

The Development of the Children, Internet, and Sex Cognitions (CISC) Scale



UNDERSTANDING THE COGNITIONS OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OFFENDERS

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OUTLINE



- Literature
 - CPOs (“Child Pornography” Offenders – common terminology)
 - ✦ CSEMOs (Child Sexual Exploitation Material Offenders)
 - CSOs (Contact Sex Offenders)
- Development of the CISC; Expert Survey
 - Children, Internet, and Sex Cognitions Scale
- Results
 - Themes & Items
- Applications

LITERATURE



- Cognitive Distortions develop from Implicit Theories (IT)
 - Ward & Keenan's 5 schemas at forefront of research

CHILDREN AS SEXUAL OBJECTS

“She is flirting and teasing me, so she wants to do it”

ENTITLEMENT

“A person should have sex whenever it is needed”

DANGEROUS WORLD

“Sex between children and adults is very loving”

UNCONTROLLABILITY

“Many men sexually assault children at times of stress”

NATURE OF HARM

“Sex between an adult and child isn't harmful”

Can these be applied to CPOs?

LITERATURE



- CPO Typologies (Meridian et al., 2011)
 - “contact-driven” and “fantasy-driven” (Briggs et al., 2011)
 - ✦ Possible differing cognitions among subgroups
- CPOs have fewer cognitive distortions than CSOs
 - Scales for CSOs
 - ✦ Internet Behaviours and Attitudes Questionnaire (IBAQ; O’Brien & Webster, 2007)
 - ✦ Children and Sexual Activities (C&SA; Howitt & Sheldon, 2007)
 - NOT VALIDATED
 - No scale for CPOs

CISC DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN, INTERNET, AND SEX COGNITIONS (CISC)



STAGE 1: DEVELOPMENT

- Method
 - Expert Survey
 - ✦ 16 Professionals
 - Thematic Analysis
 - ✦ Braun & Clarke (2006)
 - ✦ Item development
 - Sorting Task
 - ✦ MSc Forensic Psychology Students

STAGE 2: VALIDATION

- Validation
- Applying scale to CPOs, CSOs, and nonforensic

Interested in
participating?



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CISC DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN, INTERNET, AND SEX COGNITIONS (CISC)



- Expert knowledge on CPOs
 - 16 professionals, recruited through social networking
 - ✦ Experience with CPOs (average 6.5yrs)
 - Psychology, probation, social work, psychiatry and research
 - Expert Survey
 - ✦ “Explore the thinking patterns of child pornography offenders”
 - ✦ “Describe the thinking patterns of CPOs”
 - ✦ Can Implicit Theories be applied to CPOs?

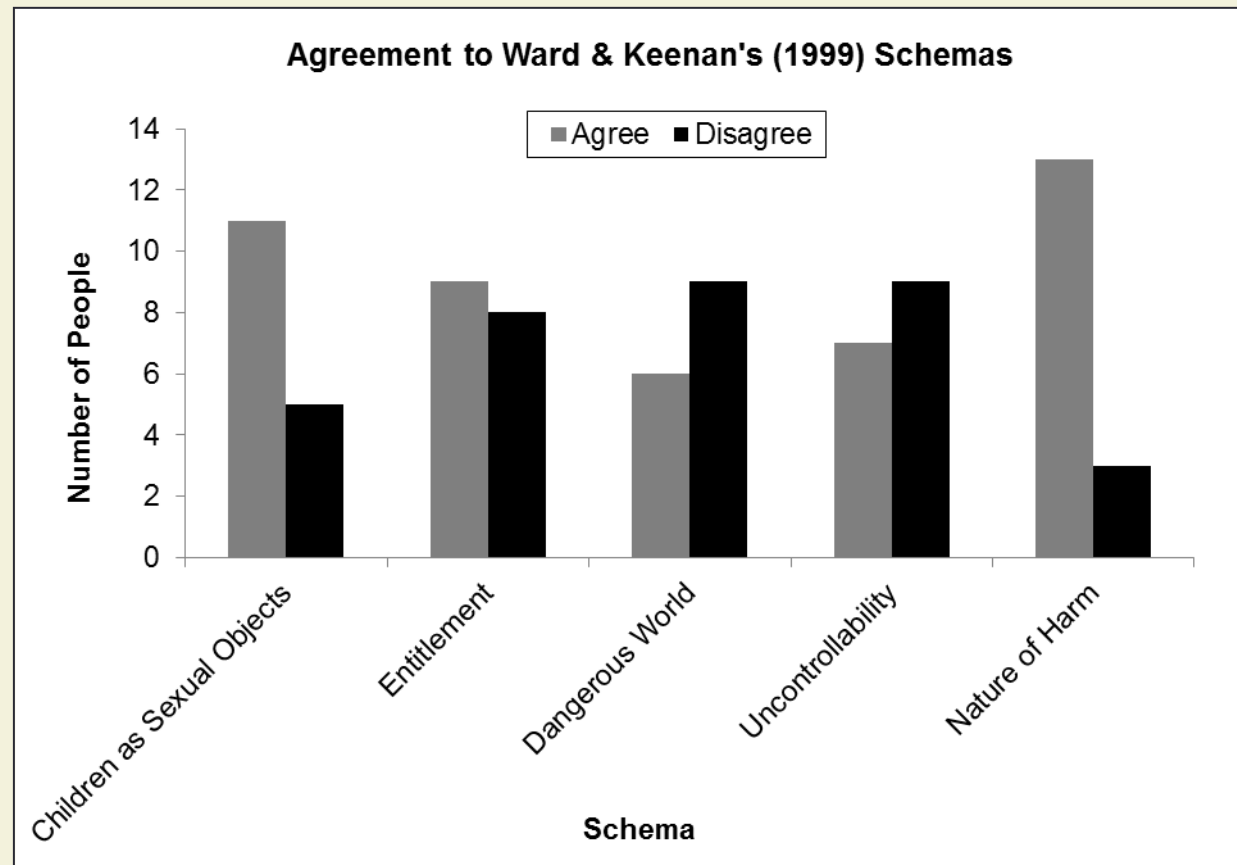
CISC DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN, INTERNET, AND SEX COGNITIONS (CISC)



