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The Role of Child and Adult Sexual Fantasies and Criminal Paraphilia Involving Serial Sexual Murderers

Heather Brown
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Heather Brown

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

The Role of Child and Adult Sexual Fantasies and Criminal Paraphilia Involving Serial

Sexual Murderers

by

Heather Brown

MA, Capella University, 2010

BASW, Salisbury University, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

Childhood trauma may be a reason a child develops maladaptive coping mechanisms such as sexual fantasies and paraphilia. These coping mechanisms increase in intensity, leading to sexual violence to gain a sense of power and control. Even though researchers have identified that serial sexual killers suffer from child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia, details of the sexual fantasies and paraphilia have not been examined. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. Hickey's trauma-control model and relational paraphilic attachment theory were used as the theoretical foundations. Data were collected from 12 U.S. male participants identified as serial sexual murderers. Four themes were identified from the thematic analysis and were linked to all 12 case participants. Findings indicated child and adult sexual fantasies began as a maladaptive coping mechanism to avoid feeling abandoned, which escalated to ways of feeling control and revenge. Criminal paraphilia developed to reinforce positive emotions from sexual fantasies and helped to create a sense of intimacy to avoid being rejected. Findings may assist law enforcement, school staff, and mental health professionals to promote positive social change by preventing future risk for behaviors that lead to and are incorporated into the sexual murders committed by serial killers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The brutality and gruesomeness of a violent sexual offense provoke great fear within communities. Researchers have attempted to gain insight into the motives and characteristics of sexual offenders. Studies have addressed possible differences between sexual offenders, sexual murderers, serial murderers, and nonsexual offenders. Past researchers have reviewed the etiology and the motivations of sexual murders (Chan & Beauregard, 2016; Choplin & Beauregard, 2018; Reid et al., 2019). These studies indicated how traumatic childhood events impact emotional and behavioral development throughout a lifetime.

Events such as psychological abuse can drive a person to isolate, struggle to develop relationships, and suffer from the psychological and emotional pain (Reid et al., 2019). An abused child may learn to self-regulate negative emotions by creating sexual fantasies and paraphilia. The sexual fantasies provide the child with the ability to gain a sense of escapism, power, control, and connection with another person (Reid et al., 2019). As the child moves into adolescence and adulthood, sexual fantasies can become more severe and create a tremendous urge to commit criminal sexual acts to feel relief from the negative emotions (Murray, 2017). When an offender seeks this release, the crimes may escalate and lead to multiple sexual murders (Gilberta & Daffern, 2017).

This chapter includes a brief review of the literature regarding elements that influence the development of sexual fantasies and paraphilia of violent offenders who commit a sexual homicide and serial sexual homicide. Previous studies focused on developmental factors that influence serial sexual murderers. The studies' results

indicated a correlation between childhood trauma, sexual fantasies, and paraphilia as factors that influence the type of sexual offenses and the motivations of the sexual murder (Pettigrew, 2017). This information helps create profiles, possible predictors of a modus operandi, and serial sexual killers' decision process to commit the premeditated murders.

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical foundations used in the current study that include Hickey's trauma control model (TCM) and relational paraphilic attachment (RPA). These theoretical foundations help explain the impact of traumatic events during childhood and how they can delay a child's emotional and behavioral development. TCM and RPA support the connection between childhood trauma and the creation of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. Recorded within these foundations, sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia influence the progression of sexual violence and impact how the killings could occur (i.e., sadistic or angry).

Finally, chapter 1 highlights the qualitative methodology used for this study. I explored the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. There was a gap in previous research regarding the details of the sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of serial sexual murderers. It was essential to explore these phenomena to gain an understanding of the role these phenomena play in serial sexual murderers.

Background

Childhood developmental complexities have been linked to criminal behavior later in life. Adverse experiences, such as childhood trauma, could place a child at greater

risk to engage in illegal activity and sexual deviance by inhibiting the development of social competencies and the ability to self-regulate (Levenson & Grady, 2016). The lack of proper parenting creates insecure attachments, which block the growth of intimacy and empathy. Instead, children may become manipulative, violent, and sexually deviant to satisfy their needs.

Chan and Beauregard (2016) and Beauregard and DeLisi (2018) focused on the developmental factors of offenders who have committed sexual homicide and nonsexual homicide. Both studies recognized that a sexual murderer was a distinct offender, and certain types of abuse impacted their social and emotional development. Sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia are two factors documented by the researchers that resulted from childhood traumatic events and used by sexual killers. It was noted within the studies that offenders' sexual fantasies and paraphilia progressed through their lifespan and became a modus operandi for sexual murder.

Chan and Beauregard (2016) compared the personality traits and paraphilic behaviors of nonsexual homicide offenders and sexual homicide offenders. Chan and Beauregard examined offender traits and behaviors that influenced their decisions while committing the crime. Sexual homicide offenders exhibited maladaptive personality traits that included grandiose thoughts regarding themselves, paranoia, and mistrust. The decision to kill correlated with sadistic paraphilic behaviors influenced by sexual fantasies.

Risk factors such as isolation, low self-esteem, and anger could become a motivation to create sexual fantasies and paraphilia. Chronic masturbation reinforces

sexual fantasies and paraphilia while an individual descends into an alternative reality (Beauregard & DeLisi, 2018). Sexual fantasies and paraphilia help create a sense of control and dominance lacking in their reality. Once the fantasy no longer provides satisfaction, the offender begins to act out the fantasy, which becomes a motivation to kill. Beauregard and DeLisi (2018) identified that the study had limitations related to the sample selection. The offenders who participated were in a forensic rehabilitation center and did not include sexual homicide offenders within penitentiaries.

Morono et al. (2020) conducted a study to create a method that maps serial killers' developmental sequences. The literature cited in the study indicated that serial sexual killers internalized the abuse they experienced as a child, which produced a cognitive process leading to violent behaviors. Morono et al. used a behavioral sequence to link childhood abuse to violent behaviors that develop throughout the offenders' actions at the time of the murder. Childhood abuse provides an understanding as to why abnormal paraphilia develops. This type of paraphilia is used in a sadistic manner, such as torturing and killing their victims to feel sexual pleasure (Morono et al. 2020).

Reid et al. (2019) reviewed childhood adverse events and serial sexual murderers' lifespan trajectory. Developmental psychology was the framework used in the study to explore how adverse events within childhood disrupt development, which leaves the child at risk for psychopathology. Reid et al. supported psychological research that abuse was a common form of violence experienced within the childhood of a serial sexual murderer. The abuse hindered their ability to create healthy relationships because they were not taught by their primary caregiver how to be affectionate or empathetic. Adverse events

influenced the creation of sexual fantasies to escape the abuse and gain a feeling of power. The study was limited based on the data gathered through public references and the limited number of participants.

Other researchers have explored the decision-making process of a sexual murderer before committing a sexual crime. A vital feature of the modus operandi is how offenders create their decisions. James and Proulx (2016) found a modus operandi became the murder that fulfilled the sexual fantasies of serial sexual murderers. These fantasies provided a sanctuary to manage emotional distress but become an internal constraint that shaped the modus operandi. Acting out fantasies helped to provide a sense of sexual satisfaction. If fantasies are not completed or do not provide the expected sexual gratification, an offender may search for another victim (James & Proulx, 2016). This research indicated characteristics of serial sexual murderers, which include sadistic fantasies and sexual sadism. The perfect completion of fantasy became the most critical motive.

The current study may assist law enforcement, school staff, and mental health professionals in preventing future risk for behaviors that lead to sexual murders committed by serial killers. These professionals frequently encounter youths who experience traumatic events such as abuse at an early age and adolescence. Gaining insight into childhood trauma is a critical factor to provide resources faster and address traumatic events earlier to avoid future repercussions. Treatment providers may use findings from the current study to create early interventions for children who exhibit risk

factors related to future sexual violence. Establishing clinical treatment protocols provide therapist guidance to attempt to prevent and treat those convicted of sexual offenses.

