

# Sexual Offender Treatment: A Paradigm Analysis of Academic Journals

2014

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SEXUAL OFFENDER TREATMENT: A PARADIGM ANALYSIS OF  
ACADEMIC JOURNALS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Criminal Justice  
in the College of Health and Public Affairs  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2014

Thesis Chair: Dr. Roberto Potter

## **ABSTRACT**

Many criminologists and psychologists have theorized the possible causes behind an individual who engages in sex offenses; some of which will be reviewed. Through this paradigm analysis, I hope to identify how each discipline addresses the causes of sex offending and what treatments they offer in response to their theories. Additionally, this thesis will examine the Good Lives, Relapse Prevention, and the Risks, Need, Responsivity (RNR) models of treatment. The main objective of this thesis is to address the different facets of sex offending, so that the importance of finding an effective treatment model can be understood. By raising awareness to the multiple typologies of sex offenders and differentiating contact and non-contact offenses, this thesis aims to allow for a better understanding of the causes of sexual offending so that we may develop effective treatment options that address such issues.

## **DEDICATION**

For the victims of sexual abuse and other sex crimes,

For my mentors, Dr. Roberto Potter, Dr. Mark Winton, Dr. Kristina Childs and Dr. David Slaughter, thank you for pushing me to attain my academic goals

And for my parents and family who never stopped believing in me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Dr. Kimberly Schneider for introducing me to the Honors in the Major program through the Summer Research Academy and showing me the importance of research. I would also like to thank Ms. Marva Ellington for being an incredible academic advisor and allowing me to excel academically while at the University of Central Florida. To Dr. David Slaughter, thank you for proofreading my thesis and sharing your vast knowledge of the legal system regarding sex offenders and their treatment. To Dr. Kristina Childs, thank you for teaching me all that I know about data analysis and making sure that I learned the necessary tools to be successful in writing my thesis. To Dr. Mark Winton, thank you for constantly challenging me to think in different ways and working with me from the start of this endeavor all the way through the end. A very sincere thank you to my thesis chair, Dr. Roberto Potter, for taking me under his wing and sharing his immense knowledge of the criminal justice field through multiple conversations and inspiring me to always keep writing and fueling my thirst for knowledge. I would also like to thank Denise Crisafi and Kelly Astro for their guidance and advice throughout this process. Last but not least, I would like to thank all of my professors that I have had here at the University of Central Florida over the past two years that have passed on a smorgasbord of information that will help me in the years to come.

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## INTRODUCTION

All too often society is quick to use the one size fits all method of classifying individuals. We hear the likes of Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer and John Wayne Gacy and immediately cringe when we think of the heinous sex crimes they committed. Society and the media have focused on these extreme cases, and have in turn created a demand for stricter sex offender legislation in order to stop the perceived epidemic (Harris & Lurigio, 2010; Wilson & Yates, 2009).

This study aims to examine different paradigms in a sample of academic journals in regards to sex offender treatment options within the fields of criminal justice and psychology. The purpose for choosing these two fields of study is that due to traditional criminology's inability to explain such crimes through its framework of offending, a theoretical explanation that blended both was needed (Harris, Mazerolle & Knight, 2009). First, I will differentiate between the processes of becoming a sex offender through the lens of several theoretical frameworks, in which we will see that there are numerous schools of thought presented. Second, I will delve further into the different treatment models and note significant differences and similarities between them. Third, I will focus on different facets of sex offenders such as the female and juvenile populations and the difference between contact and non-contact offenses.

After the notion that all sex offenders are the same has been thoroughly examined, I will explore the hypotheses of this study and review the methodology that will be used in order to test them. It is essential to differentiate between different typologies of sex offenders in order to understand why further research on the effectiveness of treatment to reduce recidivism and encourage desistance is needed.

Sex offenders are a very diverse and socially intriguing population and while “data from the National Conference of State Legislatures indicate[s] that, for the past decade, sex offender policy has consistently ranked among the top Criminal Justice issues on state legislative agendas” (Harris, Fisher, Veysey, Ragusa & Lurigio, 2010, p. 599), policy solutions do not address such diversity. Research has encouraged the implementation of evidence-based practices; however, the sex offender hysteria has caused legislators to rarely pass evidence based policies (Harris & Lurigio, 2010).

According to Miller (2013), it is estimated that one-fifth to one-third of females in the United States experience sexual abuse through the course of their childhood. Thus, it is imperative that research continues in order to find the best models to treat sex offenders and examine the multiple theoretical frameworks that influence them. Through this paradigm analysis, I hope to identify how each discipline addresses the causes of sex offending and what treatments they offer in response to their theories.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is an extensive amount of literature that is available to further understand the mind of the sex offender. Many criminologists and psychologists have theorized the possible causes behind an individual who engages in sex offenses; some of which will be reviewed.

Additionally, we will examine the Good Lives, Relapse Prevention, and the Risks, Need, Responsivity (RNR) models of treatment. The main objective of this literature review is to address the different facets of sex offending, so that the importance of finding an effective treatment model can be understood.

### **Theories**

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) General Theory of Crime argues that offenders commit several types of crimes without any preference for one over another due to low self-control. Their theory also seeks to predict that offenders will also search for pleasure from non-criminal sources that allow for immediate gratification (Harris et al., 2009). This theory was recently used in a study conducted by Cleary (2004) who found that of the 201 sex offenders she studied, many of them admitted to smoking, gambling and abusing alcohol or drugs. The General Theory of Crime focuses more on versatility than specialization, which is important in regards to sex offenders who may participate in a multitude of sex crimes. Take for example the case of famed murderer Jeffrey Dahmer who engaged in risky homosexual behavior and practiced cannibalism and necrophilia on all of his male victims (Holmes & Holmes, 2008).

Law's and Marshalls Conditioning Theory takes a different approach to sexual offending and offers an explanation of specialization. It seeks to explain how individuals with only certain

experiences will end up sexually offending in their lifetime (Harris et al., 2009). In other words, sexual deviations are learned in response to experiences with sexually deviant behaviors and those individuals who experience such interactions will have a distorted sense of sexuality and subsequent gratification (Schwartz & Cellini, 1996). This is important in the realm of sexual sadistic offenders who experience sexual gratification through acts of cruelty, bodily punishment and inflicting pain and humiliation on their victims (Kingston, Seto, Firestone & Bradford, 2010).

The Rational Choice Theory as interpreted by Cornish and Clarke (1986) views offenders as rational individuals who commit crimes in order to satisfy their need for personal gratification through the means of money, sexual intercourse, elevated status, or pure excitement. They are hedonistic in their calculations of minimizing the risks of apprehension and maximizing the reward. In the context of child sexual abuse, an offender must first choose his or her hunting grounds followed by the time he or she will engage a victim. They must also choose the aforementioned victim based on their erotic value such as age and gender, vulnerabilities, and familiarity (Leclerc et al., 2009).

The Routine Activities Theory suggested by Cohen and Felson (1979), states that an individuals' lifestyle in conjunction with their routine schedule may turn them into suitable targets. Through the lens of this framework, crime is explained as the convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian (Deslauriers-Varin & Beauregard, 2010). This theory is important because "previous studies have shown that the target selection process of sex offenders depends heavily on the social, physical, and geographic

environment as well as the victim's behaviors and location prior to the crime" (Beauregard et al., 2007, p. 320).

