

Psychopathic Experiences Among Faculty Members in Adventist Higher Institutions of Learning in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the presence of psychopathic behaviors among faculty members using a quantitative descriptive design with a sample of 130 faculty members. Data from a self-constructed questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS 27 for statistical treatment. Faculty members demonstrated low levels of psychopathic behaviors. This is attributed to their religious value system and the integration of faith in learning and teaching. Being aged 18 – 44 years or aged 45 – 64 does not make one more vulnerable to psychopathic experiences. Regardless of age, the psychopathic experiences are the same. Being a faculty member or HOD/Dean does not make a difference in psychopathic behaviors. Any university faculty job level is vulnerable to psychopathic behaviors. The One-way ANOVA test for a significant difference showed that the psychopathic behaviors of faculty members across the Divisions *do not significantly* differ, as they adhere to the same education system and share religious values. A phenomenological study would spell out the lived experiences. A convergent parallel design could complement personal and organizational factors. Besides, the study could expand the sample size to include public institutions across Sub-Saharan African countries and use standardized and validated instruments to enhance reliability and improve generalizability. An examination of the influence of organizational support, leadership style, and mental health resources on psychopathic experiences would be ideal.

Keywords: Psychopathy. Sociopaths. Faculty members. Adventist Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Psychopathy

Psychopathy is a psychological term that refers to a personality disorder characterized by patterns of behavior that include a lack of empathy and remorse, superficial charm, persistent antisocial behavior, shallow affect, and narcissism. Literature (McCann, 2002) affirmed that Hare's checklist is the most used method for identifying psychopathy in both research and clinical settings and is the best validated (Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996; Sandoval et al., 2000) and the most reliable (Lynam et al., 1999) measure. Thus, the psychopathy checklist has been adopted worldwide (Wormith, 2000; Molto et al., 2000) as the standard reference for researchers and clinicians to assess psychopathy. The literature on psychopathy in religious institutions is scarce.

The etymology of the word *psychopathy* comes from two Greek words: *psuche*, meaning soul, and *pathos* for disease or suffering. *Sociopathy* is derived from the Latin word *socius* for companion.

Historical trends indicate that the presence of organizational psychopaths has been acknowledged within the past 40 years (Hare, 1991). In his 1891 book *Die Psychopathischen Mindwertigkeiten*, the German psychiatrist Julius Ludwig August Koch used the word psychopathy for the first time (Ronson, 2011). The German psychiatrist Karl Birnbaum and educational psychologist George Partridge are credited with coining the term *sociopath* in 1909 and 1930, respectively (Skeem et al., 2011).

Following the 1941 release of the book, *The Mask of Sanity*, by an American psychiatrist, Hervey M. Cleckley, both words, psychopath and sociopath, became well known in the US and abroad (Cleckley, 1941, 1976; Boddy, 2015). From the earlier days when Cleckley characterized psychopaths as emotionally shallow, deceitfully

charming, egocentric, irresponsible, insincere, and remorseless (Chapman et al., 2003), Professor Robert Hare's work on criminal psychopaths (Deutschman, 2005) refined, modified, and extended Cleckley's checklist. Hare's subset of his criminal checklist is now considered to cater to identifying organizational psychopaths. The checklist describes psychopaths thus: 1/ they are glib and superficially charming; 2/ good at conning and manipulating others; 3/ have no remorse about harming others; 4/ are emotionally shallow, calculating, and cold; and 5/ callous (Robinson & Rogers, 2015).

DSM-5 and ICD-10 on Psychopathy

Although DSM-5, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), and ICD-10, the *International Classification of Diseases* (World Health Organization, 1992), did not define psychopathy, psychologists and psychiatrists define it as a distinct personality disorder. As such, the DSM-5 now uses psychopathy as a psychological term to refer to a personality disorder that meets criteria for antisocial personality disorder (APD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

In addition, the symptoms and criteria for APD have four diagnostic criteria: A, B, C, and D. Criterion A has seven sub-features. There is a disregard for and violation of others' rights since age 15, as indicated by one of the seven sub-features. These include: 1/ failure to obey laws and norms by engaging in behavior that results in a criminal arrest or would warrant criminal arrest. 2/ Lying, deception, and manipulation, for-profit or self-amusement; 3/ impulsive behavior; 4/ irritability and aggression, manifested as frequent assaults; 5/ blatantly disregarding the safety of self and others; 6/ a pattern of irresponsibility; and 7/ lack of remorse for actions (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Criterion B is set at age 18. Criterion C has conduct disorder manifested before 15. Criterion D has antisocial behavior that does not occur in the context of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The onset of APD is different for different ages: before 18 years, it is diagnosed as Conduct Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

On prevalence, Stout (2006) observed that an estimated 4 percent, while Sanz-Garcia et al. (2021) posited that 4.5 percent of the adult population were psychopathic. On gender, Clarke (2005) posited that 2 percent of males were psychopathic. DeAngelis (2022) posited that about 1.2% of adult men and 0.3% of US adult women were reported to have clinical psychopathic traits. The DSM-5 indicated that APD is 0.02 to 3.3 percent (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), while Boddy (2006) indicated an 'incidence of about 1 percent of the general population who work in organizations' (p. 1461). The DSM-5 added that the incidence of psychopathy depended on what cut-off point was adopted in the psychopathy measurement scale used (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Nature and Nurture of Psychopathy and Sociopathy

The terms psychopathy or sociopathy are synonymous in some contexts. For psychopaths, not much has been known concerning causes, but agree that this syndrome stems from biological or environmental factors (Hare, 1999) and is probably the result of an interplay of both. Psychopathy is based on nature, while sociopathy is rooted in nurture.