Problem Statement

There is still much to explore regarding the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. Previous research indicated childhood trauma as a reason children develop maladaptive coping mechanisms such as sexual fantasies and paraphilia (DeLisi et al., 2017; Reid et al., 2019). These coping mechanisms increased in intensity, leading to sexual violence to gain a sense of power and control. Even though researchers have indicated serial sexual killers suffer from child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia, they did not provide descriptions of the fantasies and paraphilia. Morono et al. (2020) recommended that future studies address the effects of childhood abuse and other life events leading to murder. Reid et al. (2019) suggested future research should take a top-down approach to consider all factors influencing the motives of serial sexual murderers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The study design was a multiple exploratory case study. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2005, as cited in Reid et al., 2019) defined serial murder as a premeditated murder of two or more victims, which occurs at different times. Data for the current study was gathered through archival and secondary data sources related to the case participants selected for this study. I attempted to fill a gap regarding detailed descriptions of child

and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of serial sexual murderers. This information may help law enforcement, school staff, and treatment providers identify risk factors for future violence, profile potential offenders, and create appropriate treatment modalities.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) were used to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers:

RQ1: What is the role of childhood sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ2: What is the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ3: What is the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers?

Theoretical Foundation

Research has focused on differences between nonsexual homicide offenders and sexual homicide offenders regarding their motivation and characteristics. A constant theme in the literature related to an offender's past and how it affected sexually deviant behaviors. Researchers have examined childhood trauma and its impact on the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms such as sexual fantasies and paraphilia, leading to sexual violence (Hickey, 2016; Kang et al., 2016; Reid et al., 2019). For this study, I used Hickey's TCM and RPA theories to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of an offender who committed serial sexual murders. Chapter 2 provides further details regarding each of the theoretical foundations.

Hickey's (2016) TCM posits that biological, sociological, and psychological factors related to trauma can impact serial murderers. Hickey identified trauma as a predisposition toward violence at crucial developmental stages and could affect a youth's development. Youths who experience abuse tended to internalize it as rejection. The feeling of rejection impacts their development of self-esteem (Hickey, 2016). A serial sexual killer could be triggered when feeling rejected, which leads to sexual murder to gain a feeling of power, control, and revenge.

A serial sexual murderer could develop deviant and violent sexual urges through their fantasies. The fantasies provide a retreat from feelings of rejection and worthlessness. A perpetrator could create an attachment toward a victim they created within their sexual fantasies (Hickey, 2016). A significant finding within multiple studies indicated anger and isolation as factors that influence sexual killers (Higgs, Carter, Stefanska et al., 2017).

RPA theory explains how individuals whose childhood attachments were disrupted fail to develop healthy attachments to another person. Instead, a person creates a relationship with a victim through their fantasy and later acts it out through a paraphilia. While committing a sexual offense, the offender believes that the victim is consenting to the sexual act (Hickey, 2016). The current study addressed the inability to create meaningful relationships that can prompt violent sexual behaviors. Trauma is believed to be a critical factor that affects the development of sexual violence of a serial sexual murderer using sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative research method to explore real-life situations to describe the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The current study used a multiple exploratory case study to examine data related to the three research questions. Convicted serial sexual murderers were selected as case participants. Archival sources that included biographical stories and case records provided data for the current study. Thematic analysis was used to analyze and identify patterns within the data and document participants' similarities and differences (see Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Case participants in this study included 12 male serial sexual murderers residing in the United States who revealed child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. The case participants were selected based on the FBI's 2005 definition of a serial killer as individuals who have killed two or more victims at different times (Radford University, n.d.). Non-U.S. citizens, child molesters, and female offenders were excluded as case participants from this study. This study's theoretical foundations included TCM and RPA theories that link childhood trauma to the development of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia in serial sexual murders.

Definitions

Due to the topic addressed in this study, many terms may not be recognized or understood. To ensure clarity, I provide definitions for key terms used in this study:

Criminal paraphilia: This type of paraphilia (different source of sexual arousal) occurs because of committing a crime. It does not always mean that a victim will be

sexually harmed, but it can include crimes such as exhibitionism, burglary, and peeping (Hickey, 2016).

Deviant sexual fantasy: Fantasies that are sexually violent and focus on causing physical and emotional harm (Gilberta & Daffern, 2017).

Paraphilia: A way an individual is dependent on the use of fantasies, objects, or behaviors to gain sexual gratification (Sendler, 2018).

Relational paraphilic attachment: Paraphilic behaviors begin with deviant fantasies about someone as a victim, leading to a connection with their victim through a nonconsensual relationship (Hickey, 2016).

Serial sexual homicide: Targeting and killing two or more victims after committing a sexual act such as rape or engaging in sexual activity with someone after killing them (Hickey, 2016).

Sexual sadism: A type of paraphilia involving sexual arousal resulting from causing pain or embarrassment to the victim (de Heer, 2016).

Trauma-control theory: This model indicates how an offender's previous traumatic experiences can be negative facilitators that can lead to multiple violent crimes, including serial sexual murder (Hickey, 2016).

Assumptions

Traumatic experiences during childhood can create a barrier for emotional and behavioral development. Children who experienced traumatic events begin to internalize the information as messages of rejection. I assumed that the case participants had

experienced childhood trauma. I also assumed the feeling of rejection was a driving factor to find ways to cope with negative feelings.

Another assumption in this study was the case participants had developed maladaptive coping mechanisms such as child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. Coping mechanisms, such as sexually deviant behaviors, were created to escape and gain a sense of power and control. A person became fully submerged within the sexual fantasy, and when it no longer sexually satisfied them, the offender escalated to acting out the sexual fantasy. The offender began their criminal career to gain sexual satisfaction through paraphilic behavior because they could no longer obtain this within their fantasy. Paraphilic behaviors may develop to satisfy their sexual urges by using objects to avoid feeling rejected by others.

The final assumption was that the child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia descriptions were reported honestly and in detail by the case participant. I anticipated that the sexual fantasies and paraphilia details would provide insight into their role in the killings committed by serial sexual murderers. Data analysis may increase the understanding of the motives and mental stability before, during, and after a brutal act transpires. Findings may help law enforcement, school staff, and treatment providers.

Delimitations

The focus of this study was the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. This study consisted of 12 male case participants who met the criteria for a serial sexual murderer and resided in the United States. After a thorough review of the literature, I determined that female case

participants would not be included in the study because they were less likely to commit serial sexual murders. Serial sexual killers who murdered children or lived outside of the United States were excluded as case participants from this study.

Traumatic events experienced during a person's childhood can change how they self-regulate and create relationships with others. The current study's theoretical foundations focused on childhood trauma and paraphilic attachments that create a false relationship with the victim. A multiple exploratory case study was conducted to investigate the phenomenon through real-life events.

To achieve transferability in this study, I reviewed the analysis and coding to ensure they were detailed by completing multiple coding rounds. Transferability allows other researchers to transfer the outcomes to replicate the study. Law enforcement may employ the findings to identify youths at risk for future sexual violence and to profile potential serial sexual killers. School staff may gain further insight into childhood experiences and relationships with primary caregivers of serial sexual killers. Treatment modalities may be created and implemented for at-risk youths to prevent future sexual violence.

Limitations

Qualitative research has not always been recognized as a legitimate strategy to study social sciences because of limited protocols (Yazan, 2015). In the current study, the truth of the results increases the credibility. The results were not able to be generalized to all serial sexual killers. I included serial sexual murderers who were males and lived in

the United States. Female serial sexual murderers and offenders who murdered children were excluded from this study.

It was necessary to gather data for each case participant from multiple sources that described the child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of a serial sexual murderer. A saturation level was reached based on the quality of the data. Data were gathered from documentaries, peer-reviewed literature, and the information provided by the offender, victim, and law enforcement personnel. Secondary resources provide information gathered from the offender, victim, or law enforcement and could not be proven to be fully accurate.

