

Efforts to Prevent Crime Triggers in Sexual Murder Cases in China Through Public Education, Victim Protection, Perpetrator Rehabilitation, and Law Enforcement

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Received: 20/04/2024		Revised: 29/05/2024	Accepted: 28/06/2024
Abstract	This study aims to deliver evidence-based recommendations for public education, victim support, offender rehabilitation, and law enforcement practices. Employing a literature review methodology, the research examines sexual homicides in China to identify underlying triggers and preventative strategies. Utilizing data from literature reviews, document analysis, and expert interviews, the study explores perpetrator profiles, typically characterized by males with histories of adversity and traits consistent with antisocial or schizoid personality disorders. Victims are frequently selected at random, with perpetrators employing extreme physical and sexual violence as expressions of dominance. This pattern underscores broader societal dysfunctions within Chinese society and highlights systemic challenges in the judicial framework. The findings underscore the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach to comprehensively understand and prevent sexual crimes. The study emphasizes the critical role of prevention strategies informed by criminological theories, including <i>Power and Control Theory</i> , <i>Sexual Violence and Aggression</i> , and <i>Criminological Psychopathology</i> , to effectively address the issue of sexual homicide.		
Keywords	Law Enforcement; Perpetrator Rehabilitation; Public Education; Sexual Murder; Victim Protection		
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1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual homicide cases in China are influenced by multiple complex factors (H. C. Chan et al., 2019). A significant issue is the limited public awareness and understanding of the importance of addressing sexual crimes, which often leads to underreporting and insufficient victim support (Campbell, 2020; Guo et al., 2019; Su et al., 2022; Yin & Sun, 2021; Zhang, 2022). Additionally, shortcomings in the victim protection system persist, particularly in ensuring access to adequate medical, psychological, and legal assistance (Peeters et al., 2019; Speed et al., 2020). Challenges also arise in rehabilitating perpetrators of sexual homicide (Leese & Engman, 2018), underscoring the need for a comprehensive and long-term approach to behavioural reform and mental health improvement (Servaes, 2022). Furthermore, the



consistent and rigorous enforcement of laws against offenders remains critical to addressing sexual homicide cases and delivering justice for victims and society (Campbell, 2020; Zhang, 2022).

Some prominent scholars in criminology and forensic psychology who have significantly contributed to understanding sexual homicide include Burgess (Kocsis, 2018; Shipley, 2023), Hartman (Chae et al., 2022), Ressler (Ruslan, 2018), Douglas (Adebisi & Olanrewaju, 2021), McCormack (Helfgott & Wallenborn, 2022), Chan (H. C. O. Chan, 2023), Heide (Heide, 2023), Stefanska (Stefanska et al., 2021), Beech (Beech et al., 2018), Carter (Beech et al., 2018), Myers (Myers et al., 2019), Vo, Lazarou, Beauregard (Lussier & Beauregard, 2018), Martineau, Kerr, Briken, Hill, Habermann (Strange et al., 2022), Kafka, Berner, Healey, Lussier, Firestone, Bradford, Greenberg, Larose, and Curry. These researchers have developed comprehensive theories and conducted extensive studies to uncover the motivations, dynamics, and profiles of perpetrators and victims in cases of sexual homicide.

Lack of public awareness and understanding of sexual crimes has been identified as one of the primary triggering factors. Data from the National Crime Statistics Bureau of China show that 65% of the rural population lacks sufficient knowledge of sexual crimes or the procedures for reporting them. For example, in the 2019 Xinjiang case, the community's unfamiliarity with reporting protocols delayed intervention, exacerbating the situation (X. Wang & Aoki, 2019).

Furthermore, the victim protection system in China is often deemed inadequate. A 2020 Human Rights Watch report revealed that 70% of sexual violence survivors in China face significant barriers to accessing appropriate support and protection services. A 2021 case study from Shenzhen demonstrated that victims frequently lack access to essential psychological and legal assistance, further compounding their trauma and impeding recovery.

Several foundational theories developed by experts include the Theory of Power and Control (Ten Brinke & Keltner, 2022), the Theory of Sexual Violence and Aggression (Zillmann, 2021), the Theory of Psychopathological Criminology (Dessaur, 2018), and the Theory of Reducing Sexual Murder Rates (Light et al., 2020). These frameworks provide profound insights into the psychological, social, and cultural factors underlying the behaviours of sexual homicide perpetrators, such as the drive for dominance, extreme aggression, and personality disorders. Integrating findings from these theories allows for a more comprehensive understanding of sexual homicide and facilitates the development of effective prevention strategies.

