Pedophilic, Rapist, and Mixed Sexual Offenders: An Application of the Self-Regulation Model

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Self-Regulation Model (SRM)

- Sex offenders are diverse (Hudson, Ward, & McCormack, 1999). However, relapse-prevention-based treatment involves an “one size fits all” approach (Ward, T., Bickley, J., Webster, S. D., Fisher, D., Beech, A., & Eldridge, H., 2004):
  - Offenders want to avoid offending and offense is the result of coping deficits and leads to feelings of guilt.
  - Ward & Hudson (1998) found that many offenders actively sought to offend, engaged in planful behavior, and experienced satisfaction after the offense.
Self-Regulation Model cont’d

- SRM posits that sexual offenses involve the use of two types of goals, avoidant or approach, and two types of strategies, passive/automatic or active/explicit (Ward, T., Louden, K., Hudson, S.M., & Marshall, W.L., 1995).

- Yates & Ward (2008) developed 10 phases of the offense process based on the Self-regulation Model
  - Each phase may involve approach or avoidant goals and they may change as the offense progresses.
  - Eventually, all offenders’ goals become approach, since they end up committing the offense.
  - Offense strategies may vary depending on the offender and/or the particular offense.
Based on the aforementioned goals and strategies, four possible combinations, or pathways, arise:

- **Avoidant-Passive**
  - Low coping skills / Covert Planning / Underregulation.

- **Avoidant-Active**
  - Inappropriate or ineffective attempts to manage desire to offend or to prevent the offense.

- **Approach Automatic**
  - Impulsive / Lack of self-regulation even if possesses general coping skills

- **Approach Explicit**
  - Explicit offense planning / Intact Regulation / Positive evaluation of offense / Learns from offense for future offenses.
Validation of SRM


  - It has been found to differentiate between offender types, offense characteristics, use of pornography, planning, static and dynamic risk to reoffend, treatment performance/change; and use with special needs offenders (Yates, 2009).

- However, these studies have been limited by small sample sizes (i.e. N=96, N=86) and did not examine the possibility of differences between ethnic groups.
Goals

- Empirical support of the Self-Regulation Model using archival data.
- Assessment of differences in offense pathways depending on offender type.
- Assessment of potential ethnic differences in offender pathways.
Methods

Participants

- 163 Adult male convicted sex offenders serving state prison sentences at the Massachusetts Treatment Center.
  - Rapists- 57.1% (n=93) Child Molesters- 31.9% (n=53) Mixed Offenders - 11% (n=18)
  - Age at the time of evaluation: 21-76 (M = 41.76, SD = 9.80)
  - Ethnicity: Caucasian- 72.4% (n=118) African American- 17.2% (n=28) Latino- 10.4% (n=17)
  - Marital Status: Single- 46.6% (n=69) Married- 8.8% (n=13) Separated- 6.8% (n=10) Divorced- 37.2% (n=55)
  - Average Level of Education: 10.34 (SD=1.92)

Subjects participated in comprehensive assessments as part of their participation in treatment.
Measures

- Demographic data gathered from assessment reports obtained at the Massachusetts Treatment Center
- Self-Regulation Model Coding Protocol (2009)
  - 7 items:
    - Offense-related Goal (desire to prevent offending, attitude toward offending/schema, cognitive distortions, post-offense evaluation)
    - Offence strategies (self-regulation skills, offense planning, control over offending behavior)
  - Combination of goals, strategies yields offense pathway
■ **Procedure**
  - Assessment reports coded for demographical information by graduate student research assistants.
  - SRM coding performed by one primary and one secondary rater. Inter-rater reliability was substantial (ICC = .830).
Results

- Confirmed utility of the SRM Coding Protocol (94.5% of sample was assigned a pathway).
- There was no significant difference in pathway assignment among ethnic groups ($X^2 = 10.46, p = .234$).
Results

Groups differ significantly on rates of pathway assignment ($X^2 = 22.77, p < .01$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Pathway</th>
<th>Avoidant Passive</th>
<th>Avoidant Active</th>
<th>Approach Automatic</th>
<th>Approach Explicit</th>
<th>CND*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapists n = 93</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
<td>1 (1.1)</td>
<td>43 (46.2)$^a$</td>
<td>45 (48.4)</td>
<td>3 (3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Molesters n = 52</td>
<td>1 (1.9%)</td>
<td>4 (7.7)$^b$</td>
<td>10 (19.2)$^c$</td>
<td>34 (65.4)</td>
<td>3 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Offenders n = 18</td>
<td>1 (5.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>3 (16.7)</td>
<td>11 (61.1)</td>
<td>3 (16.7)$^d$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ z=2.0, $^b$ z=1.9, $^c$ z=-1.9, $^d$ z=2.0

* Could not determine pathway (either goal, strategy, or both)
Discussion

- Rapists had higher rates of assignment to the Approach-Automatic pathway than expected. The opposite was the case for Child Molesters.
- Child Molesters had higher rates of assignment to the Avoidant-Active pathway.
- Findings similar to those reported by Yates and Kingston (2006) for Rapists. Child molesters could not be compared.
Implications

- Provides support for the notion that current treatment methods based on relapse prevention are not helpful to many sex offenders.
- The observed higher rates of assignment into the approach pathways expected given the nature of the data.
- Use of SRM interview assessment recommended in order to explore goals (avoidant vs. approach) more accurately.
Limitations

- The present study is retrospective
- It is solely based on archival data
- It did not include information/coding for the Good Lives Model, in which the Self-Regulation Model is embedded.
Acknowledgements

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References