On nature, the risk factors include being male and having a first-degree biological relative with APD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Tang et al. (2013) observed that APD is attributed to neuroanatomical issues. There were 'uncoupled connections' in parts of the frontal and parietal lobes, which are responsible for attention, self-regulation, the ability to control oneself, and resolving conflicts. Besides physiological and anatomical deficits, especially in the frontal /parietal areas, as well as in the cerebellum, contributed to chronic low arousal, high impulsivity, lack of conscience, callousness, and decision-making problems. Boddy (2015) posited that a biological predisposition subjected to an adverse social environment (Kirkman, 2005) created a psychopath.

On the other hand, it is due to nurture. Kirkman (2005) opined that 'the social environment, such as educational opportunities and family background, determined how the psychopathy became either criminal psychopathy or organizational psychopathy' (Boddy, 2006, p.1466). Besides, the American Psychiatric Association (2013), in consonance with Tang et al. (2013), confirmed that APD is caused by social learning and other environmental factors, such as internalizing negative messages from antisocial peers or parents.

According to the literature (Clarke, 2009; Newby, 2005), there are certainly organizational psychopaths in every large company working for them. Their presence arguably affects the relationships, corporate decision-making processes, and organizational outcomes. It becomes imperative to delve into, explore, and acknowledge how these organizational psychopaths think, act, and behave and affect the organization and its management, and how to manage them (Boddy, 2015).

According to the earlier study by Lilienfeld and Andrews (1996), these personality traits were traditionally deemed ‘central to the syndrome as opposed to the more behavioral antisocial manifestations of it’ (Boddy, 2006, p. 1463). The researchers (Salekin et al., 2010) subjected Hare’s checklist to factor analysis and concluded that these were the features of psychopathy (Miller & Lynam, 2003; Lynam et al., 2009; Chapman et al., 2003; Sandoval et al., 2000) and have become the personality traits deemed central to the syndrome, and on the other hand, the anti-social behavioral manifestations of the syndrome.

Boddy (2015) observed that organizational psychopaths were defined as those workplace employees who are perceived to exhibit a score of 75 percent or more on the 20 traits identified as psychopathic in Hare’s psychopathy checklist (Hare, 1991), modified (Deutschman, 2005) for use in business research. Although several measures exist that determine a level of psychopathy, including (Salekin et al., 2010) the psychopathic personality inventory, personality diagnostic questionnaire, Hare’s psychopathy checklist, and others, psychopathy measures (Salekin et al., 2010) found a high convergent validity between psychopathy measures and antisocial personality disorder. Other researchers (Reise & Wink, 1995; Sandoval et al., 2000) also found significant correlations between different psychopathy measures. Therefore, the principal psychopathy measures commonly used in psychology were seen to be measuring essentially the same thing.

From the earliest seminal literature, Hercz (2001) and Stout (2006) observed that psychopaths are incapable of experiencing the feelings of others. Organizational psychopaths have characteristics that manifest in different ways.

Psychopathic Behaviors in Colleges and Universities

Are there psychopathic behaviors among staff and faculty in universities? Forster and Laud (2018) observed that psychopaths have been reported to function as lawyers, doctors, police officers, psychiatrists, cult leaders, military personnel, businesspeople, writers, and artists. Psychopaths thrive in universities because of the high-power positional power combined with low levels of institutional oversight and safeguards. Controversy has ensued on what criteria to use when studying organizational psychopaths. Babiak and Hare (2006) identified typical psychopathic characteristics in the workplace when contextualized to suit the higher institutions of learning, which include the following factors.

First, faculty members who are psychopathic frequently minimize the work of junior faculty members while exaggerating the significance of their own research and teaching achievements (which may be of low quality). They seem accomplished at faking the emotions that they do not have, and by doing this, they appear normal to those around them (Boddy, 2006, p. 1462). Organizational psychopaths often demonstrate valuable accomplishments. Ullman (2006) observed that psychopaths and others suddenly find themselves abandoned, out of a job, without their promised pension, and/or without even a company left to work for. Furthermore, faculty psychopaths destroy the interpersonal relationships, mental health, and self-image of the people working around them, yet employers have a duty of care to protect their workforce from harm (Clarke, 2009).

Secondly, these are coworkers in academia or administration who intentionally damage the reputation of a colleague they are vying with for a promotion by spreading false information among organization members. Walker et al. (2020) observed that they take advantage of their colleagues. They are accomplished liars, totally ruthless and opportunistic, calculating and without remorse. According to Clarke (2009), they parasitically claim credit for work they have not done and blame others for things that go wrong because of their actions. They are very willing to exploit the workforce. With no emotional attachments to their colleagues, organizational psychopaths are happy to exploit everyone who works for them.

Thirdly, faculty members who are psychopaths have a strong desire to be appointed to leadership positions. In their study, Johansson and Kerr (2005) observed that organizational psychopaths were not any more or less

intelligent than the general population, but according to Stout (2006) use their arrogance and charm to climb the ladder of corporate success. They appear very hireable and worthy of promotion; they are smooth, charming, polished, and likable (Walker et al., 2020). Boddy (2015) affirmed that most organizational psychopaths are more at the top of organizations than at the bottom since they are skilled at getting employed and climbing the organizational hierarchy due to their charm and networking skills. They are more motivated (Boddy, 2015) and ‘better equipped than other corporate managers to rise to high corporate positions’ (p. 1462). Besides, their motivation is ignited by their craving for power and is reported to be found wherever they get power, prestige, and money that go with senior managerial positions (Maibom, 2005, 2018; Chapman et al., 2003).

