Pedophilia: Taxometric Properties, Other Atypical Interests and Links Between Child Pornography and Child Victims

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Atypical sexual interests are common among those who sexually offend against children, with nearly half these individuals meeting the criteria for pedophilia (Seto & Lalumière, 2001). The proportion of pedophilic men is greater among those who use Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM). According to Seto (2013), the use of CSEM might be a better indicator of pedophilia than sexual contact against children since some contact offenders exhibit sexual preference toward adults. Pedophilia is also one of the strongest predictors of sexual recidivism (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). However, the latent structure of pedophilia is still the object of debate since it is unclear whether such interest is dimensional or categorical. As well, to date, little is known about the relationship between pedophilia and the use of specific types of sexually explicit material, including CSEM. For example, among individuals identified as pedophilic, there is little research examining their use of various types of pornography and evidence of other atypical sexual interests. This symposium seeks to extend our understanding of pedophilia and other atypical sexual interests, as well as their associations to the use of pornography and sexual offending. In the first presentation, Ian McPhail will present a taxometric analysis of the structure of pedophilia among sexual offenders. The second presentation by Angela Eke will explore the links between the characteristics of children depicted in CSEM as it relates to their child sexual contact and solicitation offending. Finally, in the third presentation, Sarah Paquette investigates the associations of the use of various types of pornography and atypical sexual interests among online sexual offenders.
The Latent Structure of Pedophilia: A Taxometric Analysis

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Taxometric analyses are a set of analytic procedures that examine whether a latent construct is better conceptualized as dimensional or categorical. Recent research has begun using taxometric analyses to examine the latent structure of pedophilia. Results have been varied, with some research finding pedophilia to be categorical (Schmidt, Mokros, & Banse, 2013), continuous (Stephens, Leroux, Skilling, Cantor, & Seto, 2016), and neurodevelopmental vulnerability for pedophilia to be categorical (King, 2010). Other research has examined this question, but did not use valid indicators of pedophilia (Mackaronis, Strassberg, & Marcus, 2011). Building our understanding of the latent structure of pedophilia has ramifications for risk assessment, treatment, and research with sexual offenders.

To contribute to this growing body of empirical literature, the present study applied taxometric analyses to three different phallometric datasets (n = 810, 413, and 634). The phallometric tests for pedophilic interests were conducted as part of routine clinical assessments for sexual offenders in two Canadian provinces. Across the three datasets, taxometric analyses indicated pedophilia to be categorical in structure. These findings suggest that sexual offenders may be most accurately identified as being either pedophilic or not pedophilic when undergoing phallometric assessment. The implications of these findings for assessment, phallmetric testing, diagnosis, and treatment will be discussed.

Learning Goals and Objectives:
- To understand the previous and current findings on the latent structure of pedophilia.
- To understand points of similarity and difference between the present and previous findings.
- To discuss the implications of this body of research for the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of pedophilia.
Correspondence Between Child Pornography Content and Sexual Offenses Against Minors

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Although not all child pornography offenders are pedophilic (see Seto, 2013), there is growing empirical evidence regarding the relationship between child pornography offending and pedophilia. For example, among individuals convicted of a child pornography offense, child pornography content variables, evidence of interest spanning two or more years, and offender marital status can screen for pedophilic interests (see Seto & Eke, in press). Intuitively, we would expect child pornography content to reflect specific interests in children, including age and gender; for example, we would expect men who are sexually interested in boys to preferentially seek content depicting boys. Surprisingly, however, there is a lack of empirical research examining this correspondence. In the current study, we examined the associations between child gender and age in child pornography content with the gender and age of child contact or online solicitation victims. In many cases, we could further distinguish the timing of contact or online solicitation victims to the timing of the index child pornography offense details.

In addition, we examined how individuals’ sexual interests may be evident in other ways, specifically, through their online communications with adults and the search criteria used when seeking and sharing child content.

We examined a sample of 110 men convicted of child pornography as well as contact (n = 72) or online solicitation (n = 38) offenses; some of the latter had also committed contact sexual offenses. We excluded cases where the child pornography content was based on an actual victim (i.e., images of the child, text stories detailing the sexual assault) because such cases would necessarily have a perfect correspondence. Overall, individuals were significantly more likely to target children represented in their child pornography; for example, those with female child contact sex victims were significantly more likely to have relatively more female child pornography. This relationship was also evident when considering the current child pornography collection and contact sexual recidivism. We explored these results with other child material (e.g., nudity) with similar findings. We investigated a number of other avenues including the mix of pornography (gender and age) for those with both male and female victims.

