

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF THE OFFENDERS AGAINST CHILDREN

Zdzisław Majchrzyk¹, Karolina Grzywińska-Aleksandrowicz²

¹*Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland*

²*MA in Psychology and MA in Sociology, Poland*

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Summary

The aim of the present study aims to find out whether preferential child molesters differ from situational child molesters in terms of the level of the Big Five personality traits, self-esteem and social competence, as well as relations between them. The group of preferential molesters consisted of 55 men convicted of sexual offences against children and diagnosed with pedophilia. The group of situational molesters consisted of 50 convicts without such a diagnosis. NEO-Five-Factor Inventory, Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory (MSEI) and Social Competence Questionnaire (KKS) were used in the study. Significant differences between the groups were found in the dimension of agreeableness, self-assessment in terms of likability and moral self-acceptance, the general level of social competence and the competence that determines effective behaviour in intimate situations. The preferential offenders scored lower on all scales. Extraversion turned out to be the best predictor of social competence in both groups.

In conclusion it turned out that except for several traits, preferential offenders do not differ significantly from one another. Such knowledge can be used in dealing with the perpetrators - both with regard to criminal offences, as well as therapeutic interactions.

Introduction

Sexuality is an important aspect of human functioning, at the same time surrounded by numerous orders and prohibitions. One of them prohibits sexual contact with children. Despite awareness of the negative consequences of such behaviour, in every society there are a certain percentage

of people fulfilling their sexual needs with those who, due to their age, cannot give a valid consent to sexual intercourse. Since the predominant perpetrators are men, it is men who are the main target of research on sexual violence against children. Although from the point of view of evolution behaviours, such as sex with a child are non-adaptive, statistics kept for many years show their growth rather than decline [27:164]. Many researchers aim at identifying the causes of choosing a child as one's sexual partner, and further findings on this subject can contribute to the development of more effective treatment programs for perpetrators.

As shown by previous studies, sexual abusers of children are not a homogeneous group. It is more appropriate to talk about certain categories of offenders. Hence, in recent years, a number of classification models of child molesters have been proposed. One of them is based on the criterion of motivation, and divides perpetrators into preferential, also known as true or fixated pedophiles and situational, called opportunistic or regressed [5: 26]. Deviant behaviours of the former result from their genuine sexual preference for children. On the contrary, children are not the most desirable partners for situational offenders, but sex with a child is a substitute for sexual fulfillment, for instance, in the absence of an adult partner. The use of the term 'pedophilia' is justified only with regard to preferential perpetrators, since they meet the diagnostic criteria of such disorder [13:32].

For these reasons, attempts at creating a profile of the perpetrator, in order to prevent potential, abuse have ended in failure. In addition to the fact that it is an internally diversified group, some researchers point out that many perpetrators cannot be distinguished from the population by any particular features, both in terms of demographic characteristics and possible psychopathology. Chaffin, Letourneau and Silovsky state that the personality profile of most child molesters shows no signs of mental disorders [4:55].

Reviewing existing research indicates that there are

some features (factors) more often associated with sexual pathology than others, although no single feature (factor) leads directly to its developing. Among the personality traits mentioned in the study of the etiology of pedophilia, the most important ones are those which play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, namely extraversion and neuroticism [8], as well as self-esteem [15,18]. Much attention is also paid to the influence of deficits in social competence on the development of sexual violence against children [12]. The main assumptions of the aforementioned research have been outlined below.

