

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DETERMINANTS OF PAEDOPHILIA CRIME

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, local daily newspapers have been filled with headlines of children becoming victimised by adults. The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) recorded 22,234 cases of child sexual abuse from 2010 until May 2017. Despite this disturbing number, little has been done to identify the risk factors or causes of such offence. The extreme stigma attached to the topic of sex has made educating children regarding sexual behaviour particularly uncomfortable and difficult. While paedophilia and children sexual offenders must not be considered synonymous, paedophilic preference is a major contributing factor to children sexual offenders. The term paedophilia refers to the state of adults being sexually interested in children. Paedophilic desire is an inclination in an adult to have sex with a child; a person has paedophilia if he has relatively frequent and intense paedophilic desire. This paper presents the results of a review of studies examining the general, common, and specific developmental risk factors for paedophilia. Paedophilic factors and family environmental factors were found to be general developmental risk factors that contribute to paedophilia behaviours. This study suggests that the presence of these risk factors may lead to various negative behavioural outcomes, including the perpetration of child sexual offending. The developed framework will be used for future research to identify public perception on the risk factors contributing towards the crime of paedophilia.

Keywords: Paedophilia, Paedophilic, Children Sexual Abuse.

INTRODUCTION

It is disturbing to note that for the past few decades, the number of child sex abuse cases have been continuously increasing. The Royal Malaysia Police reported that there were 22,234 cases recorded from 2010 until May 2017. In addition to that, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health Malaysia in 2015, it was found that 14 in every 1,000 under aged girls got pregnant every year. In contrast, our neighbouring country, Singapore only reported 4 in every 1,000 under aged girls got pregnant. These numbers are strong signals that child sexual abuse in Malaysia is a pressing issue which requires immediate actions to be taken.

Child sex abuse can take place in various settings and situation, this includes at home, school, or even at work. And in most cases involving children that are unaware of sexual abused being acted upon them. This is the case because child sexual abuse sometimes do not involve any physical penetration of their sexual organs. Instead, it could occur in different forms

such as child grooming and using the child in pornography production. Surprisingly, most of the abuse cases are caused by someone closely related to the child.

Paedophilia is a psychiatric disorder in which an adult adolescent has exclusive sexual attraction to children. The word 'paedophilia' is often applied to any sexual interest in children or the act of child sexual abuse. Nonetheless, important to note that paedophilia and child sexual abuse are not synonym. Child sexual abuse offenders are not paedophiles unless they have a primary or exclusive sexual interest in children. Little research has been done to identify the development risk factors of paedophilia. Therefore, this research was designed to study and identify the root causes of paedophilia sexual offender in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Paedophilic Factors

The term paedophilia actually refers to the state of adults being sexually interested in children. It is important to note that paedophilia and child sexual offenders are synonymous. However, paedophilic preference is a major contributing factor to children sexual offenders. (Gerwinn, Weib, Tenbergen, Amelung, Fodisch, Pohl, Massau, Kneer, Mohnke, Kargel, Wittfoth, Jung, Drumkova, Schiltz, Walter, Beier, Walter, Ponseti, Schitter & Krunger, 2018). Paedophilic desire is an adult inclination to have sex with a child, and a person is considered to have paedophilia when the person has relatively frequent and intense paedophilic desire. (Doshi, Zanzrukiya & Kumar, 2018). Paedophilic offenders are more likely to sexually reoffend and require different interventions (Seto, 2009).

Studies in Malaysia show that most social problems such as cohabitation, harassment, rape, paedophilia and internet addiction are results of the collapse of family institutions, lack of religious knowledge, foreign cultural influences, mass media influence, peer pressure, and lack of support systems (Magendran, 2017; Rosyadi, 2016). In the case of paedophilia, perpetrators are essentially seen to have lost moral value and chose to commit sexual crimes against children. Some researchers claim that the collapse of humanity and moral values is likely to result from the internet explosion (Malek & Kamil, 2010).

People with paedophilic sexual interests in children do not suffer from mental disorders since birth (like autism patients and others). Instead, it may stem from the attitude of frequently surfing pornographic websites. Women's Head of IKRAM Malaysia, Datin Paduka Che Asmah Ibrahim said that when a pornographic website was blocked by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, another new website was created (Bernama, 2016). That is one of the reasons why pornographic websites seem to be unmanageable. This allegation has been supported by a study done in Indonesia which found that sex crime cases on children had increased by 12 percent and were suspected to have been triggered by the ease of accessing pornographic websites (Rosyadi, 2016). More alarming, the youth in Malaysia are also found to have tendency of surfing pornography websites. Researchers found that teenagers in Malaysia surf the internet for a few main reasons such as chatting, watching cyber pornography, and playing violent online games (Hamid & Shiratuddin, 2016).

