

The Influence of Boldness, Meanness, and Disinhibition on Aggression

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INTRODUCTION

- Aggressive behavior is an increasingly common problem in the U.S.
- The predominant model of aggression includes three types: social aggression, physical aggression and rule-breaking.
- The aspect of personality most closely associated with aggression is psychopathy, which also has three dimensions: boldness, meanness, and disinhibition.
- Of these dimensions, two are most closely linked to aggressive behavior.
- Meanness tends to be linked to all forms of aggressive behavior owing to a sense of underlying hostility.
- Disinhibition is more specifically linked to rule-breaking.
- However, there is little research on the relative influences of all three dimensions on different types of aggression.

METHODS

- Study participants were 286 men and women recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (Table 1).
- Measures: TriPM & STAB.
- We examined data using multiple regression.

RESULTS

- Subtypes of both aggression and psychopathy were on average strongly associated with each other ($r_{\text{mean}} = .49$)
- Dimensions of psychopathy accounted for a large amount of variance in all three forms of aggression (see Table 3).
- Meanness and disinhibition both had large positive effects of all three forms of aggression.
- Boldness was not associated with any forms of aggression

DISCUSSION

- The findings suggest that meanness and disinhibition are the driving forces behind aggressive behavior in general.
- This may work such that meanness provides the motivation for aggression and disinhibition removes inhibitions for aggressive action.
- Although both dimensions had large effects on aggression in this sample, it may be best to focus prevention efforts on disinhibition given low efficacy for reducing meanness.

Meanness and disinhibition (but not boldness) are associated with aggression

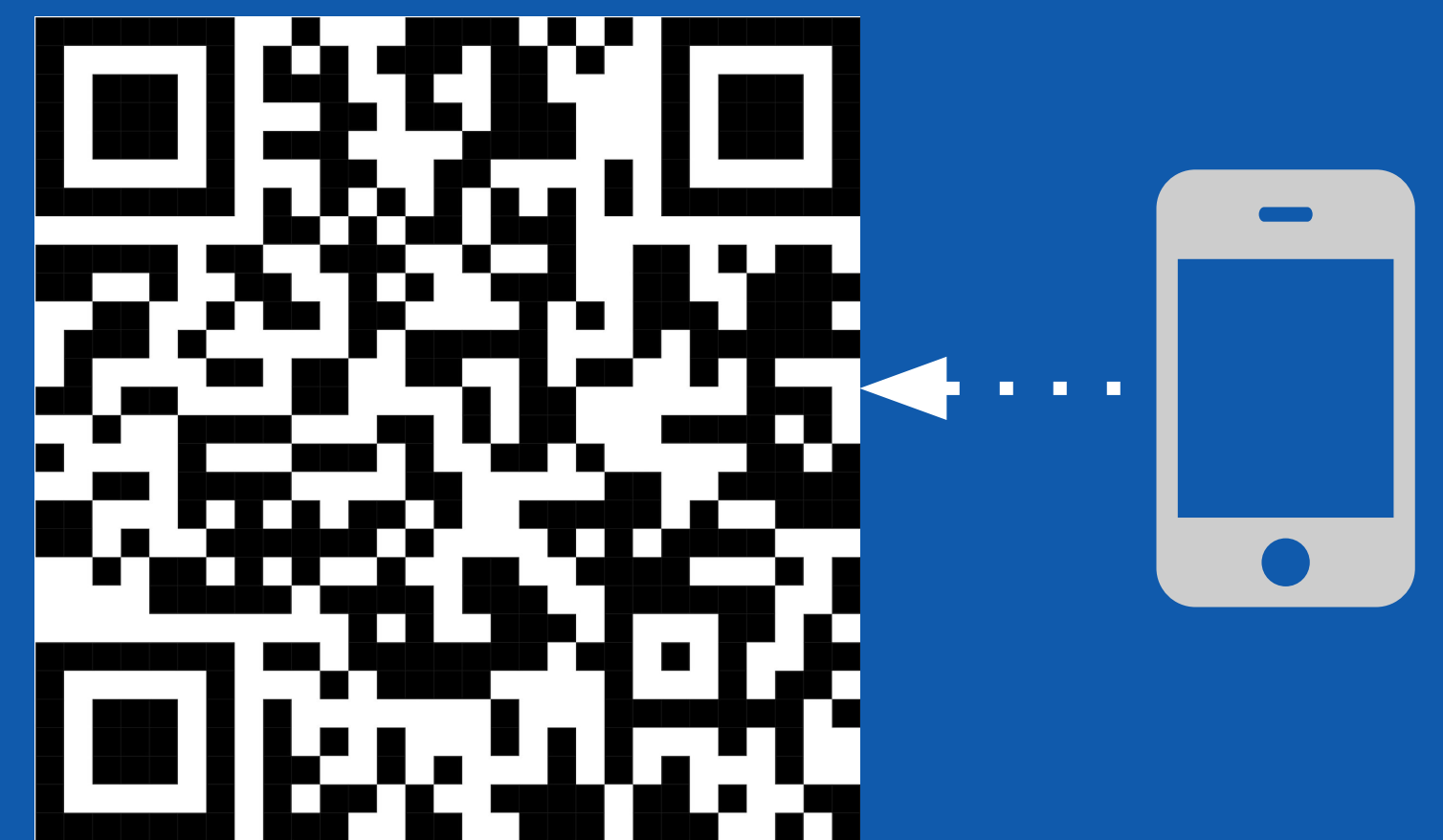


Table 1
Sample Demographics

	n (%)
<u>Sex</u>	
Male	135 (46%)
Female	151 (54%)
<u>Race</u>	
White	240 (85%)
Asian	23 (8%)
Black	8 (3%)
Multiracial	8 (3%)
Other	5 (2%)

Table 2
Correlations Between Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Boldness	(.72)					
2. Meanness	.23	(.91)				
3. Disinhibition	-.01	.78	(.92)			
4. Physical Aggression	.10	.69	.69	(.94)		
5. Social Aggression	.04	.66	.66	.93	(.95)	
6. Rule Breaking	.12	.73	.71	.93	.92	(.96)

Note. α on diagonal; $r_s > |.10|$ are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3
Relative Associations Between Dimensions of Psychopathy and Aggression

	Physical Aggression		Social Aggression		Rule-Breaking	
	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2
Boldness	.03	.53*	-.16	.48*	.06	.58*
Meanness	.68*		.69*		.83*	
Disinhibition	.64*		.58*		.60*	

Note. * indicates coefficient is statistically significant at $p < .05$.