

1 *Running head: Atypical Sexuality and Sexual Coercion Proclivity*

2
3 **Psychopathic Personality as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Atypical**
4 **Sexuality and Sexual Coercion Proclivity in the General Population**

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Abstract

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Being sexually coerced can have long-lasting psychological impacts on victims; with
perpetration strongly predicted by elevated psychopathic traits. Owing to recent legislative
developments in the United Kingdom that criminalize coercive control under the Domestic
Abuse Act (2021), this study offers a timely investigation into the mechanisms of sexual
coercion in domestic abuse across sexual abuse and coercive control. We used moderation
analysis ($n = 405$) to investigate whether sexual coercion proclivity was predicted by facets of
atypical sexuality (non-clinical elevated levels of sex drive, sexual sadism, and sexual
masochism), and whether this relationship was moderated by psychopathic personality traits
specifically the factor one components, which encompasses interpersonal and affective
characteristics). Psychopathic personality traits significantly moderated the positive
association between sex drive and sexual coercion proclivity, and between sexual sadism and
sexual coercion proclivity in males (but not females), but psychopathic personality traits had
no such moderating effect in the sexual masochism model. Results are discussed in terms of
identifying risk factors of sexual coercion within a general population sample and
international application. Open data and a preprint of this paper are available at
[\[https://osf.io/xkcah/?view_only=134ff9c93ad24ba286515b348ce79c0c\]](https://osf.io/xkcah/?view_only=134ff9c93ad24ba286515b348ce79c0c).

Key words: *sex drive; paraphilic sexual fantasy; psychopathic personality traits; sexual coercion proclivity*

72 **Predictors of Sexual Coercion**

73 The motivation-facilitation model (Seto, 2019) outlines three primary sexual
74 motivations for the perpetration of sexual offending: paraphilia, high sex drive, and intense
75 mating effort, as well as trait factors (e.g., antisocial personality), state factors (e.g., alcohol
76 use), and situational factors (e.g., access to potential victims) that may facilitate these
77 motivations. Seto (2019) proposes that trait and state factors have both the potential to
78 increase and decrease the risk of sexual offending. For example, an individual motivated by
79 high sex drive may also have high levels of self-control, which may inhibit the desire to
80 sexually offend (Seto, 2019). Conversely, alcohol intoxication may reduce inhibitions, and
81 increase the risk of offending (Kraanen & Emmelkamp, 2011). Though the motivation-
82 facilitation model offers an explanation for sexual offending broadly, facets within the model
83 alone are associated with sexual coercion (e.g., DeGue & DiLillo, 2004). Taking inspiration
84 from the motivation-facilitation model, exploring the combination of motivators and
85 facilitators may provide further understanding of sexually coercive behavior.

86

87 ***Atypical Sexuality***

88 Non-clinical levels of elevated sex drive and paraphilia are often described as ‘atypical
89 sexuality’ (Seto, 2019). Sex drive is the frequency in which an individual desires to engage in
90 sexual activity (Baughman et al., 2014). Further, elevated levels of sex drive can be attributed
91 to hypersexuality (Kafka, 2010), which may motivate one to commit a sexual offense if their
92 desire for sex outweighs their inhibition to use coercive behavior or engage in non-
93 consensual activity (Pullman et al., 2016). Importantly, however, high sex drive does not
94 necessarily suggest pathology (Pullman et al., 2016), and varies throughout the general
95 population (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2001). Whilst hypersexuality has been identified as a risk
96 factor within forensic and clinical populations, exploring non-clinical levels of high sex drive

97 in relation to attitudes towards sexually coercive behavior within the general population may
98 facilitate a greater understanding of behavioral onset.

99 In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5; APA, 2013),
100 paraphilias reflect an intense and persistent atypical sexual interest towards activities,
101 persons, and objects. Sexual interests can be indexed through the content of sexual urges,
102 thoughts, behaviors, and fantasies (Seto et al., 2021). Sexual fantasy is defined as mental
103 imagery found to be sexually arousing (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995) and is indicative of
104 healthy sexual functioning (Bartels & Harper, 2018). That is, a lack of sexual fantasizing is a
105 major component of hypoactive sexual disorders in both males and females (Nutter &
106 Condron, 1983, 1985), and persistent sexual fantasizing is a core aspect of hypersexuality
107 (Dyer & Olver, 2016; Kafka, 2010; Walton & Bhullar, 2018). Paraphilic interests have been
108 identified as a significant risk factor in sexual offending (Seto, 2019), with sexual sadism
109 specifically being linked to sexual coercion (e.g., Mokros et al., 2019).

110 Sexual sadism is a form of sexual fantasy that includes *inflicting* physical and/or emotional
111 abuse for sexual pleasure, with manifestations thereof ranging from sadistic acts between
112 consenting partners to the abuse of non-consenting victims (Kirsch & Becker, 2007; Mokros
113 et al., 2014). According to the DSM-5 (APA, 2013), sexual sadism qualifies as a paraphilic
114 disorder if fantasies and urges cause personal distress or are acted out upon non-consenting
115 victims (Mokros et al., 2019). Though the prevalence of sexual sadism among those who
116 have committed sexual offenses is extremely difficult to determine (Higgs et al., 2021),
117 sexual sadism has been explored as a risk factor in sexual offending broadly (e.g., Mokros et
118 al., 2014), and sexual coercion more specifically (Baur et al., 2016). With Mokros et al.
119 (2019) suggesting concern with sexual sadism being consistent with sexual coercion, and
120 Seto et al. (2021) reporting a strong correlation between fantasizing about and engaging in

121 sadism, exploring such fantasies within the general population could provide insight into the
122 onset of sexually coercive behaviors.

123 Another paraphilia identified within the DSM-5 (APA, 2013) is sexual masochism.
124 Masochism differs from sadism in that it includes *receiving* physical and/or emotional abuse
125 for sexual pleasure (Glick & Meyers, 1988). Though masochism alone has received little
126 attention within extant literature as a predictor of sexual violence, the concept of
127 *sadomasochism* has been explored more thoroughly in this manner (e.g., Chapman-Haddock,
128 2012; Semerikova et al., 2019). The term sadomasochism represents a constellation of
129 behaviors related to power exchange and the infliction of pain within a sexual context
130 (Williams, 2006), and encompasses both sadism and masochism.