My biases and preconceptions may have impacted the interpretation of the data. Throughout this process, I monitored my personal biases and ensured that data gathered were from professional and reliable sources to maximize the credibility of data used. As a single reviewer, I monitored my personal bias throughout the study. I also communicated with study reviewers to assess the data's concerns and limit researcher bias.

Significance

This study was unique because it was designed to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. Serial killers who have experienced childhood abuse may develop paraphilia, leading to criminal sexual violence (Drury et al., 2017). Childhood fantasies become a way for a child to feel secure and in control. As the child moves toward adolescence and adulthood, the fantasies become stronger. Increasing the knowledge of behaviors that develop through child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia may help create

preventive measures to reduce the future risk of harm. Early identification may interfere with the progression of sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. Murray (2017) reported that sexual fantasies develop during childhood, which could be identified earlier by others in the child's life.

Understanding childhood experiences of serial sexual killers may help law enforcement, school staff, and mental health professionals identify risk factors earlier in a child's life. Children who experience childhood traumatic events are more likely to encounter law enforcement and mental health professionals because of these experiences (Reid et al., 2019). Law enforcement have the potential to intervene at different stages of a child's life. At that time, law enforcement can provide resources to families, notify school officials, and become a mentor through community policing. Implementing these resilient factors may be a preventive measure to decrease the possibility of sexual fantasies and paraphilia for individuals at risk of becoming serial sexual murderers.

This study may help law enforcement identify other critical behaviors and patterns that can predict sexual offending behaviors. Morono et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of understanding the life histories and personalities to create a profile of an offender. This information could provide law enforcement with a possible reason for the *modus operandi*. Identifying what drives a person to commit horrendous crimes such as serial sexual murder can be essential to understand more about the offender's personality, which provides additional clues to who may be committing the murders.

School staff work with children beginning at pre-kindergarten and throughout their childhood and adolescence. They are with these children during critical periods of

development and can become aware of traumatic events that negatively impact children's cognitive and emotional development. Exploring the role of childhood sexual fantasies becomes vital for school staff to intervene once they identify risk factors for future sexual violence and refer the child and family to critical resources.

Finally, mental health professionals who understand the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia may intervene with specific treatment modalities. The modalities may be implemented to address specific adverse events within the child's or offender's lifetime. The earlier a person receives treatment, the less likely they will progress to future violent sexual behaviors. By recognizing there is a trauma history of adult offenders, treatment providers can provide trauma treatment and other interventions that focus on reducing the risk of sexual offending.

Summary

There has been considerable interest in understanding why people commit violent crimes such as rape, murder, and serial sexual murder. Aggressors have been evaluated separately to determine what may influence them to escalate to sexual homicide. Researchers identified the offender's characteristics, including criminal career paths and traumatic childhood events, that influenced violent sexual behaviors throughout a lifespan (Hickey, 2016; Levenson & Grady, 2016; Reid et al., 2019).

Previous researchers have focused on elements that influenced the creation of sexual fantasies and paraphilia of serial sexual murderers, but there was a gap regarding the detailed descriptions by these offenders (Levenson & Grady, 2016; Murray, 2017). Researchers have described the etiology of serial sexual offenders and the modus

operandi for these sexual murders. These included sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia but did not detail their role involving the serial sexual murderers.

The current study extended the work of Morono et al. (2020), James and Proulx (2016), and Reid et al. (2019). These researchers investigated serial sexual murderers and deviant sexual behaviors such as sexual fantasies and paraphilia and how they influenced individuals to commit serial sexual murders. Understanding the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia in detail may help law enforcement, school staff, and mental health professionals understand risk factors that could lead to future sexual violence and create the ability to intervene earlier.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. I used Hickey's TCM and RPA as theoretical foundations. A multiple exploratory case study was chosen for the research design to analyze evidence related to the three research questions. I anticipated that this study would provide information on the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of an offender who committed serial sexual murders. Throughout the study, it was essential to evaluate possible limitations such as the number of case participants, quality of the research data, and my biases to avoid inaccurate results.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on sexual offenders and serial sexual murderers. This literature addresses how traumatic events, emotions, cognitions, and the creation of relationships through sexual fantasies and paraphilia influence violent sexual

crimes. Chapter 2 also includes a review of the influential factors regarding developing child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Researchers have recognized how childhood traumatic events shape beliefs, cognitive processes, and behaviors throughout a person's lifespan. Maladaptive coping mechanisms are created to soothe negative feelings, which leads to the use of sexual fantasies and paraphilia. As the urgency for sexual fantasies and paraphilia increases, the person begins to contemplate how to bring them into reality and act them out. Previous research indicated factors that impact an offender who can become sexually violent and characteristics that can determine differences between sexual offending, sexual murders, and serial sexual murders. However, researchers had not explored the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia in serial sexual murders. Research was limited regarding the descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia created and used by serial sexual murderers. The limited descriptions indicated a gap in the role of these behaviors for the serial sexual killer.

Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature including the theoretical foundations of TCM and RPA. A brief overview of research related to serial sexual murderers' psychosocial factors includes developmental barriers related to traumatic events and the development of the cognitive process leading to mental health disorders. I also review the literature related to fantasies, sexual fantasies, and deviant sexual fantasies created by a serial sexual murderer. Finally, I review the literature on paraphilia, which includes sadism and necrophilia, used by offenders who have committed serial sexual murders.

Literature Search Strategy

This study included secondary data sources. Peer-reviewed journal articles provided information on theoretical foundations and case studies related to this study's selected case participants. Articles from the Walden University Library and Google Scholar were selected using the following search parameters. Boolean operators were used to create phrases from keywords to find journal articles (see Walden University, 2014). For this study, phrases such as *serial sexual killer* AND *sexual fantasies* were used to search for articles. Another example is *serial sexual murder* NOT *serial murder*, which helped me find articles on serial sexual murder and excluded serial murderers who did not commit sexual crimes.

Published books provided biographical and historical data related to an offender's life and further insight into their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. These sources contained data on serial sexual murderers and the etiology of sexually violent crimes. Documentaries were another data source that provided real-life stories directly from or related to the case participants to explain childhood trauma, how an offender lived, and what they believed compelled them to kill their victims. Case participants provided descriptions of their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia within these secondary sources.

Additional data were gathered from the Radford University Serial Killer Database and addressed case participants included in the study. An additional database used was from Dr. Eric Hickey, which included 500 serial sexual killers from the United States. As

part of this research project, Dr. Hickey's database was not updated with additional serial sexual murderers because the database already included the 12 case participants.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework incorporated factors that influenced a person to become sexually violent and murder their victims. These theories included Hickey's TCM and RPA. The theories were chosen because they addressed the critical themes of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of serial sexual murderers. TCM (Hickey, 2016) indicated how trauma can influence a person's development and coping mechanisms through predisposing sociological, biological, and psychological factors. These emotions may lead to a feeling of lack of control, and people will begin to explore ways to compensate for their negative emotions. Finally, Hickey's (2016) RPA model was used to explain how a sexually violent person struggles to develop a relationship with another person. Given this lack of relationship success, a person uses sexual fantasies and paraphilic behaviors to soothe and comfort themselves.

Trauma-Control Model

Experiencing trauma during childhood or adolescence may create feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, fear, anger, anxiety, and helplessness (Healey et al., 2016). Interpersonal trauma can affect the development of affect regulation, shaping a person's ability to cope with overwhelming emotional reactions (Bigras et al., 2017). Children who witness abuse or have been abused become disempowered and turn to violence to grasp control and power. Bigras et al. (2017) found that individuals who experienced

childhood trauma later struggled in life with sexual intimacy because of a feeling of vulnerability.

Research suggested that children as young as 2 years of age are affected by rejection (Hickey, 2016). To cope, children can develop a maladaptive strategy involving sexual fantasies or chronic masturbation to meet emotional needs or gain a sense of control. The use of drugs and pornography can facilitate and increase psychological excitement. According to Hickey (2016), using these facilitators can lead to sexually violent fantasies and behaviors.

