

Identify and discuss  
the four theoretical  
explanations for the  
potential causes o...

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Pedophilia (Affiliation) Introduction Pedophilia is a Greek word that means child lover and is the clinical term for child sexual abuse. Pedophilia relates to strong sexual attraction towards children. The term pedophile emanates from Pedophilia and refers to a person prosecuted for sexual crimes against children (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

#### Theories on potential causes of Pedophilia

There are different explanations for the causes of pedophilia. However, most of these explanations center around one specific factor as the main cause of child preference among pedophiles. According to Finkelhor and Araji, there are four basic accounts for pedophilia in clinical literature (1986). These explanations include emotional congruence, blockage, sexual arousal, and disinhibition theories (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

#### Emotional Congruence Theories

The underlying pillar of theories of emotional congruence is the assumption that pedophiles exhibit childish emotional interests and as such prefer an environment that suits children. Theories of emotional congruence try to figure out why a person would find it emotionally pleasing to relate sexually with a child. These theories highlight the existence of a match between the emotional needs of an adult and the features of a child. Most emotional congruence theories have a psychoanalytic background and center around arrested psychological development where pedophiles see themselves as children. The arrested psychological development perspective explains why pedophiles exhibit emotional pleasure when relating with children. Another perspective of emotional congruence theories argues that due to loss of efficacy and low self-esteem, pedophiles fancy social relations with children

as it makes them feel powerful and exert control over the relationship (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

### Sexual Arousal Theories

Sexual arousal theories try to find out why some physical characteristics of children sexually arouse pedophiles. Pedophiles tend to generate sexual arousal from certain characteristics of children that a normal man would not generate. Penile tumescence measures sexual arousal to sexual fantasies of children. One group of these theories argues that it is a normal childhood experience to engage in sexual play with playmates. However, pedophiles find the childhood experience to be more emotionally pleasing than adult sexual experiences. Consequently, the pedophile may dislike adult sexual contact and in the process end up masturbating while fantasizing on the pleasant childhood sexual experiences. Masturbation not only becomes an avenue of releasing sexual tension but also strengthens the attraction to children. In the end, pedophiles become sexually aroused to children. On the other hand, a group of sexual arousal theories links pedophilic behavior to traumatic sexual victimization. Empirical results reveal a high rate of childhood sexual abuse in the background of pedophiles. However, researchers are yet to explain the link between sexual trauma and pedophilic behavior (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

### Blockage Theories

The blockage theories of pedophilia argue that pedophilic behavior emanates from the blockage of normal sexual satisfaction from adult interactions. These theories posit that pedophiles become sexually attracted to children out of frustrations from sexual contacts with adults. Blockage theories argue

that unassertive, awkward, and timid personalities of pedophiles hamper the development of social and sexual relations with adults. For instance, a breakdown of a marital status may influence a pedophile to pursue sexual contact with their daughter (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

#### Disinhibition Theories

Disinhibition theories of pedophilia are based on issues of self-control and personal constraints on behavior. For instance, excessive use of alcohol and drugs, poor impulse control, and assortment of stressors could influence a person to engage in pedophilic behavior. The disinhibition theory explains why some pedophiles tend to lament their pedophilic behavior to external forces (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

#### Reference

Bartol, C., & Bartol, A. (2014). *Criminal behavior*. Boston: Pearson.