The **Theory of Power and Control**, which explores how offenders exert dominance and control over victims, can inform public education initiatives by promoting awareness of abusive relationship dynamics and emphasising the importance of consent and equality. For example, studies like Liang and Hu (2018) have developed a typology of sexual offences against minors in China, categorising cases into six key types and offering empirically based prevention recommendations. Similarly, Shafira et al.

(2023) highlight discrepancies in legal frameworks, noting that countries like Indonesia, India, and China enforce the death penalty for child sexual abuse, while nations such as Norway, the Netherlands, and Canada do not—underscoring the need for consistent legal measures. Handayani (2022) emphasises the importance of tailored rehabilitation programs for child perpetrators of sexual violence to reduce recidivism and support their psychological and social development.

This study's novelty lies in its holistic approach to addressing sexual homicide in China. Beyond identifying existing challenges, it proposes integrated solutions encompassing public education, victim protection, offender rehabilitation, and stringent law enforcement. Furthermore, by leveraging criminology and forensic psychology theories developed by leading scholars, this research offers a robust framework for analysing the factors influencing sexual homicide cases. Consequently, it contributes significantly to raising awareness, safeguarding victims, reforming offender behaviour, and ensuring justice—essential steps in addressing this critical societal issue.

The research gap identified in this study lies in the fact that, despite previous efforts to analyse sexual homicide cases in China and develop prevention strategies, significant gaps remain unaddressed. One critical gap pertains to the insufficient understanding of the cultural and societal factors that shape the dynamics of sexual homicide in the Chinese context. Conducting more nuanced investigations into cultural norms, value systems, and social structures associated with sexual violence could provide deeper insights into the root causes of these crimes and inform the design of more targeted preventive measures. Furthermore, research focusing on evaluating victim protection mechanisms, offender rehabilitation programs, and the efficacy of law enforcement policies is crucial. Such studies can highlight the successes and challenges in implementing current strategies and improvement areas. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive and practical approach to combating sexual homicides in China. This study, therefore, aims to offer evidence-based recommendations for public education, victim protection, offender rehabilitation, and law enforcement reforms.

2. METHOD

To comprehend and address the issue of sexual homicides in China, this study employs a literature review methodology, facilitating an in-depth examination of crime-precipitating factors and preventive strategies through a multidisciplinary framework (Chen & Song, 2019). The research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for public education, victim protection, perpetrator rehabilitation, and law enforcement. Primary data sources include peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books, research publications, and pertinent statistical datasets. These resources provide insights into perpetrator and victim profiles, crime dynamics, and existing preventive measures.

Data collection methods comprised systematic literature reviews, document analysis, and expert interviews in criminology, forensic psychology, and legal studies. Through interviews with experts, this research gained an in-depth perspective on the complexity of the problem and potential solutions. Qualitative data analysis involved thematic categorisation and classification, enabling the identification of critical topics such as triggers of criminal behaviour, the psychological ramifications for victims, and the efficacy of current interventions. By addressing essential elements, including the media's role in public education and gaps in victim protection policies, the study highlights deficiencies within the existing system and proposes actionable strategies for systemic enhancement.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Sexual Murder aspects of Criminology, psychology, and sociology

In 1986, a group of prominent criminologists and forensic psychologists, including Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas, and McCormack, made groundbreaking contributions to the study of sexual homicide (Su et al., 2022). They defined sexual homicide as a form of killing characterised by elements of power, control, sexuality, and aggressive brutality. The theoretical frameworks they proposed offer profound insights into the motivations and dynamics underlying such crimes.

The *Power and Control Theory* posits that sexual homicide is driven by a desire to establish and sustain dominance over the victim, often manifested through the use of sexual violence as a means of asserting authority (Jensen, 2023). The *Sexual Violence and Aggression Theory* underscores that sexual homicide frequently stems from heightened aggression, with sexual violence serving as an outlet for the perpetrator's brutality and anger toward the victim (Ybarra & Thompson, 2018).

Additionally, the *Criminological Psychopathology Theory* attributes such acts to psychological factors, including personality disorders and emotional instability, which predispose perpetrators to engage in sexual violence and homicide (Burke, 2018). Meanwhile, the *Declining Rates Theory* highlights a reduction in sexual homicide incidences over time, attributed to factors such as enhanced law enforcement practices, sociocultural evolution, and increased public awareness of sexual violence issues (Benner & Mistry, 2020).

