

PERCEPTION OF CHILD ABUSE OFFENDERS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored variables (respondent gender, offender history of child abuse, and type of offense) that affect how child abuse offenders are perceived. Respondents (308 undergraduates) read a scenario depicting a child abuse offense, then completed a questionnaire to assess perceived effect on the child, offender etiology, characteristics of the offender, and sentencing options. Results were analyzed using 2x3x2 ANOVAs. Results indicate that women perceived offenders to have a higher recidivism rate than men. Regarding offender history of child abuse, respondents felt more sympathy towards offenders who experienced childhood abuse, and were more likely to attribute the offense to the offender's negative childhood experiences. Child sexual abuse offenders were generally viewed more negatively than child physical abuse offenders. For example, child sexual abuse offenders were perceived as more responsible for the offense and more dangerous than child physical abuse offenders.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is an ongoing issue that affects children nationwide (United States Department of Health and Human Services [U.S. HHS], 2017). According to federal data based on the most recent submissions by state child protective services, it was estimated that, in 2015, 683,000 children were victims of neglect and abuse in the United States (U.S. HHS, 2017). Child abuse and neglect can be defined as “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (U.S. HHS, 2010, p. 6). Major types of child abuse and neglect include sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse (U.S. HHS, 2016). This review focused specifically on perpetrators of child physical abuse and sexual abuse. Examples of physically abusive behaviors include punching and kicking; sexually abusive behaviors can include sexual conduct, such as fondling and intercourse (U.S. Department of Justice [U.S. DOJ], n.d.). Among the reported child abuse victims in 2015, 17.2% were physically abused and 8.4% were sexually abused (U.S. HHS, 2017).

Child abuse is an important topic of study because of the harm that victims can experience. In 2015, approximately 1,670 children nationwide died from abuse and neglect (U.S. HHS, 2017). Of the fatalities reported, 74.8% involved children younger than 3 years old, and 43.9% involved fatalities due to physical abuse or physical abuse combined with a second type of maltreatment (U.S. HHS, 2017). Although most child abuse cases do not result in the death of a child, “the impact of abuse and neglect on

children is often severe and long lasting” (U.S. DOJ, n.d., pp. 1-2). Specifically, for female victims of child sexual abuse, it has been found that they may experience mental health problems, such as depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Saunders, Villeponteaux, Lipovsky, Kilpatrick, & Veronen, 1992). It has been proposed that children who experience abuse may develop abusive behaviors as adults (Cappell & Heiner, 1990). Specifically, it has been found that maternal history of child abuse is correlated with increased levels of child abuse potential as an adult (Smith, Cross, Winkler, Jovanovic, & Bradley, 2014). Due to the harm that child abuse can cause, perpetrators of child abuse may be reported to law enforcement agencies.

Although not all instances of child abuse may be reported to authorities, there is a substantial amount of information about child abuse that can be gathered from law enforcement data. According to the National Incident-Based Reporting System, in 2016, there were 44,727 assault offenses reported to law enforcement agencies involving children 10 years old and younger, and 72,497 involving children 11 to 15 years old (U.S. DOJ, 2017b). Regarding sex offenses reported to law enforcement agencies, 20,332 involved children 10 years old and younger, and 20,261 involved children 11 to 15 years old (U.S. DOJ, 2017b). There also were 759 reported nonforcible sex offenses involving children 10 years old and younger, and 3,452 reported nonforcible sex offenses involving children 11 to 15 years old (U.S. DOJ, 2017b). Although it is unknown how many arrests were made for the reported offenses that specifically involved child victims, the National Incident-Based Reporting System does have arrest records for adult offenders (U.S. DOJ, 2017a). In 2016, 437,560 adults were arrested for assault offenses, 12,992 were arrested

for sex offenses, and 1,499 were arrested for nonforcible sex offenses (U.S. DOJ, 2017a). It should be noted that, although approximately 150,000 sex offenders are in prisons across the United States, some offenders are released without supervision (Center for Effective Public Policy [CEPP], 2008). For child sex offenses, specifically, this may potentially be problematic because some offenders may be likely to reoffend (CEPP, 2008). In a meta-analysis of recidivism, Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2005) found that sex offenders had a 13.7% recidivism rate for sexual offenses. There are several factors that are taken into consideration when determining sentencing options for child sex offenders, including specifics of the case and state laws (CEPP, 2008). Other common consequences for sex offenders include parole or treatment (CEPP, 2008). By studying how child abusers are perceived, researchers may gain insight into which sentencing options the public deem as most appropriate and effective for offenders.

There are several factors that can influence how child abusers are perceived. One factor is respondent gender. It can be hypothesized that women may perceive child abuse offenders differently than men. Another factor that can influence perception of child abuse offenders is whether or not they have a history of being abused as a child. Specifically, if the offender is known to have had an experience of being sexually or physically abused as a child, perceptions may be different than if he or she did not experience any abuse as a child. The last factor addressed in the current review was the type of offense. It can be hypothesized that perceptions of the offense may vary depending upon whether child sexual abuse or child physical abuse was involved. For example, child sexual abuse is generally perceived by the public as a more serious

offense than child physical abuse (e.g., Harnett, 1997). For each of the three factors, specific variables were examined in this review. These specific variables were grouped into four categories, which include perceived effects on a child abuse victim (e.g., harm towards the child and overall seriousness of the offense), perceived reasons for the offense (e.g., negative childhood experiences), characteristics of a child abuse offender (e.g., responsibility, dangerousness, sympathy for the offender, and recidivism), and sentencing options for a child abuse offender (e.g., effectiveness and appropriateness of imprisonment or treatment programs). Perception of child abuse offenders may differ depending on respondent gender, history of abuse, and type of abuse.

Respondent Gender

Men and women may have different ways of perceiving child abuse offenders. For example, explanations for why people abuse children may differ between genders. Although no research has been identified that considered respondent gender when perceiving etiology for child physical abuse, one study has been identified for child sexual abuse. Fromuth and Holt (2008) found a significant main effect for gender on attribution of a child sexual offense. Specifically, it was found that, compared to men, women were more likely to attribute motivation for a teacher being sexually involved with a student to the teacher's psychological problems. Depending on what individuals attribute child abuse to, perception of how responsible the perpetrator is for the offense may vary.

No research on child physical abuse has been identified that examined perception of responsibility by respondent gender. There have been, however, several studies (e.g.,

Fromuth, Mackey, & Wilson, 2010) whose results do indicate a main effect for respondent gender on perception of child sexual abuse offenders' responsibility. Specifically, a number of studies involving teacher-student sexual misconduct scenarios have found that, compared to men, women tend to place more responsibility on the teacher (Fromuth & Holt, 2008; Fromuth, Holt, & Parker, 2001; Fromuth, Kelly, Brallier, Williams, & Benson, 2016; Fromuth et al., 2010). Graham, Rogers, and Davies (2007) found similar results in a study using a hypothetical child sexual abuse case. Their findings indicated that men perceived the offender as less culpable than women (Graham et al., 2007). Broussard, Wagner, and Kazelskis (1991) suggest that such findings support the notion that because women have a greater risk for being sexually abused, they may have a heightened sensitivity to these issues. Although there is considerable research supporting a main effect for respondent gender, Geddes, Tyson, and McGreal (2013) did not find a significant main effect for responsibility when presenting teacher-student sexual misconduct scenarios to Australian respondents.

Sympathy towards child abusers is another variable that may differ between men and women. One study, in which respondents read a fictitious scenario involving adult domestic violence, found that women, compared to men, sympathized less and placed more blame on the male offender (Locke & Richman, 1999). Although no research has been identified for gender differences and sympathy towards child sexual or physical abuse offenders, it can be hypothesized that when no background of the offender is provided, women may tend to sympathize with offenders less than men.

The perceived seriousness of child abuse may differ between men and women. Research suggests that women tend to view child sexual abuse as more serious than men (e.g., Graham et al., 2007). Female respondents also have been found to perceive abuse as more severe than male respondents (Bornstein, Kaplan, & Perry, 2007). Harnett (1997) found that female respondents, compared to male respondents, rated both child sexual and physical offenders to be more dangerous. No research has been identified that explored gender differences and perceived harm on child abuse victims. Depending on the perceived seriousness or harmfulness of an offense, punishment options for the offender may vary between respondent genders.

Prison sentences and treatment are two common options for respondents to choose from when determining consequences for child abuse offenders. It can be proposed that women may endorse greater length of sentencing or harsher punishment for offenders than men. When determining punishment for teachers who were sexually involved with students, a significant difference has been found for respondent gender (Fromuth et al., 2001, 2010, 2016). Specifically, results found that compared to men, women recommended longer years of imprisonment for the teacher (Fromuth et al., 2001, 2010, 2016). In another teacher-student sexual misconduct study, Fromuth and Holt (2008) found that men and women had different thoughts on the teacher's punishment. Specifically, compared to women, men were more likely to agree that the teacher should not be punished because the student did not object (Fromuth & Holt, 2008). Thus, research (e.g., Fromuth et al., 2001) confirms the idea that women generally perceive sentencing options for sexual offenders differently than men.

Although not all research has found a significant main effect for respondent gender on perception of child abusers (e.g., Geddes et al., 2013), there is substantially more research that has identified differences in gender perception. Across a number of studies, women tend to place more responsibility on child sex offenders (e.g., Fromuth & Holt, 2008; Fromuth et al., 2001) and deem child sex offenses to be more serious (e.g., Geddes et al., 2013; Graham et al., 2007) than men. Women also tend to perceive child sexual abuse offenses as having more negative effects on the victim and suggest longer prison sentences than men (e.g., Fromuth et al., 2016). No research has been identified that focused on perception of recidivism by respondent gender. There are other factors, however, besides the gender of the respondent that can impact the perception of child abuse.

Offender History of Child Abuse

In addition to respondent gender having an effect on perception of child abuse offenders, whether or not the offender has a history of being abused as a child also can affect perceptions of child abuse offenders. According to the cycle of abuse theory, there is an intergenerational cycle through which abuse as a child increases the risk for abusing as a parent (Cappell & Heiner, 1990). Similar to the cycle of abuse theory, the social learning theory states that modeling plays an important role in aggression (Bandura, 1973). Thus, it can be hypothesized that some children who experience abuse may adopt aggressive and abusive behaviors as adults.

