Digital Sex Crimes and Policy Challenges:
A Comparative Analysis of the United States and South Korea

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Abstract

This literature review explores how digital sex crimes challenge traditional sex crime policies in the United States through comparative analysis with South Korea's policy responses. Drawing on recent studies and policy documents, this review focuses on three key aspects: (1) how the United States and South Korea differ in their policy responses to digital sex crimes, (2) the structural and institutional limitations within the United States legal framework, and (3) proposed legal and institutional reforms in the United States. Through literature reviews of policy responses in both countries, including South Korea's experience with digital sex crime cases, this review identifies approaches that combine legal reform, institutional enforcement, and victim centered policy development to address the evolving challenges of digital sex crimes in the US legal system. This review employed a qualitative comparative method analyzing academic, legal, and policy sources from 2000 to 2025.

Keywords: Digital sex crime, Sex crime policies, Comparative analysis, South Korea sex crime, the United States sex crime

1. Introduction

Digital sex crimes have emerged as a significant global issue, with non-consensual image distribution, cybersexual harassment, and the exploitation of digital tools becoming increasingly prevalent and sophisticated (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2021). A multinational survey of over 16,000 adults across 10 countries found that more than 22% had experienced image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), highlighting the widespread nature of this problem (Powell et al., 2025). In the United States, youth-focused surveys reveal similarly alarming exposure to online sexual abuse, suggesting that digital sexual offenses extend beyond youth and affect individuals across all age groups (Finkelhor et al., 2022). The emergence of AI-generated deepfakes and automated content dissemination tools has further intensified these harms by blurring the boundaries between consent, authenticity, and anonymity. As artificial intelligence enables realistic non-consensual sexual imagery and amplifies the speed of circulation, policymakers face unprecedented challenges in defining, detecting, and prosecuting, digital sexual offenses (West, 2023).

The United States continues to face significant challenges in effectively addressing digital sex crimes. In particular, gaps persist in cross-jurisdictional prosecution, platform accountability, and victim protection mechanisms, revealing the limitations of existing enforcement systems (Human Rights Centre, 2024). More specifically, the anonymity of the Internet, extra-territoriality and the fast evolution of new digital platforms have revealed shortcomings in existing enforcement systems (Human Rights Centre, 2024). In order to identify strategies that can be implemented in the US, this literature review takes into account the policy responses that South Korea and the United States have taken regarding digital sex crimes. Since the study draws on South Korea's policy responses to digital sex crime, it provides insight and strategies that can inform more effective reforms in the United States.

2. Methods

This review employs a comparative qualitative approach to explore institutional responses to digital sex offenses within South Korea and the United States context. The analysis draws on academic journal articles, government documents, and legal instruments published between the years of 2000 and 2025. The sources include documents from South Korea's Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF), Korean National Policy Agency (KNPA), United States Department of Justice (DOJ), and the resulting conversations and analysis produced in academic and policy spaces. Initial searches for source material were conducted using the databases Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the National Assembly Library of both Korea and the USA. The search terms utilized included digital sex crime, cyber sexual violence, cooperation with law enforcement, and victim protection. Any studies that focused on non-digital sex crimes or general forms of cybercrime unrelated to sexual exploitation were omitted. The articles produced from the literature were read and analyzed across three dimensions including (1) legal framework, (2) law enforcement and, (3) victim protection in social awareness. This review identifies aspects of policy and conceptual patterns to illustrate how differences in legislative intent, enforcement capacity, and victim-centered support differ across the two countries.

3. Definition and Typologies of Sex Crime

Sex crimes encompass a broad range of non-consensual sexual activities that violate personal autonomy and bodily integrity. According to the World Department of Health and Human Services (2024), Traditional, generally covering the period from mid-20th century to the early 2000s, typologies include rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, and exploitation. These offenses typically involve physical contact, coercion, and manipulation. While these categories are widely recognized in many countries, there is no single global legal definition; jurisdictions differ in what constitutes a sex crime, the scope of acts covered, and the associated penalties (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

Digital sex crimes are defined as criminal acts in which digital technologies are used as a medium to cause sexual harm. Lee & Lee (2024) identifies key forms of digital sex crimes, including the non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit images, online sexual harassment, sexual extortion, and the production of distribution of deepfake pornography–artificially generated images or videos depicting individuals in sexual situations without their consent. These acts violate personal privacy and autonomy and have potentially profound psychological and social effects on victims (Kim & Lee, 2021).

