



Hostile Masculinity among Sex Offenders: Exploring the Role of Antisocial Behaviour, Substance Abuse, and Pornography Consumption

Cinsel Suçlular Arasında Düşmanca Erkeklik: Antisosyal Davranışların, Madde Bağımlılığının ve Pornografi Tüketiminin Rolünün İncelenmesi

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Abstract:

Sexual offenses against children arise from a multifaceted interplay of psychological, social, and environmental factors. This study investigated the causal roles of antisocial traits, drug abuse, and pornography consumption in fostering hostile masculinity (HM) among child sex offenders. Data were collected from 88 life-convicted offenders incarcerated across multiple prisons for cases resolved between 2019 and 2022. A quota sampling method ensured proportional geographical representation. Ethical clearance was obtained, and data collection tools (structured schedules and psychometric tests) were validated through a pilot study. Findings revealed that antisocial behaviour significantly predicted HM by reinforcing adversarial gender attitudes and dominance-oriented beliefs. Drug abuse further exacerbated HM, reducing empathy and normalizing hegemonic masculine norms, while pornography consumption amplified adversarial gender scripts and legitimized coercive behaviours. Demographic analysis showed that most offenders were young adults with low educational attainment, suggesting compounded vulnerabilities that increase susceptibility to hostile masculine orientations. The study underscores the interconnected influence of personality traits, substance abuse, media exposure, and sociocultural conditions in sustaining HM and sexual aggression. Policy implications emphasize integrated prevention and intervention strategies targeting antisocial conduct, substance misuse, and pornography consumption, with a focus on young, less-educated populations. These findings offer practical insights into reducing gender-based violence.

Keywords: Hostile masculinity, Child sex offenders, Antisocial behaviour, Drug abuse, Pornography consumption.

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Öz:

Çocuklara yönelik cinsel suçlar, psikolojik, sosyal ve çevresel faktörlerin çok yönlü etkileşiminden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, çocuk cinsel suçluları arasında düşmanca erkekliğin (DK) gelişmesinde antisosyal özelliklerin, uyuşturucu kullanımının ve pornografi tüketiminin nedensel rollerini incelemiştir. Veriler, 2019 ve 2022 yılları arasında çözülen davalar için birden fazla cezaevinde tutuklu bulunan ve müebbet hapis cezası almış 88 suçludan toplanmıştır. Kota örnekleme yöntemi orantılı coğrafi temsili sağlamıştır. Etik izin alınmış ve veri toplama araçları (yapılandırılmış çizelgeler ve psikometrik testler) bir pilot çalışma kapsamında doğrulanmıştır. Bulgular, antisosyal davranışların, düşmanca cinsiyet tutumlarının ve baskınlık odaklı inançların DK'yi önemli ölçüde güçlendirdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Uyuşturucu kullanımı DK'yi daha da kötüleştirerek empatiyi azaltmış ve hegemonik erkek normlarını normalleştirmiştir. Pornografi tüketimi ise düşmanca cinsiyet senaryolarını güçlendirmiş ve zorlayıcı davranışları meşrulaştırmıştır. Demografik analiz, suçluların çoğunun düşük eğitim düzeyine sahip genç yetişkinler olduğunu ve bu durumun düşmanca erkeksi yönelimlere yatkınlığı artıran bileşik zayıflıklar oluşturduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışma, kişilik özellikleri, madde bağımlılığı, medya maruziyeti ve sosyokültürel koşulların cinsel istismar ve cinsel saldırganlığın sürdürülmesinde birbiriyle bağlantılı etkisini vurgulamaktadır. Politika çıkarımları, genç ve daha az eğitilmiş nüfusa odaklanarak, antisosyal davranış, madde kötüye kullanımı ve pornografi tüketimini hedefleyen bütünsel önleme ve müdahale stratejilerini vurgulamaktadır. Bu bulgular, cinsiyete dayalı şiddeti azaltmada pratik içgörüler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Düşmanca erkeklik, Çocuk cinsel suçluları, Antisosyal davranış, Madde bağımlılığı, Pornografi tüketimi.

