

# Relationship of Criminal Social Identity and Recidivism with The Moderating Role of Psychopathic Traits in Prison Inmates

Hafsah Tahir<sup>1</sup> and Saima Majeed<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

All around the world, crime has prompted studies concerning the causes and factors that underlie criminal behaviour. This study investigated the relationship of criminal social identity and recidivism along with the moderating role of psychopathic traits. This correlation research employed a cross-sectional research design. The research population included individuals in prison. Through purposive sampling there were 135 prison inmates ( $n=135$ ) with the age range from 19-63 years ( $M=32.95$ ,  $SD=9.09$ ). Measurement tools included Measure of criminal social identity (Shagufta et al., 2016), The Statistical Information on Recidivism-Revised 1 (SIR-R1) scale (Nafekh & Motiuk, 2002), in which the items measure demographic information on criminal history. And lastly Levenson self-report psychopathy scale Urdu version (Shagufta, 2023). Correlation analysis was conducted which showed significant relationship between the variable's criminal social identity and psychopathic traits. Furthermore, no moderating effect of psychopathic traits on criminal social identity and recidivism was found in present sample. This research adds into the literature of these variables in context to Pakistani culture providing an insight to the criminal social identity and personality traits of criminals which will be helpful in the field of forensic psychology and criminology.

**Keywords:** Criminal social identity, recidivism, psychopathic traits, prison inmates, criminal behavior

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## Introduction

Crime is present in all societies and has been present at all times throughout history. Across the world, crime has led detailed research regarding the underlying factors influencing criminal behaviour. In Pakistan crime rate is constantly increasing, with many ex-convicts committing crimes again after getting released from prison (Shuja & Abbas 2022). The aim of the current study is to investigate the factors which play a role in criminal behavior by looking into the presence of criminal social identity in prisoners along with psychopathic traits and trying to understand if there is an influence of these traits on the relationship of criminal social identity and recidivism.

The concept of Criminal Social Identity was adapted from the work of Boduszek and Hyland (2011), in which they put together the theory of social identity. According to this theory the individuals who fail to conform to the norms of society, or do not have any significant positive attachment to parents or others, form criminal identity to enhance self-image and self-esteem. The theory also suggests that an individual has the need to identify with a superior group thus they form perceptions and attitudes towards the people of the criminal group, perceiving the criminal group similar to themselves. The researchers also proposed that being a member of a group with criminal tendencies, has a psychological effect on an individual because that's when the criminal social identity integrates with their self-concept and it makes him a member of a criminal group. The self-concept of criminal identity becomes primary to personal identity even in the absence of other members of that group.

The model of criminal social identity comes from prior research, which proposes the factor structure of social identity (Cameron, 2004). According to this criminal social identity constitutes three elements, cognitive centrality, in-group affect and in-group ties. The concept of cognitive centrality focuses on the cognitive aspect which brings forth a sense of belonging in an individual. The next element, in-group affect focuses on the emotional aspect of being a part of a group, which reduces the anxiety an individual feel from the incongruity between the ideal and actual self. And the third element, in-group ties focus on the psychological aspect of emotional connection and resemblance with other members of the group. According to Boduszek and his colleagues (2014), the greater an individual identifies himself to a criminal group the greater the probability for him to develop criminal thinking patterns and engagement in criminal oriented behavior which displays conformity.

Boduszek and his colleagues (2016), presented an integrated psychosocial model of criminal social identity explaining the development of criminal social identity with the focus on psychological and social factors. According to the theory, the psychological and social processes influencing the formation of criminal social identity include four main elements. The first element is identity crisis which is associated with weak parental attachment and weak bonds in society. The second is an individual's presence in a criminal or anti-social environment which is the association with criminal groups. The third is identification with a criminal group to protect one's own self-esteem. Lastly personality traits form a moderation role between criminal environment or even an anti-social environment with the formation of criminal social identity.

One of the most prominent challenges to the society is crime which is posed by the re-integration of offenders when they are released from the prison into the society, breeding the phenomenon of recidivism (Wartna & Nijssen, 2006). Within the context of crime and criminal justice recidivism is one of the most contemporary issues. The reason for prison recidivism has been associated with various personal, sociological, economical and lifestyle aspects. Although imprisonment is the focus of giving a criminal, punishment for his actions and at the same time providing an individual rehabilitation. It is observed that, social interactions that inmates have while they are imprisoned, is an adverse factor to proper rehabilitation. It has been a complex and difficult phenomenon to understand the factors causing recidivistic behavior. Numerous researches have evidence of Anti-social Personality Disorder (ASPD) and psychopathic traits having an effect on recidivism (Lee & Hanson, 2016 & Martin et al., 2019).

