

# A Qualitative Study on the Sexual Orientation Development of Boy Molesters

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## Abstract

**Preface:** Finkelhor (1986) found that boys sexually abused by older males were over four times more likely to develop a homosexual orientation in adulthood. However, there is still no clear research explaining the exact relationship between childhood sexual abuse and sexual orientation. Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes that experiencing sexual abuse may cause confusion in the perpetrator's gender identity, leading them to believe they have homosexual tendencies and fostering romantic feelings toward boys. Through this study, the researcher aims to explore possible psychological mechanisms and identify methods for intervention and improvement.

**Objectives:** This study examines the development of sexual orientation among perpetrators of boy molesters, challenging the misconception that they are inherently homosexual. It analyzes their psychological trauma, motivations, and gender identity differences to develop appropriate treatment strategies.

**Research Method:** A qualitative study with semi-structured interviews was conducted on three offenders from Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, Chiayi County Public Health Bureau, and Yunlin County Public Health Bureau.

**Research Findings:** Different treatment strategies were proposed: (1) Retaliatory types: psychological therapy; (2) Consensual type: sexual education (3) High-Functioning type: gender and legal education; (4) Withdrawn type: Psychological trauma treatment. Counseling should consider these traits, offer tailored attention and corrective therapy to address their specific needs.

**Keywords:** boy molesters, gender identity, developmental psychological

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## **Introduction**

This study presents the disciplinary methods used in the families of four interviewees, the resulting childhood trauma, and the impact on their interpersonal relationships and development as male child sexual offenders. It explores themes such as substance abuse history, sexual preferences and orientation, personal characteristics related to sexual offenses against boys, motivations for watching child pornography and alleviating sexual urges, stress coping mechanisms, and life satisfaction, along with sub-themes and researcher reflections.

## **Research Purpose and Question**

To examine whether childhood sexual trauma in male child sexual offenders affects their gender identity and sexual orientation development and classification through the administration of a psychological mechanism questionnaire.

To explore whether there are any other potential variables influencing or interfering with male child sexual offenders in the context of multicultural Chinese society.

What is the development of gender identity and sexual orientation in the group of male child sexual offenders?

What are the potential variables in the group of male child sexual offenders in the context of multicultural Chinese society?

## **Literature Review**

In Taiwan, research on male sexual assault remains very limited, due to difficulties in participant recruitment and low scholarly interest. In contrast, international studies, such as Lew Mike's work on child abuse, provide extensive insights into male child victimization (Chen et al., 2010, trans.). Male victims are likely more numerous than commonly perceived, but cultural norms and expectations of male roles contribute to the misconception that their psychological trauma is less severe. This study seeks to explore different types of male child sexual offenders and intervention approaches to promote a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

**Table 1**

*Number of reported cases of sexual abuse from 2008 to 2019 involving victims aged 12 and under, broken down by gender.*

Year	Male child victim(%)	Girl child victim(%)	Total
2008	90(15%)	510(85%)	600
2009	114(17.7%)	528(82.3%)	642
2010	168(15.8%)	893(84.2%)	1061
2011	198(16.3%)	1013(83.7%)	1211
2012	232(18.7%)	1004(81.3%)	1240
2013	195(18.9%)	833(81.1%)	1028
2014	238(21.9%)	849(78.1%)	1087
2015	265(23.8%)	846(76.2%)	1111
2016	191(24.8%)	577(75.2%)	768
2017	229(27.0%)	635(73.0%)	846
2018	273(27.3%)	725(72.7%)	998
2019	206(29.4%)	495(70.6%)	701

*Note.* Statistics sourced from data released by the Executive Yuan's Gender Equality Committee and the Ministry of Health and Welfare from 2008 to 2019.

Over time, the number of male victims of sexual assault has shown a significant increase, nearly doubling every decade (Lin, 2013). This indicates that sexual victimization is no longer an issue exclusively affecting women; rather, it is a potential risk faced by individuals of all genders. Particularly among young children, those who have been sexually abused tend to display an excessive curiosity about and exploration of sexual organs compared to children without such experiences. Consequently, they are more likely to exhibit sexualized behaviors (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Conte & Schuerman, 1987; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985).

Lin (1999) further suggested that boys who experience sexual abuse are more likely to develop instability in gender identity and may even become perpetrators of sexual offenses against boys. These findings highlight that childhood sexual abuse not only increases the likelihood of revictimization during development but may also lead to a transition toward perpetration, thereby posing substantial societal risks and burdens (Jones et al., 2006). Therefore, it is crucial to gain a clear understanding of the psychological issues that may arise in boys who commit sexual offenses during adolescence and to further explore the underlying causes.

### **Conceptualization of Gender Identity**

From the perspective of developmental psychology, the process of sexual orientation identity typically begins during adolescence and continues into early adulthood. Existing

research indicates that male individuals with pedophilic disorder often exhibit a developmental trajectory of sexual age identity that progresses along a parallel timeline (Bailey et al., 2016; Bernard, 1985; Cash, 2016; Grundmann et al., 2016; Tozdan & Briken, 2015). According to findings by Griesemer (2006), most males experience their first feelings of attraction toward same-age or younger children around the ages of 8 to 9, which is approximately three to four years prior to puberty.

For individuals with pedophilic tendencies, sexual development during adolescence—typically between the ages of 14 and 19—differs from that of non-pedophilic individuals. Their gender identity formation tends to occur later, often after reaching adulthood, a pattern associated with distinct developmental characteristics related to their sexual interests (Cash, 2016).

From the perspective of the transactional theory developed within sociology, Spaccarelli (1994) argues that an individual's development is shaped not only by the surrounding environment but also by the dynamic interactions within that environment, which in turn influence psychological health and psychopathology. Nunes et al. (2013) similarly contend that exposure to inappropriate sexual stimulation, sexualized play, or peer-perpetrated sexual assault can severely disrupt the development of intimate relationships and interpersonal functioning.