The aim of the study and hypotheses. Viewing the research on the etiology of sexual violence against children one realizes that the criterion of perpetrator motivation is rarely taken into account. Usually, sexual abusers of children are compared to other groups of offenders or to a control group, regardless of their being diagnosed with pedophilia or whether their activities were considered as substituting sexual needs fulfillment. The aim of the present study was to verify whether preferential offenders differ from situational offenders in terms of the level of personality traits and social competence. In addition, relations between these variables were examined in both groups, also to find out which personality variables make the best predictors of social competence of preferential and situational offenders. In this way we tried to determine whether similar factors are involved in the origin of sexual abuse of children by the perpetrators with sexual preferences for children and those for adults. On the basis of the existing literature, it was assumed that varied motivations behind committed offences may be associated with differences in terms of intensity of the level of the variables tested and their relations. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. There are significant differences between the group of preferential offenders and the group of situational offenders in the levels of the Big Five personality dimensions.
2. There are significant differences in the level of self-esteem between the group of preferential offenders and the group of situational offenders.
3. The preferential offenders and situational offenders differ significantly in terms of the level of general social competence and competences determining the effectiveness of behaviour in particular areas of social functioning.
4. In the studied groups of offenders there are correlations between personality traits and social competence.
5. Predictors of social competence are different for the group of preferential offenders and situational offenders.

Because there are not so many studies on the effects of the aforementioned factors on the development of different

types of pedophilia and because the results are inconclusive, it is difficult to assume that the intensity of these traits in one group of offenders is higher or lower than that in the other. More precise statements can be made only after comparing the results, which is why non-directional hypotheses have been employed in the study.

The Five Factor Model of personality in the research on offenders

The use of tools basing on the Five Factor Model in the research on the personality of offenders was initiated after the criticism with which MMPI tests had. Since it was a tool used in clinical diagnosis to evaluate mental disorders, which had usually not been reported in offenders, it seemed more appropriate to use in this field tools designed to assess the characteristics of a healthy personality. It was expected that even if attempts at creating a profile of a typical perpetrator fail, certain characteristics of a "normal" personality should have a link to the crime of a sexual nature [8:245].

The Five Factor Model of personality, developed by Costa and McCrae, and also called the Big Five, is now one of the most popular concepts in personality psychology. Previous studies indicate that among the five dimensions identified by the authors as many as four (neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness) are significantly linked to mental and sexual disorders [14:107]. The authors of the Big Five emphasize that neuroticism is the dimension most linked to adaptation, and people with high level of neuroticism may manifest various forms of maladjustment, such as marital problems or ineffective strategies for coping with difficult situations [23:258; 7:397] suggests that the FFM may also be useful in planning treatment.

In Fagan's study of 1991 [8:248], men with paraphilia scored significantly higher on the Neuroticism than men in the control group, while lower on the Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The men with paraphilia scored highest on such subscales of Neuroticism as depressiveness, aggressive hostility, and impulsivity. Furthermore, compared to the control group, significantly lower scores were noticed in the warmth factor, which makes up the Extraversion dimension, as well as the imagination factor, which makes up the Openness to experience dimension.

Dennison, Stough and Birgden [8] researched on sexual offenders against children using the NEO PI-R. Comparison of perpetrators to law-abiding citizens showed that the former are characterized by a higher level of Neuroticism and a lower level of Extraversion and Conscientiousness. The researchers also identified several categories of perpetrators due to their relationship with the victim, but found out that their personality profiles are not significantly diffe-

rent from one another. The results indicate that perpetrators show a greater tendency to experience depression, loneliness and despondency. The researchers conclude that the difficulties faced by perpetrators in establishing and maintaining close relationships are primarily the result of emotional instability, a tendency to avoid public meetings and inability to exercise self-control and plan actions. Entering in relationships with the children allows them to - at least partially - fulfill the need for domination and control.

Self-esteem and sexual abuse of children

So far, much attention has been paid to the importance of self-esteem for the functioning of an individual in various areas of social life [6,9,2]. Self-esteem plays an important role in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. While individuals convinced of their own competence, attractiveness or other merits do not fear rejection from their social environment and gladly engage in social activities, individuals with low self-esteem may fear such situations and avoid contact with other people because of the anticipation of failure. If a man is unable to establish a mature relationship with an adult partner and satisfy his sexual needs, with an appropriate correlation of other factors, he may turn aggressive toward women or take interest in children with whom the realization of his need is easier, which at the same time allows him to prove his manliness. These desires may take the form of fantasizing while masturbating or materialize in actual behaviour [17:262].

