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**An examination of the role of childhood abuse, neglect and gender roles on psychopathic personality traits.**

**Aisha Hussain**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc by Research**

**July 2020**

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## Abstract

As evident from previous findings of abuse in childhood, it is clear that there is an association with traumatic childhood experiences and psychopathic personality traits. In addition, gender differences also appear to exist in psychopathic personality and thus could have a moderating effect on the impact between childhood abuse and psychopathy. Through extensive research it is the association between childhood abuse (physical, emotional and sexual abuse and physical and emotional neglect), childhood gender roles, present-day gender roles and psychopathic personality traits amongst females and males that the current study seeks to explore. A sizeable gap has been represented in literature of which this study aims to fill. Although existing research demonstrates that clear gender differences exist within psychopathic traits, very little is known about how these differences are manifested. Therefore, the aim of this study is to fulfil the gap in literature by assessing sex differences in psychopathic personality traits by exploring the association between childhood and present day (adult) gender roles and psychopathic personality traits. A second aim is to assess gender differences in psychopathic personality traits and to establish in what specific traits these differences exist. Finally, the relationship between childhood abuse (examining all aspects of childhood abuse; physical, emotional and sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect) and psychopathic personality traits was also examined. Data was collected from 643 participants (74 males and 569 females) who were recruited from a UK university, college and the general population. Two types of analyses were conducted, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to explore sex differences in the four psychopathic personality traits and a series of Hierarchical Multiple Regression aimed at each of the dependant variables (affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, egocentricity and manipulation) to identify childhood predictors (physical, sexual and emotional abuse, physical and emotional neglect and childhood and present-day gender roles) of psychopathic personality traits. There was a statistically significant difference in psychopathic personality traits based on an individual's gender with female respondents scoring higher on average than male respondents on all four psychopathic personality traits. A significant association between emotional and physical neglect and the psychopathic personality trait affective responsiveness was discovered. Emotional and physical neglect also proved to be predictors of further psychopathic traits, cognitive responsiveness and egocentricity. No association between physical, sexual and emotional abuse and any of the four psychopathic personality traits was discovered. A significant relationship was also discovered between childhood gender roles (masculinity/femininity scores) and all four psychopathic personality traits. Potential recommendations for future research and limitations are also discussed.

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The work presented below is an extension of my undergraduate project and some of the sections in this thesis use material from my undergraduate dissertation.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

### **1.1 Prevalence and definition of psychopathy**

The prevalence of psychopathy in the general population is approximately between 0.6 and 4 %, with the majority of the psychopathic population consisting of males as opposed to females (Thomas et al., 2014). 0.5% to 1% of the population meet the criteria for a psychopath however a much higher percentage, approximately 20%-25% of criminals in prison are diagnosed with psychopathy (Wynn et al., 2012). Although only a small percentage of the population have been diagnosed as psychopaths, these psychopathic individuals are accountable for a large number of serious crimes and have higher chances of reoffending than other criminals, (Thomas et al., 2014).

Psychopathy is a personality disorder which is characterised by persistent antisocial behaviours, in particular males, (Tsang, 2018). Bronchain et al. (2019) also describes psychopathy as an extreme personality disorder. Cleckley, (1941) provided the first comprehensive conceptualisation of psychopathy and described psychopathy as a combination of behavioural and personality traits. Cleckley, (1941) suggested that the following 16 traits are present in a psychopath: a superficial charm; absence of delusions; absence of “nervousness”; unreliability; dishonesty; lack of remorse and shame; antisocial behaviour; poor judgment and failure to learn by experience; pathological egocentricity; poverty in affective reactions; loss of insight; unresponsiveness in interpersonal relations; fantastic and uninviting behaviour; suicide rarely carried out; impersonal sex life; failure to follow any life plan.

Although Hare and Neumann, (2005) argue that psychopathy was originally conceptualized as a dichotomous i.e. something you either had or did not. Further research has revealed that psychopathy may be better understood as a combination of behaviour and personality traits such as deceitfulness, guilt, impulsiveness and a lack of empathy (Glenn et al., 2011). In addition, psychopaths are risk-taking individuals and fail to plan for the future, (Glenn et al., 2011). However, the literature often describes psychopathy as pathology (Glenn et al., 2011) and some researchers propose that psychopathy is a neurodevelopmental disorder (Gao et al., 2009).

Despite the concept of psychopathy being long of interest within the criminal justice system, nevertheless psychopathy remains difficult to assess, lacking in a concrete definition of the disorder. As Arrigo and Shipley, (2001) state, despite a growing body of research into psychopathic personalities, an agreed definition of the disorder remains contradictory.

### **1.2 Psychopathic personality traits**

Primary and secondary psychopathy was distinguished by Karpman, (1941). Moreover, he proposed that primary psychopaths lack anxiety and fear whereas secondary psychopaths experience heightened anxiety. Fowles and Dindo, (2006) describe psychopathy as having two components and the most common psychopathy measures use a two-factor structure. The first factor assesses affective aspects of psychopathy, characteristics such as manipulateness, fearlessness and social dominance and the second factor assesses behaviours which are impulsive, reckless and aggressive (Salekin et al., 2014). Researchers Boduszek and Debowska, (2016) have suggested that individuals

with psychopathic traits may tend to commit criminal/antisocial acts however, individuals with psychopathic traits can also engage in non-criminal behaviour. It is important to note that a psychopath and an individual with psychopathic traits are different. Psychopathic personality traits are traits which have been linked with the diagnosis of psychopathy. Psychopathic personality traits can be measured by assessing four components of psychopathy; affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, interpersonal manipulation, and egocentricity (Boduszek et al. 2016). Although only a small percentage of the population are classed as psychopaths, a psychopath has many traits and characteristics and these traits exist in a number of individuals (Gao et al., 2009).

### **1.3 Psychopathy and criminal/antisocial behaviours**

Psychopathic traits have been linked to a number of criminal behaviours. The vast amount of previous literature has tended to focus on samples of either incarcerated adults, psychiatric patients or criminal youths ( Van der Put et al., (2014); Boduszek et al.,(2018); Darjee (2019); Dhingra et al., (2015) Edens, Campbell and Weir (2006;2007); Gray and Snowden, (2016); Häkkänen-Nyholm and Hare, (2009); Pedersen et al., (2010); Rasmussen et al., (1999); Sherretts et al., (2017); Tengström et al., (2004); Thomson, (2017); Tülü and Erden, (2014); van Vugt et al., (2012).

As Neumann and Hare, (2008) propose, although a huge number of studies have found an association between psychopathic traits and risk of violent behaviour, these traits appear to be continuously distributed further suggesting that psychopathic traits may exist in the general population.

### **1.4 “Successful psychopaths”**

Although much literature has stated that psychopathic traits may increase the chances of individuals involving themselves in criminal acts, it is important to note that psychopathic traits do not only exist in criminal populations (Glenn and Raine, 2014). Boccio and Beaver, (2018) study's findings revealed that psychopathic personality traits are generally not associated with criminal success and psychopathic traits have been observed in individuals in the community, some of who hold a high professional status, (Glenn and Raine, 2014).

Successful psychopaths are those who meet the criteria of a psychopath and hold central traits of psychopathy such as callousness and these individuals succeed successfully in their manipulative ways, (Mullins-Sweatt et al., 2010). A successful psychopath may aim to achieve status and power through pursuing a degree in subjects such as law, medicine or business (Stevens et al., 2012). These individuals have intellectual abilities and gain success through traits such as superficial charm and interpersonal manipulation which enables them to successfully exert influence in social situations, whilst disguising their true intentions such as deviance (Salekin et al., 2004). Baskin- Sommers et al. (2015) also notes that traits such as cold-heartedness and bold dominance may be displayed by a successful psychopath in order to obtain positive organizational results which would result in higher profits for the individual.

Hassall et al. (2015) found when comparing psychopathy scores of business undergraduate students with psychology undergraduate students that business students reported greater psychopathic traits

on all four factors of psychopathy. Similarly, Babiak et al. (2010) assessed the existence of psychopathy amongst 203 corporate professionals and when compared to a community sample, the sample of corporate professionals reported to have greater psychopathic traits. These individuals with higher psychopathic traits were also considered to be candidates with great potential and were employed at senior level within their occupations. Neumann et al. (2012) debates that although the public perceive a psychopathic individual as inhuman and dissimilar to most individuals, a number of studies propose that psychopathic traits are continuously distributed and psychopathic individuals exist in the corporate world and within the community (Neumann et al., 2012).

As considerable literature as proposed that individuals with psychopathic traits do indeed exist within the community, one of the purposes of this study is to focus on assessing psychopathic personality traits within a general community sample such as undergraduate and college students. As discussed, previous literature has focussed its aims on incarcerated or delinquent samples, this study will focus on assessing psychopathic personality traits within a non-criminal sample with a use of a scale that assesses four factors of psychopathic personality (affective responsiveness; cognitive responsiveness; interpersonal manipulation and egocentricity), The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale.

### **1.5 The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale**

A lot of dispute around the best and accurate method of measuring psychopathy has been made (Lynam and Derefinko, 2006). As Johansson et al. (2002) proposes, a clean personality model of psychopathy is required which does not focus alone on behaviour. A model as such can then be used to assess psychopathy in all population's regardless of individuals' criminal pasts. Furthermore, debating that there is a lack of scale which can be used in both criminal and non-criminal samples (Debowska et al., 2018).

Cleckley, (1941) provided the first comprehensive conceptualisation of psychopathy. Cleckley's (1941) work on psychopathy introduced the first psychopathic assessment tool, The Psychopathy Checklist (PCL) by Hare, (1970) which was modelled around Cleckley's (1941) work. The PCL was followed by The Psychopathy Checklist- Revised (PCL-R) which is an updated version of the original checklist. The PCL-R assesses four factors; callous affect, interpersonal manipulation, erratic lifestyle and criminal behaviour (PCL—R; Hare, 1991, 2003). The PCL-R consists of a 20-item measure which is scored on the basis of interview and collateral clinical history information. All items are rated on a 3-point scale with scores ranging from 0 to 40.

When assessing psychopathy, a number of researchers have used The Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCL-R), Hare, (1991-2003) to assess the presence of psychopathy. The PCL-R recognises individuals with characteristics such as cold-heartedness and remorselessness who seem to have a specific defect of emotional processing and display no remorse for their risky behaviour, Scott (2014). The most commonly used measure of psychopathy is the PCL-R, which is also used internationally by numerous researchers (Neumann et al., 2013). The PCL-R consists of 20 items that are rated on a 3-point scale. Items assessed by the PCL-R consist of behaviours such as; superficial charm, a need for stimulation, a grandiose estimation of self, pathological lying, manipulative behaviour, lack of

remorse, superficial emotional responsiveness, a lack of empathy, parasitic lifestyle, juvenile delinquency and short-term marital relationships. Overall, the two key aspects covered by the PCL-R are an antisocial and unstable lifestyle alongside selfish behaviour.

Verschuere et al. (2018) proposes that regardless of the extensive research carried out in relation to psychopathy, the core features of psychopathy are debatable. Verschuere et al. (2018) mapped the network structure of psychopathy as operationalized by the PCL-R using network analysis in a sample of criminals and forensic psychiatrics. Results revealed that the most central PCL-R item is a lack of empathy. These researchers further argue that this agrees with the classic clinical description of a psychopath, (Verschuere et al., 2018). Sturup et al. (2014) debates that despite the praise the PCL-R has received for a reliable and valid assessment tool, recently researchers have raised questions regarding the inter-rater reliability of the PCL-R. Furthermore, Kennealy et al., (2007) proposes that although extensive examination has taken place to assess the validity of the PCL-R in males, the validity of the PCL-R for use within female samples remains understudied and unclear. Storey et al. (2016) further proposes that the vast majority of research using the PCL-R as a tool for assessing psychopathic traits has used convenience samples as opposed to systematic methods, therefore, raising the issue of sampling bias and the question of whether the research findings are generalizable. However, when Ismail and Looman, (2018) assessed the inter-rater reliability of the PCL-R, results revealed that the PLC-R can be reliably scored with appropriately trained raters in an applied context.

Despite the most widespread acceptance for Cleckley's conceptualisation of psychopathy by researchers, Boduszek et al. (2016) proposes that a number of traits in this clinical profile, for example, pathological egocentricity are missing from the PCL and PCL-R. Boduszek et al. (2016) further stated that psychopathic traits arise from a result from criminal and antisocial tendencies. These researchers suggest that there is a need for a clean personality model of psychopathy which could be applied to forensic and non-forensic samples.

As a result of this, Boduszek et al. (2016) created The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale (PPTS), a purely personality-based assessment tool for psychopathy. This new assessment tool of psychopathy gives an accurate score of psychopathic traits within an individual regardless of the respondent's gender, age, cultural background or criminal history (Boduszek et al., 2016). The PPTS measures four personality components; affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, interpersonal manipulation and egocentricity. The affective responsiveness factor assesses characteristics such as emotional shallowness and low affective empathy. Cognitive responsiveness measures an individual's ability to understand the emotional state of others, assesses whether the individual can mentally represent another person's emotional processes alongside emotionally engaging with others at a cognitive level. The interpersonal manipulation component observes characteristics such as grandiosity, deceitfulness and superficial charm. Finally, the last component, egocentricity, assesses if the individual thinks only of themselves, without regard for the feelings or desires of others. Boduszek et al. (2016) validated the PPTS in a sample of 1794 prisoners from maximum and medium security prisons. The dimensionality alongside construct validity of the model

was measured. Findings revealed the PPTS to be an effective measure for psychopathic characteristics and Boduszek et al. (2016) concluded that the PPTS can be used with participants who may or may not have a history of criminality in the same way.

