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Criminal Prevention and Support for Children Against Sexual Violence by Pedophiles

Najmeh. Ahmadi Pournazari 10, Ebrahim. Rajabi Tajamir 20, Nariman. Fakheri 30

¹ PhD student in Criminal Law and Criminology, Department of Law, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran
² Assistant Professor of Criminology, Department of Criminology, Faculty of Law Enforcement Sciences and Technologies, Amin University of Law Enforcement Science, Tehran, Iran
³ Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Payam Noor University, Tehran. Iran

* Corresponding author email address: e.rajabi.t@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to identify the common characteristics of pedophiles, preventive measures against sexual violence towards children, necessary support after incidents of sexual violence, and the underlying factors contributing to both becoming a pedophile and victimization by pedophiles. The research focuses on understanding these aspects to develop comprehensive strategies for prevention, intervention, and support.

Methods and Materials: This qualitative research was conducted in Karaj, Iran, involving experts in psychiatry and law who specialize in sexual violence by pedophiles. A total of 10 participants, including 5 psychiatric experts and 5 legal experts, were selected through snowball sampling. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews until theoretical saturation was achieved. NVivo software was utilized for organizing and analyzing the qualitative data. The Delphi technique was employed in a multi-stage process to achieve consensus among experts on the identified sub-dimensions and operational indicators.

Findings: The study identified several common characteristics among pedophiles, such as medical history, psychological issues, family problems, and criminal records. Preventive measures included enhancing knowledge and awareness, implementing control measures, defining family boundaries, and strengthening legal punishments. Necessary support for victims emphasized appropriate parental reactions, counseling, and empathy. Underlying factors contributing to pedophilia and victimization were categorized into economic, social, and cultural influences. The study also found that comprehensive educational programs targeting both children and parents and holistic support systems are crucial in addressing the issue.

Conclusion: Addressing pedophilia and child sexual violence requires a multifaceted approach that includes prevention, intervention, and support strategies. By understanding the characteristics of pedophiles, implementing effective preventive measures, and providing necessary support to victims, the impact of



this crime can be mitigated. Strengthening family and community support systems and incorporating culturally sensitive approaches are essential in creating a safer environment for children.

Keywords: Pedophilia, Child Sexual Violence, Prevention, Support Systems, Qualitative Research, Delphi Technique, Family Dynamics, Legal Frameworks.

1. Introduction

Sexual violence against children is a pervasive problem globally, with numerous studies highlighting its prevalence and impact. Almila (2019) discusses the protection of children from sexual violence in armed conflict under international humanitarian law, emphasizing the necessity of robust legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard vulnerable populations (Almila, 2019). Similarly, Boonrusmee et al. (2018) explore the prevalence of violence among high school students in Southern Thailand, underscoring the need for effective preventive measures and support systems within educational settings (Boonrusmee et al., 2018).

The issue of sexual violence against children is not confined to any single region or culture. Cerna-Turoff et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of factors associated with violence against children in low- and middle-income countries, revealing that socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and inadequate legal protections contribute to the vulnerability of children to such violence (Cerna-Turoff et al., 2021). Edwards et al. (2023) further highlight the importance of programs to prevent violence against children in sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrating the effectiveness of community-based interventions and the need for multi-sectoral approaches (Edwards et al., 2023).

Understanding the characteristics of pedophiles is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. Brankley et al. (2022) identify pedophilia as a distinct taxon among adult males, suggesting that specific psychological and behavioral profiles are associated with this disorder (Brankley et al., 2022). Dombert et al. (2015) highlight the prevalence of self-reported sexual interest in prepubescent children among men, indicating the importance of early identification and targeted interventions (Dombert et al., 2015).

Genetic and neurobiological factors also play a significant role in pedophilia. Berryessa (2015) discusses the potential implications of research on genetic contributions to pedophilia for criminal law, while Gibbels et al. (2019) compare clinical and neurobiological characteristics of convicted and non-convicted pedophilic child sexual offenders (Berryessa, 2015). Kärgel et al. (2016) provide

evidence for superior neurobiological and behavioral inhibitory control abilities in non-offending pedophiles, suggesting that effective management and support can prevent offending behaviors (Kärgel et al., 2016).