Numerous studies confirm that the offenders who sexually abuse children have lower self-esteem in comparison to other sexual offenders, non-sexual offenders [25] and non-offenders [15,18], although there are also reports claiming the absence of differences between perpetrators and men of similar socio-economic status [19], as well as indicating that incest offenders are narcissistic and inhibited individuals, generally these traits not associated with low self-esteem [Hanson et al., 1994 in 25:79].

Some studies point out that the concept of self-assessment is too general and one should rather talk about self-assessment in particular areas of individual functioning [26:192]. It seems that such an approach may be better applicable in explaining the causes of sexual violence, more so, because it could provide a more satisfactory explanation of acts committed by the so-called respected citizens, individuals functioning perfectly in other areas, and yet committing sexual offences against children.

The role of social competence in the etiology of sexual abuse of children

The level of social competence, which can be understood as "complex abilities conditioning the efficiency to cope with a particular type of social situations, gained

by an individual in the course of social training" [22:7] is an important indicator of the quality of interpersonal relationships. Deficits in this area among the most frequent indicators to explain the cause of sexual violence against children [24,11,18].

According to the above hypothesis, some men begin to engage in sexual activities with children, because they lack the competence to establish satisfying relationships with adult partners, in which they would be able to satisfy their sexual needs. They feel much more comfortable in relations with children, perceiving them submissive and easy to control, while adult partners seem to them threatening, dominant and demanding [16:42]. Numerous studies corroborate the offenders' low level of social competence. For example, Panton (1978) [1:22] proved that, compared to rapists, sexual abusers of children exhibit a higher level of anxiety of heterosexual relationships, feel uncomfortable in social situations, fearing failure and rejection by the opposite sex. The results of Beisert's study [3] also corroborate the low level of social competence of perpetrators - both general competence and the competence in terms of assertiveness, intimacy and that, which determines success in situations of social exposure.

Deficits in social competence may be related to low self-esteem, as demonstrated by the findings of Marshall, Barbaree and Fernandez [19], who found out that perpetrators are characterized by the highest level of social anxiety, and at the same time the lowest level of self-esteem and the ability to cope in situations that involve interactions with other people, among all researched groups. Generally, it is assumed that the level of social competence depends on the impact of social environment on the individual and his or her temperamental and personal traits, hence also on the level of the five-factor model dimensions [21:19].

Materials and methods

The study was conducted in nine Polish penal institutions on the male offenders convicted for sexual intercourse or other sexual activities undertaken with a minor under 15 years of age. On the basis of legal opinions of sexologists in the perpetrators' files, they were divided into those diagnosed with pedophilia, and those without such a diagnosis, which corresponds to the division into preferential and situational offenders, respectively. Results of 105 individuals - 55 offenders with a diagnosis of pedophilia and 50 situational offenders, were subjected to final analysis. The condition for participation in the study was consent of a given individual and lack of any deficits preventing proper understanding of the questions. The following tools were used in the study:

- NEO-Five-Factor Inventory, developed by Cořta and McCrae, in its Polish adaptation by Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak & Śliwińska [28] to measure the level of the basic five-factor personality dimensions: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness,

- Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory (MSEI) by O'Brien Epstein, in its Polish adaptation by Fecenc [10], to measure the level of general self-esteem and detailed self-esteem, consisting of 11 scales: Global self-esteem, Competence, Lovability, Likability, Leadership Abilities, Self-control, Moral self-approval, Body appearance, Body functioning, Identity integration and Defensive self-enhancement,

- Social Competence Questionnaire (KKS) by Matczak [22], which measures the general level of social competence and the competence conditioning efficiency of behaviour in intimate situations, in situations of social exposure and situations requiring assertiveness.