### **1.6 Factors that contribute towards psychopathy and psychopathic traits**

As psychopathic personality traits have been found to associate with transgressive behaviours, thus by looking at early indicators, it could help determine ways of intervening with such behaviours. As Pechorro et al. (2014) proposes, it is vital for early identification of these traits. When exploring the causes of psychopathy, literature has concentrated on differences in between biological and temperamental factors, this study aims to explore psychological risk factors that contribute towards the development of psychopathic personality traits, specifically forms of childhood abuse and neglect.

#### **1.6.1 Definitions of childhood abuse**

Childhood abuse consists of abuse and/or neglect carried out by an adult or any other individual. Emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect and physical neglect are the five different types of abuse that have been recognised. Emotional abuse is making a child feel humiliated and shamed, resulting in them feeling less worthy. Norman et al. (2012) proposes that emotional abuse is a result of the main caregiver failing to provide a supportive environment for the child and abuse of this type includes, belittling, threatening and ridiculing behaviour. Physical abuse consists of harm caused to a child by an adult by way of bodily contact. This form of abuse involves intentional use of physical force such as kicking, beating and strangling (Norman et al., 2012). Sexual abuse consists of any sexual contact between an underage child by an adult (Bernstein et al., 2003) that is not fully comprehended by the child as they are unable to give informed consent, (Norman et al., 2012). Physical and emotional neglect is failing to attend to a child's emotional or physical needs such as inadequate love, support, food, clothing,

A number of studies have assessed various forms of negative childhood experiences that may contribute to the development of psychopathy and psychopathic traits which are discussed below.

#### **1.6.2 Statistics on childhood abuse**

Individuals who have been victims of childhood abuse compared to those who have not are four times more likely to develop personality disorders in later life, (Johnson et al., 1999). Gilbert et al. (2009) reported that child protection services attend to the needs of one percent of children each year. Each year between 4 and 16% of children experience physical abuse, 6% experience sexual abuse, 10% experience psychological abuse and between 1 and 15% are neglected (Finkelhor, 1994; Gilbert, et al., 2009).

#### **1.6.3 Attachment and psychopathy**

The attachment theory provides a comprehensive account of normal and abnormal development. Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond and this bond connects one individual to another across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby defined attachment as a 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.' (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby proposed that a child forms one main attachment with one figure and this figure acts as a secure base. Any disruption to

this relationship may have severe consequences. The attachment theory states that between the ages of 0-5 years is the critical period for forming this primary attachment and failure to do so can result in irreversible developmental consequences such as increased aggression in adolescence.

Childhood abuse and neglect can result in insecure attachments which then could have a number of negative consequences on the individual's future (Ainsworth, 1973). Abusive parenting can also result in infant attachment insecurity which leads to emotional dysregulation and a negative internal working model where the individual has negative views regarding themselves and others, (Bowlby, 1969). This results in maladaptive coping strategies and poor social functioning which could disturb peer relations. Insecure attachment can also cause psychological distress and cause fear of intimacy with potential partners (Taussig and Culhane, 2010). Sloman et al. (2003) has also emphasized the role that quality of attachment may play on the adaptive or maladaptive course of development during an individual's life. Leadbeater et al. (1999) proposes that a strong bond between mother and child ensures that a good secure attachment is formed. As a result of this, these individuals experience significantly less behaviour problems as opposed to those who experienced a poor quality of attachment (insecurity). In a non-clinical sample of 211 young adults, higher psychopathic traits were found for those with a dismissive and fearful attachment. Whereas, individuals who displayed secure attachment styles scored much lower with psychopathic traits (Alzeer et al., 2019). Muris et al. (2001) has found a strong association between insecure attachment styles and depression, alongside Rubin et al. (2004) who revealed that social withdrawal is linked to insecure attachment styles. Other researchers have found correlations with issues such as low self-esteem (Salzman, 1996) and internalizing and externalizing behaviours (Allen et al., 1990). An association between high self-esteem and psychopathic traits amongst males has also been discovered by Cale and Linielfeld, (2006), however for females, a correlation between low self-esteem and psychopathic traits was revealed, (Cale and Linielfeld, 2006). Pace and Zappulla, (2010) later revealed that those individuals that experience a warm and loving relationship with their caregivers are individuals that comply by rules and behave in an appropriate manner. Whereas, those who lacked this warm and loving relationship with their parents, display their dissatisfaction with aggressive and delinquent behaviour.

#### ***1.6.4 Parenting styles and behaviour***

Existing research has proposed that different styles of parenting and behaviour that a child experiences in their childhood is associated with psychopathic personality traits, such as Saltaris (2002), who proposes that the likelihood of a child developing psychopathic traits is associated with a dysfunctional family environment. Individuals who experienced a disrupted family in childhood due to separation from a parent also revealed to predict higher psychopathy scores (Farrington, 2006). Gao et al. (2013) supports this association and revealed that undergraduate students who experienced separation in their childhood from their parents and failure to establish a bond with their parents/caregivers also reported higher levels of psychopathic traits. As when a parent responds sensitively to a child's own distress emotions this enables the child's ability to respond to the emotions of others (Wright et al., 2018). Psychopathy in male and female criminals has also been found to be related to parental divorce and non-parental living arrangements (Weizmann-Henelius et al., 2010). However, other factors such as separation due to a parent passing away, was not associated with

psychopathic scores. Whereas, parental alcohol abuse and neglect towards a child revealed to be a significant factor for the development of psychopathic traits in later life. (Weizmann-Henelius et al., 2010).

### **1.7 Psychopathy and childhood abuse**

When assessing childhood factors that may contribute towards the development of psychopathy, previous findings have revealed a strong association between childhood maltreatment and psychopathic behaviours. McKillop et al. (2016) assessed self-reports of psychopathic offenders and childhood interactions with parents to understand what factors might contribute towards adult criminal psychopathy. Findings revealed that self-reports of psychopathic traits were significantly higher for those who experienced separation from caregivers, physical abuse and different styles of parenting. Aebi et al. (2015) also assessed male adolescent offenders for childhood abuse using the Child Trauma Questionnaire. Results revealed that individuals who had experienced a vast amount of abuse in childhood were more likely to commit criminal offences. A correlation between childhood abuse and a variety of psychological disorders was also found. Furthermore, a strong correlation has been established between adult arrest and neglect experienced in childhood, (Carr et al., 2013). Ford et al. (2012) revealed that 90% of juvenile offenders reported that they had experienced at least one traumatic event in their childhood. Cuadro et al. (2014) also assessed adult criminal behaviours in 338 males and found that physical child abuse experienced in childhood was linked with reactive criminal thinking styles which lead to criminal offences being committed. These researchers also concluded that child maltreatment during childhood is strongly associated with criminal behaviour. Kimonis et al. (2013) found that male criminals who displayed callous traits also reported low maternal care and male victims of childhood abuse and neglect compared to non-victims also revealed to have higher psychopathy scores (Schimmenti et al., 2015).

Ometto et al. (2016) found that emotional neglect was the only form of abuse that associated significantly with psychopathic traits, in particular the interpersonal factor (manipulation, superficial charm and deceitfulness) of the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version and therefore, concluded that emotional neglect may be more damaging to social behaviours as opposed to physical and sexual abuse. Farrington, (2006) also revealed that the strongest predictor of psychopathy is physical neglect. However, Boduszek et al. (2019) revealed a strong association between high psychopathy scores, interpersonal manipulation, egocentricity and sexual abuse and based on the study's findings Boduszek et al. (2019) concluded that sexual abuse is a strong predictor of psychopathic traits.

However, Christian et al. (2017) proposes that although there has been an increase in interest in understanding psychopathic traits in youth, the contribution environmental factors may make in the development of psychopathic traits is not well understood. Further arguing that, no prior studies have directly carried out an investigation into the effects that childhood events may have on psychopathic traits. Christian et al. (2017) examined associations between psychopathy, early life events and attachment to parents. From a sample of 206 adolescents, results revealed that psychopathy was positively correlated to the number of negative life events that individuals had experienced. An association between poor parenting styles resulting in insecure attachment styles and psychopathic

traits, specifically the affective component of psychopathy was also found. These researchers emphasize that it is crucial to understand and assess early environmental factors when attempting to understand the cause of psychopathic behaviour. Due to the great impact that childhood experiences can have on psychopathy, it is important to further investigate the effects that childhood events may have on psychopathic traits. Whilst research focusing on attachment styles, parenting styles, childhood abuse and psychopathy has demonstrated the impact that certain traumatic events could have on psychopathy, it is unclear to what extent the contribution of childhood experiences such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse and physical and emotional neglect may make in the development of psychopathic traits.

Although some previous research has assessed childhood abuse in general community samples, the vast amount of research has focussed on evaluating childhood abuse in criminal samples. Literature has focussed on the effects of childhood abuse on a variety of diverse criminal samples. Sexual offenders and associations between psychopathy have been assessed, (Christopher et al., 2007; Grady et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2012), the effects that childhood abuse has on violent offenders has also been assessed, (Craparo et al., 2013; Kolla et al., 2013;2014; Kolla et al., 2013; Schimmenti et al., 2015). Adult criminal offenders and the associations with psychopathic traits have also been examined, (Dargis et al., 2016; Krischer and Sevecke, 2008; Poythress et al., 2006). Similar to previous literature in psychopathy, research which has assessed childhood maltreatment in relation to psychopathy tends to focus on imprisoned and juvenile samples. Despite previous research around childhood abuse and psychopathic traits, it remains unclear specifically what type of childhood maltreatment influences the development of specifically what type of psychopathic traits (Dargis et al., 2016).

### **1.8 Gender differences in childhood abuse**

Watts et al. (2017) propose that the association between childhood abuse and psychopathic traits depends on gender. Much debate over childhood abuse reports and gender differences exists, (Durand and Calheiros Velozo, 2018). Lang and Lenard, (2015) found higher numbers of abuse reports reported by females and Watts et al. (2017) propose that childhood abuse is more likely to be reported by males as opposed to females. A stronger connection between abuse in childhood and psychopathy exist for females than males, (Miller, Watts and Jones, 2011).

Prevalence rates of maltreatment during childhood and adulthood have been found to be much higher for females in comparison to males, (Bohle and Vogel, 2017). Although no gender differences were discovered for physical and emotional abuse and neglect in childhood, sexual abuse revealed to be more common amongst females, (Bohle and Vogel, 2017). Weizmann et al. (2010) revealed that female victims of sexual abuse as opposed to male victims displayed affective deficits and incapability to experience normal depths of guilt, empathy and emotion. Bender, (2010) further suggests that effects of abuse in childhood has a more negative consequences for females. Others suggest that male victims of sexual abuse have more severe and complex consequences than female victims, (Bergen et al., 2004). Males and Females who had experienced abuse compared to non-victims of childhood abuse were found to be more susceptible to developing psychological symptoms, (Abrams

et al., 2019). For females, this association was more noticeable. Others have found that the effects of childhood sexual abuse on multiple social problems in later life is similar for both males and females (Dube et al., 2005) and some further argue that no gender differences arise from childhood maltreatment and the impact of maltreatment is the same for males and females, (Dube et al., 2005).

### **1.9 Gender differences in psychopathy**

Gender differences have also been noted in psychopathy. There may be sex differences as well as similarities in psychopathy (Neumann et al., 2012). Researchers have proposed that there are sex differences in the traits of psychopathy. Grieve et al. (2019) established sex differences in emotional manipulation and proposes that men as opposed to women are more likely to participate in behaviours involving emotional manipulation. Nicholls and Petrila, (2005) propose that psychopathic females may use alternative tactics to attain goals as opposed to the tactics that males use and females may display behaviours such as flirtation and manipulation to attain goals. Logan and Weizmann-Henelius, (2012) argue that psychopathic males display a lack of remorse and anxiety whereas female psychopaths tend to be anxious and emotionally unstable individuals. Furthermore, Sutton et al., (2002) propose that the emotional deficits that females display, differ vastly from emotional deficits that are displayed by males.

Further research which has explored gender differences in psychopathy has mainly focussed on criminal psychopaths and the differences that lie within gender and criminal behaviour. For example, Moffit et al., (2001) found that males engage in higher levels of criminality, psychopathy and antisocial behaviour. Hicks, Vaidyanathan and Patrick, (2010) further stated that men exhibit higher mean levels of psychopathy, antisocial behaviour and criminality than women. As Mulder et al. (1994) notes, females display behaviour which is less violent and aggressive than males and females may begin offending later in life (Hart & Hare, 1997). Salekin et al. (1998) further argues that the likelihood of females reoffending is significantly lower than males and they may have recidivism rates that are no different from non-psychopathic female offenders. Research further suggest psychopathy is more common in men as opposed to women (Wynn, Hoiseth and Petterson, 2012). A vast amount of research has also displayed that female psychopaths commit criminal acts that are not as violent as male psychopaths. Carabellese et al. (2019) discovered that women who scored highly on the PCL-R had been convicted of minor offenses and these offenses were not necessarily violent.