The roots of the term psychopathy can be found in 19th-century psychiatric literature (Hare, 1991). The personality trait psychopathy has been associated with aggression and criminal behavior (Coid et al., 2009) and can have severe consequences for both the individual and society at large. Psychopathy is a trait in an individual's personality which is identified with absence of empathy or remorse for others, impulsive behavior, and a tendency towards antisocial or criminal behavior (Muris et al., 2017). Individuals with Psychopathic traits may be charming and persuasive, but they often lack a sense of guilt or empathy for the harm they cause to others (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

The construct psychopathy has been tied with emotional and behavioral disturbances. According to Tharshini and his colleagues (2021), these disturbances have been pertained as significant risk factors for criminal behavior specifically in terms of instrumental violence, anti-social behaviour and criminal and sexual recidivism. According to Boccio and Beaver (2016) there is an inverse relationship between personality psychopathy and self-regulation, whereas there is a direct relationship of psychopathy with manipulation, impulsiveness, and absence of remorse/guilt. Literature also has evidence for the significant relationship of personality traits of psychopathy with short-temperedness, egocentricity, callousness, display superficial charm, frequent violation of social norms/values, lack of empathy and irresponsibility (Gatner et al., 2018).

Recent research provides evidence of psychological traits of personality serving an important role in criminal and antisocial behaviour in an individual. Research shows that there is a moderating effect of psychopathic traits on the relationship between confinement period and criminal social identity. The research study showed that particularly in the participants who had higher score on affective and interpersonal features of psychopathy (Boduszek, 2016).

There has been a rapid increase of research in psychopathy which has been consistent in its findings proving that the prevalence of psychopathy personality traits is greater among prisoners compared to non-imprisoned population. Researchers have explored the Triarchic Model of Psychopathy in convicted prison inmates and compared it with non-convicted members of the community. And their research established that there was an association between personality and impulsivity (Sellbom & Phillips, 2013). It has been observed that individuals with high scores in psychopathic personality traits, they are more likely to commit crimes and reoffending.

#### ❖ **National Research**

Dil & Kazmi (2016) conducted research to look into the occurrence of psychopathic disposition among young adults. According to the results, young adults with criminal record differed from young adults who never committed any crime or been accused of committing a crime. Criminal young adults had significantly higher levels of psychopathic traits. The research also revealed that males scored significantly higher in terms of psychopathic traits in comparison with the female participants.

Research conducted by Shafqat and colleagues (2019) looks at criminal acts through the lens of emotional and psychological impulses. According to their research there is a direct association between sadistic-impulses and violent actions in incarcerated prison inmates. The research finding showed that sadistic impulsiveness as the predictor of violent behavior. It has also been revealed in the research study that prison inmates develop tendencies of borderline personality and take part in reckless actions because of the influence of external environment and disturbed family dynamics. The results also indicated that psychological problems in both genders in prison are because of negative parenting styles, and absence of empathy. Which further leads to men and women taking part in risk-taking behaviors, in order to seek some sort of relief. It is noteworthy point that the tendency to take part in risk-taking behaviors is higher in men as compared to women inmates (Malik & Majeed, 2023).

In 2022, around 756,738 crime cases were registered, in the province of Punjab, Pakistan (Crime Statistics | Punjab Police, n.d.). Thus, it was important to look into criminal behavior to understand factors affecting this behavior. Much research is not present in the field of forensic psychology in Pakistan. And it is important to understand criminal behavior in the context of Pakistani culture as well. Looking at the above-mentioned literature and recognizing that individual personality traits have a part to play in when it comes to criminal behaviour, the present research seeks to investigate and develop a deeper comprehension of criminal social identity and personality traits along with the variables recidivism to add more information onto the existing literature in the field of forensic research in Pakistan.

## **Methodology**

### **❖ Research Design & Sample**

This correlational research is following a cross-sectional research design. The sample of the study is prison inmates from District jail and Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore. As the estimated population is 5000 prison inmates, the sample includes 135 inmates (n=135) which was determined through “g” power analysis. The technique for sample selection was purposive sampling.

