

Childhood Maltreatment and Borderline Personality Characteristics: The Moderating Role of Psychological Inflexibility

INTRODUCTION

- Victims of childhood maltreatment may use avoidance as a coping strategy to mentally escape distressing experiences, which can cultivate psychological inflexibility (PI).
- PI is a strong predictor of Borderline symptoms.
- Present study evaluates distinct relation between types of childhood maltreatment (neglect, sexual abuse, punishment) and borderline characteristics with the moderating role of PI.

METHODS

Participants

- Participants were 610 college students ($M_{age} = 19.65$; 71% Female, 87% White) at a midwestern university.

Instruments

- The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ-2)
- Personality Assessment Inventory-Borderline Scale (PAI-BOR)
- Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS)

Statistical analysis

- A moderation analysis was conducted in Stata.

RESULTS

- The association between neglect and borderline symptoms was stronger at high levels of PI than at means or low levels; however, the associations between sexual abuse and punishment with borderline symptoms were stronger at mean and low levels of PI than at high levels.

DISCUSSION

- PI moderates the association between different types of childhood maltreatment and borderline characteristic in distinct ways.

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Psychological inflexibility differently moderates the associations between different types of childhood maltreatment, including neglect, punishment, and sexual abuse, and borderline characteristics.



Figures 1–3. Significant interactions between psychological flexibility and types of childhood maltreatment

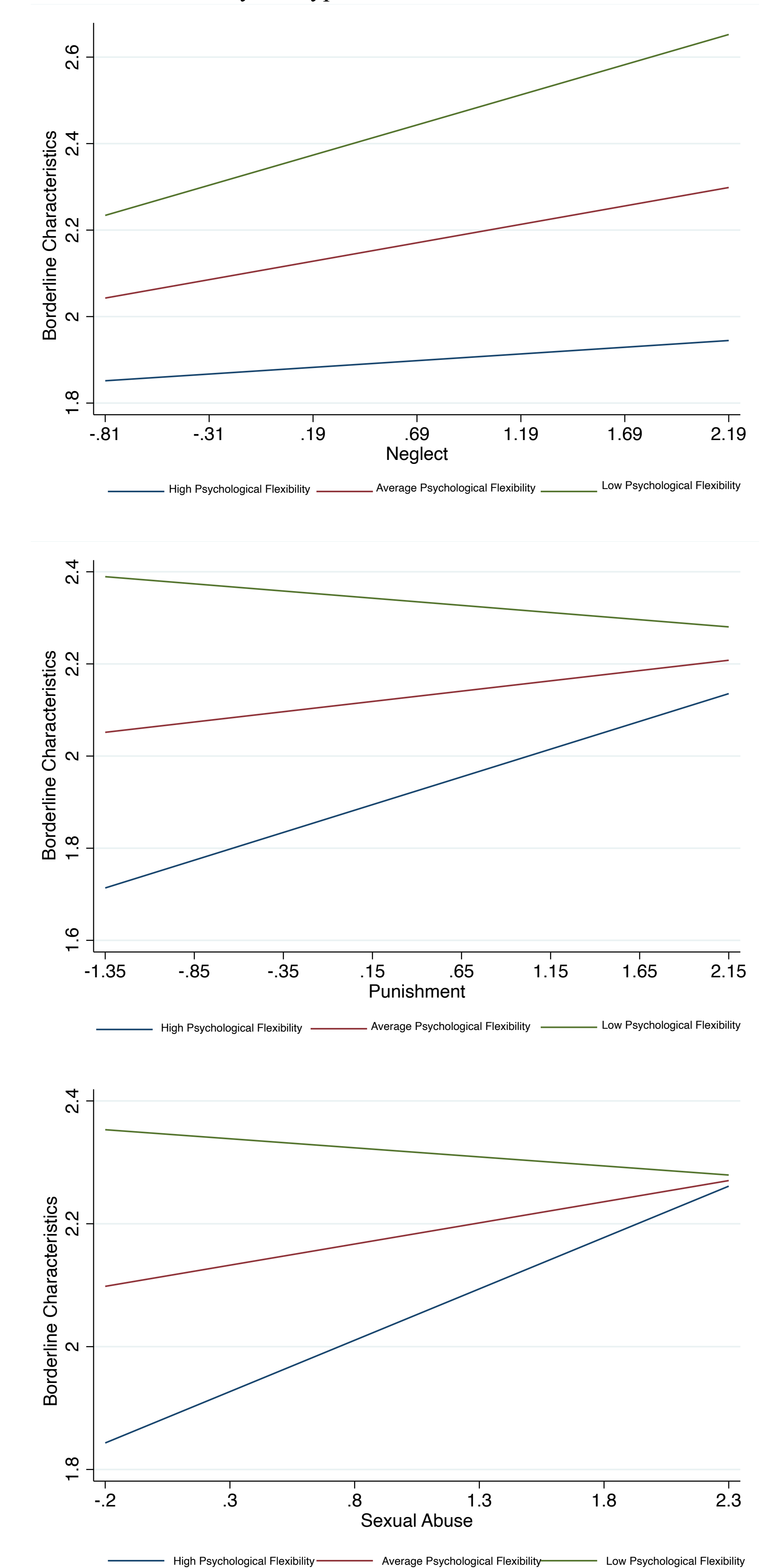


Table 1. Associations between types of childhood maltreatment and borderline characteristics with psychological inflexibility as moderator

| Variables | b | SE | t | P | 95% CI |
|-----------------|-------|------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Gender | -0.03 | 0.02 | -1.34 | .181 | -0.08, 0.02 |
| Neglect | 0.08 | 0.02 | 3.88 | <.0001 | 0.04, 0.13 |
| Punishment | 0.04 | 0.02 | 2.01 | .045 | 0.00, 0.09 |
| Sexual Abuse | 0.07 | 0.03 | 2.35 | .019 | 0.11, 0.13 |
| PI | 0.17 | 0.01 | 18.36 | <.0001 | 0.15, 0.19 |
| Neglect*PI | 0.04 | 0.01 | 3.08 | .002 | 0.01, 0.06 |
| Punishment*PI | -0.06 | 0.02 | -3.55 | <.0001 | -0.09, -0.02 |
| Sexual Abuse*PI | -0.07 | 0.02 | -3.49 | .001 | -0.11, -0.03 |
| Constant | 2.11 | 0.01 | 172.90 | <.0001 | 2.09, 2.13 |