131 Although paraphilias are prevalent among populations who have offended and who are
132 categorized as high risk (e.g., Woodworth et al., 2013), paraphilic sexual fantasy is
133 commonplace within the general population. Joyal & Carpentier (2017) found that almost
134 half of their general community sample (46.3%) reported a desire to engage in at least one
135 paraphilic behaviour, with 23.8% and 7.1% reporting a desire to engage in masochism and
136 sadism, respectively. Items that participants were provided with that measure sadism and
137 masochism included examples of sexual behaviors that could be interpreted as consenting or
138 non-consenting (e.g., “Have you ever been sexually aroused by making someone suffer?”).
139 This does highlight a difficulty in researching sadism in relation to sexually coercive
140 behaviors, as some sadistic behaviors would be considered coercive if consent is not given
141 (Mokros et al., 2019), and in a research environment, it may not be possible to determine
142 whether a participant has interpreted an item to rate as consensual or non-consensual. This
143 concern is further complicated when considering overlaps between sadism and psychopathy.

144

145 ***Psychopathy***

146 Psychopathy is a neurodevelopmental disorder frequently associated with illegal activity
147 and characterized by a constellation of affective, interpersonal, lifestyle, and antisocial traits
148 (Cleckley, 1941; Hare & Neumann, 2008; Vitacco, 2014). Though a formal diagnosis of
149 psychopathy has an estimated global prevalence of around one percent (De Brito et al., 2021),
150 trait-based indices of psychopathy exist on a continuum within the general population
151 (Nummenmaa et al., 2021). Whereas the affective and interpersonal facets (also known as
152 factor one psychopathic traits) reflect deficits in empathy and the use of manipulation, the
153 lifestyle and antisocial facets (also known as factor two psychopathic traits) reflect impulsive
154 and irresponsible behavior and the propensity to lead a parasitic lifestyle (Anderson & Kiehl,
155 2014; De Brito et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2022). These constructs map onto Hare’s (2003)
156 two-factor model of psychopathy and are captured within the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised
157 (PCL-R; Hare, 2003); the most widely used measure of psychopathy in forensic and clinical
158 settings (Collison et al., 2016).

159 Though considered the ‘gold standard’ of psychopathy testing (Vitacco et al., 2005), the
160 PCL-R is not without criticism as it lacks efficacy in measuring comparable manifestations of
161 psychopathic traits within the general population (Skeem & Cooke, 2010). Indeed, the
162 proliferation of research on psychopathic personality within the general population (e.g., Fido
163 et al., 2020; Lynam et al., 2011) has facilitated the development of measures such as the Self-
164 Report Psychopathy Scale and its associated short form (SRP4/SRP4 SF; Paulhus et al.,
165 2017). Such scales offer a comprehensive measure of psychopathic traits within non-clinical
166 and non-offending samples, and explicitly map onto the earlier-defined dimensions of the
167 PCL-R (Seara-Cardoso et al., 2020). Furthermore, the SRP SF has been praised for
168 effectively measuring factor one psychopathic personality traits – such as lack of empathy –

169 that are considered to be central to the construct of psychopathy (McCuish et al., 2021; Seara-
170 Cardoso et al., 2012).

171 Psychopathy predicts aggression in populations with and without criminal convictions
172 (Blais et al., 2014), and has been considered a risk factor for crime more broadly for decades
173 (Vitacco et al., 2014). Further, the presence of psychopathic traits has been implicated in
174 physical (Olver & Wong, 2006) and image-based (Fido et al., 2021, 2022) sexual abuse, as
175 well as sexually coercive behavior (e.g., Camilleri et al., 2009; Centifanti et al., 2016; DeGue
176 et al., 2010; Hoffmann & Verona, 2021; Krupp et al., 2012; Prusik et al., 2021). Recently,
177 positive relationships have been identified between proclivity to commit sexual coercion and
178 psychopathic traits in forensic, clinical, and general populations (Hoffmann & Verona, 2021;
179 Prusik et al., 2021); particularly, traits that map onto factor one (Camilleri et al., 2009;
180 Centifanti et al., 2016; Jones & Olderbak, 2014). Therefore, psychopathic personality
181 presents a likely predictor of sexual violence, and so its relationship with sexual coercion
182 deserves further exploration - with a particular focus on interpersonal and affective traits.

183

184 **The Association Between Atypical Sexuality and Psychopathy**

185 As well as relating to sexual offending, elevated levels of sex drive are positively
186 correlated with elevated levels of psychopathic personality traits in forensic, clinical, and
187 general populations (e.g., Baughman et al., 2014; Brazil et al., 2023; Jonason et al., 2009).
188 That is, individuals with high levels of psychopathic personality have a higher-than-average
189 sex drive, which maps on to the position that individuals with high levels of psychopathic
190 traits have a stronger desire to procreate (Jonason et al., 2009; Patch & Figueredo, 2017).
191 Such desires might be realised through sexual coercion (Gladden et al., 2008). Within a
192 college sample of men, Brazil et al. (2023) found that both psychopathic personality and sex
193 drive were moderately and positively correlated with sexual assault proclivity. Thus, the

194 combination of elevated levels of psychopathic personality traits and a high sex drive, could
195 be indicative of the endorsement and use of sexually coercive tactics.

196 Psychopathy has also been positively associated with both everyday sadism (Meere &
197 Egan, 2017) and sexual sadism (e.g., Kirsch & Becker, 2007). While it is argued that there is
198 overlap between psychopathy and sadism measures (e.g., Blötner & Mokros, 2023), research
199 suggests that psychopathy and sadism are related, but distinguishable constructs (e.g., James
200 & Proulx, 2014). Psychopathy positively correlates with sexual sadism in forensic (e.g.,
201 Porter et al., 2003) and general population samples (e.g., Dinić et al., 2020). Though
202 psychopathy and sadism together have been explored within the general population, focus has
203 remained on behaviors such as aggression (e.g., Thomas & Egan, 2022) and antisocial
204 tendencies (e.g., March & Steele, 2020); while exploration of these constructs together in
205 relation to sexual violence within the general population is lacking.