### **❖ Inclusion criteria**

- Individuals willing to participate
- Male participants
- The length of confinement period (1-8 years)

- Individuals who have committed a crime
- Individuals under trial for criminal behavior
- Convicted felons
- ❖ **Exclusion criteria**
  - Individuals with death sentence
  - Individuals with medico-legal cases
  - Individuals suffering from any diagnosed psychiatric disorder and on medication.

**Table 1.***Demographic Information of The Participants (N=135)*

|                                | <b>f</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Age</b>                     |          |          | 32.95    | 9.09      |
| <b>Marital Status</b>          |          |          |          |           |
| Married                        | 90       | 66.7     |          |           |
| Unmarried                      | 38       | 28.1     |          |           |
| Separated                      | 0        | 0        |          |           |
| Divorced                       | 7        | 5.1      |          |           |
| Widowed                        | 0        | 0        |          |           |
| <b>Inmate Status</b>           |          |          |          |           |
| Convicted                      | 54       | 39.7     |          |           |
| Under Trial                    | 81       | 59.6     |          |           |
| <b>Offense</b>                 |          |          |          |           |
| Sexual Assault                 | 17       | 12.5     |          |           |
| Murder                         | 36       | 26.5     |          |           |
| Family Case                    | 17       | 12.5     |          |           |
| Narcotics                      | 42       | 30.9     |          |           |
| Theft                          | 23       | 16.9     |          |           |
| <b>Time Period of Sentence</b> |          |          |          |           |
| Below 2 years                  | 35       | 25.7     |          |           |

|                                |     |      |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| Above 2 years                  | 2   | 1.5  |
| Above 4 Years                  | 1   | 0.7  |
| Above 6 Years                  | 16  | 11.8 |
| On trail                       | 81  | 59.6 |
| <b>Time Passed of sentence</b> |     |      |
| Below 1 years                  | 121 | 89.0 |
| Above 1 years                  | 4   | 2.9  |
| Above 2 years                  | 8   | 5.9  |
| <b>Medical Illness</b>         |     |      |
| Yes                            | 7   | 5.9  |
| No                             | 128 | 94.1 |
| <b>Psychological Illness</b>   |     |      |
| Yes                            | 2   | 1.5  |
| No                             | 133 | 97.8 |

- Note: f= frequency, %= percentage, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

The table above shows demographic information of the participants of this research study. There were 135 male prison inmates, and 54 of them were convicted inmates and 81 of them were under trail yet to be convicted. 17 prison inmates were in prison for the crime of sexual assault, 36 of them were in prison for murder, 17 of them were in prison for family case, 42 of them were in prison for narcotics case, and 23 of them were in prison for theft.

### ❖ **Materials and Measures**

#### ❖ **Instrument for Criminal Social Identity**

Measure of criminal social identity scale (Shagufta et al., 2016) measures criminal social identity. The scale consists of 8 items measuring 3 factors of criminal social identity; centrality, in-group affect and in-group ties. The scale was constructed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. According to the scoring of the scale, it has a range of 8 to 40, where high scores indicate an increase in criminal social identity. The first subscale cognitive centrality measures the psychological features of a criminal's group identity. This

subscale has 3 items. The second subscale is in-group affect which measures a criminal's attitude toward other members of the group and this subscale has 2 items. And the last subscale is in-group ties which measures the bond with other criminals. This subscale has 3 items. The reliability of this scale is good (Shagufta et al., 2016). For the subscale cognitive centrality  $\alpha = .68$ ; the subscale in-group affect  $\alpha = .91$ ; and lastly the subscale in-group ties  $\alpha = .8$ .

#### ❖ Instrument for Psychopathic Traits

Levenson self-report psychopathy scale Urdu version (Shagufta, 2022), measures psychopathy. It is a multi-dimensional scale measuring Callousness with 4 items, Egocentricity with 10 items, and Antisocial behavior with 5 items. The scale has 19 items in total. It is a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale has six reverse scoring items. Scores above 58 are considered psychopathic, scores between 49-57 are considered to be mixed group and scores below 48 are considered non-psychopathic. The reliability was reported to be  $\alpha = 0.77$  (Shagufta, 2023).