Scholars posit that these risk factors significantly impair an individual's capacity to cope with environmental demands as well as their cognitive development. Both internal factors—such as ego strength—and external factors—such as environmental resources—interact to influence the psychological outcomes of victims. Consequently, these interacting influences may affect the development of sexual orientation and may also be associated with later difficulties in life, particularly regarding problematic behaviors and challenges related to sexual development among male child sexual abuse victims.

### **Gender Identity Trauma Resulting from Sexual Victimization**

Victims of sexual assault often exhibit signs such as distress, anxiety, and behavioral changes; however, these reactions may also appear in other children because various life circumstances simultaneously influence the lives of children and adolescents (Hung, 2008). The manifestation of symptoms among victims is affected by multiple factors, including the type of sexual assault, the duration of the abuse, the individual's adaptive capacities, and the social responses surrounding the incident.

A 21-year longitudinal study conducted in New Zealand found that among 1,200 participants, those who self-identified as homosexual or bisexual exhibited significantly higher risks of generalized anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, behavioral disorders, self-harm, and suicide attempts (Right Plus, 2020). Researchers therefore

suggest that boys who suppress homosexual tendencies from a young age may experience heightened anxiety as they attempt to conform to heteronormative social expectations. Nevertheless, an individual's sexual orientation and gender identity do not change simply due to external pressures or interference; latent homosexual desire is a normal human phenomenon. In contrast, when individuals face parental rejection or homophobia, and fear moral condemnation, they are more likely to conceal their authentic identities, leading to further psychological distress.

Social support serves as a crucial protective factor for individuals who have experienced sexual victimization. Myths surrounding male sexual assault, men's reluctance to disclose their victimization, stereotypical gender role expectations, and societal ideals of "masculine traits" are among the primary factors contributing to the social isolation of male sexual assault survivors (Easton, Coohy, Rhodes, & Moorthy, 2013).

### **Definition and Conceptualization of Sexual Orientation**

Practitioners Peng and Wu (2018) argue that myths such as "a man who is sexually assaulted by another man will become gay" or "gay men are likely to be sexual offenders" are misconceptions. Lew (2010) similarly demonstrated that sexual orientation develops at a very early stage, often long before the age at which a victim experiences sexual assault. Based on this, researchers hypothesize that individuals who sexually offend against boys may themselves have experienced similar male-perpetrated sexual victimization during childhood, which could have influenced their sexual orientation or gender identity. Some victims may reenact or replicate their traumatic experiences by harming others.

In addition, sexually abused boys may themselves become perpetrators later in life, which leads to the central research question of this study. The researcher aims to explore the psychological mechanisms underlying gender identity and sexual orientation among individuals who offend against boys. A pretest was used to develop the \*Childhood Sexual Offense Psychological Mechanism Questionnaire\*, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted to examine patterns of gender identity and sexual orientation among offenders who sexually abuse boys.

Foreign scholar Moser (2016) noted that sexual orientation may emerge before or during puberty, specifying that it develops through one or more processes associated with pubertal hormonal changes prior to adulthood. Consequently, sexual orientation can be "discovered" after reaching adulthood and may persist throughout the lifespan, potentially replacing previously identified sexual preferences. Aging, along with subsequent hormonal and bodily changes, may lead to shifts in sexual orientation and stimulate behavioral sexual exploration, while simultaneously reducing the need for sexual drive.

According to Lai and Chi (2009), who reviewed the work of developmental psychologists such as Savin-Williams, adolescent sexual orientation may represent an inherent, innate trait. Some individuals become aware of this trait during their lifetime, while others may not. Moreover, this stage is not exclusive to adolescence; sexual orientation development can occur across all age groups. Generally, individuals identify as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, with a minority experiencing fluidity or uncertainty, often referred to as “questioning or fluid sexuality” (Wang, 2010). This concept is similar to that of lesbians in all-girls schools, who may engage in same-sex romantic relationships within the school environment but later enter heterosexual relationships and marry in adulthood.

### **Clinical Diagnosis of Child Sexual Abuse**

Abel (1985) believes that all child sex offenders are pedophiles and opposes the DSM diagnosis because he argues that pedophilic behavior does not cause distress for those with pedophilia. According to the DSM-5 criteria, there are two key diagnostic standards for pedophilia: 1) the sexual preference is directed at children; 2) the extent of violent involvement. From this, we can deduce that the first corresponds to Groth's fixation type, while the latter corresponds to the withdrawn type. Additionally, the victim may be a boy, a girl, or both. The DSM-5 "Diagnostic Criteria for Pedophilia (302.2 Pedophilia)" is as follows:

- A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intense sexual fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger).
- B. The fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
- C. The individual is at least 16 years old and at least 5 years older than the child or children in criteria A.

### **Precondition Model**

Finkelhor (1984) proposed the "Precondition Theory," which suggests that four factors contribute to an offender's sexual abuse of children: emotional congruence, sexual arousal, blocked sexual needs, and poor self-control. According to this theory, offenders are unable to find normal sexual outlets in typical social relationships, leading them to target children. In moments of lost self-control, they seek sexual satisfaction, which results in criminal behavior (see Figure 2-3). Finkelhor identified four preconditions related to the offender's lack of self-control:

1. A strong sexual preference for children that leads to abuse.
2. Alcohol or mental disorders that cause a loss of self-will.
3. Dysfunctional family and social environments that prevent external control, such as family breakdown.
4. Reducing the child's resistance to sexual abuse through material or monetary temptations.

### **Addiction Cycle**

Wolf (1985) proposed the theory of the sexual offense addiction cycle. In many cases, sex offenders experience significant life stress, leading to negative self-perception. This negative self-image results in unmet expectations and difficulties in social interactions, such as rejection, which causes social withdrawal and interpersonal isolation. Offenders use sexual behavior to relieve anxiety or compensate for discomfort. The frustration they feel increases over time, and with rumination on past sexual fantasies, they seek to alleviate the discomfort, but these actions do not ultimately reduce their negative feelings. This leads to the commission of sexual offenses to lower the growing frustration.