Despite many studies proving more than 30 percent of sex offender being diagnosed to have a psychiatric disorder (Fazel, Hope, O'Donnelly, & Jacoby, 2002; Norliza, Salina, Hatta, & Adam, 2014), there is also a researcher (Jahnke, 2018) who claims that sexual desire on children is normal. Jahnke (2018) highlighted that paedophilic tend to experience their sexual and emotional attachment to children in the same way as non-paedophilic experience their attraction for physically mature sexual partners, and, like others, may choose to live free without committing paedophilia crimes. This implies that the inability of paedophilic to self-control their sexual desire causes their behaviour to be expressed in a manner that is not in line with common community standards, which deems sexual acts between adults and children as unethical or immoral (Jahnke, 2018). Furthermore, the inability to control sexual desire in children may also be associated with the abuse of certain types of substances such as alcohol, drugs and marijuana. Norliza et, al. (2014) found that 19.5% of sex offenders have been diagnosed with drug addiction problems and 32.3% abused or depended on alcohol.

Family Environment Factors

Marshall and Barbaree (1990) propose that family dysfunctional experiences, such as violent parenting, are responsible for the development of strong feelings of resentment and hostility, which are essential elements in sexual offending. Additionally, Ward, Hudson, Marshall, and Siegert (1995) proposed models which suggests that various types of problematic parent-child relationships are associated with different types of insecure attachment styles found among sex offenders. Childhood experiences in terms of parental violence, problematic parent-child relationships, and poor socialisation can be regarded as the developmental risk factors for sexual offending.

The study conducted by (Aun & Yusof, 2017) found that the majority of parents did not have much knowledge on paedophilia. Among the Indian community, lack of knowledge about paedophilia has led to a lack of defences against victims when sexual abuse is only being seriously concerned where sexual intercourse occurred with a child, but acts like stimulation, showing pornographic images, touching private parts of children are not recognized as sexual abuse and are often neglected (Deb & Ray, 2015). Parents who often upload pictures of their children in social media are a sign of their lack of knowledge of paedophilia crime (Ishak, 2016; Tamboo, 2016). This act may expose their children in danger, particularly when such images are uploaded on pornography websites by paedophiles.

However, Western studies have found that children and adolescents have the knowledge and awareness of the dangers of the internet (Zilka, 2017). Experimental studies have been conducted by (Wartella, Lin, Kotler, Huston, & Donnerstein, 2000) to measure the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of children and adolescents regarding sexual media content and sexuality. Their study, however, could not prove that the influence of movies in television could potentially help children interpret the contents of sexual messages. In Malaysia, the suggestion to include sex education in formal education is not generally supported. This creates a hurdle towards educating children on the risks of paedophilia crime (Sinar Harian, 2017). The risk becomes more concerned when teenagers nowadays are prone to upload photos of themselves on social media while also disclosing personal information without realizing the dangers of such act. Children who lack attention and affection from parents prefer to express their loneliness in social media which makes them vulnerable to paedophiles (Arnaldo, 2000). On the other hand, there is also the view of childhood emotional abuse as the core issue in childhood adversities. Such a view suggests that childhood emotional abuse is likely to be a common predictor for various types of paraphilia. Childhood emotional abuse tends to enhance the effects of childhood sexual abuse (Bagley, Wood, & Young, 1994) and childhood physical abuse (McGee, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1997).

Some cases of paedophilia are caused by sexual abuse. There is evidence to suggest that sexually abused sex offenders have poorer family supports, more disturbed family background, and more negative relationships with their fathers (Dhawan & Marshall, 1996; Langevin et al., 1989). Naive children who are unaware that they are being treated improperly from trusted people (such as their father and family members) feel that such treatment is fun. While many people think sexually abused children will be traumatized, there are also researchers claiming that girl victims will be addicted to sex (Earp, Wudarczyk, Foddy, & Savulescu, 2017) instead. In contrast, the victims of sexually abused boys are likely to become paedophiles when they become adults.

Many studies posit that sexual victimization in childhood plays an important role in later sexual offending against children (Johnson & Knight, 2000; Marshall & Marshall, 2000; Seto, 2008; Ward & Siegert, 2002) and studies generally find that childhood sexual abuse are associated with sexual offending against children. Furthermore, sexual offenders against children have significantly higher rates of childhood sexual victimization than sexual offenders against adults (Jespersen et al., 2009; Seto & Lalumière, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2008). Several studies found that about 28 to 35 percent of sex offenders in their studies revealed that they had been sexually abused during childhood (Fazel et al., 2002; Seghorn, Prenky, & Boucher, 1987). It has been suggested that children sexual abuse may lead to the development of paedophilia (Nunes, Hermann, Malcom & Lavoie, 2013). Among sexual offenders, there is a relationship between child sexual victimization and paedophilic interest. There are evidences to show that paedophilic interest may be most strongly associated with sexual victimization by a male, at a younger age, and by an unrelated abuser. Hence, sexual abuse of children is also considered as a determining factor in paedophilia crime.

