

University of Missouri, St. Louis

IRL @ UMSL

---

Undergraduate Research Symposium

UMSL Undergraduate Works

---

January 2024

## Psychopathy & Perceptions of Control

Amy Kenny  
apkxdd@umsystem.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/urs>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kenny, Amy, "Psychopathy & Perceptions of Control" (2024). *Undergraduate Research Symposium*. 162.  
Available at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/urs/162>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the UMSL Undergraduate Works at IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Research Symposium by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact [marvinh@umsl.edu](mailto:marvinh@umsl.edu).

Psychopathy is a complex personality disorder characterized by egocentricity, antisocial tendencies, and emotionally insensitive behavior. One trait of psychopathy is a grandiose sense of self-worth, related to positive self-regard and egocentricity. A few studies have shown relationships between psychopathy traits and self-report measures of locus of control. However, less is known about how psychopathy traits, including grandiose self-worth, relate to perceptions of control in the moment using computer-based tasks. This study explored the correlation between psychopathy traits and perceptions of control in undergraduate students. We hypothesized that: (1) overall psychopathy scores would negatively correlate with perceptions of control, and (2) egocentricity scores would positively correlate with perceptions of control. As part of a larger study, undergraduate students ( $n = 71$ ) completed the Psychopathic Personality Inventory to measure psychopathy traits (overall psychopathy scores, egocentricity scores) and a computer task to assess perceptions of control across different noise conditions. We also controlled for demographic variables related to the dependent variables in our analyses. Results suggested partial support for the first hypothesis with a trend-level negative correlation between overall psychopathy scores and perceptions of control in the 30% noise condition ( $r = -.22, p = .069$ ), after controlling for age and sex. The second hypothesis was not supported, with significant negative correlations between egocentricity and both 75% ( $r = -.27, p = .022$ ) and 90% ( $r = -.25, p = .039$ ) noise conditions. Overall, the findings suggest psychopathy and egocentricity traits may be associated with lower perceptions of control in the moment.