Sociodemographic and Psychology Characteristics of Child Molesters, Serving Effective Sentences

Lyubka Hristova*

Ph.D. at the Academy of Ministry of Interior, Bulgaria

*Corresponding author: Lyubka Hristova, Ph.D. at the Academy of Ministry of Interior, Bulgaria

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to depict typology child molesters, serving effective sentences. In order to derive the main personality characteristics of this type of perpetrators, the results of analysis of the files of prisoners and data obtained from a study with the questionnaire MMPI-2 will be presented. Profiles will be derived based on the socio-demographic and criminological characteristics of the sample. The data for the obtained groups will be presented with the results of the MMPI clinical scales.

Keywords: Child Molesters; Typology; Offender Profiling; MMPI-2

Mini Review

The importance of the problem and the lack of research and typologies based on the Bulgarian population provoked the idea of conducting a study to identify differentiated psychological, personality and behavioral characteristics of child sexual molesters. The main tasks were to systematize information from prison records of inmates, conduct interviews and research with psychological tests. The study initially involved 50 men serving sentences for sexual offences against children in Central Prison in Sofia, Bobov Dol and Pazardzhik prisons and the prison dormitories in Kremikovtzi and Kazichene.

These are almost all of those convicted of sexual offences against children serving sentences in five of the nine prisons in the country. The sample thus formed can be considered representative of the prison population at the time of the study. At a later stage, two withdrew from participation in the study. Of the 48 questionnaires completed, 5 were dropped due to results on the validity scales. Therefore, 43 participants were left in the final sample. This report will present the results of the analysis of prison records and interviews conducted with prisoners. The summary characteristics of the sample are presented in the table 1.

Table 1: Sociodemographic and criminological characteristics.

Characteristics		Number	Percentage
Information about offenders			
Education	Without education	6	13,95%
	Elementary	11	25,58%
	Basic	9	20,93%
	Secondary	15	34,88%
	Higher	2	4,65%

Employment	Unemployed, sporadic employment	10	23,26%
	low skilled employment	30	69,77%
	Highly qualified employment	3	6,98%
Marital status	Single	15	34,88%
	Divorced	8	18,6%
	Widower	1	2,33%
	Living on family basis	13	30,23%
	Married	6	13,95%
Ethnic origin	Bulgarian	25	58,14%
	Romani	11	25,58%
	Turkish	5	11,63%
	British	2	4,65%
Abuse experience in childhood	Yes	29	67,44%
	No	14	32,56%
Neglect in childhood	Yes	34	79,07%
	No	9	20,93%
Number of children in a parental family	3 or more children – large family	24	55,81%
	1 child or 2 children	19	44,19%
Mental disorders, including disorders with organic cause	Yes	6	13,95%
	No	37	86,05%
Based on the evidence on the file classified as:	Preferential offender	13	30,23%
	Situational offender	30	69,77%
Number of known victims	1	38	88,37%
	2	4	9,3%
	26	1	2,33%
Previous convictions	No	9	20,93%
	Non sexual crimes	16	37,21%
	Sexual crimes	6	13,95%
	Non sexual crimes and sexual crimes	12	27,91%
Information about victims			
Relationship with the victim	Own child	5	11,63%
	Adopted child	3	6,98%
	Member of the extended family	7	16,28%
	Neighbor/ community member	18	41,86%
	Unknown	10	23,26%
Age of the victim	Under 14 years	34	79,07%
	14 years and older	9	20,93%
Gender of the victim	Male	7	16,28%
	Female	36	83,72%

Information about crimes			
Place of the crime scene	In the victim's home	4	9,3%
	In the offender's home	21	48,84%
	Outside settlement	7	16,28%
	In settlement	11	25,58%
Time of the offence	During the dark part of the day	17	49,53%
	During the daylight hours	26	60,47%
Use of physical violence and threats	Yes	38	88,37%
	No	5	11,63%
The crime is committed in complicity	Yes	7	16,28%
	No	36	83,72%
Incest	No	28	65,12%
	Yes	15	34,88%

Personality and Clinical Characteristics of Perpetrators

When interpreting the results of the MMPI-2 questionnaire, it should be taken into account that persons serving sentences for sexual crimes against children are usually the object of contempt and social isolation from other prisoners and not infrequently become victims of violence, including sexual [1]. It is possible that the circumstances of their exposure, investigation and conviction have left an imprint on their personality and current mental state. This can make it difficult to interpret scales, affecting emotional state and social relationships, and it will be difficult to determine whether the elevation on a given scale is due to current circumstances or to personality traits and functioning prior to the discovery of the crime.