Implicit Theories, also known as cognitive distortions represent the motivational schema that contain both an offender's own beliefs and desires as well as those around them (Elliott & Beech, 2009). Ward (2000) states that the core set of five implicit theories that drive child sexual abusers behavior are children as sexual beings, nature of harm, entitlement, dangerous world, and uncontrollability. Children as sexual beings means that children need sexual encounters with adults and should be able to consent to such acts. Nature of harm does not see sexual activity as harm to the child. Entitlement places the adult above the child and therefore promotes "special treatment". Dangerous world implies that the world is a hostile place and people are untrustworthy. Lastly, uncontrollability refers to inability of an individual to control their thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Elliott & Beech, 2009). A qualitative analysis done by Marziano, Ward, Beech, and Pattison (2006), found evidence for all five implicit theories in the majority (18 out of 22, 82%) of the sex offenders studied.

Ward and Beech's Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending (2006) seeks to incorporate key components of previous theories in the field into one coherent whole (Ó Ciardha, 2011). Human behavior is analyzed on etiological (genetic and environmental), brain mechanism (effects of etiological factors on brain development), neuropsychological and symptom based levels. The theoretical framework suggests that biological and social learning factors shape an individual's psychological functioning (Elliott & Beech, 2009). The three interlocking neuropsychological systems, motivational, action selection and control, and perception and memory each have distinct functions that produce dynamic risk factors or clinical symptoms.

Emotional deficits suggest that sexual offenders experience higher levels of loneliness and intimacy deficiencies. An elevated emotional identification with children has been an important predictor of sexual recidivism (Hanson et al., 2007). Offense-supportive cognitions feed into the belief that children benefit from sexual experiences with adults and is an important dynamic risk factor for reoffending (Neutze et al., 2011). The last of the dynamic risk factors is concerned with sexual self-regulation problems. Offenders who cannot control their sexual tendencies are more likely to recidivate than those who are able to suppress such preoccupations (Hanson et al., 2007). This theory is relevant to the field in that it incorporates the three levels of sexual offending as outlined by Ward and Hudson (1998) that include core features of sexually offensive behavior, cognitive distortions, as well as a descriptive model of the offense chain or relapse processes.

Finkelhor's (1984) preconditions model has been the most used theoretical framework in describing the offense process in contact child sexual offenses. There are four steps which include the motivation to offend, overcoming the individual's own internal inhibitors, overcoming external inhibitors, and overcoming the resistance of the child. The motivation to offend contains one or more preconditions including the belief that sex with children is emotionally satisfying, they are sexually aroused by children, normal sexual outlets have been blocked, and that they exhibit abnormal behavior. When an individual overcomes their own internal inhibitors, it is usually done so through temporary processes such as substance abuse or the development of cognitive distortions that justify the idea of sexual offending. External inhibitors are generally overcome through the grooming process of either a child victim for the purpose of sexual abuse, a caregiver in order to gain access to potential victims, or professionals

who work with a certain group of intended victims. In the final step of overcoming the resistance of a child, the offender typically employs strategies including the threat of violence, giving gifts, giving or withholding privileges, and desensitization (Elliott & Beech, 2009). Finkelhor's model gives us a detailed description of a single sexual offense, however offending is often seen as a cyclical process and thus led to the emergence of Wolf's cyclical model.

Wolf's cycle assumes an initial negative self-perception exhibited by the offender that leads to expectations of rejection and ultimately withdrawal. In order to cope, offenders engage in sexual fantasies paired with masturbation; this process is also seen as offense rehearsal. Thus the offender develops cognitive distortions to reduce guilt and provide the justification for the continuation of the acts which then feeds directly back into the offender's poor self-image (Elliott & Beech, 2009). Eldridge (1998) sought to expand on Wolf's cycle and formed three distinct typologies. The continuous cycle, involves a constant pro-offending mind and the grooming of potential victims which leads to the offense itself. The inhibited cycle which closely resembles Wolf's, begins with an individual with a pro-offending mind who is regulated by their own internal inhibitors until they can justify their behavior which leads to the grooming of a victim and ultimately a sexual offense. The short-circuit cycle is focused on offenders who abuse their own children and therefore have no need to groom possible victims as they consistently have access to their own.

Ward and Hudson's (1998) self-regulation model aims to categorize offenders based on their goal towards sexual offending (approach or avoidant) and the selection of strategies used to achieve this goal (active or passive). This interaction creates four specific pathways for the offender. The approach explicit offender is one who actively seeks opportunities to offend and

manipulates the environment in order to do so. The approach automatic offender only offends when the opportunity presents itself and does not seek to create an environment to make such behavior possible. The avoidant active offender takes the necessary action needed to avoid offending, however employs such strategies as masturbation to child pornography in order to do so. Lastly, the avoidant passive offender does not wish to offend, yet does nothing to prevent possible interactions. The self-regulation model has been important in understanding internet sexual offending as many use child pornography and other non-contact online behaviors as coping mechanisms.

Gobbels, Ward, and Willis' (2012) Integrated Theory of Desistance from Sex Offending (ITDSO) does not aim to describe the process of becoming a sex offender, but how one can desist from such behavior. It is divided into four phases that include decisive momentum (initial desistance), rehabilitation (promoting desistance), re-entry (maintain desistance), and normalcy (successful maintenance of desistance over an extended period of time).

In brief, decisive momentum is conceptualized as the turning point for an individual that can stem from either a positive or negative life event such as marriage, employment, or military service that ultimately leads to the readiness to change. This phase was based on work previously proposed by Laub and Sampson (2003).

The second phase of rehabilitation involves the assessment of the offender's problems, the setting of goals, treatment interventions, and evaluating the effectiveness of the aforementioned treatment. The main objective of this phase is to reconstruct a positive self-image; however the success of such is dependent on internal and external factors (Gobbels et al.,



2009). It is in this phase that we begin to see the application of treatment models such as the Good Lives Model that will be discussed later.

The third phase of re-entry involves the offender coming back into the community while still maintaining the positive effects of treatment as well as their own decisive momentum. A successful re-entry is contingent upon an offenders resilience to a relapse that can be brought on by restrictions to employment, housing, financial help, state support, and an elevated sense of fear throughout the community they now inhabit (Hattery & Smith, 2010; Pinard, 2010; Travis, 2005).

The final phase of normalcy is reached when an offender overcomes all barriers and is able to successfully re-enter the community at the same risk level of a non-offender. All in all, the ITDSO is an attempt to establish a connection between an offender's rehabilitation and decisions to live offense free (Laws & Ward, 2011). Perhaps the most important part of the model is its possible policy implications due to the re-entry phase that notes legislation such as community notification and privatization of parole as undermining a successful process.

### **Female Sex Offenders**

The notion that a female could commit sexual offenses has up until recent times, been disregarded due to social non-acceptance. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2006, women represented approximately 6% of those who were arrested for sex offenses. While this number may seem drastically low compared to males who generally represent an estimated 95% of those who were arrested for sex offenses, it is not a reason to disregard this segment of the population (Finkelhor et al., 1990). This number may also be skewed in that females can easily

cover sexual offenses underneath the guise of childcare activities such as showing affection, giving baths, and dressing that have the opportunity to become eroticized through seductive gestures (Kasl, 1990).

There are four predominant typologies of female sex offenders that have been proposed by Matthews (1991) and Gannon and Rose (2008). The predisposed typology explains sexual offending as a cyclical event that is born out of an offender's own childhood and is then inflicted upon other children; most likely their own. The teacher/lover typology focuses on offenders who initiate sexual contact with more often than not, an adolescent boy in either middle or high school. She often believes that the sexual contact is wanted and enjoyed by the male student and in turn validates her own youthfulness and power over male sexuality. The male-coerced offender typically commits crimes under the influence, intimidation, or coercion of a male counterpart. Many times, the females in this situation exhibit traits of passivity, dependence, and powerlessness. The last typology is the psychologically disturbed offender, who commits sexual offenses due to some form of organic brain disorder or mental illness (Miller, 2013; Grattagliano et al., 2012).

