

## Research Trend Analysis About Child Abuse During Covid-19 Period

Young Sik Kang<sup>1</sup> and Kyeong Sook Oh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education, Chungnam University, Republic of Korea

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education, Kookje University, Republic of Korea

Email: geb1568@daum.net<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

Through examination of trends in child abuse research published in academic journals from 2019 to 2021, the purpose of this study is to identify future research plans and options to address the problem of child abuse. In order to do this, we examined 288 publications on child abuse that were published in KCI-listed journals between 2019 and 2021, categorizing them into four groups: academic disciplines, research topics, research types, and research subjects. The Academy for Social Sciences, therefore, published more than 87.8% of the analysis papers in each academic field.

The sequence in which the articles on each research topic were published was the influence of abuse, actual conditions and perceptions, institutions, laws, and policies. Among the empirical scientific studies, survey research accounted for most of the characteristics of each type of study, and research trends by research subjects were found to be the most common for general children. In summary, most of the topics related to child abuse during the COVID-19 period were found to be survey studies using questionnaires structured in the form of surveys on the impact of abuse on general children. Therefore, future research on child abuse should be approached at the social dimension, such as family and child protection agency workers, to intervene in the prevention of child abuse or come up with therapeutic alternatives

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Child Abuse, Trends of Child Abuse Research, Prevention of Child Abuse

### 1. Introduction

The issue of child abuse has been slowly becoming a social concern for almost 22 years since the Child Welfare Act was completely rewritten in 2000. However, interest in "child abuse" is still not that great, and it is only discussed when it is brought up as a societal issue. As a result, ongoing attention and effective preventative measures are still lacking. In particular, 87.4% of child abuse is conducted by parents at home, and despite the increase in abuse by stepparents, relatives, and caregivers (Ministry for Health and wellbeing, 2021), ambiguous social and institutional standards are still applied. The majority of children who experienced abuse were between the ages of 13 and 15, which are middle school students. Emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse were the next most common types of maltreatment, with multi-type maltreatment accounting for a higher percentage of maltreatment than single-type maltreatment. The aftereffects of abuse from parents or caregivers during childhood when they need to promote physical and mental development with parental protection and support have a serious impact on children's physical development and mental health. Recently, as the status and cases of child abuse have been reported through various media, child abuse is also recognized as one of the serious social problems in our society. Nonetheless, it is still difficult to say that the generation level of theories or models related to child abuse reflecting the sociocultural characteristics of Korean society has achieved remarkable growth. In addition, the training programs for child abuse victims or perpetrators and research results on child protection services are insufficient. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2019, has continued for more than two years, causing difficulties in society and the economy in general. In particular, a circumstance that had never happened before took place, such as the conversion to online learning from childcare facilities that provided face-to-face child education\* services. Children spent the majority of this process at home, which considerably increased the strain parents bear in raising children. Such social isolation and changes in lifestyle affect not only parents but also children's mental health (Choi Ara, 2020). Children who spend more time living with their parents are also exposed to the risk of being affected by their parents' negative emotions in reverse (Jung Ik-jung et al., 2020). In fact, after the outbreak of COVID-19, emotional abuse, corporal punishment at home, and experience of witnessing domestic violence increased (Lee Bong-ju et al., 2020). In addition, it has

been confirmed that the risk of exposure to child abuse is high in single-income families and families with marital conflicts (Jeong Ik-jung et al., 2020).

In addition, the number of child abuse complaints and judgments climbed substantially, from 36,417 reports and 24,604 judgments in 2018 to 42,251 reports and 30,905 judgments in 2020, according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare (2021). Child abuse is also called a "hidden crime" because it is not revealed by official statistics due to the nature of a secret crime. Experts are concerned that there will be many concealed child abuse due to the prolonged COVID-19 incident, and emphasized the need for a check-up as family conflicts and continued stress can lead to child abuse (Choi Ara, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to find out what topics academia dealt with about child abuse during the COVID-19 period.

Research topics and discussions related to child abuse tend to vary depending on the enactment and revision time of related laws. The Child Welfare Act, Korea's first child welfare-related corporation, was enacted in December 1961, but it was not until 2011, 50 years later, that the definition of child abuse was discussed and the expansion and reinforcement of reporting obligations were implemented. With this, topics related to 'child abuse' have emerged as a major academic issue and research task in the academic field. Since then, research on the status of child abuse and the identification of the cause has increased. In the government, 'Act of Special Cases concerning the Punishment, ETC. of Child Abuse Crimes' was enacted, and part of the 'Child Welfare Act' was revised. As a result, the protection of the child victim and the punishment procedure of the child abuse offender were strengthened (M. S. Cha & K. W. Kim, 2017). In addition, from 2015 to 2018, the child abuse prevention project was converted into a government subsidy project, and efforts were made to overcome the limitations of the child protection system by the enactment of the Child Protection Service Network at the Community Level, enhancement of case-to-case function, prevention of child abuse and neglect, and transition to a differential response system focused on family support services (M. H. Lee, 2011). During this period, not only theoretical overview studies of child abuse but also discussions on child abuse at the legal and institutional level and child protection services were actively conducted (E.M. Park, 2019). As committed public leaders got involved in the response infrastructure from 2019 to 2020, attempts were undertaken to create a child abuse prevention week and significantly raise public awareness of child abuse in 2021. (J. W. Yoo & M. Y. Lee. 2021). As such, the government and the local community recognize child abuse from a criminal perspective and actively intervene, and at the same time carry out multifaceted projects to prevent child abuse. Such social changes are expected to have affected the direction of academic research on child abuse.