206 Though research has recently explored the relationship between psychopathy and non-
207 sexual masochism (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2020) and sexual masochism (Greitemeyer,
208 2022), this relationship is yet to receive substantial academic attention. As with research
209 related to sexual offending, masochism is often explored in relation to psychopathy when
210 included within the construct of sadomasochism. This presents a limitation, as despite
211 findings suggesting an association between sadomasochism and psychopathic traits (e.g.,
212 Baughman et al., 2014; Mahadeshwar, 2021), this could be a result of sadism and masochism
213 being measured as one variable. A wealth of evidence exists demonstrating a relationship
214 between sadism and psychopathy (e.g., Mokros et al., 2011; Porter et al., 2003; Robertson &
215 Knight, 2014), with little research exploring the relationship between masochism and
216 psychopathy (e.g., Greitemeyer, 2022), which highlights a concern with the validity of such
217 findings. These conclusions could have been reached because of participants scoring highly
218 enough in sadism to elevate their sadomasochism scores. On the other hand, studies have also

219 found no significant relationship between sadomasochism and psychopathy (e.g., Cross &
220 Matheson, 2006; Skovran et al., 2010), and these results could have occurred for the same
221 reason. If participants are scoring highly on sadism items and low on masochism items, this
222 could lower their overall sadomasochism scores and impact the results. To address this
223 limitation, research should utilize alternative measures, such as the sexual fantasy
224 questionnaire-revised (SFQ-R; Bartels & Harper, 2018), which separates sadism and
225 masochism into different subscales. This would facilitate the exploration of how psychopathy
226 correlates with sadism and masochism separately, and identify whether sadism, masochism,
227 or both together are linked with psychopathy. Making this distinction is especially important
228 when exploring risk factors in committing sexual offenses, as it could influence
229 understanding of the onset of offending behavior, as well as treatment and rehabilitation
230 options.

231

232 **The Present Study**

233 To our knowledge, the present study is the first to explore the moderating role of
234 psychopathic personality in the previously established relationship between facets of atypical
235 sexuality and sexual coercion proclivity. Pearson correlations will be used to test for a
236 significant positive relationship between sexual coercion proclivity and sex drive, sadism,
237 and masochism, with moderation analyses testing the hypotheses that psychopathic
238 personality will strengthen these relationships in both males and females. Moreover, with
239 extant literature mainly exploring the relationship that masochism has with psychopathy and
240 sexual abuse when it is included in the concept of sadomasochism, we used moderation
241 analysis to test a competing hypothesis. If sadomasochism has been reported on correctly, we
242 would expect that high levels of psychopathic personality will strengthen the relationship
243 between masochism and sexual coercion proclivity, in both males and females. If, however,

244 sadomasochism has not been recorded correctly, we would not expect to see this moderating
245 effect.

246

247

Methods

248 Participants

249 To determine our target sample size, an a priori power analysis was conducted using
250 G*Power (version 3.1.9.7). Assuming an anticipated small to medium effect size and a
251 standard alpha level of .05, a minimum of 345 participants would be required to have 80%
252 power in our analyses. A total of 417 individuals responded to the online survey, of whom n
253 = 405 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 29.73$ years, $SD = 10.38$; 57.3% female) met the required criteria
254 and were retained for analysis. We removed 12 participants due to non-completion of the
255 survey or because they did not meet the criteria to take part. Participants were recruited via
256 the crowdsourcing website *Prolific*. Inclusion criteria suggested that participants should be
257 aged 18 years or older and must have experienced consensual sexual activity. All completers
258 were reimbursed with £6/hour on average for their time. We have no reason to believe such
259 reimbursement impacted the quality of the data. Data was collected throughout March 2022.

260

261 Materials

262 *Demographics.* Participants provided their age and sex.

263

264 *Self-Report Psychopathy Scale 4 Short Form (SRP4 SF; Paulhus et al., 2017).* The
265 SRP4 SF consists of 29 items (e.g., “I’m a rebellious person” and “I never feel guilt over
266 hurting others”) measuring personality traits considered to be consistent with psychopathic
267 personality. It is an alternative to clinical measures of psychopathy and represents an
268 appropriate measure for non-clinical and non-offending samples (Seara-Cardoso et al., 2020);

269 it cannot be used for formal diagnosis. The questionnaire utilizes a five-point Likert scale
270 ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) and overall scores range from 29 to
271 145. The scale encompasses two factors that are comprised of two subscales each, and a total
272 score can also be calculated. “Factor one psychopathy” is calculated by adding the scores of
273 the [1] interpersonal (seven items) and [2] affective (seven items) subscales. “Factor two
274 psychopathy” is calculated by adding the scores of the [3] lifestyle (seven items) and [4]
275 antisocial (eight items) subscales. Higher scores indicated non-clinical elevated levels of
276 psychopathic traits. Though we also collected data that would allow us to calculate factor two
277 scores (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$) and total psychopathy scores (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$) of
278 participants, analyses within the present study only used factor one scores (Cronbach’s $\alpha =$
279 $.84$), which we refer to as psychopathic personality traits in our analyses.

280

281 *Sexual Fantasy Questionnaire Revised (SFQ-R; Bartels & Harper, 2018)*. The SFQ-R
282 consists of 62 items (e.g., “Being spanked” and “Giving oral sex”) that measure the
283 frequency in which individuals fantasize about certain sexual scenarios. It also utilizes a five-
284 point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (Have never fantasised about) to 4 (Have fantasised about
285 very frequently) and produces six scores for participants: [1] masochistic; [2] sadistic; [3]
286 impersonal; [4] courtship disorder; [5] bodily functions; and [6] romantic. The SFQ-R
287 includes 28 items that produce scores for other sexual fantasies (e.g., bodily functions) not
288 relevant to the present study, as we wanted to maintain focus on sadism and masochism.
289 These 28 items were removed to make the survey shorter, and participants were only required
290 to provide responses to the 34 items that produced scores for sadistic (e.g., “Spanking others”
291 and “Physically hurting the person you are having sex with”) and masochistic (e.g., “Being
292 humiliated” and “Being physically attacked”). Some of the items included within the sadistic
293 subscale could be attributed to sexual coercion (e.g., “Forcing somebody to have sex against

294 their will” and “Sex while threatening someone with a weapon”). The SFQ-R is not a clinical
295 measure and cannot be utilized in the diagnosis of paraphilic disorders. The analysis used the
296 sadistic (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .91$) and masochistic scores (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$) of participants. In
297 this scale, high scores equated to non-clinical high levels of sadism and masochism.

