“It’s What Matters to Me”: Values, Relationships, and Psychopathic Traits in Young Adults.

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

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April 2024

Word count: 37,708
(excluding abstract, tables, references, and appendices)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the individuals who participated in this study with enthusiasm and openness. Your time and energy are greatly appreciated, and I hope you enjoyed the interview experience as much as I did.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my project supervisors, Dr Alex Sel and Professor Andrew Bateman, for their advice and support even when my questions were frequent and panicked at times. Thank you for your guidance and expertise, it was a pleasure to work with you both.

A massive shout-out to my fellow DClin Cohort 2021 trainees who have endured this journey with me over the last three years. Thank you for your humour and friendship – I wouldn't have survived this without you guys, and now you're stuck with me, sorry not sorry.

I am so grateful to my wonderful family for their continued love and encouragement. Thank you for your unwavering support throughout my pursuit of my career and for listening to me whinge about it when I needed to. Most of all, thank you for always believing I could do this, especially during times when I was sure I'd never make it.

Finally, I would like to thank my amazing fiancé Chris, who has been an incredible source of strength and comfort throughout this whole process. Thank you for your patience, compassion, and love, and for making me laugh when I've needed it the most.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Meaning
ACE(s)	Adverse childhood experiences
AES	Assessing Emotions Scale
APA	American Psychological Association
ASPD	Antisocial Personality Disorder
CD	Conduct Disorder
CU	Callous-unemotional
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EEG	Electroencephalogram
EI	Emotional intelligence
EPA	Elemental Psychopathy Assessment
EQ-i	Emotional Quotient Inventory
ERP	Event related potential
FFM	Five-factor model of personality
fMRI	Functional magnetic resonance imaging
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LLP	Late positive potential
LSRP	Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale
MAOA	Monoamine oxidase A gene
MSCEIT	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
OCD	Obsessive compulsive disorder
PCL-R	Psychopathy Checklist Revised
PCL:SV	Psychopathy Checklist Screening Version
PD	Personality disorder
PP	Primary variant of psychopathy
PPI	Psychopathic Personality Inventory
PPI-R	Psychopathic Personality Inventory-Revised
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
PVQ	Portrait Values Questionnaire
RCT	Randomised control trials

SES	Socioeconomic status
sMRI	Structural magnetic resonance imaging
SP	Secondary variant of psychopathy
SRP-III	Self-Report Psychopathy-III
SRP-4	Self-Report Psychopathy Scale 4
SVS	Schwartz Value Survey
TA	Thematic analysis
TEIQue-SF	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form
TMMS	Trait Meta-Mood Scale
vmPFC	Ventromedial prefrontal cortex

Abstract

Background: While a vast amount of research has explored psychopathy and its associated strengths and deficits, little research has included a qualitative exploration of individual experiences related to the topic. It has long been assumed that psychopathic individuals place less worth on relationships and care little about the world around them, with limited intervention options available producing largely bleak outcomes.

Aims: The present study aimed to explore experiences of interpersonal relationships to gain insight into the perceived key aspects of relationships, including relationship rules and dynamics. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore the perceived significance of varying personal values. Lastly, the study aimed to explore the link between psychopathic traits, as measured by the PCL:SV, and aspects of interpersonal relationships and personal values.

Methods: Fifteen young adults aged 18 to 30 years were recruited via the Essex University database and SONA, as well as via social media and from a participant pool as part of a research group. Semi-structured interviews were conducted remotely using video-calling technology. Interviews included the Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV; Hare, 1995) and questions adapted from Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992). Interviews were transcribed and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Results: Reflexive thematic analysis generated three main themes in relation to interpersonal relationships and values: external influences; expectations of myself and the other; my internal world. Comparisons were also drawn between subjective views of values and interpersonal relationships, and psychopathic characteristics included in the PCL:SV (Hare, 1995). The results demonstrated significant variation between subjective worth and perceived key aspects of relationships and values, and associative links between values, relationships, and psychopathic traits.

Conclusions: The findings provide insight into the relationship between subjective values, interpersonal relationship beliefs, and psychopathic traits, contributing to the current research. Implications for clinical practice, theory development, and future research are discussed.

Chapter One: Introduction

Psychopathy

Over the course of the last century, the clinical definition of the term *"psychopathy"* has changed significantly. Once used as a blanket-term for mental ailment - psychopathy as *"diseased mind"* – the term now refers to a unique disorder encompassing superficial social adeptness, dishonesty, and reckless, uninhibited behaviour (Blackburn, 1998). According to Hare (1996), approximately 1% of the general population meet the diagnostic criteria for psychopathy, while these individuals are thought to make up between 15 and 25% of the prison population. Still, there continues to be contention surrounding the clinical definition of psychopathy and whether the term should be used in a diagnostic capacity.

One of the earliest descriptions of the psychopathic personality was written by Pinel (1806), in which he described patients as "insane" but "without delirium", characterised by an innate lack of self-control and remorse for their behaviours (Hare, 1993). In 1941, Hervey Cleckley's definitive book entitled *'The Mask of Sanity'* described the typical features of a psychopathic state as including irresponsibility, an attitude of levity toward moral values, absence of shame and gratitude, accentuated egocentricity, and improvidence. The current conceptualisation of psychopathy is grounded in Cleckley's (1941, 1976) work, although there have been many variations of the defining characteristics of the psychopathic individual.

Robins' (1966) definition of psychopathy positioned antisocial tendencies and a lack of "loyalty" to others as the "driving force" of the psychopathic personality. Although she intended for her work to be strongly allied with Cleckley (1941), Robins' list of traits excluded the inability to feel shame and accept blame, failure to learn from experience, egotism, shallow affect, and reduced insight. Instead, Robins' (1966) list included other areas of dysfunction, such as physical ailments, suicidality, drug misuse, and alcohol abuse. In 2009, Patrick et al. proposed a "triarchic" model of psychopathy. This included three discrete phenotypes: disinhibition, boldness, and meanness. It was therefore argued that a psychopathic individual would demonstrate difficulties with impulse control, social dominance and emotional resilience, and disregard for others in the search for resources. In

contrast to Cleckley's description (1941, 1976), Patrick et al.'s (2009) model included an emotionality characterised by hardiness and aggression, rather than a reduced or absent ability to experience emotional affect in relation to others. Patrick et al. (2009) described behaviours of authority and control, while Cleckley (1941, 1976) explored the extravagance and egotism of holding dominion over others.

Still, it should be considered that the work conducted by Cleckley (1941) and Robins (1966) is rather old in terms of research. As such, while these seminal pieces are work remain commonly cited, dated research may not reflect current theories, findings, or technological advancements available in modern research, which can lead to incorrect or incomplete conclusions. It is also true that social, cultural, and technological contexts change over time, therefore personality traits and behaviours which may have been considered antisocial and "psychopathic" in the early- to mid-twentieth century may be viewed differently in modern times. Due to the time in which research was conducted by Cleckley (1941) and colleagues of the time, the methodologies, tools, or techniques used may now be considered less reliable or valid, with newer research methods frequently producing results with higher accuracy and replicability, such as studies including brain activity. Furthermore, dated research such as Cleckley's (1941) may have included lower or poor ethical standards, such as gathering consent and data transparency, which can cause issues in interpretation and application of the findings to modern populations. While older research, such as that conducted by Cleckley (1941), offers valuable historical insights and a foundation for current studies, it is essential to critically assess its relevance, methodology, and theoretical basis. Integrating insights from both old and new research, while prioritising current data and advanced methodologies, can result in a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of a given topic.

Despite disparity regarding the defining characteristics of psychopathy and that seminal research on the topic is relatively old, the consensus remains that it is believed to be a disorder of personality. However, psychopathy has not been included as a diagnostic category in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) since its Second Edition, published in 1968, and was subsequently replaced by *"Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)"* in the DSM-III (1980). According to the Fifth Edition of the DSM (2013), *"psychopathy"* can be defined as *"a synonym for antisocial personality disorder".* Within the DSM-V (2013), a person with ASPD must demonstrate at least three of seven clinical symptoms consistently since age fifteen years, including failure to

conform to lawful behaviours, deceitfulness, impulsivity, irritability or aggressiveness, disregard for the safety of self or others, consistent irresponsibility, and lack of remorse. The individual must also be over the age of eighteen and had displayed evidence of conduct disorder (CD) in childhood. Still, it can be considered that individuals who may be categorised as primary psychopaths cannot be characterised by CD or ASPD as the DSM-V criteria focuses on behaviour, rather than the fundamental emotional deficits and personality traits underpinning behaviour, as outlined by Cleckley (1941. 1976). In contrast, in 2010, Skeem & Cooke argued that criminality and criminal behaviour is a correlate, rather a fundamental element of psychopathy. It was contended that the introduction, and consequent vast interest in Hare's pivotal Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003) resulted in a misunderstanding of psychopathy; that the PCL-R measure had become merged with the theoretical construct itself. Skeem & Cooke (2010) posited that criminality was not, in fact, an element of psychopathy, as some had come to believe.

Subtypes of Psychopathy

During 1941, the same year in which Cleckley published his seminal work on psychopathy, Karpman (1941) proposed there are two subtypes of psychopathy, known as primary psychopathy and secondary psychopathy. Despite the conflict of some characteristics of psychopathy, it is widely agreed that psychopaths, whether primary or secondary, *"lie, cheat, and swindle . . . seemingly have no feeling or regard for others, and no guilt feelings"* (Karpman, 1948a). Karpman's (1941) two-subtype conceptualisation of psychopathy suggested that a primary variant (PP) of psychopathy is frequently a result of reduced affect, while a secondary variant (SP) is developed as a consequence of traumatic experiences, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Hicks et al., 2004; Kahn et al., 2013). Karpman (1941, 1949) stated that the PP innately possess the main interpersonal and affective characteristics of psychopathy, whereas the SP acquire these similar characteristics as a result of their environment and experiences. A similar subtype theory was later proposed which included categorisations made principally on the basis of anxiety. Newman et al. (1997) referred to primary psychopaths as "low-anxious psychopaths" and secondary psychopaths as "high-anxious psychopaths". Numerous studies supported this categorisation on the basis of stress arousal and reaction differences (Lykken, 1995; Newman & Brinkley, 1997).

Similarly, in 1995, Lykken described the psychopathic "antisocial personality" as including multiple variants dependent on temperament and parenting resources. He believed that poor parenting and socialisation contributed to criminality, as observed in children of lower socioeconomic status (SES) within inner cities, where crime levels increase. Lykken categorised individuals possessing "normal" temperaments but "unsocialised" parents as "sociopaths". Conversely, "psychopaths" were defined as individuals from any SES, with or without a traumatic history, whose antisocial behaviour and aggression stems from a "difficult" temperament rather than poor parenting. Lykken proposed that psychopathy could be attributed to biological deficit, and that a lack of conscience, reduced ability to experience fear, and apathy toward chastisement affords them the freedom to engage in antisocial behaviour.

In 1988, Harpur, Hakstian, & Hare first introduced the concept of the two-factor model of psychopathy. Factor 1 includes affective and interpersonal features of psychopathy, for example manipulativeness and callousness, whereas factor 2 includes impulsive and antisocial aspects of psychopathy associated with social deviance (Hare, 1991, 1996). In 2003, Hare expanded his ideas to include four facets, with two facets in each factor of his two-factor structure. Within Factor 1, Facet 1 is described as 'interpersonal', including traits such as pathological lying and glibness, and Facet 2 is described as 'affective', including traits such as callousness and lacking remorse. Within Factor 2, Facet 3 is described as 'lifestyle', including traits such as impulsivity and irresponsibility, and Facet 4 is described as 'antisocial', including traits such as poor behavioural control and criminal versatility. The two-factor model was utilised in the creation of the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL; 1991, revised 2003), a "gold standard" measurement tool of psychopathic traits.

Aetiology

Neural Correlates and Genetic Components of Psychopathy

Vast research and clinical interest have resulted in numerous theories about the aetiology of the psychopathic personality, exploring the roles of environmental and biological factors. Modern research has included the investigation of the biological, neurological, and genetic explanations of psychopathy, of which there is a growing body of research (Dhanani et al., 2018).

The link between psychopathy and amygdala abnormalities has inspired extensive research. Neurological studies have found that individuals with marked psychopathic personalities display deficiencies in affective processing for "threat and reward" related incentives, as well as irregular amygdala functioning (Umbach, Berryessa, & Raine, 2015). It has also been established that a decrease in function of the amygdala significantly affects fear responses and reflexes (Funayama et al., 2001), fear acquisition (LaBar et al., 1998), and the perception of emotional expressions - fearful expressions in particular (Blair, 2003). Psychopathic individuals have been found to possess a decreased volume of the amygdala when compared to control individuals (Tiihonen et al., 2017), as well as decreased amygdala activity during recollection using emotional memory (Kiehl et al., 2001).

Researchers have also explored the role of the cortical regions of the brain in psychopathy. In 1965, Quay theorised that psychopaths experience under-arousal of the cortical brain regions and the autonomic nervous system, and in 1984, Hare & McPherson suggested an asymmetry of arousal in the hemispheres of the brain as a cause for psychopathy. In 2009, Yang et al. used structural magnetic resonance imaging (sMRI) to explore differences within the psychopathic brain. It was shown that psychopaths displayed considerable grey matter "thinning" in both the right frontal and temporal cortices. Yang et al. (2009) posited that deficits of grey matter within these regions have been linked to poor decision making and reduced emotional and social function, and as such, declination of these brain regions may explain the characteristic deficits within psychopathic personalities. Similarly, using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Motzkin et al. (2011) found an association between psychopathy and reduced functional connectivity between the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) and the amygdala, in addition to the vmPFC and the medial parietal cortex. The role of the vmPFC in emotional regulation is one of encoding stimuli and regulating fear and anxiety (Winecoff et al., 2013), therefore the findings of Motzkin et al. (2011) supports emotional deficit as a marked characteristic of psychopathy.

The role of genetics in psychopathy has also been explored. A study by Glenn (2011) suggested that multiple genes have been linked to psychopathic personalities, including the serotonin transporter gene and the monoamine oxidase A gene. The serotonin transporter gene has been found to affect serotonin uptake and is considered to be connected to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression in individuals suffering emotional trauma (Kuzelova et al., 2010). The monoamine oxidase A gene (MAOA), a gene responsible for

coding for an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin, has been linked with aggression. Sohrabi (2015) conducted a systematic review which concluded that deficiencies in MAOA positively correlated with aggressive behaviour, with its impact determined by social and environmental variables.

Additionally, genetic research has established findings suggesting a modest to high heritability of psychopathic characteristics (Dhanani et al., 2018). In 2003, Blonigen et al. studied over three hundred and fifty adult male twins using the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI; Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996), it was discovered that heritability for the traits measured was moderate, and the impact of environmental factors was insignificant. Furthermore, a study by Viding et al. (2005) in which thirty-five hundred twins were studied, it was found that genetics accounted significantly for psychopathic traits and suggested that two thirds of the differences between the participants and the general population was accounted for by genetics.

Researchers have also found differences in the brain activity of individuals with psychopathy via event related potential (ERP) components recorded using electroencephalogram (EEG). Cheng et al. (2012) investigated the neural processing of pain empathy in young offenders with varying levels of callous-unemotional (CU) traits in comparison to control participants. The study found that in individuals with high CU traits, the frontal N120 response and central late positive potential (LPP) response was diminished when compared to controls. The high CU group was found to lack both an N120 and P300 response to visual painful stimuli in the central and frontal regions when compared to low CU participants and control groups. In conditions during which participants with high CU traits were subjected to scenarios in which someone was harmed, these participants maintained the LPP, which lessened in control participants. Such results suggested that young offenders with high CU traits display atypical neural dynamics of pain empathy processing. Similarly, Howard and McCullagh (2007) found higher N350 amplitudes for offenders with psychopathic traits during observation of emotionally disturbing pictures. In contrast, participants who did not display psychopathic traits demonstrated higher N350 amplitudes to emotionally pleasing pictures. Drislane et al. (2013) investigated the neural responses of psychopathic and non-psychopathic participants to “abrupt aversive stimuli”. In this study, participants were presented with pleasant, neutral, and unpleasant images, during which abrupt sounds were played. The psychopathic individuals were found to display substantially lower amplitude of P300 response across all

image trials when compared to non-psychopathic participants. Such findings suggest a reduced defensive reactivity to threat cues in individuals with psychopathy.

Attachment & Relationships

Theories about the aetiology of the psychopathic personality and psychopathic traits have also explored environmental and interpersonal factors, including attachment experiences and relationships. It has been theorised that the development of the psychopathic personality is as a result of early caregiving relationships and experienced of being parented, concepts which have been extensively researched in relation to maladaptive personality characteristics and behaviours, including antisocial behaviour.

The association between environmental and familial factors and antisocial behaviour has been extensively researched for many years. In 1958, John Bowlby began his seminal work on attachment theory. He hypothesised that a child's attachment relationship with their mother can have a profound impact on social, emotional, and cognitive development, later defining attachment as a *"lasting psychological connectedness between human beings"* (Bowlby, 1969, 1982). Bowlby (1973) suggested that disruption to this attachment in early life would result in reduced ability to affectionately care for others, and development of delinquent and aggressive behaviour.

In 1969, Travis Hirschi published *"Causes of Delinquency",* a ground-breaking book in which he outlined Social Control Theory as an explanation for the relationship between attachment relationships and delinquency. Hirschi (1969) proposed that attachment is an emotional bond wherein children adopt societal norms from parents. He explained that attachment relationships are a form of "indirect parental control"; that children who possess a strong attachment value more highly the normative expectations held by their parents and are therefore less likely to succumb to delinquent desires. Hirschi (1969) suggested that delinquent behaviour is the result of weak attachment bonds.

Bowlby and Hirschi's work inspired many subsequent studies, including Ainsworth et al.'s 1978 study of attachment styles, 'The Strange Situation' procedure. This study uncovered patterns of responses and behaviours, leading to the development of distinct categories of "attachment styles." Ainsworth et al. (1978) proposed that attachment styles of infants would

have lasting lifelong effects on their relationships. For example, the "anxious/ambivalent attachment" style was demonstrated in infants who lacked confidence in the responsiveness of their mother. The researchers proposed that as adults, individuals with this attachment style are *"overly concerned with the uncertainty of relationships,"* and hold beliefs which position themselves as negative, and others as positive.

Since the work of Bowlby (1958, 1969, 1982), Hirschi (1969), and Ainsworth et al. (1978), research into the link between attachment and antisocial behaviour, including psychopathy, has been considerable. Alzeer et al. (2019) found that in comparison to individuals with secure attachments, people with anxious and avoidance attachments scored highly in both primary and secondary psychopathic traits, in line with Karpman's (1941) subtypes theory. It was also discovered that individuals who experienced a controlling and demanding relationship with their father predicted higher scores in both primary and secondary psychopathic traits. Similarly, Blanchard & Lyons (2016) reported sex differences between attachment and psychopathic characteristics. It was found that men who possessed primary psychopathic traits experienced their mothers as controlling and consequently had avoidance attachment styles, whereas women with primary psychopathic traits experienced their fathers as uncaring and consequently had both anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Additionally, men with secondary psychopathic traits were found to possess anxious attachment styles and experienced uncaring mothers and fathers, however in women, neither attachment style nor parental relationships were found to be significantly correlated.

Research has found that in individuals with secondary psychopathic characteristics, where there are elevated levels of anxiety and emotional disturbance, dysfunction in early life such as abuse and parental rejection is significantly implicated (Hong et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies have shown that irresponsibility and impulsivity of the secondary psychopathy subtype have been linked with fear of abandonment and rejection, as seen in anxious attachment styles (Conradi et al., 2016), whilst the primary psychopathic subtype has been linked with avoidance of close interpersonal relationships, as seen in the avoidant attachment style (Brewer et al., 2018). These findings support conclusions drawn by Kyranides & Neofytou (2021), which reported that avoidant attachment styles were associated with primary psychopathy, whereas anxious attachment styles were associated with secondary psychopathy. Furthermore, Van der Zouwen et al. (2018) also conducted a systematic review

of relevant articles related to psychopathy and attachment and found that psychopathic traits were positively correlated with insecure attachment styles.

Assumptions and Interventions

It is still widely assumed that individuals possessing clinically significant psychopathic traits are "untreatable", and as such research investigating interventions and treatment outcomes have been greatly neglected, with focus instead on risk and behaviour management. Many modern studies of psychopathy have included pharmacological interventions, most commonly Clozapine, an atypical antipsychotic medication with several potentially harmful health side effects and consequences. Studies such as Brown et al. (2014) found that Clozapine treatment improved "all psychopathic symptom domains", particularly impulsive-behavioural control difficulties and anger, and decreased levels of aggression and violence. Other interventions have included using modalities such as Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy to work with children and adolescents in order to address callous-unemotional (CU) traits before development into adulthood (Baglivio et al., 2014), however it is unclear whether these have been affective in cases where CU traits pre-exist. It has instead been suggested that the therapeutic alliance itself, rather than the mode of treatment, has a more significant impact on treatment outcomes for individuals with CU traits (Mattos et al., 2017). Despite this, a study conducted by Bailey et al. (2019) stated that research has yet to investigate the "affective" experiences of psychopathic individuals. As such, numerous assumptions are made about these individuals solely based on behaviour as well as media portrayals, and a potentially false association with violence (Skeem & Cooke, 2010), consequently constructing the belief that psychopaths plainly do not care about others. Yet, investigation into the subjective values and experiences of "psychopaths" is neglected or missing.

Moreover, the vast majority of studies investigating psychopathic traits have focussed on offenders, many of whom have endured adverse experiences and subsequent mental health difficulties during their lifetimes (Graham, Kimonis, Wasserman & Kline, 2012). However, a 1% prevalence rate within the general population suggests that individuals with high psychopathic traits also reside within the community, although far less is known about this under-researched group. As a result, researchers have had reduced opportunities to examine the role of psychopathic traits in relation to subjective experiences outside of incarcerated

populations. These experiences include the perceived worth of interpersonal relationships, personal values, and the welfare of others, to name a few. It can be considered that by better understanding the subjective experiences and priorities of individuals with clinically significant psychopathic traits, clinicians may be better able to develop and deliver specific interventions for this group of individuals.

Measures of Psychopathy

Developed in 1996 by Lilienfeld & Andrews, the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI) is a 187-item self-report measure of psychopathic personality traits, originally created for use with members of the general population. The measure was later revised by Lilienfeld & Widows (2005), developed for several reasons including for ease of use, and is now considered to be one of the most widely used and researched self-report measures. The Psychopathic Personality Inventory-Revised (PPI-R) contains a reduced 154-items, was written in more easily accessible language, and developed to be more appropriate for use in a variety of populations, including clinical, forensic, and culturally diverse groups (Edens & McDermott, 2010). The structure of the PPI-R contains eight subscales, including: social influence, fearlessness, stress immunity, Machiavellian egocentricity, blame externalisation, rebellious nonconformity, carefree non-planfulness, and cold-heartedness. Theoretically, the PPI is based on the broader concept of psychopathy, characterised by a combination of emotional, interpersonal, and behavioural traits. Psychopathy has traditionally been understood through clinical observations and case studies, resulting in diagnostic criteria like those in the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003). However, the PPI adopts a different approach, viewing psychopathy as a dimensional personality construct rather than a categorical disorder. This perspective aligns with broader trait-based models of personality, such as the Five-Factor Model (FFM; McCrae & Costa, 1999), which propose that personality traits exist along a continuum. The PPI understands psychopathy as multidimensional, recognising that it is not a singular trait but a combination of various dimensions, including both adaptive and maladaptive traits, including Fearless Dominance and Self-Centred Impulsivity. By emphasising personality traits instead of solely behaviours, the PPI offers a broader understanding of psychopathy, applicable to various populations, including those who may not display overtly antisocial behaviours.

In 2011, Lynam et al. developed the Elemental Psychopathy Assessment (EPA), a 178-item self-report measure of psychopathy. Based on the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1999), the EPA aims to assess for the 'basic elements' of psychopathy: anger, arrogance, callousness, coldness, disobliged, distrust, dominance, impersistence, invulnerable, manipulation, opposition, rashness, self-assurance, self-centeredness, self-contentment, thrill-seeking, unconcern, and urgency. The EPA aims to identify and measure fundamental personality traits to provide a comprehensive picture of the psychopathic personality. Similar to the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI), the EPA utilises a dimensional approach to psychopathy, viewing psychopathic traits as existing along a continuum rather than as distinct categories. This perspective aligns with modern personality psychology, which suggests that most personality traits, including those associated with psychopathy, are normally distributed within the general population.

Still, the most widely used measure of psychopathy is the Psychopathy Checklist, a twenty-item measure developed in 1983 by Robert Hare. Revised in 1991 and 2003, the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) is thought to be closely aligned with the work of Cleckley (1941) and is therefore considered to be the "gold standard" measure. In 1995, Hare developed the Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV), aimed for use with adults from a broad range of populations, including forensic, psychiatric, and community settings. The PCL:SV contains twelve items adapted from the PCL-R's twenty items and is considered to be less time and resource consuming than its predecessor. Structured to generate a total score and two factor scores, all items are scored on a three-point scale from 0 to 2. An itemed scored 0 signifies that the item is not applicable to the individual undergoing assessment or the individual displays traits opposite to the item's description. An item scored 2 signifies that the item certainly applies to the individual, as demonstrated by multiple anecdotes and examples that shows the item is an enduring and established characteristic of the individual. An item scored 1 signifies that insufficient information has been offered to obtain a score of 0 or 2, or that the item is only applicable to the individual in certain situations; thus, establishing that it is not an enduring and established characteristic of the individual. Totalling the item scores produces a total score, ranging from 0 to 24. Additionally, Factor 1 and 2 scores can be determined by summing items 1 to 6 and items 7 to 12 respectively. The PCL-R conceptualises psychopathy as a distinct clinical syndrome defined by specific affective, interpersonal, and behavioural traits. This differs from dimensional models like the PPI or EPA, which view psychopathic traits as existing along a continuum.

Values

Although definition and development of the psychopathic personality and its defining characteristics have been widely debated, it is widely agreed that it can be influenced by a multitude of personal and environmental factors. With this in mind, it can be considered that if early life experiences such as attachment relationships and environmental factors can influence the development of one's personality and traits, it could also be considered that these same factors could impact the development of one's values and value systems early in life, when it is believed that a person begins to adopt and develop a sense of what is important to them.