Preventing sexual violence against children requires a multifaceted approach. Kurnia et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of increasing prevention knowledge and emotional maturity among children through educational media, such as mini-movies (Kurnia et al., 2020). Kusmiwiyati and Widyana (2021) highlight the role of mothers in early childhood sex education, suggesting that parental involvement and education are critical components of effective prevention strategies (Kusmiwiyati & Widyana, 2021).

Programs aimed at raising awareness and providing education to parents and children are essential. Suwarni et al. (2021) examine the knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy of parents in Indonesia, demonstrating the need for comprehensive education programs to prevent child sexual violence (Suwarni et al., 2021). These findings align with those of Deane and Walsh (2013), who advocate for informed parenting to keep children safe from sexual abuse (Deane & Walsh, 2013).

Providing adequate support to victims of sexual violence is paramount in mitigating long-term psychological harm. Februanti and Kartilah (2019) discuss the importance of family support for child victims of sexual violence in Indonesia, highlighting the role of the family in the healing process (Februanti & Kartilah, 2019). Msambila and Abdallah (2021) explore economic factors influencing sexual violence against children, suggesting that addressing poverty and economic insecurity can reduce the vulnerability of children to such violence (Msambila & Abdallah, 2021).

Counseling and psychological support are critical components of post-incident care. Jordan et al. (2016) identify impaired attentional control in pedophiles, indicating the need for specialized therapeutic interventions (Jordan et al., 2016). Schuler et al. (2019) examine empathy in pedophiles and sexual offenders, suggesting that enhancing empathic abilities through therapy can reduce recidivism and support rehabilitation (Schmidt et al., 2013).



Several underlying factors contribute to the development of pedophilic tendencies and the victimization of children. Economic, social, and cultural factors play significant roles in this context. Kadir and Ahmad (2020) discuss castration as a criminal policy in child protection law, emphasizing the need for robust legal frameworks to deter offenders (Kadir & Ahmad, 2020). Tsikai (2023) develops inclusive Eurocentric and Afrocentric perspectives to curb sexual violence, highlighting the importance of culturally sensitive approaches (Tsikai, 2023).

The family environment and social support systems are also crucial. Etrawati (2020) identifies risk factors and consequences of sexual violence in children, suggesting that family dysfunction and lack of social support contribute to vulnerability. Konrad et al. (2015) examine the association between emotional congruence with children and sexual offending, indicating that early interventions in family settings can prevent the development of harmful behaviors (Etrawati, 2020).

Thus, the protection of children from sexual violence, particularly by pedophiles, requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, intervention, and support strategies. By understanding the characteristics pedophiles, implementing effective preventive measures, and providing necessary support to victims, we can mitigate the impact of this heinous crime. The integration of multisectoral and culturally sensitive approaches, as highlighted by the referenced studies, is essential in creating a safer environment for children worldwide. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the common characteristics of pedophiles, effective preventive measures, and the necessary support systems for victims. By addressing the underlying factors that contribute to both pedophilia and victimization, we hope to develop more effective strategies to combat sexual violence against children.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This qualitative research focused on the criminal prevention and support for children against sexual violence by pedophiles. The study was conducted in Karaj, Iran, and included experts in the fields of psychiatry and law who specialize in matters related to sexual violence perpetrated by pedophiles. A total of 10 participants were selected through a snowball sampling method, comprising 5 psychiatric experts and 5 legal experts.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were designed to gather in-depth insights from the experts about the current state of criminal prevention and support mechanisms for children against sexual violence by pedophiles. The theoretical saturation point was reached, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the subject matter.

2.3. Data analysis

NVivo software was utilized to assist in the organization and analysis of the qualitative data collected from the interviews. NVivo is a robust tool for qualitative data analysis, providing functionalities for coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns within the data.

The data analysis process involved several steps to ensure a thorough examination of the collected information. Initially, the interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo. Thematic analysis was then performed to identify key themes and sub-themes related to the prevention and support mechanisms against sexual violence by pedophiles. The analysis aimed to uncover dimensions, sub-dimensions, and operational indicators relevant to the topic.