Despite this interest, research on child abuse has been conducted in earnest for about 30 years, which is shorter than the history of child abuse. The amount of research already done may not be enough, thus it is important to examine how the areas of interest of researchers have changed and increased through time as well as the way that research should go in the future. This is because grasping this trend can serve as a theoretical cornerstone in preparing measures to fundamentally prevent which is becoming increasingly complex and serious (M. S. Cha & K. W. Kim, 2017).

As the preceding studies analyzed earlier explored the research trends from 1984 to 2018, this study aims to systematically review the research on child abuse conducted during the COVID-19 period by analyzing the flow of child abuse research in various areas, focusing on 2019 when COVID-19 started to 2021. Specifically, the analytical interest of this study is to analyze research trends based on academic fields, research topics, research types, and research subjects focusing on academic research papers on child abuse after the COVID-19 outbreak in 2019. In particular, this study intends to take an in-depth examination of where the research approach is concentrated for each research topic and the changes in the research subject. This approach attempts to examine the main goals and achievements of research on "child abuse" that has been done in Korean society amid catastrophic events like COVID-19. Through this, we intend to seek new research, policy directions, and alternatives to solve the problem of child abuse.

In order to achieve this research purpose, we established the following research questions in this study.

First, what are the research trends of child abuse in the academic field?

Second, what are the research trends of child abuse by research topic?

Third, what are the research trends of child abuse by research type?

Fourth, what are the research trends of child abuse by research subjects?

## 2. Criteria for Analysis of Research Trends in Child Abuse

In analyzing research trends on child abuse, it can be applied in a wide variety of ways according to the main interest of the researcher. In fact, looking at the earlier research results on child abuse research trends, it can be seen that the selection of analysis methods or analysis items is applied slightly differently (C. K. Kim & J. O. Lee & Y. J. Song, 2009; H. M. Yoon, 2010; M. K. Song, 2013; W. K. Seo, 2001). Therefore, before starting a full-fledged analysis of the trend of child abuse research, the researchers would like to examine the criteria for analysis of research papers published in Korea. In the early research on child abuse, sufficient research to grasp the research trends of child abuse was not accumulated. Therefore, a concise summary of the concept, cause, type, and incidence rate of child abuse was provided (E. M. Park, 2019). In a review of domestic literature on child abuse, Kim Chun-kyung et al. (2009) analyze the research focus on the ① concept and type of child abuse, ② research on variables related to child abuse, and ③ research on the current status and countermeasures of child abuse. As a result of analyzing child abuse papers published from 1994 to 2000, Seo Woo-kyung (2011) pointed out that many studies focused on identifying the actual condition or cause of child abuse, but lacked papers on child abuse measures and were limited to survey studies through questionnaires. She also emphasized the need for research specifically dealing with prevention and treatment measures, longitudinal studies that can cover childhood to adolescent abuse, and qualitative studies to explore factors surrounding child abuse in depth.

In the study of Yoon Hye-mi (2010) and Sule et al., (202), ① saturation of child sexual abuse, ② child sexual abuse by research topic, ③ child sexual abuse by target children were presented separately as a criterion for analysis. In particular, the progression of theoretical research, quantitative research, and qualitative research as the concept of saturation of research was raised in the order of general scientific saturation. In the classification by research topic, research trends were analyzed by classifying ① actual research, ② relevance/correlation research, ③ effect analysis and evaluation research, ④ research focusing on institutional and legal dimensions of prevention and intervention, and ⑤ research focused on developing measurement tools. In the same context, Song Min-kyung (2013) analyzed research papers in academic journals based on academic fields, research approach methods, research topics, and research participants. Through this, for the development of child abuse research, it was suggested to develop child abuse theory and scale reflecting the sociocultural characteristics of Korean society, and to revitalize research based on organic cooperation with academia, government, and child abuse practice fields. Afterward, Cha Mi-sook and Kim Kwang-woong (2017) analyzed the academic field, year of publication, research subject, research type, and research subject among papers published in the KCI-registered (candidate) journal from 1984 to 2015. As a result, since 2000, there have been more papers published about child abuse than ever before, with more than two-thirds of them coming from the Society of Social Sciences. These papers show that there have been numerous survey studies targeting general children in the areas of abuse's impact, actual conditions and perceptions, institutions, laws, and policies. It was also pointed out that it is necessary to conduct an overall review of the research contents, methods, and results of the study targeting research papers related to the subject of child abuse. The reason is that through this analysis, it is possible to reveal the effectiveness of child abuse research. Park Eun-mi (2019) analyzed the research trends through the seminar data collection from 1988 to 2019 by the Korea Child Abuse Prevention Association and reported that nearly one-third of studies on child abuse was published from 2016 to 2019 and consisted of studies on child abuse laws, policies, and response delivery systems.

