implications of psychopath for leadership

Several authors have speculated that individuals with psychopathic traits such as charisma and interpersonal dominance may make, or at least superficially present as, effective managers and leaders. At the same time, many of these authors have suggested that such individuals are often destructive leaders in the long-term (Babiak & Hare, 2006; Furnham, 2007; Guddmundson & Southey, 2011). As noted earlier, some researchers (e.g., Boddy et al., 2010a) have further conjectured that psychopaths exist disproportionately among higher levels of management.

Several models of leadership may elucidate the potential implications of psychopathy for adaptive leadership outcomes. Transformational leadership involves a unique relationship between leader and followers whereby each party “transforms” the other by appealing to societal motives, such as justice and peace (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders typically use one or more of four strategies: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Strategies such as inspirational motivation, also referred to as charisma, involve the articulation of vision, enthusiasm, and optimism to followers (Bass, 1997) and may be particularly relevant to the interpersonal components of psychopathy, such as self-promotion and charm.

The charismatic model of leadership in particular bears implications for the interpersonal components of psychopathy. Charisma has been described as an interpersonal magnetism, which elicits both respect and obedience from followers (House, 1977; Landy & Conte, 2010). Yukl (2006) described charismatic leaders as confident, visionary, skillful at impression management, power-hungry, and skilled at appealing to similar motives in followers (e.g., need for power, achievement, and affiliation). Such components of psychopathy such as Fearless Dominance may be expressed as charisma in leadership situations (e.g., Patrick et al., 2009).

Psychopathy may bear two-fold implications for leadership, predisposing to both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes. Specifically, an examination of what Hogan and Hogan (1997) referred to as the “dark side of leadership” may elucidate the implications of both adaptive and maladaptive components of psychopathy for leadership. The dark side of leadership refers to who people *truly* are at work, once good social skills and impression management have gotten them through the door. Hogan and Hogan (2001) identified several dark side characteristics modeled after DSM-IV Axis II personality disorders that are related to managerial incompetency. The antisocial personality disorder characteristic identified by Hogan and Hogan (2001) termed *mischievousness* comprises excessive risk taking, manipulativeness, exploitativeness, and deceit. Although traits such as willingness to take risks and charm may be strengths in the short term, they may incur such long-term adverse outcomes as lying, rule breaking, defying authority, and exploiting others (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Also potentially related to psychopathy is Hogan and Hogan's (2001) dark side characteristic modeled after narcissistic personality disorder, termed

boldness, which encompasses an excessive sense of self-confidence and grandiosity. The authors speculated that in the short-term individuals with high levels of this characteristic may be courageous or charismatic; however, a long-term inability to admit mistakes and sense of entitlement may lead to poor leadership outcomes (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Babiak et al.'s (2010) study marks one of the first examinations of the relation between psychopathy and leadership. Using a sample of 203 corporate personnel nominated by their companies to participate in management development curricula, the authors examined the prevalence and job performance correlates of psychopathy in a sample of corporations around the world. Participants were administered the PCL-R and scores were converted into PCL:SV equivalents to compare the corporate sample with community samples. Performance appraisal data and general personnel records (e.g., resumes, original applications, absenteeism records, awards) were obtained for each participant. A subset of the sample ($n = 140$) came from companies with 360° observer-report performance feedback, which was included in the analyses. These 360° assessments included such items as “makes effective presentations,” “writes well,” and “treats others with respect” (p. 180). The authors grouped the 360° assessment items into six management competency categories: communication skills, creativity/innovation, leadership skills, management style, strategic thinking, and team player.

Findings revealed that the corporate sample contained more participants with high psychopathy scores, as operationalized by a standard cut-off score on the PCL-R, than a comparable community sample. Notably, most participants with high psychopathy scores held high-ranking executive positions within their companies (e.g., vice-president, supervisor, director). Additionally, 360° assessments and performance appraisals revealed that high psychopathy scorers (on both dimensions) were perceived as poor team players and lacking in management skills, and they received poor performance appraisals from their immediate bosses. Somewhat surprisingly, however, they were also viewed as successful communicators, strategic thinkers, and creative or innovative individuals. These potentially important results raise the possibility that psychopathy may be a double-edged sword, fostering both the maladaptive and adaptive leadership behaviors in the workplace. Particular strengths of this study include the use of a well-validated psychopathy measure and 360° ratings. Nevertheless, the results of study must be interpreted in light of the fact that the sole PCL-R interviewer in the study may not have been blind to the some of the outcome information, including data that may have contributed to the 360° ratings.