Fourthly, these are faculty members who receive money or favors, also known as *Quid pro quo*, from students for better grades (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2021) or deceitfully accuse other colleagues of engaging in the same behavior. They act without concern for others’ safety. By their manipulative skills to dominate the people they work with (Clarke, 2009), exploiting them, involving them in sexual affairs, spreading rumors, and engaging in office politics to further their aims, the employees realize they are being used and abused. Their fellow employees lose control of their careers at the hands of an organizational psychopath. Psychopaths are generally disheartened people. The workers become afraid to talk to others in the organization about how they are suffering. The workforce becomes disheartened.

Fifth, professors who frequently utilize their students’ research projects for their own publications without giving credit to the students. Controversy has ensued on what criteria to use when studying organizational psychopaths. The psychopaths have a grandiose sense of self-worth, are pathological liars, lack guilt or shame, have no remorse about harming others, lack empathy, and they fail to take responsibility for their actions (Boddy, 2006, p. 1463).

Sixth, faculty members who are psychopathic are heartless in dealing with students’ academic journey. They access managerial promotion through ruthless opportunistic manipulations for selfish career advancement (Hare, 1991). Besides, psychopaths are likely to make decisions that put lives at risk in situations where other managers would make different decisions (Boddy, 2006, p. 1467).

Seventh, faculty members who volunteer for leadership positions in committees but then set unreasonably high time and workload expectations for members, going beyond what the scope of the committee mandates. They tend to eliminate everyone to get their way. They knock off whoever gets in their way (Boddy, 2006, p. 1462). They are ruthless and dangerous to the economic and mental health welfare of those around them and to the companies and organizations that employ them. Sheehy and Murphy (2021) opined that unless the senior management is aware that large organizations and corporations are run by psychopaths, then any chance of decisions being made that are friendly to the environment, to employees, or to investors will be greatly reduced.

Eighth, faculty or administrative personnel who convince others of their importance in the university yet lack the necessary qualifications and expertise for their roles. They can ruthlessly charm, sweet-talk, lie (Miller & Lynam, 2003), coax, and take advantage of fellow employees by insidious means, as they work their way up an organizational hierarchy in pursuit of their main aims of power, wealth, and status, and at the expense of anyone who gets in their way (Boddy, 2006). Besides, organizational psychopaths are defined as employees who present themselves as desirable employees and easily obtain positions in the organization. They are charming talkers.

Ninth, they disregard colleagues. Boddy (2015) observed that since organizational psychopaths have no conscience and are not concerned with the financial or emotional effects of their actions on other people, they often sack large numbers of staff to impress other people in the name of cutting costs. As leaders, they often manifest an impaired moral conscience and make decisions driven purely by their selfish desires without considering the needs of others. There are unnecessary employee redundancies. Secondly, they exploit the workforce.

Tenth, these are Deans and Heads of Departments who insist that faculty members satisfy the annual publications without discussing equitable workload, institutional support for research, or demonstrating empathy for individual work-life balance. They are retreaters at the university with no serious commitment to work. They have no emotional connection. Besides, the major criterion of psychopathy is the lack of a sense of guilt (Litton,

2013) and the absence of conscience (Boddy, 2006; Hare, 1999; Hercz, 2001). According to Mahaffey and Marcus (2006), organizational psychopaths are cold-hearted and can get rid of anyone standing in their way in the organizational hierarchy. Moreover, Boddy (2015) opined that they eventually rise to senior positions and, by default, become controllers of huge resources that are often used for selfish ends instead of being used for the good of the organization. Besides, they are unable to tolerate boredom, harbor feelings of being victimized, have a 'diminished capacity for intimacy, and are amoral and unethical (p. 1464).

Eleventh, the faculty members who treat fellow staff unfairly based on ethnicity, cultural backgrounds, gender, age, religion, and social connections. They are smooth, charming, polished, likable (Walker et al., 2020), and even charismatic (Burch & McCormick, 2009), shrewdly manipulative in conversations to achieve their selfish ends of enrichment and empowerment (Boddy, 2006, p. 1462); their aim is self-gratification (Hare, 1999). Clarke (2009) opined that they have no sense of corporate social responsibility. They have no conscience and are not at all concerned with the consequences of their actions on the environment or society. It was found that they have no sense of corporate social responsibility other than paying lip service. Besides, they are ruthless, prepared to lie (Maibom, 2005; 2018), have fewer emotional attachments, and can present a charming mask and appear to be an ideal leader. However, being accomplished liars (Kirkman, 2005), they easily obtain the jobs they want. According to Stout (2006), organizational psychopaths are employees with no conscience who are willing to lie and display extroversion (Miller & Lynam, 2003).

Twelfth, faculty members who are psychopaths are feared by staff with uncontrollable powers. They were seen to have the ability to think on their feet and the ability to present a good image. According to Gettler (2003), their charm inspired people to have confidence in them (Ray and Ray, 1982), and this meant that they could easily enter and do well in organizations and corporations. According to Ray and Ray (1982), they presented intelligence traits and success that many people aspire to as desirable employees. According to Clarke (2009) and Hare (1999), they develop a support network of patrons who assist them; they identify pawns who can be manipulated, and they also identify others in the net as police, auditors, security, and human resources personnel.