It is important to note that in a study conducted by Matthews, Matthews, and Speltz (1991), their sample of female sex offenders exhibited psychological deficits which included passivity, male dependence, low self-esteem, poor social skills, fear of rejection, shame, insecurity, suicidal intentions, antisocial behavior and anger. When we relate these findings to the typologies presented, we see how each of these could play a role in the development of female sex offenders.

## **Juvenile Sex Offenders**

“In recent years, policy-making decisions have often been based on the assumption that today’s juvenile sex offenders are tomorrow’s adult sex offenders” (Lussier et al., 2012, p.1560). Becker (1998) developed a three track system in which juvenile sex offenders could be categorized. The first was the dead end path when no further crimes would be committed. The second was the delinquency path that made sexual offending a part of a more versatile offending pattern. Lastly, the sexual interest pattern consists of juvenile sex offenders at the greatest risk of developing deviant sexual behavior and paraphilia.

It is imperative to note that the literature and empirical studies show that the hysteria focused around juvenile sex offenders is unwarranted due to the fact that many will desist and age out rather quickly. In addition, when we view the juvenile sex offender population we must look at the offenses committed and determine the severity of the punishment that is imposed by the criminal justice system. Those who commit isolated offenses should take responsibility for their actions in conjunction with attending clinical treatment. However, chronic offenders deserve the sanctions imposed upon them such as stiffer penalties as well as a permanent spot on the sex offender registry.

## **Pedophiles**

“Pedophilia has been defined as the persistent sexual interest in prepubescent children as reflected by sexual fantasies, urges, thoughts, arousal patterns and behaviors” (Miller, 2013, p. 507). It is important to note that pedophilia is a psychiatric disorder and only becomes a crime of pedophilic offending when an individual acts upon an urge or fantasy (Miller, 2013). Holmes and Holmes (1996) developed several typologies for categorizing these sex offenders.

The situational child molester does not necessarily have an interest in children, however will take advantage of them if no other sexual outlet is available. The regressed pedophile has sexual relations with adults, but molests children due to ego-threatening situations such as a poor job review or an unfaithful wife. The morally indiscriminate pedophile also engages in consensual sex with adults, however molests children as a way of heightening their excitement by controlling a helpless victim which has become a fantasy. The sexually indiscriminate molester generally abuses his or her own children as a part of their sexual pattern which also includes abnormal sexual practices with unusual partners. The naïve offender suffers from intellectual deficiencies or some form of mental illness which inhibits them from understanding the wrongfulness of their behavior. The preferential child molester prefers sexual interactions with children and has three subcategories. The seductive molester grooms his or her victim with gifts and attention and may be abusing multiple children at the same time. This subcategory of offender is the least likely to use violence against a victim. The fixated molester focuses on the primitive stage of psychosexual development within the offender as the reason for finding children sexually attractive due to the fact that they themselves are essentially a child. The sadistic pedophile is the most dangerous and violent type of molester and much resembles the characteristics of an adult serial rapist or killer. This type of pedophile usually prefers young boys whom he will stalk and abduct, torture, sexually assault, and mutilate all while enjoying the fear, pain, and horror of his victim.

When these like-minded individuals get together, they create organizations with an invested interest in having sex with children. They advocate that age of consent laws need to be lowered or outright abolished, social harassment and prosecution of pedophiles should be put to

an end and debunking the taboo of adult child sexual relations (De Young, 1988). Some of these organizations include the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), British Pedophile Information Exchange (PIE) and the Rene Guyon Society whose motto is “Sex by year eight or else it’s too late” (Harkins & Dixon, 2010). Members of these organizations tend to use Sykes and Matza’s Techniques of Neutralization Theory (1957) to justify their actions and rationale.

The denial of injury was supported through anecdotal accounts, testimonials, letters, and poetry that described the beneficial effects of sexual interactions with children. The denial of victim was found through publications that portrayed children as willing sexual partners who fully consented to such behavior with adults. The condemnation of the condemners is illustrated by the organizations’ stance that those who condemn sex with children are more exploitative and victimizing. These organizations appeal to higher loyalties by advocating for such social issues as gay rights (De Young, 1988).

The techniques used by these organizations allow for members to feel no guilt for their behavior by providing them with a false sense of acceptability despite the social backlash.

Another facet of the group oriented approach to pedophilic offending is the formation of child sex rings. Transitional sex rings are run by multiple adults who share a common interest in having sex with children. These children are essentially tested out as prostitutes by the adults in order to transition to the syndicated rings, where an organized structure oversees the recruitment of victims for the purpose of producing child pornography and providing sexual services (Harkins & Dixon, 2010). These sex rings require further research in order to understand the

organizational methods as well as the different components that allow them to flourish in today's society.

### **Non-Contact Sex Crimes**

It has consistently been misconstrued that all sex offenders are rapists or have physical contact with their victims. If this were the case, offenders who use online chat rooms, text messaging, or the internet to facilitate their sexual fantasies, would not be breaking the law. We know this is in fact not reality and due to the introduction of the internet and cellular technology, new typologies of sex offenders are emerging. The number of online offenders has increased considerably within the past five years due to a variety of circumstances such as possible advancements in detection, which has been captured through shows such as Dateline's To Catch A Predator (Babchishin, Hanson & Hermann, 2010).

A fairly recent phenomenon known as sexting, in which individuals send and/or receive nude images from one another has surfaced and garnered national attention especially with regard to adolescents. Legally termed "youth-produced sexual images", this action is illegal and resulted in 625 arrests out of 3,477 cases when minors were involved (McKinnon, Strassberg, Sustaita & Rullo, 2013). These individuals who are arrested and prosecuted become registered sex offenders as juveniles and are attached with that label for the rest of their lives. Additional research must be conducted to determine if there is a causal chain linking sexting with future sexual offenses. A major problem with minors who engage in sexting is that once the images are received, they may be shared on the internet thus creating a new issue of child pornography due to their age.

The United States defines child pornography as the sexualized depiction of minors under the age of 18 (Seto, 2010). In 2000, there were an estimated 1,713 arrests for the possession of child pornography and in 2006 the number skyrocketed to 3,672. Many of these offenders had images of children younger than 12 years of age and one out of five had images of children younger than age three or that portrayed sadistic sexual violence (Wolak, Finkelhor & Mitchell, 2005). These individuals have been categorized by Hartman, Burgess, and Lanning (1984). A closet collector is secretive about his or her collection and is rarely interested in abusing children. The isolated collector accumulates images in order to reinforce their contact with real children. The cottage collector tends to join file sharing networks in order to trade and obtain new images as well as justify his or her actions in that everyone in the group is taking part. Commercial collectors sell images from their collection for their own financial benefit and turn the distribution into a business. It is extremely important to note that there has yet to be concrete evidence that links the viewing of child pornography to an increase of contact sex offenses (Elliot, Beech & Norden, 2013).

### **Psychological Factors**

Through the psychological lens, we are given several reasons as to why an individual may fall into a life of sexual offending. Early traumatic experiences are the most commonly reported and best indicator for sexual offending. These experiences manifest themselves during childhood victimization, exposure to domestic violence, removal from the home and parental loss (Maniglio, 2011). Marshall (2007) also noted that sexual offenders report high rates of depression, anxiety, and psychotic disorders; however the prevalence of such is unknown. These individuals may not properly cope with the hand they have been dealt and ultimately use an

emotionally focused strategy in which they fantasize a different outcome, worry about their situation and release built up frustration and hostility. This coping strategy coupled with low self-esteem, childhood attachments, alcohol abuse, or intimacy deficits may contribute to sexual offending (Maniglio, 2011).

