What do people find alluring about psychopaths? An exploration into the predictive value of psychopathic status, sex and theory of mind capabilities on mate preference.
Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own independent investigation under the supervision of my tutor. The various sources to which I am indebted are clearly indicated. This dissertation has not been accepted in substance for any other degree and is not being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

Signed:
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my family for their continued support throughout the last three years. There were times where I missed home more than you can imagine but I am so grateful to you all for providing some kind of a sanctuary for me each time I visited after a stressful few months away. A special thank you to my boyfriend who has been my absolute rock the past three years, you have been so patient with me during some of the most stressful times and for that I will be forever grateful. The feeling of making you all proud is what has driven me to try and achieve my absolute best in everything I do, and I honestly couldn’t have gotten through it all without your unrelenting support.

*************

Secondly, I am so thankful and lucky to have met such an amazing and thoughtful group of girls who have made my uni experience one to remember. I don’t know what I did to deserve such supportive housemates who continuously went out of their way to make sure I was happy. We have shared countless laughs and created unforgettable memories that I will cherish forever.
Abstract

It has been suggested that people tend to avoid the pitfalls of romantic involvement with either a psychopathic partner, however, despite their manipulative reputation, research proposes that psychopathic individuals are attractive for short-term relationships. Furthermore, individuals with psychopathic traits have been found to adopt an assortative mating approach where they find others with psychopathic traits attractive for short and long-term mating. It is thought that this could be due to an inability to detect conflicting emotions and a lack of emotional intelligence, which is a commonly acknowledged characteristic in primary psychopathic individuals. While research has explored the assortative mating preferences of primary and secondary psychopathic individuals and their theory of mind capabilities as separate areas of research, this is the first to explore the allure and success of psychopathic traits in the mating domain with a particular interest in emotional intelligence as a possible predictor of this. The current study (N=179) has been adapted from Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti’s (2016) research and aimed to explore the predictive value of individuals primary and secondary psychopathic status, theory of mind capabilities and sex on their mate preferences. Using a series of multiple regressions, it was found that although surprising assortative mating trends were produced (evident in males, not females), psychopathic profiles were still rated as highly attractive for short-term relationships. It is deemed as important to consider the raters’ sex and theory of mind capabilities when researching psychopathic mate preference as these factors were found to be strong predictors of this. Psychopathic status, however, was not found to have as much of an effect as it was predicted.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Psychopathy

A considerable body of research has attempted to conceptualise psychopathy, with the basis of current research and debate focused on identifying potential subtypes (Hicks, Markon, & Patrick, 2004; Skeem, Polaschek, Patrick, & Lilienfeld, 2011). The recognition of a two-facet model has been proposed (Hare, 1991; Falkenbach, Poythress, & Creevy, 2008; Karpman, 1941; Swogger & Kosson, 2007), however, some perceive the phenomenon to be multidimensional in nature, involving many subtypes that substantially differ in personality and etiology (Blackburn, Logan, Donnelly, & Renwick, 2008; Skeem, Johansson, Andershed, Kerr, & Louden, 2007; Skeem, Poythress, Edens, Lilienfeld, & Cale, 2003). The current and most influential notion of psychopathy and a widely accepted measure is derived from the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 1991), which assesses psychopathic tendencies through a set of interpersonal, affective, and behavioural features that are largely influenced by Cleckley’s (1941) seminal portrayal of psychopathy. Factor analyses proposed that the PCL-R is composed of two correlated factors; factor 1 outlining affective and interpersonal features and factor 2 focusing on social deviance (Harpur, Hare, & Hakstian, 1989). Primary psychopathy (factor 1) is thought to stem from an effective emotional deficit resulting in the incapability of expressing and understanding typical emotions and attachments (Hicks, Carlson, Blonigen, Patrick, Iacono & MGue, 2012). This is evident in several characteristics associated with primary psychopathic individuals, such as callous and antisocial behaviours as well as an absence of guilt, fear and anxiety (Karpman, 1948; Levenson, Kiehl & Fitzpatrick, 1995). In contrast, secondary psychopathy (factor 2) has been described as a disturbance in both emotional and behavioural control, occurring as a result of adverse environmental influences (Markon, & Patrick, 2004; Swogger & Kosson, 2007). Secondary psychopathic individuals are described as living a hostile, impulsive and antisocial lifestyle with reactive and violent behaviours as well as experiencing heightened levels of anxiety and negative emotion (Hicks et al., 2012). While this need to differentiate has been well supported (Dean et al., 2013), there are still contradictions regarding the dimensions behind psychopathy (Swogger & Kosson, 2007) in terms of more recent suggestions of a three-facet (Cooke & Michie, 2001) and four-facet (Hare, 2003) model of psychopathy. Acknowledging this, the current study will incorporate the two-facet model to distinctly measure primary and secondary psychopathic traits. This was deemed as an important, as it shows an acknowledgment of the phenotypic and possible etiological differences between them (Mealey, 1995), which will be explored in relation to mating psychology.