After the offense, the offender's internal anxiety is only temporarily relieved. Once the act is completed, the frustration returns, accompanied by guilt and shame, leading to an even more negative self-assessment. This cycle reinforces the offender's belief that they are inadequate, ultimately contributing to recidivism. The behavior becomes cyclical and addictive, preventing the offender from breaking free.

### **Research Method**

The four male child sexual offenders were identified through contacts at the Chiayi County Health Bureau, Yunlin County Health Bureau, and Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital. With referrals provided by two co-supervising professors from practical casework, the researcher directly contacted the participants to invite those willing to participate in individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews.

Individual in-depth interviews are a commonly employed data collection method in qualitative research and serve as a foundational framework for data analysis in the social sciences. Interviews resemble dialogues, involving a “give and take” process between two or more parties through verbal communication (Wu, 1991). Lin, Yen, and Chen (2005) noted that through dialogue between the researcher and participants, researchers can gain insights into participants' perceptions and understanding of social phenomena by examining verbatim transcripts.

To effectively explore the influence of personal family background and child-rearing experiences on the research questions, this study employed semi-structured qualitative interviews to investigate the development of gender identity and sexual orientation among male child sexual offenders. Recorded interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed in three steps: (1) identifying events and perspectives, followed by coding, summarizing, and reflecting; (2) clustering meaningful units to generate initial subthemes and preliminary secondary themes; and (3) grouping secondary themes into overarching main themes.

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature and meaning of gender identity and sexual orientation among male child sexual offenders. The study focuses on participants' conscious experiences and subjective perceptions. According to Pan (2003), semi-structured interviews occupy a middle ground between structured and unstructured interviews as a data collection method. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher designed an interview guide based on the study's questions and objectives to facilitate an in-depth understanding of participants' life experiences. By using a semi-structured format, participants were encouraged to reflect on past experiences, allowing for rich, comprehensive data through extended dialogue and introspection during the interview process.

These cases were used for qualitative interviews to categorize male child sexual offenders into four main typologies: retaliatory, consensual, high-functioning, and withdrawn. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with participants from each category. Subsequently, sociodemographic data were collected, including age, educational level, family type, history of sexual experience with others, number of sexual offenses, age at first offense, and presence of other psychiatric diagnoses, which were then analyzed. The steps for qualitative data analysis were as follows:

#### (1) Transcription

After each interview, the researcher transcribed the entire recorded conversation verbatim, including both verbal and non-verbal responses.

#### (2) Data Coding

Once all data were collected, the researcher coded the interview transcripts. Alphabetical letters were used to represent participants, and the last three digits indicated the sequence of each interview segment to facilitate subsequent analysis.

#### (3) Examining Meaning Units According to Research Questions

The researcher approached each word, sentence, paragraph, and verbal and non-verbal response with an open attitude, segmenting the data to identify essential meanings. Segments were underlined, coded, and grouped according to their relevance, resulting in the study's "summaries."

#### (4) Determining Preliminary Subthemes from Meaning Units

Each interview was conceptualized and categorized to identify unique classifications for each participant. The meanings across these classifications were aggregated to extract core preliminary subthemes.

#### (5) Synthesizing Summaries

After identifying preliminary subthemes from all interviews, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis to derive common overarching themes. The themes were further coded, organized into tables, and synthesized into summaries to support the presentation of results.

## Research Results

### **Personality, Sexual Orientation, Family Discipline, and Criminal Mindset of Male Child Sexual Offenders.**

#### *Interviewee A*

Grew up with traditional beliefs, where their homosexual identity was not accepted. As a result, they imitated boys and hid their true self. They engaged in retaliatory anal intercourse, fully aware of their wrongdoing.

#### *Interviewee B*

Came from an open and democratic family with no history of drug use. They were attracted to young, prepubescent boys and identified as bisexual. Their crimes were driven by poor self-control and a sense of impunity.

#### *Interviewee C*

He was raised in a strict and conservative household with no history of drug use. As a child, they were bullied for being overweight and secretly harbored an attraction to baby-faced boys. They were arrested after their mobile phone leaked sensitive information.

#### *Interviewee D*

Grew up in an authoritarian family, suppressing their emotions and not sharing their concerns. While attending a vocational school, they were nearly sexually assaulted. They identified as fluid in sexual orientation and denied their charges.

Researcher conducted qualitative thematic analysis, extracting several themes. For example, the sub-theme "Homosexuality or Sexual Needs: In Prison, Gender Does Not Matter" suggests that male child sexual offenders are no different from other sexual offenders. Their primary motive is to fulfill their sexual needs. In confined environments like male prisons, where a deviant culture develops, heterosexual men may engage in same-sex activities due to testosterone-driven physiological urges and learned

helplessness, disregarding gender altogether.

The four interviewees revealed that, in specific contexts, victims create what they perceive to be a safe and private sexual space. Once influenced by the offender, they may develop a lasting sexual preference. Even as adults, they may continue to engage in heterosexual relationships, marry, and have children. The researcher does not rule out the influence of social constructs and marriage institutions, which encourage reproduction to sustain lineage.

The researcher compared several key sub-themes, including "Changes in Sexual Orientation: Blurred Boundaries and No Clear Answers," "Conflicting Views Among Sexual Offenders: Mutual Contempt," "The Influence of Testosterone: Sexual Needs Overcoming Gender Preferences," "Distinctions Between Fluid Sexuality, Homosexuality, and Heterosexuality: Separating Sex from Love," and "Victim-Turned-Perpetrator: Exploiting a Pitiful Image for Sympathy."

### **Homosexuality or Sexual Needs: In Prison, Gender Does Not Matter**

Interviewee B stated that perpetrators of child sexual abuse do not necessarily have homosexual tendencies. They believe that homosexual individuals also have sexual needs, but offenders may simply seek sexual release, regardless of their victim's gender.