Thirteenth, these are faculty members who create a toxic work environment by openly mocking, defaming, or disparaging their colleagues' research, teaching, and public service records. Psychopaths are political in decision-making and love to play games of corporate politics (Deutschman, 2005). Boddy (2015) observed that they are known to cause hostility within people groups and co-workers, which creates confusion in the workplace and enables the psychopaths to push through their agenda at the expense of the organization's true goals and the mission statement. Lastly, there is workplace bullying.

A question was raised as to how organizational psychopaths get into organizations. Psychopathic faculty members invest in public looks - they dress like businesspeople, are very persuasive, and are fun to be around, so they can do well at recruitment interviews (Walker & Jackson, 2020) because of their charm. They love to rationalize 'their behavior and shrug off any sense of personal responsibility' (Boddy, 2006, p. 1463). Besides, 'psychopaths have no emotional attachment to the company they work for or to the people they work with and find it easy to sack people' (Boddy, 2006, p. 1468). Psychopathic faculty members who shift focus away from the university's core operations and distract from its essential functions of teaching, research, and community service. According to Clarke (2009), this serves as a method to belittle subordinates. They derive satisfaction not only from causing harm but also strategically employ such behavior to create confusion and disorient staff who might pose a challenge to their influence with the university.

Dealing with functional academic Psychopaths

How should we deal with functional academic psychopaths? According to Becker (2015), psychopaths are not treatable, and they won't change, particularly not from self-awareness or the awakening of their conscience. Their mindset is unchanging, so expecting them to change is like expecting a totally deaf person to hear. The psychopath is mentally immutable and unchanging (p. 47). Literature (Deutschman, 2005; Boddy, 2015; Butcher, 2004; Morse, 2013) affirmed that, by implication, the presence of psychopaths in business organizations warrants research since this phenomenon is relatively new to business and behavioral research. Literature (Boddy, 2015; Chapman et al., 2003; Kirkman, 2005; Salekin et al., 2010) acknowledged the weakness of research into

psychopathy - the lack of generalizability from it because of the dominant use of criminal and incarcerated populations in research studies.

Several approaches to dealing with functional academic psychopaths have been suggested. They are two-pronged: enhancing the work environment in higher education and dealing with the individual. Literature (Einarsen et al., 2010; Hare, 2003; Keashley & Neuman, 2010; Lester, 2013; Sharma, 2017) has suggested ways for institutions to deal with psychopaths. Several approaches to improve the working environment include the following. Use strict hiring and selection procedures, especially for senior positions, to make sure that functional academic psychopaths are never hired in the first place. The universities are to draft and enforce suitable standards of ethical conduct, integrity, and professional behavior. To establish impartial, private reporting mechanisms for victims of bullying and psychopathic behavior within the university, as well as to establish an evaluation of the work of senior academic staff members. Educate faculty, staff, non-academic and academic heads, deans, and executive-level leaders on the prevalence and effects of this behavior.

Boddy (2015), citing Hare, who is probably the world's leading expert on psychopaths, suggested creating an awareness among organizational managers that psychopaths existed as a good first step in attempting to stem the havoc (Clarke, 2009). This is done through continuous professional development of employees. Provide counseling to bullies, psychopath, and their victims. Besides (Johansson & Kerr, 2005; Kirkman, 2005), great care needs to be taken in identifying them and dealing with them. It is good to identify the victims, form a team with them, and attempt to deal with psychopaths. Hare warned against direct engagement with psychopaths, as they psychopaths may seek to inflict emotional or physical harm on those who oppose them. A better option would be at the recruitment stage – the interviewers should be aware of the characteristics of psychopaths from the outset. It is an organizational necessity (and legal requirement in many countries) for employees to counsel perpetrators on the effects and consequences of their behaviors, even though functional academic psychopaths seldom admit that they have a problem. Benchmark and design policies to screen, track, evaluate, communicate with, and discipline those who exhibit functional academic psychopathic tendencies.

On dealing with an individual, several suggestions have been made. Since moderate psychopaths can be found in all organizations, especially at senior management levels, a psychometric screening would be important for earlier detection. According to the literature (Greely, 2015; Vendemia et al., 2006), while people may be able to lie, neuroscientists have discovered that their brains cannot. This is because telling a planned lie activates the brain's prefrontal cortex, whereas telling a spontaneous lie activates the cingulate cortex (a region of the brain that deals with conflicting information). In essence, lying and deception leave a detectable physiological trace before and after they take place. That is why magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and electroencephalogram (EEG) technologies have been developed to monitor event-related (ERP) signals in the brain. While MRI scans provide a picture of the brain's impulses every second, ERP scans may record signals up to one-thousandth of a second and forecast whether someone is going to lie a few milliseconds before they do. The hiring team would be aware of this occupational phenomenon and other personality traits through psychometric tests (Boddy, 2006, p. 1471).