### **Sex Offender Treatments**

The treatment of sex offenders has been a topic of disjuncture between criminal justice practitioners and legislators who impose strict laws and regulations based on the unwarranted hysteria they cause to their constituents. The main goal of treatment is to ultimately reduce the probability that an offender will reoffend, however it may be insufficient in motivating clients by itself (Ward, Melsner, & Yates, 2007; Yates, 2009). The treatment models that will be reviewed are Relapse Prevention (RP), Risk, Need, Responsivity (RNR), and Good Lives (GL).

“Relapse Prevention holds that sexual offending is generally the result of maladaptive problem-solving skills applied to a negative emotional state, exacerbated by high risk situational variables such as drug abuse or deviant fantasies” (Laws, 1989; Pithers, 1990). California’s Sex Offender Treatment Evaluation Program (SOTEP) utilized the RP approach in a high intensity program which consisted of two years of inpatient treatment at the Atascadero State Hospital in conjunction with 40 – 50 hours of client participation weekly and one year of aftercare within the community (Olver & Wong, 2013). The study consisted of evaluation groups according to age (under v. over 40), criminal history (yes-no prior felony convictions), and victim type (rapist, offender with male child/female child/ both). The individuals were then placed into one of three study groups. The first was a treatment group comprised of randomly selected volunteers. The second was a volunteer group of randomly selected men who served as the control group, did not



receive treatment and served the remainder of their sentences without any form of treatment. The last group was made up of non-volunteer sex offenders who also did not receive treatment. All men within the study were followed up for a minimum of five years upon release and in a final report issued by Marques et al. (2005), no significant differences in rates of sexual recidivism was documented across the three groups.

Andrews and Bonta (2007) stated that traditional models based on sanction and punishment did little to reduce recidivism and that the application of human service was necessary in order to do so. This approach has been coined the Risk, Needs, Responsibility (RNR) model and according to Ward et al. (2007), has become the premier treatment model for offenders. The risk concept proposes that the level of correctional intervention must correspond to the level of risk imposed by an offender. Research conducted by Andrews and Bonta (2007), found that an incorrect pairing between risk level and treatment intensity led to an increase in offending. The need concept focuses on the problem areas most related to offending which have been termed, criminogenic needs. These needs include intimacy and relationship skills, reconstructing attitudes, managing sexually deviant fantasies and desires, accepting responsibility and social and problem solving skills training (McGrath et al., 2010). If these needs are not attended to, then ultimately treatment will not be successful. The responsibility concept calls upon treatment providers to address individuals characteristics such as cognitive ability, motivation, and maturity when designing and implementing interventions. In a study conducted by Hanson (2006), adherence to all three concepts of the model was associated with reduced sexual recidivism within the studied population of sex offenders.

The Good Lives Model (GLM) views sexual offenders as active, goal seeking, individuals who seek to acquire experiences, activities, and actions that are beneficial to their wellbeing and serve as primary human goods (Wilson & Yates, 2009). Instrumental or secondary goods represent the means by which individuals take to accomplish the primary goods. According to Willis, Yates, Gannon and Ward (2013), flaws within the actions undertaken to achieve the primary goods can result in offending according to the GLM. Inappropriate or harmful means of obtaining primary goods represents a possible flaw in that an individual attempting to achieve relatedness may do so by having sexual relations with a child. The lack of scope of an individual's plan may place too much emphasis on one primary good, while neglecting others. An individual may also develop a conflict between the primary and secondary goods; for example, if the primary goal is independence but the means used involves domination of a partner, then the primary goal of establishing relationships is also compromised. The final flaw is found either internally or externally to the individual under circumstances such as a lack of resources, poor problem solving skills, or employment opportunities. Criminal behavior in general can be seen as the result of problematic methods used to attain a goal and does not necessarily stem from the goals themselves. Thus, the aim of the GLM is not to alter the goal, but instead to target the means that an individual uses to achieve that goal (Ward et al., 2006; Yates & Ward, 2008). When compared to the RP model, Simmons, McCullar, and Tyler (2008) found significantly higher rates of treatment engagement, completion, coping strategies and motivation as well as lower drop-out rates.

## **PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE**

There have been numerous misconceptions and myths regarding sex offenders due to society's one size fit all mentality. The purpose of this literature review was to inform the reader that there are in fact numerous facets that comprise the general sex offender label. Contact and non-contact offenders are two very different groups, and while they may both commit atrocious acts, they should not be treated as one. Similarly, pedophiles and female sex offenders are different as exhibited by the typologies presented earlier. Society must understand and distinguish between these different groups before creating hysteria that results in strict legislation for all sexual offenders across the board without any consideration for their fundamental differences.

Treatment for these individuals needs to be considered and further researched across multiple disciplines to form an integrated model that addresses multiple factors related to sexual offending. The topic of sexual offending is consistently on the legislative agenda and if researchers and practitioners can empirically prove the benefits of treatment, maybe then offenders can be sentenced to treatment rather than lengthy prison sentences that do not address the inadequacies that have led them to commit sexual offenses. The social impact of this study aims to encourage changes within sex offender policy and community perception; firstly by empirically promoting the use of treatment methods and secondly by educating individuals through the process of deconstructing the label and explaining its parts. Thus, the purpose of this study will be to determine how the disciplines of psychology and criminal justice construct their quintessential sex offender and the ways in which they go about treating and determining the cause of such behavior.

## **HYPOTHESES**

My first hypothesis is that there will be a positive relationship between theoretical framework and type of journal, such that each discipline will only discuss sex offenders and sexual offending within the context of their theories. I believe this will occur because I do not think that an interdisciplinary discussion that integrates theories will be as prevalent as one that takes place within a specific discipline. Secondly, I hypothesize that the Good Lives Model will be more prevalent than the Relapse Prevention Model and the RNR Model across all journals. I believe this will be the case due to the Good Lives Model addressing sex offenders in a positive light in that they are seen as active goal-seeking individuals. In addition, research has found lower dropout rates when compared to Relapse Prevention and RNR. Third, there will be no difference in type of treatment intervention used for contact versus non-contact offenders. I believe this will occur because society has yet to differentiate between these two sub-groups and the treatments offered will be a one size fits all approach. Lastly, I hypothesize that joint perspective treatment models will be studied more frequently than a discipline specific model. I believe this will happen because in order for a sex offender treatment program to be successful, it will have to address multiple facets that come from each of the disciplines studied.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

