

Analyzing the Experiences, Consequences, and Preventive Strategies of Online Sexual Abuse from the Perspective of Parents: A Grounded Theory Study

Hadi. Gholamrezaei¹, Mohammad Reza. Falsafinejad^{2*}, Anahita. Khodabakhshi-Koolaei³

¹ Department of Counseling, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

² Department of Assessment and Measurement, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

³ Department of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Khatam University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: falsafinejad@atu.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Gholamrezaei, H., Falsafinejad, M. R., & Khodabakhshi-Koolaei, A. (2026). Analyzing the Experiences, Consequences, and Preventive Strategies of Online Sexual Abuse from the Perspective of Parents: A Grounded Theory Study. *Journal of Assessment and Research in Applied Counseling*, 8(1), 1-15.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.jarac.2183>



© 2026 the authors. Published by KMAN Publication Inc. (KMANPUB), Ontario, Canada. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to analyze the experiences, consequences, and preventive strategies of online sexual abuse from the perspective of parents.

Methods and Materials: This study was conducted using a qualitative grounded-theory approach in 2023. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 parents who were selected via snowball sampling. Data analysis revealed 3 main categories: online abuse as a traumatic experience, awareness as the key to overcoming problems, and traumatic environment and consequences.

Findings: The data revealed 7 axial codes (34 open codes): causal conditions (parenting style, public institutions and organizations, social customs and culture, and developmental changes); contextual conditions (ineffective shame and ineffective parenting); intervening conditions (parents' traumatic behaviors); strategies (professional and communication strategies); consequences (taking care of child abuse), and the core phenomenon (online abuse as trauma; unpleasant psychological experiences and obsessive behaviors). The findings of the present study indicated that the most important consequences of online child sexual abuse include premature puberty, isolation, experiencing anxiety and panic, aggression, academic failure, posting photos and videos, masturbation, sex chatting, satisfying sexual curiosity, focusing on sexual issues in life, and seeking attention and approval.

Conclusion: The interviews with parents showed that the most important strategies for preventing online child sexual abuse include raising parents' awareness of children's developmental changes, teaching sexual issues, teaching life skills, updating information, consulting with experts, empathy with the child, monitoring the child, being an active listener, and setting limits on internet use. The insights from this study can help parents, school counselors, and families develop effective strategies to prevent online child sexual abuse.

Keywords: online sexual abuse, lived experiences, consequences and preventive strategies.

1. Introduction

The Internet enables different people to interact and communicate with each other immediately (Sethi & Ghatak, 2018). According to Kemp Global Digital Center (2022), about 62.5% of people around the world have access to the Internet, and about 58% of the world's population are users of various social networks. Globally, it is estimated that 75% of children aged 12 to 17 use the Internet regularly, mainly for educational and entertainment purposes. However, access to the Internet, despite its many advantages, exposes children to abuse such as stalking, cyberbullying, blackmail, and sexual exploitation. A multi-country study conducted by UNICEF (2022) showed that 80% of children are exposed to online sexual abuse and cyberbullying.

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) has become a big problem in the 21st century, and despite the increased awareness and efforts of governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), there are still alarming statistics in this field. Westlake (2020) has stated that online sexual abuse includes images, videos, and texts that depict babies, children, and young people in sexual situations and extreme sexual assault (Westlake, 2020). Child online sexual abuse involves displaying, collecting, compiling, and distributing materials related to child sexual abuse for personal sexual gratification, financial gain, interaction with other pedophiles, participation in online live streams of child sexual abuse, and grooming to encourage children to engage in online sexual act and later continue it offline and in real life (Özçalık & Atakoğlu, 2021). Child grooming refers to a relationship based on trust between a minor and an adult who uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) to solicit and exploit young people to provide online and offline child sexual abuse acts (Kloess et al., 2014).

The Internet Watch Foundation, a UK-based NGO, identified more than 153,000 new web pages containing child sexual abuse images in 2020, a 16% increase over 2019 (IWF, 2021). In addition, Johnson et al. (2019) studied 5715 children and showed that 6% of children had online sexual behavior at least once during the last year, and 32% of these children had experienced at least pressure, persuasion, or compulsion for sexual abuse (Jonsson et al., 2019). They also reported that adolescents who experienced online sexual abuse had poorer mental health and were victimized at least at the same level as adolescents who experienced offline sexual abuse. Numerous surveys and meta-analyses have examined different samples of people who have been

sexually abused with different methods and have concluded that victims experience a wide range of medical, psychological, and behavioral disorders (Carr et al., 2020; Hailes et al., 2019), including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sexual problems, high-risk sexual behavior, suicidal behaviors, re-victimization, substance misuse, fear, anxiety, poor self-esteem, long-term mental, emotional, and physical injuries, and interpersonal problems (Carr et al., 2020; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2023). To prevent online sexual abuse, it is important to identify potential risk factors. A few studies have addressed the risk factors for online sexual abuse against children. Various studies have suggested that age and gender are the most obvious risk factors, and girls are victims more than boys (DeSantisteban & Gámez-Guadix, 2018). Moreover, older children (approximately 13 to 17 years old) are more victimized than younger children (Montiel et al., 2016). There are indications that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, as well as youth with developmental disorders, may be at greater risk for sexual abuse. Other risk factors for online sexual abuse are low self-esteem, low life satisfaction, loneliness and depression, online risk-taking (sharing personal information and interacting with strangers), and offline risk-taking (e.g., drinking alcohol), problematic family relations, problems at school, online harassment, and previous abuse experiences (Jonsson et al., 2019). Besides, some studies point to the role of demographic factors and state that girls are more exposed to online sexual abuse than boys (Assink et al., 2019). In contrast, some studies have shown no gender difference in victimization (Pedersen et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2022). It has also been found that sexual minority adolescents in general were more likely to be sexually abused online (Pedersen et al., 2022). However, an important thing to note is that given the national and international significance of child online abuse, and also considering the extensive use of smartphones and online access to various social platforms, adolescents' lives have been increasingly digitized (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Thus, there is an urgent need to develop and execute scientific and practical initiatives to prevent online sexual exploitation of children (Turner et al., 2023). As such, using a grounded theory approach, the present study sought to analyze the experiences, consequences, and preventive strategies of online sexual abuse from the perspective of parents.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study adopted a qualitative grounded theory design. The participants were selected from parents with children and adolescents who were internet users. The participants were selected using snowball sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents who had basic information about online child sexual abuse. The interviews continued until the collected data were saturated. The criteria for enrollment in the study were 1- willingness to attend the study, 2-having a child or adolescent, and 3- having at least a bachelor's degree (In order to be able to analyze the questions asked by the researcher well).

