

Differentiating Effects of Child Sexual Abuse: How different types of victimization affect children's development

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Focusing on actual behaviors that occurred during sexual abuse, the present study hypothesized that variations in offending behavior distinctively affect victims of child sexual abuse. Based on the previous literature, a two-way behavioral thematic structure in child sexual abuse is suggested, namely Coercion and Involvement. Differences in offending behavior are expected to distinctively affect victims' symptoms (e.g., PTSD-type symptoms, behavioral problems, self-esteem, sexualized behavior). Finally, moderating variables affecting victims' symptoms, such as victim's age at the time of offense and abuser-victim relationships, are explored.

Key words : child sexual abuse, victimization, symptoms, Coercion, Involvement

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Ten to 15% of females experience sexual abuse in childhood (Mullen, 1990), and girls aged 10 to 12 are found to be the most likely victims of sexual abuse at the hands of adults (Finkelhor, 1984). Because of the weakness of children and their dependency status, they are more likely to be victimized than adults are (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994).

Previous studies on child sexual abuse have reported that the victims of child sexual abuse often display various symptoms: depression, anxiety, fear, aggression, sexualized behavior, substance abuse, and reduced interpersonal trust (Finkelhor, 1990). It also has been reported that victims of child sexual abuse suffer from PTSD-type symptoms (e.g., a sense of estrangement, numbing of affect, flashbacks) (Finkelhor, 1990). Sexually abused children also tend to manifest poor self-esteem; they report negative self-evaluations and tend to blame themselves for negative events (Diehl & Prout, 2002). Einbender and Friedrich (1989) compared sexually abused girls with non-abused girls and found that victims of child sexual abuse exhibited more overt behavior problems, lower cognitive functioning and school achievement, and greater sexual preoccupation.

Meanwhile, Kendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor (1993) reported that approximately one-third of child sexual abuse victims had no symptoms. Many child sexual abuse victims do not report PTSD-type symptoms: 63% of women who experienced child sexual abuse

reported that they had never suffered from PTSD (Finkelhor, 1990).

What makes the difference in the symptoms which victims of child sexual abuse may display? There have been a few attempts to explain variations in the victim's symptomatology by exploring characteristics of the offense (Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993). A number of variables, such as the victim's age at the time of offense, the gender of the victim, the abuser-victim relationship, have been suggested as moderators of victims' symptoms (Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993). However, one of the most important moderators, which has not received enough attention, is the nature of the victimization: the actual behaviors that occurred during the offense.

Each child sexual abuse offense reflects the distinctive style of the offender. Some child sexual abuse offenses involve excessive physical violence. Not all child sexual abuse, however, occurs under conditions of violence and threat. There are child molesters who perceive a child as a love object and act like they care for and love children appropriately. Focusing on the actual behaviors that occurred during the offense, the present study hypothesized that variations in offending behavior distinctively affect victims of child sexual abuse.

Behavioral Themes of Child Sexual Abuse

There have been many different typologies

that attempt to produce classificatory schemes of child sexual abusers using psychiatric or psychoanalytic distinctions.

Groth and Burgess (1977) divided child molesters into two groups in terms of the degree of force in the offense. The sex-pressure offense is characterized by a relative lack of physical force. The offender perceives the child as a love object. Meanwhile, the sex-force offender uses coercion or physical force and exercise power over the child. But this typology is based on clinical observations and has not been validated (Blackburn, 1993).

Among the most popular taxonomies is 'fixation' versus 'regression' (Groth & Birnbaum, 1978). The fixated offender has a primary sexual orientation toward children: a fixated offender is sexually attracted primarily to significantly younger persons. The regressed offender develops a primary sexual orientation to age-mates, and sexual involvement with a child comes about usually at a time of stress. However, a number of issues have been raised about this typology. First, it is based on clinical experience with incarcerated offenders, which may limit its usefulness when applied to the general community. Second, it lacks validation by research (Howitt, 1995). Finally, it has been reported that many offenders have characteristics of both the regressed and fixated offender (Conte, 1991).

In contrast to these classificatory schemes which are based on offender motivations, an

increasing number of studies are trying to examine empirically the difference in the behaviors that occur in child sexual offenses (Canter, Hughes, & Kirby, 1998). Kirby (1993) analyzed 416 recorded sexual offenses against children across 36 offense variables and identified three predominant themes in the offending behavior of child sexual abusers - aggression, intimacy and sexual gratification. An aggressive offender treated his victim as an object of his need for power and control, whereas an offender displaying intimate behavior sought an emotional relationship with the victim. The aggressive and intimate behaviors were seen as different ends of a linear continuum, and they met at the middle through the theme of sexual gratification. Kirby's model provides a way of understanding the crime of child molestation using observable criteria.

More recently, Canter et al. (1998) identified three modes of interaction in child sexual abuse, namely aggression, intimacy, and criminal-opportunism. Offenders with an aggressive style see the child as an object for their aggression, and typically use violence beyond the level necessary to control the child. Offenders with an intimate style "perceive a relationship with their victims analogous to a conventional sexual relationship among adults" (p. 535) and their predominant behaviors during an offense are intimate behaviors such as kissing and fondling. Finally, offenders who operate in a criminal-opportunist style have "a generally antisocial

manner of interpersonal interaction and sexual abuse of children is just one of a multitude of criminal activities they are likely to engage in” (p. 537). Although this model successfully revealed the variations that exist among child sex offenders on the basis of crime scene behaviors, the study did not attempt to relate the difference in the behaviors that occur in child sexual offenses to the variations of the symptoms that victims display. In addition, variables which have been suggested as moderators of victims’ symptoms, such as victim’s age at the time of offense, were not considered.