Regarding the etiology of abuse, some respondents may believe that offenders abuse children due to the offenders' own experiences of childhood abuse (e.g., Katz-

Schiavone, Levenson, & Ackerman, 2008). One identified study that researched perceptions of myths and facts about sexual violence presented questions from the Center for Sex Offender Management to respondents who were recruited through Craigslist (Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). When presented with the statement “children who are sexually assaulted will sexually assault others when they grow up,” 61% of respondents chose correctly by selecting the answer to be false (Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008, p. 300). When presented, however, with the statement “juvenile sex offenders typically are victims of child sexual abuse and grow up to be adult sex offenders,” 84% of respondents chose incorrectly by selecting the answer to be true (Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008, p. 300).

Some studies have found that some sex offenders did, in fact, experience abuse during their childhood (e.g., Jespersen, Lalumière, & Seto, 2009; Levenson, 2016). In a study that surveyed men in sex offender treatment programs across the United States, 42% of respondents reported experiencing childhood physical abuse and 38% reported experiencing sexual abuse (Levenson, 2016). A positive correlation also has been found between women who have been physically abused as children and women who are physically abusive towards their children (e.g., Caykoylu, İbiloglu, Taner, Potas, & Taner, 2011). Studies that examined maternal history of child abuse and maternal child abuse potential have found that self-reported history of child abuse predicts self-reported physical abuse of their own child (Haapasalo & Aaltonen, 1999) and that a history of child abuse is correlated with increased levels of child abuse potential (Smith et al., 2014). Medley and Sachs-Ericsson (2009) found similar results when studying predictors of physical abuse by parents. Results indicated that “participants who experienced

childhood abuse were almost twice as likely to exhibit parental abusive behaviors compared to those who reported no childhood abuse” (Medley & Sachs-Ericsson, 2009, p. 249). Thus, it can be hypothesized that child abuse victims may have a higher risk of developing abusive behavior as adults.

Although no research has been identified that differentiates perceived responsibility of child abuse offenders who have a history of being abused from those who do not, Hindman and Peters (2001) found interesting results when reviewing studies that used polygraph tests on adult and juvenile sex offenders. Specifically, it was found that “more than two-thirds of the non-polygraphed group claimed to have been sexually abused as children; in the polygraphed group, however, that number dropped to 29 percent” (p. 10). Results indicated that offenders who were not polygraphed were likely to overstate their own histories of victimization. It can be hypothesized that the nonpolygraphed offenders believed that they would be perceived as being less responsible for their offenses if they mentioned being abused during childhood. Further, it can be hypothesized that if an offender has a personal history of being abused as a child, then he or she may be perceived as being less responsible for the offense than if he or she has no history of abuse.

Sentencing options also may be influenced by whether or not the offender has a history of being abused as a child. One study has been identified that incorporated an offender’s childhood history of physical abuse when discussing sentencing deliberations. In the study, which used a mock trial capital murder case, it was mentioned that the offender had been physically abused by his father as a child (Stevenson, Bottoms, &

Diamond, 2010). It was found that some “jurors were more likely to argue that the defendant’s childhood abuse had permanently damaged him and that he could not be rehabilitated than they were to argue that he could recover from his child abuse” (Stevenson et al., 2010, p. 27). Thus, jurors perceived that the offender’s childhood abuse permanently damaged the offender. Although this study involved murder rather than a child abuse offense and did not include any history of child sexual abuse, it does show that acknowledging an offender’s history of abuse can impact perception of sentencing options.

Although there is research that has examined offender history of both childhood sexual abuse and childhood physical abuse (e.g., Levenson, 2016; Medley & Sachs-Ericsson, 2009), there is limited research that has been identified for perceptions of variables, such as etiology and sentencing options. Variables that do not have identified research include sympathy towards the offender, responsibility, perceived harm towards the child, seriousness of the offense, and recidivism. No research has been identified that compared perceptions of offenders who have a history of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, or no history of abuse.

Type of Offense

Depending on the type of offense, child physical abuse or child sexual abuse, perception toward offenders may vary. Some variables that have been studied as explanations for child sexual offenses include the offender's own childhood history of that specific type of abuse and substance use (e.g., Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). Katz-Schiavone et al. (2008) studied public myths and facts of sexual violence and found that

61% of respondents answered correctly by choosing false when presented with the statement “drugs and alcohol cause sexual offenses to occur” (p. 301). Although there is limited research on perception of etiology for child sexual abuse and child physical abuse, perceived etiology may influence the perception of offenders’ responsibility or culpability.

Perceived offender responsibility is another variable for which no research has been identified for child physical abuse. Regarding perceived responsibility for child sexual abuse, only minimal research has been identified. Graham et al. (2007) found a significant main effect for abuse type (i.e., contact, penetration, noncontact) on offender culpability when using a hypothetical child sexual abuse case. Results indicated that the more sexual contact involved, the more culpable the offender was perceived (Graham et al., 2007). Although this study did not compare culpability of child sexual abuse and child physical abuse, it did find that offenders were perceived as being more culpable when the offense involved more sexual contact.

When determining the degree of sympathy for offenders of physical and sexual child abuse, only one study was identified that compared the two. Harnett (1997) investigated attitudes of adult residential care-workers for child physical and sexual assault vignettes. Results, however, did not indicate a significant type of abuse (i.e., physical versus sexual) effect for sympathy. Although only limited research on sympathy or understandability for types of child abuse has been identified, there has been more research regarding seriousness by type of child abuse.

Perceived harm towards child abuse victims, seriousness of child abuse offenses, and dangerousness of child abuse offenders may differ based on whether the abuse was sexual or physical. In a study involving child sexual and physical abuse scenarios, Bornstein et al. (2007) found significant main effects for abuse type on trauma and severity ratings. Results indicated that respondents perceived severe sexual abuse, compared to physical and mild sexual abuse, as the most traumatic and as very severe (Bornstein et al., 2007). It should be noted, however, that these main effects were qualified by significant interactions. These results may support the belief that the more severe the abuse, the more harmful the effects would be on the victim. Harnett's (1997) study, which compared child sexual and physical abuse, found similar results for type of assault. These results indicated that respondents perceived child sexual assault offenders as more dangerous compared to child physical assault offenders, and child sexual assault offenses were perceived as more serious compared to child physical assault offenses (Harnett, 1997). These results can support the hypothesis that sexual abuse is generally deemed as more serious than physical abuse. It also can be hypothesized that the more serious an offense is perceived to be, the more likely imprisonment will be selected as an appropriate consequence.

Perception of what is considered appropriate consequences for child abuse offenders may be based on whether the offense was physical or sexual. Similar to other factors being examined, more research has been identified that focused specifically on sentencing or intervention for child sexual abuse offenses than child physical abuse offenses. Devilly and Le Grand (2015) investigated Australian respondents' sentencing

perspectives for different types of sexual assault cases compared to judges' sentencing perspectives. Although two of the four total vignettes used in this study did not involve child sexual assault, the other two vignettes did involve child sexual assault. Significant main effects were found for probation and community service sentences (Deville & Le Grand, 2015). Results indicated that respondents perceived both probation and community service as less appropriate for child sexual assault than for adult rape. Instead, imprisonment was perceived as being a more appropriate sentence for the child assault cases.

In regards to treatment being enforced rather than probation, community service, or imprisonment, Katz-Schiavone et al. (2008) found that when presented with the statement "treatment for sex offenders is ineffective," 66% of respondents chose the incorrect answer, deeming treatment to be ineffective (p. 300). Engle, McFalls, and Gallagher (2007) examined attitudes of members of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers towards treatment. All members were professionals who worked with and/or studied sex offenders (Engle et al., 2007). Results found that 33.8% of the respondents disagreed that violent sex offenders should be treated in a prison setting, and 14.9% strongly disagreed that violent offenders should be treated in a prison setting. Although this study only involved violent sex offenders, it also assessed attitudes toward recidivism (Engle et al., 2007).

Engle et al. (2007) found that 62.9% of respondents thought "that the general population of violent sex offenders have relapses after treatment" (p. 21). Surprisingly, however, 64.8% thought "that relapse is unlikely after their own patients have been

treated” (Engle et al., 2007, p. 21). Engle et al. (2007) noted that, although this may be interpreted as self-aggrandizement or defensiveness, some respondents still expressed reservations about their own patients relapsing. Coohy (2006) also examined risk assessment, but only for physically abusive fathers. This study found that child protective service “investigators were more likely to rate families with fathers who severely injured their children, who did not take responsibility for their behavior, or who were unwilling to change their behavior at higher risk for repeated maltreatment” (Coohy, 2006, p. 473). Bornstein et al. (2007) studied perceptions of child sexual and physical abuse, and found that perception of how likely the same type of abuse would reoccur was affected by the abuse type. Results indicated that “participants perceived physical abuse as most likely to occur and reoccur, followed by mild sexual, then severe sexual abuse” (Bornstein et al., 2007, p. 387). Although Bornstein et al. (2007) did not incorporate prison sentencing options for the offender, it was found that abuse type had an influence on how likely the same type of abuse was perceived to reoccur.

It can be concluded that both types of child abuse, physical and sexual, pose harm to its victims (U.S. HHS, 2016). Between the two types, however, sexual abuse is generally perceived as being a more serious offense than physical abuse (Harnett, 1997). Overall, there is still substantially more research that focused on child sexual abuse rather than child physical abuse.

Summary

There are several factors that can influence perceptions of child abuse offenders. It is important, therefore, to further examine perceptions based on respondent gender,

offender history of abuse, and type of offense. Respondent gender is a factor that has some previous research regarding child sexual abuse, and minimal research regarding child physical abuse. Previous research has found several significant main effects for respondent gender and child sexual abuse. Compared to men, women have been more likely to place greater responsibility on the offender (e.g., Fromuth et al., 2010), consider an offense to have more negative effects on the child (e.g., Fromuth & Holt, 2008), and recommend longer jail time (e.g., Fromuth et al., 2001). Perceived etiology of the offense and sympathy towards the offender are both areas that need more research. Locke and Richman (1999) did find that women sympathized with an offender less than men; the case, however, involved adult domestic violence rather than child abuse. Although many studies have found significant respondent gender differences for child sexual abuse (e.g., Fromuth & Holt, 2008), child physical abuse is an area that needs greater attention.