Introduction

Child sexual offenses (CSO) constitute a grave and persistent public health crisis, carrying profound consequences for individuals and imposing significant economic and social burdens on society (Scoglio, Kraus, Saczynski, Jooma, & Molnar, 2019). These offenses transcend socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical boundaries, with prevalence documented at alarming rates worldwide. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, and Tonia (2013) estimated that between 8–31% of girls and 3–17% of boys are victims of sexual abuse globally, equating to approximately 9 girls and 3 boys out of every 100 children. In the Indian subcontinent, the crisis is particularly stark, with 1.40 lakh cases formally registered in 2021 alone. The violation of children's fundamental rights through such offenses extends far beyond immediate trauma. Survivors often grapple with long-term psychological, emotional, and developmental consequences that affect personal growth, relationships, and social participation. Addressing the severity of CSO thus requires a multidimensional lens that examines the interplay among individual characteristics, familial contexts, societal structures, and systemic responses.

Child sexual offenses are among the most disturbing forms of crime, with the traits of perpetrators playing a central role in both the initiation and continuation of abuse. Although no universal profile captures all child sex offenders, research has consistently identified key demographic, psychological, and personality-related characteristics that elevate the likelihood of offending (Katz, 2013). Psychological dimensions are particularly relevant, as they inform offenders' motivations, cognitive justifications, and behavioural strategies (Abdülhamid, 2024). Hall and Hirschman's Quadripartite Theory highlights that enduring personality problems often outweigh transient physiological sexual arousal, distorted cognitions that justify aggression, and emotional dyscontrol as drivers of offending behaviour (Hall & Hirschman, 1991).

The phenomenon of hostile masculinity (HM) among sex offenders has drawn extensive scholarly attention within

criminological and psychological research, as it encapsulates the convergence of individual personality traits, behavioural patterns, and sociocultural influences that underpin sexual aggression. Hostile masculinity (HM) is one of the most consistent predictors of sexual aggression. Defined by adversarial sexual beliefs, distrust of women, and a desire for dominance, HM normalizes coercive practices and diminishes empathy (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2012). The Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression (Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995; Radcliffe et al., 2021) provides one of the most comprehensive frameworks for understanding how diverse risk factors—such as antisociality, substance use, and pornography consumption—interact to promote coercive sexual behaviour. Within this framework, HM is conceptualized as a constellation of beliefs characterized by mistrust of women, adversarial sexual attitudes, and a drive for dominance and control (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2012).

Men high in HM often justify sexual violence, endorse rape myths, and sustain misogynistic norms (Seabrook, Ward, & Giaccardi, 2018). Importantly, HM interacts with other risk factors—such as impersonal sexual orientations or peer aggression—to increase the likelihood of sexual offending (De Heer, Prior, & Hoegh, 2021). These cognitive and emotional orientations normalize aggression, diminish empathy, and provide psychological justification for coercive sexual conduct, thereby serving as a bridge between personality traits and behavioural manifestations of sexual offending. Recognizing HM is therefore crucial for interventions promoting healthy masculinity and gender equality.

Antisocial traits provide a dispositional foundation for HM, characterized by impulsivity, low empathy, and disregard for norms. Early antisocial behaviours, such as delinquency or risky sexual activity, often predict later hostile attitudes toward women (Knight & Sims-Knight, 2003). Empirical research consistently demonstrates that antisocial traits, including impulsivity, callousness, and lack of empathy, are among the most reliable predictors of both HM and sexual aggression (Hanson & Morton-

Bourgon, 2005). The developmental antecedents model (Knight & Sims-Knight, 2003) posits that those early antisocial behaviors—such as delinquency, impulsivity, and risky sexual activity—form a dispositional foundation for HM. These traits not only correlate with HM but also causally precede it, fostering entitlement, aggression, and adversarial perceptions of women (Harris, Rice, Hilton, Lalumière, & Quinsey, 2007). Antisociality further intensifies hostile beliefs in contexts such as alcohol use, amplifying the risk of sexual aggression. The convergence of antisociality and HM represents a particularly high-risk profile, with greater predictive power for sexual violence than either factor alone (Malamuth et al., 2012).