298

299 ***Sex Drive Questionnaire (SDQ; Ostovich & Sabini, 2004).*** The SDQ comprises four
300 Likert scale questions that measure sex drive. Question one asks participants how often they
301 experience sexual desire and is scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never)
302 to 7 (Several times a day). Questions two and three ask participants how often they orgasm
303 and masturbate in an average month and are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from
304 1 (Never) to 5 (Several times a day). Question four asks participants to rate their sex drive
305 compared with the average person of their age and gender and is scored on a seven-point
306 Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very much lower) to 7 (Very much higher). Total score for the
307 SDQ ranges from 1 to 24. Ratings from each question were compiled to create a sex drive
308 score for participants (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$). A high sex drive score indicated non-clinical
309 elevated levels of sex drive.

310

311 ***Tactics to Obtain Sex Scale (TOSS; Camilleri et al., 2009).*** The TOSS consists of 31
312 items measuring coaxing (e.g., Massage their neck) and coercive (e.g., Threaten to leave)
313 tactics used to obtain sex from a reluctant partner. This questionnaire employs a five-point
314 Likert scale ranging from 1 (Definitely not) to 5 (Definitely), and each item has two ratings.
315 The first part asks participants to rate *how effective* they think each item would be in
316 obtaining sex from a reluctant partner. The second part asks participants to rate *how likely*
317 they would be to use each item. The scale creates two scores for each participant by totalling
318 the responses to each question; COAX and COERCE. There are 12 items that measure

319 COAX and 19 items that measure COERCE. Total COERCE scores range from 1 to 95. The
320 analysis only required the COERCE subscale, and this was calculated by totalling
321 participants' responses to *how likely* they would be to use each item, producing a sexual
322 coercion proclivity score (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$). High COERCE scores indicate higher levels
323 of proclivity to commit sexual coercion.

324

325 **Procedure**

326 Participants provided consent via button press on an online survey hosted by Qualtrics.
327 After answering demographic questions, participants were then presented with the SRP4 SF,
328 SFQ-R, SDQ and TOSS in a randomized order to reduce order effects. We only included
329 items in the sadism and masochism subscales of the SFQ-R to reduce participant fatigue. On
330 completion of the survey, participants were directed to a debrief screen. This procedure
331 followed the ethical standards of the British Psychological Society and was approved by a
332 central university ethics committee (Ref: ETH2122-3030).

333

334 **Analysis Plan**

335 Data were screened to check for assumptions of normality and homogeneity, and a
336 bivariate correlation was used to test for linear relationships between each of the variables.
337 Moderation analyses were conducted using Model 1 of the PROCESS plugin for SPSS
338 (version 4.1; Hayes, 2022) to test the hypotheses. We conducted six separate moderation
339 analyses to test the hypotheses using three models and each model was conducted twice; once
340 for males and once for females. Models one and two analyzed the relationship between sex
341 drive and sexual coercion proclivity, with psychopathic personality traits as a moderating
342 variable. Models three and four duplicated this but used sadistic sexual fantasy as the
343 predictor variable, and models five and six were the same but using masochistic sexual

344 fantasy as the predictor variable. For transparency, though we pre-registered our analyses
345 (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/AVMFS>), upon initial review and feedback of the
346 manuscript, it became apparent that deviating from this pre-registration would allow us to
347 increase the impact and applicability of our results. We initially pre-registered our study
348 utilizing factor one psychopathy as a predictor variable (X), sadism, masochism, and sex
349 drive as moderating variables (W), and sexual coercion as an outcome variable (Y). We
350 hypothesized that sadism, masochism, and sex drive would significantly moderate
351 (strengthen) the relationship between factor one psychopathy and sexual coercion. Upon
352 receiving feedback from reviewers, we amended our analyses to those outlined above. These
353 changes also included the renaming of “factor one psychopathy” to “psychopathic personality
354 traits”, and the renaming of “sexual coercion” to “sexual coercion proclivity”. In the pre-
355 registration, we outlined that we would use the COERCE sub-scale of the TOSS in its
356 entirety, but after receiving feedback on our manuscript, we removed the *how effective*
357 questions from the scoring, and only utilized the *how likely* questions, as outlined in the
358 materials. This allowed us to maintain focus on examining participants’ likelihood of
359 engaging in such behaviors.

360

361

Results

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Data were screened and in the instances of participants ($n = 4$) missing <5% data, the sample mean was calculated for each missing item, as guided by Field (2013). Histograms indicated no concerns with kurtosis but indicated that data for psychopathic personality traits, sadism, masochism, and sexual coercion proclivity scores were positively skewed; reflecting expected distributions in the general population. Sex drive scores were normally distributed. Outliers were observed for each variable, but these were not of concern as the constructs we measured have variability within the general population.

369

370 **Descriptive Statistics and Sex Differences.** Descriptive statistics were used to calculate
371 the means and standard deviations (SD) for each variable, and an independent samples *t*-test
372 was conducted to test for differences in males and females (see Table 1). Males scored
373 statistically higher than females in sex drive, sadism, and psychopathic personality traits and
374 females scored statistically higher in masochism. The effect size for sex differences in sex
375 drive and psychopathic personality traits was large, and the effect size for sex differences in
376 sadism and masochism was medium (Cohen, 1988). There was no statistically significant
377 difference in sexual coercion proclivity scores between males and females.

378

[Insert Table 1 Around Here]

380

381 **Correlations.** Bivariate Pearson correlations were calculated between sex drive, sadism,
382 masochism, psychopathic personality traits, and sexual coercion proclivity (see Table 2). For
383 both males and females, all variables were significantly and positively correlated with the
384 exception of psychopathic personality traits and sex drive.

385

[Insert Table 2 Around Here]

387

388 **Moderation Analyses.** We conducted six moderation analyses using Hayes (2022)
389 PROCESS v4.1 macro for SPSS. In each analysis, psychopathic personality traits was the
390 moderating variable (W) and sexual coercion proclivity was the dependent variable (Y). The
391 analyses utilized three focal predictors (X); sex drive, sexual sadism, and sexual masochism.
392 As per Fido et al. (2021), each model was conducted twice, once for male responders and
393 once for female responders. Model coefficients are presented in Tables 3, 5, and 7. Simple
394 slopes analyses are presented in Tables 4 and 6, and Figures 1 and 2.

420 personality traits were significant predictors of sexual coercion proclivity, and the interaction
421 effect was positive and significant (see Table 5). This suggests that psychopathic personality
422 traits strengthened the relationship between sadism and sexual coercion proclivity. The
423 interaction was explored using a simple slopes analysis (Aiken et al., 1991; see Table 6). This
424 revealed that for low (-1SD), medium (Mean), and high (+1SD) levels of psychopathic
425 personality traits, there was a significant positive relationship between sadism and sexual
426 coercion proclivity. This indicates that at varying levels of psychopathic personality traits,
427 sadism was a predictor of sexual coercion proclivity.