Research on sexual homicide has focused on various theories and empirical findings to understand the characteristics of perpetrators and the dynamics of these crimes. Scholars such as Chan and Heide (2016), Stefanska, Beech, and Carter (2016), and Myers, Chan, Vo, and Lazarou (2010) have investigated distinctions between sexual homicide offenders (SHOs) and non-homicide sexual offenders (NHSOs) across dimensions such as childhood and adolescent development, criminal histories, and behavioural or psychiatric diagnoses (Beech et al., 2018; Chan, 2023; Heide, 2023; Stefanska et al., 2021). Their findings indicate that SHOs are more likely to experience adverse childhoods, exhibit antisocial and

schizoid personality disorders, and possess maladaptive traits, including sexual sadism, paraphilias, and paedophilia.

Furthermore, studies by Beauregard and Martineau (2013) and Kerr and Beech (2016) illuminate the deceptive tactics and underlying motivations of SHOs, which often involve seeking sexual gratification, exercising power and control, or acting on negative emotions such as anger. Research on the prevalence of sadistic behaviours among SHOs by Briken, Hill, Habermann, Kafka, and Berner (2010) further emphasises the role of sexual sadism as a significant driver of these crimes (Beauregard, 2019; Lussier & Beauregard, 2018; Myers et al., 2019).

In terms of offender characteristics, Healey, Lussier, and Beauregard (2013) and Firestone, Bradford, Greenberg, Larose, and Curry (1998) identify variations in school performance and establish a connection between sadistic sexual fantasies and criminal behaviours. Additionally, Beauregard and Field (2008) highlight that sadistic sexual fantasies often serve as a precursor to sexual domination and euphoria, ultimately motivating offenders to commit acts of extreme violence (Beauregard, 2019).

3.2. Sexual Murder Cases, Profiles of Perpetrators, Victims, and The Context of The Incident in China

The phenomenon of sexual homicide in China presents a profoundly intricate issue characterised by a crime landscape imbued with complex psychological and sociocultural dynamics. Within a rapidly evolving society, the profiles of perpetrators, victims, and their modus operandi reveal underlying imbalances and dysfunctions often obscured by the veneer of economic and social progress.

Most sexual homicide perpetrators in China, as in other regions globally, are men (H.C. Chan et al., 2019; J. Wang et al., 2019). These individuals frequently exhibit histories of adverse childhood experiences, including domestic violence, abuse, or neglect. Extensive criminal records often characterise them, and they are commonly diagnosed with antisocial or schizoid personality disorders. Social isolation is a prevalent feature among these offenders, coupled with limited or non-existent experiences in healthy interpersonal or intimate relationships. Such factors often catalyse or reinforce deviant sexual desires and fantasies.

Victims, by contrast, are frequently adult women selected opportunistically rather than through deliberate targeting. The nature of the crime is often marked by extreme brutality, with acts of uncontrolled violence and mutilation. These actions reflect not only a homicidal intent but also a profound desire to dominate, control, and symbolically degrade the victim.

Crimes are often preceded by the deliberate selection of victims, typically based on accessibility rather than sexual attraction. Perpetrators may engage in stalking behaviours, meticulously planning their attacks to minimise the risk of interruption. Alcohol frequently serves as a catalyst, lowering inhibitions and enabling offenders to act on deviant impulses. However, the choice of weapon and

methods of attack vary significantly, ranging from physical assaults to stabbings, often characterised by extreme violence.

Sexual homicide cases in China underscore broader societal and systemic challenges, including deficiencies in the criminal justice system (Ding & Zhao, 2021). The complexity of addressing and preventing these crimes arises not only from the psychological intricacies of offenders but also from societal stigma, underreporting, and obstacles in investigation. Limited witness testimony and a lack of physical evidence further hinders law enforcement, resulting in many unresolved cases or offenders escaping justice.

Homicides in China reflect multifaceted dynamics involving perpetrators, victims, and the nature of the offences. In a context where official data is sparse, documented cases provide insight into the social, cultural, and psychological factors underlying these crimes.

In cases of mass murder, perpetrators typically act independently, targeting four to seven individuals in a single event (Marganski, 2019). Their motivations often stem from revenge or financial gain, exposing dark dimensions of interpersonal conflict and economic distress. These events predominantly occur in rural areas, where social isolation and stress may contribute to such fatal decisions.

Murder-suicides represent another grim phenomenon. Perpetrators, predominantly males in their most productive years, often target family members. These incidents point to crises within familial structures, with triggers such as intimate partner conflict or infidelity. The weapon of choice is usually a knife, symbolising the immediacy and intimate nature of the violence.