Previous research regarding offender history of child abuse tends to focus on perception of offenders who experienced childhood sexual abuse (e.g., Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). There are very few studies that have examined perception of offenders who have a childhood history of experiencing physical abuse. Although Stevenson et al. (2010) found that mentioning a history of child physical abuse influenced juror perceptions, the scenario involved murder, rather than a child abuse offense. Studies that have examined individuals with a history of childhood physical abuse tend to focus on abuse potential rather than perceptions of the individual (e.g., Smith et al., 2014). Further, there is limited research that examined perceived responsibility of the offender, amount

of sympathy towards the offender, harm towards the child, seriousness of the abuse, dangerousness of the offender, and recidivism.

The final factor in the current study, type of offense, addressed child sexual abuse and physical abuse. Similar to limitations of research that addresses respondent gender and offender history of child abuse, there is less research on child physical abuse compared to sexual abuse. Among research that examined etiology for child physical abuse offenses, studies have tended to focus on abuse by mothers rather than by fathers (e.g., Haapasalo & Aaltonen, 1999; Smith et al., 2014). There also is limited research that compares the two types of abuse. Although no research has been identified that explored perception of sympathy towards the offender, main effects for type of abuse have been found for perception of seriousness, dangerousness, and sentencing options. Specifically, it has been found that compared to physical abuse, sexual abuse has been perceived as being more dangerous and serious (e.g., Harnett, 1997). Regarding sentencing options, Devilly and Le Grand (2015) found that probation and community service were deemed as less appropriate consequences for a perpetrator of child sexual assault than imprisonment. One limitation for the sentencing options variable is that there is minimal research that incorporates treatment as a consequence. Overall, the major limitation for type of offense is that research tended to focus on child sexual abuse more than child physical abuse.

Perception of child abuse offenders is an area that needs further examination for various reasons. For example, cases of child abuse are not always reported. Dinehart and Kenny (2015) found that 4.4% of early care and education providers in their study noted

“that they failed to make a report even though they thought a child may have been abused” (p. 436). By examining variables such as harm toward child abuse victims, seriousness of child abuse, and dangerousness of child abuse offenders, researchers may be able to better understand how individuals perceive child abuse offenders and why some cases of child abuse are unreported.

Another reason why studying perception of child abuse offenders is important is the amount of influence that perceptions can have on consequences for perpetrators. For example, when selecting jurors for child sexual abuse trials, defense attorneys assess for different variables, such as jurors’ beliefs about children and sexual attitudes (Cramer, Adams, & Brodsky, 2009). Some individuals may perceive prison sentencing as the only appropriate way to punish offenders. They also may believe that imprisonment is the most effective form of punishment because the offender is physically separated from children for an extended period of time. Other individuals may perceive treatment programs as being most effective for correcting offenders’ abusive behavior. It has been found that children who experienced abuse may be at a higher risk of developing abusive behaviors later on in life (e.g., Medley & Sachs-Ericsson, 2009); therefore, this topic also can gain insight on how offenders are perceived based on whether they have experienced a form of abuse during their own childhood.

The current study explored perception of child abuse offenders. It was hypothesized that perceptions regarding etiology of the offense, offender responsibility, sympathy towards the offender, seriousness of the abuse, and sentencing options for the

offender, would be influenced by respondent gender, offender history of abuse, and type of offense.

Hypotheses

1. It was predicted that there would be significant main effects for respondent gender. Overall, women would perceive child abuse offenders more negatively than men. Specifically, compared to men, women would perceive the perpetrator as more responsible for the offense and as more dangerous. Women also would perceive the offense as more serious and harmful towards the child, and perceive longer prison sentences and treatment as more appropriate and effective consequences for the offense than men.
2. It was predicted that there would be significant main effects for type of offense. Specifically, respondents would perceive sexual abuse offenses as more serious and more harmful towards the child than physical abuse offenses. Respondents would perceive child sexual abusers as more dangerous than child physical abusers, and respondents would believe that child sexual abusers should receive longer prison sentences. Respondents also would be more likely to deem treatment as a more effective consequence for child sexual abuse offenders than for child physical abuse offenders.
3. It was predicted that there would be significant main effects for offender history of child abuse. Specifically, it was predicted that there would be differences for offenders with a history of childhood physical and sexual abuse compared to offenders with no history of childhood abuse. Respondents would be more likely

to attribute a sexual or physical abuse offense to perpetrators' own history of abuse. Respondents also would perceive offenders with a history of child abuse as less responsible than offenders with no history of abuse, and feel more sympathy towards offenders with a history of child abuse. Additionally, respondents would recommend shorter prison sentences for offenders with a history of child abuse, and deem treatment as a more effective and more appropriate consequence than for offenders with no history of childhood abuse. Respondents also would perceive prison sentences as a more appropriate and effective consequence for offenders with no history of abuse than for offenders with a history of either childhood sexual or physical abuse.

4. It was predicted that there would be a significant interaction between respondent gender and offender history of child abuse. Overall, gender would have more of an effect when perceiving offenders with a childhood history of abuse (physical or sexual) than offenders with no childhood history of abuse. Specifically, women would be more likely to attribute the offense to the perpetrator having a history of negative childhood experiences than men. Compared to men, women also would feel more sympathy and choose shorter prison sentences and endorse treatment options for offenders with a history of childhood abuse. There would be less of a gender difference for scenarios that did not involve the offender having a history of child abuse.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of men and women obtained through psychology classes and a research pool at a public, midsize, southeastern university. In this study, data from 308 respondents (226 women and 82 men) were analyzed. As shown in Table 1, the majority of the respondents were Caucasian (55.37%) and 18 to 21 years old (87.99%). Two questionnaires were excluded from the data analysis. One questionnaire was excluded because the respondent answered “Other/I do not wish to answer this question” on the respondent gender question. The other questionnaire was excluded because of inconsistencies among the respondent’s responses. See Table 2 for number of respondents per scenario by gender. In exchange for their participation, respondents who participated during the summer term were given extra credit, and respondents who participated during the fall term were given research credit for their psychology classes. Prior to data collection, this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Middle Tennessee State University (see Appendices A and B).

Measures

Demographic form. The respondents were given a demographic form prior to completing the questionnaire (see Appendix C). The demographic form asked about gender (male, female, or other/I do not wish to answer this question), age (18 to 21, 22 to 25, 26 to 29, 30 years and over, and I do not wish to answer this question), and

Table 1

Demographic Information

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	82	26.62
Female	226	73.38
Age (in years)		
18-21	271	87.99
22-25	23	7.47
26-29	6	1.95
30 & older	8	2.60
I do not wish to answer this question	0	0
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	170	55.37
African American/Black	82	26.71
Other	53	17.26
I do not wish to answer this question	2	0.65

Note. $N = 308$ for Gender and Age. $N = 307$ for Ethnicity.

Table 2

Number of Respondents per Scenario by Gender

Scenario	Men	Women
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Sexual abuse by offender with childhood history of sexual abuse	14	37
Sexual abuse by offender with childhood history of physical abuse	15	36
Sexual abuse by offender with no childhood history of abuse	13	40
Physical abuse by offender with childhood history of sexual abuse	13	39
Physical abuse by offender with childhood history of physical abuse	15	36
Physical abuse by offender with no childhood history of abuse	13	37

race/ethnic group (Caucasian/white, African-American/black, other, and I do not wish to answer this question). The ages were divided into groups in order to help protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Scenario. Each respondent was given a questionnaire with one of six scenarios involving a man convicted of child abuse (see Appendix D). Three scenarios involved a child sexual abuse case, and the other three scenarios involved a child physical abuse case. Among the three child sexual abuse scenarios, one scenario noted that the offender has a documented history of experiencing child physical abuse, one noted that the offender has a documented history of experiencing child sexual abuse, and one noted that the offender has no documented history of experiencing child abuse. Similarly, among the three child physical abuse scenarios, one scenario noted that the offender has a documented history of experiencing child physical abuse, one noted that the offender has a documented history of experiencing child sexual abuse, and one noted that the offender has no documented history of experiencing child abuse.

Questionnaire. Each respondent was given a questionnaire with 16 questions. All but one question was rated on a 1 to 7 Likert Scale (1 meaning *very strongly disagree* and 7 meaning *very strongly agree*). Questions were conceptualized to assess four different categories (effect on the child, offender etiology, perceived characteristics of the offender, and appropriate and effective sentencing options). See Appendix E for a list of questions separated by category. Questions regarding the seriousness of the offense and harm towards the child were rated in the first category. The second category, offender etiology, consisted of questions that give possible reason for the abusive behavior (e.g.,

alcohol usage and the need to express power). The perceived characteristics of the offender category consisted of questions that involve perceived responsibility and dangerousness of the offender, sympathy for the offender, and the likelihood that he will reoffend. Lastly, the sentencing options category consisted of questions that involve perceived appropriateness and effectiveness of going to prison and going to a treatment program. There also was a question that asked the respondent to write how long the offender should be sentenced to prison. Some questions (i.e., 6, 10, 12, 14) served as filler items. These items were analyzed; however, no specific predictions were made. See Appendix F for an example of a complete questionnaire.