Hickey (2016) created the TCM to understand how prior trauma can influence someone to become a serial sexual murderer. This model reviews the influence of predispositional factors such as trauma, fantasy, rejection, and dissociation that reinforce and facilitate negative behaviors. In the evaluation of a serial sexual murderer's life, it is essential to recognize how a traumatic event can hinder their development during the early stages of childhood. These factors can increase an individual's risk of committing sexual homicide (Healey & Beauregard, 2015).

TCM was relevant to the current study because it describes reasons individuals learn to create fantasies and use paraphilia, and how they connect to another. Trauma at an early age can affect how a child learns to trust others and develop empathy. Children exposed to abuse and violence will develop coping strategies created to relinquish the pain they experience. Sexual fantasies, paraphilia, and the effects of their experiences influence the progression of sexual violence. Once the fantasy is no longer satisfying, the person will begin to identify ways to act it out to feel relief and sexual satisfaction,

including murdering the victims. If they do not feel that the fantasy was fully completed, they will continue to search for other victims.

Relational Paraphilic Attachment

The foundations of personality development and social interactions begin with how the individual views themselves. These foundations affect their thoughts, emotions, self-regulatory behavior, and motives, which lead to changes in how they construct relationships with significant others (Hickey, 2016). Individuals may base their self-identification on their memories from previous critical relationships, triggered or activated, based on others' interactions.

Children exposed to and witness abuse may struggle to regulate their feelings due to the belief that they are rejected by their caregiver (Hickey, 2016). Maladaptive schemas related to intimate relationships begin early in life and continue through a person's lifetime. The lack of emotional support, autonomy, self-confidence, and feeling of security may cause the development of maladaptive schemas (Gunst et al., 2017). People with maladaptive schemas may see themselves as unlovable, fear rejection, be unable to trust others, and develop ways to avoid threats and unpleasant feelings (Gunst et al., 2017). People may develop violent and sexually deviant behaviors to cope with negative emotions, such as stress and anxiety.

Individuals are innately motivated to feel a sense of belonging and relate to others, but there may be situations in their lives that affect their ability to feel accepted. Previous experiences involving close personal pain can lead to feelings of discomfort toward others. Decisions to avoid intimacy and suppress emotions are attempts to protect

themselves from feelings of vulnerability, rejection, and negative emotions (Cohen et al., 2017). In other words, people may develop maladaptive coping mechanisms to protect themselves from rejection. The type of connection a person has with others may influence their behaviors, thoughts, and affect.

Rejection can result in feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and perceived failure within one's peer group. Feeling rejected can reinforce individuals' irrational judgments that they are not good enough or are worthless (Levenson et al., 2017). To cope with the overwhelming emotions stemming from rejection, youths may begin to fantasize or daydream rather than put themselves in social situations in which they feel incompetent (Levenson et al., 2017). The youth's beliefs of the world become skewed, and fantasies become an escape to cope with negative feelings such as rejection.

Feeling rejected may reinforce previous trauma leading to further isolation and the development of deviant fantasies (Levenson et al., 2017). Fantasies may become pessimistic, cynical, and sadistic to alleviate pain. The fantasies offer a sense of power, control, and self-soothing quality, which reinforces future fantasizing. Violence has been found to decrease negative feelings and increase a sense of power created through sexual fantasy (Levenson et al., 2017).

The development of sexual behaviors helps an individual to reduce or soothe discomfort. Based on the feeling of rejection, the individual may develop antisocial behaviors and paraphilic behaviors that affect their ability to develop peer relationships (Hickey, 2016). However, paraphilic activity may help to create feelings of intimacy. RPA can create a connection with another individual. The perpetrator cannot develop

intimacy through a healthy process, so instead they resort to paraphilic behaviors. During this process, the offender believes the victim is consenting and wants to participate in the physical sexual act (Hickey, 2016). These behaviors are not meant to cause injury but to develop a relationship with the victim (Hickey, 2016).

Literature Review

Childhood trauma such as abuse can impact critical periods of development. Exposure to trauma can be related to the development of mental health disorders and violent crime (Levenson & Grady, 2016). Irresponsible parenting, neglect, and abuse may result in an insecure attachment that can hinder the individual's capability for intimacy and cause them to resort to violence and deviant sexual behavior to connect with others. To cope with previous experiences such as abuse or neglect, individuals may use sexual activity to reduce and calm their distress (Levenson & Grady, 2016). Analyzing this information has assisted researchers in creating classifications of different types of serial sexual killers. Law enforcement uses this information to create a profile to identify and arrest the serial sexual murderer.

Classifying Sexual Murders

Attempts have been made to classify and organize criminal behavior (Higgs, Carter, Tully et al., 2017; Mjanes et al., 2017). The purpose was to gain insight into the motivation behind the criminal act and develop ways to intervene clinically. An essential part of this process has been understanding the relationship between the offender's characteristics and criminal behaviors (Beauregard & Proulx, 2016). Four main themes were consistent among the typologies: anger, sadistic, opportunistic, and compensatory

(Beauregard & Proulx, 2016). When creating these typologies, the researchers identified specific characteristics that each person would have to meet the typology criteria.

Typologies have been created based on observations and interviews derived from clinical attributes to determine the motivation for the criminal act (Perry et al., 2018). Limitations to these typologies exist; however, they are useful for showing specific factors related to the offender (Perry et al., 2018). Because these factors cannot be proven until there is a suspect, typologies are not always useful in conducting investigations. Additional research has been conducted to refine and expand typologies for sexual murder. The concern with the current sexual murder typologies is they are not scientifically proven and lack standardization and reliability (Perry et al., 2018).

Researchers have suggested typologies should be clear, mutually exclusive, and comprehensible to be most useful. Such characteristics include variables of victim characteristics, the motivation for the criminal act, level of violence, and criminal behavior (Kaseweter et al., 2016). All the typologies described support the fact that sexual fantasies influence the offender. However, there was a gap in the literature because researchers had not fully explored the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers.

The FBI Behavioral Science Unit created typologies based on crime scenes and victim selection during the 1970s (Beauregard & Martineau, 2016; Higgs, Carter, Tully et al., 2017; Mjanes et al., 2017). The purpose of the research was to find data that could identify the crime scene's modus operandi, criminal profile, and characteristics (Beauregard & Martineau, 2016). Based on the results, the FBI determined two

classifications for sexual homicide: organized and disorganized. These are the most used typologies for sexual homicides and have been integrated with additional typologies related to sexual murders (Mjanes et al., 2017).

An organized sexual murderer can avoid detection because of how the crime scene is treated and postoffense behaviors (Karakasi et al., 2017; Mjanes et al., 2017). These individuals are intelligent and stalk their victims before the attack. The victim is usually a stranger and has a lifestyle that can increase the risk of victimization, for instance a young female who runs away or prostitutes (Mjanes et al., 2017). Once the attack has concluded, murderers will leave very little evidence at the crime scene, including moving the body. Organized offenders may take certain artifacts from the crime scene as trophies.

A disorganized sexual killer has below average intelligence, is socially inadequate, and struggles to create relationships (Karakasi et al., 2017; Mjanes et al., 2017). This type of offender does not plan the crime, and victims are typically an acquaintance or selected at random (Mjanes et al., 2017). As a result of previous traumatic relationships from childhood, these offenders may struggle with sexual competency and engage in postmortem sexual acts (Mjanes et al., 2017). The body will have been mutilated or severely beaten. The crime scene will appear chaotic, with the murder weapon and other evidence left at the scene. Disorganized sexual killers are arrested faster than organized killers.

Keppel and Walter (1999) expanded the rape typology created by Growth, Burgess, and Holmstrom (1977) and incorporated sexual murders. The expansion was

done to aid law enforcement by creating patterns, descriptions, and profiles of sexual killers. The categories were renamed as power assertive rape murderer, power reassurance rape murderer, anger-retaliatory rape murderer, and anger excitation rape murderer (Keppel & Walter, 1999). A concern about the research was the limited ability to gather statements from the victims.

