

Exploring Traits Linked to Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Psychopathy vs. Impulsivity

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Introduction

- Longitudinal research on commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) has found that 75% of youth whom had endured victimization reported additional occurrences of CSE (Reid & Piquero, 2014).
- Understanding personality trait associated with CSE may be used to develop CSE intervention and prevention strategies.
- There has been insufficient research on how personality traits correlate with CSE
- Personality traits linked to CSE victimization includes impulsivity and psychopathy
 - **Impulsivity:** Developmental characteristics of adolescence (e.g., sensation seeking and poor judgement create susceptibility to CSE; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).
 - **Psychopathy:** Link between crime and psychopathy; may increase risk of victimization (e.g., focus on reward, disregard for risk; may increase risk of victimization; Hare, 2003)

Methods

Study Sample

- *Pathways to Desistance* study (Mulvey, 2012)
 - 1,170 male participants
 - 14-18 years old (M = 16.05, SD = 1.16)
 - 493 African Americans; 225 Caucasian Americans; 398 Hispanic; 54 Asian, Native American, or other

11 Waves of Data Collection

Measures

- **Impulsivity:** Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI) (Weinberger & Schwartz, 1990).
- **Psychopathy:** Psychopathy Checklist- Youth Version (PCL-YV; Forth, Kosson, & Hare, 2003).
 - Factor 1 is comprised of interpersonal and affective facets (e.g., Pathological lying, lack of empathy)
 - Factor 2 is comprised of behavioral and antisocial facets (e.g., lack of goals, serious criminal behavior)
- **Control Variables:** see Table 1

Analytic Plan

- Bivariate associations were explored between personality traits, control variables and CSE victimization.
- Binary logistic regression was utilized to estimate influence of predictor variables on the outcome variable.

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Results

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Analyses of Predictor and Control Variables with Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (N = 1170)*

Predictor or Control Variables		M(SD)/%	t-test or Chi-Square statistic
Impulse Control	No CSE	2.96 (.94)	$t_{(2,1162)} = 0.17$
	CSE	2.97 (.97)	
Emotional Regulation	No CSE	2.76 (.65)	$t_{(2,1168)} = 1.17$
	CSE	2.84 (.70)	
PCL-YV Factor 1	No CSE	4.94 (3.37)	$t_{(2,1121)} = 4.26^{***}$
	CSE	6.54 (4.51)	
PCL-YV Factor 2	No CSE	8.31 (3.87)	$t_{(2,1121)} = 3.35^{**}$
	CSE	9.71 (3.71)	
Age at Baseline	No CSE	16.04 (1.15)	$t_{(2,1168)} = 1.27$
	CSE	16.19 (1.21)	
Minority Status	No CSE	79.6% minority	$\chi^2(1) = 11.83^{**}$
	CSE	90.3% minority	
SES	No CSE	51.84 (12.39)	$t_{(2,1162)} = -1.65$
	CSE	49.68 (12.04)	
Violence Exposure	No CSE	5.37 (2.97)	$t_{(2,1165)} = 4.59^{***}$
	CSE	6.81 (2.83)	
Psychological Distress	No CSE	0.52 (.51)	$t_{(2,1085)} = 3.14^{**}$
	CSE	0.69 (.56)	

Note: CSE = Commercial Sexual Exploitation; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2. *Binomial Logistic Regression Predicting CSE (N = 1170)*

CSE vs. No CSE	B	SE	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval of OR
Personality Traits				
Impulse Control	0.16	0.13	1.17	0.90, 1.53
Emotional Regulation	0.20	0.19	1.22	0.85, 1.76
Psychopathy Factor 1	0.08*	0.04	1.08	1.01, 1.16
Psychopathy Factor 2	0.02	0.04	1.02	0.94, 1.10
Control Measures				
Age	-0.06	0.11	0.94	0.77, 1.16
Minority	1.50**	0.48	4.43	1.73, 11.38
SES	-0.02	0.01	.98	0.96, 1.00
Violence Exposure	0.15**	0.05	1.16	1.05, 1.27
Psychological				
Distress	0.35	0.22	1.42	0.93, 2.17
Constant	-4.64	1.83	--	--

Note: CSE = Commercial Sexual Exploitation; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

- Study aimed to address gap between personality traits and commercial sexual exploitation, particularly among male youth.
- Average Factor 1 psychopathy score using PCL-YV was 33% higher for CSE victims than those with no CSE.
 - 6.5, compared to 4.9
- Factor 2 had no significant association with CSE victimization.
- Findings with these factors diverge from prior research on the link between personality traits and victimization
 - Youth males who are more prone to environmental factors than females are such as antisocial peer association, criminally involved parents, lack of supervision, etc.
- Adolescents often ignore long-term consequences (Steinberg & Scott, 2003).
 - Leads to poor decision-making and increasing risk of harm.

Conclusion

Future research

- Future studies should examine how such personality traits increase the risk of CSE among victims.
 - May be due to the narcissistic nature of personality combined with adolescent feelings of invincibility and their disregard for risk.
 - Further research on risk perception among male and female youth is necessary
- Research should aim to examine risk factors using female and male youth to determine the role that the environment and gender norms play in the relationship between personality and CSE victimization.

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