The research on psychopaths has knowledge, empirical, and population gaps. There is a knowledge gap where literature (Boddy, 2015) observed that 'very little research has been undertaken in this area to date and that research is needed to contribute to the building of a body of knowledge to explain the impact of organizational psychopaths on organizations (Boddy, 2006; p. 1472) and that the effects of psychopaths 'need to be studied and researched in more detail', to 'stimulate debate on this issue in academic circles outside the disciplines of psychology and criminology and in particular will bring it to the attention of business strategists and other academics involved in conducting business research' (p. 1473). According to Forster and Laud (2018), there is research on sexual harassment and bullying at colleges and universities, but there are no published studies on the prevalence or effects of psychopathic behavior in the higher education sector. In response to the empirical, knowledge, and population gaps, this study examines the impact of psychopathic experiences among faculty members in Adventist institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Research Questions

The study aimed to determine the extent of psychopathic behaviors among faculty members in Seventh-day

Adventist higher learning institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the study sought to address the following questions:

1. What is the extent of psychopathic behaviors among faculty members in Adventist higher learning institutions in sub-Saharan Africa?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of psychopathic experiences when a personal profile is considered?

The study tested the following hypothesis. There is no significant difference in the level of psychopathic behaviors when a personal profile is considered.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A correlational research design was employed in this quantitative study. The design quantifies and evaluates the variables of the study. It determines the trends and patterns in data and establishes whether the relationships are positive or negative. The correlations were examined using descriptive and inferential statistics. This study examined how faculty members' personal profiles related to psychopathic behaviors.

The Population, Sample, and Sampling Techniques

Faculty members from higher educational institutions within the three Church divisions in Africa, particularly East-Central Africa Division (ECD), West-Central Africa Division (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID), participated in this study. From the 118 tertiary institutions operated by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, categories C and G institutions that grant only baccalaureate and graduate degrees, respectively, were selected (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, April 3, 2024). The Office indicated that there were seven accredited institutions in ECD, six in SID, and five in WAD.

To select the participating institutions, a multi-stage sampling technique was utilized. Purposive sampling was used to select accredited institutions from each division (ECD, SID, and WAD). Five of the seven accredited institutions in ECD were selected, three of the six institutions from SID, and three of the five institutions from WAD. Easy accessibility, contact with institutional leadership, and ethics clearance served as selection criteria for the institutions. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample from the population of faculty members through the Human Resource Office.

The selection criteria were based on easy accessibility and easy contact with institutional leadership and ethics clearance. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample from the population of faculty from the Human Resource Office. This sampling involved statistical inference made using a subset of a population, strata based on shared characteristics that include age, sex at birth, religious affiliation, and highest educational attainment.

A sample of 130 faculty members participated. The eligibility criteria included current employees 1/ on permanent record, 2/ with experience of working from home and office, 3/ serving as faculty members or Head of Department or Dean, 4/ aged between 18 and 64 years, 5/ any sex (at birth), and 6/ whose Highest education attainment at bachelor's degree and above, and 7/ of any religious affiliation. The participants were those exposed to teaching, research, and service pressure.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Profile	Variable	Frequ	Percent
Sex	Male	91	70.0
	Female	38	29.2
Age	18 – 44 years	67	51.5
	40 - 64 years old	63	48.5
HEA	Up to Bachelors	39	30.0
	Post Graduate Level	90	69.2

Religious Affiliation*	Catholic	88	67.7
	Protestant	32	24.6
	Muslim	10	7.7
Job Level	Faculty	109	83.8
	HOD or Dean of School	21	16.2
Work Location	Work from home over 80% of the time	14	10.8
	Work between home and office 2-3 days a week	37	28.5
	Work from the office/worksites over 80% of the time	79	60.8

*NB: Most Universities are required by the government to have multi-religious representation in their faculty.

Instrumentation

Unlike the standardized tools, this study used a self-constructed questionnaire on psychopathy based on the literature. The questionnaire was subjected to external and internal validation by experts and statistical processes and had an *acceptable* range of statistical properties.

Psychopathic Experiences. This refers to how faculty members experience other people who exhibit behaviors that conflict with social norms, such as manipulation, being insensitive, and having difficulty showing remorse and empathy. This variable had 15 items. When subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, 7 items were deemed unfit, leaving only eight items. The eight items had an internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha 0.815, which is considered *good* internal consistency.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study involved having ethical clearance from the University's Ethics Review Board (AUA-ISERC), a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), and permission from the Unions and Conferences to gather data from their universities. A consent form was utilized. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured. There was no physical harm, and no personal harm arising from the disclosure of information collected. They were treated fairly and equally in terms of participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the meaning and implications of the results of all the questions. The findings in the tables below foster a better understanding of the study.

Psychopathic Experiences

Table 2 Faculty Level of Psychopathy Experiences

Sub-variable	M	SD	Scaled response	Verbal Interpre
Have a strong desire to be appointed to higher positions	2.47	1.013	Disagree	Low
Lack remorse for their conduct	2.17	1.005	Disagree	Low
Tend to eliminate everyone who gets in their way	2.41	1.090	Disagree	Low
Charming talkers wishing to raise higher on the success ladder	2.26	.953	Disagree	Low
Show a disregard of colleagues	2.03	.980	Disagree	Low
Only give lip service to the concept of corporate social responsibility.	2.45	.872	Disagree	Low
Take a political stance while making decisions	2.62	1.067	Agree	High
Draw attention away from the organization's operations.	2.50	1.036	Agree	High
Faculty Psychopathy Experiences	2.362	.662	Disagree	Low

Scoring system: 4.00 – 3.50= Strongly Agree=*Very High*; 3.49 – 2.50= Agree=*High*; 2.49 -1.50=Disagree= *Low*; 1.49 – 1.00= Strongly Disagree=*Very low*.