According to Schwartz (1992), personal values are "individual conceptions of the desirable that guide behaviour" which grow and develop over time; they can provide clarity and direction in all aspects of life and differ from person to person, though the exact definition has been widely debated. Fuentes et al. (2011) suggested that values are learnt and adopted in the family home, that relatives offer an initial standard of values and provide a foundation on which an individual builds identity. Values are then defined and categorised by importance through interactions with peers (Jiménez et al., 2008). Values gained popularity in psychology and sociology as a concept challenging 'social norms'. In contrast to social norms, values are not context-specific, rather they are carried by an individual into all circumstances of life. Put simply, values encapsulate what is important to a person.

The Values Theory (Schwartz, 1992, 2006) outlines six widely agreed primary attributes of values focussed research. First, that values are beliefs inseparable from emotion, and arousal is inevitable when values are challenged. Second, that values can be considered to be desirable goals which drive behaviour. Third, that values surpass specific circumstances and environments, and are instead applied to all contexts of life. Fourth, that values draw boundaries and guidelines for the acceptable and unacceptable across behaviours and decisions; this drive is often unconscious until a situation arises in which a desired outcome conflicts with values held. Fifth, that values are ranked in importance comparatively to one another. Lastly, this comparative importance influences behaviour, in that most actions are directly linked to more than one value. Schwartz (1992, 1996) argued that this compromise between competing values influences attitudes and conduct. In 2001, Schwartz & Bardi also described that ten broad central individual values affect behaviours and decisions at all times:

self-directional, stimulative, hedonistic, achievement, power, security, conformity, traditional, benevolent, and universal. These ten values were further categorised into four domains: a self-directional domain that operates on openness and flexibility to change; a universal value domain that is influenced by transcendence; traditional values domain that is motivated by the laws of conservation; power value domain that is governed by self-enhancement (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

Values have also been explored within international research through ideas such as individualism and collectivism. This concept has been explored extensively in research and has also been referred to as independence and interdependence (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), and idiocentrism and allocentrism (Triandis et al., 1995). In 1980, Hofstede (revised in 2001) described individualism as a belief in oneself as an autonomous individual, and collectivism as a belief in one's identity as imbedded in the society or group in which one is a member. A number of studies proposed that generally, Westernised cultures tend to be individualistically motivated, whereas Eastern cultures tend to be collectivistically motivated (Hofstede et al., 2005).

Value Assumptions

Values are assumed to be a vital part of oneself which are separate from other personal attributes, including desires, goals, and traits (Arieli et al., 2020; Sagiv & Roccas, 2021). Schwartz (1992) suggested that the distinction is made as values are 'socially desirable', and as a result individuals are able to utilise them as a means to encourage others to cooperate in the pursuit of their aspirations by sharing these with others. It is also assumed that individuals sort their personal values by perceived worth, thus organising these into a hierarchy, and that each person's hierarchy is unique to the individual. Values which are considered to hold more worth are more likely to impact behaviour (Rokeach, 1973), and this perceived worth remains fairly constant regardless of the situational context (Schwartz, 1992) and across time (Vecchione et al., 2016).

A further assumption about values is in relation to consciousness of choice. Values can be readily brought to mind and contemplated, after which an individual will consciously decide whether or not to act in line with, or against, these values. Whereas motivations and desires can be unconscious and affect behaviour without one's knowledge, it is assumed that

decisions related to values are made knowingly. These values are used as a standard against which an individual assesses, critiques, and validates the actions of oneself and others (Schwartz, 1992).

Values are thought to be developed and influenced by a number of factors. Such factors can include cultural and societal components, with researchers suggesting that values are largely socially determined (Daniela et al., 2013). It can therefore be concluded that as society changes economically, politically, and culturally, as will the developing values of the individuals living within the society. With this in mind, it can be assumed that values are not universal, and instead develop and change uniquely in accordance with one's environment. An example of this can be seen through the sexual revolution of the 1960s during which societal views around sex and sexuality were challenged, insisting that these parts of life should not be shamed and inhibited by religion, imposed morality, familial beliefs, or the state. Since the sexual revolution, marital rates have declined within society, and values and attitudes toward sex, marriage, and reproducing have shifted. In 2014, the Pew Research Centre discovered that two-thirds of people aged 18 to 29 years agreed that society has the potential to be equally as successful if people prioritise aspects of life other than marriage and children, with 53% of people aged 30 to 49 believing the same. This can be compared to responses of adults aged 50 and older, a majority (55%) of whom believed that society would benefit more from the prioritisation of marriage and having children. These figures demonstrate the changing beliefs of generations as determined by the environments in which they lived, and the values that were upheld during that time.

Measures of Values

While values have been explored within research, measures used have primarily collected quantitative data exclusively. In 1992, Schwartz developed the first measure of values, known as the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), which continues to be the most widely used measure to date. The SVS consists of fifty-six items linked to different values, presented as "nouns" and "adjectives" regarding feelings toward ourselves and others. Each of the items requires participants to rate the importance of each value on a nine-point Likert scale. The SVS affords individuals the opportunity to record both agreement and disapproval of each item. Scoring of the SVS highlights which of the four domains feature significantly in a person's life.

In 2001, Schwartz developed the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) as an extension of the SVS. The PVQ aims to measure the ten broad central individual values of children aged eleven to fourteen, as well as all individuals who did not attend schools in the West. Each of the forty items includes a statement describing a fictitious person's ambitions and desires that are directly linked to one of the ten values. As with the SVS, participants are asked to record both agreement and disapproval of each item, in how much they agree that the person in the statement compares to themselves.

Additionally, a number of measures have been developed to capture values of an individualist and collectivist nature, including the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), the Sociogram Test (Kitayama et al., 2009), and the Implicit Association Test (Park et al., 2016). The Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994) is a self-report measure in which participants are asked to indicate their agreement with both individualist and collectivist values by rating various statements on a Likert scale. While the Sociogram Test (Kitayama et al., 2009) is also a self-report measure, it requires participants to draw diagrams demonstrating their social networks with the use of circles and lines to represent people and connections between individuals. In this measure, individualism and collectivism is determined by examining circle size within the diagram. The Implicit Association Test (Park et al., 2016) uses biological measures to determine individualist versus collectivist values, instead measuring reaction times to positive and negative words associated with individualism and collectivism.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships can be defined as *"reciprocal social and emotional interactions between the subject and other persons in the environment"* (Griffin, 1990). Relationships can be formed in a multitude of ways, including bonds which can be described as intimate and close, such as a spousal or parent-child relationships, and bonds which are neither intimate nor close, such as acquaintances or student-teacher relationships. Much of the research exploring interpersonal relationships has investigated close relationships, defined by Kelley et al. (1983) as *"one that is strong, frequent, and with diverse interdependence that lasts over a considerable period of time"*.

In 1995, social psychologists Baumeister & Leary suggested that over the course of human evolution people have acquired a strong core drive for attachment to others, which simply

put, is *"a need to belong".* They hypothesised that to feel content within these relationships and therefore meet this need, relationships must possess the following qualities: interactions must occur regularly and be emotionally positive, and must be within a steady and lasting bond which includes reciprocal concern for each other's wellbeing. Baumeister & Leary (1995) therefore suggested that frequent interactions with the same individual(s) is more satisfying than frequent interactions with a continually varying string of associates, however infrequent interaction with close, familiar people is equally as dissatisfying. Consequently, it can be considered that successful and satisfying relationships must be characterised by regular contact and enduring reciprocal care.

Interpersonal relationships can be commonly sorted into four basic categories: acquaintances, friends, family, and romantic/partner. These categories can be further expanded upon, for example to include relationships such as work colleagues and community relationships, and relationships within each of the four categories can be thought of as either positive or negative.

- The term "acquaintance" can be thought of as sitting between a stranger and a friend, defined as *"either a relationship that falls short of friendship or as a stage from which the relationship becomes more intimate"* (Spencer & Pahl, 2006).
- A "friendship" can be defined as a *"a relationship between two or more people that is relatively long-lasting and in which those involved tend to be concerned with meeting the others' needs and interests as well as satisfying their own desires"* (American Psychological Association, APA). It is generally stipulated that a friendship is platonic.
- A "romantic/partner relationship" can be defined as *"mutual, ongoing and voluntary interactions between two partners that is characterised by specific expressions of affection and intimacy"* (Collins, et al., 2009).
- The term "family" can be defined as *"two or more persons joined by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption; constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister; and creating and maintaining a common culture"* (Burgess, 1963).

Relationship Assumptions

An ongoing assumption regarding romantic relationships and marriage is that women more frequently possess goals and aspirations of marriage and having children in comparison to their male counterparts (Kilmartin & Allison, 2007). However, research related to this topic has produced conflicting findings. While some research has found that women's longing for relationships and marriage is more significant than men's (Blakemore, Lawton, & Vartanian, 2005), other researchers have concluded that most men and women desire relationships and marriage (Kaufman, 2005). Furthermore, research on attitudes toward marriage has shown that while men and women in their early twenties are equally as likely to place partner relationships above other life aims (Hammersla & Frease-McMahan, 1990), by their mid-twenties, men develop a greater desire for marriage than their female counterparts (South, 1993). It has been theorised that this assumed increased female desire for relationships and marriage can be explained, in part, by social norms and stereotypes, rather than representing the true desires of men and women.

Historical research has found gender differences between men and women in regard to attitudes toward traditional gender roles. Studies have demonstrated that when asked about beliefs relating to primary wage earners and homemaking responsibilities, men have been found to dependably advocate for traditional gender roles, agreeing that men's focus should be on earning money, whereas women's focus should be on looking after the home and children (Scanzoni & Fox, 1980). In the same year, a study conducted by Astin, King, & Richardson (1980) found that approximately 35% of male college students agreed that "women's activities should be confined to the home", with only 19% of their female counterparts agreeing. While these studies may be considered to be somewhat outdated, more modern research has shown that similar gendered views continue to exist in society. For example, studies such as Berkery, Morley, & Tiernan (2013) found that both men and women possess beliefs that men are more suitable in leadership roles, although this view is supported more often by men than by women.

Research of relationships has found multiple benefits of having close relationships with others. Studies such as Bagwell & Bukoski (2018) found that friendships positively impact psychosocial adjustment across a variety of areas, including increased wellbeing, decreased reports of depression, fewer criminal behaviours, and increased academic attainment.

Moreover, research has shown that positive close relationships, regardless of the nature of the connection, are associated with emotional support, intimacy, and trust, as well as positive benefits to physical and psychological wellbeing (Mertika et al., 2020).

Measures of Relationships

There have been a number of measures designed to quantitatively study interpersonal relationships. These include the Interpersonal Relationship Scale (Guerney, 1977) which was designed to measure the overall quality of relationships, including elements such as acceptance and understanding, as well as the Interpersonal Relationship Inventory (IPRI; Tilden et al., 1994), created in response to perceived gaps in previous assessment of social relationships, to include additional scales of reciprocity and conflict. Additionally, the Interpersonal Relationship Resolution Scale (IRRS; Hargrave & Sells, 1997), was developed as a self-report measure aimed at measuring an individual's experiences of relational violations and forgiveness. While research into interpersonal relationships and related topics is great and long-existing, measures of relationships have largely collected quantitative data exclusively.

The Present Study

Fascination and interest in investigating psychopathy and psychopathic traits has produced a wealth of research and knowledge. While there exists a certain amount of consensus between experts regarding categorisation and recognisable traits of psychopathy, research appears to be lacking from a qualitative perspective. Much of the research conducted thus far has relied on quantitative data to explore and explain the intricacies of the psychopathic personality. Although numerical data can be used to determine correlations and demonstrate statistical links between psychopathy and related variables, it does not allow for investigation of personal experiences and individual nuance. Additionally, while values and interpersonal relationships are vital to the human experience, research appears to have seemingly not yet explored these aspects in relation to psychopathic traits. In reality, research appears to not have explored the intricacies of interpersonal relationships within this group in a more general context. Individuals with psychopathic traits and personalities are considered to be unreachable and untreatable in modern psychiatry due to an assumed apathy and a disinterest in human connection; an opinion which has a possibility of changing if the individual

experience is studied. By better understanding one's personal values and experiences of interpersonal relationships, including what is valued and what is superfluous, professionals may gain a better understanding of how to target intervention and treatment to meet the needs and wants of individuals with psychopathic traits.

The researcher chose to examine the experiences of young adults, defined in the current research as individuals ages 18 to 30 years. The term "young adult" typically varies due to context, though many definitions stipulate that "cut-off" boundaries can be considered to be somewhat arbitrary. However, it was considered that mental health disorders typically develop throughout adolescence up until the late twenties and early thirties. For example, research conducted by Bamgbade et al. (2020) suggested that disorders such as depression commonly develops in the mid- to late- twenties. Furthermore, research has shown that more serious mental health disorders can develop into the early thirties. McGrath et al. (2008) reported findings that schizophrenia typically develops in males between late teen years to mid-twenties, and between mid-twenties to early thirties in females. It was therefore considered appropriate to define "young adults" according to the research establishing the typical age development of psychological ailments.

The present study was conducted as part of a research group including PhD student Miss Celia Camara. Miss Camara's project aimed to explore the association between empathy for pain, aggressive behaviour and crime severity in young adults with psychopathic traits, with the aim to share participants and therefore data to further enrich the data found. However, the present project and study design was conceptualised by the researcher to complement and contribute toward the larger research group.

Study Aims & Research Questions

The present study aimed to explore experiences of interpersonal relationships to gain insight into the perceived key aspects of relationships, including relationship rules and dynamics. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore the perceived significance of varying personal values. Lastly, the study aimed to explore the link between psychopathic traits, as measured by the PCL:SV, and aspects of interpersonal relationships and aspects of personal values.

Therefore, the research questions were as follows:

- What influences an individual's personal values and their beliefs regarding interpersonal relationships?
- What "expectations" exist in interpersonal relationships in relation to the individual and the other?
- Does an association exist between psychopathic traits (as measured by the PCL:SV) and experiences of interpersonal relationships?
- Does an association exist between psychopathic traits and personal values?

Systematic Literature Review

Introduction

While research exploring the concept of psychopathy is extensive, to date, little research exists investigating the lived experience of individuals with psychopathic traits or personalities. The majority of the existing body of research has been quantitative in nature, perhaps due to the general consensus that individuals with psychopathic personalities cannot be "treated" or "cured". More recent research on therapeutic intervention for the psychopathic personality has produced a wide range of conclusions, from hopeful (Salkin et al., 2010) to bleak (Harris & Rice, 2006).

However, the emotional experiences of individuals with such features have drawn much curiosity, especially in relation to empathy and emotional intelligence. This curiosity has likely been influenced by Cleckley's (1941) proposal that the psychopathic individual lacks guilt and shame, instead possessing shallow affect and little regard for others - traits which are considered to be the exception from the everyday human experience. Thus, the literature review instead focuses on emotional intelligence (EI) in relation to psychopathy and psychopathic traits. Emotional intelligence was chosen for this literature review as it is a concept that can be considered and explored via ability EI and trait EI, in other words, one's actual EI ability in regard to others and their perceived EI ability in regard to others (Mayer et al, 1999; Petrides et al., 2007). This can be considered related to the current study as both the current research and research on EI explore the perception one has of themselves and in their interactions with others. Exploring EI informs the research questions for the current study as

the papers within the literature review largely suggest that psychopathic individuals' actual EI ability was negatively correlated with their perceived EI ability, suggesting a deficit in EI, though the results were somewhat mixed. The research questions for the current study therefore aimed to explore how individuals with psychopathic traits perceived themselves, as well as others, in relationships and whether experiences of relationships were affected or distorted as a result of possessing these traits.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) has appeared in research literature since the early part of the twentieth century. Once referred to as "social intelligence", E. L. Thorndike explained the concept as the *"ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations"* (Thorndike, 1920). Since then, multiple attempts have been made to explain the theory of EI and explore its role in various aspects of human interaction and experience. A modern understanding of EI broadly defines it as the ability to monitor the emotions of oneself and others, including the perception, expression, understanding, and management of such emotions, with this information being used to inform thinking and behaviour. Still, there exists an ongoing theoretical debate with numerous contending and complementary models being established.

Emotional intelligence can be explored via three models. The "ability model" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) describes one's ability to process emotional information and apply it within social interactions using the four-branch model; emotional perception, facilitation, understanding, and management. The "trait model" (Petrides et al., 2007) refers to one's subjective opinion of their own abilities in regard to perceiving, understanding, and utilising one's own emotions and the emotions of others, as measured via self-report methods. Finally, the "mixed model" (Goleman, 1995) encompassed skills from both ability EI and trait EI with focus on self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and social skills.

In 1999, Mayer et al. suggested that ability EI can be further broken down into two key aspects, "experiential EI" and "strategic EI". Experiential EI includes the ability to observe and recognise the emotions of others and using these to inform cognitions, skills thought to be "lower-order abilities" in emotional processing. Strategic EI refers to the ability to engage

in emotional reasoning, including the understanding and management of emotions in various situations, skills thought to be “higher-level abilities” in emotional information processing.

Aims and Rationale

Currently, there appears to be limited qualitative research exploring the link between psychopathy, values, and interpersonal relationships as is the focus of the current research, and therefore it is not viable to conduct a systematic literature review of the available literature at this time. However, an extensive body of research exists investigating the association between psychopathy and more specific emotional processes, including emotional intelligence and empathy. Still, opinions regarding even these links remain divided, with some researchers proposing that affective skills, such as empathy, and psychopathy are not mutually exclusive (Mihailides et al., 2017), despite previous belief that psychopaths lacked empathy (Cleckley, 1941). Therefore, further exploration of the construct of psychopathy is needed. The review aims to explore and evaluate research demonstrating the link between psychopathy and emotional intelligence.

Method

Search Strategy

Studies were gathered from a search in all accessible databases of EBSCOhost Research Databases via the online Essex University Library, including but not limited to: APA PsycInfo; APA PsycArticles; APA PsycTests; Audiobook Collection (EBSCOhost); CINAHL Complete; E-Journals; MEDLINE with Full Text; MLA Directory of Periodicals; OpenDissertations; and Philosopher's Index. A manual search via Google Scholar was also conducted and backward searching of identified papers was carried out. Keywords and phrases found in the preliminary searches were gathered in order to help determine search terms to collect all potentially significant studies. Both English and American terminology, spelling, and truncation were included in the search for keywords to encapsulate all variant word entries and endings. Search terms were combined using the term ‘AND’.

Table 1

Summary of search terms

Search Category	Summary of Search Terms
Emotional Intelligence	*Emotional intelligence OR emotional awareness OR emotional competence OR emotional literacy OR EI*
Psychopathy	*Psychopath OR psychopath* OR callous unemotional trait* OR CU traits OR antisocial personality disorder OR sociopath**

The search terms outlined above were limited to 'title only' as a way of ensuring relevant studies were found. Furthermore, an additional specified term of *'NOT psychopathology'* was included within the title or abstract, due to the number of irrelevant search results produced without this specification. The search was not limited to only those written in English, although were limited to academic journals or dissertations, in keeping with the eligibility criteria below.

Studies which included participants under the age of 18 years were excluded due to the nature of the traits explored. Diagnoses such as personality disorders cannot be diagnosed in children and adolescents under 18 years. Additionally, it is considered controversial and "bad clinical practice" to attribute fixed and pathologised trait labels to the developing personalities of children and young people, and so it was deemed inappropriate to include such participants in this review.

Table 2

Eligibility criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1. Studies exploring the relationship (similarities, differences, shared variance or overlap) between traits or characteristics of psychopathy/CU traits and emotional intelligence (EI). 2. Clinical, non-clinical, and/or forensic sample (e.g., individuals with traits of psychopathy	1. Review articles, case studies, editorial/opinion pieces, papers examining the validation of standardised measures, book chapters. 2. Studies that did not include recognised, standardised, and validated

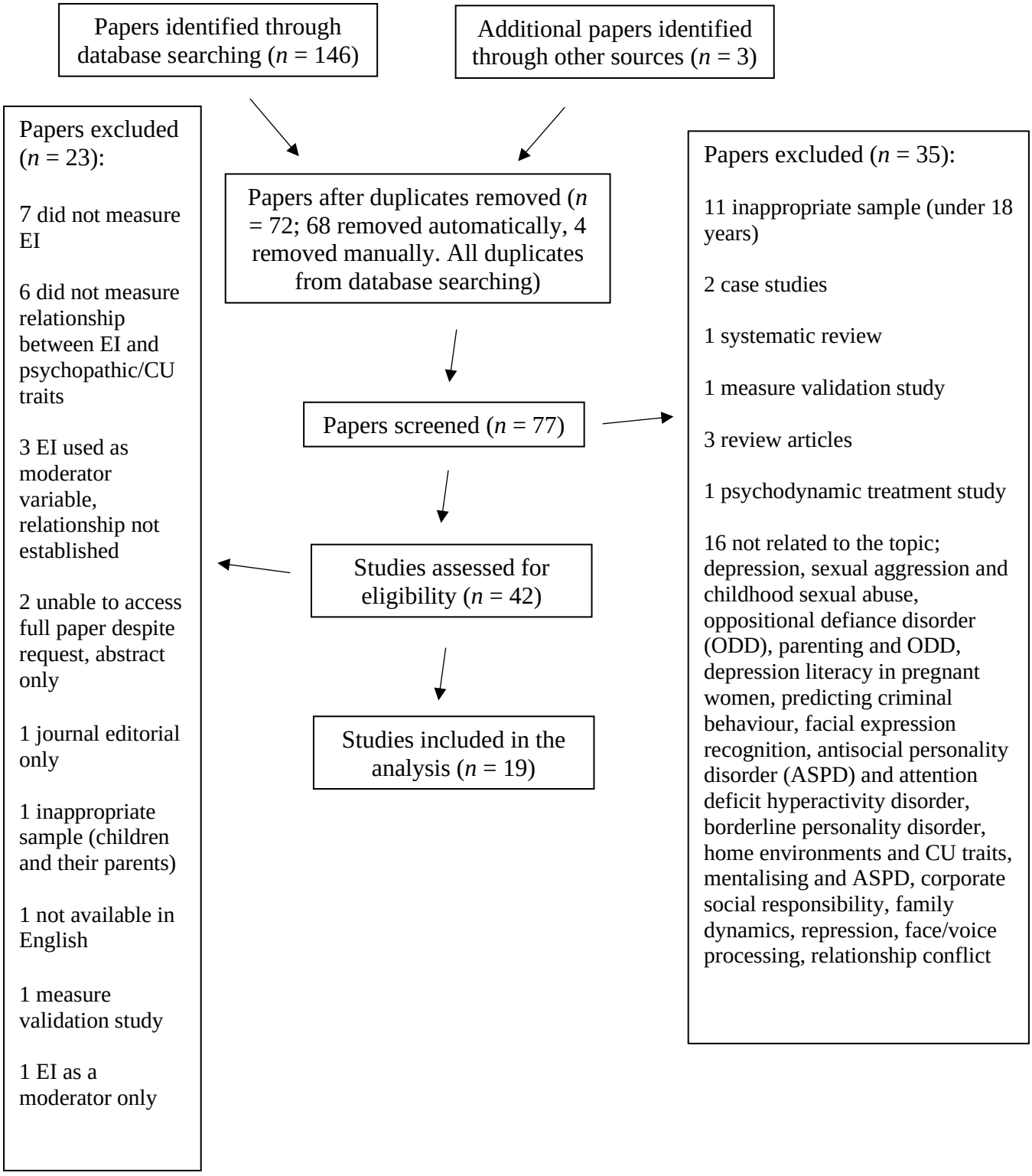
with or without formal diagnoses). 4. Papers available in English (even if published in another language). 5. Papers published in peer reviewed journals.	measures of psychopathy/psychopathic traits and EI. 3. Studies that did not measure or establish a relationship (e.g., correlation) between EI and psychopathic/CU traits. 4. Papers focusing on Antisocial Personality Disorder or associated behavioural disorders (e.g., conduct disorder or oppositional defiance disorder) that do not explore psychopathic and/or CU traits. 5. Studies that included children/adolescents under the age of 18.

Screening and Paper Selection

The process of screening and paper selection is demonstrated in the flow chart following PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021), Figure 1. Duplicate articles were electronically removed using EBSCO and via manual removal. Remaining abstracts were screened against the eligibility criteria and papers which did not meet criteria (Table 2) were rejected. Remaining articles were examined via full text screening. A total of 149 studies, published between 2002 and 2023, were found from all databases and search strategies utilised. Seventy duplicate studies were excluded, the remaining 79 studies were evaluated.

Figure 1.

Flow chart of literature search



Analysis

Data Extraction & Synthesis

Each paper was analysed for the following data, and it was subsequently extracted: author(s) and country of origin, participant population and characteristics, measure of psychopathy/psychopathic/callous-unemotional traits, measure of emotional intelligence, and main findings. This information was extracted to conduct both a quality appraisal of the articles and for synthesis of findings.

The studies included in the review used a correlational methodology. Consequently, it was deemed inappropriate to conduct a meta-analysis as the studies included were not randomised control trials (RCT) as is required for a meta-analysis. It was decided that a narrative synthesis would be a more suitable way to analyse and interpret the data from the included studies.

Quality Appraisal

Articles were critically appraised prior to synthesis to determine the quality of each study. The 'Checklist for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies' (Joanne Briggs Institute; JBI, 2020a – Appendix A) was used to assess study quality and identify any areas of bias. This tool has been widely used in research and praised for its congruity and coherence (Hannes et al., 2010).

Results

A total of nineteen papers were determined to meet the eligibility criteria and were therefore included in the review. The full list of papers can be found in Table 3, which includes extracted data and quality appraisal outcomes.

The included studies were conducted in seven Western countries: Australia (2), Canada (2), Spain (2), Italy (1), Belgium (1), UK (2), USA (9). Two studies recruited from general community populations and nine recruited from university student populations. Eight studies recruited from forensic populations: seven recruited from incarcerated forensic populations,

and one recruited from forensic psychiatric inpatients. The sample sizes included ranged from 24 (Curci et al., 2017) in a study of property offenders, to 1257 (Watts et al., 2016) in a large-scale study of university students.

Participant Characteristics

Age range was not reported by all included studies. However, the mean age of participants ranged from 18.98 (Lishner et al., 2011) to 40.29 years (Català & Caparrós, 2023). One study included only female participants (Edwards et al., 2019), while nine studies including only male participants. The remaining ten studies included both male and female participants.