Legal definitions of sex crime vary by country, reflecting differences in legal tradition, cultural norms, and technological adaptation. Digital sex crimes in the United States are defined as offenses that use digital technologies or online platforms to create, share, or threaten to distribute sexually explicit content without the consent of the person depicted (U.S. Department of Justice, 2024). While 48 states have enacted statutes criminalizing non-consensual pornography ("revenge porn") and sexual extortion, definitions, sentencing, and enforcement vary widely. Federal laws such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the PROTECT Our Children Act address some types of online sexual exploitation but do not consistently criminalize AI-generated sexual content (FBI, 2024; Gordon & Ford, 2006; McGuire & Dowling, 2013).

In South Korea, sex crimes are defined as offenses committed to coerce sexual acts or satisfy sexual desire without the victim's consent, as established under the chapter 32 of Criminal Act and the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Sexual Crimes (Republic of Korea, 1953; amended 2020). Typologies include rape, sexual harassment, forced molestation, illegal framing, and distribution of sexual content. The 2010 Act, revised in 2024, explicitly includes digital modes of sexual crime, covering smartphones, online platforms, and content generated by artificial intelligence. Specifically, it criminalizes the distribution, possession, production, or recording of sexual imagery without consent. Following high-profile cases such as the Nth Room and Molka (spycam) scandals, the 2024 amendment criminalized even the possession or viewing of sexually explicit deepfake images, imposing penalties including imprisonment and fines (Reuter, 2024). These legal reforms, combined with institutional victim support systems, demonstrate South Korea's proactive approach to mitigating digital sex crime (Jun, 2023).

4. Digital Sex Crime in the US

4.1 Legal Frameworks

In the U.S, the regulation of sex crime operates under a dual federal–state legal framework. Federal statutes establish baseline protections and address cross-border or interstate offenses, while state legislatures handle most criminal prosecutions (U.S. Department of Justice, 2024). Federal laws relevant to digital sexual crimes include the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which funds prevention programs and victim services for gender-based violence; the PROTECT Our Children Act, which strengthens mechanism to investigate child sexual exploitation; and 18 U.S.C §2252A, which criminalizes the production, distribution, and possession of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) (FBI, 2024). Additionally, 18 U.S.C. §875(d) and §2261A cover sexual extortion and cyberstalking offenses. The 2025 TAKE DOWN Act requires rapid removal of illegal sexual content from online platforms and strengthening interagency coordination, reflecting efforts to address technological challenges such as AI-generated sexual imagery. While federal law addresses some forms of online sexual exploitation, there is no single statute explicitly criminalizing all types of non-consensual pornography, leaving enforcement largely dependent on state laws (National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL], 2024).

These significant gaps in the law have led to an overwhelming majority of image-based sexual abuse cases moving to a state law jurisdiction. As of 2024, 48 states and the District of Columbia have at least one statute in place to address non-consensual pornography; however, nearly all the laws differ in their definitions, penalties, and standards of evidence (Gordon & Ford, 2006). For example, in California, the law provides for up to one year in county jail or a fine of up to $1000 for first time distribution of non-consensual sexual images, with enhanced penalties if the act is committed with intent to harm. In New York, the distribution of non-consensual sexual material can result in a Class A misdemeanor or higher charges depending on intent and prior convictions, while in several other states, first-time offenses are generally classified as misdemeanors punishable by fines or short-term imprisonment (Levenson et al., 2007).

This fragmented system presents difficulty in enforcing non-consensual pornography laws across the nation. Federal law affords jurisdiction on crimes when involved with interstate issues of communication and/or distribution of information; though, a large majority of digital sex crime happen in interstate and international spaces, where jurisdiction may be conflated. Moreover, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) allows digital platforms immunity from having legal action imposed against them for user-generated content, which must limit the ability to hold intermediaries accountable for hosting, distributing and amplifying exploitative content (Gordon & Ford, 2006; McGuire & Dawling, 2013).