1.2 Theory of Mind

Cognitive empathy and emotional intelligence (referred to as Theory of Mind) is comprised of an individual’s ability to understand and infer mental states and/or the emotional experiences of others (Sandvik, Hansen, Johnsen & Laberg, 2014; Blair & Mitchell, 2008). An effectiveness
in these abilities is thought be advantageous in social domains such as relationship and friendship contexts (Elfenbein, Foo, White, Tan, & Aik, 2007; Leppänen & Hietanen, 2001). Acknowledging this, psychopathy is one of the most prototypical disorders associated with empathic dysfunction, where previous research into relationships between psychopathy and theory of mind has provided an interesting insight into the presence of empathy deficits in individuals who score high in primary psychopathy (Ali, Amorim & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009; Baron-Cohen, 2009; Decety & Moriguchi, 2007; Maggini & Rabillo, 2004; Vellante et al., 2013). Using a Behavioural Inhibition Scale to measure the accuracy of facial emotional perception in individuals scoring high in psychopathic traits, an impaired recognition of sad and fearful facial expressions has been observed in psychopaths (Montagne et al., 2005).

Primary psychopathy is consequently thought to be associated with a core emotional deficit that underlies the “insensitivity to and lack of concern with emotional information” (Malterer, Glass & Newman, 2008, p.7). This is thought to reflect a lack of success in allocating attention to the emotional cues of others, which in turn damages their ability to comprehend emotional states (Blair & Mitchell, 2008; Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti, 2016). It has, however, been noted that there are doubts about the measures used to gain an understanding of individual’s emotional intelligence. Research in this area typically incorporates tests such as the Sally Anne task and the Storybooks task to tap into various emotions, beliefs, desires and mental distinctions (Blijd-Hoogewys, van Geert, Serra & Minderaa, 2008). However, these tests were originally aimed to measure such traits in children and those on the autism spectrum and therefore may not be suitable for measuring an adults Theory of Mind capability. Acknowledging this, and evidence suggesting that facial expressions hold an important role in conveying specific information to their observers (Blair, 2003), the current study will use the ‘Reading the Mind in the Eyes’ test (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001) to measure theory of mind capabilities. The Eyes Test has been deemed as a useful and accurate test with which to identify mild impairments in cognitive, social and emotional intelligence in otherwise normally intelligent adults (Baron-Cohen, 2009; Henry et al., 2009; Petroni et al., 2011; Wheelwright, Hill, Raste & Plumb, 2001). Critically, research thus far has measured psychopathy globally and did not distinguish between primary and secondary psychopathy, thereby failing to identify whether differences exist in relation to theory of mind capabilities within the two subtypes. Acknowledging this, it has once again been deemed important to measure primary and secondary traits distinctly.

1.3 Mating Psychology

As derived from well acknowledged evolutionary theories, females are found to be the choosier sex, due to enduring a higher biological investment in offspring (Buss, 2009; Dunn & Billett, 2017; Trivers, 1972). As a result of this, they are thought to have evolved tendencies to select potential partners that also appear willing to offer parental investment (McPeek & Gavrilets, 2006). In contrast, psychopathic individuals have been found to focus their mating efforts on acquiring as many partners as possible (Gladden, Figueredo & Jacobs, 2009; Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, 2012), suggesting that short-term mating is desired over
parental investment and subsequently long-term relationships. Psychopathic individuals have been found to facilitate opportunistic, exploitative and manipulative mating behaviours to obtain physical closeness and sexual gratification (Figueroedo et al., 2006; Jonason et al., 2009; Mealey, 1995; Muñoz Centifanti, Thomson & Kwok, 2016). They present a unique set of personality traits that generally do not bode well in relationships (Jonason, Li, Webster & Schmitt, 2009) and it is anticipated that generally, people would avoid romantic relations with these individuals due to their manipulative reputation (Glenn, Kurzban & Raine, 2011; Jonason, Valentine, Li, & Harbeson, 2011).

Acknowledging this and despite evidence to the contrary, an attraction towards psychopathic individuals has been explored and established in short-term relationships (Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010; Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009). Men characterised by primary psychopathic traits appear to succeed in the mating domain, whereby females perceive behaviours such as socially dominant behaviour, conspicuous consumption (Kruger, Fisher, & Jobling, 2003), sexual attractiveness, and charisma (Durante, Griskevicius, Simpson, Cantú, & Li, 2012) as “good genes” and therefore genetically attractive. On the other hand, psychopathic males are thought to thrive in manipulation and deception (Jonason, Valentine, Li, & Harbeson, 2011), which may present advantages in encounters with women, further creating opportunities to superficially charm them (Jonason et al., 2009). In terms of male’s preferences towards psychopathic women, it has been proposed that an attraction could be explained due to similarly pursuing short-term relationships (Gladden, Figueredo & Jacobs, 2009; Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, 2012), which may present opportunities for an affair (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009). Further, it has been suggested that a possible deficit in emotional intelligence may be responsible for individuals poor judgement, whereby they present an inability to detect the conflicting characteristics associated with psychopathic traits (Ali, Amorim & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009; Decety & Moriguchi, 2007; Maggini & Raballo, 2004; Montagne et al., 2005). The current study will explore these assumptions to determine what factors play a part in predicting the attraction towards psychopathic individuals.