*“(Do you think the victims agreed to sexual activities because the offenders were homosexual?) No, not necessarily. (In prison, married individuals still engage in mutual masturbation and oral sex. Do you think this is purely based on sexual needs?) Hmm, yes, so they don't care whether the person helping them is homosexual or heterosexual. (So, when watching adult films, you avoid ones that involve coercion?) Yes, I think that's inhumane and shouldn't be done.” (B-01-106, B-01-107)*

Interviewee D was aware that, in a confined male-dominated environment, sexual activities between inmates were common. They recalled being labeled on the first day in prison, experiencing frequent touching, and being assigned to sleep beside other inmates. They observed that those engaging in these behaviors were often married men with families, indicating that sexual needs drive these actions rather than sexual orientation.

*“I experienced this as soon as I entered prison. They kept touching me and made me sleep next to them.”(D-01-023)*

*“(When you entered prison, they touched you?) Yes! They were all married but had sexual needs. In a male-only environment, this happens easily. When I was in the military, similar things happened, but it was officially prohibited. If it happened, one person would be transferred to another unit. (But under*

*the blanket, no one would know what was happening, right?) Yeah! There's even an unwritten rule about two people sharing one blanket. (So, it was always one-sided touching? Did you ever reciprocate?) No, because if you reciprocate, you get sent to solitary confinement. I didn't dare—because I wanted to get out as soon as possible. I always behaved well and earned many commendations. (Did you ever push their hands away?) How could I? I couldn't possibly touch them! If I pushed their hand away, they'd just push mine away in return. (D-01-026)*

### **Changes in Sexual Orientation: Blurred Boundaries and No Clear Answers**

Interviewee C recalled mutual masturbation with a male friend multiple times while in a dormitory. However, the friend later married a woman, leaving them confused about their past actions. The interviewee wondered whether sexual orientation was innate or shaped by societal norms, suggesting further research is needed.

*“I once engaged in mutual masturbation with a guy in our dorm at night, just for fun. But later, he got married. (He married a woman?) Yes, so I was like—huh? (So, you did it multiple times?) Yeah, but for me, I did it because I liked him. I'm sure I'm gay. But I don't know what he was thinking. (C-01-035)*

### **Conflicting Views Among Sexual Offenders: Mutual Contempt**

Interviewee A observed that, in prison, offenders judge each other despite committing similar crimes. For example, those who assaulted adult women look down on those who abused children. Even religious figures attempting rehabilitation may distance themselves upon learning of an inmate's crime.

*“Some people just want to prove they are saints. I've seen this too often in prison. Someone once told me, ‘How could you do that to a child who hasn't even grown pubic hair?’ But that person was also a sex offender, and it was his second time in prison! Some priests claim they want to reform us, but when they find out we're sex offenders, they disappear the next day. One guy sexually assaulted women, so I wrote him a note saying, ‘You and I are just sewer rats; you just think you're a cleaner one.’ (A-03-059)*

### **The Influence of Testosterone: Sexual Needs Overcoming Gender Preferences**

Interviewee A described how a boy, despite having a girlfriend, still engaged in oral sex with them out of sympathy.

*“(Wasn't one of the boys you abused in a relationship with a girl?) Yes! He had a girlfriend, but he pitied me for ‘having an illness’ and allowed me to perform oral sex on him.” (A-03-066)*

Interviewee A remembers that one of the boys, after having intimate interactions with him, would engage in oral sex and touch the genitals of his peers in the middle of the night. The researcher is unsure whether the boy was truly homosexual, as he claimed. However, if the boy was originally heterosexual but became homosexual due to experiencing sexual pleasure and satisfaction from these acts, then this would not be a naturally occurring sexual orientation. At that time, the boy's mind and body were not yet fully mature. Regardless of whether he would later have normal heterosexual relationships, his actions caused an irreversible harm to the other boys.

*“(So, do you think that any of the males you sexually assaulted had homosexual tendencies? Or were they already homosexual?) I do recall one. After having these experiences with me, he would also touch other boys' genitals and perform oral sex in the middle of the night. Other children even called him a pervert. (Why do you think he behaved that way?) He was simply homosexual. Maybe he felt that being with me gave him a pleasurable sexual experience, so he wanted to find another person to try it with.” (A-03-067, A-03-068)*

### **Distinctions Between Fluid Sexuality, Homosexuality, and Heterosexuality: Separating Sex from Love**

Some individuals do not fit into rigid sexual orientation labels, most people identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. However, a small number of individuals may waver or remain uncertain, which is referred to as "questioning/flux sexuality," without a clear classification (Wang, 2010). The researcher reflected that 13-14-year-old boys are in a phase of sexual exploration, where sex and love can be separate.

*"Do you believe that people exist on a spectrum, with absolute homosexuality on one end, absolute heterosexuality on the other, and a wide range in between—leaning more towards homosexuality, leaning more towards heterosexuality, and right in the middle being bisexuality? People are individuals, so their sexual preferences and perceptions are unique to them. Everyone is different. That's why there are very few people who are completely homosexual or completely heterosexual. Besides, the kids later had girlfriends—they told me that themselves. (So, there are very few people who are completely homosexual or completely heterosexual?) Yes! Anything is possible; it just depends on how you guide them—eliminating a certain kind of social morality.” (A-01-029, A-01-030)*

Interviewee A clearly believes that the reason the boys he performed oral sex on engaged in these intimate acts with him is because it was simply a "temporary" part of their development process. He explains that, since they later had girlfriends, he did not hesitate

to ask them to close their eyes during the act and imagine the girl they liked.