4.2 Law Enforcement

Law enforcement in the U.S. manages digital sex crimes through integrated work between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. A significant part of this cooperation is through the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), which is a national network of 61 coordinated task forces that bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement in efforts to investigate Child Sexual Abuse Material(CSAM) and online exploitation for sexual purposes, conduct proactive operations, and provide officers with specialized training (Finkelhor et al., 2022). Investigations often rely on digital forensics that include AI-assisted analysis, network traffic monitoring, and forensic recovery of encrypted devices, and the ability to extract evidence from computers, smartphones, cloud storage, and social media, all while maintaining strict chain-of-custody protocols for court admissibility (Human Rights Centre, 2024).

Additionally, online platforms and technology companies also have regulatory obligations and engage in partnership with law enforcement to effectively detect, remove and report illegal content as required by voluntary agreements and federal statute including the 2025 TAKE DOWN Act. Variation in sentencing schemes exist at both the federal and state level for sex crimes including CSAM and sexual extortion (Kang, 2023). While federal statutes have penalties for CSAM for example, of up to 15 years to life imprisonment due to the seriousness and often cross-border nature of the crimes, state lags in this respect with some states, such as California, New York, and Texas, considering first-time distribution of non-consensual sexual content as misdemeanors while indicating felony charges

only if used with effort or past antecedents (Citron & Franks, 2019). This coordinated framework illustrates the integration of specialized agencies, technological tools, platform collaboration, and tiered sentencing in addressing the complex challenges of digital sex crimes in the U.S.

4.3 Victim Protection

Victims of digital sex crimes in the U.S. have access to assistance through a combination of legal laws, government programs, and non-government organizations (NGOs), and psychological and social services. At the legal level, federal laws such as the Amy, Vicky, and Andy Child Pornography Victim Assistance Act of 2018 (AVAA) provides restitution and compensation to child sexual exploitation victims and the 2025 TAKE DOWN Act will have provisions for a quick takedown of illegal sexual content from the web and repair interagency collaboration between law enforcement and service providers (Jun, 2023). Legal protections in the law are also available from the Crime Victims' Rights Act that governs the victims' rights to be informed, present, and heard in legal proceedings so that the victim can be active and have agency in the justice system (King, 2019). There are also state-level laws and programs that support victims in virtual contexts with hotlines, legal aid, and formal procedural processes to request content takedown and protective orders.

Reporting pathways are important both in providing victims with services and for the purpose of prosecution and/or legal action. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has a CyberTipline (§11293) that serves as a consolidated reporting mechanism for online sexual exploitation (including child sexual abuse material (CSAM), non-consensual pornography, and sexual extortion). Victims and the public can utilize the method for submitting reports to law enforcement drafts, to facilitate the investigation and follow up process as quickly as possible. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) and Victim Connect Resource Center, often collaborate with government bodies to ensure that survivors of digital sexual abuse receive trauma-informed counseling, advocacy, and referral services (Finkelhor et al., 2022).

Psychological and social support speaks to the broader implications that digital sex crimes have on mental health, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and social withdrawal (Kim & Lee, 2021). Programs at both the federal and state level offer trauma-informed counselling and therapy services, support groups, and advocates to assist victims with the aftermath of the digital sex crime. Some of these psychological and social supports will also have a technological dimension, such as a support service that allows the victims to request the removal of the non-consensual content from a digital platform, and the social media companies that also remove the content and prohibit further distribution under a legal obligation or voluntary compliance. Public service anticipatory campaigns that serve to educate potential and actual victims, provide education on their rights, and educate communities, schools, and parents to reduce stigma and create a more safe informed public will remain an important component of educating potential or actual victims about their rights, as well as empowering communities to help avoid becoming victims of online sexual exploitation (Meloy et al., 2013). Together these services provide a layered system of protection, support, care, technical assistance, and advocacy to serve the unique needs of victims of digital sex crimes in the U.S.