Critical Appraisal

The quality appraisal rating of each of the nineteen studies can be found in Table 3. All papers scored between five and eight, with one study meeting the full criteria (Malterer et al., 2008).

Table 3

Data extraction and quality appraisal – 19 papers

Author/ country	**Aim of study**	**Participant characteristics; sample type, number (N), mean age (M)**	**Psychopathic traits/ emotional intelligence measures**	**Main findings**	**Quality rating**
Brooks et al., 2020. Australia	To investigate the relationship between psychopathic personality and ability to detect vulnerability/ submissiveness in others. To explore whether detection of victim vulnerabilities indicate that psychopathic traits are associated with a predatory perception and enhanced social/emotional skills.	Community sample. N = 115 (64 female; M = 38.02), (48 male; M = 55.06), range 18 - 75 years (M = 36.58)	Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) Assessing Emotions Scale (AES; Schutte et al., 2009)	The results found no relationship between psychopathic traits and |EI. The results indicated that higher levels of empathy were associated with greater EI. Psychopathy was a significant negative predictor of empathy.	6
Schwartz, 2010. USA	To examine differences in facial affect recognition between college psychopaths (CP) and control groups. To examine differences in EI between CP and control groups.	University student population. N = 42 males; 21 CP (M = 20.29 years), 21 controls (M = 21.14 years).	Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 2008)	Emotional Intelligence scores were found to be significantly lower in the college psychopathy group compared with the control group. Four of the five subscales on the EQ-i were found to be significantly different between the CP and control group; there was a deficit in the abilities of CPs overall, with the CPs often times functioning in the borderline range of EI.	6

Copestake et al., 2013. UK	To explore deficits in ability-defined EI in psychopathy.	Forensic population, incarcerated. N = 57 males; M = 38 years.	Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) Psychopathy Checklist–Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003). Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003). Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS; Salovey et al., 1995).	Self-reported EI traits were positively associated with aspects of psychopathy for both the clinical checklist (PCL-R) and self-reported psychopathy (PPI-R). Psychopaths were found to possess greater ability to perceive emotion in others (high EI scores).	7
Edwards et al., 2019. USA	To examine EI in female offenders and the extent to which male and female offenders differ in EI. To test relations between psychopathic traits and ability EI among female offenders. To investigate whether offenders show differential relationships between EI and psychopathic traits across gender.	Forensic population, incarcerated. N = 228 females; range 18 - 60 years (M = 34.16).	Psychopathy Checklist–Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003). Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003).	Female offenders were found to be impaired in strategic EI relative to the general population. Female offenders also scored higher than male offenders in EI. Among female offenders, affective and antisocial psychopathic traits yielded small negative relationships with strategic EI. Gender did not moderate relationships between psychopathic traits and ability EI in offenders.	6
Ermer et al., 2012. USA	To investigate the relation between EI and psychopathy in a sample of incarcerated men.	Forensic population, incarcerated.	Psychopathy Checklist–Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003). Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence	Total psychopathy scores were modestly but significantly correlated with strategic EI, but not global EI or experiential EI. After controlling for general intelligence, there was a modest negative relation between	5

		N = 374 males; range 18 – 60 years (M = 34.2).	Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003).	global EI and total psychopathy scores. There was no relation between total psychopathy scores and experiential EI, but there was a significant negative relation with strategic EI.	
Vidal et al., 2010. USA	To assess the relation between psychopathy and EI. To compare the EI of low-anxious and high anxious variants of psychopathy. To assess whether low-anxious and high-anxious variants of psychopathy differs with respect to aggressive and violent dating behaviour.	University student population. N = 188 males; M = 19.9 years.	Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003).	Results indicated that the high-anxious psychopathy group had significantly lower EI than both the low anxious psychopathy and low psychopathy comparison groups. There was no significant difference between the low-anxious psychopathy and low psychopathy comparison groups in their EI scores. Total psychopathy scores were inversely associated with EI, but only when low anxiety was excluded from the measure. The low-anxious psychopathic group possessed relative intact EI and manifested some skill in facilitating thoughts, or reasoning about emotions.	6
Ali et al., 2009. UK	To further explore the relationships between non-clinical psychopathy, Machiavellianism, trait EI and deficits in empathy using a purposely-designed visual task to assess appropriateness of empathic responses to the emotional displays of others.	University student population. N = 84 (67 female, 17 male), range 18 – 46 years (M = 20.7)	Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (LSRP; Levenson et al., 1995) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue–SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2006)	Trait EI was associated with attributing positive affect to the neutral images and negatively associated with secondary psychopathy, Machiavellianism and state anxiety. No association was found between primary psychopathy and trait EI. No association was found between primary psychopathy and trait emotional intelligence.	5

Curci et al., 2017. Italy	To investigate the role of EI in mediating the relationship between psychopathy and detention term of property offenders.	Forensic population, incarcerated. N = 24 males; range 22 – 56 years (M = 30.04)	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, Italian Version (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003) Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised, Italian Version (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005)	Level of psychopathic traits were negatively associated with the level of ability EI, and this is in turn negatively related to the duration of prison sentence. Secondary psychopaths typically show a dysfunctional impulsivity control; results found that the level of ability EI contributes to control this tendency, by enhancing individuals' capacity to regulate their impulsivity.	5
Visser et al., 2010. Canada	To investigate the relations between psychopathy, Ability EI, and antisocial behaviour.	University student population. N = 429 (254 female, 175 male); M = 20.48 years	Self-Report Psychopathy-III (SRP-III; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2009) Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003)	For both men and women, psychopathy subscales were negatively correlated with EI subscales and positively correlated with student antisociality, and EI subscales were negatively correlated with psychopathy subscales and with student antisociality. The correlations between total psychopathy and total EI were significant and negative in both sexes and the correlations between total psychopathy and student antisociality were significant and positive for both sexes. Total EI and student antisociality were significantly and negatively correlated in both sexes.	5
Gómez-Leal et al., 2021. Spain	To analyse the relationship between psychopathic traits and EI in incarcerated adult males.	Forensic population, incarcerated. N = 63 males, range 22- 62 years (M = 37.51)	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003) Self-Report Psychopathy Scale-III, Spanish Version (SRP-III; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2009)	Results found a negative relationship between MSCEIT total (EI scores) and total scores on psychopathic traits. The sample was characterized by low EI and high psychopathic traits, and this low ability EI is associated with high scores on the emotional deficit components of psychopathic traits.	6

Lishner et al., 2011. USA		University student population. N = 151 (79 female, 72 male), range 18 – 24 years (M = 18.98)	Self-Report Psychopathy-III (SRP-III; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2009) Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003)	Primary psychopathy showed meaningful negative associations with perceiving and managing emotion ability EI facets, but not using and understanding ability EI facets. In contrast, secondary psychopathy showed a meaningful negative association only with the managing emotion ability EI facet. Analyses revealed that a number of associations between facets of psychopathy and facets of ability EI were eliminated after controlling for participant gender and age. Specifically, primary psychopathy remained inversely associated with the ability to perceive emotion regardless of participant gender. Primary psychopathy and secondary psychopathy both remained inversely associated with managing emotion, but only in men.	6
Malterer et al., 2008. USA	(1) the affective-interpersonal dimension of psychopathy (Factor 1) will be associated with weaker attention to affective information and (2) the impulsive-antisocial dimension (Factor 2) of psychopathy will be associated with difficulty repairing (i.e., inhibiting) pre-potent affective states.	Forensic population, incarcerated. N = 439 males, range 18 – 45 years (M = 30.28)	Psychopathy Checklist–Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003). Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS; Salovey et al., 1995).	Deficits in EI were associated (albeit modestly) with PCL-R total scores, the primary psychopathy subtype, and with the affective-interpersonal and impulsive-antisocial dimensions that comprise the two-factor model of psychopathy. Individuals with high scores on Factor 1 were less inclined to attend to their emotions. Results also found a negative association between PCL-R Factor 2 and TMMS Repair. Self-report evidence that primary psychopathy is associated with a	8

				potentially problematic failure to attend to and repair their emotional states.	
Pham et al., 2010. Belgium	To evaluate the relationships across psychopathy, alexithymia, and EI simultaneously.	Forensic psychiatric population, inpatient. N = 39 males; 20 "psychopaths", 19 "controls". Range 23 – 67 years (M = 39.01)	Psychopathy Checklist–Revised, French Version (PCL-R; Hare, 2003). Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue–SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2006)	The results show that psychopaths have superior EI on the basis of the TEIQue relative to controls. The psychopaths EI mean scores did not differed from non clinical (students) scores reported by Mikolajczak et al. (2007) except for the "emotional management" factor. This EI factor did not differ between psychopaths and control patients. The results show psychopaths to perform well with respect to the emotional perception and emotional regulation factors.	7
Watts et al., 2016. USA	Studying the relations among psychopathy and multiple indices of intelligence, including both cognitively based intelligence (CBI) and emotional intelligence (EI), in a large sample of undergraduates.	University student population. N = 1257 (880 female, 377 male). M = 19.32 years	Psychopathic Personality Inventory-Short Form (PPI-SF; Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996). Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 2008)	The majority of psychopathy indices were modestly negatively associated with EI subscales. 'Fearless dominance' (FD) was significantly and modestly positively associated with various aspects of EI. For example, those with elevated FD traits reported experiencing higher levels of emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-esteem, and confidence in their ideas and beliefs. Cold-heartedness was associated positively with emotional adjustment-related indices but negatively associated with interpersonal EI. Those with elevated 'self-centred impulsivity' traits showed the opposite pattern such that they reported very low levels of the aforementioned EI features.	6

Català & Caparrós, 2023. Spain	To analyse the association between moral disengagement mechanisms and the psychopathic personality and the dark constellation. To examine the association between psychopathic personality and emotional intelligence. To analyse the correlation between dark constellation and emotional intelligence, and to identify which components predict the psychopathic personality. To observe those personality, moral and emotional study variables, that discriminate between high psychopathic and low psychopathic group.	Forensic population, incarcerated. N = 62 (43 males, 19 females), range 25 – 80 years (M = 40.29)	Self-Report Psychopathy-III, Spanish Version (SRP-III; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2009) Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, Spanish Version (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003)	EI was found to be inversely associated with psychopathic personality factor two, Criminal Tendencies. This indicates that participants with high criminal tendencies are less confident in perceiving and managing their own and others' emotions and in facilitating thinking and problem solving with the use of emotions. This study also found a negative association between EI and one of the facets of the first factor of psychopathic personality, specifically Callous Affect, defined by a lack of remorse and shallow emotionality.	7
Grieve & Mahar, 2010. Australia	The first study aimed to empirically investigate conceptual similarities between emotional manipulation and psychopathy. The second study aimed to clarify and explore the nature of the emotional manipulation–psychopathy relationship found in the preliminary study.	University student population. Study 1 – N = 73 (58 female, 15 male), M = 23.96 years. Study 2 – N = 275 (187 female, 88 male), M = 23.53 years.	Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (LSRP; Levenson et al., 1995) Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998)	Study 1 - EI was negatively related to both primary and secondary psychopathy. However, only the relationship with secondary psychopathy was significant. Study 2 - Higher levels of primary psychopathy and EI were significant predictors of emotional manipulation. While EI directly predicts emotional manipulation in males, in females, EI is instead acting as a suppressor variable, significantly contributing to the psychopathy–emotional manipulation nexus through the suppression of extraneous variance.	5

Howe et al., 2014. USA	To examine the rate of psychopathy in a corporate sample. To examine the relationship between psychopathy and EI. To examine the relationship of both psychopathy and EI to professional success in the financial sector.	Community sample (employees of financial institutions). N = 55 (39 male, 16 female), range 22 – 72 years (M = 37.87).	Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003)	Interpersonal-affective psychopathic traits were not significantly related to EI but impulsive-behavioural traits were (negatively). While not significant, the associations between interpersonal-affective traits (i.e., the Fearless Dominance subscale) and EI scores were in the expected positive direction, whereas associations between EI scores and other aspects of psychopathy (i.e., Coldheartedness, Self-Centerered Impulsivity) were uniformly negative.	5
Fix & Fix, 2015. USA	Do measures of emotional intelligence, callousness, and empathy predict trait psychopathy within a sample of undergraduate students? Can trait psychopathy add unique predictive power to a model examining how well criminal thinking styles predict violent, property, drug, or status illegal behaviour?	University student population. N = 111 males, M = 20.58 years	Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 2008)	The present investigation found that several facets of emotional intelligence were strong predictors of trait psychopathy, while empathy levels were not. Higher trait psychopathy was predicted by lower Intrapersonal and General Mood scores and by higher Stress Management and Interpersonal Relationship scores on the EQi. Results suggested that participants scoring higher in trait psychopathy were more likely to endorse lower levels of intrapersonal understanding, caring for others, and general mood, and higher levels of interpersonal functioning and stress management.	6
Porter et al., 2011. Canada	To investigate individual differences in adopting deceptive universal emotional expressions. It was hypothesised that psychopathic traits would lead	University student population. N = 100 (75 female, 25 male), M = 20.78 years.	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue–SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2006)	Psychopathic traits were found to be negatively correlated with EI. Although emotionally intelligent and psychopathic participants did display particularly convincing, deceptive emotions, they did not fool naïve judges more often than other	6

	to a heightened ability to suppress emotional expressions and exhibit less "leakage" of inconsistent emotions during deceptive displays. Further, it was predicted that emotional intelligence (EI) would lead to a heightened ability to simulate emotional expressions.		Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP-4; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2017)	participants. Psychopathic traits – specifically, high levels of interpersonal manipulation – were related to shorter durations of unintended emotional "leakage" during deceptive expressions. Individuals higher in EI – specifically, the ability to perceive and express emotion – feigned emotions more convincingly than others but were not more immune to emotional leakage.	

Measurement Tools

Five studies used the Psychopathy Checklist–Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003), a tool considered to be the gold-standard for measurement of psychopathic traits. Seven studies used the Psychopathic Personality Inventory–Revised (PPI–R; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) and one study used the Psychopathic Personality Inventory-Short Form (PPI-SF; Lilienfeld & Andrews, 1996), both of which have been used extensively in research in the field.

Seven studies used measures that required self-reporting of psychopathic traits. Two studies used the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (LSRP; Levenson et al., 1995). Four studies used the Self-Report Psychopathy-III (SRP-III; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2009), and one study used the Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP-4; Paulhus, Neumann, & Hare, 2017). Measures of psychopathy which require self-reported information and responses should consider the validity of the data collected and analyse all information critically. It is widely understood that individuals possessing psychopathic traits can be considered to be deceitful and cunning, and it has been found that those with higher levels of manipulativeness were more likely to be dishonest in self-report measures (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996). Furthermore, Hare & Neumann (2008) posited that psychopathic individuals often exhibit decreased understanding of their psychopathology and self-report data can therefore lack validity, suggesting that research of these individuals should include multiple measures of psychopathy including varying methods. However, in the studies included within this review, only one study (Copestake et al., 2013) chose to use two measures of psychopathic traits, the PPI-R and the PCL-R.

Emotional intelligence (EI) scales are primarily self-report measures, though others aim to measure EI via ability testing wherein a participant is presented with tasks to measure EI, rather than asking participants to report their own perceived abilities. Once again, data collected from self-report measures when administered to individuals possessing psychopathic traits should be carefully considered due to the lack of insight and heightened manipulativeness of the subjects. However, eleven of the included studies used self-report measures of EI only, while one study (Copestake et al., 2013) used both self-report and ability scales (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, MSCEIT, Mayer et al., 2003; Trait Meta-Mood Scale, TMMS, Salovey et al., 1995).

One study used the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES; Schutte et al., 2009). Three studies used the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 2008). Ten studies used the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003). One study used the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998). Two studies used the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS; Salovey et al., 1995). Three studies used the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue–SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2006).

Correlation

Thirteen studies found a negative association between psychopathic traits and EI. A total of eight studies found a negative correlation between psychopathic traits and EI in university student populations, in that as psychopathy scores were higher, EI scores were lower. Three of the studies found a negative correlation within incarcerated forensic populations. The final two studies found a negative correlation between psychopathic traits and EI in community samples.

In contrast, three studies found a positive association between psychopathic traits and EI, in that as psychopathic traits increased, as did EI scores. One study found this positive correlation within a community sample (Howe et al., 2014), and two found a positive correlation within incarcerated forensic sample (Copestake et al., 2013; Pham et al., 2010), one of which was also an inpatient demographic (Pham et al., 2010).

Three studies found no association between psychopathic traits and EI, all of which were conducted with non-forensic samples; two student population samples (Vidal et al., 2010; Ali et al., 2009), and one general community sample (Brooks et al., 2020).

Ability EI

Ten of the included studies measured ability EI using the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003). Ability EI is defined as one's ability to process emotional information and apply it within social interactions using the four-branch model; emotional perception, facilitation, understanding, and management (Mayer et al., 1999). Mayer et al. (1999) stated that EI could be further broken down into experiential EI

and strategic EI. Experiential EI is defined as the ability to observe and recognise the emotions of others and using these to inform cognitions, whereas strategic EI refers to the ability to engage in emotional reasoning, including the understanding and management of emotions in various situations.

Five of these studies (Vidal et al., 2010; Curci et al., 2017; Visser et al., 2010; Gómez-Leal et al., 2021; Català & Caparrós, 2023) concluded that there was a negative association between psychopathy scores and EI, suggesting an impairment in both strategic and experiential EI in individuals with psychopathy. A further three studies (Ermer et al., 2012; Lishner et al., 2011; Edwards et al., 2019) found a negative association between psychopathy scores and strategic EI, however findings in relation to experiential EI varied. Both Ermer et al. (2012) and Lishner et al. (2011) found no association between psychopathy scores and experiential EI, whereas Edwards et al. (2019) found a positive association between psychopathy scores and experiential EI, suggesting that psychopathic individuals possessed higher abilities in experiential EI. Similarly, Copestake et al. (2013) found a positive association between psychopathy scores and experiential EI, however, they also found a positive association between psychopathy scores and strategic EI. Finally, Howe et al. (2014) did not explore strategic and experiential EI individually, instead reporting on total EI scores. The study found a negative association between total ability EI scores and the impulsive-behavioural facet of psychopathy, whereas there was no association between total ability EI scores and the interpersonal-affective facet of psychopathy.

Trait EI

Ten of the included studies measured trait EI. Petrides et al. (2007) defined trait EI as one's subjective opinion of their own abilities in regard to perceiving, understanding, and utilising one's own emotions and the emotions of others, as measured via self-report methods. Trait EI measures utilised within the papers included the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES; Schutte et al., 2009), the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 2008), the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998), the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS; Salovey et al., 1995), and the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue–SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2006).

Five of the studies reported to have found a negative association between psychopathy and trait EI (Schwartz, 2010; Ali et al., 2009; Malterer et al., 2008; Watts et al., 2016; Grieve & Mahar, 2010; Porter et al., 2011), suggesting a deficit in trait EI in individuals with psychopathy, while Ali et al. (2009) specified that this association related to secondary psychopathy only. In contrast, three studies (Copestake et al., 2013; Pham et al., 2010; Fix & Fix, 2015) discovered that psychopathy scores and trait EI were positively associated, suggesting an increased ability in trait EI in individuals with psychopathy. However, two studies (Brooks et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2009) found no association between psychopathy and trait EI, with Ali et al. (2009) specifying that this lack of association was in relation to primary psychopathy.

Discussion

This review aimed to explore and evaluate research demonstrating the link between psychopathy and emotional intelligence, due to conflicting beliefs regarding the emotional capacity associated with psychopathy. Nineteen studies were determined to have met eligibility criteria for the review, spanning the last seventeen years approximately. Due to variation in study aims, methodology, measures used, and samples included, it was difficult to establish direct comparisons between the studies, with only correlational conclusions drawn.

The results of the included studies reflected mixed findings and mixed understandings of the construct of psychopathy, both adding to and challenging the seminal research on the subject. Findings citing negative correlations between EI and psychopathy could be considered to be in line with Cleckley's (1941) model of psychopathy, suggesting that such individuals possess shallow affect and indifference to the emotions of others. Research used to inform the "gold-standard" measures of psychopathy, including the Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003), has also drawn conclusions suggesting that reduced emotional capability is a key characteristic of the psychopathic personality (Hare, 1991). However, four studies suggested that psychopathy was associated with higher EI abilities. Studies which demonstrated a positive association between psychopathy and trait EI suggested that psychopathic individuals may estimate their own emotional abilities as being more superior than they are, given the likelihood of psychopathic individuals to possess characteristics associated with grandiosity (Pham et al., 2010). Given that trait EI is self-reported ability,

these findings could also be considered to align with the works of Cleckley (1941) and Hare (1991), who attributed an inflated sense of self to the psychopathic personality.

Only one study, Copestake et al. (2013), found a positive association between psychopathy scores and both aspects of ability EI in an incarcerated sample, and three studies concluded that there was no link between psychopathy and EI. It may be considered that psychopaths possess greater ability to manage their own emotional states, perhaps due to the shallow affect associated with psychopathy. However, a positive association between psychopathy and ability EI may also reflect that an increased perception of the emotions of others benefits the ability to manipulate and meet one's own needs. Still, the conflict between the findings presented by theorists such as Cleckley (1941) and Hare (1991) and the findings in the present review may instead be indicative of the "emotional paradox" suggested by Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright (2004) and Davis (1983). The "emotional paradox" posits that recognising and experiencing emotions are different processes requiring different skills, and that an individual can possess one skill without the other. In relation to psychopathy, it may therefore be suggested that a psychopath can cognitively recognise the emotions of others but may not emotionally experience them for themselves. Although, it could be considered that the results of studies which discovered no association between EI and psychopathy do not support this theory of duality in emotional skills, perhaps instead suggesting that psychopaths possess the ability to perceive and experience emotions, though the value assigned to experienced emotions is significantly less. It could be considered that the desires of the psychopathic individual are perceived to be of more importance instead, which would more closely align with the seminal works of Cleckley (1941) and Hare (1991).

In this review, the search strategy used could be criticised for limiting the search terms to the title only and for specifying *'NOT psychopathology'*. It is acknowledged that while these strategies were employed in an attempt to exclude unsuitable results, this could have also potentially screened out appropriate research studies. A strength and limitation of the review is the broadness of the concepts investigated. Whilst exploring EI and psychopathy broadly allowed for the inclusion of a wider range of research, this lack of specificity created difficulty in relation to conclusions that were able to be drawn during this review. More specific comparisons, synthesis, and conclusions may have been feasible if the eligibility criteria of the review were more focussed or limited, for example by including studies measuring primary psychopathy and one facet of ability EI.

The research included in the review can also be considered to have limitations. Of the included studies, only seven papers (Ali et al., 2009; Brooks et al., 2020; Copestake et al., 2013; Grieve & Mahar, 2010; Lishner et al., 2011; Malterer et al., 2008; Vidal et al., 2009) made the distinction between primary and secondary psychopathy and explored these individually in relation to EI.

While the findings from the review can be considered trustworthy and accurate at the time of the initial search, due to the somewhat limited amount of current research into the topic it cannot be considered a full and accurate conclusion of the link between EI and psychopathy. Future research may wish to further explore the link between the various facets and abilities within EI and the different facets of psychopathy, including primary and secondary psychopathy as well as the four facets demonstrated within Hare's (2003) research. Future research may also consider exploring more thoroughly personal characteristics which may be considered to influence EI as well as psychopathy, such as gender, ACEs, and intelligence.

Chapter Two: Methods

Design

The current study was conducted using a qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews and a standardised measure to explore values, relationships, and psychopathic traits using thematic analysis. This study was conducted as part of a wider research team investigating the neurological activity linked to pain perception, empathy, and psychopathic traits.

Participants

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for participation in the current study, individuals were required to be young adults aged between 18-30 years and possess fluency in the English language. Participants were also required to be able to access and use Microsoft Teams via a laptop, computer, or smart phone, and be able to engage with such software in a quiet and private space for several hours. Participants who reported severe and enduring mental health conditions were excluded due to consideration for their wellbeing, and the impact this may have had on their responses.

Participants required for the study conducted by Miss Camara were aged 18 to 25 years. However, due to participant numbers, recruitment difficulties, and the arbitrary nature of age cut-offs for the threshold of "young adult" within research, it was decided that the participant pool for the present study would be extended to 18 to 30 years.

Sample

Recruitment of participants ceased in August 2023. A total of 15 individuals participated in the study, with an average age of 26.53 years. The sample consisted of 11 females (73%) and 4 males (27%). The majority of the sample identified as 'White British' (10 participants, 67%), two participants identified as 'British Indian', one participant identified as 'Dravidian', one participant identified as 'Black African', while one participant did not indicate their ethnicity. In regard to relationship status at the time of participation, 7 (47%) participants

indicated they were single, 2 (13%) indicated they were married, 5 (33%) participants indicated they were cohabiting, and 1 (7%) participant indicated 'other', noting that they were in a long-term relationship. Twelve participants reported no disability/formal mental health diagnoses, one chose not to disclose, one reported having diagnoses of anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and one reported being diagnosed with dyslexia. [1]

Procedures

Recruitment

Participants were recruited via the university database and SONA, as well as via social media; an advertisement for the study was placed on a Facebook group called "UK Clinical Psychology Applicants", including individuals at all professional levels within psychology and those interested in the field. An advertisement for the study was placed on this page due to assumed interest in the topic. The group is in use for both national and international individuals, and so it was hoped that the study could recruit from anywhere in the UK, and potentially other countries. An advertisement for the study was also posted generally on Facebook, where it was shared with others via different profiles and word of mouth. The method of recruitment was therefore via volunteer sampling. Potential participants were instructed in the advertisement to contact the researcher via email or instant messaging on Facebook to express interest and/or ask questions. A total of 26 individuals enquired about participation, of whom 15 were selected; six were recruited from the "UK Clinical Psychology Applicants" page, 3 were recruited from the participant pool from Miss. Camara's study, and the remaining 6 were recruited from word of mouth and ongoing sharing of the study advertisement on Facebook.

Data Collection

Participants determined to be eligible and interested were provided with a study information sheet (Appendix B) and afforded the opportunity to voice any questions or concerns via email, online video software, or instant messaging before agreeing to participate.

