Toward a Psychological Typology for Victims of Interpersonal Violent Crimes: An Empirical Analysis of Behavioural Characteristics and Personality Traits

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Abstract

Despite considerable development in the field of victimology, including efforts to examine proximal and distal features of criminal victimisation, there remains a need to focus attention on intra-individual victim-related risk factors. While acknowledging controversial debates about concepts such as “victim-precipitation” and “victim-blaming” in the context of perceptions about the “sanctity” of the victim, this thesis directly addresses psychological characteristics associated with the risk of victimisation.

Aims: This doctoral project has three specific research aims that necessitated a step-wise process. The first goal is to advance a psychological typology for victims of interpersonal violent crime that focuses on behavioural characteristics and personality traits, based on data drawn from a sample of self-identified victims. The second aim is to apply the types within this newly developed psychological typology for victims to a set of interpersonal violent offences, namely domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, physical assault, and polyvictimisation. The third task is to compare the behavioural characteristics and personality traits of the refined psychological typology with the four existing typologies that served as the analytic basis of this research.

Method: This thesis advances an empirically based psychological typology for victims of interpersonal violence based on extant typologies, largely following the work of Groth from the 1970s. In total, 24 variables, comprising 13 behavioural characteristics and 11 personality traits, were extracted from the four foundational typologies and used to construct a 488-item questionnaire delivered online to 160 self-identified victims of interpersonal violence. A Principal Component Analysis was performed on those variables and a psychological typology was developed. Tests of association were conducted on the crime categories and the types yielded in the typology. The final step comprising a comparison between the victim typology and the previous ones then guided the refinement of the elicited victim types.
Results: This typology comprises five types: (1) Reassurance-oriented, (2) Anger-oriented, (3) Assertive-oriented, (4) Risk-taking-oriented, and (5) Self-preservation-oriented (the latter with externally or internally-oriented sub-types). The findings suggest, that a number of behavioural characteristics and personality traits are associated with risk of victimisation especially self-esteem, anger, assertiveness, risk-taking, and self-preservation. The analysis also highlights five associations between the types of the psychological typology and some crime categories, namely self-preservation with domestic violence, anger with sexual and physical assault, and anger, risk-taking, and self-preservation for victims of more than one interpersonal violent offence.

Objectives: This thesis presents the first empirical research to utilise a self-report questionnaire that examines behavioural characteristics and personality traits of victims of interpersonal violent crime. Ultimately, this study contributes to expanding current knowledge about crime victims and related characteristics, aids epistemological understanding and provides a heuristic device in the form of a psychological typology for victims of interpersonal violence. These outcomes have implications for further theory development, greater attention to intra-individual factors in the disciplines of criminology and victimology, and can ultimately assist in the refining of justice procedures and the delivery of victim support services.

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This thesis represents my own original work towards this research and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

Gaelle L. M. Brotto
Signature:

Date: 14 September 2017
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I am dedicating this dissertation to my dad, who passed away too early.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aggression Questionnaire</td>
<td>AQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Psychiatric Association</td>
<td>APA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger Self-Report Questionnaire</td>
<td>ASR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire</td>
<td>BPAQ</td>
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<td>Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime</td>
<td>CRCVC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumulative Humiliation Subscale</td>
<td>CHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Ed.)</td>
<td>DSM-5</td>
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<td>Dickman Impulsivity Inventory-Short Version</td>
<td>DII-Short</td>
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<td>Displaced Aggression Questionnaire</td>
<td>DAQ</td>
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<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>DV</td>
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<td>General Self-Efficacy Scale</td>
<td>GSE</td>
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<td>Mean Average</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>NPI-16</td>
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<td>Number of Cases</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory Revised</td>
<td>PFAI-Revised</td>
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<td>Physical Assault</td>
<td>PA</td>
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<td>Polyvictimisation</td>
<td>PV</td>
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<td>Principal Component Analysis</td>
<td>PCA</td>
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<td>Revised Janis-Field Feelings of Inadequacy Scale</td>
<td>R-JFFIS</td>
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<td>Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</td>
<td>RSES</td>
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<td>Scale of Economic Abuse</td>
<td>SEA</td>
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<td>Self-Harm Inventory</td>
<td>SHI</td>
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<td>Sexual Assault</td>
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<td>Social Interaction Anxiety Scale</td>
<td>SIAS</td>
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<td>Stalking</td>
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<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<td>Subtypes of Antisocial Behaviour Questionnaire</td>
<td>STAB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threat-Related Reassurance Seeking Scale</td>
<td>TRSS</td>
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<td>Total Number of Cases</td>
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