Longitudinal evidence supports this proposition, showing that antisocial personality features often precede and amplify hostile masculine beliefs, reinforcing dominance-oriented cognitive scripts (Ramrakha et al., 2007). Harris et al. (2007) further noted that individuals exhibiting pronounced antisocial tendencies frequently display coercive sexual behaviours and empathy deficits—key markers of HM. The interaction between antisociality and HM creates a particularly dangerous profile, with a greater predictive capacity for sexual violence than either construct alone (Malamuth et al., 2012).

Substance abuse, particularly the consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs, serves as a significant situational amplifier of HM and related aggressive behaviours. Alcohol intoxication reduces inhibitory control, impairs empathy, negatively influences social cohesion, and heightens existing hostility, thereby facilitating sexually coercive behaviour (Hakan & Çelikay Söyler, 2025; Abbey & Wegner, 2015). Substance use often mediates hostility and violence, with men high in HM particularly vulnerable to aggression when intoxicated (Stover & Kiselica, 2015). Empirical evidence indicates that men with high HM scores exhibit significantly greater aggression when intoxicated, suggesting that substance use weakens self-regulation mechanisms and enables the enactment of underlying misogynistic beliefs (Stover & Kiselica, 2015; Brem et al., 2018). From a sociocultural perspective, substance use is also intertwined with hegemonic masculine norms that valorize toughness, risk-taking, anti-femininity, and emotional suppression (Sileo & Kershaw, 2020). Within such contexts, alcohol and drug consumption are not only normalized but also used as performative acts of masculinity, reinforcing aggression and entitlement. Consequently, substance abuse contributes both directly and indirectly to the maintenance of HM and associated sexual aggression.

Similarly, pornography consumption—especially violent or degrading material—is strongly associated with aggression-supportive attitudes (Yang & Youn, 2012). Pornography use correlates with sexual aggression, with heightened risks among men high in HM. Consumption of violent pornography normalizes coercive scripts and primes aggressive behaviour toward women (Rostad et al., 2019). Within the Confluence Model, pornography acts as a secondary risk factor that interacts synergistically with antisocial traits and HM to increase the likelihood of coercive sexual behaviour (Malamuth et al., 1995). Meta-analytic evidence strongly supports this link: exposure to violent pornography correlates with attitudes supportive of sexual violence and with actual aggressive behaviour (Wright, Tokunaga, & Kraus, 2016). Experimental research further demonstrates that repeated exposure to

coercive or degrading sexual imagery normalizes dominance-oriented scripts, primes aggressive responses, and desensitizes viewers to women's suffering (Yang & Youn, 2012; Rostad et al., 2019). Brem et al. (2018) similarly found that pornography use, especially when combined with substance abuse, reinforces misogynistic cognitions and legitimizes coercive sexual behaviours. These findings collectively underscore the interdependence between media exposure, personality dispositions, and situational risk factors in shaping HM.

The aim of this study is to examine the causal relationship between antisocial behavior, substance abuse, and pornography consumption in fostering hostile masculinity among individuals convicted of child sexual offenses, with a focus on understanding how these factors interact to reinforce dominance-oriented attitudes and sexually aggressive tendencies. This study is significant as it deepens understanding of the psychological and behavioural factors fostering hostile masculinity among child sex offenders. By identifying the combined influence of antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, and pornography consumption, it provides evidence-based insights essential for developing targeted prevention, rehabilitation, and policy interventions to reduce sexual violence.