- Can you apply Ward & Keenan's Schemas to CPOs?

- Mixed agreement
- Not for “children as sexual objects” and “nature of harm”
- Intuitively see overlaps



CISC DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN, INTERNET, AND SEX COGNITIONS (CISC)



- Thematic analysis
 - 118 data extracts – form differing themes
 - Data transformed into items for the scale

DATA EXTRACT:

“generally wanting to make themselves feel better”



CISC ITEM:

“Many men use child pornography because it helps make themselves feel better”

CISC DEVELOPMENT

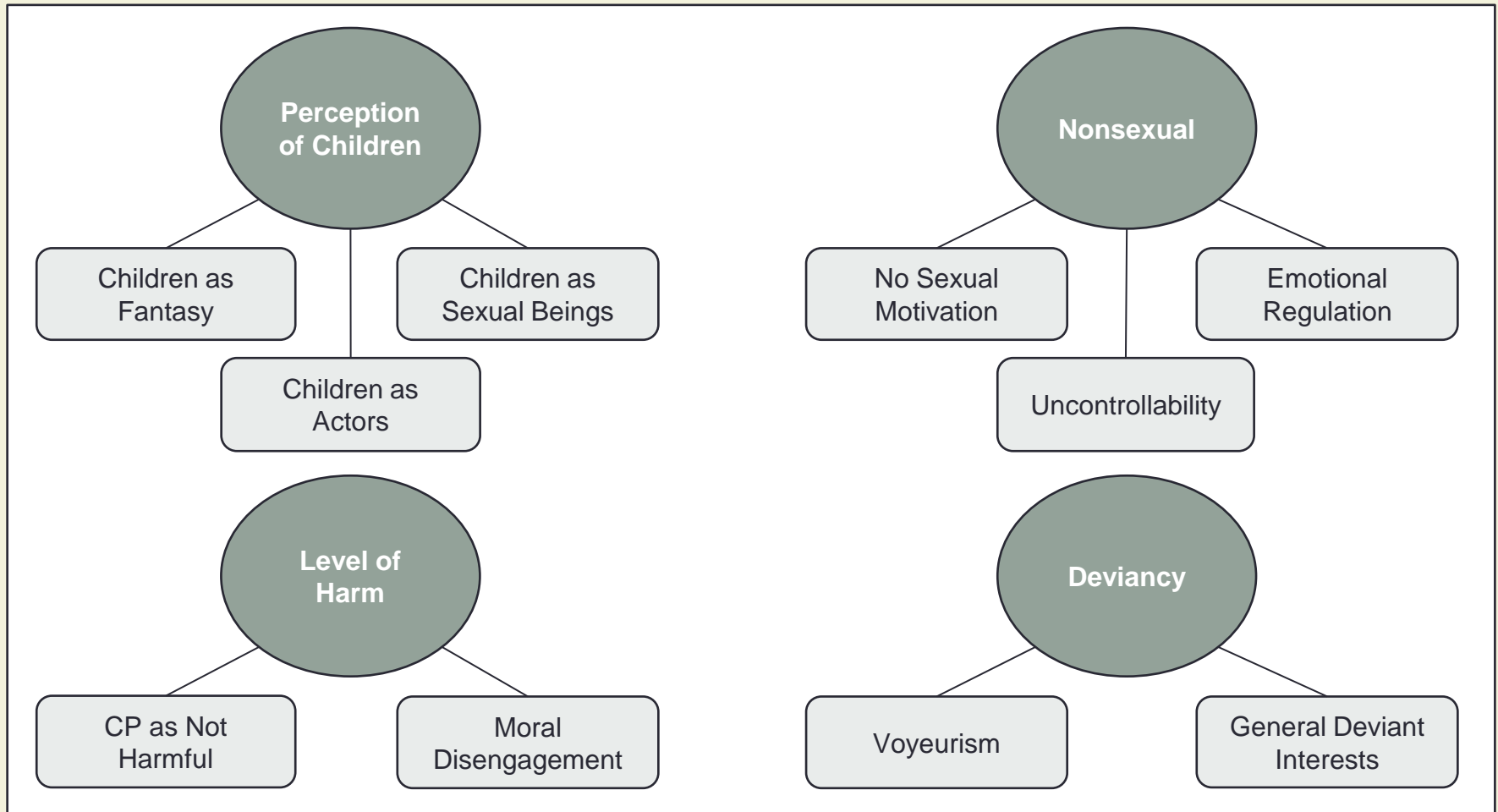
CHILDREN, INTERNET, AND SEX COGNITIONS (CISC)