Since the main method of data collection in the grounded theory approach is the use of interviews, semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews are a common tool for data collection through direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to elicit the participants' experiences and opinions. While the same questions were asked of all the participants, sometimes additional questions were asked to elicit more accurate data. The interview questions were developed in advance and the participants were free to answer them as they wished. Examples of the interview questions were: What are the consequences and harms of online child sexual abuse? What is the role of parental neglect in the occurrence of online child sexual abuse? To comply with ethical protocols in this study, the interviews were conducted voluntarily. Moreover, the interviews were recorded with the participants' permission and they were also informed about the results of the study.

The qualitative grounded theory research design is an inductive approach to discovering concepts and identifying the underlying patterns from the data. Thus, in the present study, several parents who met the inclusion criteria were invited to attend the interviews. During the interviews, they were asked to introduce volunteer parents who had information about child online sexual abuse. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced herself and the research subject. The same questions were asked of all parents. Upon the completion of the interviews, the participants' statements were transcribed and reviewed for subsequent analysis. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants for conducting interviews and recording them, voluntary participation and withdrawal, and anonymity of their names, phone numbers, and addresses. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes (950 minutes in

total). The interviews were conducted face to face with the participants in the Omid Counselling Center in Birjand, South Khorasan Province, Iran for one month from October to November 2023. However, two interviews were conducted through video calls with prior arrangements with the participants.

The interview questions were centered around online child sexual abuse and the role of parental neglect in this phenomenon. The participants were 13 parents with children and adolescents in Birjand. They were selected through snowball sampling and the interviews continued until the data were saturated. Based on the mentioned technique (the saturation), the selection of sample people continued until the interview with new people did not provide more recent information to the researcher and was almost repetitive. The collected data were organized and reviewed and were then analyzed using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) three-step approach (Struss & Corbin, 1998). In the first step, the related themes were identified through open coding. In the second step, the extracted themes were clustered around the core phenomenon and were placed into the relevant categories. The axial coding process was performed in the third step and the related and similar themes were merged into main categories and subcategories. Finally, three main categories were extracted. Lincoln and Guba's criteria were used to check the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). The findings were reviewed by three professionals including; school counselor, psychiatrist, psychologist and methodologist to determine if they matched the previous studies on the sexual online. The data and findings were also reviewed by the participants to confirm their accuracy.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Self-Harming Behavior

The Self-Harm Inventory (SHI), developed by Sansone, Wiederman, and Sansone in 1998, is a widely used standardized tool designed to assess self-injurious and self-destructive behaviors. The inventory consists of 22 dichotomous (yes/no) items that inquire about behaviors such as cutting, burning, self-starving, and engaging in abusive relationships. Each endorsed item scores one point, with total scores ranging from 0 to 22. Higher scores indicate greater levels of self-harming behavior. The SHI does not include subscales but offers a cumulative score reflecting the severity and breadth of self-harming tendencies. Numerous studies have confirmed the SHI's strong internal

consistency, test-retest reliability, and concurrent validity with other clinical indicators of psychopathology (Abrazgah et al., 2024; Carvalho et al., 2023; Janiri et al., 2024; Kapatais et al., 2022; TaşÖren & GÜL, 2022).

2.2.2. Emotional Neglect

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – Short Form (CTQ-SF), created by Bernstein et al. in 1994, is a retrospective self-report instrument used to measure experiences of childhood maltreatment, including emotional neglect. The CTQ-SF contains 28 items divided into five subscales: emotional neglect, emotional abuse, physical neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. The emotional neglect subscale includes 5 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never true) to 5 (very often true), with higher scores indicating more severe neglect. The CTQ-SF also includes three validity items to assess potential minimization or denial. This tool has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with robust evidence of reliability and validity across diverse clinical and non-clinical populations in multiple studies (Babad et al., 2020; Edet et al., 2022; Janiri et al., 2024; TaşÖren & GÜL, 2022).

2.2.3. Internalized Shame

The Internalized Shame Scale (ISS), developed by Cook in 1988, is a comprehensive self-report measure designed to assess the intensity and frequency of internalized shame. The ISS consists of 30 items, of which 24 assess internalized shame and 6 serve as self-esteem indicators. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 4 (almost always), with higher scores indicating greater levels of internalized shame. The ISS provides a total score and does not include formal subscales beyond the distinction between shame and self-esteem items. Research has

consistently supported the scale's high internal consistency and construct validity, as well as its sensitivity to changes in shame-related psychological interventions, establishing it as a reliable and valid instrument for both clinical and research contexts (Kang & Jo, 2023; Mousavian, 2020).

2.3. Data analysis

For data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied. Initially, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27 to assess the bivariate relationships between the dependent variable (self-harming behavior) and each of the independent variables (emotional neglect and internalized shame). To test the hypothesized mediating model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed using AMOS version 21. This analysis allowed for the simultaneous examination of direct and indirect effects within the proposed model. Model fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Chi-square/df ratio were used to evaluate the adequacy of the structural model.

3. Findings and Results

The participants' demographic characteristics including occupation, education, number of children, marital status, age, and gender were analyzed in the quantitative phase of the study as displayed in Table 1. As can be seen, the participants were 7 females and 5 females, and all of them had at least two children. Six participants had a Ph.D. degree, 5 had a master's degree, and one person had a bachelor's degree. Most of the participants (n = 6) were in the age group of 40 to 50 years. Furthermore, all the participants were working in public departments and organizations.

Table 1

The participants' demographic characteristics of parents

Row	Gender	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Education	Occupation
1	Male	43	Married	2	Master's degree	School teacher
2	Female	45	Married	2	Ph.D.	Faculty member
3	Female	51	Married	3	Master's degree in clinical psychology	School teacher
4	Female	49	Married	2	Ph.D. in psychology	Counsellor
5	Female	48	Married	2	Ph.D. in psychology	Employee at the welfare department
6	Female	39	Married	3	Master's degree in general psychology	Employee at the welfare department

7	Female	37	Married	2	Master's degree in social work	Employee at the welfare department
8	Female	32	Married	2	Master's degree in nursing	Nurse
9	Male	51	Married	3	Ph.D. in primary education	Teacher
10	Male	48	Married	3	Ph.D. in Persian literature	Faculty member
11	Male	44	Married	2	Ph.D.	General practitioner
12	Male	39	Married	2	Master's degree in electrical engineering	Telecommunication engineer

The analysis of the data using the qualitative grounded theory approach revealed 3 main categories (online abuse as a traumatic experience, awareness as the key to overcoming

problems, and traumatic environment and consequences), 7 axial codes, and 34 open codes as detailed in Table 2:

Table 2

The main themes, subthemes, and codes extracted from the interviews with parents

Open codes	Axial codes	Selective codes
Premature puberty	Adverse psychological experiences	Online abuse as a traumatic experience
Isolation		
Anxiety and panic		
Aggression		
Academic failure		
Sharing personal photos and videos	Obsessive behaviors	
Masturbation		
Sex chatting		
Seeking variety to satisfy sexual curiosity		
Focus on sexual issues in life		
Raising parents' awareness about developmental changes	Update parents	Awareness as the key to overcoming problems
Sexual education		
Life skills training		
Updating information		
Seeking professional advice		
Empathy with the child	Promoting parent-child interactions	
Monitoring the child		
Interaction and conversation		
Active listening		
Restricting the use of the internet		
Parents' defensiveness against talking about sexual issues	Ineffective shame	Traumatic family environment
Shame about exposing sexual abuse		
Feeling insecure when talking about sexual issues		
Mistrust in parents	Ineffective parenting	
Permissive parenting style		
Parents' ignorance		
Parents' physical and emotional apathy		
Parental strictness	Parents' traumatic behaviors	
Parental blame		
Watching porn with the child		
Parents' sex in the presence of the child		
Sharing the child's photos		

The main categories and subcategories presented in Table 2 indicate the findings of the qualitative section on the nature of online child and adolescent sexual abuse covering the answers to research questions of the qualitative phase as elaborated in detail in the following:

What are the contextual conditions of online child sexual abuse?

The findings from the present study revealed that the contextual conditions of online child sexual abuse were the traumatic family environment (ineffective shame, the taboo of sexual issues in the community, parents' defensiveness against talking about sexual issues, and shame about

exposing sexual abuse), ineffective parenting (feeling insecure when talking about sexual issues, mistrust in parents, permissive parenting style, neglect of parents, and parents' physical and emotional apathy), and parents' traumatic behaviors (parental strictness, parental blame, watching porn with the child, parents' sex in the presence of the child, and sharing the child's photos).

A. Traumatic family environment

Ineffective shame: One of the issues that can contribute to online child sexual abuse is toxic or ineffective shame, especially as some sexual issues are considered taboo in the community: *"Unfortunately, you know that talking about sexual issues is still a taboo in our society, and many people still think that this is the biggest problem in our society. If we pretend that everything is OK in our country and there is no problem, we cannot come up with a good understanding of online sexual abuse of Generation Z in Iran"* (Participant #8).

In addition, some parents not only do not give sexual information to their children but also oppose talking about sexual issues: *"Some parents state that they don't need to talk to their children about sexual issues and believe that the children themselves will learn about these issues later on"* (Participant #6). *"Some parents think talking about sexual issues is a taboo and they are hesitant to discuss such matters with their children. Thus, if their child does not talk to them about sexual issues, they are happier because they do not know what to do"* (Participant #5).

The participants' statements also indicated that toxic shame is an underlying factor for more online child sexual abuse; Shame about the disclosure of sexual abuse may discourage a victim from talking about online and even offline abuse against him/her and their avoidance can further pave the way for more sexual abuse: *"A daughter was sexually abused by older sons in the family and they had shared her photos in online media. Her parents did not talk about it because they thought that it would be a disgrace to expose sexual abuse against their daughter. They cut their relationship with some relatives and took legal action against the offender"* (Participant #4).

B. Ineffective parenting

The parents in this study stated that their interactions with their children play a vital role in inducing a sense of security in their children to encourage them to talk about their traumatic experiences of sexual abuse because when children are sexually exploited they are afraid of talking about it to their parents and they think that they will not receive any support from the parents: *"Receptive parents*

provide support to their children to induce a feeling of security in them and solve their problems" (Participant #5). The participants also stated that some children do not trust their parents because they think that if they ask their parents for information about sexual issues, they may be judged by the parents: *"Some children learn about sexual issues from others. If parents talk to their children about these issues and provide necessary instructions to them, they will help the children to solve their problems, but many children don't have a close relationship with their parents and thus they don't feel free to talk to their parents about their sexual problems and online sexual abuse without stress and fear of being judged"* (Participant #6).

The data in this study indicated that compared to other parenting styles, the permissive parenting style has the greatest contributions to promoting online child sexual abuse: *"Permissive parents leave alone their children and they have no authority and control on their children and no affection for them"* (Participant #1). *"Permissive parents expose their children to many social evils and their children freely surf online social media and networks unchecked and unchallenged"* (Participant #9).

Parents' neglect and their physical and emotional apathy are other factors contributing to the occurrence of online child sexual abuse. Some parents (also called missing parents) mostly seek to provide only the necessities of life and neglect to provide emotional and psychological support to their children. Thus, their children's use of social networks without parental supervision can be harmful to them: *"Well, parents' permissiveness and their unawareness of the children's sexual issues cause trouble. On the other hand, too much control over the children will cause more problems"* (Participant #9). *"Parental neglect can be an important factor in child sexual abuse because children tend to spend more time on social media and networks when the parents are permissive. Thus, the children may face more challenges"* (Participant #10). *"Sometimes parents go to work and do the household chores. Thus, they have less time for children and they cannot control their children. As a result, children have more freedom to spend time on online social networks"* (Participant #5).

C. Parents' traumatic behaviors

When something happens that is not expected by the parents, the way the parents react is very effective in stopping, reinforcing, or repeating that behavior. The same is true of online sexual abuse. Parents who are overtly strict and blame their children for their mistakes can harm the children and make things worse: *"There are more problems*

with children whose parents are extremely strict. They cannot teach necessary skills to their children or teach these skills incorrectly. The adolescents with strict parents cannot talk to their parents about their sexual issues and problems freely and they are afraid of the parents' reactions if they expose their mistakes, and this makes things worse in these families" (Participant #8). "Once a child was caught red-handed by his father when doing a simple search on the internet and the father blamed the child brutally. These constant blames made the child lose his connection with the father and spend even more time on the internet and online social networks" (Participant #11).

The participants reported that watching porn with the child or having sex in the presence of the children even very young children can contribute to online child sexual abuse. These behaviors can harm children's emotions and encourage them to turn to sexual issues: "If a father watches porn movies, his children may access and watch these movies very easily and then may try the sexual act seen in the movies" (Participant #2). "Of course, parents play an important role in online child sexual abuse. Sometimes they fail to adhere to moral issues. For example, I had a client whose father was involved in addiction and had relationships with a couple of women. He used to show the videos of his affairs with women to his teenage son and this caused the teenager to be involved in sexual relations with girls online and offline" (Participant #12).

The participants reported that parents who share their children's photos with unusual clothing or gestures on online channels or pages can pave the way for exposing their children, especially during their adolescence, to online sexual abuse: "There was a father who used to share his daughter's photos taken in different poses and styles and different clothes on the Instagram, exposing this 9-year-old girl to sexual abuse online and offline" (Participant #7).

What are the important consequences and harms of online child sexual abuse?

The participants in this study described online sexual abuse as a trauma. They also believed that the most important consequences of online child sexual abuse were adverse psychological experiences (premature puberty, isolation, anxiety, panic, aggression, and academic failure) and obsessive behaviors (sharing photos and videos, masturbating, sex chatting, satisfying sexual curiosity, focusing on sexual issues in life, and seeking attention and approval).