The data regarding demographic characteristics of perpetrators collected by means of a personal questionnaire

was designed for the research. The subjects' age ranged from 20 to 65 years, most of them were in the age group 30-39 and 50-59. The average age was 43.21 in the group of preferential offenders, and 41 years in the group of situational offenders. The majority of offenders had no permanent adult partner at the time of the study. Only 36% of the preferential offenders and 34% of the situational offenders had a spouse or a cohabiting partner. The subjects were rather poorly educated. Nearly three-quarters of them had primary or vocational education, in which respect there were significant differences between the two ($p \leq 0.001$). Preferential offenders were more likely to have secondary education (30.9% compared to 8% of the situational offenders). People with higher education, constituted less than 8% in both groups. There was a significant difference between the groups with regard to sexual orientation. One in ten of situational offenders and one in four of preferential offenders described themselves as bisexual. The others declared their heterosexual orientation.

Results

Tables 1-3 below present the mean scores (expressed in sten units) obtained from the studied groups in individual psychological tests. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to verify the hypotheses about intergroup differences in the level of personality traits and social competence. The mean values of the analyzed variables in the group of preferential and situational offenders were compared. Values $p \leq 0.05$ were presented in bold (Table 1).

As indicated by the data in Table 1, the preferential offenders scored lower than the situational offenders on all NEO-FFI scales except for neuroticism (for which the mean score of preferential offenders was higher). However, a significant difference between the groups was observed only in the dimension of agreeableness ($p \leq 0.01$). The offenders in both groups did not differ significantly from one another in terms of the level of intensity of the other personality dimensions.

In the case of self-esteem, measured by the MSEI, statistically significant differences between the groups were observed in its two components - moral self-acceptance and likability ($p < 0.05$), as shown in Table 2. The mean scores of the preferential offenders were lower on both scales compared to the scores of situational offenders. The scores on the moral self-acceptance scale may be regarded as reduced. The mean scores of the preferential offenders on almost all MSEI 3scales were lower than

Table 1. Mean scores on NEO-FFI domains for group of preferential and situational offenders

	Preferential offenders n = 55		Situational offenders n = 50		U	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Neuroticism	6.20	1.98	5.78	1.97	1215.50	.300
Extraversion	5.56	1.87	5.88	2.20	1245.00	.399
Openness to Experience	5.05	2.06	5.24	1.78	1277.50	.526
Agreeableness	5.15	2.00	6.16	2.17	980.50	.010
Conscientiousness	6.36	1.97	6.54	1.94	1288.50	.573

Table 2. Mean scores on MSEI scales for group of preferential and situational offenders

	Preferential offenders n = 55		Situational offenders n = 50		U	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Global self-esteem	4.76	1.88	5.38	2.10	1112.50	.084
Competence	5.80	1.85	5.78	1.88	1344.00	.839
Lovability	4.76	1.64	5.44	2.00	1104.00	.076
Likability	4.51	1.90	5.38	2.04	1033.00	.026
Leadership abilities	5.11	1.79	5.46	2.19	1242.00	.388
Self-control	5.27	1.87	5.78	2.12	1160.50	.164
Moral self-approval	4.16	2.51	5.48	2.52	991.00	.013
Body appearance	5.02	2.11	5.30	1.94	1276.00	.520
Body functioning	5.09	1.98	5.10	2.05	1333.50	.787
Identity integration	5.62	2.03	5.92	2.06	1301.00	.631
Defensive self-enhancement	4.95	1.67	5.20	1.80	310.50	.674

Table 3. Mean scores on KKS scales for group of preferential and situational offenders

Notes: Tot. - total KKS score; I - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations, ES - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations of social exposure; A - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations requiring assertiveness

	Preferential offenders n = 55		Situational offenders n = 50		U	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Tot.	4.98	1.93	5.84	2.47	1075.00	.050
I	5.29	2.13	6.56	2.38	905.50	.002
ES	4.87	2.14	5.58	2.44	1130.50	.113
A	5.05	1.97	5.32	2.20	1274.00	.512

competence. Statistically significant differences are found with regard to total KKS score ($p \leq 0.05$) and competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations ($p \leq 0.01$).