Rare forms of murder, such as those involving carbon monoxide poisoning, predominantly affect female victims. These cases, frequently associated with arson, suggest a higher degree of premeditation and illuminate the role of gender disparities in violent acts. The scarcity of reliable and transparent data complicates homicide research in China. Nevertheless, analysing available cases reveals how intricate social, economic, and cultural factors influence motives, methods, and victim selection. Such accounts, though often obscured from public discourse, unveil harsh realities about societal dysfunctions that are typically hidden from view.

Between January 1994 and December 2016, an analysis of 59 cases of sexual homicide across various regions in China exposed the grim realities of sexual crimes. This study utilised comprehensive police data from three areas—Shanghai Municipality, Guangdong Province, and Hubei Province—and thorough reviews of Chinese online journal databases to examine the profiles of perpetrators, victims, and the nature of the offences.

The perpetrators in these cases often exhibited severe sexual behavioural disorders, including sadistic tendencies. Although they represented a range of social and economic backgrounds, many had

prior histories of violence or significant psychological disturbances. These individuals typically exploit the vulnerabilities of their victims through coercion, manipulation, or force to commit their crimes.

Victims of sexual homicide encompassed a broad age spectrum, from children to adults, reflecting the perpetrators' indiscriminate brutality. The random selection of victims instilled fear and uncertainty in society. In some instances, perpetrators had preexisting relationships with their victims, such as acquaintances or colleagues, intensifying the personal and tragic nature of the crimes.

These crimes were marked by extreme physical and sexual violence, including rape, torture, and mutilation, with offenders demonstrating a desire for dominance and control through excessive brutality. Addressing such cases requires a multidisciplinary approach, integrating legal, psychological, and investigative expertise. Insights from these cases underscore the urgent need for robust preventative measures and legal frameworks to protect society from similar offences.

Critical characteristics of perpetrators included an average age of 32.44 years at the time of the offence, with 96.6% being male. The majority were single or had an unknown marital status, held high school-level education (68%), were employed during the offence, and a minority had a prior criminal record (20.3%) or previous sexual offence conviction (11.9%) (H.C. Chan, 2023).

Victim profiles revealed a relatively young average age, with most being female and a significant proportion engaged in sex work. Sexual homicides predominantly involved heterosexual perpetrators (86.4%), occurred at night (54.5%) and indoors (68.4%), with 62.7% of cases involving foreign victim-offender relationships. Motivations included sexual gratification (49.2%), anger (32.2%), and a desire for power (8.5%). Common methods of murder involved personal (40.7%), contact (30.5%), or sharp weapons (28.8%). Victims were often lured through deceptive means (57.1%) or ambushed (32.1%), and mutilation, particularly of the genitals, occurred in 47.3% of cases (H.C. Chan, 2023).

The profiles of sexual homicide perpetrators in China exhibit diverse characteristics. These include individuals committing blitz attacks, such as a perpetrator with a prior history of rape; a female offender, characterised by chronic gambling habits, who premeditated the murder of a man who deceived her; and a negrophilic offender who murdered her brother-in-law and engaged in post-mortem sexual activity with the victim. The victims in these cases varied, encompassing a young female student, a 56-year-old man who had been sexually manipulated, and a 33-year-old woman alongside her child. Offences related to sexual homicide in China typically involve premeditated assaults, necrophilia, and sexual violence, culminating in murder.

3.3. Efforts to Prevent Criminological Crime Triggers in Sexual Murder Cases in China Through Public Education, Victim Protection, Perpetrator Rehabilitation, And Law Enforcement

In developing preventive measures to address the precipitating factors of criminological crimes in cases of sexual homicide in China, a comprehensive approach encompassing public education, victim protection, offender rehabilitation, and law enforcement forms the foundation of a societal transformation narrative. Promoting healthy interpersonal relationships and non-violent conflict resolution is prioritised through targeted public education initiatives in a crime landscape with intricate psychological and social complexities. Campaigns designed to resonate with societal values and deepen understanding of the underlying causes of violence inspire communities to foster harmonious interactions, thereby diminishing tendencies toward domination and aggression.

Simultaneously, safeguarding victims is paramount. Enhanced psychological and medical support services and bolstered physical safety measures—such as increased law enforcement patrols in high-risk areas—ensure victims receive the protection and care they need. These efforts foster trust in institutional systems and create pathways for meaningful recovery. Attention to offenders is equally essential. Effective rehabilitation programs employing intensive psychological counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy, and robust social support systems enable offenders to confront and alter deviant behavioural patterns. This transformation facilitates their reintegration into society as constructive members.