Research Need

The convergence of antisocial personality traits, hostile masculinity, substance abuse, and pornography consumption creates a particularly high-risk environment for sexual violence. Evidence underscores that these factors are not isolated but interact dynamically, amplifying one another in pathways that sustain coercion and aggression (Seabrook, Ward, & Giaccardi, 2018). While hostile masculinity predicts later increases in substance use, the reverse causal direction remains less established (Sileo & Kershaw, 2020). Despite substantial research, critical gaps remain in understanding the complex mechanisms by which these factors contribute to CSO. Specifically, a deeper investigation is needed into how antisociality, pornography consumption, and drug abuse interact to foster hostile masculinity in offenders. Such inquiry is crucial for developing evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, shaping policy responses, and ultimately reducing risks of sexual violence and exploitation.

Research Question and Hypotheses

This study seeks to examine how antisocial behavior, drug abuse, and pornography consumption contribute to the development and intensification of hostile masculinity among individuals convicted of child sexual offenses. It aims to understand the independent and combined influences of these behavioural and psychological factors, while also exploring whether demographic characteristics, such as age and educational attainment, further shape hostile masculine attitudes. The research ultimately investigates how these interconnected variables increase susceptibility to sexually aggressive behaviour.

Hypotheses

- H1: Antisocial behaviour will significantly and positively predict hostile masculinity among child sex offenders.
- H2: Drug abuse and pornography consumption will each exert a positive influence on hostile masculine attitudes.
- H3: The combined effects of antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, and pornography consumption will explain significant variance in hostile masculinity.

Method

The study focuses on the complex issue of the prevalence of hostile masculinity and the contribution of drug abuse in its development among convicts of sexual offenses against minors under 16 years, through an exploratory research design. It uses a quantitative approach.

The study was conducted with participants drawn from various correctional facilities across Rajasthan. The research began after obtaining the necessary permissions from government officials. A large number of research participants were engaged to ensure a comprehensive analysis. These included 88 prison inmates convicted under the POCSO law (from a total of 371 eligible cases), selected using non-probability quota sampling across various Prisons. After cleaning the data, 82 responses were found suitable and complete for use in the study. Convicts in cases where the victims were less than 16 years old at the time of the crime were selected as participants for the study.

Approval of Study and Ethical Clearance

Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, all ethical guidelines and protocols were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. The research plan was thoroughly presented and discussed with relevant stakeholders, including administrators and executive authorities, to ensure transparency and compliance. The approval was granted by the Sardar Patel University of Police, Security, and Criminal Justice on 04 November 2022 (Letter No. VCO/2022-23/974). Subsequent approvals were obtained from the Department of Child Rights, Government of Rajasthan (Letter No. 64981–65013, dated 21 March 2023), and from the Directorate General of Prisons (Letter No. 65295–306, dated 22 March 2023).

Furthermore, the research proposal, along with documentation detailing compliance with ethical standards—including the justification for involving a vulnerable population, voluntary participation of respondents, permission from the concerned authority, procedures for obtaining informed consent, assurance of participant anonymity and data confidentiality, declaration of no physical, social, or psychological risk to participants, and the avoidance of any form of deception—was submitted to the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of the Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice (SPUP). Following the due evaluation and review (IEC Meeting No. SPUP/IEC/2025/02, dated 25.11.2025), the IEC granted ethical clearance for the study (Certificate No. IEC/2025/Project/No/01, dated 25.11.2025).

Data Collecting Tools

Tools were finalized based on reviews, the study's specific needs, expert input, and a pilot study. Based on the experience and learning from the pilot study, linguistic corrections, the deletion of unnecessary questions, and the addition of some questions were made. The research instruments were tailored for the stakeholders and refined through pilot testing. These tools collected empirical data and were used for quantitative analyses. Efforts were

maximized to build rapport and receive informed consent from participants. Data collection was carried out through a combination of in-depth interviews and structured psychometric assessments administered directly by trained researchers. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain detailed socio-demographic profiles and rich qualitative insights into offenders' personal histories, behavioural patterns, and attitudes. For the psychometric tools, the interviewer read each item aloud to participants to ensure clarity and comprehension, given the respondents' varied educational backgrounds. Participants' responses were recorded verbatim by the interviewer to maintain accuracy and consistency across the sample. This interviewer-administered approach minimized misunderstandings of questionnaire items, enhanced response reliability, and ensured ethical sensitivity while engaging with a vulnerable and legally restricted population. Researchers used the structured interview schedule to collect information about demographic and behavioural/habitual aspects related to drug abuse and consumption of pornography, and the following tools were used to collect data about psychological aspects of the convicts.