A. Adverse psychological experiences

One of the consequences of online sexual abuse for children and adolescents is premature puberty. Puberty per se is an attractive and good process, but when a child watches porn movies and scenes and nude pictures, he/she gets involved in premature puberty and thus may face some problems in the family and the community due to the signs of premature puberty: "Many children exposed to sexually offensive content develop premature puberty at the age of nine or ten, and this causes challenges for the child at home, school, and community" (Participant #1).

The participants stated that isolation is one of the other consequences of online child sexual abuse. Thus, a sexually abused child is preoccupied with sexual harm due to his/her failure to receive help and support from parents and counselors. He/she has also a sense of self-blame and feels embarrassed and afraid of sharing his/her problems. Thus, the child feels isolated and has difficulty communicating with others: "Most often children who watch adult movies and are struggling with online sexual content are likely to feel isolated and are rejected by relatives and family members" (Participant #4). "This is a type of addiction as the person always wants to be alone and away from people" (Participant #2).

The findings of the present study indicated that experiencing anxiety and panic is also one of the consequences of online child sexual abuse, because the victim experiences more anxiety, worry, and panic, especially at the beginning of the abuse, and if this abuse continues by the abuser, the victim will feel more anxiety and worry: "Signs of fear, anxiety, and panic are always evident in victims of sexual abuse" (Participant #6). "The ten-year-old son of one of our relatives was watching porn and sexual photos. Now, he has many problems. Besides, feeling guilty and post-traumatic stress disorder have led to extreme anxiety and worry in him" (Participant #3).

Aggression and academic failure are other consequences of online child sexual abuse: "Children and adolescents who are victims of online sexual abuse tend to experience high levels of anxiety, become aggressive, and cannot communicate with their family members" (Participant #7). "Sexually abused children cannot focus on routine affairs in life such as studying, learning skills, communicating with people around, and thinking. Instead, they concentrate on things they do not know. Thus, they have poor academic performance and sometimes may experience academic failure. For example, a boy who was abused online and

offline had many problems, leading to anxiety and academic failure” (Participant #5).

C. Obsessive behaviors

Posting photos and videos: When a person shares videos and photos, especially of the private parts of his/her body, or pictures and videos or posts porn movies and sexual images, the person gets addicted to porn and sexual images after a while due to the temporary and fake dopamine that he/she receives: *“Children, especially students, share porn videos, sexual photos, or photos of their private body parts on online social media, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic when the students have more access to smartphones. Sometimes I hear children are engaged in sexual chatting and sharing private photos on online social networks”* (Participant #8). *“I had a client who shared her photos and videos with an unknown friend online. Her mother was scared a lot after accidentally checking her mobile phone and discovering the recorded videos and pictures”* (Participant #11).

Masturbation: One of the most frequent consequences of online child sexual abuse is masturbation. A child may be sexually aroused after watching online sexual and porn images or videos and masturbate: *“Masturbation is one of the consequences of online sexual abuse. Masturbation has an individual source followed by the feeling of guilt caused by anxiety-reducing behaviors and then elevated levels of anxiety. This leads to a vicious cycle in children and thus they cannot concentrate on important matters in their lives”* (Participant #12).

Sex chatting: One of the consequences of online sexual abuse is sex chats by children and adolescents. The children and adolescents exchange messages with sexual content, leading to more sexual abuse: *“I heard a lot in various meetings, especially from school counselors, that currently, online chats, actually sex chats, and even sexy group chats are increasing day by day, especially among students”* (Participant #2). *“I heard a 9th-grade teenager had a relationship with a girl online who turned out to be a boy. The teenager was abused by the boy frequently threatening her to release screenshots containing her sexual messages”* (Participant #10).

Seeking variety to satisfy sexual curiosity and the focus on sexual issues in life: The participants reported that one of the consequences of online sexual abuse is seeking variety to satisfy sexual curiosity and the focus on sexual issues in life by watching porn videos and sexual images. Adolescents who engage in various online relationships and watch porn videos and images for a long time always seek

something new and this induces a sense of seeking sexual variety and curiosity: *“These children always seek to watch new sexual images and videos or experience different sexual relationships”* (Participant #2). *“Sexual materials are so attractive and diverse that children cannot find a good alternative for them and focus on things other than sexual issues. Thus, we should acknowledge that one of the characteristics of sexology is that it has no limits”* (Participant #9).

What are the important strategies for preventing online child sexual abuse?

The participants reported two main strategies for preventing online child sexual abuse including professional strategies (raising parents’ awareness of children’s developmental changes, teaching sexual issues, teaching life skills, updating information, and consulting with experts) and communication strategies (empathy with the child, monitoring the child, being an active listener, and setting limits on internet use).

A. Professional strategies

Raising parents’ awareness of children’s developmental changes: Parents should be aware of their children’s cognitive, physiological, and emotional changes, because many behaviors may be normal according to the age of children and adolescents. However, some parents have little information about the developmental characteristics of children and adolescents, and this unawareness causes some problems: *“Parents should receive training on the characteristics of puberty and adolescence and children’s cognitive processes. Many times, parents think that these issues are related to adolescence”* (Participant #8). *“Parents often do not know the age of development of children and adolescents and do not even know about the signs of puberty and sensitive issues of adolescence, and they pay too much attention to some behaviors of adolescents, leading to conflicts between parents and adolescents”* (Participant #3).

Sexual education: Awareness raising and education by experts and in a safe environment seems to be the best way to effectively discuss issues that sometimes parents may have difficulty sharing with their children or do not know how to share such issues with the children. If parents receive the necessary training, they can understand how to discuss issues related to sexual abuse with children: *“I have always tried to have a friendly relationship with my child and provide him/her with the necessary training about sexual and puberty issues and how to use online social media and networks instead of receiving such information from others, especially his/her friends”* (Participant #4). *“We should*

provide young children, especially those who are 2 or 3 years old, with some information about their private body organs or genitals and don't allow others to release their private photos online" (Participant #10).

Teaching life skills: The participants highlighted the importance of teaching life skills to children and adolescents: *"The most important thing is to raise parents' awareness. Then, children should receive some training on different issues such as emotion management, life skills, sex education, self-protection methods, cyberspace and how to use it, and problem-solving skills"* (Participant #3). *"Parents should teach problem-solving skills to their children"* (Participant #6).

Updating information: The participants stated that some parents have information, but their information is not up-to-date, especially about using the internet, smartphones, and mobile apps: *"The first thing is that parents themselves should obtain some information, especially about cyberspace, various social networks, and the risks of these networks for children and adolescents. As you know, adolescents have much more information than their parents, and there is a huge generation gap. Thus, parents cannot monitor their children effectively as they don't have enough updated knowledge"* (Participant #1). *"An important thing is that parents themselves should update their information about sexual issues and how children and adolescents are sexually abused online. Besides, they should have necessary information, especially about sexual issues"* (Participant #12).