As suggested in the study of Cha Mi-sook and Kim Kwang-woong (2018), this study aims to apprehend the characteristics of research trends on child abuse by focusing on the analysis of academic fields, research topics, research types, and research subjects. The reason for applying such criteria for analyzing research trends is that it can be applied to research on scientific child abuse based on the premise that "the first step of the academic approach begins with identifying and theoretically exploring the depth and breadth of the phenomenon" and "the understanding and evaluation of the phenomenon through empirical research can be developed, implemented, and evaluated to cultivate academic and practical skills in related fields" (Conngham, May, 2010; scientific research, Yoon Jae-jae). In particular, research on child abuse has been actively conducted

in Korea since the Child Welfare Act was revised in 2000, but the theoretical approach to child abuse and in-depth study on countermeasures are needed. during the global pandemic such as COVID-19

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Design**

It is a descriptive research study to apprehend child abuse-related research trends and identify factors related to child abuse by selecting the early research subject as a comprehensive literature search method.

#### **3.2 Subject**

This study selected papers listed in the National Research Foundation of Korea's listing (candidate) from January 2019 to December 2021 among domestic academic research papers on child abuse through the RISS database. The analytical target is restricted to research articles published in scholarly journals since these papers play a significant role in the research findings by demonstrating a particular degree of academic achievement during the screening procedure.

To select the subject of the study, we searched for a paper published in the registration (candidate) among the papers containing 'child abuse' in the title on the Korean Education and Research Information Service website ([www.riss.kr](http://www.riss.kr)).

#### **3.3 Procedure**

##### **The Analysis Procedure for the Paper to Be Studied Proceeded as Follows.**

First, in order to select the analysis criteria according to the research problem, the researcher reviewed the existing research on child abuse trends and then revised and supplemented them to prepare detailed guidelines. Second, as the first analysis procedure, the researcher repeated the task of classifying the entire paper according to the analysis criteria twice. Third, while reclassifying the classified papers according to the classification criteria of Cha Mi-sook and Kim Kwang-woong(2017), if there is ambiguity in the classification, the evaluation criteria were revised while reviewing previous studies. Fourth, in order to confirm the analysis, only papers that were not clearly classified in the previous step were finally determined and classified by two early childhood education majors. The reason for having two data reviewers in this study is to evaluate research data and reduce prejudice. For systematic exploration and verification of research, there must be at least two evaluators who evaluate data independently of each other (triangulation), multiple evaluators minimize bias and mistakes of researchers, and reduce data omission along with improved reliability (Higgins & Green, 2006; Yoon Hye-mi, 2010)

#### **3.4 Method**

In this study, the analysis frame was largely selected in five categories (year of publication, academic field, research topic, research type, and research subject) by referring to the analysis frames of previous papers (M. S. Cha & K. W. Kim, 2017; M. K. Song, 2013) that analyzed research trends in child abuse. Data analysis according to the analysis frame was presented as frequency and percentage. The specific details of the research trend analysis frame for child abuse used in this study are as follows.

##### **3.4.1 Academic Field**

Researchers used the Korea Citation Index classification criteria for the study by academic field.

The KCI differentiates the National Research Foundation of Korea's list of candidates into a total of eight topics (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, medicine, agricultural, marine, art physical education, and Interdisciplinary Science).

##### **3.4.2 Research Topics**

The research topics were analyzed by dividing them into ① actual conditions and perceptions, ② systems, laws, and policies, ③ causes of abuse, ④ effects of abuse, ⑤ intervention programs, ⑥ research and tool development.

### 3.4.3 Research Type

The research types were analyzed by dividing them into ① Empirical Scientific Research, ② Introduction and Theory Research, ③ Program and Case Research, and ④ Qualitative Research. First, 'Empirical Scientific Research' was analyzed by dividing it into general survey research, content analysis research, and statistical data analysis research. Second, 'Introduction and Theory Research' was analyzed by dividing it into discussion research, case research, and meta-analysis, including literature research. The 'Program and Case Research' was analyzed by dividing it into program development and effectiveness verification, and case research. The 'Qualitative Research' was analyzed by dividing it into grounded theory, focus group interview, interview, and u-test.

### 3.4.4 Research Subject

The research subjects were analyzed by dividing them into ① children, ② parents, ③ families, ④ reporting obligations, ⑤ other related workers, and ⑥ other adults, only for papers (including panel surveys) targeting humans among all analysis papers

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Research Trends by Academic Field

When 288 papers to be analyzed were classified as KCI criteria, it was found that 'child abuse' was dealt with in the order of social science, Interdisciplinary Science, medicine, engineering, architecture, and humanities, as shown in Table 1, [Figure 1].