428

429 [Insert Tables 5 & 6 Around Here]

430 [Insert Figure 2 Around Here]

431

432 For females, the overall model was significant ($F(3,228) = 6.297, p < .001$), producing a
433 medium to large effect size ($R^2 = .14$). Though sadism and psychopathic personality traits
434 were both significant predictors of sexual coercion proclivity, the interaction effect was non-
435 significant, suggesting that psychopathic personality traits did not moderate the positive
436 relationship between sadism and sexual coercion proclivity in females (see Table 5).

437

438 **Masochism.** For males, the overall model was significant ($F(3,169) = 5.041, p = .002$),
439 producing a medium to large effect size ($R^2 = .16$). As shown in Table 7, both masochism and
440 psychopathic personality traits were significant predictors of sexual coercion proclivity.
441 However, the interaction effect was non-significant, indicating that psychopathic personality
442 traits did not moderate the positive relationship between masochism and sexual coercion
443 proclivity in males.

444 For females, the overall model was significant ($F(3,228) = 5.135, p < .001$), producing a
445 small to medium effect size ($R^2 = .07$). Though psychopathic personality traits were a
446 significant predictor of sexual coercion proclivity, masochism was not (see Table 7). The
447 interaction effect was also non-significant, suggesting that psychopathic personality traits did
448 not moderate the positive relationship between masochism and sexual coercion proclivity.

449

450

[Insert Table 7 Around Here]

451

452

Discussion

Overview of Key Findings

454 This study investigated whether personality traits associated with factor one psychopathy
455 moderated relationships between indices of atypical sexuality and sexual coercion proclivity.
456 The analyses conducted within the study deviated from those pre-registered, in which we
457 initially planned to test whether indices of atypical sexuality moderated the relationship
458 between factor one psychopathy and sexual coercion, following feedback from reviewers.
459 These changes have strengthened the manuscript and increased the impact of the research in
460 line with the current literature. The association between sex drive and sexual coercion
461 proclivity, and the association between sadism and sexual coercion proclivity were both
462 strengthened in males who scored high on psychopathic personality traits, which supported
463 our hypothesis. Psychopathic personality traits did not, however, moderate the association
464 between masochism and sexual coercion proclivity (in neither males nor females), thus
465 providing evidence against our hypothesis.

466 The positive associations between sexual coercion proclivity and sex drive, sadism, and
467 masochism (as observed in both males and females) supports existing claims that atypical
468 sexuality may be a risk factor in engaging in sexual offending (e.g., Mokros et al., 2014; Seto,

469 2019) and sexual coercion specifically (e.g., Baur et al., 2016). Moreover, psychopathy is
470 associated with short-term mating strategies and a strong desire to procreate (e.g., Jonason et
471 al., 2009; Patch & Figueredo, 2017) and in the context of sexually abusive behaviors, may
472 manifest in an increased likelihood of the use of sexual coercion. Thus, the positive
473 association between psychopathic personality traits and sexual coercion proclivity supports
474 the notion that psychopathic personality traits may be a risk factor in perpetrating sexual
475 coercion (e.g., Camilleri et al., 2009; Centifanti et al., 2016; Hoffmann & Verona, 2021).

476 We hypothesized that psychopathic personality traits would strengthen the relationship
477 between sex drive and sexual coercion proclivity. Though we report a significant and positive
478 relationship between sex drive and sexual coercion proclivity, there was no significant
479 relationship between sex drive and psychopathic personality traits. Despite previous literature
480 suggesting individuals with high levels of psychopathic traits have a higher-than-average sex
481 drive (Baughman et al., 2014; Jonason et al., 2009), regardless of the measure of psychopathy
482 used, our findings of no relationship between psychopathic personality traits and sex drive
483 were not overly surprising. While there is a positive association between psychopathic
484 personality traits and sex drive, this does not mean that individuals with low levels of
485 psychopathic personality traits cannot also have elevated levels of sex drive. Interestingly,
486 sex drive was not a significant predictor of sexual coercion proclivity, in either males or
487 females, but psychopathic personality traits significantly strengthened the relationship
488 between sex drive and sexual coercion proclivity in males. Thus, suggesting that the
489 combination of elevated levels of sex drive and psychopathic personality traits may increase
490 the risk of sexual coercion, and needs further exploration.

491 We also posited that psychopathic personality traits would strengthen the relationship
492 between sexual sadism and sexual coercion proclivity, due to the previously established
493 relationships between psychopathy and sexual sadism (e.g., Mokros et al., 2011; Porter et al.,

494 2003; Robertson & Knight, 2014), and psychopathy and sexual coercion proclivity (e.g.,
495 Camilleri et al., 2009; Centifanti et al., 2016). As expected, we found that males reporting
496 higher levels of sexual sadism and psychopathic personality traits reported higher levels of
497 sexual coercion proclivity. However, this was not the case for females. This was unexpected,
498 as both sadism and psychopathic personality traits were found to be predictors of sexual
499 coercion proclivity in females, but the interaction effect of the two was non-significant. These
500 results suggest that males with elevated levels of psychopathic personality traits and sexually
501 sadistic behaviors may be at an increased risk of using sexual coercion.

502 The results of our masochism model, however, was not unexpected. For male participants,
503 both sexual masochism and psychopathic personality traits were significant predictors of
504 sexual coercion proclivity, but the interaction was non-significant. For female participants,
505 psychopathic personality traits were a significant predictor of sexual coercion proclivity,
506 masochism was not, and the interaction effect was non-significant. Given the nature of
507 masochistic behaviors, and as there existed no literature that explores the association sexual
508 masochism alone has with psychopathy and/or sexual abuse when we pre-registered our
509 original hypotheses, our initial predictions were formulated based on previous mixed findings
510 when investigating the association sadomasochism has with psychopathy and/or sexual abuse
511 (e.g., Baughman et al., 2014; Semerikova et al., 2019). Since publication of our original
512 hypotheses, Greitemeyer (2022) reported an association between psychopathy and sexual
513 masochism.

