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Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of factors contributing to school failure and their relationship to prior personal experience of school success

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Factors that pre-service class and subject teachers perceive as significant in explaining the occurrence of school failure were examined using mixed methods strategy. The qualitative phase of the study (N = 74) revealed that pre-service teachers recognize a wide range of causes for school failure (16 distinctive categories). The relative significance of the causes was established in the subsequent quantitative phase. The Scale of school failure causes was constructed, applied to 408 pre-service teachers and subjected to exploratory factor analysis, which pointed to the three latent groups of causes explaining 43% of variance. The lack of ability and motivation in students (1st factor) and the lack of educational support (2nd factor) were perceived as highly contributing to school failure, while moderate importance was attributed to the causes related to family and social context (3rd factor). Compared to pre-service subject teachers, pre-service class teachers were more willing to recognize the teachers’ responsibility for the occurrence of school failure. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of different factors were related to prior experiences of school success.

Key words: pre-service teachers, school failure, teachers’ beliefs, prior schooling experience

Highlights:

• Pre-service teachers recognize three distinct groups of causes of school failure (individual, educational, and familial/social).
• Lack of ability and motivation in students is perceived as the most important group of causes of school failure.

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Pre-service class and subject teachers attach different importance to different groups of causes.

Perceptions of different factors are related to prior personal experiences of school success.
Structure of self-schemas in patients with paranoia

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Negative self-schemas have been implicated in both paranoia and depression. There is a lack of research on the structural characteristics of self-schemas, even though these characteristics might be stable risk factors. The present study explored organization of positive and negative self-schemas in currently non-depressed individuals with persistent delusional disorder (PD), currently depressed individuals with persistent delusional disorder (PDD), and nonpsychiatric controls (NC). Self-schema consolidation was measured via the Psychological Distance Scaling Task. Within the interpersonal domain, negative self-schemas were more densely organized in PDD compared to both PD and NC. Both patient groups had less interconnected positive interpersonal schemas than controls. Within the achievement domain, PDD demonstrated less consolidated positive achievement schemas than NC and greater interconnectedness among negative adjectives than PD. Central limitation includes a small sample size. The findings point to an existence of at least two self-schema organizations in paranoid individuals.

Key words: self-structure, depression, paranoia, cognitive organization

Highlights:

• PDD patients have depressive cognitive organization.
• PD patients have less consolidated positive interpersonal schemas.
• There are at least two cognitive self-schema organizations in individuals with paranoia.

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The role of self-control, self-efficacy, metacognition, and motivation in predicting school achievement

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Self-control and self-regulated learning refer to those processes and strategies whereby individuals exert agency in facing educational demands. This study tested a structural model which predicts that self-control has direct effect on school achievement, as well as mediated by metacognitive self-regulation, academic self-efficacy, and regulatory motivational styles as the variables related to self-regulated learning. The research was carried out on a stratified random sample of 575 eighth grade students. It was shown that the effect of self-control on achievement is mediated by self-efficacy. In other words, students who have heightened self-control and believe in their own ability to meet school demands will be successful in school regardless of the complexity of their learning or whether they are autonomously motivated. The implications of such a finding were considered, as well as the limitations of the research and the indications for future research.

**Key words:** self-control, self-efficacy, metacognitive self-regulation, regulatory styles of motivation, school achievement

**Highlights:**

- The relation between self-control and self-regulated learning is still not explored.
- Self-control affects the achievement through academic self-efficacy.
- Metacognition and motivational styles do not mediate relation between self-control and achievement.
- Longitudinal study on the self-control and self-regulated learning is required.

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The Dark Triad, Amorality, and Impulsivity

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The ongoing research on socially toxic behaviors has been dominated by the Dark Triad approach. However, there are other theoretical approaches on antagonistic personalities that are not incepted by the Dark Triad approach. The goal of the present study was to investigate empirical overlap between the Dark Triad and Amorality constructs. Our data indicated that there is a substantial overlap between the two constructs, save for the Narcissism component of the Dark Triad which is somewhat distinct from the common Dark Triad/Amorality space. When Impulsivity was included into the analyses it disjointed the relatively monolithic Dark Triad/Amorality structure that was observed by the earlier analysis; indicating that the Dark Triad and Amorality do not unreservedly belong to the same measurement space. Thus, theoretically and empirically separable traits (amalgamated in the Dark Triad, Amorality, and Impulsivity constructs) combine in an intricate fashion to form distinctive patterns of socially malignant behaviors.

Key words: The Dark Triad, Amorality, Impulsivity, SD3, Amoral 9, UPPS

Highlights:

• There is a substantial empirical overlap between the Dark Triad and Amorality.
• Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Amorality are the core of evil personalities.
• Narcissism is somewhat distant from the Dark Triad/Amorality space.
• Impulsivity discriminately correlates with different Dark Triad/Amorality traits.
• Impulsivity is not a necessary ingredient of socially aversive behaviors.

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Approach/avoidance personality traits as predictors of psychopathology in convicted offenders

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This study examined the role of approach and avoidance personality traits as temperamental risk factors for psychopathology using the revised Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory as theoretical framework. Self-report measures were administered to male convicted offenders (N = 162) and controls matched for age, education, and ethnicity (N = 162). The results show higher approach and passive avoidance tendencies in the forensic sample, as well as higher psychological distress relative to controls. In the forensic sample, both approach and avoidance traits can account for a high degree of psychopathology vulnerability. However, higher behavioral inhibition system sensitivity is the primary risk factor both for general distress and various dimensions of psychopathology, while lower behavioral approach system sensitivity predicts internalizing psychopathology, paranoid, and psychoticism symptoms. The findings are discussed both in the general context of personality-psychopathology links, as well as in the forensic context of potential mental health interventions as part of rehabilitation prison programs.

Key words: Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory, approach/avoidance traits, psychopathology

Highlights:

- Avoidance and approach traits account for a high degree of psychological distress.
- High BIS activity is the most significant predictor of psychopathology.
- Low BAS activity predicts internalizing, paranoid and psychoticism symptoms.
- High FFFS activity predicts only phobic anxiety.

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The match in orientation between verbal context and object accelerates change detection

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Research in the field of embodied cognition has shown that sensorimotor simulation significantly influences various aspects of cognitive processing. This experiment was designed to test the impact of the sensorimotor simulation of objects’ physical proprieties, initiated by the preceding verbal context, on change detection performance. Before performing each of change detection trials, participants were exposed to sentences suggesting a particular object orientation (horizontal or vertical). The orientation in the first display of the objects that were to be replaced in the second was also manipulated. Response latencies results show that the sentences implying the same spatial orientation as that of the to-be-changed object led to a faster detection of its change compared to the sentences that implied the mismatching orientation, an effect that we explain in terms of the superior encoding, facilitated by sensorimotor simulation, of the objects with matching orientation.

Key words: change detection, sensorimotor simulation, object orientation, change blindness

Highlights:

• Change detection is influenced by the orientation suggested by the preceding sentence.
• Changes to objects with the orientation implied by the sentence are detected quicker.
• Object–sentence orientation match improves encoding and thus change detection speed.

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