In general, results show that the faculty members experienced a *low level* of psychopathic behaviors ($M = 2.39$, $SD = .464$). This means that faculty members in Adventist higher institutions of learning do not display this trait. This low level of psychopathy can be attributed to the religious instructions. They integrate faith and teaching and learning, which values reduce psychopathic tendencies. The finding is *contrary* to the literature (Sharma, 2017; Yamada, 2008), which identified five main variants of psychopathy as administrators bullying other administrators, faculty, or staff in universities, permanent faculty members bullying non-tenured or contract faculty members, faculty being incongruently mean and tough to the administrative staff or students, and administrative staff bullying other non-academic staff (Babiak & Hare, 2006). Sharma (2017) and Yamada (2008) identified five main variants of psychopathy as administrators bullying other administrators, faculty, or staff in universities; permanent faculty members bullying non-tenured or contract faculty members, faculty being incongruently mean and tough to the administrative staff or students, and administrative staff bullying other non-academic staff. Several items had higher mean scores.

Political Stance in Decision-Making and Strong Desire for Positions

The question as to whether the faculty members take a political stance in their decision-making processes showed a *high level* of experience ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.067$). This means that faculty members base their choices purely on objective criteria, established rules, and factual data. This is attributed to the Christian worldview and the Adventist education system that has a value system established on rules, regulations, and undergoes evaluations by the accrediting agencies. The results agree *with* the literature. In other universities, faculty members have been reported to create a toxic work environment by openly mocking, defaming, or disparaging their colleagues' research, teaching, and public service records. In the public domain, psychopaths are political in decision-making and love to play games of corporate politics (Deutschman, 2005). Boddy (2015) observed that they are known to cause hostility within people groups and co-workers, which creates confusion in the workplace and enables the psychopaths to push through their agenda at the expense of the organization's true goals and the mission statement. Lastly, there is workplace bullying.

As to whether there are faculty members who 'have a strong desire to be appointed to higher positions', results showed a low level ($M = 2.47$, $SD = .1013$). This means that faculty members are satisfied with their positions. The results are *contrary* to the literature. Outside the Adventist Church, faculty members display a strong desire to be appointed to leadership positions. In their study, Johansson and Kerr (2005) observed that organizational psychopaths were not any more or less intelligent than the general population, but also, according to Stout (2006), they use their arrogance and charm to climb the ladder of corporate success. They appear very hireable and worthy of promotion; they are smooth, charming, polished, and likable (Walker & Johnson, 2020). Most organizational psychopaths are more at the top of organizations than at the bottom since they are adept at getting employed and climbing the organizational hierarchy due to their charm and networking skills (Boddy, 2015). Their motivation was ignited (Boddy, 2015) by their craving for power, and they are reported to be found wherever they get power, prestige, and money that go with senior managerial positions, and they seem to be better prepared due to their lack of empathy (Maibom, 2005, 2018; Chapman et al., 2003).

Lack of Remorse for their Conduct

On whether faculty members lack remorse for their conduct, the results had a low level of experience ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 1.067$). This means that these faculty members feel a deep, painful sense of guilt and sorrow and acknowledge the harm they cause. This is healthy for organizations. The results are *contrary* to the literature. Elsewhere, professors frequently utilize their students' research projects for their own publications without giving credit to the students (Babiak & Hare, 2006). They display a grandiose sense of self-worth, are pathological liars, lack guilt or shame, have no remorse about harming others, lack empathy, and they fail to take responsibility for their actions (Boddy, 2006, p. 1463).

Eliminate Everyone in Their Way and Sweet-talk their Promotions

On whether the faculty members in Adventist higher learning institutions tended to eliminate everyone who got in their way, the results indicated low levels of such traits ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.090$). This means that the Adventist faculty members practice restraint from extreme violent or ruthless methods to deal with obstacles. This is

contrary to the literature. Elsewhere, faculty members who volunteer for leadership positions in committees but then set unreasonably high time and workload expectations for members, going beyond what the scope of the committee mandates (Babiak & Hare, 2006). They tend to eliminate everyone to get their way. They knock off whoever gets in their way (Boddy, 2006, p. 1462).

On whether faculty members seem to be ‘charming talkers wishing to rise higher on the success ladder’, the results indicated a low level of experience ($M = 2.26$, $SD = .95$). Elsewhere, the faculty or administrative personnel convince others of their importance in the university yet lack the necessary qualifications and expertise for their roles. They can ruthlessly charm, sweet talk, lie (Miller & Lynam, 2003), coax, and take advantage of fellow employees by insidious means, as they ‘way up an organizational hierarchy in pursuit of their main aims of power, wealth, and status and at the expense of anyone who gets in their way’ (Boddy, 2006, p.1461).

As to whether faculty members were ‘disregarded by their colleagues’, the results indicated a *low level* of psychopathic experiences ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 1.045$). This means that faculty members in the Adventist institutions were thoughtful, viewed, and treated their colleagues with respect. The results are *contrary* to the literature from other universities and the public. Psychopathic faculty members have a disregard for their colleagues. This is so because organizational psychopaths have no conscience and are not concerned with the financial or emotional effects of their actions on other people (Boddy, 2015). They often manifest an impaired moral conscience and make decisions driven purely by their selfish desires without considering the needs of others. There are unnecessary employee redundancies and exploitation of the workforce.