Procedure

Once the research was approved by Middle Tennessee State University's Institutional Review Board, data were collected in groups on ground. Respondents who participated during the summer term were recruited from psychology classes (See Appendix G). Respondents who participated during the fall term were recruited from a psychology research pool. All respondents were given two informed consent documents (Participant's Copy and Researcher's Copy), which included information regarding the procedure, risks, and benefits (see Appendices H and I). After consenting to participate in the study, respondents were given a demographic form and questionnaire, and verbal instructions on how to complete the forms. Questionnaires were distributed in a randomly repeated sequence and were separated by male and female groups. Once the respondents completed the questionnaire, they were given a debriefing information form (see Appendix J).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Analytic Strategy and Descriptive Statistics

Results were analyzed with a series of 2 (respondent gender) x 3 (offender history of child abuse: child sexual abuse versus child physical abuse versus no abuse) x 2 (type of offense: child sexual versus child physical) ANOVAs. The first hypothesis was that there would be statistically significant main effects for respondent gender (women versus men). The second hypothesis was that there would be statistically significant main effects for type of abuse (child sexual versus child physical). The third hypothesis was that there would be statistically significant main effects for offender history of child abuse (history of childhood sexual abuse versus history of childhood physical abuse versus no history of childhood abuse). The fourth hypothesis was that there would be statistically significant interactions between respondent gender (women versus men) and offender history of child abuse (history of childhood sexual abuse versus history of child physical abuse versus no history of childhood abuse). Follow-up analyses (Tukey-Kramer test) were conducted, and the alpha was set at .01. Descriptive statistics for individual items by category are presented in Table 3.

Main Effect for Respondent Gender

Respondent gender had an influence on one perceived characteristic of child abuse offenders. Specifically, a statistically significant main effect was found for respondent gender on recidivism, $F(1, 296) = 10.29$, $MSE = 12.44$, $p < .01$. As seen in Table 4, women perceived child abuse offenders to be more likely to reoffend than men.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Individual Items by Category

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Effect on the child			
Harm	306	6.74	0.84
Seriousness	308	6.57	0.74
Reasons for the offense			
Negative childhood experiences	308	4.51	1.73
Alcohol	308	4.68	1.66
Mental disorder	308	3.88	1.49
Need to express power	308	4.61	1.55
No excuse	308	6.04	1.40
Characteristics			
Responsibility	308	6.52	0.86
Dangerousness	305	5.91	1.12
Sympathy	307	2.55	1.54
Recidivism	308	5.69	1.13
Sentencing options			
Prison effective	308	5.73	1.39
Prison appropriate	308	5.72	1.37
Years in prison	307	12.05	15.00
Treatment effective	308	5.20	1.66
Treatment appropriate	308	5.10	1.73

Note. *N* = 81-82 for Men. *N* = 224-226 for Women.

Table 4

Main Effects for Respondent Gender

Variable	Men		Women		F
	M	SD	M	SD	
Effect on the child					
Harm	6.77	0.50	6.73	0.93	0.11
Seriousness	6.68	0.59	6.53	0.79	2.50
Reasons for the offense					
Negative childhood experiences	4.45	1.68	4.53	1.75	0.56
Alcohol	4.56	1.48	4.72	1.72	0.50
Mental disorder	3.90	1.41	3.87	1.51	0.01
Need to express power	4.46	1.51	4.66	1.56	1.08
No excuse	6.29	1.04	5.95	1.50	4.05
Characteristics					
Responsibility	6.56	0.85	6.50	0.86	0.23
Dangerousness	5.85	1.06	5.93	1.14	0.25
Sympathy	2.41	1.50	2.61	1.55	1.36
Recidivism	5.35	1.15	5.81	1.11	10.29*
Sentencing options					
Prison effective	5.67	1.46	5.76	1.37	0.16
Prison appropriate	5.66	1.25	5.74	1.42	0.13
Years in prison	10.60	11.67	12.58	16.03	1.06
Treatment effective	5.16	1.69	5.22	1.66	0.10
Treatment appropriate	5.04	1.84	5.12	1.69	0.15

Note. $N = 81-82$ for Men. $N = 224-226$ for Women.
 $df = (1, 293)$ to $(1, 296)$.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$. *** $p < .0001$.

Main Effect for Offender History of Child Abuse

As seen in Table 5, there were statistically significant main effects for offender history of child abuse. Specifically, respondents were more likely to attribute abuse by offenders with a history of childhood abuse to the offenders' negative childhood experiences than they were for offenders with no childhood history of abuse, $F(2, 296) = 94.61$, $MSE = 154.25$, $p < .0001$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey-Kramer test indicated that respondents attributed the offense to negative childhood experiences significantly more for offenders with a history of either childhood sexual or childhood physical abuse than for offenders with no history of childhood abuse, $F(2, 305) = 128.46$, $MSE = 209.18$, $p < .0001$, $\omega^2 = 0.45$. Respondents also had more sympathy for offenders who had a childhood history of abuse than for offenders with no childhood history of abuse, $F(2, 295) = 11.70$, $MSE = 24.31$, $p < .0001$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey-Kramer test indicated that respondents gave significantly higher sympathy ratings for offenders with a history of either childhood sexual abuse or childhood physical abuse than offenders with no childhood history of abuse, $F(2, 304) = 16.53$, $MSE = 35.59$, $p < .0001$, $\omega^2 = 0.09$.

Main Effect for Type of Offense

Several statistically significant main effects were found for type of offense. As evident in Table 6, child sexual abuse offenses were generally perceived more negatively than child physical abuse offenses. Respondents believed that child sexual abuse offenses were more serious than child physical abuse offenses, $F(1, 296) = 9.61$, $MSE = 5.19$, $p < .01$. Respondents also rated child sexual abuse offenders to be more responsible for offenses, $F(1, 296) = 7.14$, $MSE = 5.24$, $p < .01$, and dangerous, $F(1, 293) = 10.80$,

Table 5

Main Effects for Offender History of Child Abuse

Variable	Sexual		Physical		No History		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Effect on the child							
Harm	6.72	0.87	6.80	0.73	6.69	0.91	0.50
Seriousness	6.57	0.79	6.63	0.61	6.51	0.81	0.84
Reasons for the offense							
Negative childhood experiences	5.40	1.19	5.26	1.09	2.86	1.51	94.61***
Alcohol	4.39	1.56	4.59	1.59	5.06	1.77	2.72
Mental disorder	3.93	1.48	4.09	1.35	3.61	1.59	3.63
Need to express power	4.71	1.51	4.72	1.58	4.40	1.55	2.06
No excuse	5.98	1.39	5.82	1.56	6.31	1.20	1.98
Characteristics							
Responsibility	6.48	0.84	6.52	0.85	6.56	0.88	0.28
Dangerousness	6.03	0.97	5.97	1.07	5.74	1.27	2.34
Sympathy	2.81	1.50	2.98	1.59	1.88	1.30	11.70***
Recidivism	5.92	1.03	5.70	1.18	5.44	1.14	4.30
Sentencing options							
Prison effective	5.70	1.42	5.57	1.46	5.93	1.28	1.22
Prison appropriate	5.82	1.36	5.49	1.45	5.85	1.29	2.74
Years in prison	12.88	14.23	12.11	16.25	11.16	12.29	1.01
Treatment effective	5.19	1.60	5.40	1.56	5.01	1.81	0.58
Treatment appropriate	5.01	1.74	5.25	1.60	5.03	1.85	0.36

Note. $N = 101-103$ for Sexual. $N = 101-102$ for Physical. $N = 102-103$ for No History.

$df = (2, 293)$ to $(2, 296)$.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$. *** $p < .0001$.

Table 6

Main Effects for Type of Offense

Variable	Sexual		Physical		F
	M	SD	M	SD	
Effect on the child					
Harm	6.77	0.85	6.71	0.83	0.77
Seriousness	6.71	0.65	6.43	0.80	9.61*
Reasons for the offense					
Negative childhood experiences	4.53	1.70	4.48	1.76	0.02
Alcohol	4.38	1.78	4.98	1.48	8.96*
Mental disorder	4.06	1.53	3.69	1.42	2.46
Need to express power	4.75	1.60	4.46	1.49	0.92
No excuse	6.15	1.40	5.93	1.39	2.18
Characteristics					
Responsibility	6.63	0.79	6.41	0.91	7.14*
Dangerousness	6.14	1.03	5.68	1.16	10.80*
Sympathy	2.21	1.47	2.91	1.53	14.00**
Recidivism	5.82	1.10	5.55	1.16	1.74
Sentencing options					
Prison effective	5.99	1.33	5.48	1.41	6.79*
Prison appropriate	6.00	1.21	5.44	1.47	10.98**
Years in prison	16.07	17.37	7.95	10.70	15.21***
Treatment effective	5.14	1.78	5.26	1.53	0.00
Treatment appropriate	4.99	1.82	5.21	1.63	0.91

Note. $N = 154-155$ for Sexual. $N = 152-153$ for Physical.

$df = (1, 293)$ to $(1, 296)$.

* $p < .01$. ** $p \leq .001$. *** $p \leq .0001$.

$MSE = 16.79, p < .01$, than child physical abuse offenders. Respondents felt more sympathy for child physical abuse offenders than child sexual abuse offenders, $F(1, 295) = 14.00, MSE = 29.11, p < .001$, and believed prison would be more effective, $F(1, 296) = 6.79, MSE = 12.90, p < .01$, and more appropriate, $F(1, 296) = 10.98, MSE = 19.96, p = .001$, for child sexual abuse offenders than for child physical abuse offenders.

Respondents also suggested longer years in prison for child sexual abuse offenders than for child physical abuse offenders, $F(1, 295) = 15.21, MSE = 3229.56, p = .0001$.

Although no predictions were made, respondents were more likely to attribute child physical abuse offenses to alcohol use than child sexual offenses, $F(1, 296) = 8.96, MSE = 23.38, p < .01$.

Interactions

Statistically significant interactions were predicted between respondent gender and offender history of child abuse. As can be seen in Table 7, no statistically significant interactions were found between respondent gender and offender history of child abuse on any of the variables. Although no predictions were made and no statistically significant interactions were found, interactions for respondent gender and type of offense can be seen in Appendix K, and interactions between type of offense and offender history of child abuse can be seen in Appendix L. The three-way ANOVA also indicated no statistically significant interaction between respondent gender, offender history of child abuse, and type of offense. See Appendix M.