1.4 Longevity of Psychopathic Relationships

The mating psychology associated with these traits, particularly in males, tend to be short-term in nature (Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010; Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009), with accompanying low levels of relationship exclusivity, greater infidelity, and perpetuations of sexual pressure (Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, 2012; Jones & Paulhus, 2011). It can be agreed that psychopathic individuals offer a range of complex characteristics that are associated with negative outcomes in romantic relationships (Veronica Smith et al., 2014). They are described as impulsive and think little of long-term consequences (Jonason & Tost, 2010; Jones & Paulhus, 2011) and are generally disagreeable (Jones & Paulhus, 2010; Lee & Ashton, 2005; Paulhus & Williams, 2002), which draws conclusions that long-term relationships may not be ideal (Foster, Shira, & Campbell, 2006; Jonason & Webster, 2010; Jonason et al., 2010). In relation to the longevity of psychopathic relationships, these assumptions have been further explored from an evolutionary perspective in relation to the Life History (LH) model (Barr & Quinsey, 2004; Buss, 2009; Gladden, Figueredo & Jacobs, 2009). It has been proposed that a ‘slow’ life history strategy is related to secure attachments, a psychological disposition for
long-term planning, and subsequently long-term mating efforts (Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, 2012). In contrast, a ‘fast’ life history strategy is associated with less focus on planning for the future, a lack of self-control and increased risk taking behaviours; all of which are associated with short-term mating efforts and arguably many of the characteristics found in psychopathic individuals (Barr & Quinsey, 2004; Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009; Mealey, 1995). Further, a key dynamic in short-term mating is that women tend to be more reluctant than men to engage in this type of behaviour in that males are believed to pay fewer costs and reap more benefits for engaging in risk-taking behaviours (Carter, Campbell, & Muncer, 2014; Jonason, Luévano, & Adams, 2012). The short and long-term preferences towards psychopathic and non-psychopathic personalities will be explored in the current study to test these assumptions and identify possible inclinations towards different relationship contexts.

1.5 Assortative Mating

In addition to this, it is thought that individual’s personalities and the way they perceive themselves may play a role in who they select as potential mates (Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008). The idea that modern human mate choices do not reflect evolutionary theories but instead follow a "likes-attract" pattern has been outlined by Buston and Emlen (2003) where it was found that people adopt assortative mating strategies and choose mates that match their self-perceptions. This concept refers to the process in which individuals select romantic partners whom are like them, based on factors including intellectual, physiological and socio-economic aspects (Thiessen & Gregg, 1980). This phenomenon has been explored within the Dark Triad traits (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) and was found to be prevalent in those scoring high in these traits (Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti, 2016; Gonzaga, Carter & Galen Buckwalter, 2010). Relating this to psychopaths, it is expected that females scoring high in psychopathic traits are likely to experience cognitive distortions that are shaped by an allure towards similar traits in males but constrained by their evolutionary and reproductive realities. This may result in females showing a strong but conflicting preference for ‘bad boys’ (Aitken et al., 2013) in a way that females characterised by these traits are simply not entertained sufficiently by males who are not also high on these traits. In theory, this should reflect assortative mating patterns whereby females scoring high in psychopathic traits would show a preference towards males with similar traits over other potential partners that would more realistically fit women’s perceptions of an ideal partner. Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti (2016) proposed that females scoring higher in primary and secondary psychopathic traits found their equivalents attractive in short and long-term relationships. It was suggested that this preference towards psychopathic partners may reflect their inability to identify the conflicting characteristics in similar mates, which again could be due to a possible deficit in emotional intelligence and Theory of Mind.
1.6 Rationale

Although the current study is not the first to have researched mating preferences and primary and secondary psychopathy (Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti, 2016), nor the first to identify a relationship between psychopathy and theory of mind (Richell et al., 2002; Sandvik, Hansen, Johnsen & Laberg, 2014), it is the first to incorporate theory of mind as a possible predictor of mate preferences to further explore the allure and success of psychopathic traits in the mating domain. This study will complement the existing research in this area and aim to expand upon the findings of Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti’s (2016) research in attempting to understand what specific mechanisms play a part in psychopathic individual’s poor judgement and assortative mating. It is important to understand this phenomenon and acknowledge the fact that there is a small gap in research thus far regarding predictive values of all three factors. Given the literature reviewed above, it has been predicted that that psychopathic individuals would be attractive for short-term mating and unattractive for long-term mating. As outlined, it has been suggested that a deficit in theory of mind may result in an incapability to detect the conflicting traits and characteristics that are often associated with psychopathic individuals. It was therefore predicted that these scores would impact their preferences and theory of mind would act as a significant predictor of mate preference. Lastly, based on this assumption, it was also predicted that those (particularly females) scoring high in primary or secondary psychopathic traits will hold a deficit in theory of mind and as a result adopt an assortative mating strategy and subsequently rate their equivalents higher; at least for short-term relationships.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The sample was composed of 179 participants (45 males and 134 females) with 50% being within the age bracket 18-24 years. Due to the nature of this study, both bisexual and homosexual responses have been filtered out. To participate, individuals were required to be over the age of 18 and were largely recruited via an online participant panel through a university in South Wales. The remainder of the sample was recruited through opportunistic methods via advertising on social media outlets such as Facebook.

2.2 Design

This study takes a correlational design and is comprised of both within and between-subject variables to explore the predictors of mate preferences. The independent/predictor variables are participant’s sex (male/female), their primary psychopathic scores (out of 40), secondary psychopathic scores (out of 35) and theory of mind scores (out of 36). The dependent/outcome variable is participant’s attractiveness ratings towards each
psychopathy variant in each mating context (high primary, short-term mating and high primary long-term mating).

Some of the analyses will use participants psychopathic status in the form of a ‘score’ to explore the predictive value of this on their mate preference and some will separate them into high/low psychopathic scores to explore the assortative mating theory. Several statistical tests will be run to determine any sex differences and to explore the predictive value of sex, psychopathy scores and theory of mind on individuals mate preferences (see method of analysis).