However, Declercq, Carter and Neumann, (2015) propose that growing research has shown that there is an association between female psychopathy and antisocial behaviour, similar to what has been found in psychopathic men. Hare, (1997) proposed that what differentiates male psychopaths from female psychopaths is not the fact that male psychopaths would be more prone to criminal acts but rather the way the criminal behaviours are expressed between males and females. Furthermore, as Hare, (1997) proposed that gender differences exist in psychopathy in regards to criminal behaviour. These researchers found consistent findings to support Hare's, (1997) hypothesis. Female psychopaths commit fewer sexual offenses than male psychopaths and commit crimes involving arson and relational aggression. Females also tend to target family and friends as opposed to males who target strangers.

Despite the vast amount of investigation that has been conducted in psychopathy, the majority of studies on female psychopathy have attempted to apply male criteria to females in an attempt to understand the disorder (Lilienfeld, 1994). As a result of this, putative gender differences in the constitution and expression of this disorder have been ignored (Forouzan and Cooke 2005). Wynn, Hoiseth and Pettersen, (2012) debate that there is limited research that focuses on psychopathy in women and how psychopathy manifests itself in females. These researchers propose that previous research assumes that the core traits of the disorder can be applied to women. Although the correlates and causes of psychopathy have been extensively investigated, the focus within this area mainly remains on males (Sutton et al., 2002). Mulder et al. (1994) therefore debates that as a result of this, relatively little is known about the correlates and causes of psychopathy in females, leading to an investigation into psychopathy in females being largely neglected (Salekin et al., 1997). Differences may lie in the manifestation of psychopathic traits (Declercq, Carter and Neumann, (2015). Lee and Salekin, (2010) discovered supporting findings when comparing psychopathic traits between gender and revealed that females scored significantly higher than males on using charm to achieve their own goals. Researchers further argue the need for further research to confirm whether these differences within gender and psychopathy actually exist (Wilson et al., 2016).

Although gender differences have been noted in both childhood abuse and psychopathy, research has focussed on assessing these gender differences in regards to criminality. Literature has mainly concentrated on imprisoned adults and criminal youths. The relationship between childhood traumatic events and psychopathy among more normative mixed-gender samples has received very little attention (but see Miller et al., 2011) and further assessment is required. Furthermore, most studies have assessed the effects that physical childhood abuse has on psychopathic traits as opposed to forms of childhood neglect and research has suggested that neglectful experiences in childhood are greater predictors of psychopathic traits as opposed to physical forms of abuse (Ometto et al. (2016); Farrington, (2006). Different types of maltreatment may also influence the development of different psychopathic traits (Kimonis et al., 2013).

### ***1.10 Gender roles/identity and psychopathic personality traits***

Although, gender identity has been given many definitions, Stoller, (1965) defines gender identity as an individual's basic sense of themselves with regard to "Femaleness" and "maleness". Zucker et al. (2006) proposes that a further indication of gender identity can be defined by observing the way an individual identifies with parents of the same or opposite sex.

A number of studies that have assessed gender roles have focussed on the association between masculinity and aggression (Cohn and Zeichner, (2006); Gini and Pozzili, (2006); Killianski, (2003); Mosher and Sirkin, (1984); Parrott and Zeichner, (2003); Yubero et al., (2012). Although much research has noted sex differences in certain psychopathic personality traits, to date, Grieve et al. (2019) is the first study that assessed sex differences in the psychopathic trait emotional manipulation using gender roles. Results revealed that for males and females, masculine gender roles were associated with the psychopathic trait emotional manipulation.

Jonason and Davis, (2018) assessed how individual differences in gender roles were related to Machiavellianism and narcissism, results revealed Machiavellianism to be low in femininity and narcissism low in femininity and high in masculinity. Paulhas, (2001) describes narcissistic individuals as attention seeking, dominant and they tend to perceive themselves as grandiose individuals. Miller et al. (2017) examined traits of psychopathy and Machiavellianism and the two revealed to hold many similarities. Jakobwitz and Egan, (2006) also found moderate correlations between psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism and Paulhus and Williams, (2002) found positive intercorrelations between psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism.

### **1.11 The present study**

It remains unclear why sex differences in psychopathic personality may exist. It also remains unclear exactly what types of childhood maltreatment may influence the development of which specific psychopathic personality traits for both males and females. No prior study has provided a direct examination of the associations amongst childhood abuse (physical, emotional and sexual abuse and physical and emotional neglect), childhood gender roles, present-day gender roles and psychopathic personality traits amongst females and males. The existing research demonstrates that clear gender differences exist within psychopathic traits however, very little is known about how these differences are manifested. As evident from previous findings of abuse in childhood, it is clear that there is something within childhood experiences that is likely to lead individuals to develop psychopathic personality traits. However, psychopathy may manifest itself differently in males and females even if similar abusive events were experienced. Although clear gender differences within psychopathic traits have been noted, it still remains unclear what exactly it is about gender that manifests itself differently in psychopathic traits. The difference in manifestation may be due to gender roles. This information would be valuable in terms of understanding what factors during childhood upbringing influence the development of psychopathic traits and whether the much-debated gender differences in psychopathy are a result of an individual's gender role/identity.

Therefore, the following study's aims are as follows;

1. To explore the association between childhood abuse (assessing all aspects of childhood abuse; physical, emotional and sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect) and psychopathic personality traits through the use of The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form within a nonclinical sample.
2. To assess gender differences in psychopathic personality traits and to establish in what specific traits these differences exist through the use of The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale within a non-clinical sample.
3. To assess sex differences in psychopathic personality traits by exploring the relationship that childhood and present day (adult) gender roles has on psychopathic personality traits through the use of The Recalled Childhood Gender Identity/Roles Questionnaire and The Traditional Masculinity- Femininity Scale.

To achieve these aims, a survey was created and distributed to 643 individuals online. The survey attempted to measure experiences of childhood abuse (examining all aspects of childhood abuse; physical, emotional and sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect), psychopathic personality traits and childhood gender alongside present day gender roles.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

### 2.1 Participants

An opportunity sample of 643 participated within the study. The sample consisted of 74 males and 569 females. Participants ranged in age from 18 years to 69 years (Females  $M=20.84$ ,  $SD=4.72$ , males  $M= 21.42$ ,  $SD= 3.90$ ). Participants consisted of a mixture of undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Huddersfield and the general population, which were recruited through social media sites. Ethnicity of all participants was also recorded, however after reflection based on the previous literature, this variable was excluded in the final analysis as it did not fit with the study's aims.

### 2.2 Materials

A total of 4 questionnaires was presented to all participants.

#### The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire- Short Form (CTQ-SF)- (See Appendix A)

The CTQ-SF (Bernstein et al., 2003) is a self-administrated scale which consists of 28-items and assesses possible traumatic experiences in childhood and consists of five subscales which measure different forms of abuse and neglect:

1. Emotional abuse, (e.g. "When I was growing up people in my family called me things like "stupid", "lazy" and "ugly")
2. Physical abuse, (e.g. "When I was growing up, I got hit so hard by someone in my family that I had to see a doctor or go to the hospital")
3. Sexual abuse, (e.g. "When I was growing up, someone tried to touch me in a sexual way or tried to make me touch them")
4. Physical neglect, (e.g. "When I was growing up, I didn't have enough to eat")
5. Emotional neglect, (e.g. "When I was growing up, I felt loved")

Each subscale comprises of five items that are all measured on a five-point scale (1= Never true; 5= Very often true) and follow the precursor statement "When I was growing up".

The CTQ-SF was designed for participants aged 12 years and over and takes approximately 5 minutes to complete (Bernstein et al., 2003). The CTQ-SF is also one of the most commonly used scales for measuring traumatic childhood experiences and their impact (McDonald et al., 2013). The short form of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ-SF) is a widely used measure of the experience of childhood trauma in the general population by many researchers worldwide (Bailer et al., 2015; Balsam, Lehavot, Beadnell & Circo, 2010; Bernstein, Ahluvalia, Pogge & Handelsman, 1977; Charak et al., 2017; Chung & Chen, 2017; Dannlowski et al., 2012; Evren et al., 2013; Flory et al., 2009; Innamorati et al., 2016; Gluck, Knefel & Lueger-Schuster, 2017; Jiang et al., 2018; Kidd & Seedat, 2019; Lundgren et al., 2002; MacDoanald et al., 2016; Mandelli et al., 2010; 2011; Roy, 2010; 2011; Scher et al, 2001; Spertus et al., 2003; Spies, Viola et al., 2015; 2016; Tanaka, Werkerle, Schmuck & Paglia-Boak, 2011; Tucci, Kerr-Correa & Souza-Formigoni, 2010; Tyrka, Wyche, Kelly, Price & Carpenter, 2007; 2009; Vugt, Lanctot, Paquette, Collin- Vezina & Lemieux, 2013; 2014).

The CTQ-SF has also been used in previous research with similar samples to the current study such as undergraduates, college students and community samples (Dudeck et al., 2015; He, Zhong, Gao, Xiong & Yao, 2019; Pavo & Cramer, 2004; Raes & Hermans, 2008; Sacchi, Vieno & Simonelli, 2018).

Cronbach's alpha for the factors range from good (0.74) to excellent (0.93), (Kongersley et al., 2019) indicating high internal consistency (DeVellis, 2003). In the present sample Cronbach's alpha range from acceptable to good: .79 for emotional abuse; .87 for physical abuse; .95 for sexual abuse; .71 for physical neglect; .87 for emotional neglect.

### **The Recalled Childhood Gender Identity/Roles Questionnaire (RCGRQ)- (See Appendix B)**

The RCGRQ (Zucker et al., 2006) was used to assess childhood gender roles. The RCGRQ is split into two versions and each version consists of 23 questions, one suitable for females and the other for males. Each individual, corresponding to their own sex is presented with a total of 23 questions each. This questionnaire required participants to answer questions regarding their behavior as a child (0-12 years) and to circle the response that best described their behavior during childhood, (e.g., "As a child my favorite playmates were"; "As a child my best or closest friend was"). Each item is measured on either a four, five or six-point scale and follow the precursor statement, "As a child". Fifteen items are rated on a six-point response scale, seven items are rated on a five-point response scale and one item is rated on a four-point response scale. For items rated on a six-point response scale, an additional response option is provided to allow participants to indicate that the behaviour did not apply to them.

For the purpose of the analysis, female and male responses were combined and an overall score was calculated for each participant. The RCGRQ measures two aspects of gender. It provides an overall score for masculinity and femininity for each participant (childhood gender score) with a higher score indicating greater femininity and low score indicating greater masculinity. The scale also further provides a score for how participants conformed to their own gender (gender conventional average), a low score for males indicates average masculinity and a high score for males indicates high femininity. For females, a low score indicates average femininity and a high score indicates high masculinity.

Cronbach's alpha for the scale has been reported as .73 (Zucker et al., 2006). As DeVellis, (2003) proposes this is a good standard of internal reliability. Cronbach's alpha for the present sample was acceptable at .76.

### **The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale Revised (PPTS)- (See Appendix C)**

The PPTS-Revised (Boduszek et al., 2016) was used to measure psychopathic personality traits. The PPTS is a personality-based psychopathy assessment tool which consists of four subscales:

1. Affective responsiveness, e.g. ("I don't care if I upset someone to get what I want")
2. Cognitive responsiveness, e.g. ("Before slagging someone off, I don't try to imagine and understand how it would make them feel")

3. Interpersonal manipulation, e.g. (“I know what to say or do to make another person feel guilty”)
4. Egocentricity, e.g. (“I tend to focus on my own thoughts and ideas rather than on what others might be thinking”)

Participants were presented with a total of 28 statements and asked to indicate from 5 options to what extent they agree with each statement (1=strongly agree; 5=strongly disagree). Scores range from 0 to 20, high scores indicating higher levels of psychopathic personality traits. The affective responsiveness factor assesses characteristics such as emotional shallowness and low affective empathy. Cognitive responsiveness measures an individual’s ability to understand the emotional state of others, assesses whether the individual can mentally represent another person’s emotional processes alongside emotionally engaging with others at a cognitive level. The interpersonal manipulation component observes characteristics such as grandiosity, deceitfulness and superficial charm. Finally, the last component, egocentricity, assesses if the individual thinks only of themselves, without regard for the feelings or desires others.

All scale items are measured through knowledge, skills, and attitudes as opposed to behaviours. Items 2, 6, 10, 13, 14, and 17 are reverse-scored. High internal reliability as according to DeVellis, (2003) has been reported for all four psychopathy factors of the PPTS (affective responsiveness = .86, cognitive responsiveness = .76, interpersonal manipulation = .84, and egocentricity = .69), (Boduszek et al., 2016). In the present sample Cronbach alphas were all acceptable; .85 for affective responsiveness; .86 for cognitive responsiveness; .88 for interpersonal manipulation; .81 for egocentricity.