Give Lip Service rather than Performance

On whether faculty members were known to ‘only give lip service to the concept of corporate social responsibility’, the results showed a *low-level* experience ($M = 2.45$, $SD = .872$). The results mean that faculty members take genuine, concrete actions in teaching, research, and community engagement. The results are *contrary* to the literature. In other universities, there are incidents where faculty members treat fellow staff unfairly based on ethnicity, cultural backgrounds, gender, age, religion, and social connections (Babiak & Hare, 2006). In the public sector, such persons are likable (Walker, 2005), charismatic (Burch & McCormick, 2009), seekers of self-gratification (Hare, 1999), and shrewdly manipulative in conversations to achieve their selfish ends of enrichment and empowerment (Boddy, 2015). Clarke (2009) opined that they have no genuine sense of corporate social responsibility, instead paying lip service, and are willing to lie and display extroversion (Miller and Lynam, 2003).

Psychopathic Experiences Across Adventist Divisions

Table 3 Faculty Level of Psychopathy Experiences Across Adventist Divisions

Division	Stat function	Psychopathic Experiences
East Central Africa Division	Mean	2.346
	SD	.623
	n	104
West Central Africa	Mean	2.464
	SD	.812
	n	21
Southern Africa Indian Ocean	Mean	2.275
	SD	.881
	n	5

Source: Data, 2026

The data were collected from faculty members in the three Adventist Divisions in Africa that included East Central Africa ($n = 104$), West Central Africa ($n = 21$), and Southern Africa Indian Ocean ($n = 5$) Divisions. The descriptive statistics indicate that the mean score for faculty members’ psychopathic experiences in ECD was 2.346 ($SD = 0.623$), for WAD was 2.464 ($SD = 0.812$), and for SID was 2.275 ($SD = 0.881$).

Psychopathic Experiences When Age is Considered

The study tested whether there was a significant difference in the level of psychopathic behaviors when age was considered.

Table 4 T-test results Comparing Psychopathic Experiences When Age is Considered

				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	Ages in years	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
											Lower	Upper
Psychopathy	18 – 44	2.347	.679	0.080	.778	-.274	128	.785	-.0319	.116	-.2629	.1990
	45 – 64	2.379	.649									

$F(df) = 0.080 (128)$; NS: Not Significant

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the psychopathy tendencies for Ages 18 – 44 and Ages 45 – 64 years. There were *no significant* differences ($t (-.274) = 128, p = .785$) in the scores for Ages 18 – 44 years ($M = 2.347, SD = .679$) and Ages 45 – 64 years ($M = 2.379, SD = .649$). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = $-.0319$, 95% CI: $-.262$ to $.199$) was very small and hence *insignificant*. Hence, H_1 is supported. This means that regardless of age, the psychopathic experiences are the same. This implies that neither age category experienced psychopathic behaviors due to age. The results disagree with the literature. According to DSM-5, Criterion D states that the onset of APD is different for different ages, and before 18 years it is diagnosed as Conduct Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Table 5 T-test results Comparing Psychopathic Experiences When Sex is Considered

				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	Sex	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
											Lower	Upper
Psychopathy	Males	2.368	.698	1.960	.164	.152	128	.879	.0195	.128	-.2343	.2734
	Females	2.348	.576									

$F(df) = 1.960 (128)$; NS: Not Significant

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the psychopathy tendencies for Males and Females. There were *no significant* differences ($t (.152) = 128, p = .879$) in the scores for Males ($M = 2.368, SD = .698$) and Females ($M = 2.348, SD = .576$). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = $.0195$, 95% CI: $-.234$ to $.273$) was very small and hence *insignificant*. Hence, H_1 is supported. This means that being male or female does not expose one to psychopathic behaviors. This implies that neither gender is more exposed to psychopathic experiences from others. The results *disagree* with the literature. DeAngelis (2022) posited that about 1.2% of adult men and 0.3% of US adult women were reported to have clinical psychopathic traits.

Table 6 T-test results Comparing Psychopathic Experiences Job Level is Considered

	Job Level	M	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		
Psychopathy	Faculty	2.384	.761	6.518	.012	.280	60.801	.780	.038	.138	-.237	.315
	HOD/Dean	2.345	.619									

$F(df) = 6.518 (60.801)$; NS: Not Significant

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the psychopathy tendencies for job level for the Faculty and HOD/ Deans. There were *not significant* differences ($t (6.518) = 60.801, p = .780$) in the scores for the faculty members ($M = 2.384, SD = .761$) and HOD/Deans ($M = 2.345, SD = .619$). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = .038, 95% CI: -.237 to .315) was very small and hence *insignificant*. Hence, H_1 is supported. This means that being a faculty member or HOD/Dean does not make a difference in psychopathic experiences. In a faith-based institution, no job level is more exposed to psychopathic behaviors. The results *disagree* with the literature. Forster and Laud (2018), in consonance with Ali (2024), observed that psychopathy is more common in higher education than in the general workplace. Literature (Sharma, 2017; Yamada, 2008) identified five main variants of psychopathy as administrators bullying other administrators, faculty, or staff in universities, permanent faculty members bullying non-tenured or contract faculty members, faculty being incongruently mean and tough to the administrative staff or students, and administrative staff bullying other non-academic staff (Babiak & Hare, 2006).

Table 7 One-Way ANOVA Results for Psychopathic Experiences Across Divisions

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					ANOVA	
Divisions	Mean	Std Deviation	Levene's Statistic	Sig	F	Sig
ECD	2.346	.623	2.537	.083	.319	.727
WAD	2.464	.812				
SID	2.275	.881				
Group Differences						
Divisions	Mean Difference		Sig	95% Confidence Interval		
ECD – SID	.0711		.997	-1.388	1.530	
WAD – SID	.189		.958	-1.210	1.588	

Source: Data 2026

The One-way ANOVA was conducted to test for a significant difference in psychopathic behaviors across different Divisions. The hypothesis tests whether the psychopathic behaviors of faculty members differ across the three Adventist Divisions, namely, ECD, WAD, and SID. The ANOVA results suggest that the psychopathic scores across the Divisions *do not significantly* differ ($F_{2,127} = .319, p > .001$).