Table 7

Interactions for Respondent Gender and Offender History of Child Abuse

Variable	Men			Women			F
	Sexual	Physical	No History	Sexual	Physical	No History	
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	
Effects							
Harm	6.70(0.67)	6.86(0.35)	6.73(0.45)	6.73(0.94)	6.78(0.84)	6.68(1.02)	0.10
Serious	6.78(0.42)	6.72(0.53)	6.54(0.76)	6.50(0.87)	6.59(0.64)	6.51(0.84)	0.48
Etiology							
Childhood	5.26(1.20)	5.10(1.21)	2.88(1.51)	5.45(1.19)	5.33(1.04)	2.86(1.52)	0.25
Alcohol use	4.44(1.40)	4.45(1.43)	4.81(1.65)	4.37(1.62)	4.64(1.65)	5.14(1.81)	0.41
MD	4.37(1.18)	3.97(1.32)	3.35(1.57)	3.78(1.55)	4.14(1.37)	3.70(1.59)	2.24
Power	4.81(1.42)	4.52(1.60)	4.04(1.46)	4.67(1.55)	4.79(1.58)	4.52(1.57)	0.76
No excuse	6.15(1.10)	6.24(1.18)	6.50(0.76)	5.92(1.48)	5.66(1.67)	6.25(1.31)	0.45
Characteristics							
Responsible	6.48(0.75)	6.69(0.60)	6.50(1.14)	6.47(0.87)	6.45(0.93)	6.58(0.78)	0.82
Dangerous	6.08(0.93)	5.86(0.99)	5.62(1.24)	6.01(0.99)	6.01(1.10)	5.78(1.29)	0.21
Sympathy	2.56(1.58)	2.79(1.57)	1.85(1.19)	2.89(1.47)	3.05(1.61)	1.90(1.34)	0.18
Recidivism	5.67(1.07)	5.28(1.22)	5.12(1.11)	6.01(1.00)	5.86(1.13)	5.55(1.14)	0.23

(continued)

Variable	Men			Women			F
	Sexual	Physical	No History	Sexual	Physical	No History	
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	
Sentencing							
Prison eff.	5.48(1.58)	5.66(1.45)	5.88(1.36)	5.78(1.36)	5.53(1.47)	5.95(1.26)	0.51
Prison app.	5.93(1.00)	5.24(1.38)	5.85(1.26)	5.78(1.47)	5.59(1.48)	5.86(1.30)	0.66
Prison years	14.26(14.60)	9.62(11.35)	7.89(7.20)	12.39(14.17)	13.10(17.79)	12.27(16.17)	0.93
Tx eff.	4.89(1.76)	5.24(1.66)	5.35(1.67)	5.30(1.53)	5.47(1.53)	4.90(1.85)	1.42
Tx app.	4.81(1.86)	4.97(1.84)	5.35(1.85)	5.08(1.70)	5.37(1.49)	4.92(1.85)	1.24

Note. Childhood = negative childhood experiences. MID = Mental disorder. Power = need to express power. Eff. = effective. App. = appropriate. Tx = treatment.
 $df = (2, 293)$ to $(2, 296)$.
 $N = 305-308$.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of child abuse offenders. Specific factors addressed in this study were respondent gender, offender history of child abuse, and type of offense. Further, this study explored whether these factors affected perceptions of effects on a child abuse victim, etiology of a child abuse offense, characteristics of a child abuse offender, and sentencing options for a child abuse offender.

The first main effect explored was respondent gender. Based on previous research, which tends to find that women deem abuse to be more severe than men (e.g., Bornstein et al., 2007), it was hypothesized that female respondents would perceive the offender more negatively across a number of variables than male respondents. These hypotheses were partially supported. The main effect for respondent gender on perceived recidivism was statistically significant. Specifically, results of this study indicated that female respondents, compared to male respondents, were more likely to believe that offenders would reoffend. Men and women in the current study may not have perceived the offenders statistically significantly differently in other areas (i.e., responsibility and dangerousness) because of the particular description used in this study. For example, if the child was depicted as a male and the offender was depicted as a female, it can be hypothesized that male respondents may have perceived the offender less negatively than female respondents.

The second main effect explored was the offenders' own history of child abuse. As hypothesized, significant main effects were found for offender history of child abuse on perceived attribution to negative childhood experiences and sympathy towards the offender. Specifically, respondents were more likely to attribute the child abuse offense to the offender's negative childhood experiences for offenders with a history of either childhood sexual abuse or childhood physical abuse than for offenders with no history of childhood abuse. Respondents also felt more sympathy for offenders with a history of either childhood sexual abuse or childhood physical abuse than for offenders with no history of childhood abuse. It should be noted, however, that according to the 1 to 7 Likert Scale used in the questionnaire, the sympathy ratings (all means were less than 3) were relatively low for each offender background. It can be hypothesized that respondents of the current study perceived offenders with a history of child abuse differently than offenders with no history of abuse because they believed that the offenders' own history of abuse predisposed them to committing child abuse offenses. This belief is consistent with research findings that a history of child abuse is associated with higher levels of child abuse potential (e.g., Medley & Sachs-Ericsson, 2009; Smith et al., 2014).

Inconsistent with the hypotheses related to offender history of child abuse, there were no statistically significant findings related to perceived responsibility of the offender or sentencing options. This may be due to respondents deeming the offender to be responsible for his actions, regardless of his childhood experiences. Specifically, respondents gave similarly high responsibility ratings for offenders with a childhood

history of sexual abuse ($M = 6.48$), offenders with a childhood history of physical abuse ($M = 6.52$), and offenders with no history of childhood abuse ($M = 6.56$). These findings are important because they indicate that although respondents may have been more understanding towards offenders with a history of childhood abuse (i.e., attributing the offense to negative childhood experiences and feeling more sympathy), respondents still perceived offenders as being very responsible for the offense.

The final main effect explored was type of offense. Several perceptions were influenced by type of offense. Although no predictions were made regarding alcohol use, respondents were more likely to attribute child physical offenses to alcohol use than child sexual offenses. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Harnett, 1997), the current study found that respondents perceived sexual abuse offenders to be more dangerous than child physical abuse offenders, and sexual abuse offenses to be more serious than physical abuse offenses. Further, respondents in the current study perceived child sexual abuse offenders to be more responsible for the offense than child physical abuse offenders. Although previous research (e.g., Graham et al., 2007) has only examined perceived responsibility for offenders of child sexual abuse, the findings of the current study support the idea that child sexual abuse offenders are perceived to be very responsible for their offenses. Unlike Harnett's (1997) study, the current study found a statistically significant main effect for abuse type on sympathy. Although both types of offenses were rated low according to the 1 to 7 Likert Scale, results indicated respondents felt more sympathy towards physical abuse offenders ($M = 2.91$) than child sexual abuse offenders ($M = 2.21$).

Regarding significant main effects for type of offense on sentencing options, respondents in the current study perceived prison to be a more effective and appropriate consequence for child sexual abuse offenders than for physical abuse offenders. Further, respondents recommended over twice as many years in prison for sexual offenders ($M = 16.07$) than for physical offenders ($M = 7.95$). Previous studies generally focused on child sexual offenses and offenders rather than child physical offenses and offenders (e.g., Devilly & Le Grand, 2015; Engle et al., 2007; Graham et al., 2007; Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). The current study, therefore, extended information on perceptions by focusing on both child sexual abuse offenders and child physical abuse offenders. Findings of the current study are important because they indicate that child sexual abuse offenders are generally perceived more negatively than child physical abuse offenders, which may have an influence on the type of child abuse offenses that go unreported.

Although statistically significant main effects were found for respondent gender and offender history of child abuse independently, no significant interactions were found between respondent gender and offender history of child abuse. Across all hypothesized variables (e.g., negative childhood experiences, sympathy, treatment effectiveness, treatment appropriateness, and years in prison), men and women in the current study tended to have similar perceptions of the offender, despite whether or not the offender had been abused as a child. This suggests that men and women generally perceive offenders similarly, regardless of the background of the offender.

There were several limitations of this study. The first main issue is related to the sample. Specifically, the sample was limited to students enrolled in undergraduate

psychology courses at a southeastern university. Regarding demographic information of the respondents, there were significantly more female respondents (73.38%) than male respondents (26.62%). Age, also, was restricted in this study. Specifically, the majority (87.99%) of the respondents answered that they were between 18 to 21 years old. Ethnic representation is another limitation. Ethnicity options were in broad groups (i.e., Caucasian/White, African American/Black, and “Other”) in order to avoid inadvertently identifying respondents. Thus, the specific ethnicity (e.g., Asian or Hispanic) of some participants is unknown. Further, descriptive statistics suggest that some ethnicities may have been underrepresented. For example, 55.37% of the sample answered that they were Caucasian/White, 26.71% of the sample answered that they were African American/Black, and 17.26% of the sample answered that they were “Other.” Due to these sample issues, this study cannot be used to generalize to other geographic areas, age ranges, or ethnicities.

In addition to issues regarding the sample, there also were issues regarding the dependent measures that were used. The questionnaire used for this study was author-constructed; therefore, it may not be a valid or reliable measure. Additionally, the questionnaire was self-report; therefore, it is not possible to assure that every respondent thoroughly read the scenario and answered the questions honestly. Further, respondents may have responded in ways that they deemed to be socially appropriate. It also is not possible to confirm that respondents’ reported attitudes on the questionnaire would extend to actual behavior if they were jurors in a real-life child abuse court case.

The design of this study also has its limitations. Similar to the issue of the author-constructed measure, the child abuse scenarios also were author-constructed. In order to avoid the risk of respondents feeling uncomfortable while reading the child abuse scenario, the scenarios were created to only briefly describe an offense. This can be considered a limitation, however, because respondents may have different interpretations of child sexual abuse and child physical abuse. Depending on the specific type of sexual (i.e., touching versus intercourse) or physical (i.e., kicking versus punching) abuse, respondents may have responded differently. Information regarding the victim also may have impacted how respondents perceived the child abuse offense. Specifically, the victim was 8 years old in all scenarios. It may be hypothesized, however, that perceptions might have varied if the child was depicted as younger or older than 8 years old. For example, respondents may have endorsed a greater length of sentencing for the offender if the victim was younger than 8 years old rather than if the victim was older than 8 years old. Another limitation regarding the victim is that the gender was not depicted. It can be hypothesized that respondents may have perceived the offender more negatively if the victim was described as a female rather than if the victim was described as a male.