2.3 Materials/Measures

2.3.1 Theory of Mind;

The Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test – Revised (RMET-R; Baron-Cohen et al., 2001) was used to assess participants Theory of Mind capabilities. Participants were presented with 36 black and white images of the eye region and were required to select which word they believe best describes what the person in the picture is thinking or feeling via a multiple-choice question with four adjectives to select from (one target word and three foil words). Individual scores were defined by the total number of correctly identified mental states, out of 36. The correct target and foil words were proposed by the original authors of the test and piloted on a group of eight independent judges who agreed by consensus that the target words suitably described each stimulus. The Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test was further validated through another pilot study (N=225) and was subsequently deemed a useful test with which to identify subtle impairments in social intelligence in otherwise normal adults (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001).

2.3.2 Psychopathy;

The psychopathy measure of the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) was used to measure individuals primary and secondary psychopathic traits. Participants read 15 statements and were asked to specify how much they agree with each via a 5-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being agree). The statements represent either primary (callous effect and short-term manipulation) or secondary (antisocial behaviour and erratic lifestyle) psychopathic traits where related items were summed to provide scores for primary and secondary psychopathy. Scores were used in the regression models as a continuous scale, however, a median split of each subtype was performed to create high/low psychopathy status for both primary and secondary traits which was used to test for assortative mating trends. The SD3 was chosen due to it being a short but efficient, reliable and valid measure. Jones and Paulhus (2014) examined the structure, reliability, and validity of the SD3 subscale across four studies (total N = 1,063). The psychopathy measure was deemed a reliable measure of both primary and secondary psychopathic traits (α = .77) and was also concurrently valid with a high positive correlation (.92) against the standard Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (Levenson, Kiehl & Fitzpatrick, 1995), which was not chosen due to its length.
2.3.3 Mate Preference;

Participants mate preferences were measured through a series of 12 personality profile vignettes, created by Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti (2016) which was comprised of three each for high and low primary psychopathy, and high and low secondary psychopathy. Primary profiles portray calculating and un-empathetic personalities and secondary profiles describe impulsive and criminal personalities, whereas non-psychopathic profiles are depicted to be empathetic and stable. A pilot study was carried out whereby 50 photographs of each sex, taken from DeBruine and Jones (2017)’s Face Research Lab - London Set were rated by the opposite sex, based on their attractiveness (1 being unattractive and 5 being attractive). The 12 most averagely attractive males and females were then randomly assigned and attached to the vignettes to enhance authenticity and ecological validity. Participants were prompted to rate each personality profile on two visual analogue scales (out of 10), based on their likelihood of choosing them as a short-term (one-night stand/fling) or long-term (potential husband/wife and potential parent) partner. This created eight mate preference scores per sex; low/high, primary/secondary psychopathy in short/long-term mating. Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti (2016) reported that the vignette profiles had moderate to good internal consistency (Chronbach’s alpha = .55 to .86).

2.4 Procedure

The questionnaire was available on an online survey website (Qualtrics) for one week where participants were to complete all three measures in their own time. The questionnaire began by informing the participant what to expect as well as a consent page. Next was a series of demographic questions (e.g., age, sex and sexual preference), followed by the Eyes Test and the SD3 psychopathy measure. To avoid order effects and any influence the tests may have on one another, these two measures were randomised. Individuals then rated the personality profiles in each mating context and were lastly thanked for their time and debriefed; referring them to the project supervisor for any queries regarding the questionnaire.

2.5 Method of Analysis

The data was analysed by the computer programme SPSS. A total of 27 statistical tests were appropriately conducted to fully explore the factors that influence psychopathic mate preference. Firstly, two independent samples t-tests were run to identify any sex differences in participant’s primary and secondary psychopathy scores. Sex acted as the grouping variable and primary/secondary scores as the test variables. Next, a series of dependent samples t-tests were used to compare the means of non-psychopathic (low scoring) males and female’s ratings towards low and high potential mates where variable one represented low psychopathic profiles and variable two represented high psychopathic profiles, controlling for the longevity of the preference. To explore theories of assortative mating, another series of dependent samples t-test were conducted to determine if males and females scoring higher in primary and secondary psychopathic traits prefer partners of a similar personality. In this instance, outputs were organised by groups based on their sex and high/low psychopathy
status to focus the analysis on those scoring high in psychopathic traits. Variable one represented ratings towards high psychopathic profiles and variable two represented ratings towards low psychopathic profiles, also controlling for the longevity of the preference. To further explore the predictive value of individuals psychopathic scores and sex (predictor variables) on mate preference (outcome variables), eight multiple regressions were conducted. In addition to this, a further eight simple regressions were used to determine whether participants theory of mind scores influenced their mate preference, where each mating context acted as the outcome variable and individual’s theory of mind score acted as the predictor variable for each regression model.

3. Results

3.1 Introduction

The results will start by reporting the descriptive statistics for primary, secondary and theory of mind scores (Table 1). Next, sex differences in psychopathy scores and attractiveness ratings will be explored (sections 3.2 and 3.3), followed by assortative mating trends (section 3.4) and a further exploration into the effect of sex and psychopathy scores on mate preference (section 3.5). Lastly, the predictive value of theory of mind on mate preference will be explored (section 3.6).