Seeking advice from experts: According to the participants, another strategy to prevent online child sexual abuse is to get help from experts: *"Receiving advice and support from the right resources such as psychologists and school counselors can be helpful. For instance, school counselors can help parents avoid behaviors that may make things worse"* (Participant #5).

B. Communication strategies

The participants highlighted the importance of strategies that mostly promote parent-child interactions:

Empathy with the child: The participants reported establishing friendly relationships with children and showing empathy with them can help prevent online child sexual abuse. Empathy with children, especially during adolescence, is very effective in promoting parent-child interactions and preventing online sexual abuse. Even if a child or teenager is sexually abused, this empathy and

understanding will be more helpful than humiliation, threats, and blame by parents. *"We should have empathy with children and understand them"* (Participant #2). *"The best way to raise a child is for the parents to be decisive and at the same time understand him/her"* (Participant #4).

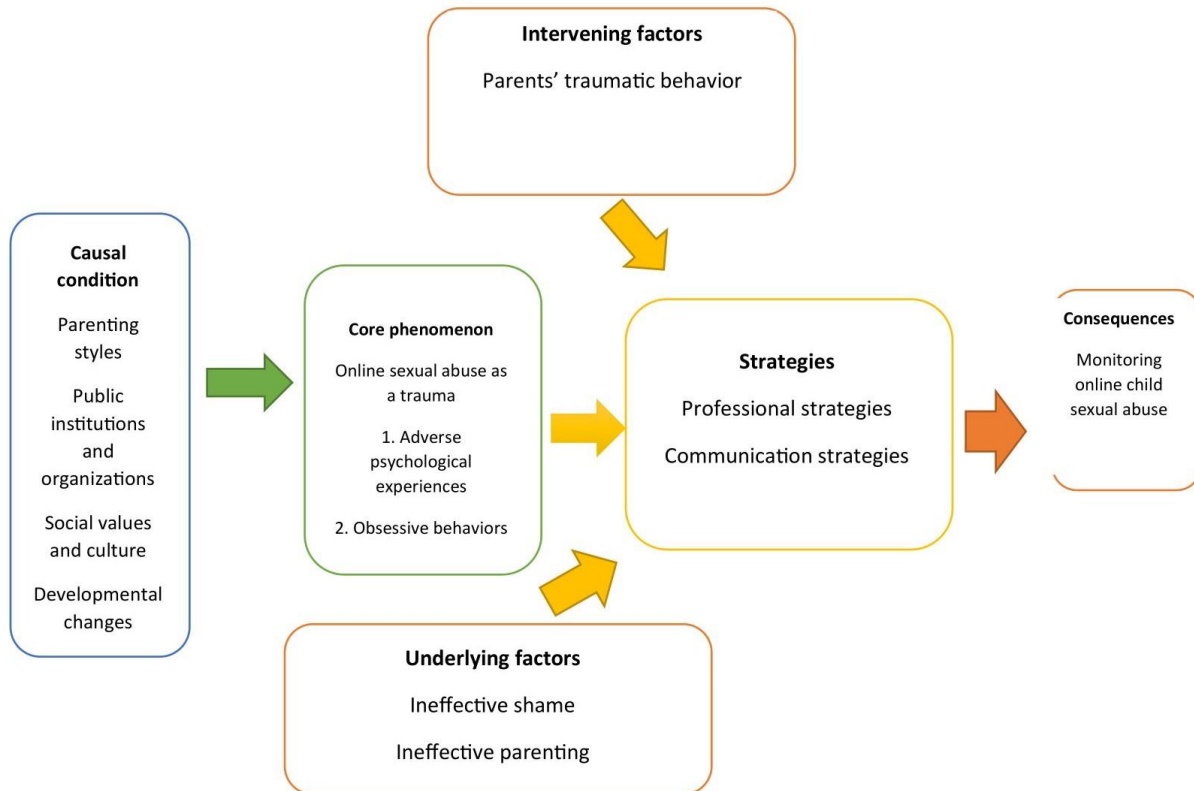
Monitoring the child: Parents' attention to a child's behaviors and needs has always been effective, but sometimes excessive parental control, direct supervision, and continuous warnings followed by judgment and sometimes humiliation can severely affect parent-child interactions, creating more distance between children and adolescents, making them turn to online social media, and thus leading to the possibility of more sexual abuse. Accordingly, parents should be cautious when exercising direct control over their children: *"Monitoring children is one of the duties of parents, which reduces parental stress, but excessive control increases parental stress and a high level of stress, in turn, leads to more control. Parents should monitor their children, especially their activities on the internet and online channels and groups"* (Participant #6).

Active listening: Effective parent-child communication and active listening can help children avoid sexual abuse: *"I think active listening and understanding the child help parents to act both as counselors and friends for their children. Children will be more likely to report any problems faced by them on online social networks if parents actively listen to their children without any judgment and valuation"* (Participant #2).

Restricting Internet use: The participants reported that restricting Internet use by the child is an effective prevention strategy to reduce online child sexual abuse. Accordingly, parents should monitor the use of the internet by their children but avoid too much control and monitoring. They can also manage the time spent by children on the internet using restrictive apps: *"Parents should set some rules for themselves. For instance, they can lock some satellite channels, avoid watching videos with sexual content on their mobile phones, and not wear bizarre and sexually arousing clothes at home"* (Participant #2). *"The internet, computers, smartphones, and online social networks are facilities that lose their effectiveness if they are used excessively. Parents can also install some apps on their children's phones to restrict their access to the internet or instruct them on how to use their mobile phones. Moreover, they should monitor the internet use by their children"* (Participant #7).

Figure 1

The experiences and consequences of online sexual abuse and preventive strategies from parents' perspective



4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the experiences of parents about online child sexual abuse to provide the answer to the following questions: What is the nature of online child sexual abuse? What are the contextual conditions and consequences of this phenomenon? What strategies can be adopted to prevent it?

The findings indicated that the contextual conditions of online child sexual abuse were ineffective shame, the taboo of sexual issues in the community, parents' defensiveness against talking about sexual issues, shame about exposing sexual abuse, feeling insecure when talking about sexual issues, mistrust in parents, permissive parenting style, neglect of parents, and parents' physical and emotional apathy, parental strictness, parental blame, watching porn with the child, parents' sex in the presence of the child, and sharing the child's photos. Thus, to prevent online child sexual abuse, the possible risk factors should be identified.