*"I would ask them to close their eyes and imagine the girl they liked. They would also become erect. They all had girlfriends. And I think this is just a temporary part of them. Maybe after entering society, they'll meet a girl they like even more, and only then will they realize that their true preference is like this. But before that, I would interpret it as part of a process." (A-01-050)*

Interviewee D states that currently, he only likes himself and does not want to be in a relationship with either a man or a woman. He feels that he is doing well in life right now. Although he does not deny that he likes women at the moment, and he has never liked men, he does not consider himself to have an absolute preference for women or men at this stage.

*"(So, if I ask about your sexual orientation, you like women, right?) Right now, I only like myself. I don't want to be in a relationship with anyone. I feel like I'm doing great on my own.(So, you like women?) Yes! At the moment, it seems that way. (Have you ever liked men?) No. Haven't they said there's no absolute? So, I think at this stage, I don't have any absolute,haha." (D-01-025)*

### **Victimizing the Image for Sympathy: The Victim Becomes the Perpetrator**

Interviewee A clearly states that the boy, due to experiencing pleasurable sexual sensations with him, may end up doing the same thing—sexually assaulting other boys.

*"(Do you think he will become a child sex offender later on?) It's possible—so society is pitiful—it will lead to more victims." (A-03-069)*

Interviewee A reveals to the researcher that most perpetrators of child sexual abuse are homosexual, but he also mentions that one child sex offender, in a therapy group, told the therapist that he had childhood trauma and had gone from being a victim to becoming a perpetrator. However, Interviewee A believes that this was merely an attempt to gain the therapist's sympathy. He suspects the person might have used homosexuality as an excuse, but he was likely a pedophile.

*"(Do you observe that most of the people in prison are homosexual?) Yes, but I've also seen one person who said he was sexually assaulted by his cousin. However, what he told the therapist differs from how we interacted with him and what we saw at the factory. Because, you know—people want to present the best side of themselves, to play the victim and make society pity them. So, whether he was sexually assaulted, I must question that. I don't rule out that he's not actually homosexual, or that he may be using homosexuality as an excuse when, in reality, he's a pedophile." (A-03-070)*

### **Analysis of Characteristics of Child Sexual Offenders**

The researcher conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the life histories and criminal processes of various types of child sexual offenders. The study sought to investigate the stages of gender identity and sexual orientation development in child sexual offenders. The core themes of four child sexual offenders were organized into a table to present the content of each theme, as shown in Table 2:

**Table 2***Summary Table of Core Themes for Each Type*

	(A) Retaliatory type	(B) Consensual type	(C) High-Functioning type	(D) Withdrawn type
Parenting Style	Grew up with traditional views, homosexual identity not accepted	Open and Democratic Family	After making mistakes, discipline shifted from strict to open and parents avoided discussing LGBTQ+ topics.	Suppresses emotions and does not share personal thoughts.
Childhood Trauma	Mimicking boys, a Defensive mentality to hide the true self	none	Due to obesity, was bullied in elementary school and forced to take off his pants.	Nearly became a victim of forced sexual assault during vocational school.
Interpersonal Relationships	Attached to social groups to avoid being bullied	Loyal to friends, sticks together Through tough times	Prefers to maintain friendships rather than lose them.	Stands by friends in difficult situations.
History of Alcohol and Drug Addiction	Socializing by drinking alcohol, exposure to drugs in nightclubs	Socializes by drinking alcohol, does not use drugs	Smokes cigarettes, social drinks with friends but does not use drugs.	Drink socially but stopped due to strict drunk driving penalties.
Sexual Preferences	Appearance-based preferences, no specific age range for males, prefers those who are childish, mischievous, and have short hair, but emphasizes disliking mature or effeminate men	Accepts boys around the same age or younger who do not have pubic hair, but cannot accept men who are fatter or older than himself	Dislikes feminine-looking men and overly stereotypical gay appearances; prefers average body types, skin color does not matter as long as the person is cute age difference is not an issue.	Interested in older women because they tend to be wealthier.
Sexual Orientation	Homosexual type	Bisexual Type	Homosexual type, "Fourth Love Type" (heterosexual dynamic with a dominant female and submissive	Currently has no absolute preference for men or women.

	(A) Retaliatory type	(B) Consensual type	(C) High-Functioning type (male).	(D) Withdrawn type
Male Child's Sexual Concepts	Experienced pleasure and gradually sought out more encounters	Takes photos of self-pleasure, openly admits to using a sex toy to stimulate his anus for sexual climax	Doesn't mind being touched, and out of curiosity, will also initiate touching the other person's genitals	Denies. Believes that, as an adult, he should educate young boys.
Establishment of Sexual Relationship	Mutual gratification, exchange of benefits	No coercion involved; the relationship is consensual	Hides his sexual identity and prioritizes self-satisfaction.	The boy involved was the son of his sister-in-law and her ex-husband.
Personality	Cognitive distortion, loss of control, leading to sexual addiction	Poor self-control, with a lucky mentality	Self-centered, prioritizes personal feelings.	Aware of the coercive nature of his actions and determined not to repeat mistakes
Watching Child pornography	Preference for watching gay men, black men, young men, and gay live-streaming on the internet. Does not watch pornographic videos involving forced or harmful acts	Prefers Asian pornography featuring both heterosexual and homosexual content, dislike European or American porn involving coercion	Prefers Asian homosexual adult content. Frequently saves photos or watches sexual videos from Twitter. Views baby-faced men's photos but only scrolls through them without saving	Prefers heterosexual adult content from both Asia and the West with romantic storylines and well-built actors.
The Purpose of Easing Sexual Desires	Enjoys the feeling of unity when ingesting semen. Engages in retaliatory anal sex as a way of expressing love, without coercion	Watches pornography and engages in casual gay encounters solely to satisfy sexual desires	Addicted to the curiosity of touching. Even if unable to continue a friendship, remains unwilling to express his feelings to the other party.	Handles his own sexual needs due to a busy work schedule with little free time.

## **Results and Discussion of the Four Types of Boy Molesters**

This section summarizes and organizes the core themes identified in the case analysis of the four types of child sexual offenders. The similarities and differences among these core themes are then compared, followed by a discussion based on relevant theories from the literature review.