- **Sorting task**
 - **Participants**
 - ✦ 16 MSc Forensic Psychology Students
 - **Method**
 - ✦ 118 items sorted into themes
 - ✦ Items removed → 108 items
 - **Interrater reliability**
 - ✦ Fleiss Kappa
 - ✦ Average score of 0.65 → “substantial” strength of agreement

CISC DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN, INTERNET, AND SEX COGNITIONS (CISC)



PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN



CHILDREN
AS
FANTASY

“[CPOs] do not perceive the activities they view as essentially 'real', or the children in the images as 'real' people”

No connection made

9
items

Child
pornography
is a fantasy
world

PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN

CHILDREN AS ACTORS

"[CPOs] view the 'child in the image' as sexually sophisticated, based on their performance (as an 'actor')"
"'on screen' children are sexually sophisticated... not children en masse"

10
items

The children in the images of CP are performing, just like any other actors

PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN



CHILDREN
AS SEXUAL
BEINGS

Likened to “children as
sexual objects”

*“children are enjoying the
sexual behaviour”*

“kids really want sex”

“kids are seductive”

9
items

Children
want sex

NON SEXUAL

NO SEXUAL
MOTIVATION

*"they enjoy the act of collecting more
than the images themselves"*

*"sexual interest in children is
secondary"*

*"enjoyment from managing the
servers"*

13
items

Most men who
look at CP are
not sexually
aroused by the
material

NON SEXUAL



UNCONTROLLABILITY

Likened to “uncontrollability”
“many aspects of their [CPOs] lives + behaviour felt out of control e.g. describing internet sexual behaviour as an ‘addiction’”

14
items

Many men cannot stop themselves from committing CP offences due to an addiction

NON SEXUAL



EMOTIONAL
REGULATION

*"Viewing images is a way of
increasing feelings of
wellbeing, a 'soothing'
strategy"*

"overcome intimacy deficits"

15
items

CP helps
alleviate feelings
associated with
negative self-
beliefs

LEVEL OF HARM



CP AS
NOT
HARMFUL

Likened to “nature of harm”
*“it does not cause any
harm”*

*“the children in the images
were not harmed”*

20
items

Viewing CP
does not
cause any
harm

LEVEL OF HARM



MORAL
DISENGAGEMENT

Likened to “nature of harm”

Society to be blamed

*“using a moral
disengagement
questionnaire”*

3 items

It is society’s
reaction, rather
than the sexual
abuse itself, which
causes the distress
a child feels

DEVIANCY

VOYEURISM

"A large proportion of non-contact offenders are 'voyeurs' or 'browsers' of illicit pornography"

Enjoyment from observation aspect and secrecy

9 items

CPOs are just "browsers"

DEVIANCY

GENERAL DEVIANT INTERESTS

"most collections would include a wide range of odd material"

"general interest in extreme behaviour rather than pedophilia per se"

6 items

Many men have a general preoccupation with internet pornography, it is not refined to CP

SCALE



- *Children, Internet, and Sex Cognitions (CISC)*

- 108 items

For the statements which follow, please write the number in the box provided that best indicates your opinion – to what degree do you agree with the statement, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. Watching child pornography is not harmful to the child	
2. Child pornography is okay because you are watching the abuse "second hand"	
3. Viewing child pornography is not abusive	
4. Child pornography offenders are fantasists	

CONCLUSIONS



- Ward and Keenan's 5 implicit schemas
 - Small overlaps, but not applicable to CPOs
 - Implicit schemas do not capture diverse range of cognitions
- Suggests CPOs are a distinct group of sexual offenders
- Supports differing typologies of CPOs
 - Diverse range of cognitions
 - Contact-driven and fantasy-driven

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS



- Do CPOs hold fewer, or *different*, cognitive distortions?
 - Present study suggests *different*
 - CISC allows for testing of above hypothesis
 - CISC help enhance understanding of CPOs
- Assessment and treatment
 - CISC provides rich data allowing for enriched case formulations
 - Captures general cognitions
 - Pathways to offending
 - Risk identification and management
- Currently at Stage 2: Validation of CISC

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING



Any Questions?

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