#### ❖ Instrument for Recidivism

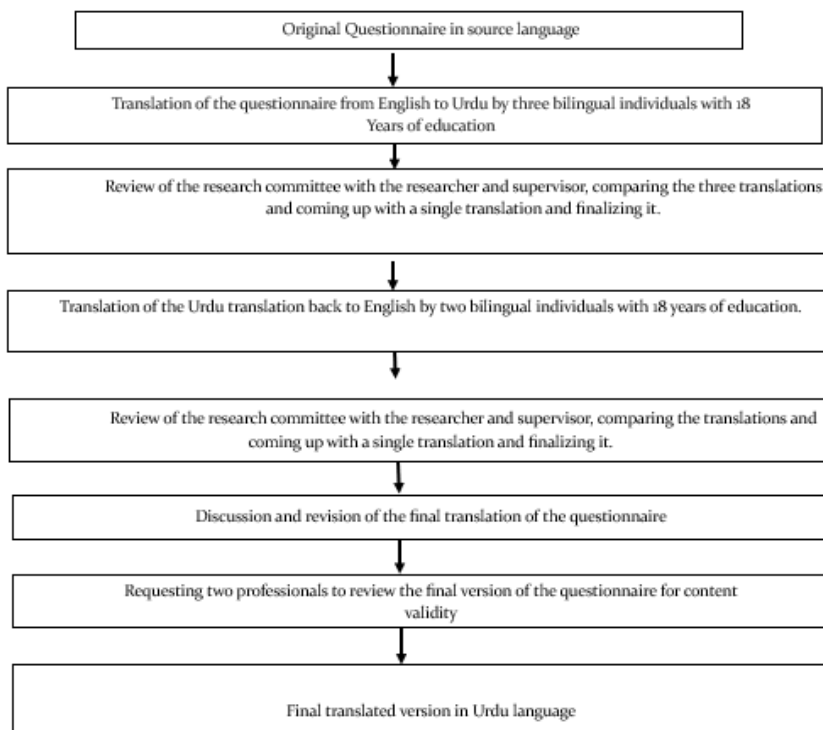
The Statistical Information on Recidivism-Revised 1 (SIR-R1) scale (Nafekh & Motiuk, 2002) was used to measure recidivism. The scoring of the scale involves a scoring system of the item on probability estimates of re-offending within three years of release. The scale has 15 items, which measure of the characteristics of criminal history. This will be filled by the researcher either by the verbatim of the participant or through their record file. According to the scoring each item is scored on a positive or negative score, on the basis of the response they give. The scoring system has been established by the population success rates. The total scores range from -30 (poor risk) to +27 (very good risk). The scale has a good reliability  $\alpha = 0.75$ .

#### ❖ Procedure

The research was approved by the Board of Studies (BoS), Ethics Review Committee (ERC), Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Board of Advances Studies and Research (BASR), after which permission for data collection was given. Permission to use the scales was also taken from respective authors. In order to collect data from prison, permission from Inspector General Prison (IG) was taken. Permission to collect the data from District jail, Lahore was given. A forensic psychologist appointed by IG office reviewed the documents and forwarded them for approval. There was a designated forensic psychologist who ensured the safety of the

participant and the researcher. All the ethical concerns and guidelines were taken into account while collecting data. Instructions were given and it was made sure that the prisoners could comprehend the questionnaire. Consent was taken from the prisoners to take part in the research, and the nature and purpose of the research was also explained to them. Their right of confidentiality and anonymity was given, and they were told about their right to leave at any time of the study. After collecting the data, it was analyzed through SPSS which helped in concluding the research.

**Figure 1.** Forward Backward Translation Procedure



The SIR-R<sub>1</sub> scale (Nafekh & Motiuk, 2002) was translated into Urdu using forward backward translation method. The scale was translated from English language to Urdu first by three bilingual individuals with 18 years of education, and then the translated versions were reviewed and discussed by the research committee, including the researcher and the supervisor. After finalizing an English translation, it was translated back in English by 2 bilingual individuals. It was then reviewed by the researcher and the supervisor. After that the translation was finalized. The

translation was then sent to 2 professionals for content validity, from which their feedback was incorporated, and the final Urdu scale translation was done.

### ❖ Ethical Considerations

The research study took care of every ethical concern and guideline. An information sheet and informed consent was given to the participants. Informed consent is attached in the appendix A. The confidentiality and anonymity of every participant was taken care of. No harm came to any participant during the research process. The participants were provided with a comfortable environment while filling the questionnaire, and they were not pressurized. And the participants were given the choice to leave at any time if they wanted. The questionnaire was in Urdu language, and the statements were easy to understand.