In addition, we had indepth information reflecting online communications with other adults for example in online chatrooms or via email, as well as parameters set for sharing and trading child content (e.g., “girls only! aged 5-12 only! no adult!”). We found age and gender in the child pornography content was positively correlated with age and gender.
search terms and stated interests. We discuss these findings in relation to the larger literature examining online child exploitation.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Examine the similarities between child pornography content and child contact and online solicitation victim characteristics.
- Describe other child content and how it relates to child contact and online solicitation victim characteristics.
- Explore additional online sources of information regarding child sexual preferences.

Pornography Use, Paraphilic Interests and Online Sexual Offending: An Exploratory Analysis

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DSM-V defines sexual interests as fantasies, urges or behaviors, and categorize them as either normophilic or paraphilic. Research suggests that paraphilic individuals rarely exhibit only one paraphilia. Instead, high levels of comorbidity with other sexual interests are typically found (Abel, Becker, Mittelman, & Rouleau, 1988). Pedophilia is the common paraphilia not only among child molesters but also, and even more so, among online sexual offenders (Babchishin, Hanson, & VanZuylen, 2015), followed by exhibitionism, voyeurism and sadism (Seto, Kingston, & Bourget, 2014). It is however unknown whether these paraphilias are associated with the use of specific types of pornographic material.

The use of pornography has been examined among clinical and nonclinical samples, and findings from those studies suggest an association between types of pornography and sexual arousal, sexual scripts and sexual behaviour (Bridges, Sun, Ezzell, & Johnson, 2016; Paul & Linz, 2008). When sexual offenders are examined, studies tend to show that the use of violent sexual material is positively correlated with coercive sexual behavior, sexual offending and sexual recidivism (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000; Kingston, Fedoroff, Firestone, Curry, & Bradford, 2008). No study, however, has yet investigated the link between pornography use and various sexual interests among sexual offenders. Thus, it is unclear whether the use of particular types of pornography are associated with particular sexual interests. It is also unknown what types of pornography, besides sexual images of children, are specifically associated with online sexual offending.

This study investigated the relationship between types of pornography and sexual interests among online sexual offenders. A sample of 221 offenders (36 Internet sexual, 44 contact sexual, 67 mixed sexual and 74 non-sexual) completed the Sexual Interest Cardsort
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*Questionnaire* (Abel & Becker, 1979) and a questionnaire assessing their frequency of use of various types of pornography. Preliminary results indicate that online sexual offenders used significantly more bondage, bestiality, rape and male adult homosexual pornographic material than contact sexual offenders and non-sexual offenders. Moreover, regression analyses show that higher use of some types of pornography predicts specific sexual interests and online sexual offending. Results will be discussed in the light of the scientific literature along with clinical implications.

**Learning Goals and Objectives:**
- Explore the relationship between pornographic use and sexual interests.
- Describe sexual offenders’ use of pornography and atypical sexual interests.
- Compare sexual offenders’ subgroups on their level of sexual interests.

**References**


Sarah Paquette, M.Sc. Criminology, is a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Montreal. She also works in the Internet Sexual Child Exploitation (ICE) unit of the provincial police of Quebec (Sûreté du Québec) in Canada. Her research focuses on sexual crimes, more specifically, the study and measurement of offense-supportive cognitions among child molesters and online sexual offenders.

Ian McPhail, M.A. is a graduate student in clinical psychology at the University of Saskatchewan. His past clinical experience includes providing assessment and treatment services to federally incarcerated violent and sexual offenders, assessment and treatment services to individuals found not criminally responsible, and outpatient services to juvenile sexual offenders. His research has focused on understanding and assessing dynamic risk factors for sexual offending against children.

Angela Wyatt Eke coordinates research in the Criminal Behaviour Analysis Unit of the Behavioural Sciences and Analysis Section, Ontario Provincial Police, and is an adjunct faculty member at Laurentian University, Ontario, Canada. She received her honors degree from the University of Toronto, Canada, and her graduate degrees in psychology from York University, Canada. Angela’s research relates to sexual offending and intimate partner violence, with a focus on risk assessment and case management.