### **The Traditional Masculinity- Femininity Scale (TMFS)- (See Appendix D)**

The Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (Kachel and Steffens, 2016), an instrument for measuring gender-role self-concept was used to assess present day gender roles. The TMFS aims to directly assess masculinity and femininity, e.g. “Traditionally, my behavior would be considered as...” 1 (not at all masculine) to 7 (totally masculine) The scale consists of 6 items only: One for gender-role adoption (“I consider myself as...”), one for gender-role preference (“Ideally, I would like to be...”), and four for gender-role identity (“Traditionally, my 1. interests, 2. attitudes and beliefs, 3. behaviour, and 4. outer appearance would be considered as...”).

Each statement is rated in terms of masculinity and femininity on a 7-point-scale. High internal reliability according to DeVellis, (2003) has also been reported (Cronbach’s alpha = .94, Kachel and Steffens, 2016). Within the present sample, Cronbach’s alpha was reported at .31. However, Cronbach’s alpha values were considerably higher when measuring items for males alone (.99) and items for females alone (.96).

### **2.3 Demographic factors**

Gender, age, ethnicity and childhood upbringing experience were all assessed.

## **2.4 Procedure**

Participants were recruited via social media and an email invite to participate. The study was completed online using Qualtrics by all participants. Qualtrics is a web interface which allows for secure remote data collection through the distribution of anonymous secure links to the protocol. All participants consented to the study prior to participating (see Appendix E). Participation in the current study was strictly voluntary and all participants were fully debriefed (see Appendix F). Contact details for several support services were also provided (see Appendix F). The survey gathered demographic data such as age, gender, ethnicity and asked participants about their childhood upbringings, e.g. "Which one of the following statements best describes your childhood?". Four questionnaires were then presented to all participants on Qualtrics (The Recalled Childhood Gender Role/Identity Questionnaire, 23 items, The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, 28 items, The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale, 28 items and The Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale, 6 items), A total of 85 questions. The survey approximately lasted around 30 minutes.

In addition, 382 participants described their childhood as having regular contact with both parents, 191 participants reported having contact with their mother only, 52 participants reported having contact with their father only and 18 participants specified (brought up in care, parents are deceased, ran away from home).

## **2.5 Design**

The study consisted of a cross-sectional design. The independent variables (IV) were forms of childhood abuse (physical, emotional and sexual abuse and physical and emotional neglect), measure by the CTQ-SF, childhood gender score, measured by the RCGRQ and present-day gender score, measured by the TFMS. The dependant/outcome variables (DV) were all four psychopathic personality traits; affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, egocentricity and manipulation, all measured by the PPTS.

The numerical data collected by the questionnaires were analysed using two separate analysis, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) A MANOVA was used to explore sex differences in the four psychopathic personality traits as the research specifically aimed to explore whether a difference exists between males and females and the four psychopathic traits and also measure where the difference may exist. A MANOVA would allow to compare these two groups for each sex individually. The MANOVA was followed by series of Hierarchical Multiple Regression aimed at each of the dependant variables with the use of the SPSS programme.

## **2.6 Piloting study**

Saunders et al. (2012) states that a study involving questionnaires should be trialled run and suggests a pilot study consisting of 5-10 participants should be carried out. A pilot study was conducted, consisting of 8 participants which confirmed that everything required was in place to proceed with the following study. The study took approximately 30 minutes to complete and feedback from participants was obtained which clarified that all questions were clearly stated and easy to follow.

## **2.7 Ethical considerations**

The following study was reviewed and approved by the institutional ethics panel of the University of Huddersfield (see Appendix G). Regarding ethical considerations, practices that safeguard the privacy and protection of participants was strictly followed using guidelines set out by the British Psychological Society (2014). Anonymity of participants is essential when conducting research (Saunders et al, 2012). Subject to the requirements of legislation, including the Data Protection Act, information obtained from the study regarding participants personal details were all kept anonymous and only accessed by the researcher and supervisor involved. As anonymity of participants is essential when conducting research, therefore, the survey was totally anonymous at all times. Participants were not asked to provide any identifiable information. All data collected was accessed only by the researcher and the supervisors involved and participants were made aware of this prior to the study and confirmed whether they agreed to proceed. All participants were also given the right to withdraw at any time during or after the study and informed that this would hold no consequences and their data will be removed. If participants wished to withdraw their data, they were asked to email the researcher with their six-digit unique code that was presented to all participants when they began the study. This code was unique and allowed the researcher to search for and remove any contribution from the research. All participants were also fully debriefed and provided with several contact details for support services.

### Chapter 3: Results

The results section is split into two analyses. The first analysis that was conducted was a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to explore sex differences in the four psychopathic personality traits. The second analysis was a series of Hierarchical Multiple Regression aimed at each of the dependant variables, psychopathic personality traits; affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, manipulation and egocentricity.

#### 3.1 Sex differences in psychopathic personality traits

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to explore sex differences (Males and Females) in four psychopathic personality traits; affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, manipulation and egocentricity.

Descriptive statistics for the four traits of psychopathy including means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) are presented below in Table 1. Results in Table 1 indicate that mean scores were higher for females than males on each of the four psychopathic personality traits factor.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for psychopathic personality traits (Affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, egocentricity and manipulation)**

Factor	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i> (95% CI)
Affective Responsiveness	Male	24.68	8.99	1.16 (.9-1.42)
	Female	30.24	3.98	
Cognitive Responsiveness	Male	24.39	5.49	0.85 (.6-1.10)
	Female	27.66	3.61	
Manipulation	Male	21.93	8.08	0.91 (.7-1.18)
	Female	27.07	5.23	
Egocentricity	Male	21.78	7.74	1.02 (.8-1.28)
	Female	26.83	4.46	

There was a statistically significant difference in psychopathic personality traits based on an individual's gender,  $F(4, 610) = 21.29, p < .0005$ ; *Wilk's Lambda* = 0.877, *partial eta squared* = .12.

For the dependant variable of affective responsiveness, there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .001$  level for the two different gender groups  $F(1, 613) = 82.25; p < .001$ ; *partial eta squared* = .12 with female respondents scoring higher on average ( $M = 30.24, SD = 3.98$ ) than male respondents ( $M = 24.68, SD = 8.99$ ). The effect size, measured using Cohen's *d* was 1.16. The effect size of the difference was large, in accordance to Cohen (1988).

For the dependant variable cognitive responsiveness, there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .001$  level for the two different gender groups  $F(1, 613) = 43.76; p < .001$ ; *partial eta squared* = .07 with female respondents scoring higher on average ( $M = 27.66, SD = 3.61$ ) than male respondents ( $M = 24.39, SD = .49$ ). The effect size, measured using Cohen's *d* was 0.85. The effect size of the difference was large, in accordance to Cohen (1988).

For the dependant variable manipulation, there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .001$  level for the two different gender groups  $F(1, 613) = 51.35; p < .001$ ; *partial eta squared* = .08 with female respondents scoring higher on average ( $M = 27.07, SD = 5.23$ ) than male respondents ( $M = 21.93,$

$SD=8.08$ ). The effect size, measured using Cohen's  $d$  was 0.91. The effect size of the difference was large, in accordance to Cohen (1988).

For the final dependant variable, egocentricity there was also statistically significant difference at the  $p < .001$  level for the two different gender groups  $F(1, 613) = 64.23; p < .001$ ;  $partial \eta^2 = .1$  with female respondents scoring higher on average ( $M=26.83, SD=4.46$ ) than male respondents ( $M=21.78, SD=7.74$ ). The effect size, measured using Cohen's  $d$  was 1.02. The effect size of the difference was large, in accordance to Cohen (1988).

### **3.2 Hierarchical multiple regression for psychopathic trait (Affective responsiveness)**

Hierarchical multiple regression was performed to investigate the ability of childhood abuse (emotional, physical and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect), childhood gender, childhood gender conventional and current-day gender to predict psychopathic personality trait-affective responsiveness, after controlling for all forms of childhood trauma. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

Additionally, the correlations amongst the predictor variables (childhood abuse, childhood and current-day gender) included in the study were examined and these are presented in Table 2. All correlations were moderate ranging between  $r=.000 p<.001$  to  $r=.69 p<.001$ . This indicates that multicollinearity was unlikely to be a problem (see Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

In the first step of hierarchical multiple regression, six predictors were entered: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect and minimization/denial score. This model was statistically significant,  $F(6, 621) = 18.35; p<.001$  and explained 15% of the variance in psychopathic personality trait-affective responsiveness. Only two out of the six factors made a significant unique contribution to the model (See Table 3). After entry of childhood gender masculinity/femininity score, gender conventional score and current-day masculinity/femininity score at Step 2 the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 24% ( $F(3, 618) = 22.93; p<.001$ ).

In the final adjusted model three out of nine predictor variables were statistically significant. The strongest predictor of psychopathic personality trait-affective responsiveness was emotional neglect scoring a slightly higher Beta value ( $\beta=-.23, p<.001$ ) followed by physical neglect ( $\beta = -.22. p<.001$ ) and childhood masculinity/femininity score ( $\beta= .28, p<.05$ ) Emotional, physical and sexual abuse and childhood gender conventional score and current masculinity/femininity do not make a unique significant contribution ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlations for all continuous variables (N=643)**

Note: Statistical significance: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Variables	AR	CR	M	E	EA	PA	SA	EN	PN	M/D	CGS	GCA	TMF
Affective responsiveness (AR)	1	.68**	.71**	.81**									
Cognitive Responsiveness (CR)	.68**	1	.53**	.63**									
Manipulation (M)	.71**		1	.77**									
Egocentricity (E)	.81**	.63**	.77**	1									
Emotional abuse (EA)	-.19	-.16	-.22	-.17	1								
Physical abuse (PA)	-.23	-.16	-.24	-.16	.69**	1							
Sexual abuse (SA)	-.13	-.07	-.12	-.09	.33**	.36**	1						
Emotional neglect (EN)	-.29***	-.27***	-.27	-.25**	.69**	.53***	.26**	1					
Physical neglect (PN)	-.36***	-.29***	-.31***	-.28**	.50**	.58**	.22**	.57**	1				
Denial (M/D)	.18	.14*	.23	.15	-.66	-.48	-.23**	-.74**	-.44**	1			
Childhood Gender Score (CGS)	.34	.23***	.25**	.28**	-.01	-.22**	-.05	-.05	-.18**	.02	1		
Gender Conventional average (CGA)	.17	.12	.14	.13	-.04	-.11	-.09	.000	-.15	.02	.20	1	
Current Masculinity/Femininity score (TMF)	.05	.08	.07	.07	-.12	-.09	-.09	-.21**	-.11	.20	.07	.001***	1
Means	29.59	27.24	26.45	26.26	9.87	7.19	7.23	10.20	6.57	10.30	3.34	3.17	7.23
Standard Deviations	5.10	4.04	5.86	5.21	4.77	3.92	4.80	4.72	2.82	3.25	.78	.40	4.80
Range	7-35	7-35	7-35	7-35	5-25	5-25	5-23	5-25	5-25	3-15	11-55	7-35	6-42
Possible Range	7-35	7-35	7-35	7-35	5-25	5-25	5-25	5-25	5-25	3-15	11-55	7-35	6-42
Cronbach's Alpha	.85	.86	.88	.81	.79	.87	.95	.87	.71	.78	.96	.95	.95

**Table 3. Hierarchical regression model of psychopathic personality traits (Affective responsiveness)**

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	B	SE	β	t
Model 1	.39	.15***	.15				
EA				.10	.07	.10	1.5
PA				-.03	.07	-.02	-.35
SA				-.06	.04	-.06	-1.40
EN				-.23	.07	-.21***	-3.33
PN				-.54	.09	-.30***	-6.04
Denial				-.11	.09	-.07	-1.15
Model 2	.49	.24***	.09***				
EA				.06	.06	.05	.904
PA				.02	.07	.02	.31
SA				-.05	.04	-.05	-1.22
EN				-.25	.07	-.23***	-3.86
PN				-.41	.07	-.22***	-4.69
Denial				-.98	.09	-.063	-1.13
Childhood Gender Score				1.81	.24	.28***	7.52
Gender Conventional Average				1.04	.47	.08**	2.22
Current Masculinity/Femininity Score				-.096 -.10	.13	-.03	-.76

Note: Statistical significance: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### **3.3 Hierarchical regression model of psychopathic personality traits (Cognitive responsiveness)**

Hierarchical multiple regression was performed to investigate the ability of childhood abuse (emotional, physical and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect), childhood gender, childhood gender conventional and current-day gender to predict psychopathic personality trait-cognitive responsiveness, after controlling for all forms of childhood trauma. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

In the first step of hierarchical multiple regression, six predictors were entered: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect and minimization/denial score. This model was statistically significant,  $F(6, 622) = 12.92$ ;  $p < .001$  and explained 11% of the variance in psychopathic personality trait-affective responsiveness. Only three out of the six factors made a significant unique contribution to the model (See Table 4). After entry of childhood gender masculinity/femininity score, gender conventional score and current-day masculinity/femininity score at Step 2 the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 15% ( $F(3, 619) = 9.14$ ;  $P < .001$ ).