Since Levene's Statistic was also *not significant*, equal variance was assumed. To check for individual differences between the Divisions, post-hoc comparisons were assessed using **Dunnett's T3**. The test indicated that the mean score for the faculty in ECD ($M = 2.346, SD = .623$) was *not significantly* different from the mean score for the faculty members in WAD ($M = 2.464, SD = .812$). The faculty in WAD ($M = 2.464; SD = .812$) did not differ significantly from Faculty members in SID ($M = 2.275; SD = .881$). The faculty members of ECD ($M = 2.346, SD = .623$) did not significantly differ from those in SID ($M = 2.275, SD = .881$). The mean differences were not significant at the 0.05 level. Working in universities in ECD, WAD, and SID does not make a difference in

faculty behavior, as all of them use the same working policy and share the same value system.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the research follow.

Conclusions

In general, the faculty members exhibited a *low level* of psychopathic behaviors. This is not clinical psychopathy. This low level of psychopathy can be attributed to the religious instructions. They integrate faith and teaching and learning. There are psychopathic faculty members who shift focus away from the university's core operations and distract from its essential functions of teaching, research, and community service. They are involved in conflicting activities with the main function of a university. Despite the Christian worldview, Adventist education value system, regulations, and evaluations by accrediting agencies, the faculty members have been reported to create a toxic work environment by openly mocking, defaming, or disparaging their colleagues' research, teaching, and public service records. The faculty members are satisfied with their job levels.

Adventist faculty professors rarely utilize their students' research projects for their own publications without giving credit to the students. Besides, they do not volunteer for leadership positions in committees but then set unreasonably high time and workload expectations for members, going beyond what the scope of the committee mandates.

Adventist faculty or administrative personnel do not convince others of their significance in the university while lacking the necessary qualifications and expertise required for their positions, in contrast to other places. In contrast to other public universities, Adventist faculty do not treat fellow staff unfairly based on ethnicity, cultural backgrounds, gender, age, religion, and social connections. Faculty members from WAD have higher levels of psychopathic experiences followed by ECD and SID. Regardless of age, the psychopathic experiences are the same. Being male or female does not make a difference in the psychopathic behavior and experiences. There is no difference in psychopathic behaviors between faculty members and HOD/Dean because faculty members at institutions in ECD, WAD, and SID have the same working policy and share the same religious values.

This paper has limitations. The use of a quantitative descriptive design restricts the ability to assess the lived psychopathic experiences among faculty members. Although the self-constructed questionnaire had acceptable psychometric properties in a sample of 130 participants may raise concerns regarding generalizability across the region. Other intervening variables such as organizational support, leadership style, and mental health resources were not comprehensively assessed, as these would provide a better understanding of faculty psychopathic experiences.

For future research, the study recommends the following. A convergent parallel design mixed-methods approach could complement personal and organizational factors. Besides, the study could expand the sample size to include different Adventist universities across Sub-Saharan African countries to improve generalizability. This study would be repeated using standardized and validated instruments such as the Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) or the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale to enhance reliability and facilitate comparisons with international studies. Lastly, future research would examine the influence of variables such as organizational support, leadership style, and mental health resources on psychopathic experiences.

Recommendations

In the higher education sector, psychopathic behaviors can be quite detrimental. Effective leadership, along with hiring and performance management processes, can mitigate the negative impact. Religious instructions, the integration of faith in teaching and learning, can mitigate psychopathic experiences in the higher education sector. Since psychopaths are not treatable and won't change by awakening the conscience, psychometric screening would help filter out potential functional academic psychopaths. This will provide interventions for faculty members and administrators who exhibit psychopathic traits, and psychological assessments for aberrant personality would be beneficial.

Enhancing the work environment in higher education and dealing with the individual. Universities should use strict hiring and selection procedures, especially for senior positions, to make sure that functional academic psychopaths are never hired in the first place. The universities are to draft and enforce suitable standards of ethical conduct, integrity, and professional behavior. To establish impartial, private reporting mechanisms for victims of bullying and psychopathic behavior within the university, as well as to establish an evaluation of the work of senior academic staff members. Educate faculty, staff, non-academic and academic heads, deans, and executive-level leaders on the prevalence and effects of this behavior.

Creating an awareness among organizational managers that psychopaths exist is a good first step in attempting to stem the havoc through continuous professional development of employees. Provide counseling to bullies, psychopath, and their victims. A better option would be at the recruitment stage – the interviewers should be aware of the characteristics of psychopaths from the onset. Since universities have a high degree of positional power, there is a need to over vigilant institutional oversight, restraints, and safeguards. Benchmark and design policies to screen, track, evaluate, communicate with, and discipline those who exhibit functional academic psychopathic tendencies. Use MRI and ECG to manage functional academic psychopaths.

The study suggests the following for further research. A phenomenological and a convergent parallel design could complement personal and organizational factors to capture the lived experiences as well. Besides, expand the sample size to include public institutions across Sub-Saharan African countries. The use of standardized and validated instruments could enhance reliability and improve generalizability. An examination of the influence of organizational support, leadership style, and mental health resources on psychopathic experiences would be ideal.

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