[1] It was initially agreed that the participant pool for this research would be provided by Miss Camara's research project with the aim that data could be shared to enhance the findings of each researcher's project. However, due to low response rates from said participant pool, only 3 participants contributed to both the research project by Miss Camara and the author, while 12 participants were recruited by other means, as detailed in this report.

Participants were offered various dates and times to book two interview appointments, the first lasting up to ninety minutes in duration, and the second up to two hours. An additional opportunity to confirm consent, ask questions, and/or discuss concerns was given at the start of the first interview appointment. Both interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams software. Renumeration was offered by the option to opt into a raffle for a £50 Amazon gift voucher. Participants were required to engage in a semi-structured interview during session one, and the Psychopathy Checklist Screening Version interview during session two, conducted using the standardised interview and information schedule.

After informed consent was provided (Appendix C), participants were also asked for demographic information (Appendix D), including age, sex, ethnicity, and marital status. Participants were asked to indicate whether they identified as having a disability and/or formal mental health diagnosis, to determine any additional considerations or support that may have been needed to benefit wellbeing during participation in the study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview consisted of ten questions exploring individual values and nine paired statements exploring interpersonal relationships (Appendix E). All interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, and with consent from participants, both video and audio recordings of each interview were taken. Transcripts were written for each interview using the aforementioned video and audio recordings.

Values

Questions exploring values were adapted from the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; 1992). The questions were adapted to collect qualitative data, and were therefore re-written as open-ended interview questions, as opposed to the Likert scale questions of the original measure. The SVS is a self-report measure which requires individuals to assign value to each item on a Likert scale, thus producing quantitative data only. While the SVS is considered to be a widely used and respected measure of values, it does not allow participants to expand on their answers and provide further supporting information. Within the SVS, items are presented in either “noun” or “adjective” form followed by a brief description of the items meaning. For example, *“Equality (equal opportunity for all)”*, after which the subject indicates how

important each item is on a numerical scale only. Instead, within this study questions from the SVS were adapted from the original measure to allow for participants to share their thoughts through discussion, and to capture the individual experience through qualitative data (Appendix E). An example adapted question being, *"how important is having a lot of money, power, and status to you?"* to explore the value *"power"*, with the opportunity for the interviewer to ask additional questions to expand on and clarify answers.

Interpersonal Relationships

Questions exploring interpersonal relationships were devised after a brief investigation of perceived important qualities within relationships. A total of 58 people were asked which qualities they found to be important in relationships with friends, family members, and partners. Participants were recruited by opportunity; the researcher asked friends and colleagues, and asked those individuals to ask one person each in their life also. Fifteen participants were recruited on a university campus and asked during a common lunchtime break, and twenty-one participants responded to a questionnaire posted on social media. Participants were not asked any for any demographic information, though it was noted that the sample consisted of thirty-seven females and twenty-one males. Participants were asked to provide answers which encapsulated concepts and characteristics as a 'theme', and given the example, *"if I were to ask what people might be looking for when they go on holiday, example answers might be: adventure, relaxation, escape, sight-seeing, rather than specifics such as: driving a speedboat, or visiting the Grand Canyon".* Participants were asked to give another example pertaining to the "holiday example", and once the participant's understanding was clear, they were asked about relationships.

Each participant was asked *"which aspects of relationships with family, friends, and partners, are important characteristics for the health of the relationship?"*. Responses from participants were analysed for potential commonalities, and it was noted when answers were repeated. Responses which were mentioned infrequently and not repeated by others were disregarded. Using the data collected from the 58 participants, answers were collated into seven overarching themes: respect, trust, honesty, compromise, understanding, emotions, aggression/violence. These themes were then used to generate questions pertaining to and across various categories of relationships.

Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version

Participants were interviewed using the Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV) Interview Schedule (Hare, 1995). Hare's 1991 (revised in 2003) Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) is considered to be closely aligned with Cleckley's (1941) work and is therefore considered to be the "gold standard" measure. Adapted from the PCL-R in 1995, the PCL:SV was aimed for use with adults from a broad range of populations, including forensic, psychiatric, and community settings.

The PCL:SV has been found to be a reliable measure internationally within research. In 2010, Žukauskienė, Laurinavičius, & Čėsnienė administered the PCL:SV on a sample of male Lithuanian offenders to examine the factorial structure and validity of the measure in a European forensic context. The study found that the mean total scores from the sample closely resemble the means reported by Hart et al. in 1995 with North American offenders. Similarly, the results of Žukauskienė, Laurinavičius, & Čėsnienė (2010) were found to be similar to those determined by Douglas et al (2005), who administered the PCL:SV to a sample of Swedish correctional institution inmates. Furthermore, utilising the cut-off score of 18, 34.6% of the Lithuanian sample met threshold for psychopathy, a finding comparable to results found and presented by Hart et al. (1995) in the PCL:SV Manual (30.2%). Overall, Žukauskienė, Laurinavičius, & Čėsnienė (2010) concluded that scores generated by the Lithuanian forensic population supported cross-cultural applicability of psychopathy as well as the validity of the PCL:SV. Overall, the PCL-R has been found to show good reliability and validity (internal consistency = .87; interrater reliability =.94; test-retest reliability = .89) (Hare, Clark, Grann & Thornton, 2000).

While most research using the PCL:SV has included forensic populations, the measure has also been found to be valid within non-forensic samples. In 2007, Lynam et al. used the PCL:SV in a longitudinal study exploring psychopathy scores within community youth. Within this study it was found that adult PCL:SV scores were significantly associated with psychopathy scores measured within childhood. These scores remained significant even after controlling for variables including delinquency and childhood risk status, indicating the consistency of psychopathic traits across the lifespan, as well as providing evidence for the validity of use of the PCL:SV within community populations.

The PCL:SV is considered to be a valid and reliable gold-standard measure for use within community populations and research, and was therefore determined to be the most appropriate measure for the current study. It was also considered that this measure would be appropriate to use within online interviews as the measure allows for adherence to an interview schedule which can be delivered through multiple mediums, including video conferencing software.

All interviews for this measure were conducted via Microsoft Teams. With consent from participants, both video and audio recordings of each PCL:SV interview were taken. Transcripts were written for each interview using the video and audio recordings, in addition to notes being taken by the researcher throughout each interview. Participants were asked all questions within sections B to J of Part 1– section A was omitted due to only being applicable to individuals residing in psychiatric institutes or similar, while Part 2 was omitted due to only being applicable in cases where collateral information was needed, which was not necessary for this study. (Please note, the PCL:SV Interview Schedule is not included in the appendices due to copyright restriction.)

Data Analysis

Epistemological Positioning

The present study implemented a critical realist epistemological position (Willig, 1999). A critical realist approach enabled the research to focus on the meanings and experiences of participants, while also recognising the ways in which individuals make sense of their experiences and how broader social contexts may impact this meaning-making (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analytical Approach

The present study utilised a reflexive thematic analysis (TA) approach to analyse the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). TA is considered to be a versatile methodology that embraces the subjectivity of the researcher in the discovery, analysis, and reporting of discerned patterns of meaning within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013). Such analysis is conducted within a process of interpretative reflexivity by the researcher; therefore, this methodology does not

demand interrater reliability or researcher objectivity (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). As is recommended by Braun & Clarke (2021b), "themes" created by the researcher were considered to be the conclusion and results of data coding.

The rationale for using reflexive TA was multidimensional. Thematic analysis is an adaptable method that can be used to analyse a variety of qualitative data, enabling researchers to be flexible in their research questions and method of data collection, whilst also providing a structured approach to identifying and analysing patterns or concepts within data using a six-phase approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Another advantage of TA is the thorough and comprehensive examination of data prescribed by the methodology, enabling researchers to acquire an in-depth understanding of individual experiences or complex phenomena. Furthermore, TA allows for themes to develop from data as opposed to applying existing theoretical concepts being applied to the data. Such an approach makes TA an appropriate methodology for investigating areas of research or concepts which are novel or under-explored, as can be considered to be true for the present study topic. Finally, TA can be applied within a variety of research paradigms, allowing for versatility of the researchers ontological and epistemological approach and perspectives. Thus, TA enables the researcher to adopt flexibility and reflexivity within research, leading to deeper understanding and exploration of experiences of participants, as well as the experienced process of research itself within the researcher.

Consideration of Other Analytical Approaches

In the process of selecting a method of analysis, other analytical approaches were considered. An alternative methodology considered for use was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), however this was rejected for this project. Similar to TA, IPA is appropriate for use with small sample sizes and seeks to offer comprehensive explorations of individual lived experiences and the process of making sense of them. However, IPA seeks to retain a more idiographic focus, whereas TA aims to emphasise patterns of meaning across data, which aligns more closely with the current study. Furthermore, TA offers researchers epistemological flexibility and can be adaptive to findings from qualitative data, whereas IPA is underpinned by an established epistemology, ontology, and theoretical framework. IPA also assumes a homogeneity within a sample group, which is not consistent with the participant sample of the current study.

Phases of Analysis

The systematic seven-phase approach to reflexive TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was followed to ensure rigor and transparency of the process. Transcript data from each interview was separated into two categories for each subject explored within the dialogue: “values” and “interpersonal relationships”. Transcripts of interviews were thoroughly reviewed and examined, during which familiarisation was fostered and preliminary reflections and features were noted. The data was then systematically coded by attaching labels to segments that captured meaningful concepts or ideas, using both in-vivo codes (the participants' own words) and descriptive codes. Mind-maps were created by the researcher to explore and encapsulate significant characteristics within the data, which were subsequently utilised to develop preliminary themes, described by Braun & Clarke (2006) as *"patterns of shared meaning or central ideas embedded in the data."* From these preliminary themes, codes were sorted and organised to determine further patterns across the data and to test each potential theme for coherency, distinctiveness, and meaning. A final list of themes and subthemes was generated, and a thematic map was created to reflect these themes and subthemes. Each theme was then given a clear name and definition.

Integration of Semi-Structured Interviews and the PCL:SV

Qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews was compared with the quantitative scores as well as the qualitative information gathered during the PCL:SV. Each participant received total and item-based scores for the PCL:SV. In addition, qualitative data was gathered during the process of administering the measure via transcripts produced from each PCL:SV interview. For the purpose of this study, data pertaining to values and relationships was compared with scores obtained in each item of the PCL:SV to determine any patterns in the data. This was achieved by analysing individual interviews and making comparisons between item scores and beliefs regarding values and relationships in semi-structured interviews. After, individuals who scored 1 or 2 on an item were compared with participants who achieved the same score in the same item, and qualitative data was analysed for any subsequent patterns across interviews related to that item.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval including final amendments was gained from the University of Essex ethics committee on 23rd July 2023 (ETH2223-2259, Appendix F). Due to the fact that this research did not include patient data from NHS services, NHS ethical approval was not required. A number of ethical considerations were made in regard to the present study and planned for accordingly, as outlined below.

Informed Consent

As part of the recruitment process, individuals who expressed interest in the project via instant messaging or email were contacted by the researcher to provide an information sheet (Appendix B) outlining the details of the study, as well as a brief explanation of the research project in accessible terminology. Potential participants were instructed and encouraged to read and process the information in full. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions via email or instant messaging within the initial recruitment contact, with the researcher additionally offering potential participants the chance to meet via Microsoft Teams to allay any concerns or answer questions in greater detail. Plans for dissemination of the written project was also shared. Participants who subsequently agreed to partake in the research were sent a consent form (Appendix C) and demographic information sheet (Appendix D) to read, complete, and return to the researcher.

Upon receipt of completed consent form and demographic information sheet, interview dates were agreed. Participants were informed within the consent form and information sheet of their right to withdraw participation and data at any time without having to provide a reason for withdrawal. Participants were assured that withdrawal could be actioned at any time until the anonymisation of data collected. During initial contact with potential participants, individuals were informed that they reserved the right to decline to answer any question without having to provide a reason. Only participants who provided completed consent forms and demographic information sheets were included in the study, all of which were collected via email and therefore completed digitally. Consent was also confirmed at the start of each interviewed and recorded using an audio recorder, as recommended by the Health Research Authority (HRA, 2018).

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Data obtained in the present study was fully anonymous and confidential. Participants were informed that transcriptions would be anonymous of any and all identifiable information, and that all audio recordings were accessible only to the researcher. During the process of transcription, data which could be linked to participant identity, such as geographic locations or names of family members/partners, was removed. As audio recordings were collected via Microsoft Teams software and saved directly into the researcher's password-protected computer for storage, it was not necessary to transfer recordings from any additional equipment. Participant data, including transcripts, consent forms, and demographic information sheets, were labelled and stored using ID numbers only in a password-protected database; information regarding participant ID numbers were recorded and stored within a secondary password-protected document. Each participant was also assigned a pseudonym generated at random, for the purpose of quotation presentation within the study.

Participants were informed that confidentiality would be adhered to except in circumstances where there were justifiable reasons for this to be breached. An example was given that if participants were considered to be at risk of harm or a risk to others as a result of interview responses then violation of confidentiality would be considered and discussed. In the eventuality that this was necessary, participants were told that the researcher would consider measures including safeguard reporting and police involvement. This was due to the nature of questions during the PCL:SV, which captured data on criminal activity and convictions. No breach of confidentiality was required during data collection.

Risk and Participant Wellbeing

Participants were considered to be of low risk to the researcher due to recruitment from student and general population samples. Individual risk assessments were not completed, however any potential risk to the researcher were minimised by use of online interviews, using Microsoft Teams.

Due to the personal nature of the interview, it was considered that participants could potentially be at risk of emotional harm as a result. A risk assessment was completed for the study, including participant and researcher wellbeing, and the study was considered to be low

risk. Participants were notified in the information sheet about the personal content of the interview and were informed that should they become distressed by any content, were able to take breaks, decline to answer questions, or withdraw participation for their own safety and wellbeing. Participants were also signposted to the Mind website, a mental health support service offering listening services and helplines from a variety of sources.

Perceived Power

It is important to consider the power and influence of the researcher in relation to the interview process. Studies such as Gill et al. (2008) explored the difficulties and disadvantages of qualitative interviews, highlighting the challenges of pressure and influence during the dynamics of an interview. Gill et al. (2008) stated that participants may experience pressure to alter their answers to meet perceived social desirability. This study demonstrates the impact, and therefore the power, the interviewer-interviewee dynamic can have on participant responses. To minimise this potential impact, the researcher reiterated anonymity of responses, the right to decline, and attempted to build rapport with participants. It was important for the researcher to be reflexive about the power imbalance that exists during interviews regardless of attempts to minimise these risks.

Dissemination

The findings of the current study will be presented at the Essex University Postgraduate Research Conference and will be available on open access in the Essex University Research Repository. Findings may be presented at the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abuse (NOTA) conference, which invites postgraduate students to present research from a variety of topics related to sexual harm perpetrators and victims. Findings will also be prepared for publication in the British Journal of Clinical Psychology, published by the British Psychological Society (BPS). The British Journal of Clinical Psychology publishes empirical and theoretical original research relating to all aspects of clinical psychology.

Chapter Three: Results

The results of this study are presented from both the qualitative data collected via semi-structured interviews, and using the quantitative data collected from the use of the PCL:SV.

Sample Demographics

Fifteen participants were interviewed with an average age of 26.53 years. The sample consisted of 11 females (73%) and 4 males (27%). The majority of the sample identified as 'White British' (10 participants, 67%), two participants identified as 'British Indian', one participant identified as 'Dravidian', one participant identified as 'Black African', while one participant did not indicate their ethnicity. At the time of participation, 7 (47%) participants indicated they were single, 2 (13%) indicated they were married, 5 (33%) participants indicated they were cohabiting, and 1 (7%) participant indicated 'other', noting that they were in a long-term relationship. Twelve participants reported no disability/formal mental health diagnoses, one chose not to disclose, one reported having diagnoses of anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and one reported being diagnosed with dyslexia. Table 4 describes the demographic and professional information of participants. Participants were identified by pseudonyms.

Table 4

Participant demographics

Pseudonym	**Age/Sex**	**Occupation**
Michael	30, male	Civil servant
Sarah	27, female	Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Monica	29, female	Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Peter	24, male	Undergraduate student – business
Emily	24, female	Undergraduate student – psychology
Grace	30, female	Clinical Psychologist
Emma	29, female	Teacher
Alex	24, male	Manual labourer – construction
Phoebe	30, female	Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Daniel	27, male	Solicitor

Lilith	23, female	Unemployed
Amber	30, female	Clinical Associate Practitioner
Rebecca	23, female	Human rights activist
Courtney	23, female	Undergraduate student - psychology
Lisa	25, female	Assistant Psychologist

Thematic Analysis

Firstly, the results determined by the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) of qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews illustrate the experiences and meaning-making of participants in relation to personal values and interpersonal relationships. Themes and subthemes are captured and explained using participant quotations. From the data, three themes were generated: External Influences; Expectations of Myself and the Other; and My Internal World. These three themes each included a minimum of two subthemes and captured information such as: family values and belief systems; socially acceptable behaviours and beliefs; the role of the workplace; expectations in values; expectations in relationships; my cost-benefit analysis; the influence of my emotions. These themes and subthemes are summarised in Table 5.

In order to ensure reliability and trustworthiness of the data and the findings, the systematic seven-phase approach to RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was followed. According to Braun & Clarke (2021) RTA embraces core qualitative research values and the subjective abilities the researcher possesses within the work. As such, a research team is not considered to be necessary to ensure coding “reliability” or “objectivity,” as analysis is instead understood as a interpretative reflexive process encompassing the subjective experience of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). However, within qualitative research it is considered important that rigour and transparency is at the core of the work, and as such each stage of analysis was reflected upon and captured. During the process of data analysis, the researcher kept a reflexive journal as a means to capture thought processes, decisions, and reflections over the course of the analysis. Additionally, the researcher kept ongoing records of the coding process at each step of analysis, including changes made and detailed process notes added, to demonstrate the process of theme development. It was hoped that by documenting each step of the analysis, these records would enable other researchers to follow and understand the

researcher's reasoning, and to provide a trail that others could follow. Finally, the researcher was able to share the process of analysis and initial themes with a peer researcher, in order to discuss initial thoughts and potential additional avenues of exploration. It was hoped that this would allow for further depth and breadth of the analysis of the data.

Table 5

Overview of themes and subthemes

Theme	Subthemes	Illustrative Quotes
1. External influences	Family values and belief systems	Yes, that's (laugh) certainly been, I think been ingrained in me since I was a child. Erm. Yeah, I, I definitely do think to be successful is important because of that. ('Emily')
	Socially acceptable behaviours and beliefs	And it's so difficult because I, like, then the other part of me, like the feminist side says, well, you can be an independent woman. You don't have to... And, but I do think sharing your life with someone is so beautiful." ('Emma')
	The role of the workplace	If you've got a code of conduct that tells you you need to behave a certain way, then I'll behave that way to the letter. Whether I endorse it or not on a personal note, you know has no bearing on my ability to conduct myself how I'm told to conduct myself. ('Peter')
2. Expectations of myself and the other	Expectations in values	So I think for other people, um, no, not necessarily. If you're happy and content and doing, you know, and you're a good person, I think that's all more important. But I wouldn't say I hold the same values for myself and and I would say, I would say that for me personally, yeah, I'm very, I'm very driven and I want to do well. ('Phoebe')

	Expectations in relationships	Yeah, that that probably feels… more important than them being able to trust me actually. And I think it's because I've been mistrusted in quite- not in family relationships, but more so in a partner relationship.” (‘Amber’)
3. My internal world	My cost-benefit analysis	I don't wanna hurt anyone and I wanna be kind and like, thoughtful and stuff, but I'm not gonna live my life making everyone else happy at my own detriment. I’ve done that before. So there's a there's a line, isn't there”? (‘Grace’)
	The influence of my emotions	When I see inequality, like, that's when you see it in your day-to-day life. It comes up a lot more, I think, and those small injustices. So I feel like that feels closer to me. And so that feels more important because of that. It makes me feel good to challenge that.” (‘Rebecca’)

Theme One: External Influences

All participants discussed external factors as impacting on their values and relationships. Participants talked about individually developed values and relationship beliefs, and how these have been shaped by the people and environments around them. There were noted differences between whether these ideas were formed from existing family values, or from casting aside family values altogether. Within this superordinate theme three subthemes were generated: family values and belief systems; the role of the workplace; socially acceptable behaviours and beliefs.

Family Values and Belief Systems

Participants talked about the role that family values and beliefs play in the formation and implementation of their own values and relationships. There appeared to be mixed views as to whether these impacts were helpful or hindrance, and whether family values were important to honour or not. Perceptions varied depending on whether these family views were in relation to personal values or relationships.

Participants described the presence of these known family values as being something deep within them, as having been implanted in an almost forceful manner. Still, many participants spoke of family values as being intrinsically important and as continuing to influence the development of their own values into adult life, particularly in regard to ideas of success. 'Sarah' commented, *"yeah, education, that's always been drilled into me by family. So I think that's something I live by in terms of I have to do well and be successful and achieve the next thing."* Similarly, 'Emily' stated, "*Yes, that's (laugh) certainly been, I think been ingrained in me since I was a child. Erm. Yeah, I, I definitely do think to be successful is important because of that."* The use of language, "drilled into" and "ingrained" may suggest that these values were imposed upon participants, though individuals did not speak negatively about this family narrative. Instead, other participants spoke of family values as being a fundamental part of themselves and their identity. 'Emily' further stated:

> *"I suppose a lot of the traditions and the kind of cultural beliefs and values that I grew up in kind of have formed my core values and beliefs growing up… and things that I learned growing up through those, that is important to me and who I am."*

In relation to interpersonal relationships, family beliefs appeared to hold less importance in favour of participants' own independently developed views, particularly within the idea of maintaining family relationships. 'Emma' stated, *"there's this idea in my family that blood is thicker than water and that, but there are people in my family who I've not maintained a relationship with because we just don't, we don't align on the same values."* Participants spoke about family views about relationships with other family members in the context of harm, and that emotional wellbeing was of more importance than following tradition.

> *"I think there are some families that, um, are very unhealthy and I think my family's traditional "they're your family, blood's thicker than water" and that isn't necessarily very helpful when there's incidents where actually people might be better off cutting ties and going... But yeah, I think it depends, that that kind of very traditional notion of they're your family, you stick by them no matter what. I think that's not necessarily the case."* - 'Phoebe'

It was noted that only male participants spoke of holding onto some family beliefs around partner relationships, specifically in relation to treatment of women. 'Alex' commented, *"I think for me personally, some of the lessons I've been given stick quite deep and I do follow them pretty much to the letter. Um, a lot of that comes down to how you treat women as a man.".* While behaviours such as aggression and violence were deemed to be somewhat acceptable in some circumstances and to some people, male participants were clear that family ideas around partner violence were relevant and necessary.

> *"I think aggression or violence or anything like that... It's always last resort just cause I felt like it's never needed. It's, especially not to partner and that it's obvious, something my dad always said. Sometimes you might have to get a bit aggressive with family, sort of, if things get a bit out of hand. Never violent to women though, I think full stop. No, you never, never need to be violent to them."* - 'Daniel'

Though all male participants made reference to the treatment of women as instilled by their fathers in particular, it was noted that female participants did not comment on the treatment of men. Instead, female participants were noted to speak more about parental ideas of having children and getting married. Almost all participants mentioned their families as upholding traditional practices such as getting married, having children, and entering trade occupations.

These values were most often spoken of respectfully but were also most frequently seemingly rejected. Participants spoke openly and seemingly confidently about rejecting these values, though the family identity was noted to have been maintained in the way participants discussed this rejection through the use of inclusive language, such as "we".

> *"I'm brought up in some sort of like, what do you call it? Church of England. Christian household. Like all my family don't go to uni. We're all like, like labourers, hairdressers, that type of stuff. Like I have just not done anything that I should have done (laugh) from my family's eyes, like that I would have had like children by now. Like, no, don't want children."* – 'Grace'

There appeared to be conflict for participants between their own developed values and relational beliefs and the beliefs and values held in their families. Still, participants appeared to want to maintain a sense of identity and belonging to their family unit, despite disagreeing with some aspects of their belief system. It could be considered that young adults struggle with the transition to independence from family, and that while new independent beliefs and values are being formed some hesitation and a reduced confidence in said beliefs may exist.

<u>Socially Acceptable Behaviours and Beliefs</u>

Participants talked about what they considered to be socially acceptable ways of being and how these have, or have not, impacted on their values and experiences of interpersonal relationships. There appeared to be gender differences within the data collected, as well as conflict between personal beliefs and societal beliefs.

Male participants were noted to not have mentioned ideas around masculinity or the social constructions of men in regard to relationships, instead views around the treatment of women appeared to stem from family values rather than societal views, as mentioned previously. However, it was noted that the majority of female participants voiced feeling conflict between possessing modern feminist ideals and the desire to maintain traditional gender roles in relation to both values and interpersonal relationships. These female participants appeared to conflate the concept of being in a relationship with the idea of losing independence, as if having a partner would strip a person's individuality and freedom, and be looked upon unfavourably.

> *"And it's so difficult because I, like, then the other part of me, like the feminist side says, well, you can be an independent woman. You don't have to... And, but I do think sharing your life with someone is so beautiful."* – 'Emma'

Other female participants spoke of the benefit of upholding both traditional roles and feminist ideals in relation to choice. It appeared that upholding traditional relationship roles offered a form of support and safety, though the desire of participants was that the extent of the support was limited, so as to not limit participants' own freedom of choice. Still, participants appeared conflicted about the benefits of having a partner to rely on.

> *"I like having the freedom to choose, but having the option to… for someone else to make the decision for me if I want, like so he can help me. If the option's not there, I get very angry… If the option to make my own choices is taken away that's more distressing than if I don't have anyone there to help choose. Yeah. I think it ties in with like, ideas around feminism and stuff."* – 'Sarah'

It was noted that while male participants mentioned societal expectations in relation to traditional practices such as marriage and children, they did not speak about these as something they wanted to challenge or change. Male participants were instead noted to embrace societal norms surrounding creating a family and having a stable home with benefit of marriage. They were also observed to mention procreation as a purpose in life and as a personal goal.

