

Exploring the Associations Among Facets of Impulsivity and Antisocial and Narcissistic Personality Traits

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INTRODUCTION

Narcissistic (NPD) and antisocial personality disorders (ASPD) are prevalent and costly to patients, and healthcare and judicial systems (Levy & Johnson, 2016). Impulsivity confers risk for these disorders (Fossati et al., 2007; Hollander & Evers, 2001). However, few studies have explored which facets of impulsivity are most implicated in each disorder.

Fossati et al. (2007) found evidence of novelty-seeking being more associated with NPD than ASPD. ASPD has also been found unrelated to lack of perseverance and negative urgency (i.e., impulsivity in response to negative emotions), whereas lack of premeditation and sensation seeking appear primarily in ASPD (DeShong & Kurtz, 2013). Jones and Paulhus (2011) also suggested that narcissistic impulsivity involves increased social engagement, while psychopathic impulsivity stems from low conscientiousness and poor self-regulation.

We explored which facets of impulsivity better predict antisocial versus narcissistic traits. We hypothesized that: 1) sensation seeking predicts both ASPD and NPD traits but more strongly predicts NPD; 2a) Lack of premeditation predicts ASPD traits, while 2b) positive urgency predicts NPD traits; 3) lack of perseverance does not predict either ASPD or NPD traits.

METHODS

Participants were 219 students at Penn State University ($M_{age}=19.04$), made up of 80 men, 133 women, one identifying as transgender, and one who declined to answer. The participants were further broken down into 90.42% of undergraduates, 1.37% of graduate students, and 8.22% who declined to answer. Participants were oversampled for BPD symptoms.

Participants completed: Five Factor Model Rating Form (FFMRF), used to derive ASPD and NPD scales (Samuel & Widiger, 2008), and the Urgency, Premeditation (lack of), Perseverance (lack of), Sensation Seeking, Positive Urgency, Impulse Behavior Scale UPPS-P.

We conducted two multiple regressions using UPPS-P subscales as predictors of ASPD and NPD traits as outcomes, controlling for gender in all analyses.

Although impulsivity predicts both antisocial and narcissistic personality traits, lack of premeditation and lack of perseverance are unique in predicting antisociality.

RESULTS

Model	b	Std. Error	t	Sig.
POSURG	0.03	0.1	5.5	0.746
NEGURG	0.27	0.09	0.32	0.003
SS	0.05	0.07	2.9	0.533
PREMED	0.07	0.09	0.62	0.484
PERSEV	0.05	0.08	0.7	0.538

a. Dependent Variable: NPD Traits

Model	b	Std. Error	t	Sig.
POSURG	0.07	0.07	1.03	0.3
NEGURG	0.19	0.06	3.05	0.003
SS	0.08	0.05	1.7	0.092
PREMED	0.18	0.07	2.87	0.005
PERSEV	0.22	0.06	3.73	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: ASPD Traits

- ASPD and NPD traits were highly correlated ($r=.79, p<.001$).
- Together, the UPPS-P (plus gender) predicted 36.1% of ASPD traits, $F(6,208)=19.61, p<.001$.
- Together, the UPPS-P (plus gender) predicted 11.9% of NPD traits, $F(6,208)=4.94, p<.001$.

DISCUSSION

- Negative urgency predicted NPD and ASPD traits, whereas lack of premeditation and lack of perseverance predicted only ASPD traits.
- Positive urgency and sensation seeking did not predict either ASPD or NPD, contrary to hypotheses.
- This study highlights facets of impulsivity (e.g., negative urgency), that may be relevant in explaining Cluster B PD manifestation.
- Patients with antisocial tendencies may struggle to maintain consistent treatment and/or employment due to issues with a lack of motivation and/or planfulness.
- Narcissistic and antisocial traits are similar in their association with impulsivity but vary in specific aspects of impulsivity.
- Future studies should explore facets of impulsivity in clinical populations.