Antisocial Behaviour: The Psychological Scale developed by Brouillette-Alarie and Proulx (2017). Was used. The 8-item scale assesses the Noncriminal Antisocial Behaviour. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha (.82), indicating excellent internal consistency.

Hostile Masculinity: Ten items from the Man Box Scale (Hill et al., 2020) were selected. The Man Box Scale measures harmful masculinities, which are beliefs about what men should be like. The 17-item scale contained items related to theoretically- and empirically-derived aspects of masculine norms, including self-sufficiency, acting tough, physical attractiveness, rigid masculine gender roles, heterosexuality and homophobia, hypersexuality, and aggression and control. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha (.79), indicating excellent internal consistency.

SPSS was employed to process the quantitative data. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics, while Pearson's correlation assessed relationships among variables. Stepwise multiple regression analyses were employed to examine the predictive effects of antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, and pornography consumption on hostile masculinity, determining their individual and combined contributions. Overall, the methodology is interdisciplinary and policy-oriented, aiming to bridge knowledge gaps and offer practical insights into child protection and criminal justice reform from contextual and psychological perspectives.

Results

This section presents the key findings of the study regarding the demographic characteristics of the convicts, as well as the causal contributions of drug abuse, pornography consumption, and antisocial behaviour to hostile masculinity (HM) among individuals convicted of child sexual offenses.

Table 1. Showing the age of the convicts

Statistics	Age
Mean	30.43
Median	27.00
Mode	25

The demographic analysis revealed that the average age of the offenders was 30.43 years, with a median age of 27 and a mode of 25, indicating that the majority of convicts were relatively young adults at the time of conviction. This age pattern suggests that child sexual offending in the sample

predominantly occurs during early adulthood—a developmental stage often associated with heightened impulsivity, sexual curiosity, and identity instability, which may contribute to maladaptive sexual and behavioural tendencies.

Table 2. Educational and behavioural characteristics of convicted offenders

Variables	Percentage (%)
Educational Level	
Uneducated	14.6
Primary education	22
Middle school	25.6
Secondary (10th)	12.2
Higher secondary (12th)	11
Graduation or above	13
Substance Abuse	
Initiated substance use during adolescence	47
Consumed alcohol/drugs immediately before the offense	50
Pornography Consumption	
Consumed pornographic material	52.4
Regular pornography consumption	48.8
Sexual Behaviour	
Maintained simultaneous intimate or sexual relationships	62

An analysis of educational background further illustrated significant vulnerabilities. Approximately 14.6% of the convicts were uneducated, while 22% had attained only primary education. About 25.6% had studied up to middle school, 12.2% had completed secondary education (10th standard), and 11% had reached higher secondary education (12th standard). Only 13% of the offenders were educated beyond high school.

Substance use emerged as a pervasive behavioural pattern among the offenders. Nearly 47% of the convicts reported initiating substance abuse during adolescence, and 50% admitted to consuming alcohol or drugs immediately prior

to committing the sexual offense. This finding highlights the role of intoxication as a situational facilitator of sexual violence.

Pornography consumption was similarly prevalent. A total of 52.4% of the offenders reported having consumed pornographic material, and 48.8% indicated that they were regular consumers. Moreover, 62% of the convicts admitted to maintaining simultaneous intimate or sexual relationships, reflecting an impersonal and exploitative orientation toward sexual behaviour—a characteristic often associated with the Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Substance abuse	82	13.44	5.48	—	—	—	—
2. Consumption of Porn	82	4.30	1.18	.19	—	—	—
3. Antisocial behaviour	82	17.91	3.77	.47**	.25*	—	—
3. Hostile masculinity	82	15.85	2.26	.52**	.32**	.35**	—

(N=82), * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Correlation analyses (Table 3) revealed statistically significant and positive relationships between substance abuse, pornography consumption, antisocial behaviour, and hostile masculinity among the convicts (N = 82). This indicates that higher levels of substance use and pornography exposure are associated with stronger endorsement of adversarial gender beliefs, dominance motives, and low empathy—all core components of HM.