> *"Personally, I'm a big believer in it is a biological drive to have families, so, being on your own is kind of, kind of be difficult to eventually have kids get married and do all of the standard kind of societal things that you know, what are considered traditional, I suppose."* – 'Michael'

However, it was noted that male participants more openly expressed behaving in a way which they perceived to contrast with socially acceptable conduct in favour of their own beliefs or needs. These participants were observed to speak more openly about confidence in their own judgement and how this affects decisions. They also spoke more frequently about disregarding the opinions of others when societal norms are chosen to be ignored. When asked whether he would do something deemed to be socially unacceptable by others but

personally desired, ‘Peter’ responded, “*I believe in my judgement. In my decision and judgement so... Yeah, I know that I wouldn't go to the extreme. So yeah, I believe in my judgement and I'll do it.”*

While participants spoke freely about their beliefs and values in relation to socially constructed relationship roles and social ideology, female participants specifically appeared hesitant to express desire in regard to materialistic values and power. On the topic of money, status, and power, participants expressed placing importance on social desirability and the perception of self by others, though this was not always explicitly stated. ‘Phoebe’ reflected, *“they’re probably all reasonably quite important, but probably would not necessarily openly admit that as much”*. Similar hesitation and experience of social desirability was noted in relation to ideas around being ‘a good person’ and helping others, and the importance of this idea to participants.

> *“Erm I probably feel some societal pressure to say very important. But less important than what I think. Like less important, so it's in the middle, basically. It's not like it's not not important, it's just not super important.”* – ‘Grace’

Some participants stated that they felt free to express opinions and honestly talk about their views and values only because of the anonymity of the study. This appeared to be particularly pertinent to the topic of ‘helping others.’ Participants expressed placing an importance on self-preservation above helping those around them.

> *“I’ll say it because it’s anonymous. I think these days a lot of people will go out of their way to help someone to the extent they actually cause problems for themselves... I quite like the saying “never set yourself on fire to keep someone else warm.” And so, yeah, I'll I'll help people if I can, I suppose, without meaning to sound totally selfish, also, if I can be bothered.”* – ‘Alex’

Participants were noted to highlight that their behaviour and views could be perceived as “selfish”, “wrong”, “bad”, and “not socially acceptable”, as if to qualify their position as remaining a good person despite holding such views. Participants also expressed feelings of guilt and shame that helping others was not as much of a priority to them as pursuit of their own dreams and desires, or when citing incidences during which they did not act upon

helping another. It was noted that in relation to the topic 'world peace and the environment', multiple participants mentioned feeling guilt about their personal input. 'Monica' stated, *"I think sometimes I feel guilty cause I'm like I need to do more about it, or try… Yeah, do a little bit."* Interestingly, only one participant mentioned using their desired wealth, status, and power to influence political topics such as the environment, though most mentioned feeling guilt and shame that they were not doing more to tackle such issues.

The Role of the Workplace

Participants spoke about the differences in experiences of values and relationships in their professional lives compared to their personal lives. Many participants spoke about the influence of the organisations in which they work and their desire to maintain employment as, at times, over-riding the importance of their own values and beliefs. The majority of participants made a clear distinction between their behaviour and beliefs within the workplace and in their personal lives, and as this disparity as being a negative aspect of their employment.

Participants spoke about employment situations in which they believe they would be obligated to present in a way that contradicts their values, including within their behaviour. 'Peter' commented,

> *"If you've got a code of conduct that tells you you need to behave a certain way, then I'll behave that way to the letter. Whether I endorse it or not on a personal note, you know has no bearing on my ability to conduct myself how I'm told to conduct myself."*

It was also noted that participants reported to engage in activities that were mandatory, without question, even on occasions when they believed the exercise to be unnecessary and unhelpful.

> *"There are some things at work, maybe like tick-boxing exercises or even down to like, I guess some of the online training. Erm. Some of them are pointless and not helpful, but I will sit and do them because I value my career and don't want a disciplinary, erm so I think that comes into like that success thing."* – 'Sarah'

Participants therefore appeared to regard their success at work as more important than following rules and participating in activities that they do not agree with. Almost all participants shared that the risk to their career was not worth their potential rebellion or disagreement with the demands from the workplace, even if they contradicted participants' values or beliefs. These participants also seemed to view this as outside of their own control, and that they are operating within systems that cannot be changed and should not be challenged. In relation to personal values, participants also spoke of feeling conflict between their personal values and their professional ones.

> *"Yeah, in my, in my professional capacity, I'm required to help people. Erm, and be good to others, to some extent. But I would argue that it's a professional obligation. Erm. My personal obligation's pretty low in that respect."* – 'Michael'

Some participants spoke of feeling as though they are two different people: one at work, and one outside of work. This appeared to relate mostly to values which would be considered socially acceptable, such as being helpful to others and being a good person.

In relation to interpersonal relationships, participants spoke of work colleagues who had become friends, though some made a distinction of "work friends" as being people they do not see outside of the workplace. Participants most commonly spoke of work colleagues as being less than friends but more than acquaintances, citing the usefulness of having work colleagues as acquaintances at minimum for casual social interactions. 'Emma' commented, *"I do think that in my life I need superficial small talk people because sometimes you just wanna talk about the Kardashians. Sometimes you just need to have a superficial chat where you're talking about the weather."*

Theme Two: Expectations of Myself and the Other

All participants spoke of a sense of conflict in what they considered to be acceptable behaviours and beliefs in others, compared to what they considered to be acceptable for themselves. There were noted differences between expectations in relation to values and expectations in relationships. Within this superordinate theme, two subthemes were generated: expectations in values, and expectations in relationships.

Expectations in Values

Participants spoke about success as being one of the important personal values that they hold. However, it was noted that values regarding success were the only values that seemed to be spoken about as if they could possess flexibility, and that this flexibility was both acceptable and necessary. Participants commented openly that the expectations they have for themselves regarding the pursuit of success differed greatly to the expectations they have of others in relation to the same value.

> *"So I think for other people, erm, no, not necessarily. If you're happy and content and doing, you know, and you're a good person, I think that's all more important. But I wouldn't say I hold the same values for myself and and I would say, I would say that for me personally, yeah, I'm very driven and I want to do well."* – 'Phoebe'

Participants highlighted elements of life that would or should be considered as more important. This included happiness, being a good person, and achieving set goals. However, these elements were presented as an alternative option to success for others, but not themselves. Participants openly acknowledged that they would not impose these expectations on others and multiple individuals described success as "not everything" in relation to the lives of others.

> *"I probably wouldn't put… I don't wanna, don't put that on other people as much. And so when I'm speaking to like my nephews, for example, I'm like, that's not everything. There's other things in life. Erm, but for me it's important."* – 'Sarah'

Participants spoke of feeling conflicted in regard to how they view their own lives and what they value as being important. It was recognised by most participants that they held themselves to a higher standard than others, and applied more pressure to themselves to be successful and achieve. These same participants spoke of values regarding 'happiness' and 'having fun' as important elements of their lives, but that both happiness and fun should be balanced with a successful life, rather than having a life that is just 'fun'.

> *"I'm very determined and I do want to do really well. Erm, however, then the other side of me is like, no, people should just be happy with whatever. It doesn't matter.*

> *But I would say I'm definitely more on the other end. I do think it's important for me."* – 'Courtney'

In contrast, some participants spoke of differing levels of ambitions regarding success as necessary for society, rather than in regard to individual success.

> *"There's nothing wrong with not having ambition to some extent like not wanting to climb all the way to the top of the of the ladder, you know. Erm, menial jobs and tasks are always needed, you know, you can be the richest person in the world in a restaurant, you're still gonna need to have someone doing the waitering to bring you out the food… But for me personally, I couldn't imagine living in a way of life that was just with the attitude of "that'll do" for everything."* – 'Amber'

These participants described the utility of having members of society who do not possess the same elevated levels of ambition as something that is adequate for others, but not for themselves. Individuals who are content with "menial" jobs were perceived as useful for the delivery of everyday necessities, however this lifestyle was considered to be less favourable for a variety of reasons. Participants shared that they desired a way of life better aligned with being served, rather than serving others, and suggested that while society needs those who serve, this life would be unacceptable to them.

<u>Expectations in Relationships</u>

Participants spoke about many different facets of relationships as being complex and nuanced. It was noted that in relation to elements of relationships including trust, respect, honesty, compromise, and aggression, participants expressed believing that there are differences between what they expected from others, and what they expected from themselves.

Of the characteristics of relationships discussed, respect was consistently described by all participants as an element that needed to be earned by all others, including friends, family members, and partners. 'Emma' commented, *"yes, it's very it's important that my, it is important that all those people feel respected by me. Well, it depends if they've earned my respect. So yeah, it is important."* Earning respect by others was commented on frequently,

though earning the respect of others was noted to have not been mentioned by any participants. It was also noted that participants spoke of a difference between respecting the other and respecting their decisions. 'Lisa' explained, *"I think okay, maybe I could say I respect you as a person, but I don't respect the decision that you made or what you did there."*

All participants described trust as a very important part of relationships with friends, family members, and partners. It was noted that most participants perceived relationships as less valuable and important if trust was absent, though participants highlighted trust in others as being more important overall. 'Rebecca' commented, *"it's important for them to feel they can trust me. And yeah, and it is important, erm, more important that I trust them."* During discussion, participants shared that difficulties with trusting others stemmed from past experiences, and that in order to maintain self-preservation, trusting others was more significant than being trusted. Trust was reported by all participants to be especially vital in partner relationships, often due to past experiences of being deceived by a former partner.

> *"Yeah, that that probably feels… more important than them being able to trust me actually. And I think it's because I've been mistrusted in quite- not in family relationships, but more so in a partner relationship."* – 'Amber'

All participants spoke of trust as being closely linked to honesty, and that a lack of honesty would lead to a depletion of trust. However, the majority of participants again spoke of believing there to be a difference in expectations regarding honesty. These participants reported that honesty from others was more important than being honest to others. It was also noted that participants attempted to justify this disparity around honesty.

> *"They must be honest with me. It's more important to me. Yeah, it's very important to me that they tell me the truth and if I ever sort of said white lies, you know it is for their better. For everyone's good. For everyone's... For their own sake."* – 'Lilith'

Some participants explained that being less honest, or dishonest, with others could be for their benefit. Participants stated that withholding information from others could protect them from potential upset but could also preserve their own positive reputation. Other participants explained that withholding information from others was a further form of self-preservation.

> *"I mean, I won't say I've never told a lie because that would be a lie. So maybe it doesn't hold as much importance this way round. But still I want to…I think it is important for me to, be open, but not have to tell all, and have the option to keep things to myself."* – 'Lisa'

When explored, many participants expressed concern regarding the consequence of honestly sharing information with others. These consequences included a negative impact on their relationship or a form of 'punishment'. This also included the risk that a person may use this information to tarnish their reputation with others, violate their privacy, or use this knowledge to possess power over them.

Participants spoke of compromise within relationships as being something that they expected others to concede to in relation to their wants and needs. Most participants stated that while desires of both parties were important, compromise in their favour was ultimately the anticipated outcome. In relation to compromising for another, 'Sarah' commented, *"it is important. But, I don't always want to do it, so I won't do it, so maybe it doesn't hold as much importance. I would expect people to kind of compromise with me on things that I want."* Compromise was also regarded as flexible. Almost all participants stated that compromising for others was dependent on what was being asked, and that if this conflicted with their personal values, compromise would not be agreed.

> *"Depends on what they ask me to compromise about... Something I can actually compromise, something not too serious, something not... Something that's just fun and easy, you know, we can compromise. But say something like very critical to like my values, and you wanted me to compromise on that, like that's a bit different."* - Peter

Participants perceived their own values as being more valuable than the potential consequence to their relationships as a result of not compromising. Many participants shared past experiences of compromising on their values for the benefit of others in adolescence, and that the outcome of this had negatively impacted their wellbeing. Multiple participants described themselves as having been "people pleasers" in the past, but that they had since learned that their values could not, and should not, be compromised on.

Another element of compromise discussed was in regard to positions of being 'right' and 'wrong'. 'Phoebe' commented, *"if I'm in a position where I need to compromise with a person, the chances are I feel I'm right, right? And I feel that they're in the wrong in some way."* Some participants viewed compromise as a power struggle irrespective of values. These individuals described compromise as a barrier to getting their own way, although the desires of others could still be compromised for their own benefit. 'Rebecca' stated, *"what they want, I think we can come to a middle ground, but… But I can't, pretty much, can't compromise on things. I want what I want."*

In relation to violence and aggression in relationships, participant beliefs were somewhat varied. All participants explicitly expressed that physical violence of any kind toward themselves was unacceptable, with some flexibility regarding sibling relationships only. However, there appeared to be a disparity between participants as to what could be considered acceptable in relation to their own verbal aggression, and physical and verbal aggression toward others. Regarding physical violence toward themselves and others, 'Lilith' stated,

> *"I believe that I make right decisions if I'm being violent or aggressive to others. I never cross limits. I don't think there's a reason for others to be disrespectful towards me. There's no reason. So I feel… they shouldn't do that to me."*

Verbal aggression toward others in relationships was considered to be more acceptable by some participants. Verbal aggression was seemingly justified by participants as something that could happen without intent and as a means to get their needs met or their voices heard. These behaviours were also spoken of as though participants did not have control over when they displayed them, instead describing such behaviours as "natural".

> *"I can swear, I can shout. I can probably call people names, but I suppose... I try not to… Sometimes I think naturally it just happens even if I don't want to be... Yeah, sometimes I like to feel heard. And if you're not listening to me, then the only way I can get you to listen is to shout more… to use the verbal aggressive behaviours I suppose is to kind of get their attention and to make sure they're listening, even though it's probably not always the most helpful way. Sometimes I think it just happens."* – 'Emily'

Other participants described both physical and verbal aggression as undesirable and unacceptable in all relationships, and without possible justification. Beliefs relating to these behaviours appeared to be the least consistent among participants.

Theme Three: My Internal World

Participants frequently considered the role of the self in relation to values and interpersonal relationships. It was noted that participants referred to their feelings and wellbeing when discussing their behaviour and interactions with others, and that often, logic was trumped by emotion when considering different potential paths of action. Within this superordinate theme, two subthemes were generated: my cost-benefit analysis, and the influence of my emotions.

My Cost-Benefit Analysis

When discussing values and interpersonal relationships, participants often referred to the benefits and the costs of their beliefs and interactions with others. There appeared to be differences in how participants viewed and calculated the cost and benefits in relation to their values and their interpersonal relationships. In relation to values, participants particularly spoke about the cost-benefit of striving for success and helping others. In regard to relationships, the cost-benefit analysis seemed to be multifaceted for most participants.

Some participants highlighted values related to success as inherently containing costs and benefits. While many participants reported that they did not desire career success due to an increase in power and status, they shared beliefs that there should be benefits to accomplishment. During discussions regarding career success, participants described their ‘costs’ as including experiences of having to sacrifice time, energy, and the option to engage in other more enjoyable activities. Participants also often described these costs as short-term, and that sacrifices made now would lead to more comfortable lives in the future. When exploring the cost-benefit of career success, most participants expressed a belief that succeeding should provide benefits including financial rewards, with other participants also placing importance on social benefits.

> *"I enjoy praise and appreciation so much. So I think that's one of the reasons why I want to get to the top like... Being that superiority, if people are not allowed me to give me that, I don't think it's worth it going there. Putting all this effort and not getting that.* – 'Lilith'

Many participants also described values related to helping others as a balance between costs and benefits. Participants shared a desire to help others though stated that whether they act upon these desires was dependent on the time, effort, and personal resources this would cost them. 'Alex' commented, *"So I guess if it's something I can do easily, I'll happily help with the people. It just depends how much of my time, I guess, that is… I'm gonna have to give."* It was noted that participants referred to incidents in their past where they had sacrificed their own personal resources to aid another, and this was detrimental to them. Participants spoke of learning from such events that their drive to help others was now mediated by personal cost. Participants also appeared to allude to the awareness that their lifespan and therefore time is limited, and so weighing up how this time should be spent is very important.

> *"I don't wanna hurt anyone and I wanna be kind and like, thoughtful and stuff, but I'm not gonna live my life making everyone else happy at my own detriment. I've done that before. So there's a there's a line, isn't there"?* – 'Grace'

Other participants spoke of the benefit of helping others as providing them with an increased sense of wellbeing. It was noted that individuals were motivated to help others in part due to the benefit to themselves, in that they would feel good from aiding another. 'Emily' commented, *"it gives me a sense of reward in the sense that I know that I've done something, whatever that may be, but I've done something to help."* Participants also spoke about helping others as benefitting them due to it giving them a sense of purpose and value in themselves and in society.

> *"So I think that helping others is something that really drives me and I get a lot of value in, I think a lot of my sense of value comes from, from how helpful and useful I can be to other people."* – 'Monica'

However, some participants spoke of helping others solely as a means to increase their sense of self-worth. 'Lilith' commented, *"I think it kind of boosts my ego, so I think it's important*

for me to make them feel good from my end." These participants spoke of benefit to others as a non-necessity in situations where helping others benefitted them, and as unlikely to occur if there only existed a benefit to the other.

In regard to relationships, the cost-benefit analysis seemed to be multifaceted for most participants. One essential benefit of relationships participants spoke of was whether or not the relationship enhanced their life in some way. Participants appeared to believe that if a relationship did not add to their life, then it could be considered less valuable and unnecessary. This appeared true for friendships and partner relationships especially, as these are relationships one is able to choose to welcome into their life. In relation to having a partner relationship, 'Monica' commented, *"it's not, it's not like it's essential, but it, it like I feel like enhances my life."* It was noted that partner relationships were the only type of relationship that all participants felt were non-essential for a satisfactory life. Participants therefore stipulated that having a partner must benefit them in some way, as their life could still be considered complete without one.

> *"If I'm gonna be in a relationship, I need to be happy and kind of content in myself and kind of the things that I believe in, and whoever that person is, is going to have to add to that and share hopefully as many of those as well as possible."* – 'Lisa'

Additionally, participants spoke of acquaintance relationships as being less important due to the fact that these relationships often did not add anything to their life. 'Sarah' stated, *"they don't really add value or anything to my life and so I feel like, having an acquaintance is great, you can say you know 300 people, but what does that actually mean for me? Probably nothing."* It was noted that quality of relationships was more important than the number of relationships one has for almost all participants. Individuals who reported believing that having more relationships was important, regardless of level of intimacy, explained that having more contacts meant having more people from whom things could be asked. 'Lilith' commented, *"I would like to have acquaintances more, whom I don't have to talk to them on regular basis, but when I need something then I can reach out to them whenever I want."* Therefore, for some participants, the potential personal benefit of having acquaintance relationships outweighed the cost to personal resources, such as social energy.

In cases where relationships were considered to be costly in terms of emotional wellbeing and personal effort without a personal benefit to the participant, these were considered to be relationships that are acceptable to discard. ‘Monica’ stated, *“if it costs you too much and it’s not helpful to you no, you shouldn’t feel obliged to have a relationship”.* Such relationships were noted to often be described as relationships that would generate contempt and resentment for the other. Many participants recalled having relationships that were costly in terms of emotional effort and time, but that these were worth keeping and maintaining as the benefit of possessing those relationships, including physical and emotional intimacy, still outweighed the cost to themselves.

The Influence of My Emotions

Participants frequently spoke about the way in which values and interpersonal relationships affected their emotions and wellbeing, but that their emotions could also impact their behaviours and beliefs. In relation to values, participants often stated that their values were driven by how behaving in a way that aligns with and against their values made them feel. Most commonly, participants reported that experiencing negative emotions specifically greatly affected their behaviour and values. It was noted that participants frequently referred to rule-breaking, fairness, and large-scale issues in particular when discussing the influence of negative emotions on values.

Some participants expressed a desire to be able to break rules at times, however this was suppressed by the consequence of feeling negative emotions as a result of such behaviour. Others described experiences of negative emotions as a consequence of rule-breaking even when this was unintentional. ‘Emily’ shared, *“if I haven't meant to break, break the rules, something inside me, I I literally feel like my world is gonna fall apart.”* Similarly, when discussing fairness, participants often referred to how observing inequality would impact their emotional wellbeing. ‘Peter’ commented, *“I probably wouldn't feel right if someone was being cheated out or treated unfairly.”* It was noted that when speaking about values, participants would first refer to how they make them feel, before discussing how these values impact on the world around them.

Helping others, as a value and as an element of interpersonal relationships, was noted to be influenced by resentment. Participants expressed a desire for reciprocity when offering help

to others, and that in cases where this was not reciprocated, the outcome was most often feelings of resentment. Therefore, the decision to continue to be helpful to others was frequently described as being impacted by the negative emotions which accompany resentment.

> *"I like being helpful and feeling helpful, that's for sure. But like it can sometimes, if that's not equal, then I harbour resentment or if like might feel like, um, I'm giving more than I'm getting back."* – 'Lisa'

Participants spoke of the importance of values in terms of how much they believed they could affect different issues and how this influenced their emotions. It was noted that where participants believed their impact was less, they experienced more frustration and powerlessness, and as a result the value was of less importance to them. Therefore, personal values were considered to be chosen, in part, by one's own ability to feel as though they could embody those values and feel satisfied by their influence.

All participants shared beliefs that values regarding caring about issues such as environment and world peace was important to them. However, participants were noted to regard these values as less important than most others. During discussion, participants reflected that their perceived influence on such issues was somewhat inconsequential, leading to feelings of powerlessness and frustration. This perceived insignificance was observed to be justification by participants to not engage in behaviours which are related to these values.

> *"I think it's such a macro issue, that personal responsibility for it means nothing. It doesn't make a difference. You can be the most PC green eco warrior you wanna be, you're not gonna be able to actually make a change."* – 'Michael'

Participants also explained that they believed themselves to be aware of current events related to world peace and the environment, and that ignorance of the topic was not related to the reduced importance placed on these values. 'Daniel' commented, *"you know, we're well aware of climate change and things going on in the world, but I think sometimes maybe on an individual level, on a day-to-day basis, feeling able to influence that feels quite difficult."* Participants expressed caring about such issues, but that being unable to see the impact they have on them was demotivating and difficult, even if an impact was being made.

On the other hand, values which related to issues that participants felt they could directly influence were considered to be more important. Such values included caring about inequality and injustice.

> *"When I see inequality, like, that's when you see it in your day-to-day life. It comes up a lot more, I think, and those small injustices. So I feel like that feels closer to me. And so that feels more important because of that. It makes me feel good to challenge that."* – 'Rebecca'

Participants described that being able to see the consequence of their input in relation to values around inequality and injustice encouraged them to continue to behave in ways which reinforced those values. They described feeling satisfied and as experiencing a positive impact on their emotional wellbeing as a result of being able to make a difference. It was therefore noted that the emotions tied to the impact made, rather than the impact itself, affected which values participants placed more importance on.

Psychopathic Traits, Values, and Relationships

The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the use of the PCL:SV can be explored using the data collected during the semi-structured interviews. Scores attained on the PCL:SV were considered by individual item scores correlating to each feature of psychopathy according to Harpur, Hakstian, & Hare's (1988) two-factor conceptualisation of the psychopathic personality, rather than total scores. Where participants obtained the same scores on each item within the PCL:SV - whether a score of 0 or of 1 or 2 - their data was grouped together and analysed for similarities and patterns in comparison with their responses in relation to values and experiences of interpersonal relationships. To further illustrate this, an example is that the data of all participants who scored 1 and all participants who scored 2 on deceitful were grouped together and compared with the responses from the same participants in relation to questions about values, and questions about relationships, in order to determine whether participants who obtained a score on the deceitful item shared any similarities in their attitudes and beliefs toward values and relationships.

The twelve features within the PCL:SV include: superficial; grandiose; deceitful; lacks remorse; lacks empathy; doesn't accept responsibility; impulsive; poor behavioural controls;

lacks goals; irresponsible; adolescent antisocial behaviour; and adult antisocial behaviour. Items 1 to 6 represent the affective and interpersonal aspects of psychopathy, whereas items 7 to 12 represent the impulsive and antisocial aspects of psychopathy. Full descriptions of each feature, referred to as "items", can be found in Appendix G. Each item was scored on a three-point scale from 0 to 2. An item scored 2 signified that the item certainly applied to the individual, whereas an item scored 1 signified that the item was only applicable to the individual in certain situations.

Factor 1 Items: Affective & Interpersonal Features of Psychopathy

Individuals who scored on the *'superficial'* item (a score of 1 or 2) shared that while they did not think having acquaintances was important generally, they acknowledged that greeting others and being polite to everyone had its advantages. Participants who scored highly on this item stated that acquaintances could provide them with help or resources, and that because a quasi-relationship had been established the other party may feel obligated to accommodate their requests. 'Alex' commented, *"they might be able to do something that I would need help with. So then I would go to them and ask them for help, and they'd want to help."* Another advantage described by participants was popularity and positive feedback from others. Participants mentioned enjoying some level of familiarity with everyone around them, though they did not necessarily enjoy the interaction itself. 'Sarah' explained, *"you don't necessarily have to be friends, that doesn't matter, but to be able to make small talk and say hello, be polite with them and know other people, everyone knows who you are. Yeah, it's pretty important."* When asked about whether it would make a difference to their lives not having acquaintances, participants who scored highly on this item were noted to comment that it would, as this would affect their work persona.

Participants who scored on this item were also noted to place the least importance on having a partner relationship. All participants explained that having a partner was unnecessary and they were not motivated to find or keep one.

> *"It's not the end of the world if I don't have that. I did go for like big patches of time being completely single. And that was fine, because I felt like despite that, all my needs were still met, it just in different ways with other people, so that was fine."* – 'Grace'

Most commonly, the reason for this was due to the fact that these participants felt that needs fulfilled by a partner could be, and were being, fulfilled by others. Other participants who scored highly on this measure stated that they did not feel a drive to find a partner as other aspects of their lives were more important, such as their career, and a partner could impede on this. 'Alex' commented, *"maybe in the future I'll find one, but I don't think it's very important. I don't find the need, like I do my career."*

In relation to personal values, participants who scored highly on the *'superficial'* item were noted to place high importance on values concerning the environment, world peace, and helping others. However, when asked about this further, participants did not give examples of their contributions to the causes or provide realistic or specific examples of being helpful, giving vague or blanket statements instead. For example, 'Lilith' commented, *"well it's something we should all care about. I mean I give money to charity."* Participants were considered as wanting to be seen as caring about values such as these, rather than holding them as genuine values. This was also observed in relation to values regarding rule-following and being 'well-behaved'. Participants who scored on this item valued following rules in the workplace as this would benefit their career and put them in good favour with others. When asked about breaking rules according to their desires, participants described their own wants and needs as more important than the expectations of others. 'Michael' stated, *"if we're talking more personal rules like societal rules, like how people expect you to behave no, I'd say a three out of 10, I'll behave how I choose."*

Participants who scored on the *'grandiose'* item were noted to place highest importance on values concerning being successful and doing well in life, including gaining money, power, and status. These individuals spoke of success as being an individual achievement, but also as something that they could compare to others in order to highlight their sense of superiority. 'Michael' commented, *"I'm thinking more, how can I be better than everyone? How can I be more than everyone in every way possible in terms of power? Money especially. And yeah, status. I think it's what matters to me. The most."* In relation to values regarding family traditions, participants who scored on this item were noted to place high importance on following the traditions and culture of their family. Participants explained that adhering to traditions was not equivalent to possessing a value of following all rules, but that family traditions were an exception. 'Peter' explained, *"I think it's important to respect it, because it existed before you were there. But I feel like you're not mandated to follow everything 'cause*

some things you may not quite agree with." Regarding values around safety, participants who scored on this item reported not to worry about personal safety or safety in their environment. These individuals recounted having felt safe within their surroundings due to their ability to look after themselves. Participants were also noted to give examples of times during which they had needed to defend themselves or others.