514

515 **Interpretation of Findings**

516 In this section, we offer potential explanations as to why, [i] bivariate correlations
517 supported our first hypothesis but demonstrated no associations between psychopathic
518 personality traits and sex drive in males or females, [ii] psychopathic personality traits did not

519 moderate the relationship between masochism and sexual coercion proclivity in neither males
520 nor females, and [iii] psychopathic personality traits moderated the associations between sex
521 drive and sexual coercion proclivity, and sadism and sexual coercion proclivity in males but
522 not females. Sex differences will also be explored in terms of atypical sexuality, psychopathic
523 personality traits, and sexual abuse to offer an explanation for these findings.

524

525 *Sex Drive, Psychopathic Personality, and Sexual Coercion Proclivity*

526 Drawing focus to specific psychopathic personality traits, instead of exploring
527 psychopathy overall, might explain point [i]. Factor one psychopathic personality
528 encompasses pathological lying, manipulation, superficial charm, lack of remorse and
529 empathy, and shallow affect (Hare, 2003), each of which can contribute to the perpetration of
530 sexual abuse and coercive control (e.g., Hoffmann & Verona, 2021). The affective facet
531 described by factor one traits, in particular, is a predictor of sexual violence (Krstic et al.,
532 2018). Therefore, our observed relationship between psychopathic personality traits and
533 sexual coercion proclivity suggests that these personality traits may be a risk factor in the
534 perpetration of such behaviors. Psychopathic personality traits, however, were not associated
535 with sex drive when testing for correlations. Though we expected to see an association
536 between psychopathic personality traits and sex drive based on the existing literature
537 (Baughman et al., 2014; Jonason et al., 2009), our null-result is likely a result of utilizing a
538 non-clinical sample with lower baseline scores.

539 When considering psychopathic personality traits as a moderator, the association between
540 sex drive and sexual coercion proclivity strengthened in males, but not females. Given that
541 males scored significantly higher in sex drive than females, consistent with previous findings
542 (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2001), this could explain why the interaction effect of sex drive and
543 psychopathic personality traits was a significant predictor of sexual coercion proclivity in

544 males, but not females. The moderation analysis results indicated that sex drive was not a
545 significant predictor of sexual coercion proclivity in either males or females, but following
546 the significant moderating effect of psychopathic personality traits in males, we explored this
547 further with a simple slopes analysis. This analysis indicated that sex drive was a significant
548 predictor of sexual coercion proclivity in males with high levels of psychopathic personality
549 traits, but not in males with low or mean levels of psychopathic personality traits; suggesting
550 that the combination of both elevated levels of sex drive and psychopathic personality traits
551 predict sexual coercion proclivity. These findings are consistent with the notion that
552 individuals with high levels of psychopathic personality traits have a stronger desire to
553 procreate (e.g., Jonason et al., 2009; Patch & Figuerdo, 2018), and that such desires could
554 manifest in sexual coercion as a means of success (Gladden et al., 2008).

555

556 *Paraphilia, Psychopathic Personality, and Sexual Coercion Proclivity*

557 Sexual sadism is a predictor of sexual coercion (Baur et al., 2016), and positive
558 correlations between psychopathic personality and sexual coercion are frequently reported in
559 both clinical and non-clinical samples (e.g., Camilleri et al., 2009; DeGue et al., 2010; Krupp
560 et al., 2012). In males, our model indicated that both sadism and psychopathic personality
561 traits are indeed predictors of sexual coercion proclivity, however, the interaction between
562 sadism and psychopathic personality traits demonstrated a more robust predictor of such
563 behaviours. The role of psychopathic personality traits moderating the relationship between
564 sadism and sexual coercion proclivity could be attributed to already established associations
565 between psychopathy and sexual sadism (e.g., Porter et al., 2003; Woodworth et al., 2013),
566 and sadism and sexual offending (e.g., Berger et al., 1999; Chan & Beauregard, 2016; Reale
567 et al., 2017). Previous research demonstrates that individuals engaging in sexual sadism often
568 exhibit a lack of empathy and emotional deficits (e.g., Robertson & Knight, 2014); traits

569 which map onto psychopathic personality traits that we utilized within this study (Hare, 2003;
570 Paulhus et al., 2017). Furthermore, the interpersonal facet of psychopathy has been associated
571 with more paraphilic history in males convicted of sexual offenses (Krstic et al., 2018). This
572 might explain our findings that not only suggest a positive association between sadism and
573 psychopathic personality traits, but also that the interaction of the two can predict sexual
574 coercion proclivity. It is likely that deficits in emotion and empathy perpetuate sadistic
575 behaviours associated with sexual offending (Kirsch & Becker, 2007), which could account
576 for why psychopathic personality traits can be associated with both sexual sadism and sexual
577 offending.

578 Sexual masochism as a predictor of sexual violence has received little academic attention
579 and is typically included within research exploring sadomasochism (e.g., Chapman-Haddock,
580 2012; Semerikova et al., 2019). Furthermore, masochism has often been associated with
581 psychopathy when it is included in the concept of sadomasochism (e.g., Baughman et al.,
582 2014; Mahadeshwar, 2021), with research concluding that a relationship may exist between
583 psychopathy and masochism, specifically. This presents an issue within the literature, as
584 sadism and masochism are qualitatively different and are listed within the DSM-5 as separate
585 paraphilic disorders (APA, 2013). Though our bivariate correlations indicated significant
586 associations between masochism, and psychopathic personality traits and sexual coercion
587 proclivity, these were weak. The specific association between masochism and psychopathic
588 personality traits is, however, replicated elsewhere (Greitemeyer, 2022). This association may
589 be explained by the shallow affect trait within factor one psychopathy. A lack of emotion can
590 be attributed to a lack of fear (Hoppenbrouwers et al., 2016), which could provide an
591 explanation as to why individuals with psychopathic traits might seek sexual pleasure in
592 receiving abuse. To understand the results of our moderation analysis, we must first look at
593 the very nature of masochism. Masochism is the practice and/or fantasizing of receiving

594 abuse for sexual pleasure (Glick & Meyers, 1988), implying that masochists enjoy receiving
595 abuse as opposed to inflicting it. Therefore, offering an explanation as to why the interaction
596 masochism had with psychopathic personality traits did not predict sexual coercion
597 proclivity.