Table 1 Mean, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores for primary and secondary psychopathy and theory of mind (minimum and maximum obtainable scores in parenthesis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum (min possible)</th>
<th>Maximum (max possible)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>17 (8)</td>
<td>37 (40)</td>
<td>27.76</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>15 (7)</td>
<td>33 (35)</td>
<td>24.13</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Mind</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>12 (0)</td>
<td>35 (36)</td>
<td>25.31</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Sex differences in primary and secondary psychopathy scores

Firstly, two independent t-tests were run to explore males and females psychopathy scores. It can be seen that males and females primary psychopathic scores were similar, however females rated themselves higher than males in secondary psychopathic traits (Table 2).
Table 2 Independent samples t-tests showing males and females mean primary and secondary psychopathic scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Score</td>
<td>27.5 (4.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary score</td>
<td>23.1 (3.53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two independent samples t-tests revealed that males and females rated themselves similarly in primary psychopathic traits (male M=27.5, SD=4.1; female M=27.85, SD=3.6; t (177) = -.568, p = ns, d = -.36), however, there was a significant difference in ratings of secondary psychopathic traits, where females rated themselves higher than males (male M=23.13, SD=3.5; female M=24.46, SD=3.8; t (177) = .206, p < .05, d = -1.33).

3.3 Sex differences in attractiveness ratings

Non-psychopathic (low scoring) males and females mean ratings towards each mating context was explored. It can be seen in table 3 that females rated higher psychopathic profiles as attractive for short-term relationships and lower psychopathic profiles attractive for long-term relationships in both primary and secondary contexts. The same findings were evident in male’s ratings towards primary psychopathic profiles, however, males showed a preference towards high and low secondary profiles for long-term mating over short-term (Table 3).

Table 3 Dependent samples t-tests showing non-psychopathic males and females mean rating of high and low primary and secondary psychopathic personality profiles in short and long-term mating contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Psychopathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>4.9 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>3.1 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>3.5 (3.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>1.2 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001
** = no statistics because the standard error of difference is 0.

A series of dependent samples t-tests revealed a significant difference in female’s scoring low on psychopathic traits preferences as they rated primary psychopathic profiles higher for short-term mating (t = 1.4, p < .001) and low profiles for long-term mating (t = -10.5, p < .001). The same was evident in female’s ratings towards secondary psychopathic profiles where
they rated psychopathic profiles higher for short term mating (although not a significant difference) and low profiles for long-term mating ($t = -10.8, p < .001$).

In males, a significant difference was also apparent in their preferences as they rated primary psychopathic profiles higher for short-term mating ($t = 1.7, p < .001$) and low profiles for long-term mating ($t = -4.4, p < .001$). There were no significant differences in male’s ratings towards high and low secondary psychopathic profiles as the standard error for these was the same.

### 3.4 Primary and secondary assortative mating trends

To see if those scoring high in psychopathic traits find their equivalents attractive, assortative mating trends were explored. It was found that this phenomenon was evident in only one mating context. As seen in Table 4, males scoring high in primary psychopathic traits rated primary psychopathic profiles higher for short-term mating. Although males scoring high in secondary psychopathic traits did not rate their equivalent higher or lower, it can be seen that they rated secondary psychopathic females considerably high for long-term mating. All other contexts saw a preference towards non-psychopathic personalities and assortative mating was not present in females.

Table 4 Dependent samples t-tests showing males and females scoring high in psychopathic traits mean rating of high and low primary and secondary psychopathic personality profiles in short and long-term mating contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary Psychopathy</th>
<th>Secondary Psychopathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>5.3 (2.5)</td>
<td>2.8 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>1.8 (1.5)</td>
<td>5.6 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>2.4 (2.5)</td>
<td>2.8 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>1 (1.2)</td>
<td>4.8 (2.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .001$
** $= no statistics because the standard error of difference is 0.$

Another series of dependent samples t-tests revealed assortative mating trends in males scoring high in primary psychopathic traits. The results revealed a significant difference in their ratings towards high and low primary profiles where males rated their equivalents higher for short-term relationships ($t = 1.7, p < .001$). Although other scenarios produced significant differences, these were showing preferences towards non-psychopathic profiles and are not suggestive of assortative mating trends.
3.5 Sex and psychopathy as predictors of mate preference

A further exploration into the predictive values of sex and psychopathy scores showed that six out of eight models could predict mate preference outcomes, with a particularly large effect of sex (Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Table 5 Multiple regression of high primary psychopathy mate preference in short and long-term mating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High primary psychopathy, short-term mating</th>
<th>High primary psychopathy, long-term mating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-2.119</td>
<td>0.494</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. High primary psychopathy (short-term mating) model: $R^2 = .11, F(2, 176) = 10.9, p < .001$; high primary psychopathy (long-term mating) model: $R^2 = .17, F(2, 176) = 17.9, p < .001$. * $p < .001$, ** $p < .05$

Table 6 Multiple regression of low primary psychopathy mate preference in short and long-term mating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low primary psychopathy, short-term mating</th>
<th>Low primary psychopathy, long-term mating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-0.566</td>
<td>0.367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Low primary psychopathy (short-term mating) model: $R^2 = .03, F(2, 176) = 3.1, p < .05$; low primary psychopathy (long-term mating) model: $R^2 = .01, F(2, 176) = .95, p = ns.$

Table 7 Multiple regression of high secondary psychopathy mate preference in short and long-term mating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High secondary psychopathy, short-term mating</th>
<th>High secondary psychopathy, long-term mating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-0.513</td>
<td>0.486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note. High secondary psychopathy (short-term mating) model: \( R^2 = .01, F(2, 176) = 3.1, p = \text{ns} \); high secondary psychopathy (long-term mating) model: \( R^2 = .65, F(2, 176) = 168, p < .001 \).