### **Parenting Styles and Childhood Trauma**

#### *Common Themes Among A, C, and D*

The retaliatory type (A), high-functioning type (C), and withdrawn type (D) share common themes related to parenting styles and childhood trauma.

For both A (retaliatory) and C (high-functioning) offenders, their parents strongly opposed homosexuality. Even after same-sex marriage was legalized, traditional beliefs persisted, leading their families to avoid discussions about LGBTQ+ topics. As only sons, they were expected to carry on the family lineage.

The retaliatory offender (A) exclusively fantasized about young boys. Growing up in a conservative society where homosexuality was not accepted, he developed a deep-seated fear, resulting in psychological trauma and childhood distress.

The high-functioning offender (C) experienced childhood bullying due to obesity. He admitted that this trauma was linked to his later sexual offenses against boys, suggesting a possible defense mechanism mindset.

The withdrawn offender (D) nearly became a victim of sexual assault during his vocational school years. He acknowledged that this trauma was likely related to his later offenses, as he was uncertain about how to process or cope with the experience.

As Levant et al. (1996) suggested, men who conform to traditional masculine norms and demean femininity may develop psychological issues as a result.

#### *B's Uniqueness*

The B (consensual type) offender was the only interviewee raised in a democratic and open single-parent household. According to his account, he did not experience childhood trauma.

Identifying as bisexual, he stated that the rise of same-sex marriage made him feel no particular need to pursue open relationships. His family took a liberal stance on homosexuality, assuring him that there were many LGBTQ+ individuals in society and that he should neither overthink nor worry about others' opinions.

However, when it came to his friends, he only disclosed his attraction to women. This suggests that while he was comfortable with his sexuality within his family, he was still influenced by societal norms and peer expectations.

As noted by Chu Ruei-Ling (1983) and Su Shan-Yun & Huang Kuang-Kuo (2003), individuals with similar concerns often describe their struggles as a matter of "saving face."

## **Impact of Child Molesters on Interpersonal Relationships**

### *Common Themes Among B, C, and D*

The B (consensual type), C (high-functioning type), and D (withdrawn type) offender maintained good family relationship even after committing their crimes. Their families provided positive support, sometimes even encouragement, with the belief that family scandals should not be publicized to preserve family integrity.

Most of these offenders drank alcohol socially, mainly during gatherings with friends. The D (withdrawn type) offender avoided drinking due to the severe legal consequences of a previous DUI violation.

The study also sought to determine whether these individuals had a history of mental illness, substance abuse, or alcohol dependence to assess the potential causes of their offenses and the likelihood of recidivism. Preliminary findings indicate that their alcohol consumption was primarily a habitual form of leisure rather than an addiction.

### *A's Uniqueness*

The A (retaliatory type) offender, in contrast, became estranged from his family after his release. His relationship with his siblings became distant, family ties weakened, and conversations decreased.

He consumed alcohol frequently, not for enjoyment, but as a means of coping with emotional distress. Notably, he drank twice to numb the pain of a breakup, but instead of alleviating his suffering, it worsened his emotional turmoil.

Furthermore, he was the only interviewee who openly admitted to using drugs before committing the crime.

## **Sexual Preferences and Orientation**

### *Common Themes in A and C*

The A (retaliatory type) and C (high-functioning type) offenders both identify as homosexual men, naturally attracted to males and uninterested in females.

However, the C (high-functioning type) offender, despite being homosexual, admitted that he could also be attracted to androgynous-looking women.

A notable similarity between A and C is their strong preference for physical appearance—they are highly attracted to boys with handsome or cute faces and average physiques. This aligns with the looks-focused" mentality commonly referred to as the "appearance association".

Regarding age preference, the A (retaliatory type) offender showed a preference for middle school boys aged 14 and below, particularly those in the first year of middle school or the last year of elementary school. Similarly, the C (high-functioning type) offender's victims were 13 to 14 years old at the time of the offense.

This age range coincides with Blanchard's (2009) research, which found that the most common age of victims in sexual offenses is around 14 years old.

*Common Themes in Type B and Type D*

Both the Type B (Consensual) and Type D (Withdrawn) offenders have had sexual relations with adult women. According to Groth (1982), in relation to the victim, both offenders had prior sexual relationships with women, but their main targets were young boys. They also displayed parental role behaviors in front of the victim. For instance, the role dynamic between the Type B offender and the victim resembled that of an older brother and younger brother, while the relationship between the Type D offender and the victim was akin to that of an uncle and nephew.

**Sexual Concepts and Relationship Formation of Male Child Sexual Offenders***Unique Characteristics of Type B*

The Type B (Consensual) offender stated that although he had relationships with males, he did not fully like males. He is interested in both males and females, identifying as bisexual. However, he recognizes that society tends to be more accepting of heterosexual relationships, aligning with the gender role orientation described by Ye Guanghui et al. (2006). A unique feature of his behavior is that his intimate actions with the male child victims are unrelated to whether the victims have pubic hair, and the victims are younger compared to other types, with one victim being as young as 11 years old.

*Unique Characteristics of Type D*

The Type D (Withdrawn) offender mentioned that currently, he only likes himself. Although he has had relationships with females, he has never been attracted to males. He stated that he does not have a clear preference for either males or females at this stage, which aligns with Wang Zhen Wei's (2010) concept of "fluid sexuality." He indicated that most people identify as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, while a minority remain uncertain.

**Personal Construction of Sexual Concepts and Sexual Relationships in Male Child Sexual Offenders***Common Themes of A and B*

A (Retaliatory type) respondent mentioned that the victim, a boy, came to his house for a one-night stay. The sexual act occurred naturally, and the boy left the next day. This was described as trading one's body for safety and protection, likened to "a deal with the devil" to receive equal compensation. B (Consensual-type)\*\* respondent stated that when the boy had sexual needs, he would call to request sexual encounters. Both parties were simply fulfilling their sexual desires. As Zhou Huangzhi and Wen Rongguang (2018) described, aggressive and abusive offenders may have sexual needs and impulses toward young children. From this, it can be understood that male child sexual offenders engage in an exchange of security and benefits through sexual abuse.