To achieve the necessary analytical depth and reach consensus on critical issues, a multi-stage Delphi technique was employed. This process involved the iterative gathering and analysis of expert opinions to calculate three key indices: consensus, importance, and priority. Through this method, the study systematically refined the expert feedback to derive well-supported conclusions regarding the criminal prevention and support for children against sexual violence by pedophiles.

3. Findings and Results

The interviews aimed to identify common characteristics of pedophiles, preventive measures against sexual violence towards children by pedophiles, necessary support after the occurrence of sexual violence against children, and the underlying factors leading to pedophilia and victimization. These aspects are divided into theoretical dimensions, sub-dimensions, operational indicators, and eventually empirical variables through open, axial, and selective coding, as shown in Table 1.



Table 1Identification of Research Variables Based on Triple Coding

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Depression, cardiovascular diseases, drug and alcohol abuse	Medical History	Common Characteristics in Pedophiles
Distrust in people, feeling of inferiority	Psychological Issues	
Divorce, school dropout, inability to establish relationships	Family Issues	
Criminal history, corruption, alcohol consumption	Criminal Record	
Educating children and parents, media education, teaching children to say no, teaching privacy to children	Knowledge and Awareness	Prevention Strategies against Sexual Violence
Medical tests, medication, managing mobile and social media use, social rules like rewards and punishments	Control Measures	
Defining family boundaries, seeking specialist help	Educational Factors	
Judicial structures, independent and differential prosecution, special police, harsher penalties, criminalizing pedophilia, strengthening existing laws	Legal Punishment	
Parental reaction and behavior with the child	Parental Reaction	Necessary Support after Sexual Violence
Providing necessary counseling, proper education to parents and teachers	Counseling	
Empathy and support from parents, considering the emotional state of the victim	Empathy	
Poverty and unemployment	Economic Factors	Underlying Factors Leading to Pedophilia
Neglect in the family, depression, divorce, childhood sexual abuse, mother's employment	Social Factors	
Deviant religious beliefs, racism, lack of parenting skills, lack of educational and training skills, education level, family addiction, genetics	Cultural Factors	
Mother's employment, divorce, unhealthy and tense parental relationships, being orphaned	Social Factors	Underlying Factors Leading to Victimization
Blackmail, parents' education level, fear of disgrace, family addiction	Cultural Factors	
Genetic factors, type of clothing, personality traits, financial needs	Individual Factors	

In Table 1, the common characteristics in pedophiles include medical history, psychological issues, family issues, and criminal records. The preventive strategies against sexual violence towards children by pedophiles include knowledge and awareness, control measures, educational factors, and legal punishment. Necessary support after the

occurrence of sexual violence involves parental reaction, counseling, and empathy. The underlying factors leading to pedophilia consist of economic, social, and cultural factors. Additionally, the factors leading to victimization include social, cultural, and individual factors.

Table 2

Consensus, Importance, and Priority Indices for Common Characteristics, Prevention Strategies, Necessary Support, and Underlying Factors

Sub-dimensions	Operational Indicators	Consensus Index	Importance Index	Priority Index
Medical History	Depression, cardiovascular diseases, drug and alcohol abuse	1.5	77.5	87.5
Psychological Issues	Distrust in people, feeling of inferiority	1.4	75.0	88.5
Family Issues	Divorce, school dropout, inability to establish relationships	1.6	85.0	95.0
Criminal Record	Criminal history, corruption, alcohol consumption	1.7	62.5	95.0
Knowledge and Awareness	Educating children and parents, media education, teaching children to say no, teaching privacy to children	1.6	87.5	88.5
Control Measures	Medical tests, medication, managing mobile and social media use, social rules like rewards and punishments	1.7	85.0	85.5
Educational Factors	Defining family boundaries, seeking specialist help	1.6	85.0	87.5
Legal Punishment	Judicial structures, independent and differential prosecution, special police, harsher penalties, criminalizing pedophilia, strengthening existing laws	1.5	80.0	89.5
Parental Reaction	Parental reaction and behavior with the child	1.7	86.0	89.5
Counseling	Providing necessary counseling	1.6	84.0	85.5
Empathy	Empathy and support from parents, considering the emotional state of the victim	1.5	87.0	86.0