### ❖ Statistical Analysis

All data was entered and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive analysis was run on the data. Cronbach Alpha value was calculated for criminal social identity, psychopathic traits and recidivism. Pearson product moment correlation looked at the relationship between criminal social identity, psychopathic traits, and recidivism. The moderating role of psychopathic traits for the relationship between criminal social identity and recidivism were run through PROCESS SPSS Macro.

### ❖ Results

This section looks at variables; criminal social identity, psychopathic traits and recidivism in order to investigate the relationship between the variables. The analysis was carried out on the data collected from District Jail, Lahore.

### ❖ Descriptive Analysis

In this research 135 participants filled the survey containing Criminal Social Identity Scale, Statistical Information on Recidivism Revised Scale and Levenson's Self-Report Psychopathy Scale. The participants were prison inmates in District Jail Lahore. All participants were male. The participants' age ranged from 18-63 years.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Information of The Variables; Criminal Social Identity, Psychopathy Traits, Moral Disengagement and Recidivism (N=135)*

|                             | M     | SD    | Range |       | Skewness | Kurtosis | $\alpha$ |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|----------|----------|
|                             |       |       | Min   | Max   |          |          |          |
| CSI                         | 15.09 | 5.40  | 8.00  | 36.00 | 1.09     | 2.07     | .652     |
| <b>Cognitive Centrality</b> | 5.57  | 2.77  | 3.00  | 15.00 | 1.05     | .70      | .574     |
| <b>In-Group Ties</b>        | 3.05  | 1.90  | 2.00  | 10.00 | 1.93     | 3.09     | .289     |
| <b>In-Group Affect</b>      | 6.40  | 2.66  | 3.00  | 15.00 | .73      | .99      | .849     |
| Psychopathy                 | 50.67 | 11.60 | 27.00 | 90.00 | .77      | 1.39     | .755     |
| <b>Egocentricity</b>        | 24.21 | 7.03  | 10.00 | 46.00 | .88      | 1.09     | .664     |
| <b>Callous</b>              | 14.79 | 4.65  | 4.00  | 20.00 | -.39     | -1.06    | .792     |
| <b>Anti-Social</b>          | 11.39 | 4.30  | 5.00  | 25.00 | .69      | .57      | .590     |

▪ Note: M= mean, SD= standard deviation,  $\alpha$ = Cronbach alpha, CSI= criminal social identity

The participants (N=135) filled out the questionnaire with criminal social identity scale, having 3 subscales; cognitive centrality, in-group affect and in-group ties. The questionnaire had a scale on recidivism, scale on psychopathic traits, having subscales, ego centrality, callous and anti-social. The subscale in-group ties have weak ( $\alpha=.289$ ), the subscale had only three items, which could contribute to a weak Cronbach alpha value.

### ❖ Inferential Analysis

For the investigation of correlation between the variable's criminal social identity, recidivism, psychopathic traits and moral disengagement, Pearson-product correlation analysis was conducted through SPSS 25. And to investigate the moderating role of psychopathic traits on the relationship between criminal social identity and recidivism, a moderation analysis was conducted through SPSS PROCESS Macro.

## ❖ Correlation Analysis

**Table 4.2**

*Correlation Between Variables, Criminal Social Identity, Recidivism Psychopathic Traits and Moral Disengagement(N=135)*  
 Note: CSI= criminal social identity

|                      | 1     | 2     | 3      | 4     | 5    | 6     | 7     | 8   | 9 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|---|
| CSI                  | -     |       |        |       |      |       |       |     |   |
| Cognitive Centrality | .72** | -     |        |       |      |       |       |     |   |
| In-Group Affect      | .70** | .26** | -      |       |      |       |       |     |   |
| In-Group Ties        | .76** | .24** | .43**  | -     |      |       |       |     |   |
| Recidivism           | -.04  | .05   | -.08   | -.08  | -    |       |       |     |   |
| Psychopathy          | .41** | .34** | .20*   | .34** | -.07 | -     |       |     |   |
| Egocentricity        | .44** | .35** | .31**  | .31** | -.02 | .88** | -     |     |   |
| Callous              | -.11  | .02   | -.29** | -.03  | -.00 | .51** | .19*  | -   |   |
| Anti-Social          | .47** | .26** | .35**  | .43** | -.08 | .77** | .69** | .04 | - |

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

The relationship between the variables; criminal social identity, recidivism and psychopathic traits was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results showed a nonsignificant relationship between criminal social identity and recidivism [  $r=.046$ ,  $n=135$ ,  $p>.05$ ], a moderate, positive correlation between the variables, criminal social identity and psychopathy traits [  $r=.418$ ,  $n=135$ ,  $p<.05$ ].