A power-assertive rapist-murderer is arrogant and prefers not to socialize with others (Keppel & Walter, 1999). This type of rapist will select victims based on looks and previous experiences with women. The power-assertive rapist-murderer is motivated to rape but does not have an initial intent to commit murder. The victim may die because of the increased use of aggression from the intimidation to gain power. This type of offender avoids being identified by law enforcement because of their arrogant personality (Keppel & Walter, 1999). As a result of careful planning and victim choice, these individuals are organized sexual killers. To improve the murder, the raping murderer will study the criminal act.

The next classification is power reassurance rape murderer. These offenders will plan the rape to satisfy their fantasies (Keppel & Walter, 1999). Typically, they will commit rape murder during the nighttime when they are most comfortable (Keppel & Walter, 1999). The murder is unplanned and occurs because of overkill. The purpose of the act is to reassure themselves of their sexual adequacy (Keppel & Walter, 1999). If the offender feels as though they are being rejected or humiliated, they may panic and become violent to gain control and power. The violence may result in the murder of the victim due to the failure to complete the rape. As a result of sexual inadequacy or failure

to complete the fantasy, these offenders act out the sexual behavior post-mortem (Keppel & Walter, 1999). To maintain a relationship with a victim, the offender will take something that belonged to the victim to further assist with their fantasies.

Offenders who express anger using revenge and rape are considered anger retaliation rape murderers. These offenders struggle to develop relationships and are socially awkward, impulsive in their behaviors, and self-centered (Keppel & Walter, 1999). They are disorganized, and the attack involves a violent outburst. The violent act is precipitated after the offender feels that they have been criticized or scolded by a woman in power (Keppel & Walter, 1999). Anger may be related to sex if the offender is sexually impotent (Keppel & Walter, 1999). The assault will last until the offender feels emotionally satisfied. If arrested for the sexual offense, the offender will not take responsibility for the attack. Instead, they will blame the victim for justifying the need for the sexual murder.

The final category is anger excitation rape murderer. These individuals can socially adjust and are manipulative (Keppel & Walter, 1999). The purpose of the assault is to inflict pain and terror on the victim. It is pain and terror that provides the offender with sexual gratification. The assault is prolonged, and the torture increases the arousal of the rapist-murderer. The victim is selected based on symbolic meaning, which could be related to the offender's mother, type of profession, or other victim attributes that have a special meaning to the offender (Keppel & Walter, 1999). The violence will escalate during the assault and result in mutilation and extreme torture. Violence satisfies the need

to kill. After the victim has died, the offender may experiment sexually with the corpse (Keppel & Walter, 1999). These are organized murderers, and they are well prepared.

A variety of typologies have been created since 1986 (Karakasi et al., 2017), each of which has used different scientific approaches. Limitations regarding the scientific approaches resulted from the small sample size or the methodology's weakness (Karakasi et al., 2017). There are some consistencies found through the different typologies, which include the expression of rage and sadism.

Psychosocial Components of Serial Sexual Murderers

Childhood trauma such as abuse, being raised in a low income, and a single-parent home was the most common childhood adversities linked to the development of criminal behaviors (Levenson & Grady, 2016). A parent's inability to teach a child intimacy skills and healthy communication can develop negative personality traits and insecure attachment. Research by Levenson & Grady (2016) showed a correlation between insecure attachment and sexual offending. Paraphilic behavior develops to create a connection within the offender's mind between themselves and the victim.

Mental distress may develop because of sexually compulsive behaviors, impairing a persons' daily functioning (Meyer et al., 2017). These behaviors can develop due to having a preoccupation with sex and the inability to control impulses (Meyer et al., 2017). Compulsive sexual behaviors are a means to cope with negative emotions and are rewarded by self-gratification. However, this can lead to feelings of guilt and shame, which increases social isolation and continues the cycle of sexual behaviors (Meyer et al., 2017).

Interpreting the complexities of an individual's psychosocial history helps identify how sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia could be related to negative experiences early in life (Levenson & Grady, 2016). The effects of traumatic childhood events can continue to impact an individual throughout adolescence and adulthood. Research has shown a link between an unstable childhood environment and the development of selfishness, poor relationship patterns, and the tendency to violate emotional and physical boundaries related to childhood abuse (Levenson & Grady, 2016). Gaining a deeper understanding of a person's family relationships, social relationships, and psychopathology can further reveal criminal behavior progression. The traumatic events within a child's life greatly influence the development of sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia.

Childhood Development

Reid et al. (2019) studied how life span development psychology could determine serial sexual murderers' etiology. Their research indicated that the influences which occurred in utero could either enhance or delay the development of the fetus. Mothers who experienced high-stress responses while pregnant impacted the fetus's brain development. The participants within the study by Reid et al. indicated that the negative influence began the trajectory for the development of serial sexual murderers.

External influences become essential as to how they affect physiological and emotional development in a child. Children's brains are not fully developed and, therefore, easily affected by events such as abuse, neglect, and lack of attachment. Reid et al. (2019) determined that seventy-two percent of the serial sexual murderers experienced

psychological abuse within their research. This type of abuse can influence the development of adjustment problems that lead to delinquency, high-risk sexual behaviors, depression, and self-destructive behaviors (Reid et al., 2019).

Traumatic childhood events affect the ability to create and learn proper coping and social skills. Abuse at an early stage of life can affect how children learn to develop healthy relationships and communicate when they have specific needs. Past research has suggested that life stressors for sexual murderers include low attachment, abuse, parental aggression, and having a parent who was incarcerated (Kang et al., 2016). Researchers have supported that child abuse influences the progression of violence. The most influential type of abuse is sexual abuse, which has been found to influence serial sexual murderers' development. These events include being raised by parents who were addicted, promiscuous, and struggle with a psychiatric disorder (Kang et al., 2016).

Karakasi et al. (2017) reviewed the possible differences between a serial sexual homicide killer and a serial homicide killer. Their research showed that serial sexual killers were raised in a more troubled households and had more challenging circumstances (Karakasi et al., 2017). Troubled households included being raised by parents who abused drugs and alcohol, had psychiatric disorders, committed crimes, and had a higher rate of promiscuous sexual behavior (Karakasi et al., 2017).

The feeling of disempowerment may lead to interpreting the world as being unfair. Disempowerment can influence how an offender seeks a sense of control using sexualized behaviors (Levenson & Grady, 2016). This behavior helps the offender cope and soothe their distress and gain a sense of intimacy or affection. Additional coping

mechanisms may include deviant sexual fantasies, distorted thinking, and a lack of empathy that enables sexual aggression (Kang et al., 2016). To gain power and control, an offender could create fantasies that are typically sexual and violent.

The participants in the research conducted by Reid et al. (2019) indicated high rejection rates from a parental figure and impacted the child's self-esteem. A child who experiences these types of feelings struggle to feel empathy and create relationships. The abuse and rejection that a child experiences pushes them to find ways to escape. They may escape by running away or creating fantasies. By the age of eight, serial sexual killers reported violent thoughts and fantasies related to inflicting pain on a person who appears to be a parental figure (Reid et al., 2019).

Schemas are maps created within an individual's mind that help them understand themselves and their environment (Kang et al., 2016). These schemas may influence relationships developed in early childhood through adolescence. To develop a healthy schema, children need to have positive interactions within their interpersonal relationships, which support a secure attachment. If a child or adolescent's emotional needs are not met by a parental caregiver, they may be at risk to develop maladaptive schemas (Kang et al., 2016).

A maladaptive schema is a distorted conceptualization a person develops about themselves and others due to past negative experiences such as abusive, unstable, isolating, and rejecting families (Kang et al., 2016). Such schemas operate unconsciously and can lead to the misinterpretation of information. Automatic negative thoughts result from misinterpretation of information centered around rejection and limited self-control

and lead to hypervigilance and emotional suppression (Gunst et al., 2017; Kang et al., 2016).