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Economic Factors	Poverty and unemployment	1.6	85.0	84.5
Social Factors	Neglect in the family, depression, divorce, childhood sexual abuse, mother's employment	1.6	90.0	95.0
Cultural Factors	Deviant religious beliefs, racism, lack of parenting skills, lack of educational and training skills, education level, family addiction, genetics	1.5	84.0	93.0
Social Factors	Mother's employment, divorce, unhealthy and tense parental relationships, being orphaned	1.8	85.0	86.0
Cultural Factors	Blackmail, parents' education level, fear of disgrace, family addiction	1.7	86.0	84.0
Individual Factors	Genetic factors, type of clothing, personality traits, financial needs	1.6	87.5	85.0

The analysis results in Table 2 indicate that the common characteristics in pedophiles include medical history, psychological issues, family issues, and criminal records. In terms of prevention strategies against sexual violence towards children by pedophiles, important factors include knowledge and awareness, control measures, educational factors, and legal punishment. Necessary support after the occurrence of sexual violence involves proper parental reaction, counseling, and empathy. Moreover, the underlying factors leading to pedophilia are categorized into economic, social, and cultural factors. On the other hand, factors leading to victimization are identified as social, cultural, and individual factors. These findings are validated and ranked based on the consensus, importance, and priority indices derived from expert opinions.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the common characteristics of pedophiles, preventive measures against sexual violence, necessary support after incidents, and the underlying factors contributing to pedophilia and victimization. This section will discuss these findings in detail, align them with previous studies, and provide further explanations and insights based on the literature.

The findings reveal that common characteristics among pedophiles include a history of medical issues such as depression and cardiovascular diseases, psychological issues like distrust in people and feelings of inferiority, family problems such as divorce and school dropout, and criminal records including previous offenses and substance abuse. These results are consistent with those of Brankley et al. (2022), who identified distinct psychological and behavioral profiles in pedophiles. Similarly, Berryessa (2015) highlighted the role of genetic and neurobiological factors in pedophilia, suggesting a multifaceted etiology involving both biological and environmental influences (Berryessa, 2015).

Gibbels et al. (2019) compared convicted and nonconvicted pedophiles, finding significant differences in clinical and neurobiological characteristics. This study's findings of psychological and family issues align with their results, emphasizing the need for early identification and targeted interventions (Gibbels et al., 2019). Furthermore, Kärgel et al. (2016) demonstrated that non-offending pedophiles exhibit better inhibitory control, indicating the potential for effective management and prevention of offending behaviors (Kärgel et al., 2016).

The study identifies several preventive measures, including enhancing knowledge and awareness through education, implementing control measures like medical tests and medication, defining family boundaries, and strengthening legal punishments. These findings support the conclusions of Kurnia et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of educational media in increasing prevention knowledge among children (Kurnia et al., 2020). Kusmiwiyati and Widyana (2021) also highlighted the critical role of parents, particularly mothers, in early childhood sex education (Kusmiwiyati & Widyana, 2021).

Educational programs targeting both children and parents are crucial in preventing sexual violence. Suwarni et al. (2021) found that comprehensive education programs significantly improve parents' knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy in preventing child sexual violence (Suwarni et al., 2021). Deane and Walsh (2013) similarly advocate for informed parenting to enhance children's safety. These findings underscore the importance of community-based and family-centered approaches in preventing sexual violence against children (Deane & Walsh, 2013).

The study highlights the importance of providing adequate support to victims of sexual violence, including appropriate parental reactions, counseling, and empathy. These results align with those of Februanti and Kartilah (2019), who stressed the significance of family support in the recovery process for child victims of sexual violence (Februanti & Kartilah, 2019). Msambila and Abdallah (2021) also noted that addressing economic factors such as poverty can reduce children's vulnerability to sexual violence, emphasizing the need for holistic support systems (Msambila & Abdallah, 2021).



Psychological support is critical in mitigating long-term harm to victims. Jordan et al. (2016) identified impaired attentional control in pedophiles, suggesting that specialized therapeutic interventions are necessary (Jordan et al., 2016). Schuler et al. (2019) examined empathy in pedophiles and sexual offenders, indicating that enhancing empathic abilities through therapy can reduce recidivism and support rehabilitation. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive support systems that address both immediate and long-term needs of victims (Schuler et al., 2019).