Despite these limitations, results from the current study suggest that abuse type and offender history of abuse influence perception of child abuse offenders. This is an important area of research because of the number of children who are affected by abuse (U.S. HHS, 2017). Further, perception of child abuse offenders may influence the number of reported cases and how individuals believe offenders should be punished. In order for respondents to have a clear understanding of what specific abusive action (e.g., punching,

kicking, fondling, or intercourse) an offense is referring to, future studies may choose to be more detailed when describing an offense. Additionally, future studies may choose to vary the age, gender, and relationship of the offender and victim in child abuse scenarios to further explore gender differences, perception of the type of offense committed, and perception of the background of the offender.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
 Office of Research Compliance,
 010A Sam Ingram Building,
 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
 Murfreesboro, TN 37129



IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Monday, May 14, 2018

Investigator(s): Taylor Yates; Mary Ellen Fromuth
 Investigator(s) Email(s): tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu; maryellen.fromuth@mtsu.edu
 Department: Psychology

Study Title: Perception of Child Abuse Offenders
 Protocol ID: 18-1266

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category (2) *Educational Tests*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

IRB Action	EXEMPT from further IRB review***	
Date of expiration	NOT APPLICABLE	
Participant Size	200 [Two Hundred]	
Participant Pool	Adults 18+	
Mandatory Restrictions	1. Participants must be age 18+ 2. Informed consent must be obtained 3. Identifiable data may not be collected.	
Additional Restrictions	None	
Comments	None	
Amendments	Date	Post-Approval Amendments
	None	

***This exemption determination only allows above defined protocol from further IRB review such as continuing review. However, the following post-approval requirements still apply:

- Addition/removal of subject population should not be implemented without IRB approval
- Change in investigators must be notified and approved
- Modifications to procedures must be clearly articulated in an addendum request and the proposed changes must not be incorporated without an approval
- Be advised that the proposed change must comply within the requirements for exemption
- Changes to the research location must be approved – appropriate permission letter(s) from external institutions must accompany the addendum request form
- Changes to funding source must be notified via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- The exemption does not expire as long as the protocol is in good standing

- Project completion must be reported via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- Research-related injuries to the participants and other events must be reported within 48 hours of such events to compliance@mtsu.edu

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to make the following types of changes to this protocol without the need to report to the Office of Compliance, as long as the proposed changes do not result in the cancellation of the protocols eligibility for exemption:

- Editorial and minor administrative revisions to the consent form or other study documents
- Increasing/decreasing the participant size

The investigator(s) indicated in this notification should read and abide by all applicable post-approval conditions imposed with this approval. [Refer to the post-approval guidelines posted in the MTSU IRB's website](#). Any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918 within 48 hours of the incident.

All of the research-related records, which include signed consent forms, current & past investigator information, training certificates, survey instruments and other documents related to the study, must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data storage must be maintained for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the post-approval responsibilities.
More information on exempt procedures can be found [here](#).

APPENDIX B

Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board Addendum Letter

IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
 Office of Research Compliance,
 010A Sam Ingram Building,
 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
 Murfreesboro, TN 37129



IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Tuesday, August 21, 2018

Investigator(s): Taylor Yates; Mary Ellen Fromuth
 Investigator(s) Email(s): tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu; maryellen.fromuth@mtsu.edu
 Department: Psychology

Study Title: Perception of Child Abuse Offenders
 Protocol ID: 18-1266

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category (2) *Educational Tests*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

IRB Action	EXEMPT from further IRB review***	
Date of expiration	NOT APPLICABLE	
Participant Size	200 [Two Hundred]	
Participant Pool	Adults 18+	
Mandatory Restrictions	1. Participants must be age 18+ 2. Informed consent must be obtained 3. Identifiable data may not be collected.	
Additional Restrictions	None	
Comments	None	
Amendments	Date 5-18-18	Post-Approval Amendments Addendum to alter approved recruitment template (altered dates)
	08.20.18	The proposed shortened version of SONA recruitment tool has been reviewed and approved.

***This exemption determination only allows above defined protocol from further IRB review such as continuing review. However, the following post-approval requirements still apply:

- Addition/removal of subject population should not be implemented without IRB approval
- Change in investigators must be notified and approved
- Modifications to procedures must be clearly articulated in an addendum request and the proposed changes must not be incorporated without an approval
- Be advised that the proposed change must comply within the requirements for exemption

- Changes to the research location must be approved – appropriate permission letter(s) from external institutions must accompany the addendum request form
- Changes to funding source must be notified via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- The exemption does not expire as long as the protocol is in good standing
- Project completion must be reported via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- Research-related injuries to the participants and other events must be reported within 48 hours of such events to compliance@mtsu.edu

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to make the following types of changes to this protocol without the need to report to the Office of Compliance, as long as the proposed changes do not result in the cancellation of the protocols eligibility for exemption:

- Editorial and minor administrative revisions to the consent form or other study documents
- Increasing/decreasing the participant size

The investigator(s) indicated in this notification should read and abide by all applicable post-approval conditions imposed with this approval. [Refer to the post-approval guidelines posted in the MTSU IRB's website](#). Any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918 within 48 hours of the incident.

All of the research-related records, which include signed consent forms, current & past investigator information, training certificates, survey instruments and other documents related to the study, must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data storage must be maintained for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the post-approval responsibilities.
More information on exempt procedures can be found [here](#).

APPENDIX C**Demographic Form****Part A**

Please complete the following questions regarding demographic information.

1. Are you?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other/I do not wish to answer this question.

2. How old are you?

1. 18-21
2. 22-25
3. 26-29
4. 30 & older
5. I do not wish to answer this question.

3. What is your ethnicity?

1. Caucasian/White
2. African American/Black
3. Other
4. I do not wish to answer this question.

APPENDIX D

Scenarios

Sexual abuse by offender with childhood history of sexual abuse

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of sexually abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has a documented history of experiencing sexual abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

Sexual abuse by offender with childhood history of physical abuse

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of sexually abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has a documented history of experiencing physical abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

Sexual abuse by offender with no childhood history of abuse

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of sexually abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has no documented history of experiencing abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

Physical abuse by offender with childhood history of sexual abuse

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of physically abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has a documented history of experiencing sexual abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

Physical abuse by offender with childhood history of physical abuse

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of physically abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has a documented history of experiencing physical abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

Physical abuse by offender with no childhood history of abuse

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of physically abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has no documented history of experiencing abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

APPENDIX E

Questions by Category

Effects on the child abuse victim

I believe that this was a serious offense

I believe that the offense was harmful to the child

Perceived reasons for the offense

I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to his negative childhood experiences

I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to his alcohol usage

I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to a mental disorder

I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to his need to express power

I believe that there is no excuse for the offender's abusive behavior

Characteristics of the child abuse offender

I believe that the offender is responsible for what occurred

I feel sympathy for the offender

I believe that the offender is dangerous

I believe that the offender is likely to abuse a child again

Sentencing options for the child abuse offender

I believe that going to prison would be an effective consequence for the abusive behavior

I believe that going to a treatment program would be an effective consequence for the abusive behavior

I believe that going to prison would be an appropriate consequence for the offender

I believe that going to a treatment program would be an appropriate consequence for the offender

If the offender is sentenced to prison, I think he should stay for _____
(please indicate years or months)

APPENDIX F
Questionnaire Example
Demographic Form

Part A

Please complete the following questions regarding demographic information.

1. Are you?
 1. Male
 2. Female
 3. Other/I do not wish to answer this question.

2. How old are you?
 1. 18-21
 2. 22-25
 3. 26-29
 4. 30 & older
 5. I do not wish to answer this question.

3. What is your ethnicity?
 1. Caucasian/White
 2. African American/Black
 3. Other
 4. I do not wish to answer this question.

Instructions: Please read the following scenario. Once you have finished reading, please answer the following questions based on the scenario.

Joe, a 40-year-old man, has been convicted of sexually abusing an 8-year-old child. A presentencing evaluation was done. In the sentencing hearing, it was revealed that Joe has a documented history of experiencing physical abuse during his childhood. It also was revealed that Joe had been drinking alcohol at the time of the offense.

Part B

Question	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1. I believe that this was a serious offense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to his negative childhood experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I believe that the offender is responsible for what occurred	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I believe that going to prison would be an effective consequence for the abusive behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel sympathy for the offender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to his alcohol usage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I believe that the offense was harmful to the child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I believe that the offender is dangerous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Question	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
9. I believe that going to a treatment program would be an effective consequence for the abusive behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to a mental disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I believe that the offender is likely to abuse a child again	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I believe that the offender's abusive behavior is due to his need to express power	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I believe that going to prison would be an appropriate consequence for the offender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I believe that there is no excuse for the offender's abusive behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Question	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
15. I believe that going to a treatment program would be an appropriate consequence for the abusive behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. If the offender is sentenced to prison, I think he should stay for _____ (please indicate years or months)							

APPENDIX G

Summer Flyer Example

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Psychology Dept – Middle Tennessee State University

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Investigator(s): **Taylor Yates**
 Study Title: ***Perception of Child Abuse Offenders***
 Protocol ID: **18-1266**
 Expiration: Leave Blank

Study Description

The purpose of the study is to explore how child offenders are perceived. The study also aims to explore factors that may affect how offenders are perceived based on respondent gender, the type of child abuse committed, and the background of the offender. The study will take less than 30 minutes.

Target Participant Pool

Participants must be MTSU students who are taking an on-campus undergraduate psychology course during the summer term. Participants also must be at least 18 years of age.

Additional Information

No discomforts are expected from this study. The risks involved are less than minimum. The potential benefit to science and humankind that may result from this study is that we will be able to learn more about how child abuse offenders are perceived. There is no direct benefit for you for participating in this study. In compensation for your participation, you will receive 1 research credit. Once you read the Informed Consent document, you will qualify for the research credit. If you do choose to participate, you will be given an anonymous survey that begins with a demographic form. The demographic form includes questions about your gender, age (in categories), and ethnicity (in categories). You will then read a scenario involving a child abuse case. Following the scenario, you will be asked questions about your perception of the child offender. You will not be asked any questions about your personal history.

You may participate in the study during any of the following dates and time slots. Please simply show up at the time of your choosing.