## ❖ Moderation Analysis

**Table 3**

*Moderation effect of psychopathy on the relationship between criminal social identity and recidivism (N=135)*

|                          | B     | SE   | P    | 95% CI |       |
|--------------------------|-------|------|------|--------|-------|
|                          |       |      |      | Low    | UP    |
| Constant                 | 10.39 | .279 | .000 | 9.84   | 10.94 |
| Psychopathy (A)          | -.012 | .026 | .643 | -.065  | .040  |
| Criminal Social Identity | -.002 | .059 | .978 | -.011  | .111  |
| (B)                      |       |      |      |        |       |
| AxB                      | -.002 | .003 | .508 | .008   | .004  |

|                                |       |      |      |       |        |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|------|-------|--------|
| <b>Constant</b>                | 10.48 | .282 | .000 | 9.92  | 11.04  |
| <b>Ego Centrality (A)</b>      | -.007 | .041 | .858 | -.089 | .075   |
| <b>Cognitive Centrality(B)</b> | .084  | .104 | .420 | -.112 | .291   |
| <b>AxB</b>                     | -.020 | .013 | .132 | -.045 | .006   |
| <b>Constant</b>                | 10.29 | .268 | .000 | 9.76  | 10.82  |
| <b>Callous (A)</b>             | -.006 | .058 | .920 | -.120 | .109   |
| <b>Cognitive Centrality(B)</b> | .071  | .105 | .501 | -.136 | .277   |
| <b>AxB</b>                     | -.006 | .022 | .788 | -.049 | .037   |
| <b>Constant</b>                | 10.38 | .272 | .000 | 9.84  | 10.925 |
| <b>Antisocial (A)</b>          | -.058 | .066 | .305 | -.188 | .071   |
| <b>Cognitive Centrality(B)</b> | .102  | .099 | .375 | -.095 | .299   |
| <b>AxB</b>                     | -.029 | .020 | .158 | -.068 | .011   |
| <b>Constant</b>                | 10.39 | .275 | .000 | .984  | 10.93  |
| <b>Ego Centricity (A)</b>      | .012  | .042 | .773 | -.071 | .095   |
| <b>In-Group Affect (B)</b>     | -.109 | .161 | .502 | -.427 | .210   |
| <b>AxB</b>                     | -.011 | .015 | .465 | -.040 | .018   |
| <b>Constant</b>                | 10.30 | .297 | .000 | 9.755 | 10.85  |
| <b>Callous (A)</b>             | -.024 | .061 | .695 | -.114 | .096   |

|                            |       |      |      |       |       |
|----------------------------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|
| <b>In-Group Affect (B)</b> | -.150 | .150 | .320 | -.447 | .147  |
| <b>AxB</b>                 | .004  | .030 | .894 | -.055 | .063  |
| <b>Constant</b>            | 10.39 | .276 | .000 | 9.76  | 10.85 |
| <b>Anti-Social (A)</b>     | -.045 | .068 | .514 | -.180 | .090  |
| <b>In-Group Affect (B)</b> | -.086 | .165 | .602 | -.414 | .241  |
| <b>AxB</b>                 | -.004 | .023 | .850 | -.051 | .042  |
| <b>Constant</b>            | 10.41 | .275 | .000 | 9.87  | 10.95 |
| <b>Ego Centricity (A)</b>  | .008  | .041 | .839 | -.072 | .089  |
| <b>In-Group Ties (B)</b>   | -.070 | .109 | .520 | -.286 | .146  |
| <b>AxB</b>                 | -.012 | .011 | .292 | -.033 | .010  |
| <b>Constant</b>            | 10.30 | .268 | .000 | 9.77  | 10.83 |
| <b>Callous (A)</b>         | -.007 | .058 | .899 | -.122 | .107  |
| <b>In-Group Ties (B)</b>   | -.112 | .102 | .274 | -.314 | .090  |
| <b>AxB</b>                 | .016  | .025 | .530 | -.034 | .065  |
| <b>Constant</b>            | 10.27 | .280 | .000 | 9.72  | 10.83 |
| <b>Anti-social (A)</b>     | -.049 | .073 | .503 | -.194 | .096  |
| <b>In-Group Ties (B)</b>   | -.074 | .113 | .512 | -.194 | .096  |
| <b>AxB</b>                 | .004  | .017 | .824 | -.030 | .037  |