The study identifies several underlying factors contributing to the development of pedophilic tendencies and victimization, including economic, social, and cultural influences. Kadir and Ahmad (2020) discussed the role of legal frameworks, such as castration policies, in deterring offenders (Kadir & Ahmad, 2020). Tsikai (2023) emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in preventing sexual violence, highlighting the need for inclusive strategies that consider diverse sociocultural contexts (Tsikai, 2023).

Family dynamics and social support systems are crucial in preventing both the development of pedophilic tendencies and victimization. Etrawati (2020) identified family dysfunction and lack of social support as significant risk factors for sexual violence in children (Etrawati, 2020). Konrad et al. (2015) examined the association between emotional congruence with children and sexual offending, suggesting that early interventions in family settings can prevent harmful behaviors (Konrad et al., 2015). These findings underscore the importance of strengthening family and community support systems to mitigate the risk factors associated with pedophilia and victimization.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

While this study provides valuable insights into the characteristics, preventive measures, and support systems related to pedophilia and child sexual violence, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study's qualitative nature and limited sample size may restrict the generalizability of the findings. The snowball sampling method, while useful for reaching specialized populations, may introduce selection bias. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from participants may be subject to social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of the reported characteristics and behaviors.

Second, the study focuses primarily on expert opinions from the fields of psychiatry and law. While these

perspectives are crucial, incorporating views from other relevant stakeholders, such as educators, social workers, and survivors, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Furthermore, the study does not fully explore the intersectionality of factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, which may influence the dynamics of pedophilia and child sexual violence.

Third, the study's reliance on the Delphi method, while effective for reaching consensus among experts, may limit the exploration of divergent views and innovative solutions. The iterative nature of the Delphi process may also lead to a convergence towards commonly accepted ideas, potentially overlooking novel approaches that could be beneficial in addressing this complex issue.

Future research should address the limitations identified in this study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of pedophilia and child sexual violence. Larger, more diverse samples should be utilized to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Incorporating quantitative methods alongside qualitative approaches could provide a more robust analysis of the characteristics, preventive measures, and support systems. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the effectiveness of different interventions over time would offer valuable insights into their long-term impact.

Exploring the perspectives of a broader range of stakeholders, including survivors, educators, and social workers, would enrich the understanding of the issue and inform the development of more holistic strategies. Future research should also consider the intersectionality of factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, examining how these dimensions interact with the dynamics of pedophilia and child sexual violence.

Further studies should investigate innovative approaches to prevention and intervention, exploring the potential of emerging technologies and new therapeutic techniques. For instance, the use of virtual reality for training and education or the application of artificial intelligence in identifying and predicting risky behaviors could be promising areas of exploration. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of various legal frameworks and policies in different cultural contexts would provide valuable insights into best practices for preventing and addressing child sexual violence.

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be made to enhance the prevention and support mechanisms for child sexual violence. First, educational programs targeting both children and parents



should be prioritized. These programs should focus on increasing knowledge and awareness about sexual violence, teaching children about personal boundaries and consent, and empowering parents to effectively communicate with and protect their children.

Second, strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms is essential in deterring offenders and providing justice for victims. Policies such as castration, as discussed by Kadir and Ahmad (2020), should be carefully evaluated and implemented within a comprehensive legal framework that includes harsh penalties for offenders and robust support systems for survivors (Kadir & Ahmad, 2020). Additionally, creating specialized units within law enforcement and judicial systems to handle cases of child sexual violence could improve the effectiveness and sensitivity of responses.

Third, providing holistic support to victims is crucial in mitigating the long-term impact of sexual violence. This support should include psychological counseling, medical care, and social services, tailored to the individual needs of each victim. Programs that promote family involvement in the recovery process, as highlighted by Februanti and Kartilah (2019), should be developed and implemented (Februanti & Kartilah, 2019). Ensuring that victims have access to safe and supportive environments where they can heal and rebuild their lives is paramount.

In conclusion, addressing the issue of pedophilia and child sexual violence requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that encompasses prevention, intervention, and support. By integrating the insights from this study with previous research and best practices, we can develop more effective strategies to protect children and promote their well-being.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed in this article.

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