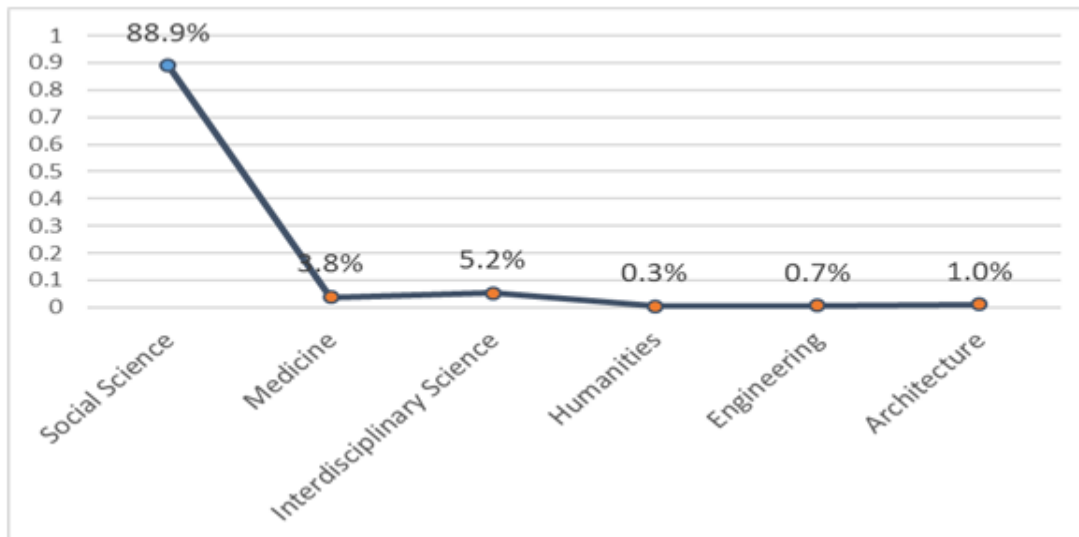
**Table 1:** Frequency Analysis by Academic Field

Academic Field		Institution Name	N (%)
Social Science	Social Welfare	Health and Welfare Policy Forum (1), Journal of Welfare and Counselling Education(1), Korean Journal of Social Welfare Studies(3), Community Chest of Korea(1), Social Work Practice and Research (2), Journal of Child Welfare and Development (5), Journal of youth welfare(2), Youth Facility and Environment(1), Journal of School Social Work(8), Korean Journal of Family Welfare(1), Journal of Family Social Work(1), Korean Association for Social Welfare Studies(3), Korean Journal of Qualitative Research in Social Welfare (1), Korean Journal of Social Welfare (2), Journal of the Korean society of child welfare (9), Journal of Disability and Welfare(1)	42
	Educational Research	Journal of Educational and Culture (1), Educational Research(2), Journal of Educational Development(1), Education Welfare Research(1), Journal of Educational Research(1), Journal of Future Early Childhood Education (3), Journal of Korean Council for Children and Rights (11), Korean Journal of Child Education (1), Korean Journal of Child Protection (8), Children's Literature (1), Korean Journal of Child Studies (1), Journal of Korea Open Association for Early Childhood Education(1), Early Childhood Education Research and Review(4), Korean Journal of Early Childhood Education(2), Korean Journal of Youth Studies (1), Special Education Research (1), The Journal of Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction (9)	49
	Jurisprudence	Gosigye(1), Journal of Theory and Practics of Private Law(2), Criminal Investigation Studies (2), Korean Journal of Law and Society(2), Journal of Law and Politics research(1), Law Practice Review(2), Korean Lawyers Association(2), Dissertation of law(2), Legal Studies(1), Journal of Comparative Law(1), Korean Journal of Comparative Criminal Law(5), Social Security Law Research(3), Social Welfare and Law Journal (4), Collection of articles on foreign law(1), Ewha Journal of Gender and Law(2), Korean Journal of Victimology (5), Journal of Criminal Law (1), Han Yang Law Review(1), Journal of Constitutional Justice(1)	39