In the final adjusted model four out of nine predictor variables were statistically significant. The best predictor of psychopathic personality trait- cognitive responsiveness is emotional neglect scoring a slightly higher Beta value ( $\beta = -.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ) followed by physical neglect ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and childhood masculinity/femininity score ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Denial of trauma in childhood also scored significantly with a Beta value ( $\beta = -.13$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Emotional, physical and sexual abuse and childhood gender conventional score and current masculinity/femininity do not make a unique significant contribution ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4. Hierarchical regression model of psychopathic personality traits (Cognitive responsiveness)**

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	B	SE	β	t
Model 1	.33	.11***	.11				
EA				.03	.05	.04	.61
PA				.03	.06	.03	.45
SA				-.001	.03	-.001	-.028
EN				-.24	.06	-.28***	-4.25
PN				-.32	.07	-.22***	-4.46
Denial				-.16	.07	-.13*	-2.16
Model 2	.39	.15***	.04***				
EA				.007	.05	.01	.14
PA				.05	.06	.05	.87
SA				.007	.03	.01	.19
EN				-.25	.06	-.29***	-4.47
PN				-.25	.07	-.18***	-3.48
Denial				-.16	.07	-.13*	-2.24
Childhood Gender Score				.90	.20	.17***	4.49
Gender Conventional Average				.69	.39	.07**	1.78
Current Masculinity/Femininity Score				.07	.10	-.02	.64

Note: Statistical significance: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### 3.4 Hierarchical regression model of psychopathic personality traits (Manipulation)

Hierarchical multiple regression was performed to investigate the ability of childhood abuse (emotional, physical and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect), childhood gender, childhood gender conventional and current-day gender to predict psychopathic personality trait-manipulation, after controlling for all forms of childhood trauma. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

In the first step of hierarchical multiple regression, six predictors were entered: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect and minimization/denial score. This model was statistically significant,  $F(6, 623) = 13.13$ ;  $p < .001$  and explained 11% of the variance in psychopathic personality trait-manipulation. Only one out of the six factors made a significant unique contribution to the model (See Table 5). After entry of childhood gender masculinity/femininity score, gender conventional score and current-day masculinity/femininity score at Step 2 the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 16% ( $F(3, 620) = 11.12$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

In the final adjusted model two out of nine predictor variables were statistically significant. The best predictor of psychopathic personality trait-manipulation is childhood masculinity/femininity score scoring a higher Beta value ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Physical neglect followed with a Beta value of ( $\beta = -.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Emotional, physical and sexual abuse and childhood gender conventional score and current masculinity/femininity do not make a unique significant contribution ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 5. Hierarchical regression model of psychopathic personality traits (Manipulation)**

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	B	SE	$\beta$	t
Model 1	.34	.11***	.11				
EA				.03	.08	.03	.44
PA				-.06	.09	-.04	-.71
SA				-.04	.05	-.03	-.78
EN				-.11	.08	-.09	-1.34
PN				-.45	.10	-.21***	-4.28
Denial				.12	.11	.07	1.10
Model 2	.40	.15***	.05***				



**Table 6. Hierarchical regression model of psychopathic personality traits (Egocentricity)**

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	B	SE	β	t
Model 1	.31	.10***	.10				
EA				-.002	.07	-.002	-.024
PA				.06	.08	.05	.84
SA				-.03	.05	-.026	-.625
EN				-.22	.07	-.20***	-3.06
PN				-.42	.09	-.23***	-4.50
Denial				-.13	.10	-.08	-1.35
Model 2	.40	.16***	.06***				
EA				-.04	.07	-.04	-.641
PA				.10	.07	.08	1.41
SA				-.017	.04	-.02	-.40
EN				-.24	.07	-.22**	-3.38
PN				-.30	.09	-.17***	-3.30
Denial				-.13	.09	-.08	-1.40
Childhood Gender Score				1.57	.26	.23***	6.11
Gender Conventional Average				.93	.50	.07	1.87
Current Masculinity/Femininity Score				.04	.13	.01	.29

Note: Statistical significance: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## Chapter 4: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to

- To assess the effects of childhood abuse (examining all aspects of childhood abuse; physical, emotional and sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect) on psychopathic personality traits.
- To assess gender differences in psychopathic personality traits and to establish in what specific traits these differences exist.
- To assess the effects that childhood and present day (adult) gender roles has on psychopathic personality traits.

In regards to the study's first aim the study investigated all aspects of childhood abuse including emotional, physical and sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect via The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire- Short Form (Bernstein et al., 2003) to establish whether a relationship between traumatic childhood events and psychopathic personality traits (affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, egocentricity and manipulation) exists. A significant association between emotional and physical neglect and the psychopathic personality trait affective responsiveness was discovered. Emotional and physical neglect also proved to be predictors of further psychopathic traits, cognitive responsiveness and egocentricity. However, manipulation only revealed to be associated with physical neglect as opposed to both physical and emotional neglect. Furthermore, no association was revealed between physical, emotional and sexual abuse and any of the four psychopathic personality traits.

The second research question aimed to assess gender differences in psychopathic personality traits. As evident a clear gender difference was found between psychopathic personality traits with females scoring higher on all four factors of The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale (affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, manipulation and egocentricity) than males.

The final aim of this study was to assess the relationship between childhood and adult day gender roles (masculinity and femininity scores) and psychopathic personality traits. Although clear gender differences in psychopathic traits have been noted, there is a gap in the literature which explores possible reasons and explanations behind these differences. Psychopathy may manifest itself differently in males and females and it still remains unclear what exactly it is about gender that manifests itself differently in psychopathy and the difference in manifestation may be due to gender roles.

A significant relationship was discovered between childhood gender roles (masculinity/femininity scores) and all four psychopathic personality traits on The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale (affective responsiveness, cognitive responsiveness, egocentricity and manipulation). Childhood gender roles was a stronger predictor in the development of the psychopathic personality trait, affective responsiveness followed by egocentricity, manipulation and then cognitive responsiveness. However, no association between present-day/adult gender roles as measured by the Traditional

Masculinity- Femininity Scale (Kachel and Steffens, 2016) and any of the four psychopathic personality traits was discovered.

#### **4.1 Childhood abuse and psychopathic personality traits**

The study's findings are consistent with the findings of Farrington, (2006) who's results revealed that the strongest predictor of psychopathy is physical neglect. Although the present study revealed emotional neglect to be the strongest predictor for three out of the four psychopathic traits measured by The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale, physical neglect revealed to have an association with each psychopathic trait. Therefore, supporting the results of Farrington, (2006). Similarly, Christian et al. (2017) also found psychopathy was positively correlated to the number of negative life events that individuals had experienced throughout their childhood. An association between poor parenting styles resulted in insecure attachment styles and the development of psychopathic traits, specifically the affective component of psychopathy.

This can be explained by the attachment theory. The theory provides a comprehensive account of normal and abnormal development. Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond and this bond connects one individual to another across time and space. Bowlby, (1969) defined attachment as a 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.'(Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby, (1969) proposed that a child forms one main attachment with one figure and this figure acts as a secure base. Any disruption to this relationship may have severe consequences. The attachment theory states that between the ages of 0-5 years is the critical period for forming this primary attachment and failure to do so can result in irreversible developmental consequences such as increased aggression in adolescence.

Neglect and abuse in childhood can result in insecure attachment which then could have a number of negative consequences on the individual's future. Abusive parenting can result in infant attachment insecurity which leads to emotional dysregulation and a negative internal working model where the individual has negative views regarding themselves and others. This results in maladaptive coping strategies and poor social functioning which could disturb peer relations. Taussig and Culhane, (2010) found that those that had experienced emotional abuse during their childhood had poor peer relations throughout childhood and adulthood. Insecure attachment can also cause psychological distress and cause fear of intimacy with potential partners. Therefore, it is crucial to understand and assess early environmental factors when attempting to understand the cause of psychopathic behaviour.

Emotional neglect is failing to provide a child with the nurture and stimulation they need and consists of behaviours such as ignoring, isolating and humiliating the individual. The study's findings provide further support for the findings of Durand and Calheiros Velozo, (2018) who revealed that rejection faced by parents was the main predictor of childhood maltreatment and 50% of the participants involved reported they had experienced physical neglect during their childhood. An association between childhood maltreatment and psychopathic traits was also established. Emotional neglect and the antisocial factor as measured by the Psychopathy Checklist-Youth Version (Forth, Kosson, and Hare, 2003) has also revealed to have an association (Krischer and Sevecke, 2008). Weiler and

Widom, (1996) also found an association between neglect and abuse in childhood and psychopathy in young adults, however no gender differences were found.

Furthermore, Krischer and Sevecke, (2008) assessed the relationship between physical, sexual and emotional traumatic events in childhood and psychopathy in a sample of 185 male and female prisoners in comparison to 98 college students. Results revealed an association between physical trauma and high scores of psychopathy on The Psychopathy Checklist-Youth Version. However, for female prisoners, no association between physical trauma and psychopathy was discovered and other factors such as non-parental living arrangements and childhood upbringings regarding families were associated with psychopathic traits within females. Weilor and Widom, (1966) further propose that childhood maltreatment may encourage the development of certain coping strategies. An individual who has experienced abusive childhood events may develop a coping strategy which might be less than adaptive. Further proposing that early behavioural problems such as impulsive behavioural styles may arise from a result of the negative events experienced. Further characteristics which reflect a psychopathic personality such as manipulativeness, pathological lying, unrealistic long-term goals and a superficial charm might be begin in an individual as a method of coping with the abusive events they experience at home.

#### **4.1.1 Physical abuse**

Although results from the present study found an association between physical and emotional neglect and psychopathic personality traits. No association between other forms of childhood maltreatment such as childhood physical, emotional and sexual abuse and psychopathic personality traits was discovered. However, previous research has proposed alternative findings. Weizmann- Henelius et al. (2010) concluded that both females and males have a higher chance of displaying psychopathic traits if victims of childhood victimisation, specifically physical and sexual abuse. Krischer and Sevecke, (2008) study also revealed a significant relationship between physical abuse and psychopathy in male homicide offenders however, physical abuse was not related to psychopathy in female homicide offenders. However, researchers such as McKillop et al. (2016) assessed self-reports of psychopathic offenders and childhood interactions with parents to understand what factors might contribute towards adult criminal psychopathy. Self-reports of psychopathic traits were significantly higher for those who experienced separation from caregivers, physical abuse and different styles of parenting. Frodi et al. (2001) examined the relationship between childhood abuse and psychopathy and found that criminal psychopaths reported that they had experienced more physical abuse than criminal non-psychopaths.

However, it is important to note that the literature above has focused on collecting data from criminal and imprisoned samples and methodology from the current study focuses on a sample from the general population with the majority consisting of university students. One possible explanation for why no association between childhood abuse and psychopathic personality traits was discovered in the current study may be due to childhood experiences of students being less severe.

#### **4.1.2 Sexual abuse**

Further research has revealed associations between sexual abuse and psychopathic personality traits. Durand and Calheiros Velozo, (2018) discovered that sexual abuse was associated with females who displayed high levels of boldness and physical neglect and sexual abuse was associated with individuals who scored high in disinhibition. Findings from Boduszek et al. (2019) revealed a strong association between high psychopathy scores, interpersonal manipulation and egocentricity and sexual abuse and based on the study's findings Boduszek et al. (2019) concluded that sexual abuse is a strong predictor of psychopathic traits. Similarly, findings from Weizmann et al. (2010) revealed that female victims of sexual abuse as opposed to male victims displayed affective deficits and incapability to experience normal depths of guilt, empathy and emotion. One possible explanation as to why an association with sexual abuse and psychopathic personality traits may be absent in the current study may be due to individuals having fear and reluctance to disclose experiences of sexual abuse (Paine and Hansen, 2002). A victim of sexual abuse may have feelings of shame and guilt and may even falsely believe that the behaviour is acceptable (Tyler, 2002). Further research proposes gender differences in reports of sexual abuse and reveal that females are more likely than males to disclose child sexual abuse (O'Leary and Barber, 2008). O'Leary and Barber, (2008) also note that it takes male victims of sexual abuse significantly longer than females to discuss their experiences.

#### **4.2 Gender and psychopathic personality traits**

The findings of the study were unexpected with literature regarding gender differences in psychopathic personality traits. The vast amount of literature around gender differences has noted clear gender differences within psychopathy and psychopathic personality traits, with males scoring significantly higher psychopathy scores and displaying more psychopathic traits than females.

Dolan and Vollm, (2009) propose that a vast amount of studies have found that females overall score lower with psychopathy than males. Wall, Sellbom and Goodwin, (2013) found men to have higher psychopathy scores than women. Devogel and Lancel, (2016) found amongst 197 female and 197 male Dutch psychiatric individuals that overall personal and criminal pasts of psychopathic females and males are similar. However, several gender differences were also noted. Men scored higher on the PCL-R than women. Durand, Calheiros and Velozo, (2018) study revealed that males scored higher than females with psychopathic traits but females reported more childhood maltreatment and negative parenting experiences.

Although previous research has shown similarities in the personality structure of psychopathy within non-criminal males and females, there is further research which proposes that there are clear gender differences in psychopathy (Miller et al., 2011). However, Lee and Salekin, (2010) found no differences in psychopathy scores between males and females. Wilson et al. (2016) also found no gender differences and argue the need for further research to confirm whether these differences within gender and psychopathy actually exist. However, it is important to note that previous literature which has revealed clear gender differences in psychopathy and psychopathic personality traits has mainly focussed on the link between criminality and psychopathy and the measures used to assess

psychopathy focus on measuring the individual's behaviours as opposed to personality traits which may be linked to psychopathic behaviour.