Individuals who scored on the *'grandiose'* item were noted to place importance on all relationships in which they considered to be valued by the other. Respect was considered to be a particularly important aspect of relationships for individuals who scored on this item, citing dissatisfaction in any relationship which does not provide them with respect and value. 'Lilith' commented, *"I don't like when people don't respect me the way I want to be. I have to be valued equally or more than everyone or I don't like it."* However, participants were noted to place less importance on having others understand them outside of their wants and needs. Individuals explained beliefs that a relationship, whether with friends, family members, or partners, could still be successful even in cases where the other party does not understand them as a person. 'Grace' stated, *"I don't feel like it's necessary for me to feel completely understood by others for me to have a relationship with them that works. I just tell them what I want."* It was noted that participants instead placed value on relationships in which others were willing to listen to and meet their needs, and cited their most important relationships as with those who offer praise and resources as required.

Individuals who scored highly on the *'deceitful'* item placed high importance on values regarding money, power, status, and success. However, it was noted that participants who scored highly on this item also placed great importance on values regarding wanting an exciting life and having new experiences. 'Alex' commented, *"it's very important to have variety in life and be… I think I look for thrill in a way. I want to be, to feel thrilled."* Such individuals stated that lying to others and being able to 'con' people brought excitement to their life, regardless of whether or not the thing they were being dishonest about or 'conning' someone for is something they genuinely desire. Furthermore, these participants also placed a high importance on having freedom and being able to make their own decisions. It was noted that individuals who scored highly on this item most commonly reported strong feelings attached to direction by others. 'Lilith' stated, *"I'm a very independent person. I hate to be told what to do or have decisions made on my behalf. I can be quite stubborn."* It was noted that being deceitful and possessing freedom can both be related to the idea of 'control', and

so it was considered that individuals who scored highly on this item may struggle being without control and feel the need to exercise more control over their environment.

In regard to relationships, participants placed very high importance on others being honest and trustworthy, despite the fact that their honesty towards others and perceived trustworthiness was considered unimportant. 'Lisa' stated, *"I respect honesty. So yeah, it's very important to me that they say truth, they be like, frank about things. I wouldn't like when people lie."* Interestingly, these participants were also noted to place the highest importance on partner relationships. Within this, participants were noted to cite that having a partner could offer them support and objectivity, qualities which reflected the individual gains of having a partner rather than reciprocal gains.

> *"Life is easier, to have someone with you who will support you and there's a certain element of two heads are better than one. When someone knows you well enough, they are able to gauge when you're not seeing things in, maybe as an objective way."* – 'Michael'

All participants who scored in the *'lacks empathy'* item also scored in the *'lacks remorse'* item, though not all participants who scored in *'lacks remorse'* also scored in *'lack empathy'*. Additionally, participants who scored highly in the *'deceitful'* item were noted to have also scored highly in the *'lacks remorse'* item. It was considered that individuals who professed to lie and manipulate others for their own gain would likely feel less remorse for these actions, enabling them to become repeated behaviours. Individuals who scored in *'lacks remorse'* reported to place a high importance on values regarding having fun and enjoying themselves. It was considered that these individuals who placed more value on fun and enjoyment may not feel restricted in their ability to ask requests of others to do the things they do not want to do instead, as a result of experiencing less remorse. It was noted that participants spoke of prioritising fun to the point of having less time to take care of responsibilities, without acknowledging that this is within their control to re-organise their time. It was considered whether these participants assumed that other people would then intervene and do things for them.

> *"It's very important and I get miserable if I don't have fun or if I'm not scheduling any things to have fun. It's important to the point that I then often don't have time to do the more serious, less fun stuff."* – 'Sarah'

Participants who scored on *'lacks remorse'* and *'lacks empathy'* were noted to more openly speak about acts of verbal and physical aggression toward others. Individuals were noted to justify these actions toward others as being without their control, or as an understandable response to treatment and behaviour that they deem to be unacceptable. 'Peter' stated, *"aggression realistically, is a bit more of a knee jerk response a lot at the time, and it's usually if you feel like you haven't been treated fairly or that someone's being aggressive towards you."* Physical and verbal aggression was noted to have been spoken about in terms of being an exchange between two people, as if a natural consequence of some behaviours, rather than being framed within a 'victim-perpetrator' perspective.

Individuals who scored on the item *'doesn't accept responsibility'* were noted to place less importance on values related to world peace and the environment. Participants were noted to acknowledge the need for change and contribution to these causes, though did not speak about their own part in potential change. Participants placed high importance on values related to success and achievement. However, when asked about their own success, participants who did not yet consider themselves successful were noted to justify this using external factors as sources of blame, despite evidence of their own wrongdoing or lack of evidence of mistreatment. 'Grace' stated that she kept her only job for two weeks before getting fired, commenting, *"I didn't miss any days, turned up on time. But the boss was sexist. I was the only girl. They were very unfair; they kept the guys and sent me home."*

Participants who scored on the *'doesn't accept responsibility'* item were noted to also externalise blame in relation to interpersonal relationships, though they placed high importance on partner relationships. Individuals who shared that their relationship status was 'single' recalled that their most recent relationship ended as a result of the other. Individuals who claimed to be in a relationship at the time of the interview attributed the current success of the relationship to their ability to be a good partner, citing that any disagreements within the relationship are often unimportant. 'Phoebe' commented, *"it's usually nothing. Sometimes he gets mad when I don't do something but like, that's not my problem."*

Factor 2 Items: Impulsive & Antisocial Aspects of Psychopathy

Participants who scored in the *'impulsive'* item placed high importance on values related to living a life consisting of new challenges and new experiences and having the freedom to make their own choices. Individuals reported enjoying being non-committal in their plans as well as their relationships with others, including with friends, family members, and partners. These participants were noted to place less importance on values regarding success, though stated that variety and mobility within their career was important. 'Grace' stated, *"if things get too stagnant and too same-y I get funny and itchy inside and it's not a nice feeling. And like in my career, I've always moved around. I've never been in the same place very long."*

Participants who scored in the *'impulsive'* item placed high importance on relationships in their lives that they considered to be fun, and with people whom they felt they could share experiences. Participants stated that relationships in their lives, including friends and partners, generally did not last a long time. However, it was noted that individuals maintained their longest relationships with people who they felt understood and accommodated their need for variety. 'Lisa' commented, *"like my best friend, she's up for whatever. We have so much fun and do lots of stuff together, so she's really important to me."*

Participants who scored on the item *'poor behavioural controls'* placed high importance on their emotions being understood within relationships, whether with friends, family members, or partners. Individuals stated that being ignored or having their experiences disregarded would make them angry, clearly recalling examples of when this had happened. 'Lilith' stated, *"in my past I've shown aggression. Both verbally and being very expressive about my anger and… There has been situations erm, that throwing stuff around also will be part of it. I don't like to be ignored."* Participants were also noted to share having expressed anger in situations during which they did not understand why someone in their life was experiencing an emotion. It was reported that during these occurrences, anger and frustration was directed at the other for lack of clarity, but it was considered that anger may have also been directed toward themselves for failure to understand.

None of the participants included in this study scored on the items *'lacks goals'* or *'irresponsible'*. It was considered that participants were predominantly recruited from sources that may inherently contain individuals with clear career goals and those drawn to

careers and lifestyles which require stability and commitment, including university students and the "UK Clinical Psychology Applicants" Facebook group. It was also considered that participants may have chosen not to disclose information regarding financial instability and untrustworthiness, as well as unreliability within their relationships with others and in relation to their responsibilities. While some participants spoke of plans related to high-achieving career goals, there was no evidence that these goals were unattainable given their experience and level of education. Therefore, it was considered that although these goals were lofty, they were realistic, and did not warrant a score in the *'lacks goals'* item.
Some participants scored on the item *'adolescent antisocial behaviour'* but did not score on the item *'adult antisocial behaviour'*, with only one participant scoring on both items. Participants who only scored on *'adolescent antisocial behaviour'* placed moderate importance on values related to following rules, though expressed that this had not always been the case for them. 'Alex' stated, *"I used to be a terror when I was younger. But now I think, without rules, it's chaos really, so I think we do need some."* Participants also appeared to place less importance on values relating to having an exciting life, citing past experiences of antisocial behaviour as having fulfilled that need. The participant who scored on both items reported placing the least importance on values related to following rules as well as personal and societal security. It was considered that this participant may not have experienced security due to their involvement in adolescent and adult antisocial behaviour, and so it may have been difficult to envision a world in which it exists.

> *"I think you'd be an idiot to ever think you're actually safe or secure in society because that's not the way it works. That's why we have criminals. That's why we have violent crimes and victims. That's just the way it goes."* – 'Michael'

All participants who scored on either *'adolescent antisocial behaviour'* or *'adult antisocial behaviour'* placed high importance on interpersonal relationships. In particular, these participants highly valued trust and respect in their relationships. It was noted that participants reported to quickly cast aside relationships in which they felt trust or respect had been broken. 'Courtney' commented, *"no if I can't trust you I don't need you around. If I don't trust you, I can't be myself, and that's it."* It was considered that trust was linked to feelings of personal safety and past experiences of being betrayed by others, possibly within adolescent or adult antisocial activity.

Chapter Four: Discussion

Overview

This qualitative study explored the experiences of young adults regarding their personal values and interpersonal relationships, in relation to psychopathic traits. To the researchers' knowledge, this is the first study to examine values and relationships alongside psychopathic traits using reflexive thematic analysis. The current study proposed three main aims: to explore experiences of interpersonal relationships to gain insight into key aspects of relationships, including relationship rules and dynamics; to explore the perceived significance of varying personal values; to explore the link between psychopathic traits, aspects of interpersonal relationships, and aspects of personal values. Reflexive thematic analysis of fifteen interviews produced three main themes: External Influences; Expectations of Myself and the Other; and My Internal World. This discussion includes the central ideas generated from these themes, as well as the patterns established between information collected from interviews and psychopathy scores in relation to the research aims.

Summary of Findings

External influences from a variety of sources had a significant impact on values and interpersonal relationships. Participants expressed conflict between their own developed values and beliefs held in their family. Family values and beliefs systems were considered to be a deep-rooted, fundamental part of themselves, and as continuing to influence personal values, particularly in relation to success. Family beliefs related to interpersonal relationships were considered to hold less importance in regard to maintaining relationships with family members, however male participants retained family beliefs regarding the treatment of women. Females spoke of rejecting family values related to marriage and children, though all participants desired to maintained identity with their family. Values and relationships were also influenced by beliefs held within society. Females expressed feeling conflict within values and interpersonal relationships due to a desire to adhere to modern feminist ideals as well as a desire to maintain traditional gender roles, whereas males did not express such a conflict. Males welcomed societal traditions of creating a family and getting married, though generally favoured behaving in accordance with their own values and beliefs rather than in a socially acceptable manner. Social desirability did however influence the expression of

desires related to money, status, and power, and values related to altruistic behaviours, with guilt and shame experienced as a result of placing higher importance on personal wishes rather than selfless conduct. Finally, the workplace was cited as having an impact on values and relationships. Career success was considered to be more important than complying with rules which contradicted personal values as these were felt to be outside of individual control, with potential rebellion deemed not to be worth the risk to one's career. The workplace encouraged duality; that values at work differed to those within an individual's personal life, particularly in relation to altruistic values. Relationships within the workplace were considered to sit between acquaintances and friends, with importance placed on these casual social interactions.

A conflict appeared to exist between acceptable behaviours and beliefs in others compared to acceptable behaviours and beliefs for oneself in regard to both values and interpersonal relationships. Values related to success were considered to be mandatory for the self and flexible for the other, with values including happiness and selflessness as acceptable alternatives to success for other people only. Elements of one's life including happiness and entertainment were thought of as needing to be balanced with success. Differing levels of success within society were acknowledged as important for society, though unacceptable for oneself. Trust and respect were considered to be very important aspects of all relationships, with trust needing to be earned by others and respect divided into respect for the other and respect for their decisions. Relationships which lacked trust were considered to be less important, a viewpoint which was commonly developed as a result of past experiences of mistrust. Trust and honesty were considered to be linked, though expectations of honesty from others were higher than personal expectations of the self to be honest. Interestingly, this was justified as being potentially beneficial to the other, as withholding information could protect the other from distress, or as a form of self-preservation, as withholding information could protect the self from violation or consequence. Similarly, compromise was impacted by past experience and considered flexible depending on the request, and personal values were thought to be more important than fulfilling the desire of the other in relation to compromise. Beliefs related to violence and aggression in relationships were the most divisive. Such behaviours were viewed as both unacceptable and undesirable, as natural and as uncontrollable, and as getting needs met and having voices heard. An agreed distinction was made between verbal aggression and physical violence, though views on acceptable conduct regarding these were inconsistent.

The role of the self had a significant impact on values and interpersonal relationships. Participants expressed weighing up the costs and benefits of upholding certain values and maintaining relationships, including whether one enacts certain behaviours within relationships. Values including success and helping others were perceived as possessing costs and benefits, such as costs to personal resources, for example time, money, and energy. Whereas notable benefits included financial rewards, a sense of wellbeing, and a sense of purpose. Past experiences were also taken into consideration when deciding whether to enact altruistic behaviours. Relationships were thought of as being required to enhance a person's life to possess value, especially in relation to partnerships and friendships. Participants cited partnerships as the only non-essential relationships in terms of life fulfilment, and therefore benefits to these relationships were considered to be essential. Acquaintances were considered to be less important due to the reduced perceived addition, or benefit, to one's life, though acquaintances were considered useful in terms of potential resources available from them. In cases where relationships are costly in terms of emotional wellbeing and personal effort without personal benefit, these were considered to be acceptable to discard. In relationships that were thought to be worth keeping but were costly to emotional effort and time, the perceived benefits of those relationships still outweighed the cost to themselves. Personal emotions and perceived personal impact influenced behaviours in relation to values and relationships, including feelings of resentment, frustration, and powerlessness. Values which related to issues that participants believed they had less impact on, such as world peace, were considered to be of less importance. On the other hand, values which participants believed they could impact were considered more important, such as equality and fairness. This perceived impact encouraged continuation of behaviours in line with these values and led to feelings of satisfaction. It was considered that the emotions tied to the impact made, rather than the impact itself, affected which values were considered of higher importance.

In regard to relationships, there were differences between perceived relationship value and acceptable conduct depending on the psychopathic trait indicated. Participants who scored on *'superficial'* shared enjoying the personal benefits of relationships including acquaintances, such as resources, popularity and positive feedback, whilst placing the least importance on partner relationships as these were considered unnecessary to meet their needs. Individuals who scored in *'deceitful'* placed higher importance on others being trustworthy and honest than their own honesty and trustworthiness, and considered partner relationships to be of highest importance due to the perceived gains of these relationships. Participants who scored

on *'adult antisocial behaviour'* or *'adolescent antisocial behaviour'* also highly valued trust and respect in relationships, and were reported to quickly cast aside relationships in which trust or respect had been broken. Individuals who scored on *'grandiose'* placed importance on all relationships in which they felt valued by the other, citing respect, praise, and meeting their needs as vital elements of relationships, but understanding of themselves by others as less important. Those who scored on *'impulsive'* placed high importance on fun relationships though they did not often last long, sharing that their longest relationships were with individuals who understood and accommodated their need for variety. Participants who scored on *'doesn't accept responsibility'* placed high importance on partner relationships, attributing relationship failure to the other, and success to themselves. Participants who scored on *'poor behavioural controls'* placed high importance on having their emotions understood by others, with anger as a consequence of misunderstanding the other or for a perceived lack of clarity from the other in regard to their emotions. Individuals who scored on *'lacks remorse'* and *'lacks empathy'* believed verbal and physical aggression to be an uncontrollable but understandable response to unacceptable behaviour in relationships.

In regard to values, individuals who scored on *'superficial'* reported placing high importance on values concerning issues such as the environment as this was thought to improve their perception from others. Rules were considered to be importance in the workplace for similar reasons, while breaking rules according to one's own desires was considered to be more important. Participants who scored on *'grandiose'* placed highest importance on values related to success as these increased feelings of superiority, and to following family traditions and cultures. They reported to place low importance on values related to safety, citing their ability to look after themselves. Individuals who scored on *'deceitful'* placed high importance on values regarding money, power, and status, and success, wanting an exciting life with new experiences, and having freedom of behaviour and choice. Participants who scored on *'lacks remorse'* placed high importance on values related to having fun and enjoying themselves, feeling able to ask others to take care of neglected responsibilities. Individuals who scored on *'doesn't accept responsibility'* placed less importance on values regarding world peace and the environment, though did not acknowledge their role in this, and placed high importance on values of success and achievement. Where this was lacking, participants justified this by blaming external factors. Participants who scored on *'impulsive'* placed high importance on values regarding new challenges and experiences and less importance on values of success, though career variety and mobility was considered important. Individuals who scored on

'adolescent antisocial behaviour' placed moderate importance on values related to following rules and less importance on having an exciting life due to previous experiences. Participants who also scored on *'adult antisocial behaviour'* placed the least importance on values related to following rules and security, possibly as a result of past experiences.

Interpretation of Key Findings

Influences on Values and Interpersonal Relationships

The results suggested that values and interpersonal relationships are influenced by a number of factors. These included external influences such as family, society, and the workplace, as well as internal processes and states, including emotions and 'cost-benefit' analyses.

In relation to familial influence, findings demonstrated that individuals perceived family values as being intrinsically important. Such findings support conclusions drawn by research including that conducted by Schönpflug (2001), who proposed that values are transmitted intergenerationally. However, Schönpflug (2001) noted that collectivist values were passed on more often than individualistic values, whereas within the findings of this study it was highlighted that collectivist values related to maintaining relationships with family members, were not adopted by participants. Reasons cited for failing to accept these values included self-preservation of emotional wellbeing and avoiding harm; that maintaining relationships with family members that are detrimental to wellbeing should not be mandatory. It could be considered that awareness of mental health difficulties has increased, and that awareness efforts may be resulting in enhanced recognition and more accurate reporting of mental health problems (Kelly et al., 2007) compared to previous years. As a result, it may be concluded that there exists an increased emphasis and importance placed on maintaining personal wellbeing, seemingly in favour of familial values. Familial values which were found to be upheld included male participants' perceptions of the treatment of females.

While all male participants expressed possessing values condemning violence against females, female participants did not mention the treatment or roles of males. Such findings may be considered to support those concluded by Larsen & Long (1988) and Brewster & Padavic (2000), who found that men more strongly support traditional gender roles and beliefs in relationships. It was noted that female participants instead mentioned familial

beliefs regarding children and marriage, which may also be considered traditional values or as being related to gender roles. However, female participants were found to frequently reject these values in favour of accepted social ideologies.

The results showed differences in the impact of societal factors on values and relationship beliefs. Male participants did not mention ideas around masculinity or male roles in relationships, whereas most female participants spoke of feminist ideas influencing both values and relationships. National surveys have found that 48% of 18- to 29-year-olds self-identify as 'feminists' (YouGov, 2023) and so it is unsurprising that a large portion of female participants spoke of feminism. Female participants who mentioned feminism expressed a conflict between the desire to possess feminist ideals and to maintain traditional gender roles in some aspects of relationships and values, suggesting that it was not possible to uphold both. Participants appeared to allude to the fact that romantic relationships result in a loss of independence, individuality, and freedom. This supports previous research which found that feminism is perceived to be incompatible with heterosexual romance (Rudman and Fairchild 2007), and that engaging in social relationships generally leads to inevitable sacrifice to at least some of women's needs (Gilligan, 1982). Female participants also mentioned apprehension in possessing both feminist ideas and traditional gender roles due to the risk of this being perceived unfavourably. It was not explicitly stated whether these participants feared negative judgement from men or from other women. However, it has been suggested that some women experience feminists as judging them for making decisions which do not align with modern feminism (VoiceBox, 2022), whereas judgement from men tended to be experienced in relation to their physical appearance (Gervais et al., 2013).

Additionally, social norms of marriage and children were commented on, with social norms defined as *'rules of action shared by people in a given society or group; they define what is considered normal and acceptable behaviour for the members of that group'* (Cislaghi and Heise 2018). Interestingly, only male participants spoke about goals of marriage and having children as familial and societal expectations that they did not want to challenge, instead reporting to embrace the concept of a "traditional" lifestyle. Research on attitudes toward marriage has concluded that while men in their early twenties are as likely as women of the same age to place partner relationships above other life aims (Hammersla & Frease-McMahan, 1990), by their mid-twenties, men actually develop a greater desire for marriage than their female counterparts (South, 1993). Therefore, the findings of this study support

these conclusions, despite the ongoing perception that women desire marriage and children more than men (Kilmartin & Allison, 2007).

Male participants reflected that confidence in their own judgement and decision making aided their ability to behave in accordance with their values and needs regardless of societal norms. This finding supports research which suggests that there are gender differences in decision making, with decision making defined as assessing the advantages and disadvantages of options available and the costs and benefits associated with them (Bechara, 2005). Byrne & Worthy (2016) concluded that when making a decision, females generally integrate all available information in an environment even when this information may steer them to make detrimental decisions, whereas males process information more selectively. This suggests that males are able to make decisions while ignoring environmental information, including potential consequences or risks of a decision, and are therefore more willing and able to make decisions that include risk in order to achieve a goal. The results of the current study suggested that during decisions made regarding relationships and values, males feel more willing and able to act in line with their values and desires despite potential negative evaluation by others, whereas females may hesitate to do so. This was further illustrated by female participants' hesitation to express desire in regard to materialistic values including money, power, and status. Female participants appeared to place more importance on the opinions of others and social desirability than their own accumulation of wealth and achievements, a finding which supports Byrne & Worthy's (2016) conclusion that females consider extraneous information such as the opinions of others despite the potential negative impact on themselves and reaching their goal, in this case, money, power, and status.

The results suggested that while participants had formed values and relationship beliefs independently, a desire to maintain identification with the family unit remained. It was considered that late adolescence into adulthood is a time during which young people develop their own beliefs and values from experiences, rather than being solely based on values and beliefs of the family. Research has shown that achieving independence in life aspects such as education, employment, finances, and everyday activities is vital to self-sufficiency (Arnett, 2001; Luyckx et al., 2008) and benefits wellbeing (Arnett, 2001). It has been suggested that values are often similar to familial values (Boehnke et al., 2007) and remain reasonably constant throughout adulthood (Vecchione et al., 2016), however introduction to new information and experiences is significant in change in values after adolescence, particularly

in young adulthood (Johnson, 2001). Participants reported that aspects of familial values were personally upheld but that others had fallen away as a result of aspirations and goals as well as experiences, supporting Johnson's (2001) findings.

The results demonstrated that the workplace also had influence over values and behaviour. Participants described situations in the workplace during which they would comply with company expectations, despite contradiction with their own personal values. It was found that participants appeared to regard career success as more important than rebelling against expectations which did not align with their values. This aligns with findings of previous research which suggests that workplace values are "hierarchically ordered" according to their importance (Lyons et al., 2010) and applied during career-related decision making, such as career development (Super & Šverko, 1995). It can therefore be presumed that the hierarchy of personal values may differ significantly to the hierarchy of work values, and so individuals may experience a sense of dual personalities. Participants indeed described feeling as though they are two different people, one at work and one in personal life, and as though values which hold high importance outside of work are less significant in the workplace. It may be considered that for such individuals, the workplace itself possesses higher worth than values themselves, or may even be seen as more powerful than the individual and their desires.

Interpersonal Relationships

The results demonstrated the complexity and multifaceted nature of interpersonal relationships. Topics discussed included 'cost-benefit' analyses and 'rules' of relationships, including expectations for the self and the other in regard to different characteristics of relationships.

Participants spoke of engaging in processes likened to 'cost-benefit' analyses in all social relationships. An element of relationships which was perceived essential was the enhancement of one's life as a result of possessing a relationship. Such findings complement research conducted by Cohen (2004), who suggested that social support positively impacts both mental and physical health by lowering the effects of stress, or by promoting a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Participants generally favoured the quality of relationships over quantity, reporting that friends and partners in particular could be considered less valuable and unnecessary if failing to add to one's life. It could therefore be inferred from data

collected that participants would rather possess no relationships than maintain relationships which were considered to be detrimental and lacking benefit. Although social isolation can be detrimental to physical and mental health, unhealthy relationships can negatively impact wellbeing, as may be a contributing factor to participant preference for no relationships over non-beneficial ones. Reis et al. (2000) found that negative exchanges including arguments and conflict predicted higher negative affect, lower positive affect, and greater physical symptoms. Findings of the current study may therefore suggest that participants perceive the consequence of negative relationships as outweighing the physical and emotional consequence of potential loneliness, decided as a result of previous experience. This could be considered to support research which has found that people who have positive, close relationships possess higher life satisfaction and are less likely to suffer from depression (Choi et al., 2020).