There are five broad domains of maladaptive schemas that include disconnection and rejection, impaired autonomy and performance, impaired self-limitations and other-directedness, and over vigilance and inhibition (Kang et al., 2016). Kang et al. (2016) found those classified in the disconnection and rejection domain is inept at creating a secure attachment and are unable to develop fulfilling relationships. Their relationships' unsatisfactory nature can be related to their belief system that their need for stability, safety, and love is unlikely to occur. Schemas have been a focal point in the exploration of sexual offending. As a result of the study, Kang et al. (2016) found that sex offenders were rated highest in the "disconnection and rejection" domain, while rapists were rated higher within the personal instability/abandonment and defectiveness/shame domains. The schema domain linked with North American sex offenders is disconnection and rejection (Kang et al., 2016).

Schemas organize information based on personal experiences. A script is knowledge gained through patterns of routine activities (Flores et al., 2017). A script guides proactive behavior by segmenting information based on past experiences used to make future predictions. Scripts can mediate the input of certain negative factors and behaviors related to aggression. The rehearsal of the script can become a coping mechanism. Gilberta and Daffern (2017) described scripts among sexual offenders as cognitive operations that assist predatory behaviors and lead to sexual offending through aggressive behavior. These aggressive behaviors may happen unconsciously by

dissociation. Scripts are affected by fantasies that can shape or alter behavior (Gilberta & Daffern, 2017).

Dissociation can occur if there is a disruption of a person's integrated functions. Such disruptions may impact a person's memory, perception, behaviors, and identity (Bourget et al., 2017). Dissociation helps an individual cope with overwhelming emotions related to traumatic experiences (Bourget et al., 2017). There are positive and negative symptoms of dissociation. Positive symptoms consist of memories or flashbacks that intrude on awareness (Bourget et al., 2017). Negative symptoms involve the interruption of a person's full ability to access information (Bourget et al., 2017).

If the mind becomes overwhelmed with anxiety, it may dissociate (Hickey, 2016). As a reaction to stress, a person may depersonalize any disruption within their consciousness. The dissociation helps a person to regain a sense of equilibrium. The lack of awareness affects the ability to evaluate the potential consequences of actions (Costopoulos & Juni, 2018). Violent acts may occur during an altered state.

Socialization

Relational satisfaction refers to the satisfaction and happiness a person gains from an intimate relationship (Gunst et al., 2017). Early maladaptive schemas can create a feeling of rejection that may lead the individual to disconnect from others. To develop a connection, a sexual murderer may create a fantasy where he believes the victim wants to be in a sexual relationship with him (Hickey, 2016). Hickey (2016) described this process as relational paraphilic disorder. Based on their fantasy and use of paraphilia, the

individual believes that they are creating a relationship with the victim when, in fact, they are harming them.

Attachments experienced during childhood will significantly influence the ability to create or engage in relationships. Parental caregiver's instability may cause dysfunctional interactions and the inability to develop intimacy (Levenson & Grady, 2016). A person's lack of affect regulation results from insecure attachment, a risk factor for sexual violence. Sexual murderers struggle to develop stable peer groups and emotional attachments and are sensitive to rejection (Karakasi et al., 2017).

Levenson and Grady (2016) described how sexual offending had been linked to specific attachment styles based on the individual's Internal Working Model (IWM). The person may use sex to gain an emotional bond, which becomes a coping strategy for sexual murderers to avoid negative feelings. Lack of emotion may become an enabling factor in the commission of a sexual offense (James & Proulx, 2016).

The insecure attachment, which results from maltreatment, can be either avoidant or anxious (Levenson & Grady, 2016). These patterns may continue through adulthood and influence social and intimate relationships (Meyer et al., 2017). Those who struggle with insecure attachment during adulthood are more likely to be aggressive or violent. Insecurely attached individuals often struggle to develop intimate relationships and lack trust in others. This type of attachment has been identified within individuals who have committed sexual offenses (Levenson & Grady, 2016).

Chan and Beauregard (2016) reported that sexual homicide offenders were suspicious and lacked trust in others. If relationships are established, they tend to be

unstable. Offenders who escalate to become sexual killers struggled with relationships because they could not feel empathy but instead felt entitled (Higgs, Carter, Stefanska et al., 2017). A sexual killer who had an emotional deficit, such as a lack of empathy and fear, had a limited ability to experience emotions that could prevent violent behaviors (Mededovic, 2017).

Higgs, Carter, Stefanska et al. (2017) found those who struggled to develop intimacy were also found to feel lonely. Feeling rejected or humiliated triggers anger, which intensifies scars from past traumas. Experiencing rejection or humiliation could be a motivating factor for murder. Sexual murderers isolate themselves, which increases the feeling of loneliness (Stefanska et al., 2015).

Reid et al. (2019) found that seventy-one percent of the serial sexual murderers were loners and rejected by their peers during adolescence. To compensate for the rejection and isolation, the offenders would soothe their loneliness by creating imaginary friends or solitary play. During adolescence, serial sexual murderers reported that they turn inward to gain emotional validation (Reid et al., 2019). The serial sexual murderer developed maladaptive skills that provided a way for them to reclaim their feelings (Reid et al., 2019).

Psychiatric Disorders

Researcher have uncovered how psychopathology involves specific personality traits relating to immoral, criminal, and antisocial behavior (Mededovic, 2017). Past studies focused on these traits and their relationship to criminal behavior, which was proven through meta-analytic studies (Wright et al., 2016). Subclinical personality traits

such as psychopathic, narcissistic, and machiavellian are connected to violent behaviors and labeled as the Dark Triad. According to Wright et al. (2016), these personality characteristics have a dark core, resulting from the inability to feel empathy and recognize others' emotions. Sadism was later added to these dark personality traits, and the four became known as the Dark Tetrad.

An individual could be identified as having a narcissistic personality because they are self-promoting to the point they are grandiose, feel entitled, and are ego-driven (Pajevic et al., 2018). They are unable to develop emotions and understand the emotions of others. As a result, individuals who are narcissistic struggle to create and maintain long term relationships. A narcissist responds to rejection or criticism as a personal attack and react irrationally, leading to violence. To protect themselves, the narcissist will look for a means of revenge.

Narcissism has been related to violence through studies that compared violent and non-violent offenders. Research has shown that a narcissist may commit a murder based on rage, a primitive response to rejection, criticism, and humiliation (Scott & Freckelton, 2018). These individuals are unable to mediate their reactions and become impulsive (Scott & Freckelton, 2018). High profile offenders such as Ted Bundy have been identified to have a clinical diagnosis of narcissism.

Machiavellianism is like narcissism because these individuals manipulate others for their personal gain. They are considered selfish, untrustworthy, and callous. An individual diagnosed with machiavellianism, works to stay one step ahead of their victims to manipulate them (Jones & De Roos, 2017). Individuals who have machiavellianism

were less likely to engage in long-term relationships. If they enter a relationship, it is to maximize their personal needs (Jones & De Roos, 2017). Relationships are a tool used to manipulate others and hide their intentions. These individuals were less likely to be aggressive (Jones & De Roos, 2017).

The sexual sadist fantasizes about how they commit acts of violence, such as a means of torturing their victim and use whatever sexual practices are most sexually gratifying. Mededovic (2017) found similarities between sadism and psychopathy because both have a severe lack of empathy and are related to forms of violence. Sadism produces a positive emotion for the offender when they see or fantasize about the harm used on another person. This positive reinforcement then becomes the motivator for committing the violent act.

Researchers have related ineffective parenting to psychopathic personality traits because they exhibit little warmth or lack of close relationships (Silva & Stattin, 2016). These children become less responsive to the processes of socialization. Previous research has indicated that adolescents with psychopathic traits are at greater risk for violence because of the limited maternal influences and relationships (Silva & Stattin, 2016). Conflict between the parental caregiver and you is a factor found with youths who committed sexual violence (Silva & Stattin, 2016).