In order to verify the relationship between the level of social competence and the level of intensity of personality traits the correlation coefficient r-Pearson was used (Table 4 and 5). As the data in Table 4 implied, in both study groups mostly moderate relationships were observed between all the scales of the KKS and extraversion and conscientiousness (positive) and neuroticism (negative). It shows that the greater the intensity of extraversion and conscientiousness and the lower the intensity of neuroticism, the higher the level of social competence of the offender. Furthermore,

Table 4. Correlations of the KKS with NEO-FFI dimensions in the groups of preferential and situational offenders

Notes: Gr. I - preferential offenders (N=55); Gr. II - situational offenders (N=50); * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; Tot. - total KKS score; I - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations, ES - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations of social exposure; A - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations requiring assertiveness

KKS NEO-FFI	Total		I		ES		A	
	Gr. I	Gr. II	Gr. I	Gr. II	Gr. I	Gr. II	Gr. I	Gr. II
Neuroticism	-.363**	-.498**	-.313*	-.377**	-.291*	-.388**	-.403**	-.412**
Extraversion	.556**	.601**	.607**	.398**	.387**	.560**	.469**	.628**
Openness to Experience	.056	.515**	-.004	.410**	.102	.493**	.031	.465**
Agreeableness	.279*	.153	.289*	.235	.211	.121	.271*	.023
Conscientiousness	.478**	.474**	.344*	.450**	.409**	.432**	.471**	.356*

Table 5. Correlations of the KKS with measures of self esteem in the groups of preferential and situational offenders

Notes: Gr. I - preferential offenders (N=55); Gr. II - situational offenders (N=50); * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; Tot. - total KKS score; I - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations, ES - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations of social exposure; A - competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations requiring assertiveness

MSEI KKS	Tot.		I		ES		A	
	Gr. I	Gr. II						
Global self-esteem	.360**	.441**	.331*	.308*	.327*	.402**	.353**	.380**
Competence	.404**	.547**	.269*	.421**	.409**	.425**	.319*	.537**
Lovability	.267*	.390**	.210	.337*	.254	.327*	.164	.273
Likability	.325*	.450**	.410**	.325*	.161	.430**	.358**	.368**
Leadership abilities	.488**	.551**	.297*	.443**	.442**	.564**	.503**	.503**
Self-control	.217	.410**	.133	.328*	.129	.388**	.318*	.313*
Moral self-approval	.306*	.371**	.271*	.267	.176	.362**	.331*	.278
Body appearance	.482**	.304*	.591**	.232	.291*	.281*	.472**	.288*
Body functioning	.286*	.309*	.305*	.172	.133	.269	.378**	.377**
Identity integration	.055	.254	.056	.130	.014	.216	.056	.191
Defensive self-enhancement	-.144	.228	-.157	.207	-.136	.196	-.027	.123

those of the situational offenders. One exception is self-esteem in terms of competence, but the difference between groups is minimal here. On all other scales, except for the scale of moral self-acceptance, the subjects from both

groups scored within the average range of scores (Table 2,3).

As Table 3 shows, on all scales of the KKS, the preferential offenders on average score lower than situational offenders, which means, that they exhibit poorer social

in the group of preferential offenders a weak positive correlation was found between agreeableness and the general level of competence, as well as the competence that determines the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations and situations requiring assertiveness. In turn, in the group of situational offenders moderate positive correlation was found between openness to experience and all the KKS scales. The relationship between openness to the experience and social competence was not observed in the group of preferential offenders (Table 4).

A number of weak or moderate positive correlations were observed between individual types of social competence and MSEI scales. What was not observed in either group, was the relationship between competence and the scales of identity integration and defensive self-enhancement, although it is worth pointing out that, despite the lack of statistical significance, in the group of preferential offenders the direction of the aforementioned correlation was negative, and in the group of situational offenders - positive. Thus, the higher the offender's self-esteem is the greater their social competence. In both groups of offenders, all the KKS scales showed the strongest correlation with self-esteem in terms of competence and e6r.