Based on the previous literature, the present study will attempt to develop a model of behavioral themes in child sexual abuse. The existing literature reveals much about underlying themes that occur in the offending behavior of child sexual abusers. Above all, it has been continuously suggested that there exist, at least, two distinctive styles of child sexual abusers: one is coercive offenders who use excessive physical violence over the child, and the other is pseudo-intimate offenders who seek to develop a relationship with a child (Canter et al., 1998; Groth & Burgess, 1977; Kirby, 1993). Therefore, a two-way thematic structure of offending behaviors in child sexual abuse, namely Coercion and Involvement, is suggested in the present study.

Coercion

The first pattern which emerges from the existing literature on child sexual abuse involves coercive offending behavior. Lanning (1992) suggests the primary motivation of many child abusers is anger and hostility. Groth and Burgess (1977) describe the sex-force offender, who is characterized by using coercion or physical force in sexual offense. Prentky, Knight, and Lee (1997) include a category of ‘non-sadistic aggressive’ child molesters who use physical violence over the victim. Marshall and Christie (1981) report that a large number of child sexual abuse offenses involve violent threats or physical force to obtain control over children. Behaviors typical of this theme include using weapons and violence.

Involvement

Groth and Burgess (1977) described the sex-pressure offender, who is characterized by a relative lack of physical force in sexual offenses and perceives the child as a love object. Groth (1979) suggested that child sexual abusers appear to have a high emotional investment in the victim. They regard the victim less as an object and more as a person, and there is much more affectionate involvement in the sexual activity. Prentky et al. (1997) include an interpersonal type of child sex abuser who tries to build an intimate relationship with the victim. Canter et

al. (1998) identified intimate style offenders “who perceive a relationship with their victims analogous to a conventional sexual relationship among adults” (p. 535). Lanning (1992) includes a category of child molesters who court children with affection and seduce them as an attempt to engage them in sexual activity. Wyre (1987) reported that the normal approach to a child by a pedophile is one of seduction, and the seduction process often outwardly resembles the actions of someone who cares for and loves children appropriately. Behaviors typical of this theme include complimenting the victim and gift-giving.

After exploring the two-way behavioral framework of child sexual abuse, it will be explored how these variations in offending behavior differently affect victims' symptoms.

Moderating Variables

A number of variables such as victim's age at the time of offense and abuser-victim relationship have been suggested as moderators of the symptoms that the victim displays (Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993). First, it has been reported that younger children tend to be more symptomatic (Wolfe, Gentile, & Wolfe, 1989). In terms of abuser-victim relationship, it has been suggested that the closer the offender and the victim, the more serious the victim's symptoms are (Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993).

Variations in the symptoms of child sexual abuse

It has been suggested that PTSD results from overwhelming and dangerous experiences (Figley, as cited in Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993). Dykman, McPherson, and Ackerman (1997) reported that children who were both physically and sexually abused exhibited a higher incidence of PTSD than children who were either sexually or physically abused. Therefore, it is expected that children sexually abused by offenders with a coercive style are more likely to exhibit a higher incidence of PTSD than children sexually abused by offenders with an intimate style.

In relation to behavior problems, Kinard (1995) reported that physically abused girls were rated as having more social problems than sexually abused girls. Therefore, it is expected that children sexually abused by offenders with a coercive style are more likely to have behavioral problems than children sexually abused by offenders with an intimate style.

Implications of the present study

The present study suggests that we need to develop different treatment programs for the victims. Because behaviors occurring during a sexual offense, their frequency, and their levels of violation are different, each victim experiences a different nature and level of victimization. For example, children who are both sexually and

physically abused need treatment different from merely seduced children. The treatment for child victims is extremely important, because victimization has huge impacts on children's development (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994), and sexually abused children may develop or learn sexualized behaviors that put them at risk of continued abuse by the same perpetrator or new abuse by different perpetrators (Gelles, 1997).

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아동 성범죄 범행 특성에 따른 피해자의 증상과 발달상의 차이

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아동 대상 성범죄 피해를 입은 아동들은 우울과 불안, 공포, 낮은 자존감, 학업 기능 저하 등 다양한 신체적, 정신적, 사회적 증상들을 나타낸다. 본 연구에서는 아동을 대상으로 한 성범죄에서 나타나는 범죄자의 여러 가지 행동 특성에 초점을 맞추어, 가해자의 범행 방식에 따라 피해자가 향후 나타내는 증상과 발달 상에 차이가 있을 것으로 가정하였다. 아동 대상 성범죄 관련 선행 연구들을 바탕으로 하여 본 연구에서는 가해자 행동 유형을 크게 두 가지 - 강압형, 친밀형 - 로 나누었다. 우선 강압형은 범행 당시 아동에게 과도한 폭력을 보이는 가해자들로, 언어적 위협이나 흉기 사용 등 아동을 통제하기 위해 적대적인 공격성을 드러낸다. 한편 친밀형은 범행 당시 폭력이나 위협의 사용보다는, 아동에게 칭찬을 하거나 관심을 보이고 선물을 주는 등의 방법으로 서서히 아동을 성범죄에 끌어들이는 방식이다. 본 연구에서는 이러한 가해 유형에 따라 아동이 겪는 피해의 특성에 차별적인 영향이 있을 것으로 보고, 향후 피해자가 보이는 외상 후 스트레스 장애 관련 증상이나 행동 발달 상의 문제, 자아 존중감, 성적 행동 등에서 차이가 있을 것으로 가정하였다. 더불어, 범행 당시 피해자의 연령이나 가해자-피해자 간의 관계와 같은 중재 변인들이 피해자가 나타내는 증상과 향후 발달 과정 상에 미치는 영향력에 대해서도 논의하였다.

주요어 : 아동 성범죄, 피해자화, 증상, 강압형, 친밀형