In this study, hierarchical regression analysis was used to capture the theoretically appropriate prediction of hostile masculinity by entering predictors in conceptually ordered blocks. Anti-social behaviour was entered first, reflecting its role as a core externalizing tendency that often precedes other risk behaviours. In the second step, substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) and exposure to pornographic material were entered together to evaluate their combined and unique contributions beyond the influence of anti-social

behaviour. This order aligns with theoretical perspectives suggesting that while anti-social tendencies form a foundational behavioural risk, substance use and sexualised media exposure represent additional, co-occurring factors that may further shape hostile masculine attitudes. By structuring the model in this way, hierarchical regression enabled a clear assessment of the incremental explanatory power of each set of theoretically relevant predictors.

All major assumptions of hierarchical linear regression were examined prior to analysis. Visual inspection of residual histograms, Q-Q plots, and scatterplots indicated

that the assumptions of normality and linearity were reasonably satisfied. Homoscedasticity was supported by the absence of systematic patterns in the residuals across predicted values. Multicollinearity was not a concern, as all predictor tolerance values ranged from .749 to .939 and all VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 1.334, which fall well below commonly accepted thresholds. The collinearity diagnostics further showed no problematic condition indices. Together, these results indicate that the data met the key assumptions necessary for valid hierarchical regression analysis, consistent with standard linear regression guidelines.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression analysis of anti-social behaviour, drug abuse, and consumption of pornographic material with hostile masculinity among convicts

	B	95% CI		SE B	β	p	R ²	ΔR^2
		LL	UL					
Step 1						.00	.13	.12
Antisocial behaviour	.21	.09	.39	.06	.35			
Step 2						.00	.32	.30
Drug abuse	.19	.09	.28	.04	.45			
Consumption of porn	.40	.04	.77	.18	.21			

Note. Total $N = 82$, R^2 change for antisocial behaviour is .126; for drug abuse is .16, and for consumption of porn is .042, CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

As shown in Table 4, in step 1 of the hierarchical regression analysis, antisocial behaviour emerged as a significant predictor of hostile masculinity, explaining 12.6% of the variance. In step 2, the addition of substance abuse significantly improved the model, accounting for an additional 16.0% of the variance, and pornography consumption contributed a further 4.2% to the explained variance. Overall, the final model accounted for 32.7% of the variance in hostile masculinity, indicating that antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, and pornography exposure each make significant and unique contributions to hostile masculine attitudes among the offenders.

Discussion

This study investigated convicts of sexual offenses against children under 16 years, examining demographic profiles and the contributions of drug abuse, pornography consumption, and antisocial traits to the development of hostile masculinity (HM). By analyzing these factors, the research elucidates pathways to sexual offending, highlighting opportunities for targeted interventions.

Demographic analysis revealed that the peak age among convicts was 25 years, underscoring early adulthood as a critical period for the commission of offenses. Education levels were notably low: 14.6% of convicts lacked formal education, and 22% had only primary schooling. The interplay between early age and criminality is multifaceted, influenced by individual traits, socioeconomic disparities, and familial dynamics. Limited education exacerbates risks by fostering economic instability and unemployment, which may propel individuals toward criminal acts, including sexual offenses. While education deficits do not justify such behaviour, they amplify vulnerability, aligning with

broader criminological frameworks that link socioeconomic marginalization to deviance.