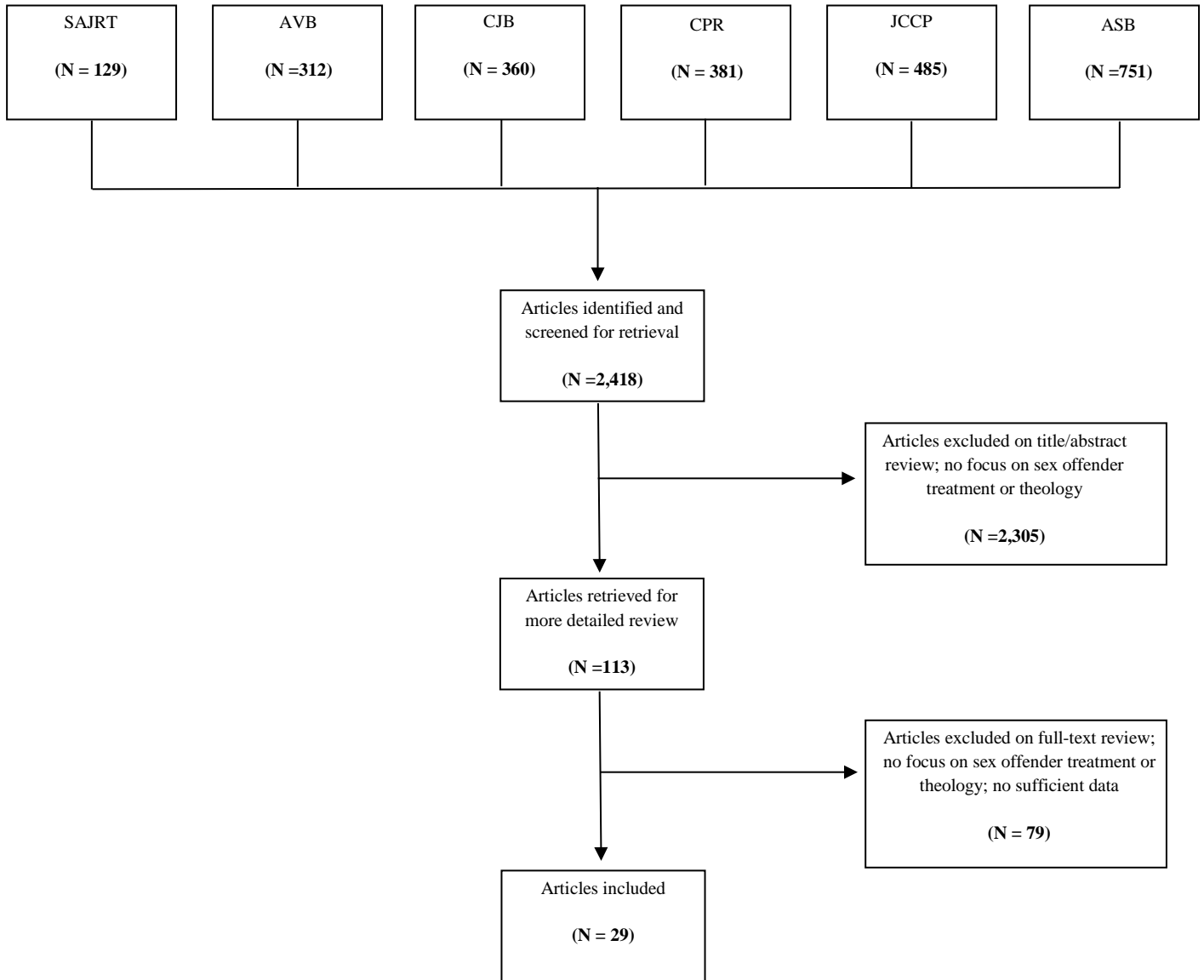
Within the context of this study, the term “contact offender” relates to the individual who acts upon his or her fantasies regardless of the paraphilia and causes harm to another person. Conversely, a “non-contact” offender refers to that individual who expresses a likeness towards sexually deviant paraphilia such as child pornography, however does not act upon such interest. This term should not be synonymous with victimless crimes especially when pertaining to child pornography due to other societal issues such as human sex trafficking and kidnapping that is attached to this type of activity. In regards to theoretical orientation a criminal justice perspective offers a sociological explanation which include such elements as an individual’s environment, access towards upward mobility, and experiences they have had within their lifetimes. A psychological approach offers cognitive explanations in the form of inadequacies, distortions and justification of behavior. A joint perspective provided by the criminal justice and psychology disciplines provides an explanation of cognitive and sociological reasoning aimed at intertwining the two so that a complete theory of offending is presented.

## METHODOLOGY

To test my hypotheses, I will utilize academic journals within the criminal justice and psychology disciplines. While these sources are classified as secondary sources of data, univariate analysis will allow for the production of primary research.

Six journals were selected for this study: *Archives of Sexual Behavior (ASB)*, *Clinical Psychological Review (CPR)*, *The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology (JCCP)*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior (AVB)*, *Criminal Justice and Behavior (CJB)*, and *Sex Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment (SAJRT)*. I selected these journals using the impact factor provided by ISI Journal Citation reports for criminology and penology and clinical psychology. The criminal justice journals selected are highly regarded within their discipline and include psychology as subject categories within them. While the psychology journals do not contain criminal justice as a subject category, they are reputable in that they are clinical psychology journals and provide the most current information about the treatment and diagnosis of sexual offenders. Three of the journals are primarily criminal justice oriented (AVB, CJB, and SART) and the other three present sex offender treatment through a clinical psychology lens (ASB, CPR, and JCCP). The study selection process is summarized in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Article Selection Process**



By exploring these journals, the most recent studies, treatment models, and theories of sex offending will be examined between 2009 and 2013. All articles that pertained to sex offending and treatment will be read and coded as follows:

- Journal (*Archives of Sexual Behavior, Clinical Psychological Review, The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, Aggression and Violent Behavior, Criminal Justice and Behavior, and Sex Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*). These six journals will be broken into criminal justice (AVB, CJB, and SAJRT) and psychological categories (ASB, CPR, and JCCP).
- Publication year (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013)
- Theoretical framework of sexual offending will be broken into three orientations (criminal justice perspective, psychological approach, or a combination of criminal justice and psychology). Criminal justice theories include a sociological explanation which include such elements as an individual's environment, access towards upward mobility, and experiences they have had within their lifetimes. A strain imposed by society would be coded as a criminal justice prospective. Psychological theories include cognitive explanations in the form of inadequacies, distortions and justification of behavior due to learning and early childhood experiences. A theory involving cognitive distortions would be coded as psychologically oriented. The intertwining of criminal justice and psychological theories will be coded as a combined model of criminal justice and psychological theories. A theory that aims to explain sexual behavior as the result of being in a particular setting with a certain state of mind would be classified as a combination model. All other theories will be coded as other; such as medical.



- Treatment type (Relapse Prevention, Good Lives Model, Risk, Need, Responsivity, or Other)
- Gender studied (male, female, both)
- Age of offenders studied will be categorically coded, (adult, juvenile, adult and juveniles) despite age being a continuous variable.
- Offense type (contact or non-contact). An article that discusses sadistic rape would be coded as a contact offense. An article that contains information about child pornography will be coded as a non-contact offense.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data was coded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2010 for Windows. Frequency tables were constructed in order to categorize the data and properly analyze the paradigms that are present within each discipline. Each discipline was individually studied in order to compare and contrast to the other later on. Charts were then constructed through Microsoft Excel 2010 as well in order to provide a visual representation of the frequency tables.

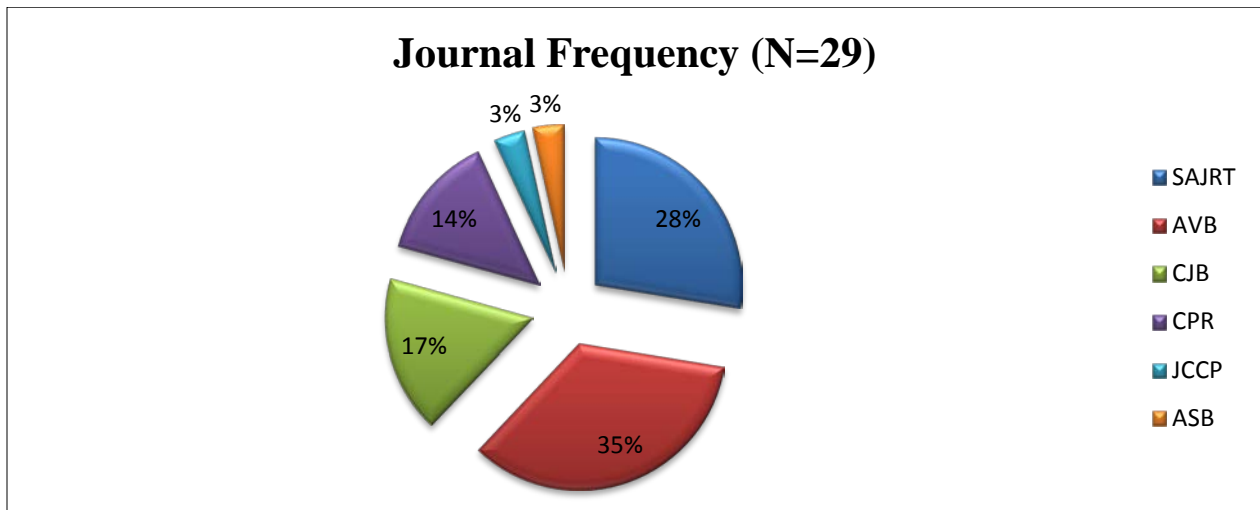
## RESULTS

The sample consisted of 29 articles from the six journals that focused on sex offenders regardless of age, sex, or victim choice of the offender. As seen in Table 1 and Figure 2, the SAJRT made up 27.6% (8) of the sample; AVB, 34.5% (10); CJB, 17.2% (5); CPR, 13.7% (4); JCCP, 3.5% (1); and ASB, 3.5% (1).