For example, much research (Hart and Hare, 1997; Hicks, Vaidyanathan and Patrick, (2010); Moffit et al., (2001); Mulder et al., (1994); Salekin et al., (1998) has found male criminals scoring higher with psychopathy as opposed to female criminals. As research has proposed, females with psychopathic personality traits may not commit criminal acts. Strand et al. (2005) examined gender differences within a sample of Swedish offenders 129 female and 499 males. Results revealed that psychopathic females displayed more deceitful and lying behaviour and males displayed more antisocial behaviours. Nicholls and Petrila, (2005) propose that psychopathic females may use alternative tactics to attain goals as opposed to the tactics that males use and females may display behaviours such as flirtation and manipulation to attain goals.

Sutton et al., (2002) propose that the emotional deficits that females display, differ vastly from emotional deficits that are displayed by males. For example, Moffit et al., (2001) found that males engage in higher levels of criminality, psychopathy and antisocial behaviour. Hicks, Vaidyanathan and Patrick, (2010) further stated that men exhibit higher mean levels of psychopathy, antisocial behaviour and criminality than women. As Mulder et al., (1994) notes, females display behaviour which is less violent and aggressive than males and females may begin offending later in life (Hart & Hare, 1997). Salekin et al. (1998) further argues that the likelihood of females reoffending is significantly lower than males and they may have recidivism rates that are no different from non-psychopathic female offenders.

Carabellese et al. (2019) discovered that women who scored highly on the PCL-R had been convicted of minor offenses and these offenses were not necessarily violent. However, these researchers further propose that these minor offenses are related to typical features of a psychopathic individual such as manipulation, pathological lying and superficial charm. However, Declercq, Carter and Neumann, (2015) propose that growing research has shown that there is an association between female psychopathy and antisocial behaviour similar to what has been found in psychopathic men.

#### ***4.3 Gender roles and psychopathic personality traits***

Limited research exists around the effects of gender roles on psychopathic personality traits, however research which has focused on gender roles has revealed a clear link between masculinity and criminal acts and aggression. Addis and Mahalik, (2003) propose that individuals who portray violent behaviour have masculine attitudes and the need to be powerful and dominant is of high importance to them. Further stating that these individuals feel as though this respect of masculinity and status is earned through displaying violent and aggressive acts towards others. A link between hypermasculinity and significantly higher levels of aggression has also been found (Mosher and Sirkin, 1984). Further research by Parrott and Zeichner, (2003) compared electrical shocks given to a female participant by males who scored higher on hypermasculinity and males who scored lower on hypermasculinity. Results were as predicted by researchers, those who scored high with hypermasculinity displayed higher levels of physical aggression which was measured by the electrical shocks administered to female participants. Contrary, Jakupcak et al. (2002) failed to find a significant relationship between

self-reports of aggression and a masculine identity. These researchers agree partially with previous findings and propose that gender role stress plays some contribution towards individuals displaying aggressive behaviours, however masculine identity does not play a role in the development of aggression.

As noted earlier, limited previous literature has focussed on the effects of gender roles on psychopathic traits however, research which has explored this area has revealed that masculine gender roles are associated with emotional manipulation. Grieve et al. (2019) investigated the effects of gender role on the psychopathic trait emotional manipulation amongst a sample of 435 females and 139 males. Females who scored low on femininity and high on emotional intelligence also predicted emotional manipulation.

Jonason and Davis, (2018) also assessed how individual differences in gender roles were related to Machiavellianism and narcissism, results revealed Machiavellianism to be low in femininity and narcissism low in femininity and high in masculinity. Paulhas, (2001) describes narcissistic individuals as attention seeking, dominant and they tend to perceive themselves as grandiose individuals. Miller et al. (2017) examined traits of psychopathy and Machiavellianism and the two revealed to hold many similarities. Jakobwitz and Egan, (2006) also found moderate correlations between psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism and Paulhus and Williams, (2002) found positive intercorrelations between psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism.

### **Chapter 5: Recommendations for future research**

As Grady et al. (2018) proposes more research is required to understand the associations between attachment, childhood abuse and psychopathy. The child protection services deal with one percent of children in the population who have experienced some form of childhood abuse (Gilbert, Kemp et al., 2009). The immense amount of previous research has focussed on forms of childhood abuse and the associations this has on psychopathy in criminal and imprisoned samples. As the current study has revealed strong links between childhood emotional and physical neglect and psychopathic personality traits in a sample from the general population, future research may benefit from exploring forms of abuse and neglect in non-criminal samples which may impact the development of psychopathic personality traits. Furthermore, as researchers have noted clear gender differences in childhood abuse exist, with sexual abuse found to be more common in females (Bohle and Vogel, 2017) and the effect of abuse in childhood having a more negative consequence for females as opposed to males (Bender, 2010). Current research has not been able to explain the contradicting findings and possible explanations for this difference. Future research could focus on exploring the factors that explain gender differences in childhood abuse. A longitudinal study with greater resources that assesses individuals who have experienced forms of abuse would also be effective in explaining how different forms of abuse can affect an individual.

Research which has focussed on females and psychopathy has consisted of criminal samples which have aimed to present a link between female criminality and psychopathy; Pechorro et al. (2017), Oshukova et al. (2017), Leenarts et al. (2017). These studies have revealed that clinical samples of females are more severe in psychopathy and offending and these studies did not assess the effects

of childhood experiences of the participants. Only one study of a community sample of youth has examined associations between child abuse and victimization and psychopathic features within a sample of adolescents (Saukkonen et al., 2016) and results revealed that victimization or abuse experiences were stronger predictors of psychopathic personality among girls than boys. The manifestation of psychopathic traits within females and males is an important topic in psychopathy literature and gender differences have not been assessed thoroughly (Schulz, Murphy and Verona, 2016). There is limited research that focuses on psychopathy in women and how psychopathy manifests itself in females and previous literature assumes that the core traits of the disorder can be applied to women (Wynn, Hoiseth and Pettersen, 2012). As the current findings revealed a clear gender difference within the four psychopathic traits, with females scoring significantly higher on all four traits, future research is required to build on this. Research consisting of interviews with participants may help to explain causal reasons and whether psychopathic traits manifests itself in females differently in order to explain why females scored higher than males in a non-criminal sample. As Strand et al. (2005) study revealed, male psychopaths displayed antisocial behaviours whereas female psychopaths portrayed behaviours such as lying and acting deceitfully. Therefore, it may also be beneficial for future researchers to use psychopathic assessment tools which focus on assessing personality traits linked to psychopathy such as The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale as opposed to scales which assess behaviours linked to psychopathic behaviour.

Previous literature has established a clear link between criminal behaviour and psychopathy. Prior research has also established strong relations between gender differences in female and male criminal psychopaths. As the prevalence of psychopathy in the general population is approximately between 0.6 and 4 % with the majority of the psychopathic population consisting of males as opposed to females and these psychopathic individuals are accountable for a large number of serious crimes (Thomas et al., 2014). Future research should intent to explore gender differences in psychopathic traits which may lead to the development of psychopathy within non-criminal samples. Although the prevalence for psychopathy in the general population may be low, the prevalence of psychopathic personality traits within the general population may be significantly higher and as Neumann and Hare, (2008) have suggested, psychopathic traits may exist in the general population. Therefore, exploring gender differences in psychopathic personality traits in population-based samples will clearly define the differences between the behaviours and personality traits of a criminal psychopath and a noncriminal psychopath. As previous research has noted that females may not engage in as many antisocial behaviours as males (Strand et al. (2005); Nicholls and Petrila, (2005); Sutton et al., (2002); Moffit et al., (2001); Hicks, Vaidyanathan and Patrick, (2010). Future research could explore psychopathic traits in females in samples other than prison- based populations such as corporate organizations where successful psychopaths tend to exist. Successful psychopaths have been found to display behaviours such as lying and being manipulation (Mullins-Sweatt et al., 2010), similar to characteristics of a female psychopath (Nicholls and Petrila, 2005).

As discussed, previous literature has noted many gender differences in female and male psychopaths and have used psychopathy assessment tools (The Psychopathy Checklist, The Psychopathy Checklist- Revised) which focus on psychopathic behaviours as opposed to psychopathic personalities. Future research may benefit from using measures such as The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale in community, university, non-forensic samples which assess the personality aspects linked to psychopathy as opposed to behaviours. It is important to note that psychopathic traits do not only exist in criminal populations (Glenn and Raine, 2014) and psychopathic personality traits are generally not associated with criminal success (Boccio and Beaver, 2018) and have been observed in individuals in the community, some of who hold a high professional status, (Glenn and Raine, 2014).

Furthermore, as the study revealed, masculinity and femininity play an important role in the development of all four psychopathic personality traits as measured by The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale. Future research should focus on exploring the possible explanations behind the clear gender differences that have been noted within psychopathic personality traits, specifically focussing on the role that childhood gender roles may play in development of psychopathic personality traits.

However, when assessing gender roles, The Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (Kachel and Steffens, 2016) may not be the most reliable scale available. The Cronbach's Alpha scores indicate that amongst males alone the items were highly inter-correlated and amongst female participants alone the items were also highly inter-correlated, suggesting the items measured similar concepts (masculinity and femininity) very well. However, when combining the male and female participants the items did not appear to be to be as inter-correlated. This suggests that The Traditional Masculinity Femininity Scale may be a reliable scale for comparing masculinity or femininity in males or females alone. However, using the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale to make cross gender comparisons considering males and females and comparing them may not be as reliable.

### **5.1 Limitations**

The present study is not without limitations. One of the possible limitations of this study is that some of the study relies on retrospective data such as The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (Bernstein et al., 2003) and The Recalled Childhood Gender Identity/ Roles Questionnaire (Zucker et al., 2006), although this method of data collection enabled a large sample size to be obtained and also avoided time that would have been spent on interviews. Research suggests that retrospective data can result in inaccuracies of recall (Williams and Banyard, 1999) and individuals who have experienced some form of trauma tend to remember more trauma than initially experienced and people's memories for traumatic events are easily distorted (Strange and Takarangi, 2015).

Due to the study using self-reported measures such as the CTQ-SF to obtain results, self-presentation bias may have been presented. Nonetheless, self-report questionnaires have been found to work more effectively and have provided more honest responses than face-to-face interviews especially concerning childhood abuse experiences (Burton, Ward, and Artz, 2015). Furthermore, The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire- Short Form consists of a minimisation and denial scale to detect for participants who may be underreporting traumatic experiences in their childhood. The CTQ-SF is also

one of the most commonly used scales for measuring traumatic childhood experiences and their impact (McDonald et al., 2013).

It is also important to note that males may have been less reluctant of reporting experiences of abuse, especially sexual abuse and neglect as opposed to females. Research proposes gender differences in reports of sexual abuse and reveal that females are more likely than males to disclose child sexual abuse (O'Leary and Barber, 2008). Further noting that it takes male victims of sexual abuse significantly longer than females to discuss their experiences. Research by King and Woollett, (1997) also revealed that male victims of sexual abuse were hesitant to seek help and for some victims didn't speak out until 17 years later.

A further limitation that should be taken into consideration is the gender imbalance of the sample. Although the sample obtained was large, the study involved 74 males and 569 females so the gender differences revealed for females may have been impacted by the number of female participants. Therefore, it could be argued that the results obtained are more reflective of the female population.

Self-presentation bias may have been presented in the results as the study used self-report measures. However, ensuring participants of the anonymity improves the genuineness of their response's (Fishbein & Pequegnat, 2000). Throughout the study participants were constantly reminded of the importance of providing honest answers and were reassured on numerous occasions that all data will be confidential and anonymous. Additionally, the majority of participants were university students and the sample was comprised of individuals from the general population. This may limit the generalizability of the study's findings.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between psychopathic personality traits, childhood abuse and neglect and childhood and adult gender roles. The findings in this study provide support for the assumption of a linkage between childhood victimization, specifically physical and emotional neglect and psychopathic personality traits. As noted by Doyle and Timms, (2014) child protection tends to address issues concerning physical and sexual abuse and as a result of this, emotional abuse and other forms of neglect are all more readily overlooked. As noted, research has proposed that physical neglect is the strongest predictor of psychopathy, therefore more attention should be paid to the association between neglectful experiences in childhood and psychopathic personality traits. The findings also clearly reveal an association between childhood gender roles and psychopathic personality traits, therefore the role of gender roles/identity in the development of psychopathic personality traits requires further investigation. Furthermore, the findings revealed females to have stronger psychopathic personality traits than males amongst UK university/college students and within the general population. The majority of previous research consists of data from correctional samples of criminal females and non-criminal females who have experienced such traumatic events in their childhood require further assessment in order to prevent abnormal personality functioning in later-life.



## Chapter 6: References

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## Chapter 7: Appendices

### Appendix A- The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire- Short Form (Bernstein et al., 2003)

Directions: These questions ask about some of your experiences growing up as a child and a teenager. For each question, circle the number that best describes how you feel. Although some of these questions are of a personal nature, please try to answer as honestly as you can. Your answers will be kept confidential.