5. Digital Sex Crime in South Korea

5.1 Legal Frameworks

Unlike the United States, South Korea operates under a centralized legal system, which allows for uniform enforcement and codification of digital sex crime legislation at the national level. The primary legal basis lies in both the Criminal Act, which covers traditional sexual offenses such as rape and indecent assault, and the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Sexual Crimes (2010, revised 2024), which explicitly includes digital conduct such as "the production, distribution, or possession of sexual imagery without consent" (Lee & Lee, 2022). Article 14 of the Act criminalizes the use of camera or digital devices for non-consensual recording and the creation or distribution of fabricated sexual images. Complementing this is the Information and Communications network Act (Article 44-7), which authorizes administrative measures such as the blocking or deletion of illegal sexual content,

defamation, and obscene material online– focusing on content regulation rather than criminal punishment (Korea Internet and Security Agency [KISA], 2023).

In addition, the Act on the Punishment of Arrangement of Sexual Traffic applies to technologically mediated prostitution and sexual exploitation, which was central in prosecuting the perpetrators of the Nth Room case. The Act on the Protection of Children and Juveniles from Sexual Abuse prohibits the distribution, possession, or viewing of sexual exploitation material involving minors, aligning with global child protection standards (MOJ, 2023). Most recently, the Special Act on the Punishment and Prevention of Digital Sex Crime (2024) was enacted to consolidate previously fragmented laws and cover the entire spectrum of digital sexual offenses– including illegal recording, AI-generated sexual synthesis, and redistribution of exploitative material.

The comprehensive framework reflects South Korea's legal evolution from addressing analog sexual crimes to tackling technologically mediated offenses through cohesive, centralized statutes. The rapid legislative reforms following public outrage over high profile cases such as Molka and the Nth Room scandal mark a significant shift toward integrating criminal penalties, administrative regulation, and victim-centered provisions in the country's digital sex policy (Human Rights Watch, 2024; The Diplomat, 2022).

5.2 Law Enforcement

Law enforcement against digital sex crimes in South Korea operates through close coordination between police, prosecutors, and administrative agencies. The Korean National Police Agency (KNPA) serves as the central investigative body, overcoming the Cyber Bureau and the Digital Sex Crime Investigation Unit, established in 2020 in response to the Nth Room case to enhance digital forensics, rapid evidence collection, and inter-agency coordination. The Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency also runs a specialized unit focusing on forensic recovery of deleted files, AI-assisted tracing of illegal content, and cooperation with global platforms to identify offenders (Seoul Metropolitan Police, 2023).

The Supreme Prosecutors' Office directs prosecution through its Digital Sex Crime Task Force, founded in 2020 to ensure consistent legal interpretation, protect victims during trials, and seek aggravated sentencing in severe or commercialized cases (Supreme Prosecutors' Office, 2022). Beyond policing and prosecution, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family operates the Digital Sex Crime Victim Support Center under the Act on the Prevention of Violence Against Women (Article 30), managed by the Korean Women's Human Rights Institute. The center provides legal counseling, psychological support, and content deletion assistance in collaboration with the Korean Communications Standards Commission and major online platforms (MOGEF, 2023). Together, these agencies form an integrated enforcement network that combines technological expertise, interdepartmental cooperation, and trauma-informed victim protection to address the complex and evolving nature of digital sex crimes in South Korea.

In terms of sentencing, South Korean courts have gradually increased the severity of punishment for digital sex crimes following public outrage over cases like the "Nth Room." Amendments to the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Sexual Crimes now impose up to life imprisonment for producing or distributing sexually exploitative materials, with mandatory minimum sentences for repeat or commercial offenders (MOJ, 2021). Judges are encouraged to consider victims' psychological harm and the permanence of online circulation when determining penalties, reflecting a shift toward restorative justice and deterrence. A recent ruling by the Seoul Central District Court demonstrates this trend, where perpetrators of large-scale Telegram exploitation schemes received sentences exceeding 30 years (South Central District Court, 2022). However, critics note inconsistencies remain in lower courts and call for more uniform sentencing guidelines to ensure proportional justice and reinforce public trust in the legal system.