Conceptual Model and Research Propositions

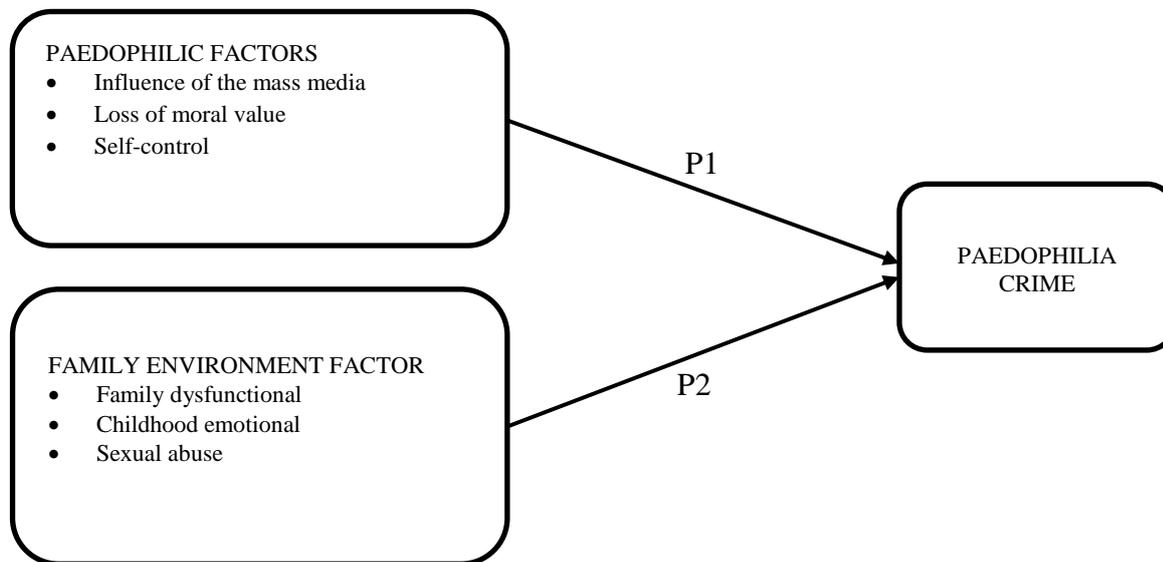


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This study attempts to identify the determinants of paedophilia. Each factor of paedophilia is studied against detailed literature review. The conceptual model as illustrated in Figure 1, suggests that there are two main factors contributing towards paedophilia: paedophilic factors and family environment factors. Paedophilic factors focus on the perpetrator factors that led to the occurrence of paedophilia. Based on the study, men with influence of social media, loss of moral values and lack of self-control will be considered as high paedophilic risk. By considering that a man who has a hobby of surfing pornographic websites, immoral and has inability to control their sexual interest in children is likely to commit paedophilia. In line with that argument, the following proposition is made:

Proposition 1: Higher paedophilic factors will be associated with higher levels of paedophilia crime.

On the other hand, family environment factors may include signs such as dysfunctional family, emotional children and history of sexual abuse including as paedophilia victims. Taking into consideration those factors, the following proposition is thus made:

Proposition 2: Higher family environment factors will be associated with higher levels of paedophilia crime.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study suggested the paedophilic influences and family environmental factors are the main causes for the occurrence of paedophilia crime. One of the main methods to prevent paedophilia is to avoid situations that may promote paedophilic acts. Therefore, children should never be left in one-on-one situations with any adult other than their parents or trustworthy family members. Besides that, children must be exposed regarding paedophiles and that it must be avoided. They must also learn to protect themselves from becoming a victim of sexual abuse and paedophilia crime. Notwithstanding, parents should always take precautions and remain vigilant of the risk of sexual crimes exposed to their children.

The lack of exposure on sex education might be the key reason to the high rate of sexual abuse in Malaysia. Based on Talib, Mamat, Ibrahim, & Mohamad (2012), sex education has been taught indirectly at school in Malaysia, but without enough depth of the topic. This lack of knowledge may lead to sexual offenders being ignorant of the effect of their own actions. Hence, education programmes on sex education should be implemented in schools uniformly. It should be noted that sexual education is not designed to encourage more sexual activity. Instead, it is meant educate kids, teenagers and adult about the accountability of having sex (M. Mutalip & Mohamed, 2014). It was also observed that reinforcement at home, with parent's support will help to reduce the possibility of children forgetting the lessons taught in school. Learning about how to protect themselves from sexual crime could be effective in reducing the worries of parents, and appropriate lessons thought could increase effectiveness while also elevating children confidence of their own safety.

This study is significant in its contribution towards public awareness, including parents, schools, and local authority. This study comes with its effort to find development risk factors contributing to paedophilia. As a suggestion for future research, the framework developed will be used to identify the public perception on the risk factors that contribute to the paedophilia crime.

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