Warto przy tym zauważyć, iż w przypadku tej ostatej skali uzyskano najwyższą wartość współczynnika ($r=0,591$) (Table 5).

The analysis also revealed some interesting differences between the groups, especially concerning the competence that determines the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations. In the case of lovability and self-control scales, the correlation coefficient reached statistical significance only in the group of situational offenders, while for the moral self-acceptance and body appearance scales, it was statistically significant only in the group preferential offenders. It is worth noting that in the case of the latter scale the highest value of coefficient was observed ($r=0.591$).

In order to determine which personality variables ana-

Table 6. Regression analysis for the group of preferential offenders

Variable	R	R ²	Beta	T	p
Step 1	.556	.309			
Extraversion			.556	4.873	.000
Step 2	.629	.396			
Extraversion			.432	3.689	.001
Leadership abilities			.320	2.735	.009
Step 3	.665	.442			
Extraversion			.354	2.960	.005
Leadership abilities			.266	2.282	.027
Conscientiousness			.240	2.039	.047

lyzed here are the best predictors of social competence, regression analysis was carried out for both, where the dependent variable was the general level of social competence, while the explanatory variables were personality dimensions measured by the NEO-FFI and self-esteem measured by the MSEI test.

Table 6 presents the coefficients of the regression analysis for the group of preferential perpetrators. The analysis showed that almost 31% of the variation in the total KKS score among the preferential offenders can be explained by extraversion. Self-esteem in terms of leadership abilities raises the level of the explained dependent variable to 39.6%, while conscientiousness raises it further by 4.6%. In total, the variables introduced explain 44.2% of the variance of the dependent variable.

The results of the regression analysis carried out for situational offenders (Table 7) show that extraversion is responsible for 36.1% of the variability of the results obtained in KKS, while neuroticism explains 9% of the variance (this dimension has a negative impact on the level of competence). In this group of subjects, the variables introduced explain in total 45.1% of the variance of the dependent variable, which makes a general level of social competence.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to answer the question whether sexual abusers of children, for whom they are the most desired sexual partners, differ from sexual abusers with no sexual preference for children, but who molest for other reasons, in terms of personality profile and the level of social competence, as well as its personality conditioning.

The study only partially confirmed the first hypothesis. The preferential offenders differed significantly from the situational offenders only in terms of the level of agreeableness. Those who prefer children were less agreeable, and therefore less sensitive to the problems of others, less trusting and more competitive. If the Big Five dimensions are taken as a biological basis for the development of sexual preferences, it seems that lower intensity of agreeableness may initially be associated with greater difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships - first friendly

Table 7. Regression analysis for the group of situational offender

Variables	R	R ²	Beta	t	p
Step 1	.601	.361			
Extraversion			.601	5.211	.000
Step 2	.672	.451			
Extraversion			.484	4.174	.000
Neuroticism			-.322	-2.773	.008

relationships, and then sexual, too. Besides, the lower level of agreeableness may be considered characteristic of the early stage of development, remembering that its level increases with age in the population [23:139]. The results confirm earlier reports concerning a lower intensity level of the basic dimensions of personality (except neuroticism) among people with paraphilia according to Fagan's study [8] even though statistical significance was found only for one dimension. On the other hand, if the results are compared to the standards for the entire population, it turns out that the personality profile of the offenders - both situational and preferential, cannot be distinguished by anything in particular.

