Antisocial personality disorder and Dark Tetrad personality traits, violent crime, and recidivism: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Research indicates that some personality disorders such as antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) and certain personality traits, such as the Dark Tetrad personality traits; namely, psychopathy, sadism, narcissism, and Machiavellianism can be associated with criminal behavior. For this reason, researchers have investigated how ASPD, psychopathy, sadism, narcissism, and Machiavellianism are related to re-offending and violent crimes. Findings from several individual studies revealed that individuals with ASPD and Dark Tetrad traits are unable to conform to societal rules; therefore, they are at a greater risk to engage in re-offending behaviors.

The present research aimed to systematically collate findings of studies related to personality and recidivism. Electronic literature databases such as SAGE Journals, ClinicalKey, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect, Criminology Collection, APA PsychInfo, Academic Search Complete, APA PsychArticles, Criminal Justice Abstracts, MEDLINE, and Wiley Online Library were searched to identify studies examining the relation between ASPD, Dark Tetrad personality traits, recidivism, and violent crimes. Six articles were included in the present study. The current review found that certain traits of psychopathy and antisocial personality disorder predisposes offenders to reoffending. Furthermore, it was found that dysregulation of emotions explains criminal behavior. Findings from the present study may have an impact on how the justice system understands, predicts, and reduces recidivism.

Key words: Personality traits, recidivism, criminal behavior, violent crime, Offender.



Portia Mandiwana is a clinical psychologist in South Africa. She has two years' experience in the field of clinical psychology. Her interest is on psychology and criminology. Her dissertation which was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for her master's degree in clinical psychology was titled antisocial personality disorder, dark tetrad personality traits, violent crime, and recidivism: A systematic review. Her future research project will be a qualitative study that focuses on the lived experiences of offenders

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