Contact Information

Taylor Yates
 tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu

Mary Ellen Fromuth, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor
 MaryEllen.Fromuth@mtsu.edu

THIS FLYER HAS BEEN APPROVED

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Middle Tennessee State University, 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN 37129
 URL: www.mtsu.edu/irb – Tel: 615 898 2400 – Email: irb_information@mtsu.edu

APPENDIX H

Informed Consent (Participant's Copy)

IRB

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN 37129



INFORMED CONSENT – RESEARCHERS' DISCLOSURES

(Part A – Participant's Copy)

Study Title	<i>Perception of Child Abuse Offenders</i>	Office Use
Principal Investigator	Taylor Yates	IRB ID: APPROVED
Faculty Advisor	Mary Ellen Fromuth	Approval Date: 05/18/2018
Contact Information	tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu	Expiration Date: N/A

Dear Participant,

On behalf of the research team, the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) would like to thank you for considering to take part in this research study. You have been contacted by the above identified researcher(s) to enroll as a participant in this study because you met its eligibility criteria.

This consent document describes the research study for the purpose of helping you to make an informed decision on whether to participate in this study or not. It provides important information related to this study, possible interventions by the researcher(s) and proposed activities by you. This research has been reviewed by MTSU's internal oversight entity - Institutional Review Board (IRB) - for ethical practices in research (visit www.mtsu.edu/irb for more information).

As a participant, you have the following rights:

- You should read and understand the information in this document before agreeing to enroll
- Your participation is absolutely voluntary and the researchers cannot force you to participate
- If you refuse to participate or to withdraw midway during this study, no penalty or loss of benefits will happen
- The investigator MUST NOT collect identifiable information from you, such as, name, SSN, and phone number
- The researcher(s) can only ask you to complete an interview or a survey or similar activities and you must not be asked to perform physical activities or offer medical/psychological intervention
- Any potential risk or discomforts from this study would be lower than what you would face in your daily life

After you read the following disclosures, you can agree to participate in this study by completing "Part B" of this informed consent document. You do not have to do anything further if you decide not to participate.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to gain insight into perception of child abuse offenders. This study examines how perceptions may be influenced by gender, offender childhood history, and type of offense.

2. What will I be asked to do in this study?

We will be asking you to participate in a study examining perceptions of child abuse offenders. The demographic form will ask questions about age (in categories), sex, and ethnicity. You will be asked to read one scenario involving a child abuse offense. Next, you will be asked to answer some questions regarding the scenarios. The study will take less than 30 minutes to complete. In compensation for your participation, you will receive 1 research credit. You will qualify for credit once you read the Informed Consent. The questionnaire is anonymous and will not include your name. You will not be asked about your own abuse history.

IRBF004IC – Informed Consent EXEMPT

IRB ID: 18-1266
APPROVAL DATE: 5-18-2018
EXPIRATION DATE: N/A

3. How many times should I participate or for how long?

You will participate in the study one time. The study should take less than 30 minutes.

4. What are the risks and benefits if I participate?

No discomforts are to be expected from this study. The risks involved are less than minimum. The potential benefit to science and humankind that may result from this study is that we will be able to learn more about how child abuse offenders are perceived. There is no direct benefit for you for participating in this study. In compensation for your participation, you will receive 1 research credit.

5. What will happen to the information I provide in this study?

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised. Your information may be shared with MTSU or the government, such as the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, Federal Government Office for Human Research Protections, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

6. What will happen if I refuse to participate and can I withdraw if I change my mind in the middle?

There is no penalty for withdrawing your participation. Once you read this consent form, you will qualify for 1 credit. You may stop filling out the questionnaire at any time.

7. Whom can I contact to report issues and share my concerns?

You can contact the researcher(s) by email or telephone (Taylor Yates at tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu, or Mary Ellen Fromuth at 615-898-2548, Maryellen.Fromuth@mtsu.edu). You can also contact the MTSU's Office of Research Compliance by email – irb_information@mtsu.edu. Report compliance breaches and adverse events by dialing 615 898 2400 or by emailing compliance@mtsu.edu.

INVESTIGATOR'S SIGNATURE	FACULTY ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE
NON-IDENTIFIABLE PARTICIPANT ID# _____		

Confidentiality Statement:

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised, for example, your information may be shared with the MTSU IRB. In the event of questions or difficulties of any kind during or following participation, you may contact the Principal Investigator as indicated above. For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact our Office of Compliance at (615) 898 2400.

Compensation:

Unless otherwise informed to you by the researcher(s), there is no compensation for participating in this study. The investigator must disclose if the participant would be compensated in the benefits section.

Study-related Injuries:

IRBF0041C – Informed Consent EXEMPT

IRB ID: 18-1266
APPROVAL DATE: 5-18-2018
EXPIRATION DATE: N/A

MTSU will not compensate for study-related injuries.

Exemption Criteria:

This study was submitted to the MTSU IRB – an internal oversight entity to oversee research involving human subjects. The IRB has determined that this investigation consists of lower than minimal risk and it is exempt from further IRB processes based on the criteria: "*Category 2 - Educational Tests.*"

Note to the Participant

You do not have to do anything if you decide not to participate in this study. But if you wish to enroll as a participant, please complete "Part B" of this informed consent form and return it to the researcher. Please retain the signed copy of "Part A" for your future reference.

APPENDIX I

Informed Consent (Researcher's Copy)

IRB

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN 37129

INFORMED CONSENT

(Part B – Researcher's Copy)

Study Title	<i>Perception of Child Abuse Offenders</i>	Approval Information
Principal Investigator	Taylor Yates	IRB ID: <i>APPROVED</i>
Faculty Advisor	Mary Ellen Fromuth	Approval Date: 05/18/2018
Contact Information	tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu	Expiration Date: N/A

You have been contacted by the investigator(s) because the researchers believe you meet the eligibility criteria to participate in the above referenced research study. Be aware that you must NOT be asked by the investigator(s) to do anything that would pose risk to your health or welfare, such as:

- Identifiable information – name, phone number, SSN, address, College ID, social media credentials (FaceBook page, twitter, etc.), email, identifiable information of closest relatives and etc.
- Physical activities – like exercise studies
- Medical intervention – testing drugs, collection of blood/tissue samples or psychological questions
- Nothing risky – any proposed activity that would expose you to more risk than what you would face on a day to day basis is not approved by the IRB

However, you can do the following:

- Withdraw from the study at any time without consequences
- Withdraw the information you have provided to the investigators before the study is complete
- Ask questions so the researcher must explain the procedures used in the research verbally.

The investigators must give you enough time to ask any questions. Once you have had a chance to read "Part A" (Participant's Copy), indicate your acceptance by checking the appropriate boxes:

	NO	YES
➤ I have read investigator(s)' disclosure (Part A) for the above identified research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ The researcher(s) explained the procedures to be conducted verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ I understand each part of the interventions and all my questions are answered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ The researcher(s) gave me a signed copy of the disclosure page (Part A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

By initialing below, I give my consent to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

X

----- NON-IDENTIFIABLE PARTICIPANT ID# -----
Participant initial Date

Initial this copy and return it to the researcher and retain Part A for your reference in case you have questions or you wish to get in touch with the researcher or with the MTSU IRB

APPENDIX J

Debriefing Information

Please keep for your own use.

Physical abuse and sexual abuse are two common types of child abuse. Physical abuse can include intentional punching and kicking, and sexual abuse can include unwanted touching and intercourse. Abuse is associated with many different types of negative outcomes for children; therefore, it is an important area to study. There is little research, however, on perceptions of child abuse offenses and offenders. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore whether men and women perceive child abuse offenders differently. This study also explored factors that affect how the offender was perceived based on the type of child abuse committed, as well as the background of the offender.

If you would like more information about this study or your rights as a participant, please contact Taylor Yates at tdy2g@mtmail.mtsu.edu or my supervisor, Dr. Mary Ellen Fromuth, at MaryEllen.Fromuth@mtsu.edu.

Thank you for your participation and helping us with this study.

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APPENDIX K

Interactions for Respondent Gender and Type of Offense

Variable	Men				Women				F	
	Sexual		Physical		Sexual		Physical			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Effect on the child										
Harm	6.85	0.36	6.68	0.61	6.73	0.97	6.72	0.90	0.56	0.56
Seriousness	6.85	0.53	6.51	0.60	6.66	0.69	6.40	0.86	0.17	0.17
Reasons for the offense										
Negative childhood experiences	4.34	1.76	4.56	1.61	4.60	1.68	4.46	1.82	1.60	1.60
Alcohol	4.24	1.64	4.88	1.25	4.43	1.83	5.02	1.56	0.02	0.02
Mental disorder	3.98	1.25	3.83	1.56	4.09	1.63	3.64	1.36	0.57	0.57
Need to express power	4.46	1.70	4.46	1.31	4.86	1.55	4.46	1.56	1.11	1.11
No excuse	6.49	0.95	6.10	1.09	6.03	1.52	5.87	1.49	0.40	0.40
Characteristics										
Responsibility	6.78	0.61	6.34	0.99	6.58	0.84	6.43	0.88	1.79	1.79
Dangerousness	6.10	1.06	5.61	1.02	6.15	1.02	5.71	1.21	0.02	0.02
Sympathy	2.05	1.48	2.78	1.44	2.26	1.47	2.96	1.57	0.02	0.02
Recidivism	5.37	1.16	5.34	1.15	5.98	1.03	5.63	1.16	1.55	1.55
Sentencing options										
Prison effective	5.85	1.59	5.49	1.31	6.04	1.23	5.47	1.45	0.29	0.29
Prison appropriate	5.98	1.13	5.34	1.30	6.01	1.24	5.47	1.53	0.05	0.05
Years in prison	13.59	13.99	7.60	7.84	16.96	18.41	8.08	11.61	0.67	0.67
Treatment effective	5.24	1.89	5.07	1.47	5.11	1.75	5.33	1.56	0.86	0.86
Treatment appropriate	4.93	1.99	5.15	1.70	5.01	1.76	5.23	1.62	0.00	0.00

Note. $N = 305-308$.
 $df = (1, 293)$ to $(1, 296)$.