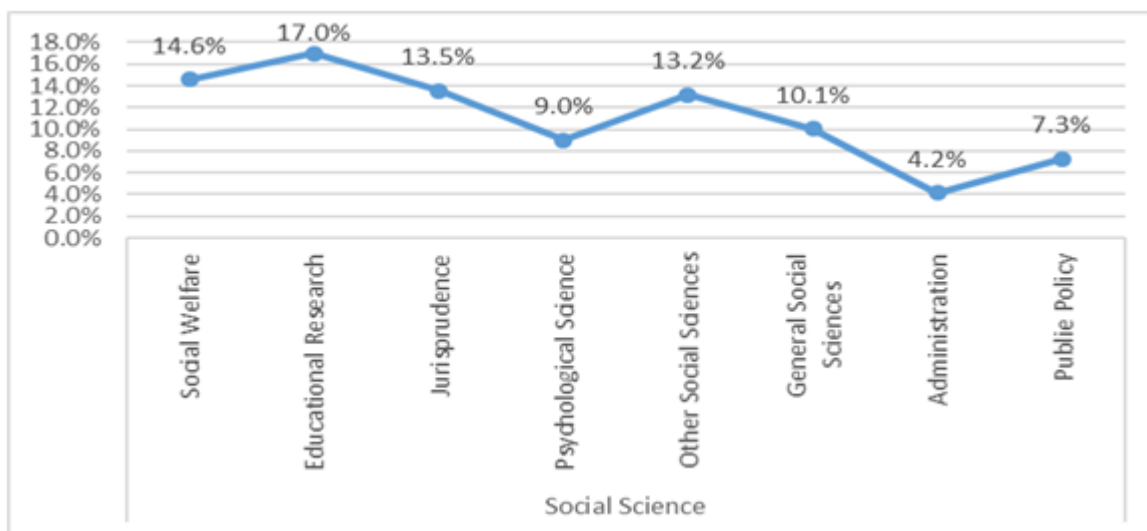
Psychological Science	Korean Journal of Correctional Counseling(2), Journal of Literary Therapy (1), Korean Journal of Art Therapy (1), Journal of Counseling Psychology Education Welfare (1), Korea Journal of Counseling (6), Psychological Type and Human Development(1), Korean Journal of Rehabilitation Psychology (4), Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (2), Korean Journal of Christian Counseling (1), Korean Journal of Psychology (6), Korean Association of Addiction Crime Review (1)	26
Other Social Sciences	Family and Family Therapy(1), Korean Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology (2), Research of case management (1), Studies on Life and Culture (1), Korean Journal of Safety Culture (1), Korean Journal of Human Development(5), Human understanding(1), Human Right and Justice(2), Journal of Humanities and Social science (3), Journal of Humanities and Social science 21 (12), Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (2), Forum for Youth Culture (3), Journal of the Korean Official Statistics (3), Studies on Korean Youth (1),	38
General Social Sciences	International Journal of Tourism Management and Sciences (2), Public Safety Association(1), Dong Kwang (3), Korea Broadcasting Journalist Association (1), Journal of Parent Education (1), Social Science Review (1), Studies on Life and Culture(1), Survey Research (1), Korean Journal of Safety Culture (1), Journal of Children's Media and Education (2), Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (3), Japanese Studies(2), Journal of Korean Child Care and Education (1), Korean Journal of Child Education and Care (1), Korea Vision Study(2), Korea Academia-Industrial Cooperation Society (1), Korea Association of Child Care and Education (2), Journal of the Korean Society of Child Welfare (3)	29
Administration	Korea Local Administration Review (1), Korean Police Studies Review (2), Korean Criminal Psychology Review (4), Korean Criminal Intelligence Review(3), Journal of Korean Criminological Association (1), Korean Association for Local Government and Administration Studies(1)	12
Public Policy	Journal of Family Resource Management and Policy Review(2), Journal of Public Policy Studies (1), Journal of Welfare for the correction (1), Public Policy Review(1), Social Welfare Policy and Practice (2), Childcare Policy Forum(3), Journal of Police Policies(6), Korean Policy Sciences Review (1), National Youth Policy Institute (3), Korean Criminology Review (1)	21
<b>subtotal</b>		<b>256(88.9)</b>
<b>Medicine</b>	Korean Society of Pediatric Emergency Medicine(1), Korea Academy of Care Management(2), Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing(1), Journal of the Korean Society of Maternal and Child Health (3), Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs(2), Journal of the Korean Society of Radiology (1), Journal of Korean Society of Pediatric Emergency Medicine(1)	<b>11(3.8)</b>
<b>Interdisciplinary Science</b>	Journal of Social Convergence Studies (1), Korean Journal of Animation (1), Journal of Korean Computer Research Society (1), Journal of the Korea Society of Computer and Information (2), Korea Contents Association (6), Gender Review (1), Asia-pacific Society of Convergent Research Interchange(1), Journal of Convergence for Information Technology (1), Journal of Holistic Convergence Education (1)	<b>15(5.2)</b>
<b>Humanities</b>	Global Creative Leader(1)	<b>1(0.3)</b>
<b>Engineering</b>	Public Land Law Review (2)	<b>2(0.7)</b>
<b>Architecture</b>	Architectural Institute of Korea (2), Journal of Community Safety and Security by Environmental Design (1)	<b>3(1.0)</b>

In detail, first, in the field of social science [Figure 2], papers were published in the order of pedagogy (49), social welfare (42), jurisprudence (39), other social science (38), general social science (29), psychological science (26), policy science (21), and public administration (12). In terms of detail, humanities 21 (12)

published more than eight papers in other social sciences, children's rights (11), learner-centered curriculum education research (9), and child protection research (8) in social welfare (9), and school social welfare (8). Second, there were many papers in the J Korean Soc Matern Child Health (3) and third, six papers were published in the Korean Contents Association in Interdisciplinary Science, two papers in land construction research in engineering, and two papers in architecture.



[Figure 1] Frequency Analysis by Academic Field



[Figure 2] Frequency Analysis by social science

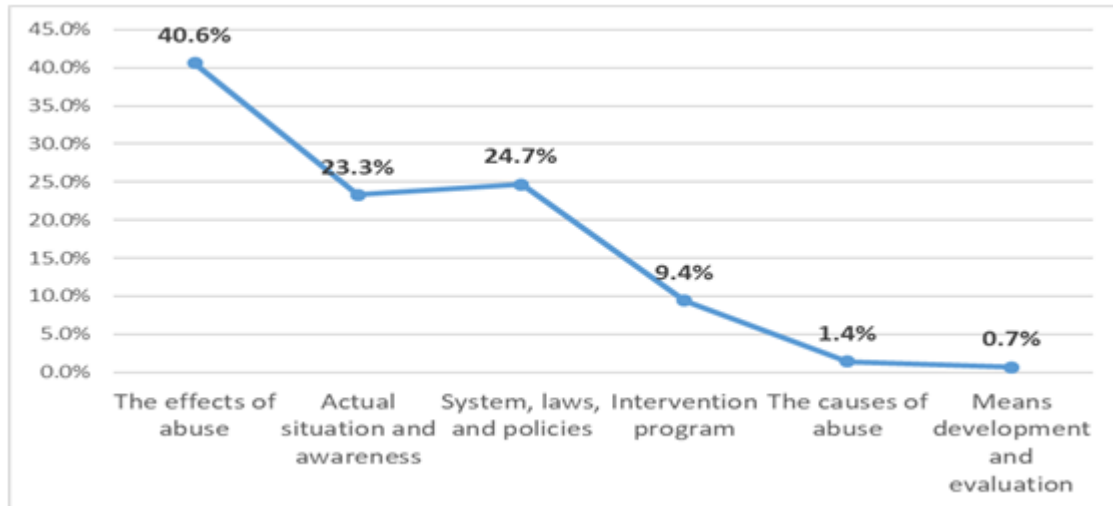
#### 4.2 Research Trends by Research Topic