5.3 Victim protection

Victim protection in South Korea has evolved into a comprehensive and multi-layered framework designed to provide immediate assistance, long term rehabilitation, and reintegration into society. Central to this framework is the Digital Sex Crime Victim Support Center, operated by the Korean Women's Human Rights Institute under the

supervision of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). The center provides illegal content deletion, legal consultation, and psychological counseling, often in coordination with the Korean Communication Standards Commission and major online platforms to ensure the swift removal of non-consensual material. This collaboration is crucial, as the rapid spread and permanence of digital content often prolong victims' trauma and complicate the restoration of their dignity.

Beyond direct content removal, victims benefit from government-subsidized protection programs established under the Act on the Prevention of Violence Against Women. These include medical and housing support, therapy cost coverage, and emergency relocation assistance, recognizing that victims often face social stigma, economic instability, and emotional distress following exposure. The state's approach is thus not limited to legal redress but extends to rebuilding a victim's personal and social stability. To strengthen accessibility and efficiency, South Korea introduced an Integrated Psychological and Legal Support System that links police stations, prosecutors' offices, hospitals, and counseling centers.

This system enables real-time information sharing and coordinated care–allowing a victim who reports to the police to be immediately connected with medical treatment, legal guidance, and emotional support services. It represents a significant institutional effort to minimize procedural fragmentation and prevent secondary victimization, a recurring issue in digital sexual crime cases. Nevertheless, questions remain regarding the practical effectiveness of these mechanisms. Despite improvements in inter-agency cooperation, scholars and advocacy groups have noted uneven regional implementation and occasional delays in content deletion or financial aid (Korean Women's Human Rights Institute, 2024). Continuous monitoring, victim feedback, and increased funding are therefore essential to ensure that these well-intentioned systems operate as fully supportive, survivor-centered mechanisms rather than bureaucratic formality.

6. Comparative Analysis of Digital Sex Crime Policies: US and South Korea

6.1 Legal Frameworks

Both the U.S. and South Korea have established legal frameworks to address the proliferation of digital sex crimes, yet their approaches reflect fundamentally different legal cultures and institutional logic. In the United States, the regulation of digital sexual exploitation is dispersed across federal and state jurisdictions, resulting in a pluralistic but fragmented system. Federal statutes such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and Child Protection and Obscenity Enforcement Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 2251-2260), and the Communications Decency Act (CDA) criminalize the production and dissemination of sexually explicit material without consent. However, the constitutional prioritization of First Amendment protections often constrain legislative efforts to expand regulatory oversight. States have responded by enacting "revenge porn" laws– beginning with California in 2013–but these vary widely in scope, evidentiary standards, and enforcement mechanisms, creating inconsistencies in victim protection and legal remedies across jurisdictions (Citron & Frank, 2019).

In contrast, South Korea has adopted a centralized and codified legal framework that reflects its civil law tradition and strong administrative coordination. The Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Sexual Crimes, first enacted in 2010 and amended repeatedly following the Nth Room case (Korean Institute of Criminology and Human Services, 2024), explicitly criminalizes the production, distribution, and possession of non-consensual sexual imagery (Kim, 2022). Complementary legislation, such as the Information and Communications Network Act, obligates digital platforms to remove illegal content promptly upon government request, reinforcing a system of state-led regulatory intervention (Park & Lee, 2021). The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) and the Korea Communications Commission (KCC) play pivotal roles in coordinating cross-agency responses, including prevention campaigns, forensic monitoring, and victim counseling services (KCC, 2022).

This divergence illustrates a broader philosophical distinction: the American model emphasizes the balance between individual liberties and criminal accountability, relying heavily on judicial interpretations and precedent, while the Korean model privileges administrative efficiency and victim-centered justice. The U.S. approach, though deeply grounded in constitutional liberalism, often struggles to adapt to the rapid technological evolution of online

platforms, whereas South Korea's system demonstrates a more agile, state-driven capacity for reform. Yet, the latter's emphasis on governmental control raises concerns regarding overregulation and potential encroachments on digital privacy (Choi, 2023). Thus, while both nations aim to protect victims and deter perpetrators, their contrasting legal architecture reveal the tension between liberty oriented pluralism and state coordinated intervention in confronting the global challenge of digital sexual exploitation.