		Never true	Rarely true	Some times true	Often true	Very Often true
<b>When I was growing up, . . .</b>						
1.	I didn't have enough to eat.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I knew that there was someone to take care of me and protect me.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	People in my family called me things like "stupid", "lazy", or "ugly".	1	2	3	4	5
4.	My parents were too drunk or high to take care of the family.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	There was someone in my family who helped me feel important or special.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>When I was growing up, . . .</b>						
6.	I had to wear dirty clothes.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I felt loved.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I thought that my parents wished I had never been born.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I got hit so hard by someone in my family that I had to see a doctor or go to the hospital.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	There was nothing I wanted to change about my family.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>When I was growing up, . . .</b>						
11.	People in my family hit me so hard that it left me with bruises or marks.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I was punished with a belt, a board, a cord (or some other hard object).	1	2	3	4	5
13.	People in my family looked out for each other.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	People in my family said hurtful or insulting things to me.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I believe that I was physically abused.	1	2	3	4	5

	Never true	Rarely true	Some times true	Often true	Very Often true
<b>When I was growing up, . . .</b>					
16. I had the perfect childhood.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I got hit or beaten so badly that it was noticed by someone like a teacher, neighbor, or doctor.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Someone in my family hated me.	1	2	3	4	5
19. People in my family felt close to each other.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Someone tried to touch me in a sexual way or tried to make me touch them.	1	2	3	4	5

**When I was growing up, . . .**

21. Someone threatened to hurt me or tell lies about me unless I did something sexual with them.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I had the best family in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Someone tried to make me do sexual things or watch sexual things.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Someone molested me (took advantage of me sexually).	1	2	3	4	5
25. I believe that I was emotionally abused.	1	2	3	4	5

**When I was growing up, . . .**

26. There was someone to take me to the doctor if I needed it.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I believe that I was sexually abused.	1	2	3	4	5
28. My family was a source of strength and support.	1	2	3	4	5

**Appendix B-** The Recalled Childhood Gender Identity/Roles Questionnaire (Zucker et al., 2006)

**Form for Males**

1. 1.  
As a child, my favorite playmates were
  1. a. always boys (5)
  2. b. usually boys (4)
  3. c. boys and girls equally (3)
  4. d. usually girls (2)
  5. e. always girls (1)
  6. f. I did not play with other children
  
2. 2.  
As a child, my best or closest friend was
  1. a. always a boy (5)
  2. b. usually a boy (4)
  3. c. a boy or a girl (3)
  4. d. usually a girl (2)
  5. e. always a girl (1)
  6. f. I did not have a best or close friend
  
3. 3.  
As a child, my favorite toys and games were
  1. a. always "masculine" (5)
  2. b. usually "masculine" (4)
  3. c. equally "masculine" and "feminine" (3)
  4. d. usually "feminine" (2)
  5. e. always "feminine" (1)
  6. f. neither "masculine" or "feminine"

4. 4.  
Compared to other boys, my activity level was
1. a.  
very high (5)
  2. b. higher than average  
(4)
  3. c. average (3)
  4. d. lower than average  
(2)
  5. e.  
very low (1)
5. 5.  
As a child, I experimented with cosmetics (make-up) and jewelry
1. a.  
as a favorite activity (1)
  2. b.  
frequently (2)
  3. c. once-in-a-while (3)
  4. d.  
very rarely (4)
  5. e.  
never (5)
6. 6.  
As a child, the characters on TV or in the movies that I imitated or admired were
1. a. always girls or women (1)
  2. b. usually girls or women (2)
  3. c. girls/women and boys/men equally  
(3)
  4. d. usually boys or men (4)
  5. e.  
always boys or men (5)
  6. f.  
I did not imitate or admire characters on TV or in the movies
7. 7.  
As a child, I enjoyed playing sports such as baseball, hockey, basketball, and soccer
1. a. only with boys (5)

2. b. usually with boys (4)
  3. c. with boys and girls equally (3)
  4. d.  
usually with girls (2)
  5. e.  
only with girls (1)
  6. f.  
I did not play these types of sports
- 
8. 8.  
In fantasy or pretend play, I took the role
    1. a. only of boys or men (5)
    2. b. usually of boys or men (4)
    3. c. boys/men and girls/women equally (3)
    4. d. usually of girls or women (2)
    5. e. only of girls or women (1)
    6. f.  
I did not do this type of pretend play
- 
9. 9.  
In dress-up play, I would
    1. a. wear boys' or men's clothing all the time (5)
    2. b. usually wear boys' or men's clothing (4)
    3. c.  
half the time wear boys' or men's clothing and half the time wear girls' or women's clothing (3)
    4. d.  
usually wear girls' or women's clothing (2)
    5. e.  
wear girls' or women's clothing all the time (1)
    6. f.  
I did not do this type of play
- 
10. 10.  
As a child, I felt

1. a. very masculine (5)
2. b. somewhat masculine (4)
3. c. masculine and feminine equally (3)
4. d. somewhat feminine (2)
5. e. very feminine (1)
6. f. I did not feel masculine or feminine

11. 11.  
As a child, compared to other boys my age, I felt

1. a. much more masculine (5)
2. b. somewhat more masculine (4)
3. c. equally masculine (3)
4. d. somewhat less masculine (2)
5. e. much less masculine (1)

12. 12.  
As a child, compared to my brother, I felt

1. a. much more masculine (5)
2. b. somewhat more masculine (4)
3. c. equally masculine (3)
4. d. somewhat less masculine (2)
5. e. much less masculine (1)
6. f. I did not have a brother [Note: If you had more than one brother, make your comparison with the brother closest in age to you.]

13. 13.  
As a child, I

1. a. always resented or disliked my sister  
(1)
2. b. usually resented or disliked my sister  
(2)
3. c. sometimes resented or disliked my  
sister (3)
4. d. rarely resented or disliked my sister  
(4)
5. e. never resented or disliked my sister  
(5)
6. f.  
I did not have a sister [Note: If you had more than one sister, make your comparison with the sister  
closest in age to you.]

14. 14.  
As a child, my appearance (hair style, clothing, etc.) was

1. a. very masculine (5)
2. b. somewhat masculine  
(4)
3. c. equally masculine  
and feminine (3)
4. d. somewhat feminine  
(2)
5. e. very feminine (1)
6. f. neither masculine or  
feminine

15. 15.  
As a child, I

1. a.  
always enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (1)
2. b.  
usually enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (2)
3. c.  
sometimes enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (3)
4. d.  
rarely enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (4)
5. e.  
never enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (5)

16. 16.

As a child, I was

1. a. emotionally closer to my mother than to my father (1)
2. b. somewhat emotionally closer to my mother than to my father (2)
3. c. equally close emotionally to my mother and to my father (3)
4. d. somewhat emotionally closer to my father than to my mother (4)
5. e. emotionally closer to my father than to my mother (5)
6. f. not emotionally close to either my mother or to my father

17. 17.

As a child, I

1. a. admired my mother and my father equally (3)
2. b. admired my father more than my mother (4)
3. c. admired my mother more than my father (1)
4. d. admired neither my mother nor my father (2)

18. 18.

As a child, I had the reputation of a "sissy"

1. a. all of the time (1)
2. b. most of the time (2)
3. c. some of the time (3)
4. d. on rare occasions (4)
5. e. never (5)

19. 19.

As a child, I

1. a. always felt good about being a boy (5)

2. b. usually felt good about being a boy (4)
3. c. sometimes felt good about being a boy (3)
4. d. rarely felt good about being a boy (2)
5. e. never felt good about being a boy (1)
6. f. never really thought about how I felt being a boy

20. 20.  
As a child, I had the desire to be a girl but did not tell anyone

1. a. almost always (1)
2. b. frequently (2)
3. c. sometimes (3)
4. d. rarely (4)
5. e. never (5)

21. 21.  
As a child, I would tell others I wanted to be a girl

1. a. almost always (1)
2. b. frequently (2)
3. c. sometimes (3)
4. d. rarely (4)
5. e. never (5)

22. 22.  
As a child, I

1. a. always felt that my mother cared about me (1)
2. b. usually felt that my mother cared about me (2)

3. c. sometimes felt that my mother cared about me (3)
4. d. rarely felt that my mother cared about me (4)
5. e. never felt that my mother cared about me (5)
6. f. cannot answer because I did not live with my mother (or know her)

23. 23.

As a child, I

1. a. always felt that my father cared about me (1)
2. b. usually felt that my father cared about me (2)
3. c. sometimes felt that my father cared about me (3)
4. d. rarely felt that my father cared about me (4)
5. e. never felt that my father cared about me (5)
6. f. cannot answer because I did not live with my father (or know him)

### **Form for Females**

1. 1.  
As a child, my favorite playmates were
1. a. always boys (1)
2. b. usually boys (2)
3. c. boys and girls equally (3)
4. d. usually girls (4)
5. e. always girls (5)
6. f. I did not play with other children

2. 2.  
As a child, my best or closest friend was

1. a. always a boy (1)
2. b. usually a boy (2)
3. c. a boy or a girl (3)
4. d. usually a girl (4)
5. e. always a girl (5)
6. f. I did not have a best or close friend

3. 3. As a child, my favorite toys and games were

1. a. always "masculine" (1)
2. b. usually "masculine" (2)
3. c. equally "masculine" and "feminine" (3)
4. d. usually "feminine" (4)
5. e. always "feminine" (5)
6. f. neither "masculine" or "feminine"

4. 4. Compared to other girls, my activity level was

1. a. very high (1)
2. b. higher than average (2)
3. c. average (3)
4. d. lower than average (4)
5. e. very low (5)

5. 5.

As a child, I experimented with cosmetics (make-up) and jewelry

1. a.  
as a favorite activity (5)
2. b.  
frequently (4)
3. c. once-in-a-while (3)
4. d.  
rarely (2)
5. e.  
never (1)

6. 6.

As a child, the characters on TV or in the movies that I imitated or admired were

1. a. always girls or women (5)
  2. b. usually girls or women (4)
  3. c. girls/women and boys/men equally  
(3)
  4. d. usually boys or men (2)
  5. e.  
always boys or men (1)
  6. f.  
I did not imitate or admire characters on TV or in the movies
7. 7.  
As a child, I enjoyed playing sports such as baseball, hockey, basketball, and soccer
1. a. only with boys (1)
  2. b. usually with boys (2)
  3. c. with boys and girls equally (3)
  4. d.  
usually with girls (4)
  5. e.  
only with girls (5)
  6. f.  
I did not play these types of sports

8. 8.

In fantasy or pretend play, I took the role

1. a. only of boys or men (1)
2. b. usually of boys or men  
(2)

3. c. boys/men and girls/women equally (3)
  4. d. usually of girls or women (4)
  5. e. only of girls or women (5)
  6. f. I did not do this type of pretend play
- 
9. 9. In dress-up play, I would
    1. a. wear boys' or men's clothing all the time (1)
    2. b. usually wear boys' or men's clothing (2)
    3. c. half the time wear boys' or men's clothing and half the time wear girls' or women's clothing (3)
    4. d. usually wear girls' or women's clothing (4)
    5. e. wear girls' or women's clothing all the time (5)
    6. f. not do this type of play
- 
10. 10. As a child, I felt
    1. a. very masculine (1)
    2. b. somewhat masculine (2)
    3. c. masculine and feminine equally (3)
    4. d. somewhat feminine (4)
    5. e. very feminine (5)
    6. f. I did not feel masculine or feminine
- 
11. 11. As a child, compared to other girls my age, I felt
    1. a. much more feminine (5)

2. b. somewhat more feminine (4)
3. c. equally feminine (3)
4. d. somewhat less feminine (2)
5. e. much less feminine (1)

12. 12.

As a child, compared to my sister (closest to you in age), I felt

1. a. much more feminine (5)
2. b. somewhat more feminine (4)
3. c. equally feminine (3)
4. d. somewhat less feminine (2)
5. e. much less feminine (1)
6. f. I did not have a sister [Note: If you had more than one sister, make your comparison with the sister closest in age to you.]

13. 13.

As a child, I

1. a. always resented or disliked my brother (1)
2. b. usually resented or disliked my brother (2)
3. c. sometimes resented or disliked my brother (3)
4. d. rarely resented or disliked my brother (4)
5. e. never resented or disliked my brother (5)
6. f. I did not have a brother [Note: If you had more than one brother, make your comparison with the brother closest in age to you.]

14. 14.

As a child, my appearance (hair-style, clothing, etc.) was

1. a. very feminine (5)

2. b. somewhat feminine  
(4)
3. c. equally masculine  
and feminine (3)
4. d. somewhat masculine  
(2)
5. e. very masculine (1)
6. f. neither masculine or  
feminine

15. 15.

As a child, I

1. a. always enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (5)
2. b.  
usually enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (4)
3. c. sometimes enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (3)
4. d.  
rarely enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (2)
5. e.  
never enjoyed wearing dresses and other “feminine” clothes (1)

16. 16.

As a child, I was

1. a. emotionally closer to my mother than to my father (5)
2. b. somewhat emotionally closer to my mother than to my  
father (4)
3. c. equally close emotionally to my mother and to my  
father (3)
4. d. somewhat emotionally closer to my father than to my  
mother (2)
5. e. emotionally closer to my father than to my mother (1)
6. f. not emotionally close to either my mother or to my  
father

17. 17.