598

599 *Sex Differences*

600 In the absence of an abundance of contextual literature that has sampled female
601 participants, our *t*-tests indicated significant differences in sex drive, sadism, masochism, and
602 psychopathic personality traits scores between males and females. Males scoring significantly
603 higher in sex drive supports previous findings of such sex differences (e.g., Baumeister et al.,
604 2001). Consistent with our results demonstrating that males reported higher sadism and
605 females reported higher masochism, Joyal and Carpentier (2017) found that males reported a
606 higher prevalence of not only fantasizing about, but engaging in sexual sadism, and females
607 reported a higher prevalence of fantasizing about and engaging in sexual masochism. Further,
608 Bouchard et al. (2017) found that males were more likely to engage in sadism and females
609 were more likely to engage in masochism. As paraphilias can be predictors of sexual
610 offending (Seto, 2019; Woodworth et al., 2013), this could also explain our findings that
611 sadism predicted sexual coercion in males. Males scoring higher in psychopathic personality
612 traits also maps firmly onto existing literature (Coid et al., 2009; Neumann et al., 2012;
613 Verona & Vitale, 2019). Though males are more likely to engage in sexual coercion than
614 females (e.g., Gámez-Guadix et al., 2011; Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003), our results
615 indicated no significant sexual coercion proclivity -related sex difference. This supports the
616 suggestion that both males and females engage in sexual coercion (e.g., Prusik et al., 2021).
617 However, the results of our sex drive and sadism moderation models were only significant in
618 males, suggesting that males with elevated levels of indices associated with atypical sexuality

619 and psychopathic personality traits are more likely to engage in sexually coercive behavior
620 than females.

621

622 **Limitations and Future Directions**

623 Our findings should be discussed within the context of limitations. Our general population
624 sample means that results may not be directly applicable to individuals convicted of sexual
625 offenses and/or with a clinical diagnosis of psychopathy, hypersexuality, or paraphilic
626 disorder. This is particularly important when interpreting our findings in the analyses that
627 utilized sex drive as a variable, due to variability of sex drive within the general population,
628 and therefore, we advise caution when interpreting our findings in terms of psychopathy
629 literature. As such, we suggest future research replicates this study within clinical and/or
630 forensic settings.

631 Second, researching sexual sadism and sexual coercion presents challenges. For example,
632 scholars have argued that sexual sadism can be coercive in nature and there needs to be a
633 distinction between consensual sexual sadism and coercive sexual sadism (Mokros et al.,
634 2019). As we have highlighted difficulties in making these distinctions when using self-report
635 data, we suggest a need for further exploration of these constructs together in a more
636 controlled way. Furthermore, though we sought to explore the relationship between sadism
637 and psychopathic personality, the relationship sadism has with specific components of
638 psychopathic personality remains unclear. For example, Porter et al. (2003) reported an
639 association between sadism and factor one traits, but not factor two. Whereas, in a sample of
640 men convicted of rape, those categorized as ‘sexually sadistic’ scored significantly higher in
641 factor two than those who were not sexually sadistic, but there was no significant difference
642 in factor one scores between the two groups (Barbaree et al., 1994). Furthermore, Mokros et
643 al. (2011) found that sexual sadism was positively correlated with affective and antisocial

644 components of psychopathy, but not interpersonal and lifestyle. Therefore, we suggest future
645 research explores sadism with specific facets of psychopathy to address this.

646 Finally, our findings from the sex drive and sadism moderation models in males partially
647 mapped onto the motivation-facilitation model (Seto, 2019), in that atypical sexuality and
648 antisocial personality traits (psychopathic personality traits) predicted sexual coercion
649 proclivity. Though significant, this finding is limited because other facilitators from the
650 motivation-facilitation model were missing; state factors (e.g., alcohol use) and situational
651 factors (e.g., access to victims). We suggest that future research builds on our findings by
652 introducing such factors.

653

654 **Conclusion**

655 The findings of our sex drive and sadism moderation models are consistent with Seto's
656 (2019) motivation-facilitation model in that the combination of sex drive and paraphilia with
657 antisocial personality predicted sexual coercion. Identifying such risk factors is of great
658 importance to the prevention and reduction of sexual offending. Thus, highlighting the
659 importance of identifying and treating paraphilic disorders within already established
660 treatment programmes for those convicted of sexual offenses. Furthermore, there exists a
661 need for education surrounding sexual behaviors that are paraphilic to reduce the onset of
662 sexual offending. We also emphasize the importance of researching sadism and masochism
663 as separate variables to avoid conflicting findings that result in potentially inaccurate
664 conclusions. Future research should build on our findings to better understand the risk factors
665 associated with committing sexual offenses, and how this understanding can further inform
666 cross-cultural empirical research and international legislative changes.

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Table 1. Means, SD, sex differences, and effect sizes for sex drive, sadism, masochism, psychopathic personality traits, and sexual coercion proclivity.

Variable	Mean (SD) Total	Mean (SD) Males	Mean (SD) Females	Sex Differences	<i>d</i>
Sex Drive	15.51 (4.05)	17.45 (3.34)	14.06 (3.92)	9.147**	0.9
Sadism	5.35 (7.86)	7.16 (9.60)	4.00 (5.93)	4.078**	0.4
Masochism	7.41 (9.32)	5.62 (8.32)	8.75 (9.80)	-3.385*	0.4
PPT	26.49 (8.26)	29.72 (8.25)	24.08 (7.42)	7.219**	0.7
SCP	23.87 (6.53)	24.41 (6.92)	23.46 (6.21)	1.448	0.1

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$. PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits, SCP = Sexual Coercion Proclivity *d* = effect size.

Table 2. Pearson correlations between variables, split by sex.

	1	2	3	4	5
[1] Sex Drive	-	.192*	.155*	.114	.159*
[2] Sadism	.269***	-	.708***	.300***	.412***
[3] Masochism	.360***	.653***	-	.239**	.264***
[4] PPT	.075	.285***	.263***	-	.315***
[5] Sexual Coercion Proclivity	.139*	.333***	.170**	.241***	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Male correlations above the diagonal, female correlations below the diagonal.

PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits

Table 3. Moderation coefficients for males and females (sex drive model).

	Males				Females			
	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)
Sex Dive	.222 (.175)	1.271	.205	[-.123, .568]	.181 (.114)	1.578	.116	[-.045, .406]
PPT	.232 (.061)	3.770	<.001	[.110, .353]	.197 (.056)	3.505	.001	[.086, .308]
Int	.059 (.023)	2.537	.012	[.013, .104]	.012 (.013)	.932	.352	[-.013, .037]

Note. PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits, Int = Sex Drive X Psychopathic Personality Traits.

Table 4. Simple slopes analysis for males (sex drive model).