A (Retaliatory type) respondent stated that the incident was discovered by the victim's family. The boy himself told his friends about the incident, and afterward, the victim's

family strongly criticized the perpetrator. On the other hand, B (Consensual-type) respondent mentioned that after the boy's father learned of the incident, he immediately demanded five million for a settlement. The researcher found that the victim's family had intense criticism and sought compensation after the incident.

#### *Common Themes of C and D*

C (High-functioning) respondent said that the incident might not have been discovered if not for the boy's phone being confiscated by a teacher. The teacher found the boy's chat records, which revealed that he frequently skipped class and went out to play, which led to a report. When social workers inquired, the boy honestly explained the events, prompting intervention from the District Prosecutor's Office. In rural areas, which are more conservative, the victim's family was not willing to file a lawsuit, believing that the genital touching between them was consensual. The victim's family still expressed concern for the perpetrator and his family, advising the perpetrator's father to be cautious, as the police had been asking about him.

D (Withdrawn-type) respondent revealed that the boy often touched his private parts, regardless of the time or situation. He discussed this with his sister-in-law, and other family members also observed it but felt the boy was too young to take action. His sister-in-law wanted to keep the family intact, so the respondent did not want to escalate the issue. It wasn't until the boy entered elementary school that a nurse noticed the behavior during a health education class and reported it. Subsequently, social services required the respondent to move out and prohibited any contact. At the time of the court ruling, the boy cried and begged the judge not to convict him, feeling guilty because he thought it was just a misunderstanding. After being released from prison, the boy would shout when he saw the respondent, but his sister-in-law would tell him not to approach, and the boy repeatedly asked why. Later, after working in real estate, the respondent took his sister-in-law to view houses, and the family did not blame him for the incident. The researcher analyzed that the families of C (High-functioning) and D (Withdrawn-type) respondents sympathized with the offenders, believing that the incident was consensual. Although they were shocked and regretful, due to conservative cultural norms and the desire to avoid public embarrassment, they chose not to press charges and even wrote letters to the judge asking for leniency.

### **Watching Child Pornography and the Purpose of Relieving Sexual Desires**

#### *BC Common Theme*

B (Consensual-type) and C respondents stated that they both watch Asian adult heterosexual or homosexual pornography, enjoying romanticized content and disliking forced scenarios.

#### *AD Uniqueness*

A (Retaliatory type) and D (High-functioning) respondents both preferred mainstream

pornographies. They stated that it didn't matter whether the content involved men or boys, if it matched the characteristics they liked, they would watch it. They favored romantic, consensual storylines where both parties willingly participated and disliked coercive scenarios involving power dynamics.

## Discussion

The researcher adopted Mohr's (1962) early typology of child sexual offenders, which categorizes offenders as heterosexual or homosexual pedophiles. Based on the modern classifications by Groth (1979, 1982)—including the “regressed” and “fixated” types—and according to Lin (2018), in Taiwan, these types constitute approximately 95% of all child sexual offenders. Consequently, this typology serves as the primary conceptual framework for the present study.

Although studies by Contour et al. (2004) suggest that male pedophiles exhibit widespread cognitive deficits relative to age-matched peers, practical feedback from professionals indicates that many sexual offenders are highly educated, high-functioning, self-efficacious, and older, showing no notable differences in overall functioning compared to the general population. However, they exhibit poor sexual inhibition and control, leading to sexual offenses. This observation contrasts with Contour et al.'s findings regarding offenders with lower IQ and academic achievement. Regarding psychological mechanisms, the researcher referenced Wolf's (1985) sexual offense addiction cycle to clarify the concrete patterns and trajectories of offenses, which provides valuable guidance for practitioners in cognitive-behavioral interventions with male child sexual offenders. Freud's (1902) five-stage psychosexual development theory also indicates that children who experience frustration or trauma between ages 6 and 12 may develop regressed or fixated responses, which could potentially result in later offending or homosexual pedophilia. Similarly, Cai and Zhu (2004) proposed that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can lead to flashbacks of past sexual trauma, as well as personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder, characterized by emotional instability, irritability, and unstable interpersonal and affective expression. Based on this, the researcher hypothesizes a strong link between sexual trauma and sexual offending, suggesting that victims of sexual abuse may replicate their experiences as perpetrators. Therefore, exploring the psychological mechanisms of gender identity and sexual orientation can elucidate the potential distortions resulting from early-life trauma.

Lips (1993) proposed several psychological perspectives related to gender identity, including psychoanalytic, evolutionary, social learning, cognitive development, and gender schema theories. Bandura (1977) argued that gender role expectations and gender identity develop through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. For most individuals, imitation of opposite-sex attraction and gender role behavior is positively reinforced. In contrast, for male child sexual offenders, such imitation is distorted, reflecting negative

reinforcement from replicating past abusive behavior. Garneksi and Diekstra (1997) further suggested that gender identity is related to anxiety, the expression of masculinity, and the reenactment of victimization experiences. Accordingly, this study includes gender identity and sexual orientation as research variables, referencing domestic and international literature to clarify their developmental relationships among male child sexual offenders, with the aim of understanding the true nature of this population.

Ogarui (1996) indicated that traditional male roles and patriarchal thinking embed numerous prohibitive messages, which shape cultural values—especially male-dominated cultural norms—and influence boys through extreme gender hierarchies and authoritative parenting. These norms pressure children to conform to traditional gender identity and sexual orientation. In contrast, male child sexual offenders in repressive and closed environments may develop defensive mechanisms of resistance, expressing rebellion against male dominance. It is hypothesized that such offenders may engage in sexual offending as a form of retaliation against patriarchal authority (reflecting RC in Transactional Analysis). Additionally, overly restrictive environments can lead to distorted sexual preferences when individuals move to different contexts. Gu (2009) noted the common misconception in traditional society that male victims experience less trauma than female victims. Through observations in group therapy sessions, the researcher found that many male child sexual offenders were themselves previously victims. This study aims to compare differences in gender identity and sexual orientation between male child sexual offenders, general sexual offenders, and violent offenders, and to examine differences in intervention approaches and strategies.