However, a few studies have addressed these risk factors. Noll et al. (2013) showed that children who have a history of neglect and abuse are more likely to be exposed to high-risk online sexual content and desires (Noll et al., 2013). Children experience online abuse for several reasons, including inadequate parenting and lack of legal protection (Who, 2022) and inadequate knowledge of safe Internet use and online child abuse (Oecd, 2020). Johnson et al. (2019) also showed that factors such as low self-esteem, poor relationships with parents, substance abuse, psychological difficulties, the desire to feel, and risky behaviors on the Internet are significantly correlated with exposure to online sexual abuse (Jonsson et al., 2019). Moreover, Leach, Stewart, and Smallbone (2015) showed that adverse childhood experiences, childhood maltreatment, unstable family environments, family conflicts, and parental mental health problems are related to abuse and neglect (Leach et al., 2015). Cyberspace is now an integral part of social interaction and communication, especially for young people.

Thus, more attention should be paid to the nature of online and offline abuse. Those children who are left without care for a long time are emotionally vulnerable and to some extent at risk of sexual abuse (Quadara et al., 2015). Furthermore, Jonsson, Svedin, and Hydén (2015) showed that children who are not socially and economically deprived, but who experienced traumatic life events and felt excluded in childhood, were more inclined to participate in sexual activities online (Jonsson et al., 2015). Although these children do not need money, they feel more connected by participating in online sexual activities in internet communities and groups and this online sexual behavior appears as a modified form of self-harm. These findings highlight the importance of the family and parenting styles as the most important contextual conditions of online child sexual abuse. Thus, to prevent online sexual abuse, adequate training, psychological support, and interventions should be provided for the victims of online sexual abuse. Moreover, encouraging early disclosure and conducting on-time and effective interventions are some solutions to reduce the consequences of online child sexual abuse. In addition, specialized telephone centers and online services should be created or developed to provide services to children and adolescents who are exposed to contact, touch, or sexual abuse. Broadly speaking, some laws should be passed to deal with online sexual abusers, block sexual content and access to URLs, and identify websites that provide child pornography. Social institutions should use social media and traditional platforms to increase awareness about online child sexual abuse. Such awareness-raising initiatives should be age-appropriate, of good quality, and provided on safe internet platforms to children and adolescents. Building digital resilience is another prominent approach to combatting online child sexual abuse. Parents and even teachers must have the ability to recognize children at risk and provide them with the necessary self-confidence and environmental support so that they can deal with online threats more effectively, but still, parents' emotional support for children should not be disregarded. Moreover, parental support is an important factor in dealing with online child sexual abuse. Since victims experience severe psychological distress, negative parental reactions can further harm them and reduce the chances of recovery. To deal with online child sexual abuse, parents should be well informed about potential risk factors and talk to their children about online sexual abuse and preventive measures.

The data in this study indicated the most important consequences of online child sexual abuse from the parents'

perspective include premature puberty, isolation, anxiety, panic, aggression, academic failure, sharing photos and videos, masturbating, sex chatting, satisfying sexual curiosity, focusing on sexual issues in life, and seeking attention and approval. Numerous surveys and meta-analyses have examined different samples of people who have been sexually abused with different methods and have concluded that victims experience a wide range of medical, psychological, and behavioral disorders (Carr et al., 2020; Hailes et al., 2019). The consequences of cyberspace victimization include little participation in academic activities, social incompatibility, anxiety, and depression (Navarro et al., 2018), suicidal thoughts and increasing feelings of loneliness in the victim due to the lack of parental knowledge of child abuse (Nocentini et al., 2018), low levels of self-efficacy, negative self-concept, sleep disorders, and even rejection by peers (Kowalski et al., 2014). Avdibegović and Brkić (2020) also believe that child abuse leads to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, low self-confidence, sleep deprivation, etc. Sex offenders often use the Internet to communicate with children to facilitate in-person sexual abuse or to create and distribute sexual images of children (Dimitropoulos et al., 2022). It has also been found that girls who experience premature puberty are exposed to increased sexual risk by their peers (Skoog & Bayram Özdemir, 2016). According to these findings, premature puberty may also be a risk factor for online sexual abuse.

The findings of the present study also indicated that one consequence of online child sexual abuse was sharing pictures and videos of private parts and sex chats. Online sexual solicitation of children occurs when an adult stranger uses the Internet to access, interact, and establish relationships with children to lead them to perform sexual conversations and actions, offline and/or online, including a variety of sexually explicit acts, desired or undesired by the child, such as initiating conversations of a sexual nature (e.g., cybersex, describing sexual acts, and exchanging sexual information), exchanging pornographic images, and meeting offline and performing sexual acts (Gemara et al., 2022). Of course, the effect of abuse on each victim may be different compared to another victim, and factors such as the nature of the abuse, the way the victim perceives the abuse, the past life experiences of the victim, and even post-abuse supportive reactions can be effective in the type of reaction and impact of sexual abuse (Marriott et al., 2014). However, Ventus et al. (2017) reported that some children who are exposed to sexual abuse may not show any psychological

reaction (Ventus et al., 2017). Overall, it can be argued that children who are sexually abused can suffer a wide range of consequences and harms, but none of the mentioned symptoms are specific to victims of sexual abuse. Thus, child sexual abuse should be considered a general and non-specific risk factor for psychopathology, and research has not yet specified whether this is also the case with the victims of online sexual abuse.

The results of this study indicated that the most important strategies to prevent online child sexual abuse were raising parents' awareness of developmental changes, teaching sexual issues, teaching life skills, updating information, and consulting with experts. Furthermore, empathy with the child, monitoring the child, being an active listener, and restricting internet use by the child were other strategies for preventing online child sexual abuse. Turner et al. (2023) concluded that prevention programs aimed at reducing the risk of sexual abuse are likely to be effective against online sexual abuse provided that efforts are made to educate young people about the need to avoid risky online behaviors (Turner et al., 2023). Educating children and raising their awareness can help them in situations where they may be sexually abused by an adult (such as taking a child for a ride or to the park, sleeping in a shared bed, or watching a movie and television alone and watching movies that may have sexual content). These strategies can help prevent victimization and exposure to abuse (Vedelago, 2020). In addition, Amri et al. (2024) showed that children who were neglected by their parents were more significantly exposed to online sexual abuse and had 11.2 times the chance of being exposed to online sexual abuse compared to normal children. Overall, it can be argued that parental support is an important factor in coping with online child sexual abuse. As victims experience severe psychological distress, negative parental reactions can further harm them and reduce the chances of recovery (Safety, 2013). To cope with child sexual abuse online, parents should be well informed about risk factors and talk to their children about online sexual abuse and preventive measures.

Another effective strategy to prevent online sexual abuse is the identification of IP addresses of users and criminals producing, publishing, and viewing content aimed at child sexual abuse. The US Child Protection System can track the IP addresses of users who download files known to contain child sexual abuse material (CSAM), even if the VPN is turned on (Solon, 2020). In some cases, law enforcement agencies can deceive consumers of CSAM into revealing their identities. In 2014, the Queensland Police arrested the

manager of a site producing child sexual content and secretly took control of the site, during which the IP of users who used this site were detected and warnings were issued to these users (Cox, 2017). In January 2013, Google and Microsoft announced that their search engines would take additional measures to block attempts to access CSAM through their platforms. According to Steel (2015), this initiative led to an immediate drop in CSAM searches (Steel, 2015). Moreover, authorities in some countries insist that lists of URLs that contain CSAM be filtered. Some countries such as China and Saudi Arabia have forced ISPs to block websites that produce CSAM (Leavitt, 2021).