Participants most frequently reported partner relationships as non-essential for a satisfactory and complete life, suggesting that singledom is an acceptable social norm. This has seemingly been reflected in research, with DePaulo & Morris (2005) reporting that the number of single people in the United States rose from 28% to more than 40% between 1970 and 2002, with this figure remaining relatively stable to present day. The current study found that participants perceived partner relationships as non-essential due to beliefs that their needs could be fulfilled by other aspects of their lives. Research by Apostolou (2017) found three main reasons for remaining single, including "difficulties with relationships," "freedom of choice," and "constraints." These findings are consistent with the current research, with participants citing previous negative experiences and freedom of choice as affecting relationships and the decision to enter into relationships. Research conducted by Park & Rosén (2013) suggested that the six reasons for entering a committed relationship with the benefit of marriage included romance, respect, trust, finances, meaning, and physical aspects. In line with these findings, the current study found that participants maintained relationships which were costly in terms of personal resources including effort and time, in cases where the benefits, such as emotional and physical intimacy, outweighed these costs. The findings of the current research may therefore suggest that when relationships are perceived as offering meaning, emotional fulfilment, and the potential for longevity or marriage, the cost-benefit analysis no longer applies. It may instead be proposed that the drive to form lasting and meaningful connections with others overrides consideration of one's own expenditures.

In relation to trust, it was found that participants placed a great amount of importance on the presence of trust in all relationships. A distinction was made between relationships with and without trust, in that those without trust were deemed to be of less importance. Many theories of early development, including Bowlby's attachment theory (1969, 1982) and Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1963), centre around the idea that experiences of trust in early life determine the future success and satisfaction of relationships in adulthood. Trust is inherently linked to feelings of safety and security (Bowlby, 1969, 1982), and therefore relationships without trust can feel unsafe and risky. It can be considered that the findings of the current study can be interpreted through the lens of attachment theory in particular, in that trust may be perceived as essential in relationships as it paves the way for genuine connection and promotes feelings of safety. It can therefore also be considered that past experiences of trust being broken or betrayed can result in an understanding of relationships as being unsafe, as also demonstrated by Ainsworth's theory of attachment styles (1978). Participants in the current study recalled experiences of betrayal of trust, and as a result, trusting others was considered more important than being trusted.

Similarly, participants spoke of honesty as closely linked to trust, in that a lack of honesty would result in a depletion of trust. Interestingly, honesty from others was found to be more important than honesty with others. These findings could also be linked to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1982) and attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1978), in that being honest with others about one's needs and expectations, and not having them met, can affect one's future expectations of others. Therefore, it could be considered that an individual would refrain from complete honesty to avoid disappointment and repeat patterns of not having needs met. Participants also spoke of withholding information as a form of 'self-preservation', in that honesty could tarnish a positive reputation, violate one's privacy, and lead to emotional consequences. Such findings could be understood using Gruenewald et al.'s (2007) social self-preservation theory, which postulates that self-conscious and shame-related emotions are a consequence of failing to maintain a positive social self, or when a threat to the positive social self is experienced. It could therefore be considered that withholding information from others could be understood at the core as an attempt to avoid feelings of shame.

Aspects of relationships such as compromise can be considered via the idea of power dynamics within relationships. It has long been thought that understanding power dynamics is a vital part of understanding adult relationships (Frieze & McHugh, 1992), with equity

viewed as a core aspect of healthy relationship dynamics in Western culture (Felmlee, 1994). It could be considered that compromise in relation to values could be viewed as a power dynamic within relationships. For example, participants likened compromise to positions of 'right' and 'wrong', and to 'getting their own way', with personal values perceived as being more important than the potential consequences of failing to compromise. While compromise was considered to be an important aspect of all relationships, it was also considered to be flexible according to the needs of the individual. However, participants frequently spoke of compromise as a fair and equal arrangement which benefits each person in the relationship at different times, stating dissatisfaction in situations during which compromise favoured one individual more frequently. These findings support those of Beach & Tesser (1993), who concluded that experiencing inequity in relationships, including feeling powerless, is associated with adverse psychological and relational consequences, such as anger, depression, and frustration.

Relationship power dynamics can also be considered in relation to aggression and violence. The findings of the current study suggested that beliefs regarding violence and aggression in relationships were the most varied. While all incidences of physical violence toward oneself were considered unacceptable, there appeared to be a disparity as to acceptable conduct relating to one's own verbal and physical aggression toward others. Participants who considered verbal aggression to be more acceptable described verbal aggression as a means to have one's needs met or to have their voice heard, with such actions believed to be "natural" and outside of one's control. Such beliefs could be perceived through the lens of a term coined by Johnson & Leone (2005), "intimate terrorism": this idea describes the concept of using aggression as a means by which to establish and maintain power and control in relationships. While it may be argued that participant responses could indicate verbal aggression as a last resort to meet needs or be heard, it was noted that this distinction was not made by such participants. It could be considered that statements describing verbal aggression as outside of one's control and a "natural" response, could also suggest that these behaviours serve to reinforce power and control. The "intimate terrorism" framework posits aggression as part of a wider picture of control, which is not suggested by the present findings. However, it is considered whether such beliefs around the acceptability of aggression toward others may indicate potential for escalation of similar behaviours. Furthermore, assigning an external locus of control to acts of verbal aggression, which are inherently acts moderated by an internal mechanism of control, could indicate higher levels

of aggression. A study conducted by Avtgis & Rancer (2009) found that individuals who orientated toward an external locus of control in regard to their behaviour reported higher levels of verbal aggression, results which support the findings of the current study.

Personal Values

The results demonstrated the variability of importance in relation to personal values. Participants highlighted a difference between their own values and values which they believed others should, or should not hold. Values were also linked to personal feelings and previous experiences.

The findings of the current study suggest participants place high value on personal success in comparison to other values. Due to the fact that the majority of participants were from Westernised cultures, these findings could be interpreted using the model of individualism and collectivism, established in 1980 by Hofstede (revised in 2001). However, the findings also demonstrate that values of participants, and factors which affected these, were more nuanced than the model would suggest. This supports conclusions drawn by research such as Choi et al. (2019), who found that people are more frequently socialised to develop both individualistic and collectivist beliefs, suggesting that beliefs in cultures may not be as polarised as previously believed. While participants within the study spoke of valuing individual success and achievement, emphasis was also placed on the importance of helping others and caring about societal issues. It was instead noted that beliefs regarding one's own impact influenced the perceived importance of values relating to collectivist ideas and wider societal topics. The results found that when participants believed their impact on a topic was less, they experienced more frustration and powerlessness, and as a result the value was of less importance to them. Such findings could instead be considered to support research such as that conducted by Miller & Seligman (1975), which suggested that a perceived lack of control over events can be detrimental to mental health and increase experiences of psychological burden. Therefore, decreased importance placed on values relating to topics which may be thought of as outside of one's personal control, such as the environment and world peace, may in fact serve as a form of self-preservation of one's wellbeing instead. The results of the current research suggest that importance placed on values is affected by multiple factors, and that perceived personal impact can influence importance placed on values related to wider societal issues.

The results also highlighted a discrepancy between standards and expectations of the self and of the other in relation to values, particularly in relation to success. Participants reported placing pressure on themselves to be successful and to achieve, while acknowledging that they would not impose these beliefs on others and would not expect others to place as high importance on success, favouring other aspects of life relating to satisfaction and enjoyment. This discrepancy can be thought of in terms of Duval & Wicklund's (1972) theory of objective self-awareness. This theory suggests that when a person directs attention to oneself, a comparison is made between an actual self-view with an imagined, ideal standard for oneself. Duval & Wicklund (1972) proposed that when there is a perceived difference between the actual and imagined views this can result in experiences of negative affect, and people will attempt to compensate for this using various self-regulatory strategies. It could be considered that participants within the current study possess high achieving imagined, ideal selves which they desire to live up to and continue to strive for in order to avoid negative affect. This imagined self can be somewhat assumed by taking into consideration the nature of the participant pool, which included those gathered from groups for aspiring or practicing psychologists, and those interested in the field. Using Duval & Wicklund's (1972) theory, it could also be considered that participants practice kindness to others as a form of self-regulation, as demonstrated by participant beliefs that others can and should place higher importance on fun and happiness. Findings from Otake et al. (2006) found that individuals who engaged in more acts of kindness toward others reported feeling happier and more grateful. It could be considered that allowing flexibility and placing less pressure on others to achieve is an act of kindness, resulting in increased positive affect which could act as a self-regulatory behaviour after comparison of one's ideal and actual selves. Currently there appears to be little research exploring the comparative nature of values, in regard to expectations held for the self and the other.

The findings of the present study suggest that the selection of personal values is influenced by one's emotions. Due to the fact that in different people, different emotional responses are elicited by various values, it can be concluded that value importance therefore varied across individuals according to their affective reactions. The results highlighted that values related to helping others were particularly linked to the emotions of participants. Participants reported experiencing emotions including guilt, shame, pride, and fulfilment as a result of helping or not helping others. Those who reported helping others as a felt obligation from external influences such as work did not share emotions that may be attached to this value,

other than acknowledging that others may perceive this as undesirable. Whereas individuals who reported feeling positively about helping others also shared that this motivated them to continue this behaviour. Such findings support research conducted by Richaud & Mesurado (2016), who found that experiences of positive emotions including personal satisfaction and joy promote prosocial behaviour. Instead, individuals who seemed to place less importance on helping others due to lack of positive emotional response, experienced personal satisfaction from success, money, and power, which was reported to drive their behaviour. These results also support findings from Schwartz (2010) and Moors et al.'s (2013) appraisal theory of emotion. Schwartz (2010) proposed that when values are "supported or threatened" they become intertwined with emotions, reinforcing the significance of the value. Moors et al. (2013) appraisal theory of emotion describes that emotions are elicited and changed by the perception of the alignment of an event or object with goals and expectations, and the perceivable control one has over this. It could therefore be argued that the positive or negative emotional feedback one receives as a result of behaving, or not behaving, in alignment with one's values will impact on an individual's emotions and reinforce the level of importance of said value. While the current study aimed to decipher which values may hold more importance to participants, this is in fact determined by the emotions one experiences as a result of engaging in each value, rather than the value itself. It could be argued that the emotions, rather than the values, hold importance for each participant.

Psychopathic Traits and Values

The results demonstrated some associations between personal values and psychopathic traits, as measured by the PCL:SV. Due to the fact that the aim of the study was not to determine whether participants met the threshold for clinical psychopathy, PCL:SV characteristics were considered individually and are discussed as such.

Superficial

The findings of the current study demonstrated that individuals who scored on the 'superficial' item placed high importance on values such as those concerning social issues and helping others, though were unable to give examples of acting according to these values. It was determined that these individuals appeared to place high importance on values which could be considered socially desirable to possess, in an effort to heighten the opinions others

may have of themselves. However, these participants also stated that overall, personal desires were of more importance than the expectations of others. These findings can be considered as supporting the work of Cleckley (1941, 1976), who posited accentuated egocentricity as a feature of psychopathy. Such findings also support descriptions of the psychopathic characteristic of superficiality, as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003). It is therefore unsurprising that individuals who possessed superficial traits reported to place higher importance on values which boosted their self-image. It is also unsurprising that when questioned further, examples of embodying such values were superficial or non-existent, further supporting the idea that reported possession of such values was in attempt to portray themselves in a positive light. However, it may be considered to be unexpected that these individuals reported willingness to somewhat sacrifice this perception by others in favour of their own wants and needs. This may suggest that while superficiality influences the selection of personal values, the desires of the individual can exercise more impact over whether one engages in behaviour aligned with such values.

Grandiose

Individuals who scored on the 'grandiose' item placed highest importance on values concerning success, money, power, and status. Attainment of success was considered an individual achievement in addition to a measure by which they could compare themselves to others. These findings also support the description of the psychopathic trait of grandiosity as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003), and so it could have been predicted that individuals who scored in grandiosity would report to possess values related to success. Interestingly, such individuals reported placing high importance on following traditions and cultures of family, regarding these as an exception to general rule-following behaviours. While there is little research regarding psychopathic traits and family values, it could be considered that individuals with grandiose traits may consider family traditions and culture to possess inherent power and influence, traits which they may admire. It may also be theorised that by enforcing family traditions and cultures one may experience themselves as powerful and influential, and that monitoring the behaviour of others in adherence to these rules may instead demonstrate an expression of the 'grandiose' trait. It may further be considered that while individuals with grandiose characteristics may consider themselves superior to others, research has not established whether this inflated sense of self applies to intangible material, such as ideas, concepts, and rules. It is therefore unclear whether

'grandiose' individuals may accept cultures and traditions as more influential than themselves.

Deceitful

The current study found that individuals who scored on the 'deceitful' item also placed high importance on values concerning success, money, power, and status, in addition to values related to having an exciting life and new experiences, and freedom to make decisions. As individuals reported manipulation of others as a means of experiencing excitement and to achieve their own desires, these findings could be considered to support the psychopathic trait of deceitfulness as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003), in addition to Cleckley's (1941, 1976) descriptions of improvidence and an absence of shame. However, it could be considered that values reported to be of highest importance to these individuals encompass an element of control. The need to manipulate others and exercise freedom over decision making demonstrates an individual's desire for control and influence, and it could be considered that individuals who possess this trait may have experienced feeling a loss of control during their lifetime, or who experience negative affect when they perceive themselves to be without control. It may also be theorised that individuals who possess this trait may feel inferior to others, whether intellectually or otherwise. In order to improve their sense of self-worth and gain resources, these individuals engage in behaviour they believe themselves to be proficient in, namely, controlling behaviours such as lying and manipulation, in order to achieve what they would not have otherwise gained by their own merits. While there is currently little research exploring the link between deceitfulness, control, and self-worth, the results of this study suggest that there may be a link between these factors which influences behaviours and personal values.

Lacks Remorse and Lacks Empathy

The findings of the current study show that individuals who scored on 'lacks remorse' placed high importance on values related to having fun and self-indulgence. These findings could be considered to support the psychopathic trait of lacking remorse as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003), in addition to Cleckley's (1941, 1976) descriptions of improvidence and an absence of shame. It was further considered that such individuals may have considered fun and enjoyment to be of more importance as they may not feel

restricted in their ability to ask requests of others to do the things they do not want to do instead, as a result of experiencing less remorse. Participants reported prioritising fun over other responsibilities, and it was considered whether such individuals assumed that other people would adopt these responsibilities instead. However, it was also theorised that such individuals may somewhat perceive themselves to possess a level of incompetence which may make them unable to meet their responsibilities. If this were the case, avoiding responsibilities in favour of self-indulgence may be a method by which to avoid admittance of one's own failings and to move such responsibilities onto someone who would seemingly come to their aid and fulfil this need. Consequently, it was considered that placing high importance on values related to having fun and self-indulgence may be an attempt at self-preservation, rather than placing importance on something they may be unable to achieve, such as success and power.

The results demonstrated that individuals who scored on 'lacks remorse' and 'lacks empathy' seemed to place less importance on values related to harm toward others. These findings could be considered to support the psychopathic traits of lacking remorse and lacking empathy as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003), in addition to Cleckley's (1941, 1976) descriptions of an attitude of levity toward moral values. A vast majority of previous research has suggested a connection between reduced empathy and aggression, with the absence of emotional responsiveness as a root cause of aggressive behaviour (van Hazebroek et al., 2017), which would support and explain the findings from the current study. However, numerous systematic review and meta-analyses have failed to determine a significant association between the two concepts, including Jolliffe & Farrington (2004). Researchers have therefore considered other factors which may influence empathy and aggression, such as attachment styles (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001) and previous experiences. Participants in the current study went on to suggest that aggression and violence could be perceived as an exchange between two people or as outside of one's control. Such statements may allude to the fact that potential exposure to negative environmental factors may affect characteristics such as attachment style and the subsequent adoption of personal values. It could be considered that a reduction of empathy and remorse may be a result of enduring trauma, supporting Karpman's (1941) concept of secondary psychopathy.

Doesn't Accept Responsibility

Individuals who scored on the 'doesn't accept responsibility' item were found to place less importance on values related to societal issues, and higher importance on values related to success and achievement. Once again, these findings could be considered to support the psychopathic trait of failing to accept responsibility as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003), in addition to Cleckley's (1941, 1976) descriptions of an attitude of levity toward moral values. Participants were noted to not speak of their own role in relation to societal issues and to justify their lack of success using external factors as sources of blame, regardless of their own role in this lack of achievement. It could be theorised that failing to accept responsibility could be perceived as a failure to accept one's own shortcomings. For example, if one tries and fails, an acknowledgement needs to be made about one's abilities, and so it may be more tolerable not to try at all. This could be considered in terms of defences, as proposed by Freud (1936); avoidance and denial as mechanisms used in an attempt at self-preservation and protection. This may also support Hare's (1995, 2003) outline of the characteristic of not accepting responsibility as Hare (1995) also mentions the acts of projection of blame, denial of actions, and rationalisation, as theorised by Freud (1936) as defence mechanisms.

Impulsive

The findings of the current study demonstrated that individuals who scored on the 'impulsive' item placed high importance on values related to new challenges and experiences and freedom to make decisions, while placing less importance on values related to success. These findings could be considered to support the psychopathic trait of impulsivity as outlined by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) and PCL-R (Hare, 2003). Participants reported enjoying the non-committal nature of plans and relationships and having variety and mobility within employment. It could be reframed that for these participants, impulsivity offers reduced commitment to tasks and others, as well as locations, which may instead offer insight into an avoidance of obligation and the mundane. Instead of signalling the importance of variety and spontaneity, possessing these values could indicate a fear of losing freedom and becoming bored. Commitment to others, including by marriage and by staying in job roles long-term, has often been portrayed by the media as lifeless and restrictive, with terms such as "ball and chain" used to represent marriage (Boswell & Spade, 1996). Modern feminist ideas also

assert that women can and should be happily independent and self-sufficient and embrace the freedom of the sexual revolution which has been in place in society since the 1960s. Research conducted by the Pew Research Centre (2014) found that two-thirds of people aged 18 to 29 years agreed that society is just as successful if people prioritise aspects of life other than marriage and children, with 53% of people aged 30 to 49 believing the same. It may be considered that with societal ideals around marriage as non-essential, it could be assumed that the narrative around commitment is generally becoming more undesirable than it once was.

Adolescent and Adult Antisocial Behaviour

The current study found that individuals who scored on the 'adolescent antisocial behaviour' item placed moderate importance on values related to rule-following and placed less importance on values related to having an exciting life. The one participant who also scored on 'adult antisocial behaviour' placed less importance on values related to rule-following and security. While these individuals met the criteria to score on items described by Hare's PCL:SV (1995), the measure does not otherwise provide a description of an individuals' character outside of antisocial behaviour one engaged in. However, it was considered that participants who engaged in adolescent antisocial behaviour but did not go on to engage in such behaviour in adulthood may place moderate importance on rule-following as a result of their lifestyle change. These participants shared that they did not always believe following rules was an important value, and so it can be theorised that these individuals adopted values related to following rules during a decision made to change their antisocial behaviour. It can also be theorised that these participants may place less importance on values concerning having an exciting life due to feeling that they had engaged in such behaviour during their younger years, and so do not feel the need to seek excitement in adulthood. The individual who scored on both adult and adolescent antisocial behaviour may place less importance on values relating to rules as they continue to engage in behaviours which are illegal, suggesting an indifference toward rules in general. This participant may also place least importance on values related to security, both personal and societal, due to a consistent lack of this. It could be theorised that an individual who has consistently engaged in antisocial behaviour may have never inhabited a world in which security exists and is important, and so it may be difficult for such an individual to envision a life in which this is present.

Psychopathic Traits and Relationships

The results demonstrated some associations between relationship beliefs and psychopathic traits. Psychopathic characteristics in the PCL:SV were again considered individually and are discussed as such.

Superficial

The current study found that individuals who scored on the 'superficial' item did not believe having acquaintances was important, though highlighted advantages of maintaining these relationships, including access to resources and popularity. These participants also placed the least importance on partner relationships. These findings can be considered as supporting the work of Cleckley (1941, 1976), and also support descriptions of the psychopathic characteristic of superficiality, as outlined by Hare's PCL-R (Hare, 2003). It can be concluded that individuals who possess superficial characteristics value personal gains from relationships, rather than the relationships themselves. An example being that if relationships with work acquaintances were lost, this would affect one's work persona rather than affecting one's mood. While Hare's (2003) depiction of superficiality would support these findings, it could also be considered that aspects such as attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1978) and adverse childhood experiences may also affect such an individuals' ability to form meaningful connections with others. Karpman's (1941) theory of primary and secondary psychopathy suggests that secondary psychopathy develops in reaction to traumatic experiences and ACEs (Hicks et al., 2004; Kahn et al., 2013). Poythress & Skeem (2006) further theorised that secondary psychopaths may possess a disturbed emotional capacity which impedes the formation of stable relationships. It may therefore be concluded that individuals who possess the superficiality characteristic may not have learnt the ability to form relationships with others, or have differing understandings of relationships. This may also provide understanding as to why these participants placed the lowest value on partner relationships. It could be considered that such individuals had either never had a healthy partner relationship demonstrated to them or may not understand or recognise the deep connection involved in partner relationships and how these may differ from other relationships, and so consider them to be unnecessary.

Grandiose

The findings demonstrated that participants who scored on the 'grandiose' item placed importance on all relationships in which they felt valued and respected by the other. While these findings support the description of the psychopathic trait of grandiosity as outlined by the PCL-R (Hare, 2003), the current findings appear to highlight some differences. Participants stated that relationships could be successful regardless of whether the other understands them as a person, with having their needs met as a perceived priority of each relationship. It was considered that, like the 'superficial' characteristic, an individual with grandiose traits may instead not have experienced relationships in which they have felt understood by others. Individuals may have experienced relationships with caregivers and others that included physical needs being met and material items being provided, without emotional connection and understanding, leading to disturbed attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1978). It may be theorised that such individuals experience acts of service and providing resources as a demonstration of love as this may have been the only way in which this has been demonstrated to them. Such conclusions would suggest that individuals with grandiose characteristics may not have experienced themselves as individuals as being important or as worthy of understanding, and so this is valued less within relationships.

Deceitful

Individuals who scored on the 'deceitful' item were found to place very high importance on trust and honesty in relationships, citing partner relationships as being the most important. These findings appeared to be in contrast of the description of the psychopathic trait of deceitfulness as outlined by PCL-R (Hare, 2003). Vast research has been conducted regarding the presence of deceitful traits and deception detection in psychopathy (e.g. Martin & Leach, 2012), however little research has attempted to understand the root causes of deceptive behaviours and how deceitful individuals may value honesty from others. Participants were found to report that having a partner could offer support and objectivity, which could be perceived as a desire for individual gains from a partnership. However, it could also be theorised that deceptive individuals also desire a relationship in which they can judge and adjust their own reactions and perceptions, and trust the other to accept and support this without judgement. The need for honesty from others may reflect a fear of judgement of their true self, which may also underpin one's compensatory behaviour to be untruthful. It could be

considered that lying to others may instead reflect low self-esteem and self-worth in order to paint oneself in a more desirable light, while also getting their needs met by others. Deceptive individuals may place higher importance on partner relationships as these typically offer more security and personal intimacy than other relationships, and may be the only relationships in which deceptive individuals believe they will feel seen and accepted.

Doesn't Accept Responsibility

The results found that individuals who scored on the 'doesn't accept responsibility' item placed higher importance on partner relationships, though were noted to extend blame to the other in interpersonal relationships. These findings regarding blame could be considered to support the psychopathic trait of failing to accept responsibility as outlined by Hare's PCL-R (2003) and Cleckley's (1941, 1976) descriptions of an attitude of levity toward moral values. However, the depictions illustrated by both Hare (2003) and Cleckley (1941, 1976) do not appear to explain the perceived increased importance of partner relationships. These findings could suggest that individuals who do not accept responsibility experience difficulties in managing emotions linked to critique and failure. As is the case with these individuals' perceived importance of personal values, participants refusal to accept responsibility in relationships could be theorised as a demonstration of Freud's (1936) defence mechanisms of avoidance and denial. However, increased importance placed on partner relationships could be due to the fact that perceived security in romantic relationships has been found to aid insecure individuals in overcoming self-protective behaviours, such as defences (Sasaki & Overall, 2020). It may therefore be concluded that partner relationships are perceived as offering feelings of security which can potentially lower the need for defensive behaviours, such as failing to accept responsibility.

Impulsive and Poor Behavioural Controls

The findings of the current study concluded that individuals who scored on the 'impulsive' item placed high importance on 'fun' relationships with shared experiences, though relationships generally did not last long. These findings could be considered to support the psychopathic trait of impulsivity as outlined by Hare's PCL-R (2003). However, it was noted that both individuals who scored on 'impulsive' and 'poor behavioural controls' cited placing high importance on their emotions being understood in relationships. While Hare's PCL-R

(2003) depiction of 'poor behavioural controls' cites such individuals as being quick to anger, it does not explain what underpins this, neither does it explore why impulsive individuals are characterised by instability. The findings of the current study suggest that 'impulsive' and 'poor behaviourally controlled' individuals may often feel misunderstood, resulting in the quick abandonment of relationships and feelings of anger. While individuals who scored on each item appeared to express their dissatisfaction with being misunderstood in different ways, it could be considered that there may be a shared experience of frustration from being misjudged, or misjudging others. The reactions of each individual could be considered in terms of the fight-or-flight response, in that when threat is perceived – in this case, being misjudged or misjudging others – these individuals may respond in ways which restore safety and regain control. In the case of the impulsive individual this would be 'flight', and in the case of the 'poor behavioural control' individual, this would be 'fight'. It could therefore be suggested that both individuals display these characteristics as a threat response to a social interaction which they perceived themselves to have failed.

Adolescent and Adult Antisocial Behaviour

The results demonstrated that participants who scored on 'adolescent antisocial behaviour' or 'adult antisocial behaviour' placed high importance on interpersonal relationships, with particular value placed on trust and respect. As mentioned previously, the items described by Hare's PCL:SV (1995) does not provide a description of an individuals' character outside of antisocial behaviour. The data collected suggested that individuals who scored on these items discarded relationships in which trust or respect had been broken. It was theorised that trust and respect may hold particular importance to these individuals due to engaging in illegal and antisocial activity. It could be assumed that such individuals may experience a hypervigilance and awareness of others in relation to betrayal and harm, as perceptions of personal safety may be low. Previous research has demonstrated the long-lasting effects on cognitive functioning as a result of exposure to acute stressors (Vaisvaser et al., 2013), and so it could be considered that the continued desire for respect and trust may be as a result of living a risky lifestyle while engaging in antisocial behaviour.

Implications and Recommendations

The conclusions drawn by this study suggest that further research is needed into the topic of psychopathy, values, and relationships, due to the questions raised about some of the previously held assumptions as a result of the findings.