	Effect (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)
Low PPT	-.261 (.187)	-1.392	.166	[-.631, .109]
Mean PPT	.222 (.175)	1.271	.205	[-.123, .568]
High PPT	.705, (.314)	2.247	.026	[.086, 1.325]

Note. PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits. Effect refers to effects of X on Y at -1SD, Mean, and +1SD of the moderator. SE = Standard Error.

Table 5. Moderation coefficients for males and females (sadism model).

	Males				Females			
	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)
Sadism	.215 (.047)	4.578	<.001	[.122, .307]	.344 (.172)	2.000	.047	[.005, .682]
PPT	.162 (.051)	3.183	.002	[.062, .263]	.134 (.056)	2.406	.017	[.024, .243]
Int	.013 (.005)	2.758	.006	[.004, .022]	-.011 (.017)	-.660	.510	[-.044, .022]

Note. PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits, Int = Sadism X Psychopathic Personality Traits

Table 6. Simple slopes analysis for males (sadism model).

	Effect (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)
Low PPT	.109 (.047)	2.311	.022	[.016, .202]
Mean PPT	.215 (.047)	4.578	<.001	[.024, .243]
High PPT	.321 (.072)	4.476	<.001	[.179, .462]

Note. PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits. Effect refers to effects of X on Y at -1SD, Mean, and +1SD of the moderator. SE = Standard Error.

Table 7. Moderation coefficients for males and females (masochism model).

	Males				Females			
	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI (<i>B</i>)
Masochism	.152 (.071)	2.147	.033	[-.012, .293]	.074 (.048)	1.536	.126	[-.021, .169]
PPT	.211 (.061)	3.466	.001	[-.091, .282]	.177 (.053)	3.328	.001	[-.072, .282]
Int	.014 (.008)	1.613	.109	[-.003, .030]	-.001 (.007)	-.085	.932	[-.014, .012]

Note. PPT = Psychopathic Personality Traits. Int = Masochism X Psychopathic Personality Traits

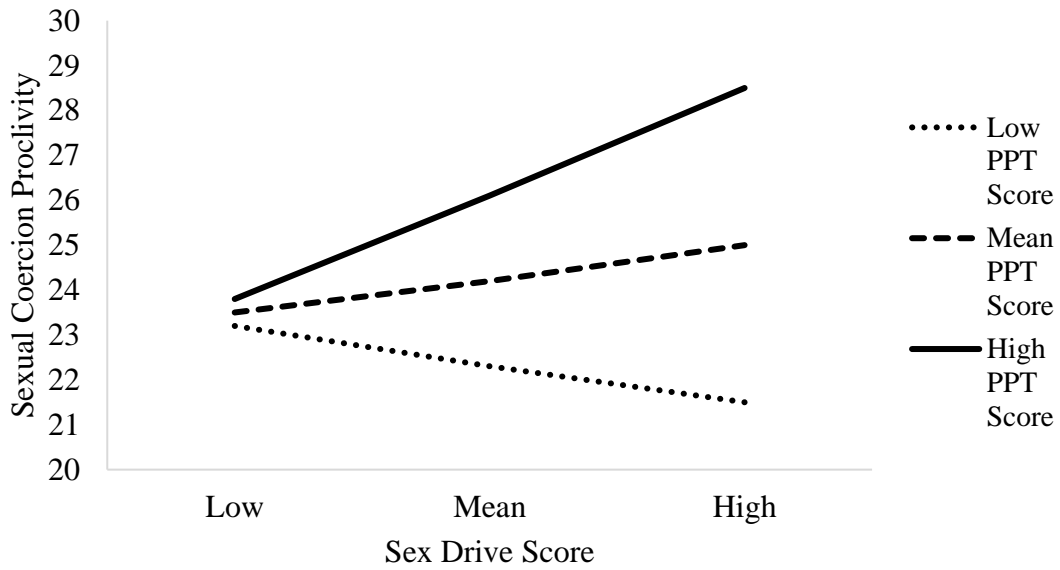


Figure 1. Simple slopes analysis for psychopathic personality traits moderating the relationship between sex drive and sexual coercion proclivity in males.

Low, Mean, High = -1SD, Mean, +SD.

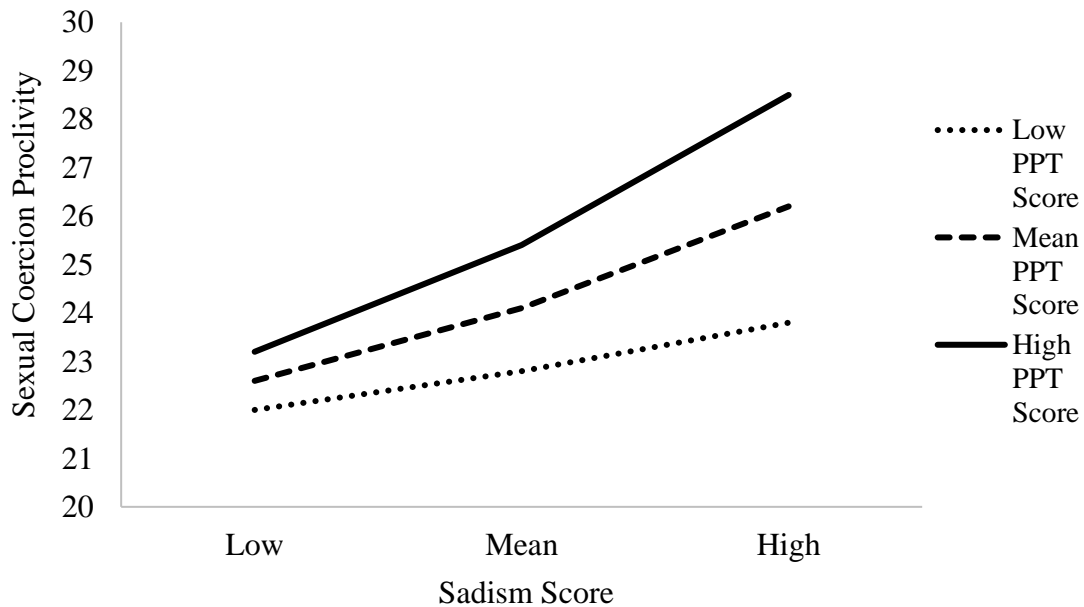


Figure 2. Simple slopes analysis for psychopathic personality traits moderating the relationship between sadism and sexual coercion proclivity in males.

Low, Mean, High = -1SD, Mean, +SD.