Westerlaken and Woods (2013) examined the association between psychopathic personality traits and the Full Range Leadership Model (Avolio & Bass, 1991) in 300 undergraduate and postgraduate management students. This nine factor model comprises components of transformational, transactional (e.g., use of recognition and rewards to motivate followers), and passive (e.g., laissez-faire inclination of waiting for problems to arise before taking action) leadership styles. Because of its association with a lack of planfulness and failure to accept responsibility, the authors hypothesized that self-report psychopathy, as measured by the SRP III-R12 (Williams, Paulhus, & Hare, 2007), a variant of the SRP, would correlate with passive leadership styles. Transformation, transactional, and passive leadership styles were measured using the self-report Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Global levels of psychopathy correlated negatively with global transformational leadership and a transformational leadership subscale termed Individualized Consideration, which measures the tendency to treat followers as unique individuals. The SRP-III-R12 subscale of callous affect was also negatively correlated with global transformational leadership and two transformational leadership subscales, namely, Individualized Consideration and Inspirational Motivation, which measures the articulation of a compelling vision. This subscale was also negatively correlated with the contingent reward component of transactional leadership, which

assesses the extent to which managers provide rewards based on employee's successes. The SRP-III-R12 subscales of interpersonal manipulation and criminal tendencies were also negatively associated with Individualized Consideration and global transformational leadership. Finally, as predicted, all four SRP-II-R12 subscales were positively associated with a passive leadership style.

Overall, the results indicated that individuals with high levels of psychopathy were less likely to engage in behaviors consistent with transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles. However, the study is marked by several limitations, especially mono-operation bias given the use of self-report measures of both psychopathy and leadership. This reliance on self-reported leadership may be problematic in that people are often limited in their ability to gauge their own leadership ability (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Mabe & West, 1982). Future research should incorporate observer reports of leadership and objective leadership outcomes.

Although much of the speculation regarding psychopathy and leadership has focused on toxic bosses, Lilienfeld, Waldman et al. (2012) found support for a link between certain psychopathic traits and effective leadership in the U.S. presidents. They acquired ratings on the personality traits of 42 U.S. presidents, up to George W. Bush, from 121 presidential expert historians. The raters evaluated the personality traits of their target presidents using the NEO Personality Inventory-Revised, a well-validated questionnaire that assesses the five major dimensions of personality of the five factor model (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). From these ratings, the authors used empirically-derived equations to estimate PPI-I (Fearless Dominance) and PPI-II (Self-Centered Impulsivity). The authors hypothesized that given its ties to charm, social potency, and adaptive risk-taking, Fearless Dominance would be positively related to overall presidential performance.

This hypothesis was supported by findings that PPI-I was related to superior presidential performance, leadership, crisis management, agenda-setting, communication skills, and persuasiveness, all rated by independent historians in large presidential surveys. To date, these are the first results to suggest that certain components of psychopathy, namely fearless dominance or boldness, are related to superior leadership in political settings. In contrast, PPI-II was positively associated with several maladaptive outcomes, including Congressional impeachment resolutions, tolerating unethical behavior in subordinates, and negative character (a composite measure of unethical behavior). Nevertheless, and contrary to prediction, PPI-II was not negatively associated with overall presidential performance.

These findings raise the possibility that certain components of psychopathy are tied to positive leadership outcomes, whereas others are tied to negative leadership outcomes. Considering the potential overlap between the corporate and political arenas, it will be important to extend these findings to the business world.

