

---

# Anger Trait As A Predictor Of Sexual Coercion

Sexual coercion (SC) is among other sexual assaults that have created public concern in the United States. SC is the use of pressure on another person which causes them to submit into a sexual act. SC can vary from persuasion to a forceful contact. Whichever form it takes, SC is in the continuum of sexual offences since it takes away the other persons consent to the act. In most instances of SC, studies have revealed that most of them have relationship with the coercer's anger. This paper intends to provide an analysis of the past literature on the traits of anger and their relation to sexual coercion. The paper starts by analyzing the prevalence of SC in globally and in the united states. From there, the paper discusses anger and its relation to SC.

## Sexual Coercion

The benefits of romantic relationships are considered social and personal. To an extent, romantic relationships can become negative thus endangering life and health particularly when it involves coercion. The work of Benbouriche and Parent (2018) defines sexual coercion (SC) as the use of tactics or strategies with the intention of taking someone else the free will or consent to engage into a sexual act. An analysis of the global prevalence of SC shows that the behavior varies across countries (Song, Ji, & Agardh, 2014). For instance, in developed countries like the US, the study estimated the prevalence of SC to be about one in every six women and one in every thirty men (Song et al., 2014). In less developed countries like northern Thailand, Kenya, Uganda, and Peru, the rate ranged between 5 to 50%. In China, the study reported prevalence of 40.9% in girls and 29.5% in boys (Song et al., 2014). While analyzing past studies that relied on self-reported data in Canada, Benbouriche and Parent (2018) the study found that about a third of female students reported having been victims of SC.

In the US, in particular, the 2010-2012 analysis report by (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention[CDC], 2017) found that approximately about 13.2% have experienced SC one or several times in their lives. Though the analysis did not rely on a 12-month reported cases, about 2.0% of the women reported having experienced SC 12 months prior to the survey. The report further stated that there were 5.8% cases of SC experience among men and 1.4% men reported to have experienced it 12 months prior to the study.

The study of Benbouriche and Parent (2018) has presented the school environment as involving high levels of social interaction which is one of the factors for SC. This is evident from some of the studies that have analyzed data from student environment. For instance, from the study of Song et al. (2014), the authors reported that the prevalence of SC among the US students was 11.9% in female students and 6.1% among males students. This trend was also the same in different countries though it varied from one country to another.

## Anger

Anger is a social emotion that modulate a person's risk to aggression. The work of Tafrate, Kassino, and Dundin (2002) defines anger as a basic emotion common to some human beings which is a response to unfriendly and strange behaviors from others. However, studies

---

on the analysis of anger in some people have identified it as a trait which is a different view from seeing it as an emotional state common to all persons. Among them is the work of Novaco (2011) that has identified different levels of anger between men and women. From an analysis of studies that focused on analyzing anger from forensic population, the author identified that women have higher levels of anger than men. The views are consistent with the results of the study of Tafrate et al. (2002) which analyzed episodes of anger in people considered to have high (HTA) levels or low (LTA) levels of anger. From the study, those with HTA exhibited higher levels of anger reactions than the LTA (Tafrate et al., 2002).

Episodes of anger manifest themselves differently among individuals. For instance, the study of Tafrate et al. (2002) found that people with HTA had reactions such as negative responses in conversations, use of drugs, physical aggression and other anger-related outcomes. In relation to manifestation of anger, most studies have confirmed that aggression is the most common manifestation of anger. From the analysis of Novaco (2011), most studies conducted on violent offenders both in prisons and hospitals had a conclusion that anger is the main activator or aggression.

In addition to aggression, anger manifests itself in some individuals as frustration. From the study of (Tafrate et al. (2002) both groups the HTA and LTA showed moments of frustrations as a sign of anger, but tolerance to frustration was lower in HTA than LTA. In addition, people with HTA also rated themselves low in positive approaches to dealing with provocations. Another manifestation closely related to anger is belligerence. While analyzing anger, Novaco (2011), states that belligerence is one of the main risk factors for violent behavior. Novac (2011) further states that the usage of 'anger' is interchanged with 'aggression', and 'hostility' which all intend to define anger as a harm-doing behavior that easily ends up as 'belligerence'.

## **Anger & Sexual Coercion**

There are numerous studies that have provided a direct relationship between anger and SC. Some of these studies have explained this relationship from the concept of emotional disablement. These are mainly situations where one is unable to control their hostility behavior and ends up offending the other person sexually such as in the case of SC (Thomas & Gorzalka, 2012). In another view, Pundik (2015) explains that when people are considering moral judgement when taking negative actions such as SC, they tend to ascribe their judgement to anger or resentment.

Some authors have also attributed aggressive sexual behaviors in men as the consequence of some individual or community factors such as hostility (Sierra, Gutiérrez-Quintanilla, Bermúdez, & Buéla-Casal, 2009). The authors explained that in most cases related to SC, there is always an interaction between anger and hostility. In addition, Thomas and Gorzalka (2012) found that the anger caused by loneliness and humiliation among convicted sexual offenders caused them to engage in increased coercive and aggressive sexual fantasies as well as masturbatory activities. Thomas and Gorzalka (2012) also explain anger induction and its relation to SC. These are the cases where a man would be insulted or aggressively provoked by a woman in a negative interaction.

## **Conclusion**

---

Particular attitudes and traits are predictors of sexual coercion. This notion has been explained in studies that have sought to examine the levels of aggression, anger and impulsivity as personality traits that lead to sexual coercion and other offences. The intention of this paper was to demonstrate an association between anger and sexual coercion. By a review of past literature, this paper has found that anger is linked to aggression and other hostility behavior.

edubirdie.com