A psychopathic personality is described as charming, cunning, manipulative, and will hurt others for their personal gain (O'Connell, & Marcus, 2019). They cause harm to others because they do not feel empathy. The inability to share emotions or to feel empathy leads to antisocial behaviors (Ritchie et al., 2019). An additional deficit of

individuals with psychopathic personality is interpreting fear responses. They are not able to recognize the feelings or reactions of fear within others.

Psychopaths who commit murder are described as being a matter of fact and casual about the crime they committed. They express very little emotion and will blame the victim. Research has examined psychopathy and serial sexual homicide. The results indicated that since they lack remorse, guilt, or shame, the offenders can commit sexually violent murders. Fox and DeLisi (2018) noted that a study conducted by Porter, Woodworth, Earle, and Boer (2003) indicated that eighty-five percent of the serial sexual murderers scored moderate to a high score on the Psychopathy Check List – Revised (PCL-R).

Reid et al. (2019) was able to identify that thirty-five percent of the serial sexual murderers within their study had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. These disorders included but were not limited to substance abuse, impulse control disorder, paraphilia, and insecure attachment. As these individuals progressed through adolescence, the percentage of psychiatric disorders increased. Reid et al. (2019) determined that between 18 and 22, the participants received some type of psychiatric treatment.

Criminal Histories

Keatley et al., (2018) reported that serial sexual killers had a widespread criminal history before completing their first murder. Delinquency began during adolescence and started with forms of violence such as assaults towards others. It has also been reported that many serial killers within the study conducted by Reid et al. (2019) had committed

theft and burglary early in their criminal careers. Another factor in the development of the serial sexual killers' criminal career was linked to a diagnosis of paraphilia. Some of the crimes committed were done to gain sexual satisfaction that occurred through stalking, an obsession with prostitutes, or theft of objects from the victim's home (Keatley et al., 2018). These eventually continued to progress to sexual violence. Reid et al. (2019) reported that 51% of their sample had a history of sexual assault. These behaviors and urges progressed and led to their first homicide.

Sexual homicide is one of the most horrendous crimes and can be punishable by death. One to four percent of the annual homicides within the United States are identified as sexual (Chan et al., 2017). According to Karakasi et al. (2016), there are two components to sexual homicide, the act of killing and sexual behavior during the crime. It is challenging to gather data on sexual homicide because the sexual component is not readily identifiable and the murder is then classified as a general homicide. Law enforcement identify crimes based on what is found at the crime scene. Evidence of sexual homicides can include missing clothing from the victim, positioning the victim in a sexual pose, and the type of assault (Stefanska et al., 2015).

According to Chan et al. (2017), most sexual murderers were Caucasian males who may struggle with attachment, were socially awkward, and often used substances or pornography to cope with emotional distress. As a result of a problematic childhood, their ability to adjust socially was limited, and they were prone to maladaptive coping strategies. Chan et al. reported that sexual homicide offenders were often diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder and tended to develop a paraphilia of sadism.

Two of the most common motivations for sexual homicide are sadism and anger. Sadistic behaviors provide sexual gratification through the act of sadism (Higgs, Carter, Stefanska et al., 2017). A victim's actions could anger the offender that leads to murder (Stefanska et al., 2015). Typically, within the crime scene, it is clear whether the offense was spontaneous or planned. Spontaneous murders result from anger and a lack of impulse control. This type of perpetrator is also often disorganized. The disorganized perpetrator becomes careless by leaving evidence that allows law enforcement to apprehend them easier (Mjanec et al., 2017).

Common behaviors among sexual murderers include paraphilic behavior and acting out sexual fantasies. Chan et al. (2017) found sexual sadism was the most common paraphilia among sexual murderers. The sexual fantasy was the driving force behind achieving euphoria through sadistic behaviors (Chan et al., 2017). The fantasy was used to obtain psychological gratification, but when it no longer provided satisfaction, the individual attempted to act out their fantasy (Chan & Beauregard, 2016).

A sadistic sexual killer could be triggered by sexual fantasies, which are strengthened when the offender uses pornography and engages in compulsive masturbation (Stefanska et al., 2015). Murders by sadistic killers are planned and involve conning the victim during the first contact (Stefanska et al., 2015). The perpetrator may kidnap, confine, humiliate, and torture the victim (Stefanska et al., 2015). The perpetrator maintains control by using restraints and implies the use of force to keep their victim from leaving. Once they got control the perpetrator carries out their sexual fantasies.

A serial sexual murderer kills two or more individuals (James & Proulx, 2016; Stefanska et al., 2015). These perpetrators may have sadistic fantasies, act out sexually sadistic behaviors, and display the early development of sexually coercive behaviors (James & Proulx, 2016). Serial sexual murderers struggle to feel accepted by others and often use fantasies as a refuge. Fantasies can increase isolation, further leading to a feeling of rejection by society (James & Proulx, 2016). Chronic masturbation and paraphilia are used to support sexual behaviors and fantasies.

The motivation for serial sexual murders could be related to sadistic fantasies that are shaped by sexual violence. The fantasies become increasingly extreme and invasive, and offenders develop the need to act out (James & Proulx, 2016). The serial sexual murderer may also prepare for the crime by gathering materials needed to fulfill the fantasy (James & Proulx, 2016). There is a lack of research that provides descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia, which could help identify the roles of these factors within the serial sexual murder.

Fantasies

Fantasies are a natural and healthy process. Beginning during early childhood, humans will use their imagination to recreate situations. According to Gilberta and Daffern (2017), fantasies are created through a learned process organized by the individual. During this process, a fantasy develops to allow the child to create mental images of symbols that develop into scripts. Fantasies are a means to psychologically escape reality and find temporary refuge to problem-solve or cope with stressful situations.

Trauma can cause mental injury, impact how the mind functions, or influence self-identity and self-constructs (Costopoulos & Juni, 2018). Children who experience sexual or violent trauma may develop a confused belief of self and feelings of weakness. During early development, children begin to understand themselves based on their experiences with their parental caregivers.

An estimated one-third of sexually abused children develop clinically significant stages of internalized and externalized behaviors (Ensink et al., 2017). Internal behaviors consist of dissociation and depressive symptoms. External behaviors are aggressiveness and breaking the rules. Intense traumatic experiences in childhood can lead to inappropriate coping mechanisms by repressing and suppressing memories. A child creates ways to avoid pain and mitigate emotional reactions to a stimulus that occurs unconsciously. The images created by the child can result in acting out their past trauma toward their victims (Costopoulos & Juni, 2018).

Sexual Fantasy

A sexual fantasy is an image that develops within the conscious mind of an individual. Sexual fantasies are a natural process and use sexual images to achieve sexual arousal. Vivid images produce physiological arousal, reinforce feelings of pleasure, and release sexual tension. Even though the fantasies help eliminate sexual tension, they increase sexual tension which the offender seeks to release (Seifert et al., 2015).

Individuals tend to keep sexual fantasies a secret due to feelings of shame about creating the fictional world and how engrossed they become. This process is typical for individuals who were exposed to traumatic situations during childhood and adolescence.

Sexual fantasies become a way for serial sexual murderers to create relationships with others and not have to fear rejection. As the fantasy increases in intensity, the person struggles to distinguish between reality and fantasy. The fantasies become powerful, lead to isolation, and interfere with intimate relationships. The feeling of isolation feeds the fantasy and increases anger and antisocial behavior (Malizia, 2017).

Deviant Sexual Fantasy

Children exposed to violence may create fantasies that are based on violent behaviors. These individuals most likely use objects to gain sexual satisfaction, but this can also train them to hurt others without feeling empathy or pain for the other person. The fantasy replays the trauma but is designed to change the outcome by creating feelings of power, control, and revenge towards others. As the individual begins to gain feelings of power, control, and revenge, it increases the risk of hypersexuality and leads to possibly acting the fantasy out towards others. Reid et al. (2019) identified that sixty-four percent of the serial sexual murderers within their study began to experience violent fantasies during adolescence. An adolescent retreats into the fantasy to gain feelings of power to negate feelings of powerlessness.