▪ Note: B= unstandardized coefficient, SE= standard error, CSI= criminal social identity

To investigate the moderating effect of psychopathic traits on the relationship of criminal social identity and recidivism, a moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2022). The results showed that the overall model was not statistically significant ( $R^2 = .010$ ,  $F(3, 129) = 0.426$ ,  $p = .735$ ), indicating that the predictors collectively explained only 1.0% of the variance in recidivism. The coefficients for criminal social identity ( $b = -0.002$ ,  $SE = 0.059$ ,  $p = .978$ ), psychopathy traits ( $b = -0.012$ ,  $SE = 0.026$ ,  $p = .643$ ), and the interaction effect ( $b = -0.002$ ,  $SE = 0.003$ ,  $p = .508$ ) were all nonsignificant. Additionally, the change in  $R^2$  due to the interaction term was very small and not significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .003$ ,  $F(1, 129) = 0.440$ ,  $p = .508$ ). These results suggest that psychopathic traits do not significantly moderate the relationship between criminal social identity and recidivism.

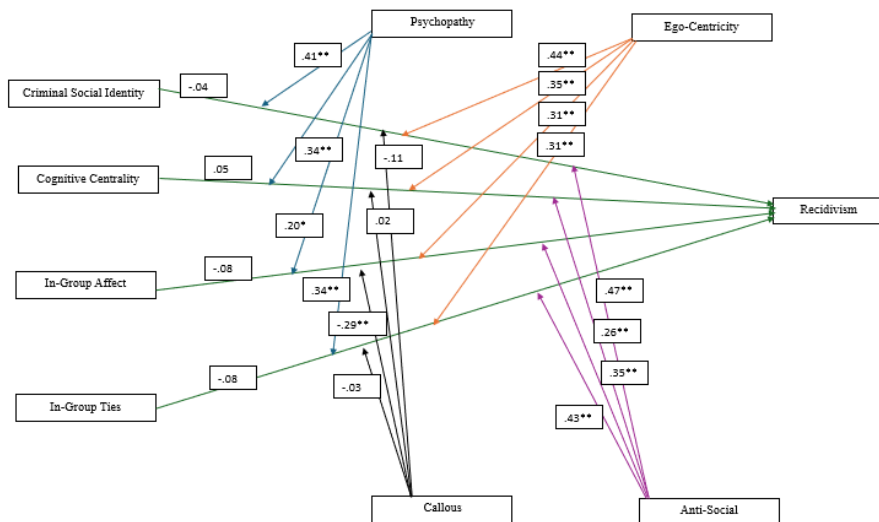


Figure 2. Model of moderation effect of psychopathic traits on the relation between criminal social identity and recidivism

## Discussion

Crime is a phenomenon present in countries all over the world. In most developed countries, forensic psychologists and criminologists are working and adopting methods to investigate crime and criminal behavior. In Pakistan, criminal investigation is still the same as it was in the past. This research was conducted to look into the variables of criminal social identity, psychopathy traits, and recidivism in prison inmates to investigate the relationship between these variables.

The results of this research showed a nonsignificant correlation between the variables of criminal social identity and recidivism. The increase in the rate of crime can be contributed to the fact that there is a high chance of criminals re-integrating and committing a crime again when they are released from the prison into the society, leading towards recidivism (Wartna & Nijssen, 2006). But the current research found that criminal social identity and recidivism has no relationship. One possible reason for this could be that in Pakistani culture, the factor which influences prison recidivism can be linked with a series of personal, sociological, economic, and lifestyle factors, rather than an individual's criminal social identity. There is not much indigenous literature on this phenomenon. Although looking at international research it has been reported that there is a direct relation between criminal social identity and recidivism. But even they suggest that criminal social identity may differ in terms of group differences among offenders (Walters, 2003).

Furthermore, previous research provides evidence of a significant direct association between criminal social identity and recidivism of male offenders from a high-security prison (Boduszek et al., 2016). And in current research, the prison inmates did not belong to maximum-security. Along with that research has found sub-elements of criminal social identity; cognitive centrality and ingroup ties having high scores amongst recidivistic offenders when compared to inmates imprisoned for first offense (Sherretts et al., 2017). And in this research the sample included prison inmates, who were imprisoned for first offense.