* \( p < .001 \)

Table 8 Multiple regression of low secondary psychopathy mate preference in short and long-term mating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low secondary psychopathy, short-term mating</th>
<th>Low secondary psychopathy, long-term mating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.923</td>
<td>0.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.180*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Low secondary psychopathy (short-term mating) model: \( R^2 = .03, F(2, 176) = 3.3, p < .05 \); low secondary psychopathy (long-term mating) model: \( R^2 = .03, F(2, 176) = 3.5, p < .05 \).

* \( p < .05 \)

A series of eight multiple regressions indicated that six out of the eight models were significant predictors of mate preference; high primary short and long-term (\( R^2 = .11, F(2, 176) = 10.9, p < .00 \); \( R^2 = .17, F(2, 176) = 17.9, p < .001 \)), low primary short-term (\( R^2 = .03, F(2, 176) = 3.1, p < .05 \)), high secondary long-term (\( R^2 = .65, F(2, 176) = 168, p < .001 \)) and low secondary short and long-term (\( R^2 = .03, F(2, 176) = 3.3, p < .05 \); \( R^2 = .03, F(2, 176) = 3.5, p < .05 \)). Low primary long-term and high secondary short-term did not produce significant models.

Within these models, it was revealed that both psychopathy scores and sex contributed significantly to the high primary long-term model (\( \beta = -.07, p < .05 \); \( \beta = -1.3, p < .001 \)). It was also revealed that while sex contributed significantly to the following models; high primary long-term (\( \beta = -2.1, p < .001 \)), high secondary long-term (\( \beta = -5.4, p < .001 \)), low secondary short (\( \beta = -.92, p < .05 \)) and long-term (\( \beta = -.95, p < .05 \)), individuals psychopathy scores did not. No other models were deemed significant predictors.

3.6 The effects of theory of mind on mate preference

In addition to this, theory of mind scores were also explored as a potential predictor of mate preference and it was found that individuals theory of mind capabilities has an influence on three out of eight mating contexts; high primary long-term, low primary short-term and high secondary short-term (Table 9).
Table 9 Simple linear regression(s) on the influence of theory of mind in predicting mate preference in each mating context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mating Context</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High primary short-term</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>-.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High primary long-term</td>
<td>-.102</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.291*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low primary short-term</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>-.155**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low primary long-term</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High secondary short-term</td>
<td>-.156</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>-.255*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High secondary long-term</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>-.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low secondary short-term</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low secondary long-term</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. HPST model: $R^2 = .020$, $F(1, 177) = 3.5$, $p = $ ns; HPLT model: $R^2 = .085$, $F(1, 177) = 16.4$, $p < .001$; LPST model: $R^2 = .024$, $F(1, 177) = 4.3$, $p < .05$; LPLT model: $R^2 = .002$, $F(1, 177) = .38$, $p = $ ns. HSST model: $R^2 = .065$, $F(1, 177) = 12.3$, $p < .001$; HSLT model: $R^2 = .020$, $F(1, 177) = 3.5$, $p = $ ns; LSST model: $R^2 = .007$, $F(1, 177) = 1.3$, $p = $ ns; LPLT model: $R^2 = .000$, $F(1, 177) = .07$, $p = $ ns.

* $p < .001$
** $p < .05$

Another series of eight simple linear regressions revealed that theory of mind was a significant predictor of mate preference in three out of the eight models; high primary long-term ($R^2 = .085$, $F(1, 177) = 16.4$, $p < .001$), low primary short term ($R^2 = .025$, $F(1, 177) = 4.3$, $p < .05$) and high secondary short-term ($R^2 = .065$, $F(1, 177) = 12.3$, $p < .001$).

4. Discussion

4.1 Introduction

As previously stated, the current study is not the first to have researched mating preferences and primary and secondary psychopathy (Blanchard, Lyons & Centifanti, 2016), nor the first to identify a relationship between psychopathy and theory of mind (Richell et al., 2002; Sandvik, Hansen, Johnsen & Laberg, 2014). However, it is the first to incorporate theory of mind as a possible predictor to further explore the allure and success of psychopathic traits in the mating domain. Individuals completed a measure of emotional intelligence (RMET-R; Baron-Cohen et al., 2001) and a subscale from the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) to measure primary and secondary psychopathic traits. Scores from these were then analysed using a variety of t-tests and regressions to determine overall preferences as well as
their predictive values on ratings towards psychopathic and non-psychopathic profiles, as measured by a series of personality profile vignettes (created by Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti, 2016). Due to the possibility of multiple interactions, there were three main predicted outcomes for the current study, which will now be presented along with the main findings. Overall interpretations will be discussed and limitations of the current study will be taken into consideration and addressed with reference to previous research before suggestions for possible future research are made.

4.2 Predictions and Main Findings

4.2.1 An attraction towards psychopathic individuals;
Firstly, it was predicted that psychopathic individuals would be attractive for a one-night stand or fling (short-term mating) and unattractive as a potential spouse or potential parent (long-term mating). Given the literature reviewed in this area, it was unsurprising to find evidence of this in both males and females ratings where they showed a significant preference towards primary and secondary psychopathic personalities for short-term mating. Although these findings were are predicted, given the adversarial nature of primary and secondary psychopathic traits, it is difficult to distinguish whether an attraction towards these individuals is apparent due to the others finding the traits associated with psychopathy attractive (Aitken et al., 2013; Durante, Griskevicius, Simpson, Cantú, & Li, 2012; Kruger, Fisher, & Jobling, 2003) or down to their own ability to manipulate and take advantage of potential partners (Jonason, Valentine, Li, & Harbeson, 2011; Jonason et al., 2009). Thus, the quantitative methods used in this study present opportunities for a more in depth analysis underlying the individual differences associated with the underlying attraction and/or mating success.