A core finding was the significant positive relationship between antisocial traits and HM, where higher antisocial tendencies strongly predicted elevated HM attitudes. Regression analyses confirmed that antisocial behaviour explained substantial variance in HM scores, indicating a directional pathway. Practically, this suggests that antisocial individuals are more susceptible to adopting hostile gender views, such as adversarial sexual beliefs and dominance over women. The effect size underscores antisociality as a primary driver rather than a mere correlate, predisposing men to internalize toxic masculinity scripts that legitimize coercion.

These results resonate with hegemonic masculinity theory (Connell, 2005), which frames dominance and control as pivotal to masculine identity, reinforced by antisocial aggression and empathy deficits. The gender role strain paradigm (Pleck, 1995) further illuminates how failures to meet societal masculinity standards may manifest as hostility and antisocial compensation. Consistent with Malamuth et al.'s (1995) confluence model, antisocial behaviour emerges as a key predictor of sexual aggression when intertwined with HM. Psychologically, traits like impulsivity and low empathy in antisocial individuals erode barriers to hostile gender ideologies (Harris et al., 2007). Emerging evidence positions antisociality as a precursor to HM, especially in environments valorizing aggression and detachment as masculine virtues (Malamuth & Thornhill, 1994). Socially, it disrupts relationships, fostering an adversarial outlook that sustains HM. O'Brien et al. (2017) corroborate this, linking antisociality—often amplified by alcohol—to aggressive masculine norms and entitlement.

The study also uncovered a substantial portion of convicts reporting substance abuse and Consumption of pornographic material starting from their teenage years. These early experiences heighten HM risks, as explored through causal analyses.

Regarding drug abuse, results showed a statistically significant positive association with HM, where elevated substance use correlated with stronger adversarial beliefs, women's distrust, and sexual dominance. Regression models affirmed drug abuse as a predictor of HM, implying a causal role beyond mere co-occurrence. In practical terms, this linkage means substance abuse may intensify gendered hostility, framing women as opponents and relationships as power struggles. The relevant and significant effect size indicates that drug abuse is a psychosocial amplifier of aggression and violence.

This aligns with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005), where substance use embodies norms of toughness and risk-taking, reinforcing dominance (Camacho-Ruiz, Galvez-Sánchez, Galli, & Limiñana-Gras, 2024). Drug abuse impairs impulse control and empathy (Harris et al., 2007), nurturing adversarial attitudes and hindering egalitarian bonds. From the gender role strain lens (Pleck, 1995), it serves as a maladaptive coping mechanism, alleviating conformity pressures while externalizing hostility toward women. Prior research supports these ties: Abbey and Wegner (2015) noted alcohol's role in amplifying HM in sexual scenarios, while Camacho-Ruiz et al. (2024) intertwined substance abuse with hegemonic masculinity, often affirmed in peer contexts.

Similarly, pornography consumption exhibited a significant positive correlation with HM, encompassing adversarial attitudes, dominance, and distrust. Regression analyses established it as a predictor, suggesting causal influence on HM development. Practically, frequent consumption predisposes men to hostile views, potentially escalating coercive risks. This effect stems from content reinforcing schemas of male dominance and female submissiveness (de Heer et al., 2021).

Hegemonic masculinity theory (Connell, 2005) explains how pornography normalizes aggressive scripts, portraying dominance as inherent. The gender role strain paradigm (Pleck, 1995) posits it as a tool for affirming masculinity amid role pressures. Psychologically, it desensitizes to aggression and erodes empathy (Hald, Malamuth, & Yuen, 2010) while socially embedding adversarial scripts. These align with Malamuth et al.'s (1995) confluence model, where pornography exacerbates HM and impersonal orientations. De Heer et al. (2021) linked it to sexual aggression in high-HM men, and Ferguson and Hartley (2009) noted weak associations with hostility. The present study advances this by demonstrating causality rather than correlation.

Collectively, the findings illustrate that antisocial traits, drug abuse, and pornography consumption each significantly foster HM, synergistically promoting adversarial norms, dominance, and aggression.