The results of classifying 288 papers to be analyzed by research topic are shown in Table 2. As revealed in the analysis procedure, the subject classification was modified and supplemented by the researcher referring to previous studies.

**Table 2:** Frequency Analysis by Research Topic

	Research Topic	N (%)
The effects of abuse	Suicidal thoughts, Depression anxiety, Gender role attitudes, Somatization symptom, etc.	117(40.6)
Actual situation and awareness	Child abuse crime status, Parental perception of child abuse, etc.	67(23.3)
System, laws, and policies	Legal process-punishment, protection	71(24.7)

Intervention program	Intervention process, Countermeasures and improvement of child abuse crimes, etc.	27 (9.4)
The causes of abuse	Family (child, parent factors)	4(1.4)
Means development and evaluation	Verification and development of abuse evaluation and discrimination tools	2(0.7)
<b>Total</b>		<b>288(100.0)</b>



[Figure 3] Frequency Analysis by Research Topic

As shown in Table 2, [Figure 3], 40.6% of the total studies examining the impact of child abuse accounted for the highest proportion in the trend by research topic

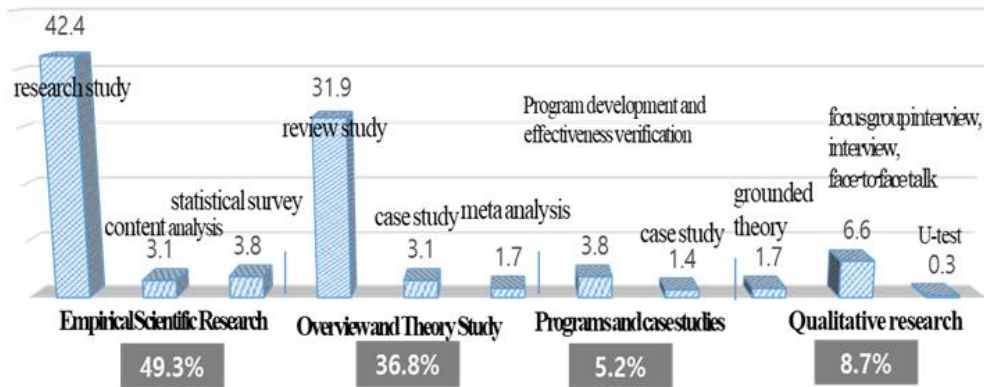
### 4.3 Research Trends by Research Type

Table 3, [Figure 4], shows the results of categorizing 289 papers to be analyzed by research type. Empirical scientific research accounted for the majority with 49.3% of the total, followed by overview and theory research 36.8%, qualitative research 8.7%, and program and case study 5.2%.

**Table 3:** Frequency analysis by study type

	<b>Research type</b>	<b>N (%)</b>
Empirical Scientific Research	research study	122(42.4)
	content analysis	9(3.1)
	statistical survey	11(3.8)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>142(49.3)</b>
Overview and Theory Study	review study	92(31.9)
	case study	9(3.1)
	meta - analysis	5(1.7)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>106(36.8)</b>
Programs and case studies	Program development and effectiveness verification	11(3.8)
	case study	4(1.4)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>15(5.2)</b>
Qualitative research	grounded theory	5(1.7)
	focus group interview, interview, face-to-face talk	19(6.6)
	U-test	1(0.3)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>25(8.7)</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>288(100.0)</b>





[Figure 4] Frequency analysis by study type

Specifically, among the empirical scientific studies, research studies accounted for 42.4% of the total. Next was a statistical survey (3.8%) and content analysis (3.1%). The bulk of overview and theory studies were review studies, which had the second-highest proportion of all study types after research studies. Case studies and meta-analysis studies that can grasp the flow of precedents, although a small number, were made up of 3.1% and 1.7% respectively.

In the overview and theory studies, research on laws, institutions, and policies occupied a large proportion. In program and case studies, 3.8% of program development and effectiveness verification studies and 1.4% of case studies were conducted. For qualitative research, approaches such as focus group interview, interview, and interview were 6.6%, and grounded theory and U-test were 1.7% and 0.3% respectively.