Studies have highlighted the importance of parental participation as a key goal for preventing child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon. The causes, nature, and dimensions of sexual abuse in different situations differ among different people in terms of time, motivation, behavior, related processes, nature, and even domestic, organizational, public, and online environments. Given such considerable differences, the best way is to define a comprehensive set of prevention strategies for online child sexual abuse with a focus on the nature and dimensions of child sexual abuse (e.g. who, what, where, when, and how) to provide a strong theoretical and empirical framework. In addition, identifying these dimensions helps to determine key goals for prevention and devise a comprehensive and coordinated response to child sexual abuse. Moreover, parental education and support can be effective in dealing with online child sexual abuse. Since victims experience severe psychological distress, negative parental reactions can further harm them and reduce the chances of recovery. To cope with online child sexual abuse, parents should be well informed about potential risk factors. Parents should talk to their children about online sexual abuse and preventive measures.

The findings of the present study have limited generalizability to other populations and groups as the participants were selected from a limited region and the data were collected using a qualitative approach. This being so, future studies can use the proposed model in preventive and interventional programs in counseling centers to raise the awareness of parents, children, and adolescents about the risk factors and consequences of online child sexual abuse and prevention strategies.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

This study, while illuminating, is not without limitations. First, its cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences between variables. Although the mediating model is supported theoretically and empirically, longitudinal data would be needed to confirm the temporal ordering of emotional neglect, shame, and self-harm. Second, the use of self-report measures may introduce bias, particularly in the recall of childhood experiences and the willingness to disclose shame or self-harm. Social desirability and memory distortion could have affected the accuracy of the data. Third, the sample consisted exclusively of Canadian adolescents and young adults, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or socioeconomic groups. Lastly, the study did not control for potential confounding variables such as depression, anxiety, or peer victimization, which may also influence self-harming behavior.

Future research should aim to replicate these findings using longitudinal designs to establish causal pathways and developmental trajectories. Including clinical populations alongside community samples would enhance the robustness of the findings and provide insight into more severe presentations of self-harm. Furthermore, qualitative research may offer deeper insight into the lived experiences of individuals who internalize shame following emotional neglect. Expanding the study to include diverse cultural and demographic groups would allow for a more nuanced understanding of how cultural norms around emotion, parenting, and shame influence the development of self-harming behavior. It would also be beneficial to explore protective factors such as social support, resilience, or positive attachment relationships that may buffer the negative effects of emotional neglect and shame.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of early identification of emotional neglect in both clinical and educational settings. Practitioners should be trained to recognize the often-invisible signs of emotional deprivation and to assess for internalized shame in at-risk youth. Interventions aimed at reducing shame and improving emotion regulation skills may be especially effective in preventing self-harming behavior. Schools and mental health services should incorporate screening tools for childhood neglect and create supportive environments where emotional validation and psychological safety are prioritized. Lastly, parent-focused interventions that emphasize emotional responsiveness and attunement may

serve as primary prevention strategies against the long-term consequences of neglect.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to appreciate the officials of Omid Counselling Center in Birjand, South Khorasan Province and the participants who cooperated closely with them.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

This study was extracted from the PhD dissertation of Hadi Gholamrezaei, approved by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tehran North Branch, Islamic Azad University.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. This study was extracted from PhD dissertation of IR.IAU.TNB.REC.1402.036, approved by Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tehran North Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

References

- Abrazgah, M. A., Bostansara, M., & Ravan, F. A. (2024). The Model for Predicting Self-Harming Behaviors Based on Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategies and Emotional Distress Tolerance in Adolescents Visiting Harm Reduction Centers in Tehran: The Mediating Role of Internalized Shame. *Aftj*, 5(5), 164-172. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.aftj.5.5.19>
- Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). Teens, social media & technology 2018. *Pew Research Center*, 31, 1673-1689.