The second hypothesis was confirmed only with regard to the two components of self-esteem, namely popularity and moral self-acceptance. The offenders did not differ significantly from one another in terms of its general level. Individuals with sexual preferences for children have lesser sense of being liked by others, which is probably due to the absence of successes in social interaction. If this result was influenced by the current situation of offenders (conviction on a socially condemnable offense and serving a prison sentence), it should not be different for the two groups. Thus, it is not surprising that preferential offenders scored lower in self-esteem in terms of consistency between one's core values and one's own behaviour. Aware of social attitudes towards sexual abusers of children, the perpetrators for whom contacts with children make a substitute for sexual fulfillment can evaluate their own behaviour higher than those for whom children are the most desired partners. Unexpectedly, the scores are within the range of average ones. This result fails to confirm several existing reports on the causes of sexual violence against children, which put them down to lower self-esteem [18,20]. The average score on the scale of defensive self-enhancement, which measures the need for social approval, allows for the results to be regarded as credible. It only proves that the level of self-esteem is not a factor distinguishing sexual abusers of children from the rest of the population.

Likewise, subsequent results gave no answer to the question concerning the etiology of sexual violence against children. What they did, however, was to confirm the predictions concerning the differences between the two groups of offenders. Preferential offenders are the individuals with lower level of general social competence and lower level of the competence conditioning efficacious behaviour in intimate situations. The latter result seems particularly notable. Greater difficulties in relationships with adult partners, the offenders with paraphilia show, can be both a reason for their focusing on children as less threatening partners, and

a consequence of the fact that right from the start the contacts with children have been the most preferred form of relationships. In any case, this result is consistent with the findings in the NEO-FFI that is the core of a satisfying intimate relationship is, among other things, trust and the ability to expose oneself, which preferential offenders found more difficult. The analysis of relationships between the variables studied herewith provides more information on the subject.

Verification of the fourth hypothesis aimed at identifying those personality variables that correlated significantly with social competence, which could prove useful in therapeutic treatment of the offenders who have shown deficits in this respect. Factors relating to the competence that determines the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations seem to be of particular importance since they are largely responsible for possible reoffending.

In both groups, this type of competence proved to have a positive relationship with extraversion and conscientiousness and negative with neuroticism. These results are consistent with relationships between personality traits and social competence obtained in previous studies [21,211]. Higher demand for stimulation, which is typical of extroverts, makes them open to various social stimuli, and their social training becomes more intense, resulting in a higher level of interpersonal competence. Conscientiousness is the dimension describing the degree of involvement in actions undertaken and perseverance in their implementation. It can also indicate some active style of functioning, correlated with the demand for stimulation and the ability to control impulses in accordance with the social rules, thereby influencing the effectiveness of the process of social training. On the contrary, neuroticism is a dimension defining the degree of emotional adaptation. Its high level manifests itself in a tendency to experience anxiety, unsuccessful coping in stressful situations, and tendency to self-regulation by avoiding interpersonal challenges [23]. For sure, these tendencies are not conducive to gaining social competence.

The analysis also revealed some differences between the groups of offenders. The dimension significantly correlated with intimacy of preferential offenders turned out to be agreeableness. These results may explain poorer competence of those with sexual preferences for children. If the effectiveness of social training depends on the level of agreeableness, people with lower intensity of this trait will not develop as high a competence as individuals with a positive interpersonal orientation, probably due to their attitude to other people. In turn, the competence of situational offenders in terms of intimacy correlates positively with the

dimension of openness to experience. Despite the lack of more detailed studies to compare present results, the results obtained are not surprising, since this dimension is related to, among others, with a tendency to seek new life experiences that undoubtedly increases the intensity of social training during which an individual acquires social competences. Interestingly enough, the correlation coefficient equaled nearly zero in the groups of preferential offenders.

As expected, the present research showed statistically significant positive correlations of social competence with the offenders' self-esteem, which confirms earlier reports that low levels of social competence result from negative self-esteem, making it difficult to establish mature heterosexual relationships and increasing fear of such situations. In result, an individual begins to avoid such situations where he would contact a potential partner that, in turn, prevents him from gaining competences necessary to establish successful intimate relationships. In both groups, the strongest relationship was observed for self-esteem in terms of leadership abilities. The higher the offender evaluates his ability to control other people and influence their behaviour, the higher his social competence. This result may indicate that offenders perceive that competence in a specific manner, rather as manipulative skill than effective cooperation with others.