**Table 1: Journal Frequency**

Journal Frequency (N=29)		
Journal	Number of Articles	Percentage of Total
SAJRT	8	27.6%
AVB	10	34.5%
CJB	5	17.2%
CPR	4	13.7%
JCCP	1	3.5%
ASB	1	3.5%

**Figure 2: Journal Frequency**

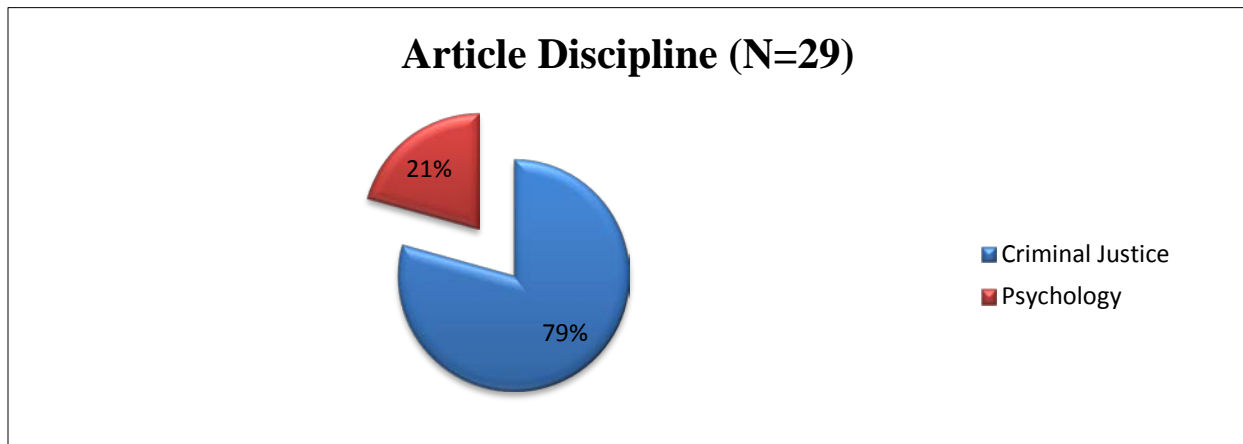


When the journals were combined into two categories, the criminal justice journals made up 79.3% (23) of the sample and the psychology journals made up 20.7% (6) as seen in Table 2 and Figure 3.

**Table 2: Article Discipline**

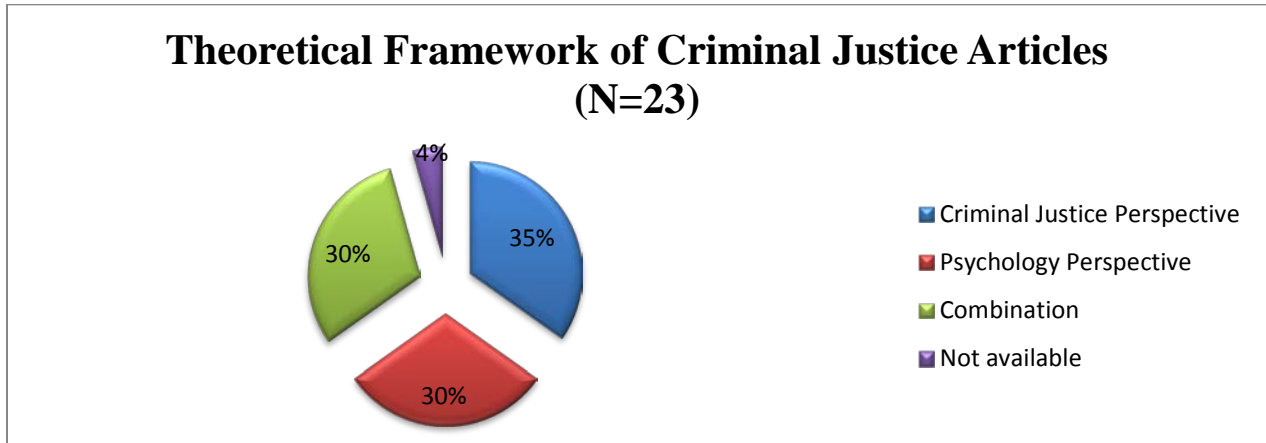
Article Discipline (N=29)		
Type	Number of Articles	Percentage of Total
Criminal Justice	23	79.3%
Psychology	6	20.7%

**Figure 3: Article Discipline**



When looking at the theoretical framework of the criminal justice articles, each article was coded according to the examples given earlier. Within the sample of 23 articles, a criminal justice perspective was offered 34.8% of the time; a psychology perspective 30.4%; a combination perspective 30.4%; and none were available 4.4% of the time (Figure 4). The article in which no theoretical framework was presented spoke about child pornography and did not present it through a criminal justice or psychological lens; however was informational in discussing its prevalence in today's society.

**Figure 4: Theoretical Framework of Criminal Justice Articles**

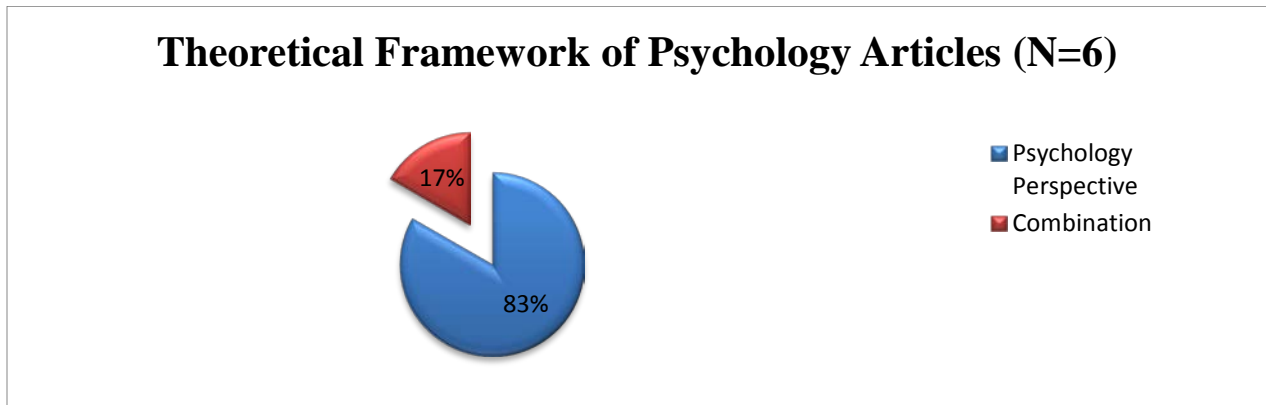


Looking at the theoretical framework of the psychology articles (6), 83.3% (5) were presented through a psychology perspective while only 16.7% (1) was presented through a combination perspective. In addition, no articles were presented through a criminal justice perspective as seen in Table 3 and Figure 5.