8.1. Summary

The relation of psychopathy to leadership may be twofold. The findings of Babiak et al. (2010) raise the possibility that psychopathy may be a double-edged sword, predisposing to both positive and negative leadership outcomes (but see Westerlaken & Woods, 2013). The picture may become even more complex when subcomponents of psychopathy are considered. Preliminary findings in one political sample (Lilienfeld, Waldman et al., 2012) also suggest that certain aspects of psychopathy, such as Fearless Dominance, may relate to positive leadership styles and outcomes, such as overall job performance and successful communication. At the same time, other features of psychopathy, such as Self-Centered Impulsivity, may be related to negative leadership outcomes (e.g., unethical behavior) and ineffective leadership styles (e.g., poor management skills, passive or laissez

faire leadership styles). Nevertheless, further investigation of these intriguing results in larger and more diverse business samples will be needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

9. Concluding thoughts and future directions

There is no question that the construct of psychopathy bears potentially important implications for the workplace. A better understanding of how psychopathy manifests itself in the workplace is critical for both pragmatic and theoretical reasons. Pragmatically, this question may provide crucial information for employee selection and monitoring. Theoretically, this question may help us to understand the potentially differential manifestations, both adaptive and maladaptive, of psychopathy across settings. In addition, it may shed light on the still controversial and poorly understood construct of successful psychopathy (Hall & Benning, 2006).

Nevertheless, the study of business psychopathy has languished in a state of neglect from researchers for some time. This neglect stems largely from the fact that until the 1980s, most research on psychopathy was based on criminal and, to a lesser extent, psychiatric populations. In this regard, the recent increase in attention accorded to workplace psychopathy is encouraging. With the development of business-specific and self-report psychopathy measures (bypassing reliance on file information) that can be used in nonclinical samples, workplace psychopathy has begun to receive more attention from investigators, leading to a modest but growing body of research.

Despite the increased attention accorded to workplace psychopathy, our review raises several serious concerns regarding the current state of the research. As demonstrated in Fig. 1, there is a glaring discrepancy between popular coverage and scientific data surrounding workplace psychopathy. Perhaps equally disturbing is the fact that some of this hype comes from within the field, with researchers and media personnel alike touting workplace psychopaths as “organizational destroyers” (Boddy, 2011), and “monsters” (Clarke, 2005).

Such overstatements overlook the fact that the current evidence that psychopathy is tied to negative outcomes in the workplace is suggestive, but not conclusive. To date, the most compelling evidence for this claim derives from studies demonstrating that psychopathy is positively associated with the use of hard manipulation tactics (e.g. threats of punishment; Jonason et al., 2012), bullying (Boddy, 2011), counterproductive workplace behavior (O'Boyle et al., 2011), and poor management skills and being a poor team player (Babiak et al., 2010). Psychopathy is also negatively associated with perceived social responsibility and commitment to employees (Boddy, 2010), and job performance (Babiak et al., 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011). At first glance, this evidence seems compelling. Yet many of these studies are marked by methodological flaws, including a reliance on global measures of psychopathy, the use of measures (e.g., MMPI Pd scale) that do not adequately assess the core interpersonal and affective features of psychopathy, and research designs subject to method covariance owing to the use of the same informants to report on both predictors (e.g., psychopathy in bosses) and criteria (e.g., organizational problems).

A few studies suggest that psychopathy is linked to both positive and negative workplace outcomes. For example, in one study, psychopathy was both positively correlated with the perception of communication skills, being a strategic thinker, and being creative or innovative, and negatively correlated with multiple job performance indicators (Babiak et al., 2010). In another study, in the U.S. presidents psychopathy was positively correlated not only with overall presidential performance, successful leadership, communication skills, and persuasiveness, but also with impeachment resolutions and unethical behavior (Lilienfeld, Waldman et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the evidence for this “double-edged sword” hypothesis is preliminary, and requires replication and extension in business samples. Moreover, if psychopathy indeed functions as a double-edged sword, it is unclear whether psychopathy as a whole is tied to both adaptive and

maladaptive outcomes, or whether different components of psychopathy, such as Fearless Dominance or Self-Centered Impulsivity, are preferentially linked to one set of outcomes. It is also unclear whether the associations between psychopathy or its component dimensions are curvilinear; for example, Fearless Dominance may predispose to adaptive workplace outcomes at moderate, but not extremely high, levels (Lilienfeld, Waldman et al., 2012). Needless to say, this possibility has important implications for employee selection.