6.2 Law Enforcement

Law enforcement in digital sex crime cases reveal distinct contrasts between the United States and South Korea in institutional design and investigative philosophy. In the U.S., the system is decentralized with federal agencies such as the FBI and DHS handling interstate or international cases under the PROTECT Act (2003), while state and local police investigate most non-consensual image distribution and online harassment. Although this pluralistic structure ensures wide jurisdictional coverage, it often produces uneven enforcement and gaps in digital expertise, as many local departments lack specialized forensics units or training (Citron & Wittes, 2017).

By contrast, South Korea maintains a centralized and technologically integrated approach. The Korean National Police Agency (KNPA) oversees nationwide cyber investigations through its Cyber Bureau and Digital Sex Crime Investigation Unit, created in 2022 after the Nth Room case. These divisions specialize in digital forensics, tracing encrypted transactions, and AI-assisted offender identification (KNPA, 2023). The Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency also operates a digital forensics team that collaborates with global platforms to trace illegal materials (Seoul Metropolitan Police, 2023).

The Supreme Prosecutors' Office coordinates prosecution through its Digital Sex Crime Task Force (2020) to ensure consistent interpretation and protect victims in court. These institutions are connected through an integrated psychological-legal support network, linking police, prosecutors, hospitals, and counseling agencies to provide medical, housing, and mental health aid financed by state subsidies. However, concerns persist about its uneven accessibility and bureaucratic delays, especially outside major cities (Choi, 2023). In essence, South Korea's top-down, technology driven model emphasizes rapid intervention and victim protection, while the U.S. system reflects a bottom up, rights based framework prioritizing procedural fairness and constitutional balance. The comparison underscores a broader policy trade off between administrative efficiency and liberal decentralization in confronting digital sexual exploitation.

6.3 Victim Support

Victim protection in digital sex crimes demonstrates a clear contrast between the United States and South Korea, reflecting differences in institutional coordination and policy orientation. In the United States, victim support is largely decentralized, relying on federal and state-level programs and non-governmental organizations. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) provide grants and resources for counseling, legal aid, and preventive education (U.S Department of Justice, 2024). The Amy, Vicky, and Andy Child Pornography Victim Assistance Act of 2018 also mandates restitution for victims of child sexual exploitation, while the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) operates the CyberTipline to report and trace online exploitation. Despite these measures, the United States lacks a centralized mechanism for the rapid removal of illicit content and long-term rehabilitation services, often leaving victims to navigate fragmented systems independently (Citron & Franks, 2019; Flynn et al., 2023).

In contrast, South Korea adopts a state-coordinated and integrated approach led by the Digital Sex Crime Victim Support Center under the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). The center provides real-time content takedown services, legal consultation, and psychological counseling in partnership with the Korea Communications Standards Commission (KCSC) and major online platforms (MOGEF, 2023). Victims also receive financial assistance, housing support, and educational reintegration, reflecting the recognition of digital sexual harm as a social and economic issue as well as a psychological one (Korean Women's Human Rights Institute, 2024). The integrated cooperation between law enforcement, healthcare, and social services enables faster and more consistent support for

survivors. Overall, while the U.S. prioritizes rights-based assistance and procedural justice, South Korea's centralized framework emphasizes immediate intervention and holistic recovery, offering a model for more coordinated victim protection in the digital age.

7. Policy Recommendations for Digital Sex Crime Prevention in the US

Based on South Korea's experience with digital sex crimes, several targeted policy recommendations can inform U.S. strategies across legal frameworks, law enforcement, and victim protection. South Korea demonstrates the benefit of a centralized, cohesive approach, but also highlights the limitations of relying solely on technical solutions to address the complex social and psychological consequences of digital sexual abuse.