**Table 3: Theoretical Framework of Psychology Articles**

Theoretical Framework of Psychology Articles (N=6)		
Theoretical Framework	Number of Articles	Percentages of Total
Criminal Justice Perspective	0	0.0%
Psychology Perspective	5	83.3%
Combination	1	16.7%
Other	0	0.0%
Not available	0	0.0%

**Figure 5: Theoretical Framework of Psychology Articles**

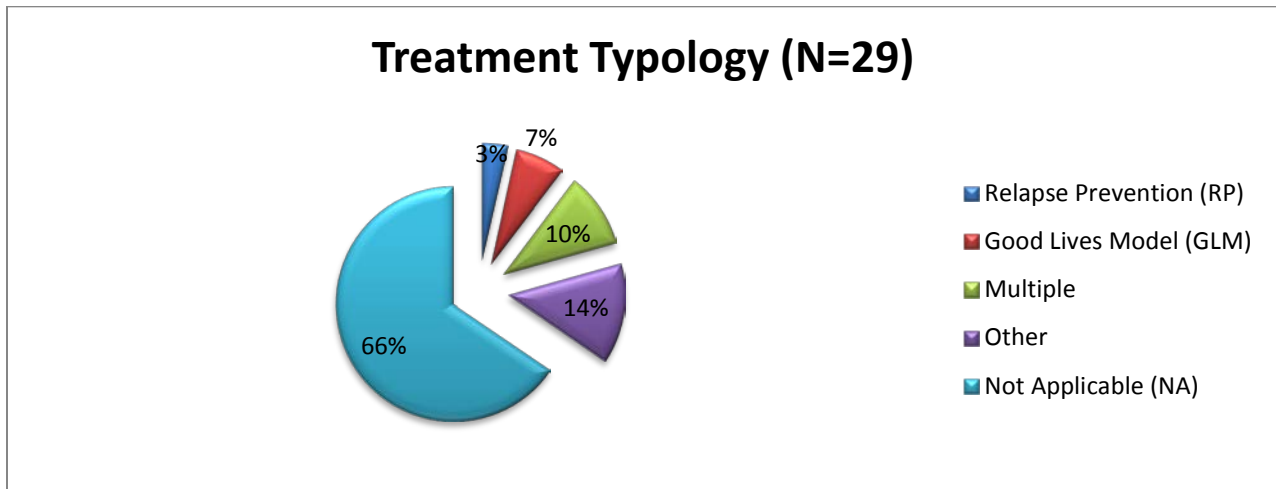


The types of treatment that were presented in both the criminal justice and psychology articles are broken down in Table 4 and Figure 6. Relapse Prevention (RP) was represented in one article (3.4%); Good Lives Model (GLM) in two articles (6.9%); multiple treatments in three articles (10.4%); other treatments in four articles (13.8%); and were not applicable in nineteen articles (65.5%). Risk, Need, Responsivity was not represented by itself in any of the articles, however was present in two of the three articles coded multiple treatment.

**Table 4: Treatment Typology**

Treatment Typology (N=29)		
Treatment	Number of Articles	Percentages of Total
Relapse Prevention (RP)	1	3.4%
Good Lives Model (GLM)	2	6.9%
Risk, Need, Responsivity (RNR)	0	0.0%
Multiple	3	10.4%
Other	4	13.8%
Not Applicable (NA)	19	65.5%

**Figure 6: Treatment Typology**



I then examined the sample of 19 articles that were coded as not applicable in order to determine what topics were addressed in them. Three articles (15.8%) were concerned with theories, three articles (15.8%) looked at reasoning for sexual offending, six articles (31.6%) focused on pedophilia, two articles (10.4) dealt with sexual offender sub-groups (i.e. sadism), and the remaining five articles (26.4%) did not address either of the aforementioned topics. This break down can be seen in Table 5 and Figure 7.

**Table 5: Not Applicable (NA) Article Break Down**

Not Applicable (NA) Article Break Down (N=19)		
Categories	Number of Articles	Percentages of Total
Theories	3	15.8%
Reasoning	3	15.8%
Pedophilia	6	31.6%
Sexual Offender sub-groups	2	10.4%
Other	5	26.4%

Figure 7: Not Applicable Article Break Down

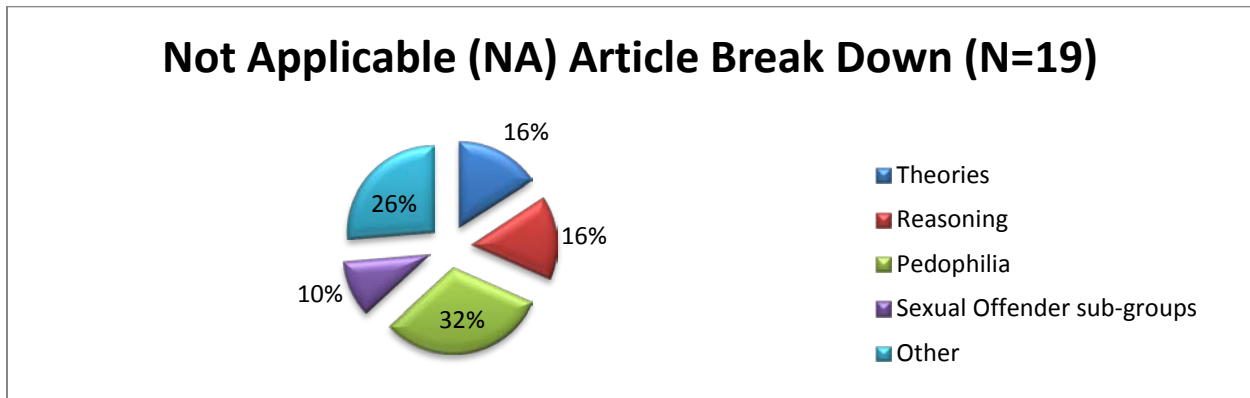


Table 6 looks at the frequency distribution for the offense type and what type of treatment is used to address each. For articles concerned with only contact offenses, one case was treated using Relapse Prevention and two others were not offered any type of treatment. For the two articles dealing with only non-contact offenses, both did not offer a treatment solution. Of the articles that addressed both contact and non-contact offenses, two offered a multiple treatment typology and the remaining twenty-two did not offer a treatment solution.

Table 6: Offense Type and Treatment Typology

Offense Type and Treatment Typology (N=29)						
Offense Type	RP	GLM	RNR	Multiple	Other	NA
Contact	1	0	0	0	0	2
Non-Contact	0	0	0	0	0	2
Both	0	0	0	2	0	22
Total	1	0	0	2	0	26

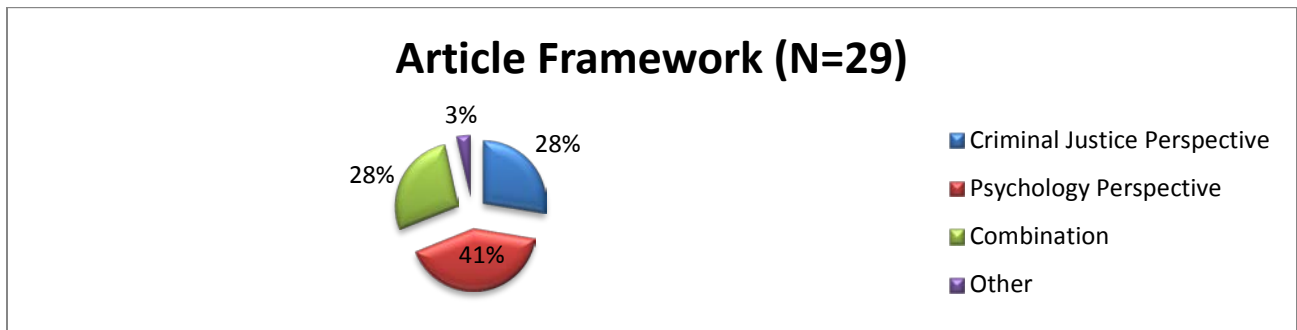


Within the sample, a Criminal Justice perspective was offered within eight articles (26.7%); a psychology perspective within twelve (41.4%); a combination perspective within eight (26.7%); and an article coded as other was offered once (3.4%). This can be seen in Table 7 and Figure 8.

