

# ABSTRACT

Pedophilia and the victimization of children represent pervasive and deeply concerning social issues, necessitating urgent attention due to their profound impact on societal well-being and the welfare of innocent victims. This research project seeks to investigate the psychosocial factors contributing to pedophilia, develop a diagnostic assessment tool, and devise an intervention strategy. The project is structured into three distinct studies. Study 1 focuses on the development of a culturally appropriate tool designed to assess pedophilic tendencies among convicted child sex offenders. At first semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts and convicted child sex abusers to explore the psycho-social and sexual determinants that result in the development of pedophilic traits. In the next phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts and convicted child sex offenders to explore the psycho-social and sexual determinants contributing to the development of pedophilic traits. The sample comprised of 18 participants. Thematic analysis, in conjunction with an extensive literature review, was employed to generate 40 items. Subsequently, five independent reviewers evaluated these 40 items, leading to the retention of 22 items based on their feedback. To establish the psychometric properties of the tool, a sample of 390 male child sex offenders aged 18 years and older was recruited. Data was collected from different jails through purposive sampling. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was carried out by using orthogonal rotation (varimax) on 22 items as the factor analysis extraction technique through SPSS. In addition, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed, and model was fit on 16 item final scale. Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient of the 16 item Pedophilia Assessment Scale (PAS) met the required standards with an internal consistency ( $\alpha = .64$ ).

Second study aims to explore the predictors of pedophilia (childhood sexual and physical abuse, dark tetrad personality traits, and aggression) in convicted child sex abusers. The study employed a cross-sectional research design and non-probability, purposive sampling techniques. A total of 275 convicted child sex abusers of age 18 years and above were taken under sections of 376 and 377. Data was collected from various district jails of Punjab. The mean age of the sample group was 30 years ( $M = 29.88$ ,  $SD=2.73$ ). Measuring instrument include an indigenous constructed Pedophilic Assessment Scale (PAS), Aggression Questionnaire (Perry et al., 1992), Short Dark Tetrad Scale (SD4; [Paulhus et al., 2020](#)) and Sexual and Physical Abuse Questionnaire ([Kooiman et al., 2002](#)). Statistical analyses revealed a significant positive association between childhood sexual abuse and pedophilic interest. Furthermore, pedophilic interest was found to be positively correlated with various subscales of the Dark Tetrad personality traits, including Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism. Additionally, a positive relationship was observed between pedophilic interest and different forms of aggression, including physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. Hierarchical multiple linear regression analyses identified early-life sexual trauma, three of the four Dark Tetrad personality traits (narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism), and various forms of aggression (including violent behavior, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility) as significant predictors of pedophilic interest. Among these variables, childhood sexual abuse emerged as the most robust predictor of pedophilic interest. Mediation analysis demonstrated that aggression significantly mediates the relationship between childhood sexual and physical abuse, as well as narcissism, psychopathy, sadism, and pedophilic intent. This finding suggests that increases in these variables are associated with elevated levels of aggression, which subsequently contributes to an increase in pedophilic interest among convicted child sex offenders. Independent samples t-tests revealed that unmarried men exhibited higher levels of Machiavellianism compared to their married counterparts. Additionally, unemployed males reported greater experiences of childhood sexual and

physical abuse, higher Machiavellian traits, and increased pedophilic interest relative to employed males. Illiterate pedophiles experienced more physical abuse than their literate counterparts. Child sex abusers from rural areas reported higher levels of childhood sexual and physical abuse compared to those from urban areas. Furthermore, pedophiles with a history of childhood abuse were more likely to target girls rather than boys. All significant findings demonstrated a medium effect size. One-way ANOVA revealed a significant age-related disparity in the Dark Tetrad personality traits and pedophilic interests. Specifically, mean scores for Machiavellianism, sadism, and pedophilic interest were significantly higher among young adults compared to middle-aged adults. Additionally, a Chi-square test demonstrated a significant association between childhood sexual abuse and the gender of the victim, with females being disproportionately affected. However, no significant correlation was observed between childhood physical abuse and the gender of the victim.

The third study employed a small-n research design to evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) in mitigating aggression and pedophilic tendencies among two participants diagnosed with pedophilia. Analysis of pre- and post-treatment data demonstrated a general reduction in pedophilic tendencies, as well as a notable decrease in aggression levels attributable to CBT. The findings were contextualized within the cultural framework of Pakistan, with a discussion of their implications for addressing pedophilia in this socio-cultural environment. The study also outlined potential avenues for future research and intervention strategies, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches to enhance therapeutic outcomes.

**Keywords:** pedophilia, child sexual abuse, paraphilic disorder, childhood sexual and physical abuse, dark tetrad personality traits, aggression, cognitive behavior therapy