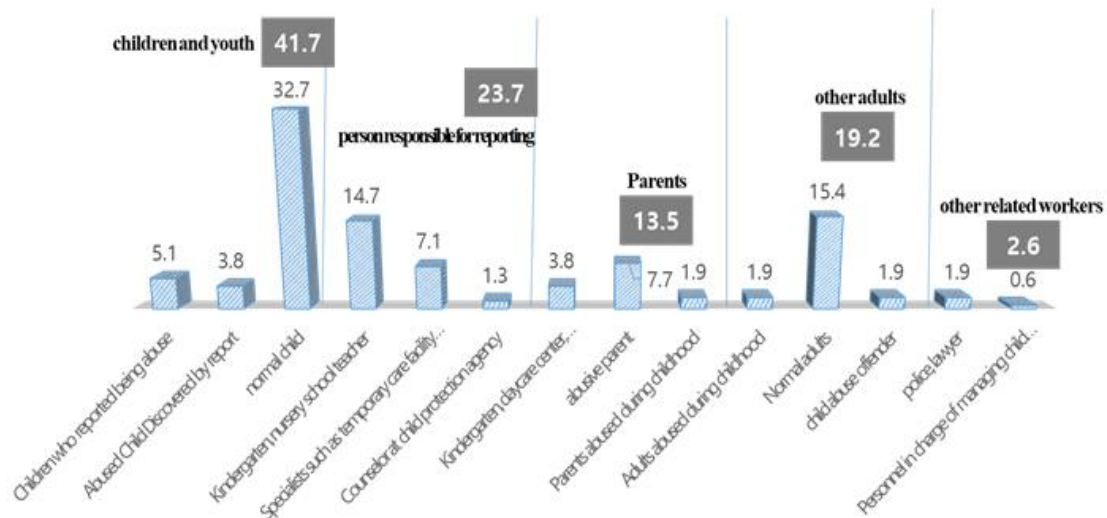
#### 4.4 Research Trends by Research Subject

Of the total 288 papers, only 156 papers on humans were analyzed by study subject and if multiple subjects were investigated simultaneously in one study, duplicates were checked. As a result, it was found that 41.7% of the analysis subjects were studied with children. Next, the research was conducted in the order of persons responsible for reporting (23.1%), other adults (19.2%), parents (13.5%), and other related workers (2.6%)

Table 4: Frequency analysis by research subject

	Research subject	N (%)
children and youth	Children who reported being abused	8(5.1)
	Abused Child Discovered by report	6(3.8)
	normal child	51(32.7)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>65(41.7)</b>
person responsible for reporting	Kindergarten, nursery school teacher	23(14.7)
	Specialists such as temporary care facility workers and therapists	11(7.1)
	Counselor at child protection agency	2(1.3)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>36(23.1)</b>
Parents	Kindergarten, daycare center, elementary/middle/high school parents	6(3.8)
	abusive parent	12(7.7)
	Parents abused during childhood	3(1.9)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>21(13.5)</b>
other adults	Adults abused during childhood	3(1.9)
	Normal adults	24(15.4)
	child abuse offender	3(1.9)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>30(19.2)</b>
other related workers	police, lawyer	3(1.9)
	Personnel in charge of managing child abuse cases	1(0.6)
	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>4(2.6)</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>288(100.0)</b>

\* Among the studies that dealt with humans, the total number (N) is 156 because the papers that dealt with multiple subjects were double-checked.



[Figure 5] Frequency analysis by research subject

The detailed characteristics of each target are as follows. First, among the studies on children, the study on general children was performed the most with 32.7% of the total. Next, the study on children who reported being abused accounted for 5.1% of the study, and the study on abused children discovered by the report was 3.8%.

Second, the study on people responsible for reporting accounted for 23.1% of the total. Among them, the most research was conducted on teachers of kindergartens and daycare centers (14.7%), followed by experts such as temporary care facility workers and therapists (7.1%) and counselors working in child protection organizations in the order of 1.9%.

Third, studies on parents accounted for 13.5% of the total. Among them, 7.7% of the research was done on parents who were abusive, 3.8% of the research on parents of kindergartens, daycare centers, elementary, middle, and high schools, and 1.9% of studies on parents who were abused during childhood.

Fourth, 19.2% of the studies were conducted on adults who were not family-related workers. Among them, the study on general adults accounted for the most at 15.4%, and the study on adults who were abused during childhood and the study on offenders of child abuse accounted for 1.9% each. Lastly, the number of studies targeting workers in related fields was 2.6% of the total

## 5. Discussion And Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the flow of child abuse research by analyzing the trends of domestic child abuse research in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to focus on the direction of follow-up research. With this, 288 papers on child abuse among papers published in KCI-registered (candidate) journals published in Korea from 2019 to 2021 were analyzed for academic fields, research topics, research types, and research subjects. Based on the analysis results, we would like to cover the main discussions and conclusions

First, as a result of analyzing research trends in the academic field, it was found that the child abuse thesis was mainly published in the field of social science. Among these, research on children's rights and child protection focuses on analyzing and disclosing the features of child abuse and its impact on its occurrence, as well as how daycare centers and teachers perceive child abuse. Special laws and interventions for child abuse were addressed in the area of the law; child abuse prevention was addressed in the psychological field; and a limited number of articles dealing with child abuse in various domains were published in other fields. Through this, it was found that various academic fields have dealt with various topics comprehensively and systematically

on child abuse and related topics in a balanced way. This can be seen as a desirable phenomenon in an attempt to prevent child abuse and prevent a recurrence.