- <http://publicservicesalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Teens-Social-Media-Technology-2018-PEW.pdf>
- Assink, M., van der Put, C. E., Meeuwse, M. W. C. M., de Jong, N. M., Oort, F. J., Stams, G. J. J. M., & Hoeve, M. (2019). Risk factors for child sexual abuse victimization: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 145(5), 459-489. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000188>
- Babad, S., Zwillling, A., Carson, K. W., Fairchild, V. P., & Nikulina, V. (2020). Childhood Environmental Instability and Social-Emotional Outcomes in Emerging Adults. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(7-8), NP3875-NP3904. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520948147>
- Carr, A., Duff, H., & Craddock, F. (2020). A systematic review of reviews of the outcome of noninstitutional child maltreatment. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(4), 828-843. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018801334>
- Carvalho, C. B., Cabral, J., Pereira, C., Cordeiro, F., Costa, R., & Arroz, A. M. M. (2023). Emotion Regulation Weakens the Associations Between Parental Antipathy and Neglect and Self-Harm. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 89, 101597. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2023.101597>
- Cox, J. (2017). Australian Dark Web Hacking Campaign Unmasked Hundreds Globally. www.vice.com/en/article/4xezgg/australian-dark-web-hacking-campaign-unmasked-hundreds-globally
- DeSantisteban, P., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2018). Prevalence and Risk Factors Among Minors for Online Sexual Solicitations and Interactions with Adults. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 55(7), 939-950. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1386763>
- Dimitropoulos, G., Lindenbach, D., Dwvove, D., Cullen, O., Bhattarari, A., Kuntz, J., Binford, W., Patten, S., & Arnold, P. (2022). Experiences of Canadian mental health providers in identifying and responding to online and in-person sexual abuse and exploitation of their child and adolescent clients. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 124, 105448. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105448>
- Edet, B., Essien, E. A., Eleazu, F. I., Atu, G. E. E., & Ogunkola, I. O. (2022). Childhood Adversity as a Predictor of Depression and Suicidality Among Adolescents in Calabar, Nigeria. *Journal of Global Health Neurology and Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.52872/001c.33811>
- Gámez-Guadix, M., Mateos-Pérez, E., Wachs, S., Wright, M., Martínez, J., & Incera, D. (2022). Assessing image-based sexual abuse: Measurement, prevalence, and temporal stability of sextortion and nonconsensual sexting ("revenge porn") among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 94, 789-799. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.12064>
- Gemara, N., Cohen, N., & Katz, C. (2022). "I do not remember... You are reminding me now!": Children's difficult experiences during forensic interviews about online sexual solicitation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 134, 105913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105913>
- Hailes, H. P., Yu, R., Danese, A., & Fazel, S. (2019). Long-term outcomes of childhood sexual abuse: An umbrella review. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 6(10), 830-839. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(19\)30286-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30286-X)
- Janiri, D., Luzio, M. D., Montanari, S., Hirsch, D., Simonetti, A., Moccia, L., Conte, E., Contaldo, I., Veredice, C., Mercuri, E., & Sani, G. (2024). Childhood Trauma and Self-Harm in Youths With Bipolar Disorders. *Current Neuropsychopharmacology*, 22(1), 152-158. <https://doi.org/10.2174/1570159x21666230213155249>
- Jonsson, L. S., Fredlund, C., Priebe, G., Wadsby, M., & Svedin, C. G. (2019). Online sexual abuse of adolescents by a perpetrator met online: a cross-sectional study. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 13(1), 32. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-019-0292-1>
- Jonsson, L. S., Svedin, C. G., & Hydén, M. (2015). Young women selling sex online - narratives on regulating feelings. *Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics*, 6, 17. <https://doi.org/10.2147/AHMT.S77324>
- Kang, Y.-S., & Jo, Y. (2023). The Effects of Adult Attachment on the Satisfaction of Romantic Relationship: The Mediating Effects of Internalized Shame and Perfectionism of Romantic Relationship. *Korean Association for Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction*, 23(2), 345-361. <https://doi.org/10.22251/jlcci.2023.23.2.345>
- Kapatais, A., Williams, A. J., & Townsend, E. (2022). The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation on Self-Harm Among Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Minority (LGBTQ+) Individuals. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 27(2), 165-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2022.2064254>
- Kloess, J. A., Beech, A. R., & Harkins, L. (2014). Online child sexual exploitation: Prevalence, process, and offender characteristics. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 15(2), 126-139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838013511543>
- Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140, 1073-1137. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035618>
- Leach, C., Stewart, A., & Smallbone, S. (2015). Testing the sexually abused-sexual abuser hypothesis: a prospective longitudinal birth cohort study. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 51, 144-153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.10.024>
- Leavitt, K. (2021). Should Canada block websites that post terrorist content and child porn? Ottawa is considering it. www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2021/04/20/should-canada-block-websites-that-post-terrorist-content-and-child-porn-ottawa-is-considering-it.html
- Marriott, C., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., & Harrop, C. (2014). Factors promoting resilience following childhood sexual abuse: A structured, narrative review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38, 14-24. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2258>
- Montiel, I., Carbonell, E., & Pereda, N. (2016). Multiple online victimization of Spanish adolescents: Results from a community sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 52, 123-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.12.005>
- Mousavian, E. (2020). Examining the role of internalized shame in psychopathology and effective psychotherapies. *Journal of Rooyesh Psychology*, 9(7), 96. <https://frooyesh.ir/article-1-1989-fa.html>
- Navarro, R., Yubero, S., & Larrañaga, E. (2018). Cyberbullying victimization and fatalism in adolescence: Resilience as a moderator. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 84, 215-221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.12.011>
- Ngo, V., McKeever, S., & Thorpe, C. (2023). Identifying Online Child Sexual Texts in the Dark Web through Machine Learning and Deep Learning Algorithms. *Advances in Cybersecurity*, 1-6.
- Nocentini, A., Fiorentini, G., Di Paola, L., & Menesini, E. (2018). Parents, family characteristics and bullying behavior: A systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 45, 41-50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.07.010>
- Noll, J. G., Shenk, C. E., Barnes, J. E., & Haralson, K. J. (2013). Association of maltreatment with high-risk internet behaviors and offline encounters. *Pediatrics*, 131(2), e510-e517. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-1281>

- Oecd. (2020). Strengthening online learning when schools are closed: The role of families and teachers in supporting students during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Özçalık, C. K., & Atakoğlu, R. (2021). Online child sexual abuse: Prevalence and characteristics of the victims and offenders. *Journal of Psychiatric Nursing*, 12(1), 76. https://jag.journalagent.com/z4/download_fulltext.asp?pdire=phd&ppdf=2&plng=tur&un=PHD-30643
- Pedersen, W., Bakken, A., Stefansen, K., & von Soest, T. (2022). Sexual victimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10926771.2022.2061880>
- Quadara, A., Nagy, V., Higgins, D., & Siegel, N. (2015). Conceptualizing the prevention of child sexual abuse: Final report. <https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/item/8q1wv/conceptualising-the-prevention-of-child-sexual-abuse>
- Safety, U. K. C. f. C. I. (2013). Victims' voices: the impact of online grooming and sexual abuse. *The Impact of Online Grooming and Sexual Abuse*. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/UPIAS/fundamental%20principles.pdf>
- Scott, A., Mainwaring, C., Flynn, A., Powell, A., & Henry, N. (2022). Image-based sexual abuse among Australian youths: The experiences and perspectives of victims, perpetrators and bystanders In - *Interpersonal violence against children and youth*. Rowman & Littlefield. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781666995855.ch-4>
- Sethi, D., & Ghatak, S. (2018). Mitigating cyber sexual harassment: An Insight from India. *Asian Themes in Social Science Research*, 1(2), 34-43. <https://doi.org/10.33094/journal.139.2018.12.34.43>
- Skoog, T., & Bayram Özdemir, S. (2016). Explaining why early-maturing girls are more exposed to sexual harassment in early adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 36(4), 490-509. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431614568198>
- Solon, O. (2020). Inside the surveillance software tracking child porn offenders across the globe. www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/inside-surveillance-software-tracking-child-porn-offenders-across-globe-n1234019
- Steel, C. M. S. (2015). Web-based child pornography: The global impact of deterrence efforts and its consumption on mobile platforms. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 44, 150-158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.12.009>
- Struss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, London: Sage. https://www.academia.edu/download/63418658/Basics_of_Qualitative_Research20200525-48749-xole4d.pdf
- TaşÖren, A. B., & GÜL, İ. Ş. (2022). The Role of Childhood Abuse and Psychological Symptoms in Discriminating Frequency of Drug Use and Self-Harm in Incarcerated Men Convicted of Robbery. *Psikiyatriye Guncel Yaklasimlar - Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, 14(Ek 1), 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.1083683>
- Turner, H. A., Finkelhor, D., & Colburn, D. (2023). Predictors of online child sexual abuse in a US national sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(11-12), 7780-7803. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221149090>
- Vedelago, C. (2020). More than 7.4 million images of child abuse circulating in Victoria. www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/more-than-7-4-million-images-of-child-abuse-circulating-in-victoria-20200619-p554dy.html
- Ventus, D., Antfolk, J., & Salo, B. (2017). The associations between abuse characteristics in child sexual abuse: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 23(2), 167-180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2017.1318963>
- Westlake, B. (2020). *The past, present, and future of online child sexual exploitation: Summarizing the evolution of production, distribution, and detection* In - *The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyber Deviance*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78440-3_52
- Who. (2022). Violence against children.