Another possible reason for this could be that most of the prison inmates were in prison for the first time and they had been in prison for less than one year. And in this time period, they did not form a strong criminal social identity. Researchers have explored this and concluded that the cognitive structures of reoffenders develop a stronger self-identity as a criminal compared to criminals who are incarcerated for the first time, which explains recidivism (Boduszek et al., 2014).

The results of current research showed a moderate positive correlation between the variable criminal social identity and psychopathy traits. Which indicates that with an increase in criminal social identity, there will be an increase in psychopathy traits and vice versa. Research conducted by Boduszek and his colleagues (2012) revealed that personality traits can be a moderating variable in the relationship of CSI and criminal behavior. Looking at more research, these variables have been investigated along with period of confinement and it was found period of confinement and

criminal social identity did not have any direct relationship. The results show a significant moderating effect of primary psychopathy on the association between period of confinement and criminal social identity while the covariates were controlled. The researcher specifically looked at the effect of period of confinement on criminal social identity in participants with greater scores on primary psychopathy features of affective and interpersonal (Boduszek, 2021).

Moreover, the results of this research also found that psychopathy traits do not have a moderating relationship with criminal social identity and recidivism. Which means that psychopathy traits do not have any influence in increasing or decreasing the effect of criminal social identity in recidivism. These findings challenge the assumptions in the literature which shows that psychopathic traits have a moderating effect of criminal social identity on criminal behavior (Hare, 2003). Numerous recent studies have observed the weak effect of psychopathy and ASPD on recidivism (Lee & Hanson, 2016). Research has also found that the increase in aggression and tendencies of violence-oriented activities in criminals with ASPDs (Gilbert & Daffern, 2011).

There is a possibility that the non-significant relationship of criminal social identity, psychopathy traits and moral disengagement with recidivism could be explained by the influences of cultural factors unique to Pakistani cultural context. Pakistani society is characterized with a collectivistic culture as compared to western society. And in a collectivistic society, an individuals' family and community play a very vital role in one's life (Ali et al., 2019). An individual's behavior is strongly influenced by the members of the family and community. This could perhaps, weaken the impact of criminal social identity on recidivism, as individuals may be more influenced by the expectations and support of their family and community than by their identification a criminal group (Brunton-Smith, & McCarthy, 2016). This support network can be a factor for preventing future recidivism by providing emotional, financial, and social support which could mitigate the criminal social identity.

Furthermore, the justice system of Pakistan, differ significantly from those in Western contexts. These differences can affect the outcomes of criminal behavior and recidivism. These cultural factors may be influencing criminal behavior and recidivism more than criminal social identity or psychopathy. These factors can be explored in future research to understand the complex interplay of criminal social identity and recidivism among Pakistani inmates. These findings highlight the

importance of contextualizing psychological and criminological theories within the cultural framework. More research needs to be conducted in Pakistan, in order to increase the understanding of criminal behavior in context of Pakistani culture.

#### ❖ Limitations and suggestions

- A limitation in this research was that this research had small sample size. As the permission was only given for District Jail, Lahore. All data was collected from the same prison, where only male prison inmates are present. Thus, there was no data collected from female prison inmates. It is important to investigate this phenomenon in female prison inmates as well and look into gender differences.
- The participants in this research were not all incarcerated, some of the participants were under trial, for future research it is suggested that research could be conducted on incarcerated prison inmates.

#### ❖ Implications

The research has provided an insight in the phenomenon of criminal social identity, psychopathy traits, and recidivism in prison inmates, in the collectivistic society of Pakistan. The findings of this research not only add into existing body of literature in the field of forensic psychology in Pakistan, but it also has important implications for designing future interventions which could be aimed at preventing recidivism after prison inmates are released from the prison. Since the findings of this study showed that criminal social identity does not directly link to recidivism, interventions should perhaps focus more on external factors such as improving social support systems, providing employment opportunities, and addressing substance abuse issues.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this research have highlighted the complex interplay and the relationship between the study variables. It is important to note that this study did not find any significant association between criminal social identity and recidivism. Furthermore, there was no moderating effect of psychopathy on the relationship of criminal social identity with recidivism. The findings of this research suggest that there is a need for interventions for prison inmates which should adopt a multifaceted approach targeting the management for the characteristics of psychopathy and criminal social identity.

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