As a child, I

1. a. admired my mother and my father  
equally (3)

2. b. admired my father more than my mother (1)
3. c. admired my mother more than my father (4)
4. d. admired neither my mother nor my father (2)

18. 18.  
As a child, I had the reputation of a “tomboy”

1. a. all of the time (1)
2. b. most of the time (2)
3. c. some of the time (3)
4. d. on rare occasions (4)
5. e. never (5)

19. 19.  
As a child, I

1. a. always felt good about being a girl (5)
2. b. usually felt good about being a girl (4)
3. c. sometimes felt good about being a girl (3)
4. d. rarely felt good about being a girl (2)
5. e. never felt good about being a girl (1)
6. f. never really thought about how I felt being a girl

20. 20.  
As a child, I had the desire to be a boy but did not tell anyone

1. a. almost always (1)
2. b. frequently (2)
3. c. sometimes (3)
4. d. rarely (4)

5. e.  
never (5)

21. 21.  
As a child, I would tell others that I wanted to be a boy

1. a. almost always (1)

2. b.  
frequently (2)

3. c. sometimes (3)

4. d.  
rarely (4)

5. e.  
never (5)

22. 22.  
As a child, I

1. a. always felt that my mother cared about me  
(5)

2. b. usually felt that my mother cared about me  
(4)

3. c. sometimes felt that my mother cared about  
me (3)

4. d. rarely felt that my mother cared about me  
(2)

5. e. never felt that my mother cared about me  
(1)

6. f. cannot answer because I did not live with  
my mother (or know her)

23. 23.  
As a child, I

1. a. always felt that my father cared about me (1)

2. b.  
usually felt that my father cared about me (2)

3. c. sometimes felt that my father cared about me (3)

4. d.  
rarely felt that my father cared about me (4)

5. e. never felt that my father cared about me (5)

6. f. cannot answer because I did not live with my father (or  
know him)

**Appendix C-** The Psychopathic Personality Traits Scale-Revised (Boduszek et al.,2016)

Subscales:

1. Affective responsiveness: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25
2. Cognitive Responsiveness: 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26
3. Interpersonal Manipulation: 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27
4. Egocentricity: 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28

<b>Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Read each statement and put an X in the appropriate box.</b>		Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I don't care if I upset someone to get what I want.					
2	Before slagging someone off, I don't try to imagine and understand how it would make them feel.					
3	I know what to say or do to make another person feel guilty.					
4	I tend to focus on my own thoughts and ideas rather than on what others might be thinking.					
5	What other people feel doesn't concern me.					
6	I don't take into account the other person's feelings before I do or say something, even if they may be affected by my behaviour.					
7	I'm good at saying nice things to people, to get what I want out of them.					
8	I don't try to understand another person's opinion if I don't agree with it.					
9	Seeing people cry doesn't really upset me.					
10	I can guess how people will feel in different situations.					
11	I know how to fake emotions like pain and hurt to make other people feel sorry for me.					
12	No matter what happens and what people say, I'm usually the one who is right.					
13	I don't feel bad when a friend is going through a tough time.					
14	I can't really tell when someone is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.					
15	I sometimes provoke people on purpose to see how they react in certain situations.					
16	I'm happy to help somebody as long as I get something in return.					
17	I don't really feel compassion when people talk about the death of their loved ones.					
18	I find it difficult to understand what other people feel.					
19	I'm good at pretending that I like someone if this will get me what I want.					

**Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Read each statement and put an X in the appropriate box.**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20	Something has to benefit me otherwise it I'm not willing to do it.					
21	Seeing somebody suffer doesn't distress me.					
22	I can see when someone is hiding what they really feel.					
23	I would lie to someone if this gets me what I want.					
24	I like it when people do as I say, regardless of whether I'm right or wrong.					
25	It doesn't really bother me to see somebody in pain.					
26	I find it hard to understand why some people get very upset when they lose someone close to them.					
27	I'm good at getting people to do what I want, even if they don't want to at first.					
28	How others feel is irrelevant to me, as long as I feel good.					

**Appendix D** The Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (Kachel and Steffens, 2016)

1. I consider myself as...

[Ich empfinde mich selbst als...]

2. Ideally, I would like to be...

[Idealerweise wäre ich gern... ]

3. Traditionally, my interests would be considered as...

[Traditionellerweise würden meine Interessen angesehen werden als...]

4. Traditionally, my attitudes and beliefs would be considered as...

[Traditionellerweise würden meine Einstellungen und Ansichten angesehen werden als...]

5. Traditionally, my behavior would be considered as...

[Traditionellerweise würde mein Verhalten angesehen werden als...]

6. Traditionally, my outer appearance would be considered as...

[Traditionellerweise würde meine äußere Erscheinung angesehen werden als...]

Appendix E- Consent Form



**CONSENT FORM**

**Please take time to carefully read each statement below. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate. Please click on each statement if you wish to proceed with the study.**

I am aged 18 or over

I have been fully informed of the nature and the aims of this study as outlined in the information sheet version 1, dated: 17.03.2019

I consent to participating in this study

I understand I will be asked questions related to traumatic experiences in my childhood and will be prewarned about these questions again before commencing the study

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions for a period of ten years at the University of Huddersfield

I understand that no person other than the researcher and academic supervisors will have access to the information provided

I give permission for my anonymised data to be used

I understand that my identity will be protected in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report.

**Please print your name and sign in the box below if you fully understand all the information above and are fully satisfied to proceed with this study.**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date:</b>



## Childhood Experiences, Gender Roles and Personality Traits

### INFORMATION SHEET

It is important that you understand what this study involves and why it is being done before you decide to participate in this research. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and feel free to contact the primary researcher if you wish to ask more questions.

#### What is this study about?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects that gender role and childhood experiences has on personality traits.

#### What will I be asked to do?

First, I'll ask some general personal information about you such as your gender and age. This research uses questionnaires to collect information so you'll be asked to complete a total of 4 questionnaires. **The first questionnaire will assess your childhood gender roles, the second assesses personality traits, the third questionnaire involves questions regarding possible traumatic experiences in childhood (e.g. whether you have experienced any form of abuse such as sexual or emotional). This questionnaire aims to detect experiences of childhood abuse and neglect in adolescents and adults. This questionnaire asks questions relating to different types of abuse such as emotional abuse, physical and sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect that may have been experienced during childhood. Each of these subscales is composed of 5 items and asks you to rate statements using 1 of 5 response options: (1) "never true", (2) "rarely true", (3) "sometimes true", (4) "often true", and (5) "very often true". The material within the questionnaire may be distressing to some individuals, and some of the questions will require very personal and sensitive information relating to your childhood experiences. This questionnaire asks about topics that might be difficult or uncomfortable for you but if you think you would find them distressing remember participation in the study is voluntary and you don't have to take part. Once beginning the study, you will be prewarned about these types of questions again and as discussed above, participation is completely voluntary.** The final questionnaire will assess present day gender roles and ask questions based around your masculinity and femininity.

All questionnaires that will be used in this study are pre-validated questionnaires and I will not be asking you to explain your experiences in more detail.

#### How long will it take?

Each questionnaire approximately will take around 10 minutes to complete, a total of 40 minutes to complete all questions.

#### What if you don't like some of the questions?

The material within the questionnaire may cause **distress** to some individuals and some questions you will be asked are on **difficult** topics. **Some of the questions will require very personal and sensitive information relating to your childhood experiences. If for any reason you don't want to participate in this study, you can close down the questionnaire immediately. If you do wish to proceed, your responses will not be submitted until the very end of the questionnaire, so you are able to withdraw at any time.**



### **DEBRIEFING STATEMENT**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your participation is greatly appreciated.

#### **Why the research was important?**

This research aims to look at different personality traits and assesses different types of personality traits; how you respond to others, the amount you think about other people and their feelings, how warm you are as a person and towards others and how you feel towards certain situations with others.

The purpose of this research was to assess the effects that certain childhood experiences may have on personality traits. It also involved assessing how gender roles may be linked to certain personality traits. I hope that this research and research like this can provide further insight as to why individuals may develop certain personality traits. Although previous research has shown that traumatic experiences in childhood are associated with certain personality characteristics in later life, it is unclear as to what part gender roles plays in this relationship.

The purpose of this study was:

- To examine the relationship between childhood abuse and personality traits
- To examine the relationship between gender roles and personality traits
- To assess whether gender roles change over time and the potential reasons to this

#### **What if I want to withdraw my data now?**

If you wish to withdraw your data, please email me (contact details provided below) with your unique 6-digit code and all your data will be removed from the study. Please note that data can only be removed prior to the survey ending date which is the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

Please also be reassured that the information collected from this research will be kept secure and any identifying material such as names will be removed, ensuring anonymity. When the survey closes your data will remain anonymous and your information will be unidentifiable. However, please note if you wish to have your data removed from the study at any point your anonymity at this point will be lost.

#### **What if I need some support after completing this study?**

**If you have been affected by any of the material presented within this survey, further information, advice, and support are available from the following services:**

#### **Samaritans**

Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK  
Chris, PO Box 90 90  
Stirling FK8 2SA 116  
123 (Freephone)  
jo@samaritans.org  
samaritans.org

24-hour support for anyone experiencing distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

## **Victim Support**

0808 1689 111 (Mon to Fri: 8pm to 8am, Sat to Sun: 24-hour service). [supportline@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:supportline@victimsupport.org.uk) [victimsupport.org.uk](http://victimsupport.org.uk)

Online self-referral is available [here](#).

Victim Support is a charity that provides support and information to people affected by crime, including rape and sexual abuse, as a victim or a witness.

## **NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood)**

Telephone: 0808 801 0331 (freephone)  
[napac.org.uk](http://napac.org.uk)

Support, advice and guidance for adult survivors of any form of childhood abuse – sexual, physical or emotional

## **TANSAL (The Abuse Network Survivor Aid Links)**

[tansal.50megs.com](http://tansal.50megs.com)

Provides information on books, training, UK events and links for survivors of sexual, physical, emotional or mental abuse and neglect during childhood, and those supporting survivors.

## **What if I think of further questions about the research?**

Feel free to email me with any questions or if you would prefer to speak with my project supervisors, their details alongside mine are listed below.

**Researcher:** Aisha Hussain

Email: [Aisha.Hussain@hud.ac.uk](mailto:Aisha.Hussain@hud.ac.uk)

Contact: 07741633515

### **Supervisors:**

Dr Dara Mojtahedi

Email: [Dara.Mojtahedi@hud.ac.uk](mailto:Dara.Mojtahedi@hud.ac.uk)

Derrol-Kola Palmer

Email: [D.kola-palmer@hud.ac.uk](mailto:D.kola-palmer@hud.ac.uk)

## Appendix G- Ethical Approval

School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) Application - Aisha Hussain (MSc by Res) - SREP/2019/049

2 ✓

23 KB

Dear Aisha,

The review of your SREP Application has now been undertaken and I have been asked to advise you that your SREP Application has been **approved subject to amendments**.

The attached document contains essential amendments which reflect concerns expressed by our reviewers (listed on the left of the document) – you are required to complete the relevant box on the right hand side of the document to explain how you have addressed the reviewers' concerns. Please refer in the box to any additional documents you are revising in response to the amendment, and submit these documents too. There is no need to resubmit an amended version of your original SREP Application Form. Please email your completed Amendments Form along with any accompanying revised paperwork to [hhs\\_srep@hud.ac.uk](mailto:hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk) within the next month – I will then forward your amended application onto your reviewers for their feedback.

Please also be advised of the following GDPR requirements:

As part of your legal obligations to research participants, prior to embarking on any research study that involves the handling of personal (i.e. identifying) data, you are required to inform them of the following:

- The University of Huddersfield is responsible for the secure management of the data i.e. the 'data controller'
- The legal basis for the collection of the data is usually 'a task in the public interest'.
- The researcher or research team (including transcribers) is the recipient of the data i.e. 'the data processor'.
- The data subject should contact the University Solicitor (as the Data Protection Officer) if they wish to complain about the management of their data. If they are not satisfied, they may take their complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- You are also required to detail precisely how your data will be safely stored, and when it will be destroyed (i.e. as soon as it is no longer needed). You will also need to detail the additional safeguards you will put in place if the data will be transferred outside Europe.

Regards,

Kirsty  
(on behalf of SREP)

**Kirsty Thomson**  
Research Administrator

✉: [hhs\\_srep@hud.ac.uk](mailto:hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk)  
🌐: [www.hud.ac.uk](http://www.hud.ac.uk)

School of Human and Health Sciences R&E Office - R1/17  
University of Huddersfield | Queensgate | Huddersfield | HD1 3DH

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School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) Application - Aisha Hussain (MSc by Res) - SREP/2019/049

SE

SHUM Research Ethics <[hhs\\_srep@hud.ac.uk](mailto:hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk)>

Tue 14-May-19 2:51 PM

Aisha Hussain (Researcher); Dara Mojtahedi; Derrol Kola-Palmer ✓

👍 ↶ ↷ →

Dear Aisha,

The reviewers of your SREP Application have confirmed that you have addressed the issues raised to their satisfaction and your SREP Application has now been **approved outright**.

With best wishes for the success of your research project.

Regards,

Kirsty  
(on behalf of SREP)

**Kirsty Thomson**  
Research Administrator

✉: [hhs\\_srep@hud.ac.uk](mailto:hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk)  
🌐: [www.hud.ac.uk](http://www.hud.ac.uk)

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