**Table 7: Article Framework**

Article Framework (N=29)		
Theoretical Framework	Number of Articles	Percentages of Total
Criminal Justice Perspective	8	27.6%
Psychology Perspective	12	41.4%
Combination	8	27.6%
Other	1	3.4%

**Figure 8: Article Framework**



## DISCUSSION

For my first hypothesis, I was able to see that there were mixed results for the relationship between theoretical framework and type of journal concerning sexual offenders and sexual offending. Within the criminal justice journals, there was an almost even amount of articles that were presented through a criminal justice, psychological, and combination perspective. However, an overwhelming majority of the psychology articles were presented through a psychological perspective. This finding suggests that the field of criminal justice has taken into consideration the influence that psychology has within the arena of sexual offenders and has included the psychological findings in an attempt to formulate a better understanding of the quintessential sex offender. It also suggests that psychology has conversely not addressed the work the criminal justice field has added to the discussion, as only one article studied presented a combination perspective and none were solely criminal justice. My second hypothesis relating to treatment typology was very surprising. Of the 29 articles studied, only two articles were coded as presenting a Good Lives Model for treatment, one was coded as Relapse Prevention, and none were coded as Risk, Need, Responsivity. A possible explanation for the underrepresentation of Risk, Need, Responsivity is due to the fact that it is not a treatment option, but more so a screening tool for placement into either Relapse Prevention or a Good Lives Model of treatment. While my hypothesis was validated that Good Lives Model would be more prevalent, I do believe the bigger concern is that more articles did not present a treatment typology. The majority of articles dealt with pedophilia, which makes sense given today's societal agenda targeting pedophiles with such shows as MSNBC's "To Catch a Predator." My third hypothesis was analyzed through Table 6, in which there was not enough data to determine if there was a

relationship between types of treatment intervention used for contact versus non-contact offenders. There needs to be more research done in order to distinguish which treatments are more effective in dealing with contact versus non-contact offenders as we know there is a difference and they cannot be treated as one and the same. For my last hypothesis, I found through my literature review that the dominant treatment theories presented were the Good Lives Model and Relapse Prevention. They both take into consideration ideals from the fields of criminal justice and psychology in order to provide the most beneficial treatment. A treatment typology that was strictly psychologically or criminal justice related was not presented in the articles I reviewed, thus making a joint perspective treatment model the most prevalent.

A limitation of this study may be the fact that only articles from certain journals were selected, thus eliminating potentially relevant articles. In addition, articles were collected for the past five years which may not be sufficient time for numerous treatment types to be presented throughout the literature. This study also does not take into account contributions made by the medical field, as I was only focused on the fields of psychology and criminal justice.

Future research can expand on this study by incorporating different fields of study in order to add literature to the discussion of sex offenders and their treatment. A larger time span could also be used to gather more literature and collect more data to analyze in order to garner stronger results. Additionally, future research should ensure that when studying sex offenders, contact and non-contact sex offenders are differentiated in order to deconstruct the misconception of one size fits all.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, the main purpose of my research is to critically analyze treatment models to find if and how each one addresses the causes presented in current sex offender theories within the context of criminal justice and psychological perspectives; however a systematic review of the treatment effectiveness was not conducted. Having knowledge of the theories that both disciplines have to offer, similarities and differences, allowed me to see where the concepts of the treatment model are derived from; criminal justice, psychology, or a combination. Sex offenders will continue to be a topic of discussion and I hope that my research will shed light on the different treatment options available and show that the one size fits all mentality does not work on such a population.

**APPENDIX A: CODING SHEET USED WITHIN STUDY FOR SELECTED  
ARTICLES**

## Coding Sheet Used Within Study for Selected Articles

Code # \_\_\_\_\_  
Author: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Volume: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Page: \_\_\_\_\_

### Journal

Archives of Sexual Behavior – 1  
Clinical Psychological Review – 2  
The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology – 3  
Aggression and Violent Behavior – 4  
Criminal Justice and Behavior – 5  
Sex Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment – 6

### Journal Type

Criminal Justice – 1  
Psychological – 2

### Publication Year

2009 – 1  
2010 – 2  
2011 – 3  
2012 – 4  
2013 – 5

### Theoretical Framework

Criminal justice perspective – 1  
Psychological approach – 2  
Combination of criminal justice and psychology – 3  
Other – 4  
Not Applicable – 5

### Treatment Typology

Relapse Prevention – 1  
Good Lives Model – 2  
Risk, Need, Responsivity – 3  
Multiple - 4  
Medical/Other – 5  
Not Applicable – 6

**Gender Studied**

Male – 1

Female – 2

Both – 3

Not Applicable – 4

Unknown – 5

**Age**

Adult – 1

Juvenile – 2

Both – 3

Unknown – 4

Not applicable – 5

**Offense Type**

Contact – 1

Non-contact – 2

Both – 3

Unknown – 4

Not applicable – 5

**APPENDIX B: DATA FILE FOR ARICLES INCLUDED WITHIN STUDY**



## Data File for Articles Included Within Study

Journal	Journal Type	Publication Year	Theoretical Framework	Treatment Type	Gender Studied	Age	Offense Type
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2011	Not applicable	Not Applicable	Both	Both	Non-contact
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2011	Psychological	Medical	Male	Adults	Both
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2012	Psychological	Good Lives Model	Male	Unknown	Unknown
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2013	Psychological	Good Lives Model	Both	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2011	Psychological	Not Applicable	Both	Both	Both
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2011	Criminal Justice	Not Applicable	Both	Adults	Both
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2010	Combination	Not Applicable	Male	Adults	Contact
SAJRT	Criminal Justice	2013	Psychological	Not Applicable	Both	Adults	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2009	Psychological	Mutliple	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
AVB	Criminal Justice	2012	Combination	Not Applicable	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
AVB	Criminal Justice	2013	Combination	Not Applicable	Both	Both	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2012	Combination	Not Applicable	Female	Both	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2009	Combination	Mutliple	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2012	Psychological	Other	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2013	Combination	Mutliple	Male	Unknown	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2009	Criminal Justice	Relapse Prevention	Both	Both	Contact
AVB	Criminal Justice	2010	Criminal Justice	Not Applicable	Male	Both	Both
AVB	Criminal Justice	2011	Combination	Other	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Both
CJB	Criminal Justice	2012	Criminal Justice	Not Applicable	Unknown	Adults	Both
CJB	Criminal Justice	2012	Criminal Justice	Not Applicable	Male	Juveniles	Both
CJB	Criminal Justice	2010	Criminal Justice	Not Applicable	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
CJB	Criminal Justice	2010	Criminal Justice	Medical	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
CJB	Criminal Justice	2009	Criminal Justice	Not Applicable	Male	Adults	Both
CPR	Psychological	2013	Psychological	Not Applicable	Both	Both	Both
CPR	Psychological	2011	Combination	Not Applicable	Unknown	Both	Both
CPR	Psychological	2011	Psychological	Not Applicable	Both	Both	Both
CPR	Psychological	2011	Psychological	Not Applicable	Not Appliable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
JCCP	Psychological	2010	Psychological	Not Applicable	Male	Adults	Contact
ASB	Psychological	2013	Psychological	Not Applicable	Both	Juveniles	Non-contact

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