Second, in the results of analyzing the research trends by research topic, most studies focused on the effect of abuse on the victimized children. On the other hand, there were few studies on intervention programs or tool development and evaluation. Considering that there are many children suffering from ADHD, depression, social anxiety, and aggressive behavior as the aftereffects of child abuse, it will be a study that needs to be continuously conducted, such as developing an intervention program for the victims of child abuse as well as parents and adults who belong to the perpetrators and countermeasures against child abuse crimes.

In addition, Song Min-kyung (2013), who conducted a study on child abuse trends from 2000 to 2012, argued the importance of developing a child abuse scale, and even in a study from 2021 more than a decade later there are still few studies on child abuse-related scales. Given the steady increase in child abuse, the development of measures related to child abuse is a prerequisite in order to prepare accurate prevention, treatment, and intervention measures for child abuse. A scientific and standardized child abuse scale should be created as a result of profile research on child abuse being conducted through institutional ties with associated institutions and academia. In particular, the child abuse scale has a strong characteristic of reflecting socio-cultural characteristics, so it is urgent to develop a Korean child abuse scale that can lead to social consensus in our sentiment.

Third, there were many empirical scientific studies and overview and theoretical studies by research type. In particular, research studies and review studies occupied a high proportion. On the other hand, there were not many program development and effectiveness verification, case studies, and qualitative studies. Recently, rather than research on the actual situation of abuse, there has been a lively discussion on the supplementation of the protection system for abused children. Furthermore, studies on neglect, starvation, school violence, and abuse of children in poverty have been neglected compared to other areas of child abuse. In-depth case analysis studies were also confirmed to be relatively few. It is desirable that many research studies be conducted to examine the perception or effect of child abuse. However, there is a risk of false answers or errors depending on the question in self-reported survey research. Child abuse must deal with the sensitive and highly emotional realm. Therefore, if the emotions of the research subjects are reflected or if a qualitative study is conducted on the vivid experiences experienced in the field, it will be helpful to the development of a child abuse prevention program that is essential for both child abusers and victims. If such research accumulation continues, it is expected that this will become a cornerstone for a more effective and efficient prevention system.

Fourth, when looking at the results by research subject, it was found that the cumulative number of studies that selected subjects other than children as research subjects was insufficient. Since the subject of child abuse research is concentrated on children and parents, studies on workers in child abuse-related fields are rare, and in particular, studies on child abusers or children who are victims of child abuse are rare. Even in 2020 data, the ratio of parents among child abuse perpetrators is 77.5%, which is about 8 out of 10. In particular, in special circumstances such as COVID-19, both parents and children have reduced social interaction and, as this situation has been prolonged, the increase in isolation at home has been cited as the cause of the increase in child abuse. In view of this situation, it will be necessary to accumulate research that reflects the psychological causes, interventions, and effects of children who have been abused during the COVID-19 period and parents who are abusers.

In addition, organizations that protect children are increasing along with changes in the social structure. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of studies targeting nursery school teachers among those working in specialized child protection institutions, but there are still many studies on the level of awareness and actual conditions. It is even more difficult to find targets other than daycare teachers. Based on these results, a study targeting the workers of institutions in charge of childcare and education is necessary.

In addition, abuse assessment, investigation methods, abuse prevention and rehabilitation support for experts in each unit involved in child abuse protection services, such as temporary protection facility workers and therapists and the importance of understanding the human rights and rights of children in child protection services need to be addressed with focus.

In particular, as there are reports of abused children returning to their original homes after a period of protective service and being abused again, research on the occurrence of student abuse is needed. In this context, research on the follow-up management of the child reporting service system will be a research topic for child abuse that needs to be explored intensively.

There are several limitations in interpreting the results of this study. First, the academic journals sampled as the subject of analysis in this study have randomness according to the researchers' personal research purposes, and the results of this study may not represent the trend of overall research on child abuse in Korea. In addition, although efforts were made to secure the rigor and objectivity of the study, there is a limitation in that the results of coding the papers of this analysis subject cannot elicit consent from all researchers. Lastly, the investigation for research materials was selected by searching for the paper using a database or by searching for a list of academic papers, but it is difficult to rule out the possibility of missing research materials.

Despite these research limitations, this study was able to quantify the trends of child abuse-related research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2021), building on the findings of earlier studies that examined the trends of child abuse-related changes over time, including legislation, legal revisions, and incidents from the earliest days of child abuse research to the most recent. In addition, it also suggested an approach to the topic of child abuse that needs to be moved forward. The results of this study will be able to contribute to academically and socially seeking more effective and developmental directions for child abuse in the future.

## 6. Suggestion

Recommendations for follow-up research are as follows. First, since the research methods and subjects are concentrated on research studies of children in general, diversity of research methods is required as well as the diversity of research subjects. Second, there is still a lack of research related to countermeasures and program development for an active paradigm for the prevention of child abuse. Therefore, a preventative education program that focuses on different target populations, such as children, adolescents, parents, and other caregivers, and is based on "caring" for the two-way connection between nurturing and childcare, has to be developed and verified. Lastly, since the experience of child abuse affects an individual throughout his or her life, future research should include longitudinal studies dealing with child abuse to adult abuse, including cross-sectional studies that consider the characteristics of child development

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