While research conducted by experts such as Cleckley (1941), Karpman (1941), and Hare (2003) thoroughly explored and categorised psychopathic traits, the results of the study suggest that there may still be a role for further qualitative exploration. Within this study, it was found that elements such as attachment styles, perceptions of self, and trauma impacted upon participant beliefs in relation to values and relationships, as well as psychopathic characteristics expressed. Although these findings can be considered to support Karpman's (1941) theory of secondary psychopathy, Karpman's research solely focused on traumatic experiences as a cause of secondary psychopathy. It may be considered that there are additional factors which contribute to the development and perpetuation of these characteristics, as demonstrated by the results.

Future research should consider collecting qualitative data concerning the factors that underpin the expression and perpetuation of psychopathic traits, as there has been little research conducted to explore this topic. Current literature has established multiple theories regarding the development of such characteristics but have yet to explore the function of the continual expression of these aside from face-value justifications, for example perceived manipulation and reduced empathy. It is believed that the findings from this study suggest that further qualitative exploration of this topic may provide better understanding of the experience of those with psychopathic traits, and potentially open additional treatment options for these individuals outside of medication. Further research should also consider the exploration of psychopathic traits, values, and relationships qualitatively within forensic populations, which could also be used as a possible comparison with community populations. Within this group, it is likely that psychopathic traits are more common and would score higher on items such as the PCL:SV (Hare, 1995), and therefore larger samples can be used to explore any further potential links between characteristics and experiences more thoroughly. While forensic populations have been the subject of measures including the PCL-R (2003), little qualitative exploration has been undertaken. It is hoped that by further

exploration with this population, psychological interventions can be tailored or developed to meet the needs of these individuals in order to promote psychological wellbeing.

The results of this study could be considered to contribute to current research regarding values. Previous research has suggested that values are adopted from the family environment (Fuentes et al., 2011) and then defined and categorised through peer relationships (Jiménez et al., 2008), though they are broadly socially determined (Daniela et al., 2013) and affect behaviour (Rokeach, 1973). These conclusions are somewhat substantiated by the current findings, as participants cited multiple environmental factors as influencing values, including family, employment, and social beliefs, such as feminism. Furthermore, the findings support The Values Theory (Schwartz, 1992, 2006), which suggested that values are inseparable from emotion, drive behaviour, apply across contexts, and draw boundaries for behaviour. The findings also support Schwartz's (1992, 2006) claim that values are ordered by significance; for example, participants cited situations during which some values were set aside in favour of career progression and success. However, while the results support previous research in relation to values, the study highlighted a difference between values they hold and values they share with others. It was determined that values pertaining to personal desires, such as power and money, were frequently prioritised by participants, though expressions of guilt and shame often accompanied sharing these values. Future research may consider further exploring factors which can underpin guilt and shame attached to values, including aspects of the social and political environment and gender differences. Previous research has distinguished values from goals (Arieli et al., 2020; Sagiv & Roccas, 2021), instead describing them as 'socially desirable' (Schwartz, 1992), though current findings would suggest that some values can still be considered worthy of guilt and shame for possessing and expressing them.

The results of this study could be considered to contribute to current research regarding relationships. The findings support previous research citing the desire to find attachment to others via frequent interactions (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), with participants most consistently describing friendships as vital. The findings also exhibit the conflicted beliefs regarding gender attitudes towards marriage and children, with more males expressing a desire for these traditional goals in comparison to their female counterparts. These findings support those found by South (1993), in that within one's twenties, men's desire for marriage surpasses that of women of the same age, whereas previous assumptions had been made that

women's desires outweighed those of men (Kilmartin & Allison, 2007). The findings also support previous findings that friendships and close relationships positively impact wellbeing across a variety of areas (Bagwell & Bukoski, 2018; Mertika et al., 2020). However, the present research concluded that romantic relationships were both embraced and rejected by participants, citing that such needs could be met by other relationships. While it is acknowledged that environmental factors and social ideologies can influence beliefs in regard to relationships, research may need to further explore the seemingly modern phenomenon of romantic relationships as non-essential connections. Future research should consider exploring in depth the factors which underpin changing attitudes toward romantic relationships, despite long-standing beliefs that humans desire lasting attachments to others (Bowlby, 1969, 1982; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Romantic partner relationships can be considered to be the most intimate of human connections, and so it is important to understand in greater depth why modern young people appear to value these connections less than previous generations seemed to.

Findings from this study could be used to inform psychological intervention for individuals with psychopathic traits, and possibly individuals with diagnoses of personality disorder (PD) such as ASPD. Previous assumptions have suggested individuals that possess substantial psychopathic traits do not place significance on relationships with others and hold vastly different moral and relational values to others. Conclusions drawn from the current research suggest that while psychopathic traits can be considered to be associated with placing differing levels of importance on different aspects of relationships, relationships with others do hold some significance to these individuals. It also suggests that relationships with others are substantially affected by lifestyle and experiential factors, such as attachment and perceptions of the self, which could be incorporated into psychological intervention undertaken with such individuals.

Previous treatment regimens for those with psychopathy have largely included medications with little attempts to engage individuals in psychological therapies, assuming that this will not be effective. Findings of this study suggest that better understanding of such individuals and factors which affect values and relationships, as well as elements of these which are considered to be important, should be used to individualise and tailor psychological interventions for this group, in order to improve its efficacy. It should be considered that previous psychological intervention may have been unsuccessful due to the fact that

interventions are typically developed for use with community and inpatient populations and are not designed with individuals with psychopathic traits in mind. Findings such as those provided by the current research may instead suggest that existing psychological interventions could be tailored to the needs of such individuals or new interventions could be developed, rather than assuming that they are untreatable. The findings suggest that such interventions could focus on psychological defences, demonstrating and building relationships and relationship scripts, and the development of the idea of the self.

Results from the current research could also be used to add further understanding to existing psychological interventions which focus on values and relationships. Current interventions including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) have been developed for use with individuals struggling with negative affect and borderline personality disorder, focusing on personal values (ACT) and relationship building and emotional regulation (DBT). It could be considered that findings from this study could be used to further inform these and similar interventions as they provide further insight into reasons for values held and relationship beliefs maintained. Alternatively, the findings from this study could suggest that similar interventions be adapted to include exploration of an individual's relationships and values, including patterns that are enacted and why certain values are prioritised. This study demonstrated that factors including family beliefs, societal beliefs, and environments including the workplace can affect values held, and that emotions including shame and guilt can impact the expression and possession of values. The findings also demonstrated the role of attachment, previous experience, and emotions in relationships. Such findings may suggest that values shared within ACT and relationships discussed during DBT should be examined thoroughly in order to determine potential factors that may underpin different aspects of an individual's life and experience, and that by understanding these better, psychological intervention may be more successful.

Strengths and Limitations

A recognised limitation of the study is in relation to the sample. The aim of the researcher was to also gather information from individuals within the probation system with the hopes of capturing data from people who may have possessed higher and broader psychopathic traits. It was hoped that by gathering information from individuals within the probation service comparisons may have been made between participants from the general public and those

from probation services in regard to values and experiences of interpersonal relationships. These differences would then have been considered in light of scores collected from the measure of psychopathic traits. The desired sample pool would have contained approximately 10 individuals from the probation service and 10 members of the public between the ages of 18 and 25 years. While ethical approval to approach individuals within the probation service was sought, this was not granted, and therefore the sample was limited only to members of the general public. Despite efforts to recruit from additional sources, including participants from other studies within the research group, further recruitment was unsuccessful within the initial participant eligibility criteria. Due to time constraints of the research, it was considered that the upper age limit of participants could be extended to age 30, rather than 25 years, in order to collect a large enough sample. It is acknowledged that due to the fact that the sample consisted only of members of the public, findings related to psychopathic traits cannot be fully generalised to other individuals, such as forensic and inpatient populations. If this research were to be repeated, it would be considered to include a sample consisting of individuals admitted to secure inpatient facilities in the NHS as well as individuals detained within the prison service. It is theorised that levels of psychopathic traits within these populations may be more varied, producing more robust and rich findings in relation to the topic and understanding of individuals with psychopathic traits.

A further limitation of the study is in relation to the extent of the themes identified. Due to the constraints of the project in relation to the time allowance and word count of the project, certain elements of the results found were not analysed and included in the project. It was required that the researcher choose from the identified themes, rather than presenting the full breadth of the findings, and it was acknowledged that this was influenced by the researcher's own interests and experiences. It is acknowledged that presenting all found themes and ideas may give a more robust understanding of the subject matter and it is considered that these findings may be of value to include in an additional project in the future.

A strength of the study was in relation to the methodology used. By using semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to collect rich data relating to participant experiences in their own words. This method allowed for further questioning and therefore exploration of answers, giving participants the opportunity to explain and expand on their thoughts and feelings. Conducting semi-structured interviews also allowed for flexibility within the process as well as keeping conversations relevant to the research topic. The use of planned

questions enabled the interviewer to guide conversations in order to capture information related to the project. However, interviewing participants also enabled the researcher to tailor questions to each individual participant. Using semi-structured interviews allows for consideration of the participant's background, communication style, and language abilities. By using this method, the researcher was able to assess participant understanding and rephrase questions to meet needs where appropriate. Interviewing participants can also be considered as a method which fosters rapport and trust with participants as the participant is given the opportunity to meet and speak with the researcher. By allocating time at the start of interviews for introductions and questions, participants may feel more able to share candid and authentic responses. If this research were to be repeated, the researcher could consider integrating validated quantitative measures for values and/or relationships into the interviews to create a more robust mixed-methods study. A mixed-methods design could facilitate triangulation, which could increase the credibility and reliability of the findings by reducing the likelihood of bias or error associated with the use of a single method.

Self-Reflexivity

Throughout the process of this research project, I have attempted to be mindful of my own positioning and characteristics and how this may have influenced my research. Conducting reflexive thematic analysis has allowed me to take time to reflect on my own personal and professional experiences and to become aware of the lenses through which I interpret my findings.

I am aware that my own experiences of relationships in particular have influenced my perception of the data collected and will have potentially impacted the formulation of my interview questions and generated themes. I am mindful that I possess a bias in regard to relationships with others, particularly in family and partner relationships. As someone from a family in which my parents have remained married and cohabiting, my perception of partner relationships is impacted by having seen a healthy, long-term relationship throughout my lifetime. I have also been fortunate enough to have experienced healthy relationships within my family and have successfully maintained my own partner relationship for an extended period of time. I am aware that as a result of my experiences of relationships, I perceive relationships with others as a positive and necessary part of life and essential to wellbeing, whereas people with different experiences may struggle to perceive relationships with others

as positive at all. I understand that due to my positioning, I may have interpreted information from participants as being in agreeance with my own views regarding relationships, where there may potentially have been a more nuanced story underpinning answers given that I did not prompt for.

I am conscious of the fact that my own interest in this topic may have influenced the outcome of my findings. I have been fascinated by relationships and psychopathy as a topic for a long time, and so was very excited to have the opportunity to measure and explore psychopathic traits within my research. However, I am aware that my interest could have impacted my analysis of the data collected. I have been mindful of my own want to find something significant within my study, and so have kept a reflective journal during this process to enable me to stop and think about when and where I may have been looking for something that simply was not there in the data. While I am satisfied that I have been able to identify patterns in the data and generate themes, I continue to be conscious of the fact that the themes I have generated will be inherently influenced by my subjective views and wants. In an attempt to add some objectivity to the project, I had asked colleagues to review my findings and provide feedback, adjusting my themes accordingly. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that my own interest in this topic may still be reflected in my findings.

I am aware that my position as a researcher may have influenced this project. It has been considered that participating in research presented as being for a clinical doctorate holds an amount of power that may have been felt by my participants. I am conscious of the fact that there is also an unavoidable power imbalance present between the researcher and participants. I was mindful throughout my interview processes to make attempts to diminish this imbalance as much as possible, though I was aware that this would continue to exist somewhat. I purposefully offered additional time for asking questions and spent time at the beginning of each interview attempting to build a rapport while still being clear about the purpose of our time together. I am aware that the clinical doctorate carries a weighty title, and so participant answers may have been influenced by this power as well as the knowledge that the project would also be considered for publication.

I believe I have learnt a great deal about myself during this process in relation to my resilience and determination. While I have thoroughly enjoyed my project, it has tested me in a multitude of ways and taught me more about myself, for which I will forever be grateful.

Appendices

Appendix A - *Quality Appraisal Checklist*

Moola S, Munn Z, Tufanaru C, Aromataris E, Sears K, Sfetcu R, Currie M, Qureshi R, Mattis P, Lisy K, Mu P-F. (2020). Chapter 7: Systematic reviews of etiology and risk . In: Aromataris E, Munn Z (Editors). *JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis.* JBI. Available from https://synthesismanual.jbi.global

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for analytical cross sectional studies

Reviewer_____Date_____

Author_____Year_____ Record Number_____

	Yes	No	Unclear	Not applicable
1. Were the criteria for inclusion in the sample clearly defined?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Were the study subjects and the setting described in detail?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Was the exposure measured in a valid and reliable way?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Were objective, standard criteria used for measurement of the condition?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Were confounding factors identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Were strategies to deal with confounding factors stated?	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Were the outcomes measured in a valid and reliable way?	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Was appropriate statistical analysis used?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall appraisal: Include ☐ Exclude ☐ Seek further info ☐

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

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Appendix B - *Participant Study Information Sheet*

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics code: ETH2223-2259

Date of approval: 23.07.23

Invitation to our study

In the Department of Psychology we are investigating the link between callous-unemotional traits, values, and relationships.

If you are over 18, we would like to invite you to participate in this research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear, or you would like more information.

The Study

This study includes an online interview, conducted via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Participants will be asked a series of open questions in relation to their personal values and relationships, in addition to questions aimed to collect information regarding callous-unemotional traits. In total the entire study may take around 2.5 hours, which can be spread across 2 sessions.

Potential risks

You will be asked questions that require some personal information about yourself to be given. Participants may find it difficult talking about relationships and details about their lives. In some cases, there is a risk that this causes you some distress. In such case, you may discontinue or take a break at any time. Though the risks of this study are low, should you feel you need support, please seek help via the Mind website Helplines and listening services - Mind, where there are a variety of options for support.

Informed consent

Should you agree to take part in this experiment, you will be asked to sign the consent form before the experiment commences**.**

Withdrawal

Your participation is voluntary, and you will be free to withdraw from the project at any time

without giving any reason and without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, you simply need to notify the principal investigator (see contact details below).

If any data have already been collected, upon withdrawal, your data will be destroyed if possible, unless you inform the principal investigator that you are happy for us to use such data for the scientific purposes of the project. It will not be possible to destroy any data that have already been shared anonymously on data sharing repositories.

Data gathered

- We will collect the following data from each participant: demographic data (e.g. age, sex, social background). We will also collect audio/video recordings of your responses during the online interview with the principal investigator (Hayley Warman). A transcript of these responses will be produced. We will store your name and contact details in a password-protected folder. This folder will be locked in a different place than the above data.

- We are using your data to investigate experiences of interpersonal relationships, personal values, and expression of callous-unemotional traits.

- Your data will be gathered by the researcher (Hayley Warman).

- Signed consent forms will be kept separately from individual experimental data and locked in a drawer.

- Your personally identifying data will be retained indefinitely.

- Our legal basis for processing your personally identifying data is that you have consented to it.

- The data controller is the University of Essex. Essex University's Data Protection Officer can be contacted on dpo@essex.ac.uk.

- Your anonymous data may be published in scientific journal articles, and shared in permanent, publicly accessible archives accessible from any country.

Ethical approval

This project has been reviewed on behalf of the University of Essex Science and Health Ethics Sub-committee and had been given approval with the following Application ID: ETH2223-2259.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact the Principal Investigator of the project (see contact details below). If you are still concerned or you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager (Sarah Manning-Press).

Contact details

Principal investigators

Hayley Warman (hw21629@essex.ac.uk)

Dr Alex Sel (alex.sel@essex.ac.uk)

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Appendix C – *Informed Consent Form*

Consent Form

Title of the Project: **Callous-Unemotional, Relationships, and Subjective Values** *(working title)*

Research Team: Hayley Warman, Celia Camara, Dr Alex Sel, Professor Andrew Bateman

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. I understand that any data collected up to the point of my withdrawal e.g. will be destroyed; cannot be withdrawn because it cannot be identified. ☐

3. I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the project, and that confidentiality will be maintained. ☐

4. I understand that my fully anonymised data will be used for research publications. ☐

5. I understand that the data collected about me will be used to support other research in the future, and may be shared anonymously with other researchers. ☐

6. I give permission for the anonymised transcripts, audio/video recordings, and survey responses that I provide to be deposited in a data repository so that they will be available for future research and learning activities by other individuals. ☐

7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

8. I consent to be contacted again for future research related to this project. ☐

9. I wish to be entered into the raffle to win a £50 Amazon gift voucher ☐

Participant Name	Date	Participant Signature
_____	_____	_____

Researcher Name	Date	Researcher Signature
_____	_____	_____

Appendix D – *Participant Demographic Information Sheet*

Participant Demographics

Title of the Project: **Callous-Unemotional Traits, Relationships and Subjective Values** *(working title)*

Research Team: Hayley Warman, Celia Camara, Dr Alex Sel, Professor Andrew Bateman

1. Age at the time of study ☐

2. Sex Male ☐ Female ☐

   Prefer not to say ☐

3. Ethnicity ☐

4. Marital status

   Single ☐

   Married/Civil Partner ☐

   Cohabiting ☐

   Divorced ☐

   Prefer not to say ☐

   Other (please state) ☐

5. Do you have a disability and/or formal mental health diagnosis? *This data is collected to determine any additional considerations or support that may be needed for your wellbeing.*

Yes (please state) ☐

No ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

Participant Name	Date	Participant Signature
_____	_____	_____

Researcher Name	Date	Researcher Signature
_____	_____	_____

Appendix E – *Semi-Structured Interview Items: Values & Interpersonal Relationships*

Values questions

- How important is having a lot of money, power, and status to you?
- Do you think it's important to do well and be successful in life?
- How important is it to you to have fun and enjoy yourself?
- Do you like to have an exciting life filled with new challenges and experiences?
- How important is it to you to have the freedom to do what you want and make your own choices?
- Do you think it's important to be fair to everyone and care about things like world peace and the environment?
- How important is it to you to be a good person and help others?
- Do you think it's important to respect the traditions of your family and culture?
- How important is it to you to follow rules and be a polite and well-behaved person?
- How important is it to you to feel safe and secure, both personally and in society as a whole?

Interpersonal relationships statements

Explain how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- It is important to have acquaintances (people that you can ‘small talk’ with, but do not share intimate details of your life with).
- It is important to have friends (people that you can share intimate details of your life with, someone you trust and care about)
- It is important to maintain relationships with family members (people that you are related to by blood, adoption, marriage)
- It is important to have a partner relationship (someone that you have ongoing emotional and/or physical closeness and affection with)

- It is important to me that my friends, family, and/or partner feel respected by me
- It is important to have my friends, family, and/or partner respect me

- It is important to me that my friends, family, and/or partner feel trusted by me (they feel they can trust you, they think you're trustworthy)
- It is important to trust my friends, family, and/or partner

- It is important that my friends, family, and/or partner can be honest with me
- It is important to be honest with my friends, family, and/or partner

- It is important that I find a middle ground and compromise with my friends, family, and/or partner (what they want)
- It is important for my friends, family, and/or partner to compromise with me (what I want)

- It is important that my friends, family, and/or partner feel understood by me (they feel you understand them)
- It is important that my friends, family, and/or partner understand me

- The emotions of my friends, family, and/or partner are important to me
- It is important that my emotions are important to my friends, family, and/or partner (they care about how you feel)

- It is important to avoid being aggressive and violent toward my friends, family, and/or partner
- It is important that my friends, family, and/or partner avoid being aggressive and violent toward me

Appendix F – *Evidence of Ethical Approval*

From: ERAMS <erams@essex.ac.uk>
Sent: 23 July 2023 14:44
To: Camara Perez-Vera, Celia F <c.camaraperezvera@essex.ac.uk>
Subject: Decision - Ethics ETH2223-2259: Miss Celia Camara Perez-Vera

University of Essex ERAMS

23/07/2023
Miss Celia Camara Perez-Vera, Miss Hayley Warman
Psychology, Psychology, Health and Social Care
University of Essex
Dear Celia,

Ethics Committee Decision

Application: ETH2223-2259

I am pleased to inform you that the research proposal entitled "Understanding the relationship between empathy for pain, aggressive behaviour and crime severity in young adults with psychopathic traits" has been reviewed on behalf of the Ethics Sub Committee 1, and, based on the information provided, it has been awarded a favourable opinion.

The application was awarded a favourable opinion subject to the following **conditions**:

Extensions and Amendments:

If you propose to introduce an amendment to the research after approval or extend the duration of the study, an amendment should be submitted in ERAMS for further approval in advance of the expiry date listed in the ethics application form. Please note that it is not possible to make any amendments, including extending the duration of the study, once the expiry date has passed.

Covid-19:

Please note that the current Government guidelines in relation to Covid-19 must be adhered to and are subject to change and it is your responsibility to keep yourself informed and bear in mind the possibility of change when planning your research. You will be kept informed if there are any changes in the University guidelines.

Yours sincerely,
Tasos Giapoutzis

Ethics ETH2223-2259: Miss Celia Camara Perez-Vera

This email was sent by the University of Essex Ethics Review Application and Management System (ERAMS).

Appendix G - *Item Descriptions of the PCL:SV*

Item 1: Superficial
The item describes an individual whose interactional style appears superficial, i.e. glib, to others. Usually, the individual tries to make a favourable impression on others by "shamming" emotions, telling stories that portray him/her in a good light, and making unlikely excuses for undesirable behaviours. He/she may use unnecessary – frequently inappropriate – jargon. Despite it's superficiality, the individual's style may be considered engaging. Alternatively, the individual may try to impress others by appearing sullen, hostile, or "macho." Still, the key aspect is that this presentation appears affected and superficial. Both types of individuals are "slippery" in conversation; when challenged with facts that contradict their statements, they simply change their stories.

Item 2: Grandiose
Individuals who score high on this item are often described as grandiose or as braggarts. They have an inflated view of themselves and their abilities. They appear self-assured and opinionated in the interview (a situation where most people are somewhat reticent or deferential). If they are in hospital or prison, they attribute their unfortunate circumstances to external forces (bad luck, the "system") rather than to themselves. Consequently, they are relatively concerned about their present circumstances and worry little about the future. (Note that psychotic delusions are irrelevant to the scoring of this item, unless they are accompanied by the other characteristics listed.)

Item 3: Deceitful
People with this characteristic commonly engage in lying, deception, and other manipulations in order to achieve their own person goals (money, sex, power, etc.). they lie and deceive with self-assurance and no apparent anxiety. They may admit that they enjoy conning and deceiving others; they may even label themselves "fraud artists."

Item 4: Lacks Remorse
High scores on this item are given to individuals who appear to lack the capacity for guilt. It is normal to feel justified in having hurt someone on at least a few occasions; however, high scorers on this item appear to have no conscience whatsoever. Some of these latter individuals will verbalise remorse but in an insincere manner; others will display little emotion about their own actions or the impact they had on others and will focus instead on their own suffering. (In scoring this item, is it necessary to take the nature of the individual's harmful behaviours into account. Clearly, a lack of remorse concerning relatively trivial acts may not be pathological.)

Item 5: Lacks Empathy
This item describes individuals who have little affective bonding with others and are unable to appreciate the emotional consequences (positive or negative) of their actions. As a result, they may appear cold and callous, unable to experience strong emotions, and indifferent to the feelings of others. Alternatively, they may express their emotions, but these emotional expressions are shallow and labile. The verbal and nonverbal aspects of their emotion may appear inconsistent.

Item 6: Doesn't Accept Responsibility
People who score high on this item avoid taking personal responsibility for their harmful actions by rationalising their behaviour, greatly minimising the consequence for others, or

even denying the actions altogether. Most of their rationalisations involve the projection of blame (or at least partial blame) onto the victim or the circumstances. Minimisations usually involve denying that the victim suffered any serious or direct physical, emotional, or financial consequences. Denial usually involved claiming innocence, that is, that the victim lied or the individual was framed; alternatively, he/she may claim amnesia due to substance use or to physical or mental illness.

Item 7: Impulsive
This item describes people who act without considering the consequences of their actions. They act on the spur of the moment, often as the result of a desire for risk and excitement. They may be easily bored and have a short attention span. Consequently, they lead a lifestyle characterised by instability in school, relationships, employment, and place of residence.

Item 8: Poor Behavioural Controls
This item describes people who are easily angered or frustrated; this may be exacerbated by the use of alcohol or drugs. They are frequently verbally abusive (e.g. they swear, insult, or make threats) or physically abusive (e.g. they break or throw things; push, slap, or punch others). The abuse may appear to be sudden and unprovoked. These angry outbursts are often short-lived.

Item 9: Lacks Goals
High scores on this item are given to those who do not have realistic long-term plans and commitments. Such people tend to live their lives "day-to-day," not thinking of the future. They may have relied excessively on family, friends, and social assistance for financial support. They often have poor academic and employment records. When asked about their goals for the future, they may describe far-fetched plans or schemes.

Item 10: Irresponsible
This item describes people who exhibit behaviour that frequently causes hardship to others or puts others at risk. They tend to be unreliable as a spouse or parent; they lack commitment to relationships, fail to care adequately for their children, and so forth. Also, their job performance is inadequate; they are frequently late or absent without good reason, etc. Finally, they are untrustworthy with money; they have been in trouble for such things as defaulting on loans, not paying bills, or not paying child support.

Item 11: Adolescent Antisocial Behaviour
People who score high on this item had serious conduct problems as an adolescent. These problems were not limited to only one setting (i.e. occurred at home, at school, and in the community) and were not simply the result of childhood abuse or neglect (e.g. running away to avoid beatings, stealing food when it wasn't available at home). Such people frequently were in trouble with the law as a youth or minor, and their antisocial activities were varied, frequent, and persistent.

Item 12: Adult Antisocial Behaviour
This item describes people who frequently violate formal, explicit rules and regulations. They have had legal problems as an adult, including charges or convictions for criminal offenses. Their antisocial activities are varied, frequent, and persistent.

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