This extends prior models like Malamuth et al. (1995), emphasizing integrated risks in child sexual offending. Implications call for multifaceted interventions: addressing antisociality through early behavioural programs, curbing substance abuse via treatment, and mitigating pornography's impact with media literacy education (Yıldız, İncekara, & Ulaş, 2024). Policy should

integrate these into prevention, targeting at-risk youth to disrupt HM pathways.

Strengths, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

This study possesses several methodological strengths, including its use of validated psychometric tools, a mixed-method design, and data drawn directly from a highly specific and hard-to-access population of offenders convicted of life imprisonment or capital punishment for sexual crimes against minor girls. Although the sample size ($N = 88$) may appear relatively small, it represents a rare and critical population, making it sufficiently large to identify statistically meaningful and theoretically important relationships. Nevertheless, the specialized nature of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings to broader offender groups or community populations. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, especially regarding sensitive behaviours like drug use and pornography consumption.

Future research should aim to replicate these findings using larger, more diverse samples, including offenders with varied sentencing backgrounds and across different geographical settings. Longitudinal studies would further clarify temporal pathways linking antisocial traits, substance use, pornography consumption, and hostile masculinity. Additionally, integrating perspectives from victims, families, and community stakeholders could enhance understanding of structural and preventive factors. Despite its limitations, the study provides important insights into the psychological and behavioural profiles of high-risk offenders and highlights critical areas for targeted intervention and policy reform.

Conclusion

This study concludes that sexual offenses against children stem from the complex interplay of psychological dispositions, behavioral risk factors, and sociocultural influences. The results demonstrated that antisocial behaviour is a central causal factor in the development of hostile masculinity (HM), fostering adversarial gender attitudes and dominance-oriented beliefs that normalize aggression and control. Drug abuse further intensified these dynamics by diminishing empathy and reinforcing hegemonic masculine ideals, while pornography consumption perpetuated adversarial sexual scripts and legitimized coercive behaviours. Together, these factors created a reinforcing cycle of psychological desensitization, impulsivity, and gendered hostility that sustains sexual aggression. The demographic findings—showing that most offenders were young and less educated—suggest that developmental and educational vulnerabilities magnify the impact of these risk factors. The study, therefore, emphasizes that addressing hostile masculinity requires not only individual-level interventions but also structural efforts to reduce the social and cultural conditions that reinforce it. By integrating psychological, behavioural, and environmental perspectives, this research advances understanding of the multifaceted roots of sexual offending and provides an evidence-based framework for targeted prevention and rehabilitation strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that prevention and intervention programs adopt an integrated approach

addressing antisocial traits, substance abuse, and pornography consumption simultaneously. Correctional rehabilitation programs should incorporate cognitive-behavioural strategies aimed at reshaping distorted gender beliefs, promoting empathy, and enhancing impulse control. Drug treatment initiatives must be coupled with psycho-education on healthy masculinity and emotional regulation. Furthermore, specialized programs targeting young and less-educated populations—those most vulnerable to developing hostile masculine orientations—should be developed within educational and community settings.

At a policy level, public awareness campaigns should challenge hegemonic masculine norms, promote nonviolent expressions of masculinity, and highlight the psychological harms of pornography and substance misuse. Interdisciplinary collaboration between psychologists, educators, and criminal justice professionals is essential for implementing early intervention initiatives. By addressing both the individual and societal determinants of hostile masculinity, these efforts can contribute to the reduction of child sexual offending and broader gender-based violence.

Declarations

Ethical Approval

After the due evaluation and review, the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of the Sardar Patel University of

Police, Security and Criminal Justice (SPUP) granted ethical clearance for the study (Certificate No. IEC/2025/Project/No/01, dated 25.11.2025).

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to funding agency restrictions, but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that no competing interests in this manuscript. To the best of the author's knowledge, the manuscript does not infringe upon any copyright or property right of any third party.

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Authors' Contributions

AS and SA both carried out the proposal for the research's main idea and contributed to data collection. AS performed the analysis, interpreted the analysis results, and wrote the article. SA contributed to the article's proofreading. Both authors have read and approved the final article.

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