Personality and Clinical Characteristics of Offenders

In the interpretation of the results of the MMPI-2 questionnaire, it should be considered that persons serving sentences for sexual offences against children are often treated with contempt and social isolation by other prisoners and are not infrequently victims of violence, including sexual violence [2]. The circumstances of their prosecution, investigation and conviction may have left an impact on their personality and current psychological state. This can make scales affecting emotional state and social relationships difficult to interpret, and it will be difficult to determine whether the elevation on a scale is due to current circumstances or to personality characteristics and functioning prior to the disclosure of the crime.

Main Clinical Scales

In the analysis of the main clinical scales, scales with more than 65 T points are primarily considered. In this case, these are the Pa (Paranoia) and Sc (Schizophrenia) scales. A profile of 68/86 is formed, which has the following interpretation:

Intense feelings of rejection and insecurity; lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem; guilt over perceived failures; withdrawal from activity; emotional apathy; suicidal ideation; disconnected from other people; suspicious and distrustful; avoids emotional connections; insufficient social skills; feels best when alone; resents demands on him; moody; irritable; unfriendly; negative; schizoid lifestyle. Likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia paranoid type (especially when both scales are very elevated and higher than Pt 7 scale); certain psychotic behaviors may be present; thinking is autistic, fragmented, superficial and circumstantial; poor judgment; delusions of persecution and/or grandeur; sense of unreality; over-involvement with abstract and theoretical things to the exclusion of specific aspects of life situation; blunted affect; rapid and incoherent speech; lack of effective defenses; reacts to stress and pressure by retreating into fantasies and daydreams; may have difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality. The general increase of the profile is interpreted as general disadaptation, disturbances in social functioning, prevailing negative emotions.

Clinical Subscales

Subscales are interpreted if more than 65 T-scores are present on the corresponding clinical subscale. In the present study, these are the Pa (Paranoia) and Sc (Schizophrenia) scales. Elevation on the Pa1 (Ideas of Persecution) scale is associated with projecting guilt outward, feeling threatened, and ideas of persecution. It is possible that the current situation of the subjects contributes to the latter, namely, that the nature of the crime for which they have been convicted implies a hostile attitude towards them on the part of other prisoners and a likelihood of being subjected to violence on their part. Scale Pa2 (Harshness of Experience) is related to the defensive construction of an idealised self-image of a special, exalted being with a sophisticated emotionality that is less likely to be explained solely by being in prison. Elevations on both scales simultaneously suggest a pre-constructed mechanism for self-denigration and justification of one's own actions, involving a black-and-white picture of the world in which the

person is always good and the others are always wrong and bad. In effect, it is a mechanism for excluding guilt as a regulator of behaviour that is more likely to have been formed in childhood and youth. Guilt exclusion is generally associated with parental abuse and neglect.

The elevated subscales build a picture of schizoid detachment from one's own experiences (Sc1-social alienation) and hence of disturbances in the motivational domain (Sc4-lack of ego masters, connotative) associated with difficulties in initiating and sustaining spontaneous and volitional actions. Sc3 impairment (Lack of Ego Masters, cognitive) implies disturbances in the thought process caused by alienated thoughts and ideas that are perceived as non-proprietary. The Sc2 (Emotional Alienation) impairment suggests an impaired ability to build emotionally intense and wholesome close social relationships. For all four subscales of Sc (Schizophrenia) described above, it is unlikely that the elevations are due to the circumstances of

the punishment. Such deficits in the capacity for social engagement, volitional action, affect, and thinking are generally associated with adversities in the formative years and/or genetic causes. Comparable to the personality of the offenders, the crimes committed by them seem to be the result of their personal inadequacy and social helplessness rather than an aggressive and selfish imposition of their own needs over those of the victims. In an attempt to seek at least partial answers to the question of whether certain pathological personality traits play a role in the commission of crime, we performed graphic comparisons of offender profiles on the major clinical scales of the MMPI.

References

1. Nikolov N (2008) Minesotski mnogofaktoren lichnosten vaprosnik – 2. Balgarska adaptatsia. Administrantivno rakovodstvo. Sofiq, OS Bulgaria OOD.

2. (2015) University of Minnesota Press. MMPI-2 Training Slides. University of Minnesota Press.

Submission Link: https://biomedres.us/submit-manuscript.php

BIOMEDICAL
RESEARCHES

ISSN: 2574-1241

Assets of Publishing with us

- Global archiving of articles
- Im*m*ediate, unrestricted online access
- Rigorous Peer Review Process
- Authors Retain Copyrights
- Unique DOI for all articles

https://biomedres.us/