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OPEN PEER REVIEW

A Grounded Theory Exploration of Perspectives, Underlying Factors, and Preventive Strategies of Online Sexual Abuse: A Stakeholders' View

Hadi Gholamrezaei, Mohammad Reza Falsafinejad, Anahita Khodabakhshi-Koolaee

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

2 comments · 23 Sep 2024 – 23 Sep 2024

Associate Editor

MINOR REVISION 23 Sep 2024

Minor Revision

Editor-in-Chief

MINOR REVISION 23 Sep 2024

Minor Revision

2

Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Dear reviewers

We are grateful for the valuable suggestions and feedback from the reviewers. In following section, we answered all comments point by point.

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

An interesting paper is submitted and important results are reported.
After the initial review, it was determined that it would be better to edit.

1- What is the reason for doing this qualitative research? Couldn't it be extracted with quantitative methods, background factors and preventive strategies? The necessity of conducting research with the current method must be justified.

For exploring the perspectives, underlying factors, and preventive strategies the authors implemented the grounded theory for provided the specific strategies for analysis. In addition, the grounded theory is providing the analysis strategies throughout the research process (10).

2.Please clarify why online sexual abuse is investigated?

In addition to all these cases, conducting this research seems important and necessary from the point of view that still in Iran current society, the discussion of online sexual abuse has not been paid much attention. On the hand, since social norms are usually dependent on culture, and on the other hand, with the increase in the incidence of online sexual activities, there is a need to recognize and identify different social norms related to online sexual abuse among children and youth, and more importantly.

Overall, it can be argued that children who are sexually abused can suffer a wide range of consequences and injuries, but none of the mentioned symptoms are specific to victims of sexual abuse. Hence, child sexual abuse should be considered a general, non-specific risk factor for psychopathology, and research has not yet determined whether the same applies to victims of online sexual abuse. However, given the extensive national and international consequences of online child abuse, there is an urgent need for more extensive studies on this phenomenon with a focus on prevention strategies.

3.In conducting the interview, the working method should be explained: how to conduct the interview, where the

interview is conducted, the approximate time of each interview, the method of selecting experts and the method of data analysis.

The criteria for enrollment in the study were having at least a master's degree, having expertise in the field of sexual education, and working with children and adolescents with sexual abuse. The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions: *"What is the scope of online child sexual abuse? What are the most important consequences of online child sexual abuse? What are the most important strategies to prevent online child sexual abuse?"* Before conducting each interview, some instructions were provided to the respondent about the objectives of the study, and the interviews were recorded upon their permission. The minimum interview time was 45 minutes and the maximum was 60 minutes, and the total time of the interviews was 1051 minutes. The interviews were conducted between April 1402 and February 1402 in a period of eleven months. All the interviews were conducted in person and face-to-face at the Omid Counseling Center affiliated to education in the city of Birjand, the capital of South Khorasan province.

4.The method of data analysis should be specified with reference and its steps should be recorded.

The content of the interviews was then transcribed into a text file for subsequent analysis. The collected data were analyzed using Corbin and Strauss's (2015) grounded theory approach (10). Afterward, the underlying themes about the phenomenon in question were extracted from the participants' statements and categorized through open, axial, and selective coding. Conceptualization (open coding) was done based on the research variables and the questions raised in the interview and the participants' statements. Then, in order to refine and separate the obtained categories (sentences that are closer and have the same meaning) axial coding was used. Finally, selective coding or the process of integrating categories and their relationships was done in order to create a paradigm model.

5. Was there a finding in this study that cannot be compared and concluded with the findings of other studies?

In addition, given the legal gap that contributed to expanding online child sexual exploitation, preventive and up-to-date laws should be adopted for this emerging harm. In addition, support and psychological interventions should be planned and implemented for the affected children.

Moreover, relevant organizations and institutions need to launch programs and campaigns using social media and traditional platforms to increase children's awareness of online sexual abuse. In addition, such awareness-raising programs should be implemented according to the age requirements of children, with good quality, and on safe internet platforms.

The results of this research showed that an unsafe and unsupervised cyberspace can be a serious threat for online sexual abuse of children. The results of this research can help to develop knowledge and media literacy, pay attention to securing virtual space and contents of social networks for children and teenagers. Also, the preventive ways that experts and stakeholders put forward in this field, including informing parents, educators, and children and teenagers of the possible dangers of online sexual abuse, can lead to changes in social, educational policies and the adoption of laws in This field leads.

6.What are the limitations of the study?

The results of this research have limitations for generalizability due to the abstractness nature of the concepts in qualitative researches, geographical area and social conditions and finally the limited number of participants.

2 Revision 1

2 comments · 17 Oct 2024 – 17 Oct 2024

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 17 Oct 2024

Dear author,
After revising, decrease the word count.
regards,

Editor-in-Chief

MAJOR REVISION 17 Oct 2024

Major Revision

3

Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

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Dear reviewers

We are grateful for the valuable suggestions and feedback from the reviewers. In following section, we answered all comments point by point.

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

An interesting paper is submitted and important results are reported.
After the initial review, it was determined that it would be better to edit.

Reviewer 1:

Many comments are reflected in the manuscript. But one important point is still unclear to me, why was this study done qualitatively and using grounded theory? Unlike some other forms of qualitative approaches, grounded theory, while dealing with rich description, also deals with detailed explanation of the phenomena in question. In other words, the purpose of grounded theory is to produce a theory, not just to describe the phenomenon. In order for analyzes to become theories, concepts must be regularly related to each other.
I do not see this important point in the attached manuscript.

Thank you, al lot. We mentioned in text.

This qualitative study adopted a grounded theory approach to investigate the experiences of experts about online child sexual abuse. For exploring the perspectives, underlying factors, and preventive strategies the authors implemented the grounded theory for provided the specific strategies for analysis. In addition, the grounded theory is providing the analysis strategies throughout the research process. After uncovers a process inherent to the substantive area of research the construct an explanatory theory is started (10).

The construct theory in grounded theory model generated in fig. 1 in article.

2- Editor Comments:

Reducing the words number:

All of the article without references and abstract equal to 5200 words. Due to this article is qualitative research the minimum words are considered.

3 Revision 2

1 comment · 5 Nov 2024

Editor-in-Chief

MINOR REVISION 5 Nov 2024

Dear author,
The changes are acceptable.
The article is too long; reduce the word count.
regards,

4

Revision 3

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Dear Editor;

With regards and respect;

The article with the code and title "

150810 A grounded theory exploration of perspectives, underlying factors, and preventive strategies of online sexual abuse: A stakeholder’s view [Revision 2]

that you and your colleagues have worked hard to confirm. In your last note, you wrote that the article is too bulky and we should reduce it. A part of it was reduced, however, other authors and myself also believe that it is a qualitative article and reducing its words will seriously damage its content and understanding.

Best regards

Mohammad Reza Falsafinejad

4 Revision 3

1 comment · 12 Nov 2024

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 12 Nov 2024

accept