Similarly, slightly different correlates of high competence determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations were observed in both groups. In the group of offenders with sexual preferences for children, they relate primarily to how they evaluate their physical appearance and how popular they feel in their environment; consequently the higher the self-esteem in these areas the higher the competence. In the case of situational offenders, higher competence associates with a higher assessment of one's leadership abilities and the ability to cope in social situations. Therefore, one may conclude that for preferential offenders it is more important how they are judged by others, and for situational offenders, what impact they themselves have on their environment.

The regression analysis confirmed the final hypothesis, which assumed that the predictors of social competence differed in both groups. It turned out that for preferential offenders what affects the level of social competence is mostly extraversion, self-esteem in terms of leadership abilities and conscientiousness. In turn, the best predictors of competence for situational offenders are extraversion and neuroticism, wherein the latter dimension is a factor which hinders its development that is an inhibitor. These factors explain 44.2% of the variation in competence in the first group and 45.1% in the second, which means that the level

of competence also depends on other variables, which were not analyzed herein.

Conclusions

1. The study showed that sexual abusers of children for whom children are preferred sexual partners do not differ significantly from those with sexual preferences for adults, in terms of the analyzed personality variables and social competence. Small but statistically significant differences were found only in the dimension of agreeableness, self-esteem in terms of moral self-acceptance and likability, the general level of social competence and the competence determining behavioural effectiveness in intimate situations, as well as in some predictors of social competence.

2. Most of the results fall within the average scores, which means that, in this respect, the tested group of offenders cannot be distinguished from the general population.

3. In order to draw conclusions on the etiology of crime for the men from both groups wider research should be conducted that would include some other factors.

4. Knowing the differences between the two groups of offenders (or the absence of such) could be applied in practice to develop therapeutic programs, so as to prevent reoffending having served prison term. First of all, it should answer the question whether it is justified differentiate between preferential and situational offenders in criminal court. Present findings suggest that it may not be justified considering the variables examined.

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PEDOFILŲ ASMENYBĖS YPATUMAI IR SOCIALINĖ KOMPETENCIJA

Z. Majchrzyk, K. Grzywinska-Aleksandrowicz

Raktažodžiai: seksualiniai nusikaltimai prieš vaikus, pedofilija, savivertė, socialinė kompetencija.

Santrauka

Atlikti tyrimai turi tikslą nustatyti, ar preferenciniai nusikaltimų prieš vaikus vykdytojai skiriasi nuo situacinių vykdytojų didžiojo penketo kategorijoje: asmenybės ypatumai, savivertė ir socialinė kompetencija bei reliacija tarp jų. Preferencinių vykdytojų grupę sudarė 55 vyrai, nuteisti už seksualinius nusikaltimus prieš vaikus, kuriems buvo diagnozuota pedofilija. Situacinių nusikaltėlių grupę sudarė 50 nuteistųjų be tokios diagnozės. Tyrimo metu panaudoti metodai: asmenybės tyrimo instrumentas NEO-FFI, savivertės klausimynas MSEJ, J-E Rotterio skalė, socialinės kompetencijos klausimynas. Reikšmingi skirtumai nustatyti paslaugumo ir savivertės, populiarumo ir moralinės savęs akceptacijos, bendro lygio socialinės kompetencijos ir kompetencijos, determinuojančios efektyvų elgesį intymiose situacijose, grupių vertinime. Preferenciniai vykdytojai parodė žemesnius rezultatus visose skalėse NEOFFI. Ekstraversija buvo geriausias socialinės kompetencijos požymis abiejose grupėse. Esminių skirtumų tarp preferencinių nusikaltėlių nenustatyta.

Adresas susirašinėti: z.majchrzyk@neostrada.pl

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