4.2.2 Assortative mating;
It was also predicted that those scoring high in primary or secondary psychopathic traits (particularly females) would adopt an assortative mating strategy and subsequently rate their equivalents higher; at least for short-term relationships. Contrary to expectation, females scoring high in primary or secondary traits did not show any preference towards their equivalents, revealing no trends of assortative mating in any of the eight mating contexts. In fact, they seem to present a strong distaste for males of a similar personality. These findings differ from those in previous research that has found evident of assortative mating in younger females scoring high in primary and secondary psychopathic traits. This differentiation could be due to the age range of the current sample in that half the females are within the age bracket 18-24 years and half were older with a substantial amount falling within what is believed to be ‘middle-aged’. Given the vast range of ages amongst female respondents, this would have presented an opportunity to test for potential differences in younger and older women’s mating preferences towards psychopathic and non-psychopathic profiles. However, as the current study was invested in exploring sex differences and specific predictors of mate preference and although this variable could have influenced preferences, it was not taken into consideration until now. It is widely acknowledged that females desires in a relationship change over time (Bleske-Rechek, Vanden-Heuvel & Vander Wyst, 2009), in that attitudes
toward casual sex are thought to become less important as a woman ages (Shackelford, Schmitt & Buss, 2005; Singh, 2004) and energy is more focused on long-term partnership (Loo, Hawkes & Kim, 2017). Owing to this, the current study may have found significant assortative mating trends in young women, if age had been controlled for.

In terms of assortative mating in males, this phenomenon was not as interesting as in females, due it being well known that women are the choosier sex when it comes to mate preferences. However, the findings suggest that males presented as being strategic in their choices. It seems that it was vital to incorporate the two-facet model of psychopathy to distinctly measure primary and secondary traits distinctly as the findings suggest disparity in trends between the two. There was evidence of assortative mating in males scoring high in primary psychopathic traits where they rated their equivalents attractive for short-term mating whereas males scoring high in secondary psychopathic traits showed a slight preference towards their equivalents for long-term mating. This poses the question as to why males scoring high in psychopathic traits would find their equivalent attractive as a potential partner. It has been suggested that this poor judgement may be due to the traits associated with their secondary psychopathic tendencies whereby anxiety, negative urgency and the inability to learn from their mistakes may play a part in their mate preferences (Levenson et al., 1995; Whiteside & Lynam, 2001; Wilkowskì & Robinson, 2008).

In addition to this, as previously outlined, the idea that contemporary mate choices do not reflect evolutionary theories but instead follow a "likes-attract" pattern has been proposed by Buston and Emlen (2003). The way in which men perceive themselves may influence their mate preferences to the extent that they choose partners to match their self-perceptions. This assumption leads to the conclusion that assortative mating could reflect narcissistic tendencies, which are associated with substantial self-enhancement (John & Robins, 1994; Paulhus, 1998; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991) and entitlement whereby individuals perceive themselves as smarter, more attractive, and generally superior over others (Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Combine these views with the competitive mating domain and it is perceived that no potential partner would be sufficient, unless they matched their own self-perceptions. Acknowledging this, it has been proposed that both narcissism and psychopathy are negatively correlated with preferences for serious romantic relationships (Fox & Rooney, 2015). In addition to this, particular dimensions of narcissism may parallel with psychopathy (Schoenleber, Sadeh & Verona, 2011; John & Robins, 1994), with shared characteristics including extraversion and openness (Fox & Rooney, 2015), which may compensate for the assortative mating trends found in the current study. Moreover, narcissistic traits are found to be more prevalent in males (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003), which could provide further clarification as to why females did not find their equivalents attractive.

4.2.3 The predictors of mate preference;

It has been outlined that a deficit in theory of mind relates to primary psychopathic individuals (Blair & Mitchell, 2008; Casey, Garrett, Brackett & Rivers, 2008; Montagne et al., 2005; Malterer, Glass & Newman, 2008) and as a result, individuals high in these traits would
present difficulties in their ability to detect the conflicting traits and characteristics that are often associated with other psychopathic individuals (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001; Henry et al., 2009; Petroni et al., 2011). It was therefore predicted that these scores would distort their preferences and theory of mind would act as a significant predictor of mate preference. Contrary to evidence suggestive of emotional intelligence deficits in psychopathy (Blair & Mitchell, 2008; Casey, Garrett, Brackett & Rivers, 2008; Malterer, Glass & Newman, 2008), it was found that mean theory of mind scores did not significantly differ across the psychopathy spectrum, which suggests that a deficit in theory of mind was not prevalent in the sample of those scoring high in psychopathic traits. Due to these findings, the assumptions surrounding this must be rejected, but not overlooked in future research. Nevertheless, while these two variables did not interact in a significant way and psychopathy status did not predict mate preference to the extent it was expected to, findings suggest that regardless of individuals psychopathic status, those scoring lower in theory of mind showed a significant preference towards primary psychopathic individuals for long-term mating. This suggests that theory of mind alone acts as a strong predictor of higher ratings towards primary psychopathic individuals. Acknowledging this, it can be concluded that a deficit in emotional intelligence influences mate preference more so than psychopathy status.