APPENDIX L

Interactions for Type of Offense and Offender History of Child Abuse

Variable	Sexual				Physical				F	
	Sexual		No History		Sexual		No History			
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)		
Effects on child										
Harm	6.70(1.11)	6.86(0.49)	6.74(0.86)	6.75(0.56)	6.75(0.91)	6.64(0.96)	6.40(0.83)	6.75(0.91)	6.64(0.96)	0.01
Seriousness	6.75(0.56)	6.76(0.59)	6.62(0.79)	6.40(0.93)	6.49(0.61)	6.40(0.83)	6.40(0.83)	6.49(0.61)	6.40(0.83)	0.25
Etiology										
Neg. childhood	5.37(1.37)	5.20(1.06)	3.08(1.54)	5.42(1.02)	5.33(1.13)	2.64(1.45)	2.64(1.45)	5.33(1.13)	2.64(1.45)	0.31
Alcohol use	3.90(1.64)	4.63(1.65)	4.60(1.95)	4.87(1.33)	4.55(1.54)	5.54(1.42)	5.54(1.42)	4.55(1.54)	5.54(1.42)	2.59
Mental disorder	4.10(1.58)	4.10(1.40)	3.98(1.63)	3.77(1.38)	4.08(1.31)	3.22(1.45)	3.22(1.45)	4.08(1.31)	3.22(1.45)	1.41
Power	5.02(1.42)	4.73(1.63)	4.53(1.72)	4.40(1.55)	4.71(1.55)	4.26(1.35)	4.26(1.35)	4.71(1.55)	4.26(1.35)	1.00
No excuse	6.08(1.25)	5.92(1.68)	6.43(1.22)	5.88(1.52)	5.73(1.44)	6.18(1.17)	6.18(1.17)	5.73(1.44)	6.18(1.17)	0.23
Characteristics										
Responsibility	6.65(0.77)	6.61(0.80)	6.64(0.81)	6.31(0.88)	6.43(0.90)	6.48(0.95)	6.48(0.95)	6.43(0.90)	6.48(0.95)	0.17
Dangerousness	6.10(0.98)	6.10(1.14)	6.21(0.97)	5.96(0.97)	5.84(0.99)	5.22(1.37)	5.22(1.37)	5.84(0.99)	5.22(1.37)	2.84
Sympathy	2.43(1.46)	2.61(1.63)	1.60(1.12)	3.17(1.45)	3.36(1.48)	2.18(1.42)	2.18(1.42)	3.36(1.48)	2.18(1.42)	0.14
Recidivism	6.14(0.89)	5.75(1.13)	5.58(1.18)	5.71(1.11)	5.65(1.25)	5.28(1.09)	5.28(1.09)	5.65(1.25)	5.28(1.09)	0.69
Sentencing										
Prison eff.	5.84(1.39)	5.84(1.47)	6.26(1.09)	5.56(1.45)	5.29(1.40)	5.58(1.37)	5.58(1.37)	5.29(1.40)	5.58(1.37)	0.52
Prison app.	5.92(1.29)	5.88(1.29)	6.19(1.04)	5.71(1.42)	5.10(1.51)	5.50(1.43)	5.50(1.43)	5.10(1.51)	5.50(1.43)	0.96
Prison years	16.74(16.64)	16.58(18.83)	14.93(16.87)	9.03(10.11)	7.63(11.74)	7.17(10.30)	7.17(10.30)	7.63(11.74)	7.17(10.30)	0.18
Tx eff.	5.29(1.63)	5.37(1.61)	4.77(2.03)	5.10(1.58)	5.43(1.53)	5.26(1.51)	5.26(1.51)	5.43(1.53)	5.26(1.51)	0.23
Tx app.	5.04(1.75)	5.24(1.67)	4.70(2.01)	4.98(1.74)	5.27(1.54)	5.38(1.61)	5.38(1.61)	5.27(1.54)	5.38(1.61)	0.14

Note. Neg. childhood = negative childhood experiences. Power = need to express power. Eff. = effective. App. = appropriate.

Tx = treatment.

N = 305-308.

df = (2, 293) to (2, 296).

APPENDIX M

**Triple Interaction: Respondent Gender by Offender History of Child Abuse by
Type of Offense**

Harm to Child

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	6.93	0.27	36	6.61	1.29
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	6.86	0.36	37	6.87	0.54
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.77	0.44	40	6.73	0.96
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	6.46	0.88	38	6.84	0.37
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	6.87	0.35	36	6.69	1.06
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.69	0.48	37	6.62	1.09

Note. $F(2, 294) = 1.53$.

Seriousness of Offense

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	6.93	0.27	37	6.68	0.63
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	7.00	0.00	37	6.68	0.67
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.62	0.87	40	6.63	0.77
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	6.62	0.51	39	6.33	1.03
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	6.47	0.64	36	6.50	0.61
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.46	0.66	37	6.38	0.89

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.56$.

Offense Due to Offender's Negative Childhood Experiences

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	5.14	1.51	37	5.46	1.30
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	5.07	1.14	37	5.24	1.04
Offender No History of Abuse	13	2.69	1.44	40	3.20	1.57
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	5.38	0.77	39	5.44	1.10
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.13	1.30	36	5.42	1.05
Offender No History of Abuse	13	3.08	1.61	37	2.49	1.39

Note. $F(2, 296) = 1.17$.

Offense Due to Offender's Alcohol Use

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	4.00	1.57	37	3.86	1.69
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	4.43	1.45	37	4.70	1.73
Offender No History of Abuse	13	4.31	1.97	40	4.70	1.96
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	4.92	1.04	39	4.85	1.42
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	4.47	1.46	36	4.58	1.59
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.31	1.11	37	5.62	1.52

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.02$.

Offense Due to Offender's Mental Disorder

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	4.5	1.22	37	3.95	1.68
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	3.79	0.70	37	4.22	1.58
Offender No History of Abuse	13	3.62	1.61	40	4.10	1.65
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	4.23	1.17	39	3.62	0.43
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	4.13	1.73	36	4.06	1.12
Offender No History of Abuse	13	3.08	1.55	37	3.27	1.43

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.12$.

Offense Due to Offender's Need to Express Power

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	5.07	1.38	37	5.00	1.45
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	4.57	1.70	37	4.78	1.62
Offender No History of Abuse	13	3.69	1.84	40	4.80	1.60
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	4.54	1.45	39	4.36	1.60
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	4.47	1.55	36	4.81	1.56
Offender No History of Abuse	13	4.38	0.87	37	4.22	1.49

Note. $F(2, 296) = 1.17$.

No Excuse for the Offender's Abuse Towards a Child

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	6.14	1.35	37	6.05	1.22
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	6.71	0.47	37	5.62	1.88
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.62	0.77	40	6.38	1.33
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	6.15	0.80	39	5.79	1.69
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.80	1.47	36	5.69	1.45
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.38	0.77	37	6.11	1.29

Note. $F(2, 296) = 1.18$.

Responsibility of the Offender

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	6.71	0.61	37	6.62	0.83
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	6.93	0.27	37	6.49	0.90
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.69	0.85	40	6.63	0.81
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	6.23	0.83	39	6.33	0.90
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	6.47	0.74	36	6.42	0.97
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.31	1.38	37	5.54	0.77

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.07$.

Dangerousness of the Offender

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	6.08	1.12	36	6.11	0.95
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	6.21	0.97	37	6.05	1.20
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.00	1.15	40	6.28	0.91
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	6.08	0.76	39	5.92	1.04
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.53	0.92	36	5.97	1.00
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.23	1.24	36	5.22	1.44

Note. $F(2, 293) = 1.01$.

Sympathy for the Offender

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	2.29	1.59	37	2.49	1.43
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	2.29	1.64	37	2.73	1.63
Offender No History of Abuse	13	1.54	1.13	40	1.63	1.23
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	2.85	1.57	39	3.28	1.41
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	3.29	1.38	36	3.39	1.54
Offender No History of Abuse	13	2.15	1.21	37	2.19	1.51

Note. $F(2, 295) = 0.20$.

Offender Recidivism

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	5.86	1.03	37	6.24	0.83
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	5.29	1.07	37	5.92	1.12
Offender No History of Abuse	13	4.92	1.26	40	5.80	1.09
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	5.46	1.13	39	5.79	1.10
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.27	1.39	36	5.81	1.17
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.31	0.95	37	5.27	1.15

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.96$.

Prison Effectiveness

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	5.50	1.65	37	5.97	1.28
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	5.93	1.77	37	5.81	1.37
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.15	1.34	40	6.30	1.02
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	5.46	1.56	39	5.59	1.43
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.40	1.06	36	5.25	1.54
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.62	1.39	37	5.57	1.39

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.07$.

Prison Appropriateness

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	6.07	0.92	37	5.86	1.42
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	5.64	1.39	37	5.97	1.26
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.23	1.01	40	6.18	1.06
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	5.77	1.09	39	5.69	1.52
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	4.87	1.30	36	5.19	1.60
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.46	1.39	37	5.51	1.46

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.01$.

Years in Prison

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	18.21	17.91	37	16.18	16.35
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	13.39	13.22	37	17.79	20.58
Offender No History of Abuse	13	8.83	8.14	40	16.91	18.52
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	10.00	8.75	38	8.70	10.62
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	6.09	8.23	36	8.28	12.98
Offender No History of Abuse	13	6.95	6.31	37	7.25	11.45

Note. $F(2, 295) = 0.43$.

Treatment Effectiveness

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	4.93	2.20	37	5.43	1.37
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	5.29	1.82	37	5.41	1.55
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.54	1.71	40	4.53	2.09
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	4.85	1.21	39	5.18	1.68
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.20	1.57	36	5.53	1.52
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.15	1.68	37	5.30	1.47

Note. $F(2, 296) = 0.83$.

Treatment Appropriateness

	Men			Women		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	14	4.50	2.14	37	5.24	1.57
Offender History of Physical Abuse	14	4.86	1.99	37	5.38	1.53
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.46	1.85	40	4.45	2.01
Physical Offense						
Offender History of Sexual Abuse	13	5.15	1.52	39	4.92	1.83
Offender History of Physical Abuse	15	5.07	1.75	36	5.36	1.46
Offender No History of Abuse	13	5.23	1.92	37	5.43	1.52

Note. $F(2, 296) = 2.03$.