The U.S. currently operates under a fragmented system in which state and federal laws vary widely, and AI-generated sexual content remains largely unregulated. To address these gaps, the U.S. should establish a unified federal digital sex crime law. This statute would criminalize all forms of non-consensual pornography, sexual extortion, and AI-generated sexual material, with standardized definitions, penalties, with mandatory minimum sentencing for repeat or commercialized offenses. In addition, adopting a legislative framework similar to South Korea's "Right to be Forgotten" policy could empower victims to request the swift removal of non-consensual intimate content across digital platforms, providing legal clarity and enforceable mechanism for content takedown. Such measures would enhance consistency, reduce jurisdictional ambiguity, and align with international human rights standards for online privacy and dignity.

U.S. law enforcement faces persistent challenges in digital sex crime investigations, including multi-jurisdictional evidence collection and lack of specialized training (Spencer et al., 2019). The U.S. should establish a centralized digital sex crime task force, modeled on South Korea's integrated approach, to coordinate federal, state, and local efforts. This task force would include specialized cybercrime units, standardized investigative protocols, and inter-agency collaboration to ensure rapid response, efficient evidence collection, and effective prosecution of offenders. Additionally, law enforcement agencies should leverage AI-assisted monitoring systems and technological tools to detect and trace illegal content, while maintaining robust ethical safeguards. These measures would improve investigative capacity and bridge current gaps between law enforcement capabilities and the evolving sophistication of digital sex crimes.

Victim-centered policies in South Korea highlight the importance of integrated support systems combining legal, psychological, and technological assistance. The U.S. should adopt a rapid takedown and victim support mechanism, linking law enforcement, tech platforms, and support services to minimize secondary victimization. Trauma-informed legal, psychological, and financial support programs should be expanded, offering counseling, content removal assistance, and restitution for victims' social and economic recovery. Complementary to direct services, public education and prevention campaigns should raise awareness about consent, digital safety, and the implications of non-consensual sexual content, empowering communities and reducing victimization. Finally, The U.S. should enhance and integrate existing data systems on cyber and sexual crimes to establish a coordinated national framework for tracking digital sex crime patterns and victim outcomes, enabling evidence-based responses to emerging threats such as deepfake pornography. Together, these recommendations advocate for a comprehensive, integrated approach that combines legal clarity, specialized enforcement, technological tools, and victim-centered services. By learning from South Korea's proactive legislative reforms and support systems, the U.S. can strengthen its capacity to prevent digital sex crimes, ensure consistent legal protections, and enhance the overall safety and dignity of victims in an increasingly digital society.

8. Conclusion

This literature review revealed that digital sex crimes present complex, multi-dimensional challenges that exceed the capacities of traditional legal frameworks. In the United States, fragmented jurisdictional authority, inconsistent state statutes, and constitutional limitations continue to impede the consistent prosecution of offenses such as non-consensual image distribution and AI-generated sexual content. By contrast, South Korea's centralized and proactive

legislative framework—strengthened through national coordination and technological enforcement—has demonstrated greater institutional responsiveness, particularly in areas such as deepfake regulation, content removal, and victim protection.

The findings indicate that while South Korea's integrated approach enables more rapid adaptation to emerging digital harms, its mechanisms often remain limited in addressing the long-term psychological and social recovery of victims. In both contexts, digital sexual exploitation disproportionately affects women and young people, fostering pervasive anxiety, behavioral changes, and digital insecurity (Jun, 2023). These insights underscore the necessity of developing victim-centered systems that integrate technological detection tools with sustained mental health and legal support.

Overall, this comparative analysis demonstrates that effective digital sex crime prevention requires more than legislative reform—it demands institutional cohesion, technological accountability, and a holistic approach to victim care. Drawing from South Korea's coordinated model, U.S. policymakers could benefit from harmonizing federal and state-level laws, strengthening interagency collaboration, and embedding digital literacy and psychological recovery frameworks into enforcement systems. By synthesizing legal, technological, and social perspectives, this review emphasizes that cross-national learning is essential to protecting individuals in the evolving landscape of digital sexual exploitation.

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