As well as exploring the predictive value of theory of mind on mate preference, the current study was also interested in investigating possible influences of sex and psychopathic status. As a result of multiple regression analyses incorporating sex and psychopathy as predictors on mate preference, it was revealed that six out of the eight models were significant. However, upon further analysis, it was found that while sex contributed significantly to a number of models representing different mating contexts, individual’s psychopathy scores did not. These results were unexpected, given the findings in Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti (2016) study that found psychopathy to be uniquely predictive of higher ratings for primary psychopathic partners in long-term mating. In conclusion, although individual’s psychopathic status was not found to be as important as expected in influencing mate preferences in the current study, previous evidence of such an influence should not be dismissed (Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti, 2016). It can be observed that sex, psychopathic status and theory of mind each provide partial explanations in underpinning why individuals find psychopathic partners alluring.

4.3 Considerations

Firstly, it must be acknowledged that reported preferences may not correspond to actual mate choices (Todd, Penke, Fasolo, & Lenton, 2007). As previously outlined, it has been proposed that people prefer potential partners that match their self-perceptions and reflect their traits and characteristics, however when it comes to choosing a partner, these decisions are very much in line with the evolutionary predictions of parental investment theory (Buston and Emlen, 2003; Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008). Research suggests that in reality, men chose women based on their physical attractiveness and women chose men whose overall desirability as a mate matched their own self-perceived physical attractiveness, which suggests that who we are attracted to may not relate to whom we choose as a partner (Todd,
Penke, Fasolo, & Lenton, 2007). It can therefore be acknowledged that participants mate preferences as measured in this study through the use of vignettes, may differ if methods of real life interactions and choices were adopted. The use of vignettes and large focus on mate preferences instead of mate choice in research has been evaluated (Hainmueller, Hangartner & Yamamoto, 2015). It is argued that despite the importance of external validity in the accumulation of knowledge surrounding human behaviours in psychological research, the methods adopted in such research are deemed as questionable in capturing the aspects of real life (Benítez-Silva et al., 2004; Hainmueller, Hangartner & Yamamoto, 2015). The vignettes used to measure mate preferences towards primary and secondary psychopathic individuals in the current study were provided by Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti (2016). It was reported that these personality profiles are based on the Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP-III; Hare, 1985) and are proposed as possessing moderate to good internal consistency (Chronbach’s alpha = .55 to .86). These profiles were therefore deemed suitable in representing primary and secondary psychopathic personalities. Taking this into consideration, it must be stated that the findings in the current study may not capture nor reflect individual’s actualised choices in potential partners as some aspects are argued as not suitably representing real life scenarios. To address this, it would be interesting to see future research into psychopathic mate preferences adopting measures higher in ecological validity to uncover a more realistic conclusion.

It has been proposed that response rates are generally lower for longer questionnaires (Rolstad, Adler & Rydén, 2011). This was taken into consideration during the creation of the current study, however, although the psychopathy measure of the SD3 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) was chosen due to its ability to capture primary and secondary psychopathic in just fifteen questions; which has arguably shortened the overall length of the questionnaire considerably, this was just one of three measures. Response dropout rates were high in the current study, where over one hundred potential participants’ data had to be disregarded due to partial responses. Additionally, although the measures used in the current study were found be sufficient in measuring what they intended to, self-report measures are subject to issues such as self-bias (Rolstad, Adler & Rydén, 2011). However, for this explorative study, they were deemed as appropriate and present opportunities to explore similar projects in a different way such as real-life mate choice scenarios as previously mentioned.

In regards to keeping up with current mating trends, it must be considered that there are a wider range of relationships that individuals are found to engage in than what was explored in the current study (Garcia & Reiber, 2008; Jonason, Li, & Cason, 2009). Other research has investigated how psychopathic traits relate to a larger variety of relationship choices (i.e., one-night stands, booty-calls, friends-with-benefits, and serious romantic relationships; Jonason, Luevano & Adams, 2012). This could arguably provide an advantage in uncovering the predictors of mate preference in a more realistic and updated range of potential relationship contexts, however, it is thought that introducing more variables and possible choices into the scenario may have a knock on effect in producing significant results. Acknowledging this, the mating contexts used in the current study were seen as suitable in capturing males and females mate preferences and provided participants with a clear
A distinction between short and long-term potential relationships. Additionally, in order to compare findings with previous attempts to understand the complexity that is mating psychology in psychopaths (Blanchard, Lyons and Centifanti, 2016), the current study adopted a similar methodology to examine whether new variables (theory of mind) contribute towards uncovering the mechanisms underlying psychopathic attraction.

4.4 Conclusion

The current study is thought to be the first to explore the allure and success of psychopathic traits in the mating domain with a particular interest in emotional intelligence as a possible predictor of mate preference. It was deemed important to investigate primary and secondary psychopathy specifically as it showed an acknowledgment of the phenotypic and possible etiological differences between them (Mealey, 1995). This was also incorporated in an attempt to deviate from the majority of research in this area that explores psychopathy without recognition of the factorial subtypes. The current study has provided a unique contribution to a small, but emerging research area that looks at the appeal of individuals who harbour psychopathic traits. It can be concluded that although there assortative mating trends provided surprising results, psychopathic profiles were still rated as highly attractive for short-term relationships, despite their negative associations. When researching psychopathic mating, it is important to consider the raters’ sex and theory of mind capabilities as there are deemed to be strong predictors of this. Although some expected results did not turn out as significant, possible explanations for this have been explored and discussed. Acknowledging to findings in the current study, further research into the mechanisms underlying psychopathic attraction is needed to fully understand the attraction towards psychopathic traits and characteristics.
References


Word Count

Abstract 266

Introduction 2,225
Method 1,205
Results 1,791
Discussion 2,529

Overall 7,782

Date: 20/04/18