Freeman-Longo (1995) suggested that the most effective treatment approach involves addressing the recidivism cycle. Lin (1998) further proposed that understanding the recidivism cycle helps offenders avoid high-risk situations and allows practitioners to discuss feasible prevention strategies. The recidivism cycle includes four stages: escalating risk (fantasy/arousal, sexual excitement—often involving pornography, planning sexual offenses, and executing offenses); offense enactment; rationalization (fear, guilt, or denial, including claims of never having offended); and normalization (returning to daily life, compensating for deviant behavior through work or routine, experiencing boredom). Observations of group therapy revealed that male child sexual offenders purposefully and systematically approach potential victims, increasing opportunities for offending, while rationalizing past behaviors and denying coercion, claiming that all interactions were consensual.

Given the limited understanding of male child sexual offenders, this study employs qualitative interviews and questionnaires to identify offender characteristics, investigate treatment approaches, and examine intervention strategies.

## Conclusion and Suggestion

**Table 3**

*Summary Table of Typologies of Male Child Sexual Offenders and Key Psychological Mechanisms*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Key Features</b>	<b>Psychological Mechanism</b>
Retaliatory Type	Offense motivated by revenge or rebellion	<p><b>Prohibited Messages Preventing Self-Expression:</b> Family discipline and attachment emphasis can suppress personal feelings, leading to a "mask-wearing" defense mechanism.</p> <p><b>Self-Protective Mechanism:</b> Offenders attempt to satisfy sexual desires while conforming to societal and familial expectations. This creates a protective mechanism to avoid legal consequences while fulfilling fantasies.</p>
Consensual Type	Offense perceived as consensual by the offender	<p><b>Contradictory Mindset:</b> Offender views the act as consensual, believes they will escape legal responsibility, yet is concerned about causing physical harm.</p> <p><b>Concern for Others' Judgments:</b> Post-offense, offenders hide bisexual tendencies and limit sexual engagement to women due to fear of social judgment.</p>
High-Functioning Type	Offender exhibits adaptive social and cognitive functioning	<p><b>Self-Protective Mechanism:</b> Family adopts enlightened disciplinary strategies post-offense, improving the offender's support system.</p> <p><b>Issues in Heterosexual Relationships:</b> Unique relational dynamics, e.g., male-female role reversals between partners, remain underexplored in research.</p>
Withdrawn Type	Offender displays avoidance, low social engagement	<p><b>Curiosity Due to Insufficient Sex Education:</b> Lack of proper sex education and family dysfunction allows the offender to engage in sexual exploration and commit abuse.</p> <p><b>Tendency for Self-Harm:</b> Childhood trauma</p>

		may lead victims to become offenders, acting out as revenge or coping mechanisms.
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## **Recommendations for Future Research**

### **Deepening Qualitative Research on Different Types of Male Child Sexual Offenders**

This study employed convenience sampling, with participants recruited from local health bureaus and correctional institutions, serving only as an exploratory study and not representing all types of offenders. Findings focused on four types (retaliatory, consensual, high-functioning, withdrawn) to illustrate differences among types. Future research is recommended to conduct in-depth qualitative analyses for each offender type to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their psychological and behavioral characteristics.

### **Expanding Sample Sources and Populations**

In addition to the eight specialized correctional institutions included in this study, future research should incorporate cases from other national agencies, and consider the minority of female perpetrators against boys to enhance the generalizability of findings.

Given societal prejudice against sexual minorities, many homosexual individuals conceal their sexual orientation for self-protection; thus, researchers should strengthen interview techniques to obtain more accurate and authentic information.

### **Increasing Sample Size and Depth of Interviews**

This study only interviewed four male child sexual offenders, with a focus on psychological processes and criminal motivations due to time and sample constraints.

Future qualitative studies should increase the number of participants, expand interview scope, and explore the psychological mechanisms and criminal patterns of each type to present a more comprehensive portrait of male child sexual offenders.

### **Promoting Social Awareness and Reducing Discrimination**

Findings from qualitative interviews can help correct societal misconceptions about homosexuality. Research should aim to achieve the best possible results while safeguarding participant rights and minimizing risks.

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# 性侵男童者性傾向發展之質性研究

廖慧婷

## 摘要

**前言：**Finkelhor(1986)發現遭受比自己年長男性性侵害的男童成年後變成同性戀的傾向為未受侵害者的四倍多。但至今尚無明確研究可說明男童遭受性侵害及性取向之間是如何關聯。故研究者推論曾遭受性侵害可能是造成性侵男童者在性別認同上產生混淆，使其認為自己有同性戀的傾向，並且傾向對男童有愛戀的心。研究者期待藉著本研究來探索可能的心理機制，及找出如何改善的方法。

**目的：**本研究探究性侵男童者的性取向之發展議題，從傳統社會中對於性侵男童者等同男性同性戀之迷思，深入探討性別認同與性取向之差異，並分析性侵男童者潛在的心理創傷、性取向、性侵動機等心理歷程，擬定合適的處遇策略。

**方法：**本研究採質性研究。招募 3 名性侵男童者分別為大林慈濟醫院、嘉義縣政府衛生局、雲林縣政府衛生局，同時作為預試問卷及半結構式深度訪談的參與者。

**結果：**依據性侵男童者之四個類型：（1）報復型實施心理治療（2）合意型實施性教育（3）高功能型實施性別教育及法治教育（4）退縮型實施心理治療處遇創傷。

**關鍵字：**性侵男童者、性別認同、性取向、心理機制