In summary, we call for further research in the area of workplace psychopathy, as the construct bears important implications theoretically and practically. In doing so, we offer the following 10 recommendations for future research and scholarship on psychopathy in the workplace (see Table 1 for a summary):

- (1) The multidimensional assessment of psychopathy is crucial for a more nuanced understanding of psychopathy in the workplace. For example, Factors 1 and 2 of the PCL-R and other psychopathy measures (e.g., LSRP, PPI) display differential correlates, some of which (e.g., PPI Fearless Dominance) may be related to largely adaptive workplace outcomes and others of which (e.g., PPI Self-Centered Impulsivity, PCL-R Factor 2) may be related to largely maladaptive workplace outcomes.
- (2) A full understanding of the implications of psychopathy in the workplace requires an examination of both adaptive and maladaptive features of this condition. If researchers continue to examine maladaptive criteria alone, they may overlook the potentially adaptive manifestations of workplace psychopathy. Researchers should also examine the potential curvilinear relations of psychopathy dimensions in predicting both adaptive and maladaptive workplace outcomes.
- (3) The use of both self- and observer-report outcome measures should help to elucidate the behavioral implications of psychopathy for the workplace. Peer or manager reports of performance will allow researchers to examine tactics such as impression management that may be particularly common among psychopathic individuals.
- (4) Although observer ratings of job performance can be helpful indicators (see # 3), a full understanding of the practical implications of psychopathy in the workplace also requires an examination of objective performance criteria, such as promotions, bonuses, firings, disciplinary problems, and sales.
- (5) Although undergraduate samples provide important clues and hypotheses about how psychopathy in the workplace will manifest itself, the generalizability of findings from such samples to the business world cannot be assumed. Hence, the use of business samples is crucial for a more accurate understanding of workplace psychopathy.
- (6) Psychopathy in the workplace may bear different implications in various cultures, especially in those with more collectivist vs.

Table 1
Recommendations for future scholarship on workplace psychopathy.

1. Use multidimensional measures of psychopathy.
2. Assess both maladaptive and adaptive outcomes of psychopathy in the workplace.
3. Assess performance outcomes relevant to psychopathy using self- and observer-reports.
4. Use objective performance criteria (e.g., sales, promotions) to assess outcomes of workplace psychopathy.
5. Draw on business samples.
6. Examine the differential implications of psychopathy across cultures.
7. Examine the implications of psychopathy for workplace outcomes over time using longitudinal designs.
8. Examine the relations between psychopathy and forms of aggression relevant to the workplace, such as indirect (e.g., relational) aggression.
9. Examine business psychopathy in the context of the dark triad.
10. Exercise modesty when reporting and discussing findings concerning workplace psychopathy.

individualistic attitudes. Research across cultures is therefore needed to provide a more thorough picture of the implications of workplace psychopathy.

- (7) Psychopathy may be adaptive for first impressions, job interviews, and initial promotions. Nevertheless, over time, co-workers and employers may begin to grow weary of psychopathic individuals. Thus, we recommend the use of longitudinal designs to permit the temporal examination of the implications of psychopathy for the workplace.
- (8) Because direct aggression in the workplace is relatively uncommon, we recommend the examination of workplace psychopathy's association with both direct and indirect (e.g., relational) aggression; (see Schmeelk, Sylvers, & Lilienfeld, 2008). Indices of indirect aggression, which may be more frequent and normative in business settings, may provide more sensitive tests of psychopathy's predictive implications for the workplace.
- (9) Psychopathy is closely related to both narcissism and Machiavellianism, the two other components of the dark triad. Future research on workplace psychopathy should place the construct within the broader context of the dark triad to clarify the unique correlates, if any, of psychopathy in the workplace.
- (10) In closing, we call for greater circumspection by both media reporters and researchers in their description of findings on business psychopathy. Such scholarly restraint is needed to prevent further sensationalizing of research in this area. For example, despite the absence of any direct assessment of psychopathy in their study, the findings of Board and Fritzon (2005) have been presented repeatedly as evidence that psychopathy is especially prevalent in business samples (e.g., Clow & Scott, 2007; Coyne & Thomas, 2008; Wilson & McCarthy, 2011). Moreover, as noted earlier, numerous authors have used sensationalized terms to refer to workplace psychopaths. Such incidents underscore the importance of humility in drawing conclusions from research findings in this still nascent and poorly understood area.

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