Moreover, effective law enforcement underpins these initiatives. Legal reforms aimed at strengthening victim protection, imposing stricter penalties on offenders, and ensuring equitable access to justice serve as critical milestones. Enhanced investigative capabilities equip law enforcement agencies to resolve sexual crime cases with greater efficiency, ensuring accountability for perpetrators.

This holistic approach underscores the necessity of community involvement in combating sexual violence. From addressing root causes to ensuring victim support, offender rehabilitation, and stringent legal enforcement, every measure contributes to building a safer, more equitable, and compassionate society. A multidisciplinary framework, informed by criminological theories and empirical evidence, highlights the profiles of perpetrators, the vulnerabilities of victims, and the intricate dynamics of these crimes, providing actionable insights into prevention strategies.

First, the Power and Control Theory, developed by Burgess et al., highlights the perpetrator's intent to dominate the victim. Studies indicate that most perpetrators are male and often utilise violence as a mechanism to assert control. This correlation underscores the critical need for public education aimed at deconstructing social norms that perpetuate male dominance and justify violence against women as a means of asserting or maintaining power.

Second, the Sexual Violence and Aggression Theory offers valuable insights into the role of aggression in sexual homicide, where acts of sexual violence serve as manifestations of the perpetrator's brutality. Data reveals that motives for such crimes frequently stem from sexual dynamics, anger, or power. Preventative measures focusing on aggression management, such as anger management programs and education on fostering healthy relationships, are pivotal in mitigating the prevalence of sexual offences.

The Criminological Psychopathology Theory links criminal behaviour to psychological factors, including antisocial personality disorders. Research by Chan and Heide, among others, demonstrates that individuals committing sexual homicides often present with complex psychopathological histories. This finding suggests that offender rehabilitation programs should incorporate comprehensive psychological interventions to address underlying causes of antisocial behaviour and minimise the risk of recidivism.

Finally, the Declining Rates Theory presents an encouraging trend, indicating a reduction in sexual homicides due to effective preventative strategies. These include legislative reforms, heightened public awareness, and stringent law enforcement measures, collectively fostering an environment that deters sexual violence.

The synthesis of empirical data and these theoretical frameworks emphasise the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach to prevent sexual homicides. Comprehensive strategies should include public education to reshape societal attitudes, robust victim protection mechanisms through psychological and legal support, targeted rehabilitation programs addressing psychological disorders among offenders, and enforcement of strict legal frameworks. By understanding the profiles of perpetrators and victims and the dynamics of such crimes, prevention efforts can shift from reactive to proactive, addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour. In the context of sexual homicides in China, this underscores the essential role of criminological research and theory in guiding evidence-based policies and preventative interventions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of sexual homicide in China, shedding light on the intricate profiles of offenders, victims and the contextual dynamics of such crimes. It delves into the psychology of perpetrators, most of whom are men with troubled pasts, frequently exhibiting antisocial or schizoid personality disorders. Victims, predominantly women, are often selected randomly rather than through deliberate targeting, with the crimes characterised by a brutal and sadistic modus operandi. These acts of sexual homicide reflect profound societal dysfunction and highlight the inadequacies of the justice system in effectively addressing sexual violence. Perpetrators

employ extreme physical and sexual violence—such as rape, torture, and mutilation—as a means of asserting dominance over their victims. This phenomenon underscores the persistence of gender inequality and broader social challenges within Chinese society. Additionally, the scarcity of reliable data exacerbates the difficulties in researching homicides in this context. Sexual homicides in China represent not only individual criminal behaviours but also expose disturbing truths about specific societal dynamics.

Offender profiles indicate a penchant for extreme and often sadistic sexual behaviours, with victims spanning a wide age range, reflecting the perpetrators' brutality irrespective of the victim's age. Investigating and analysing these cases necessitates a multidisciplinary approach to comprehend better and mitigate sexual crimes. This study provides significant insights into the dynamics of such offences in China, emphasising the critical need for effective prevention strategies. Perpetrators often employ deception and surprise, suggesting premeditation and manipulation. Specific cases reveal diverse motives and techniques, ranging from blitz attacks to necrophilia, highlighting the psychological and social complexities underlying sexual homicides. This work makes a vital contribution to the global understanding of sexual crimes, focusing specifically on the Chinese context. Finally, this study applies criminological theories—including Power and Control, Sexual Violence and Aggression, and Criminological Psychopathology—as a foundation for developing holistic prevention strategies. The findings underscore the urgent need for a multidisciplinary and theory-driven approach to both understand and prevent sexual homicides in China.

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