Deviant sexual fantasies help to maintain the aggressive script by replaying the past. Acting out the fantasies provide a way for the individual to cope with negative feelings by gaining a sense of control and power. The fantasy is a precondition that teaches the individual to feel aggression through sexual arousal. This process helps maintain the aggressive script and create a relationship between the fantasy content and sexual arousal (Beauregard & DeLisi, 2018).

Deviant fantasies are cognitions that contain thoughts and images of pain being inflicted on another person. Deviance increases throughout the fantasy to help maintain the level of arousal, using masturbation that strengthens the relationship between deviance and arousal (Beauregard & DeLisi, 2018). Reid et al. (2019) disclosed that 27% of the serial sexual murderers within their study indicated they had engaged in deviant sexual fantasies, and by the age of 18, increased to 57%. These deviant fantasies include cognitions, images, emotions, and dialogue that focus on causing harm or pain during sex. The deviant fantasy includes thoughts about illegal and socially unacceptable behaviors (Gilberta & Daffern, 2017). Individuals who develop deviant sexual fantasies early in life could eventually resort to violent behavior (Malizia, 2017).

The deviant sexual fantasies increase in frequency and lead to more extreme and risky sexual behavior (Plante et al., 2017). The frequency the fantasies are replayed increases the compulsion to use fantasies as an outlet for the individual's negative emotions. Deviant sexual fantasies can manifest because they are reinforced by anger, masturbation, and pornography (Hickey, 2016). It also creates a false sense of confidence and redirects emotions of failure.

Those who become fully submerged within the deviant fantasy believe that they can move back and forth between fantasy and reality (Plante et al., 2017). Once an individual begins to make the fantasy a reality, it then plays an integral role in criminal acts such as rape or sexual homicide (Plante et al., 2017). To act out the fantasy, an offender may use dishabituation agents such as alcohol, drugs, and pornography. When dishabituation agents are paired with the deviant sexual fantasy, the offender can

overcome any cognitive or emotional barriers if they act out the fantasy. The offender develops a false sense of confidence, which then allows them to commit the offense.

Deviant sexual fantasies provide an avenue to plan the offense, select their victims, and sexual activities to be used during the offense. These factors become the modus operandi for a sexual crime. The planning of the crime is also important because it provides the offender to be cautious and avoid being caught. Prior research has found that a feature of a sadistic murderer included deviant sexual fantasies, which could be a motivation to commit serial sexual crimes such as rape and sexual homicide (Gilberta & Daffern, 2017; Malizia, 2017). Murray (2016) proposed that understanding deviant sexual fantasies can help predict sexual crime.

As the offender creates and directs the deviant sexual fantasies into criminal behavior, this strengthens a heightened sense of arousal (Murray, 2017). Individuals who escalate to commit sexual crimes find that deviant sexual fantasies no longer provide satisfaction or an ability to self-soothe, so they progress to acting out their behaviors (Malizia, 2017). Researchers have shown that offenders begin to fantasize about their crime 48 hours before committing the offense (Beauregard & DeLisi, 2018).

The physical act of the deviant sexual fantasy provides some level of arousal. If it does not fully meet the level previously obtained within the offenders' fantasy, they will attempt to act out again on another victim. The fantasies and behaviors continue until the offender feels they can gain the level of sexual satisfaction. The urge to kill becomes very intense and fuels the serial sexual killer.

Paraphilia

When a person experiences intense sexual arousal triggered by atypical objects or situations this develops into a paraphilia (Carstens & Stevens, 2016; Hickey, 2016).

Forensic sexology characterizes paraphilia as extreme images and ritualistic practices.

The use of images and ritualistic practices elevates the level of sexual arousal. When the behavior occurs, there is an intense focus on the act, that blocks attention to external stimuli (Carstens & Stevens, 2016).

The term paraphilia replaced sexual deviance, categorized as a sexual disorder in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual II (DSM-II) (Tatak et al., 2016). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual V's (DSM-V) criteria for paraphilic disorders include intense behaviors, exhibit an atypical sexual arousal pattern, and are persistent regardless of whether there is distress or impairment by the disorder (Tatak et al., 2016). Not all individuals who have paraphilic behavior meet the clinical diagnosis criteria.

Psychosexual disorders could escalate abnormal fantasies that manifest from traumatic experiences during childhood (Hickey, 2016). The most common type of trauma related to the development of paraphilic behavior is abuse during childhood or adolescence (Hickey, 2016). Paraphilia typically starts during childhood and intensifies through adolescence into adulthood. Those who have a paraphilic disorder are most likely to develop more than one type of paraphilia. One paraphilia becomes primary until another is more satisfying (Hickey, 2016).

Voyeurism and fetishism are the two most common types of paraphilia among men (Joyal & Carpentier, 2016). It is more likely for individuals to develop a fetish due

to the arousal from an object versus sexual activity (Joyal & Carpentier, 2016). The individual may choose an occupation or hobby that allows the paraphilia to be a part of their daily life (Carstens & Stevens, 2016). Fetishism and voyeurism aid in the escalation to violent criminal acts (Hickey, 2016).

Criminal Paraphilia

Criminal paraphilia may not always result in sexually harming a victim. Criminal careers may begin with peeping or exhibitionism (Hickey, 2016). Other acts may result from fetishes, which lead the offender to burglarize to obtain artifacts that aid in arousal and sexual gratification. The offender may search for victims through stalking that contributes to how the offender becomes sexually aroused.

According to Hickey (2016), sexual fantasies may instigate the paraphilic process. Masturbation rewards the sexual fantasies, that increase sexual gratification and arousal. If individuals are no longer able to gain sexual gratification through their fantasies, they could attempt to physically act out (Hickey, 2016). Karakasi et al. (2017) estimated that about 72% of serial sexual murderers have at least one paraphilia. Sadism and necrophilia are the most common diagnoses of paraphilia among serial sexual murderers (Karakasi et al., 2017).

Sexual Sadism

Sexual sadism is a paraphilia diagnosis within the DSM V described as sexual arousal resulting from the infliction of pain and humiliation on another (American Psychological Association, 2013). This type of paraphilia may start during childhood with sadistic fantasies, which become more extreme over time (DeLisi et al., 2017; Eher

et al., 2016). Sadistic acts are performed to gain pleasure and create a sense of power and control by watching a person suffer. Murray (2017) found that sadistic fantasies are the gateway to feelings of control and sexual gratification.

Once the fantasy no longer provides sexual euphoria, the offender seeks to physically commit sadistic acts (Chan et al., 2015). Sexual sadism is a type of paraphilia linked to sexual offenders and sexual murderers (Chan et al., 2015). DeLisi et al. (2017) found that sexual sadism was highly connected to sexually violent crimes such as homicide, assaults, and kidnapping. Sexual sadists are more likely to be violent than non-sadistic sexual offenders. Sexual offenders who progressed to murdering their victims were reported to be aroused through sadistic acts (Chan et al., 2015).

Necrophilia

Necrophilia is a paraphilia involving a sexual attraction to corpses and could be connected to the modus operandi for sexual homicide (Chan & Beauregard, 2016; Pettigrew, 2017). Necrophilia is a diagnosable disorder within the DSM V. Necrophiliacs act on their sexual urge either with the bodies of people who are already dead or with victim they murdered. Necrophilia should not be confused with somnophilia when individuals are sexually attracted to an unconscious person (Pettigrew, 2017). Somnophiles may use a date rape drug to take advantage of their victims while they are unconscious. Like other types of paraphilia, somnophilia can intensify and lead to necrophilia.

Somnophilia and necrophilia are ways to avoid resistance or rejection (Pettigrew, 2017). Necrophiliacs who commit murder become disinhibited by the compulsion to kill

(Pettigrew, 2017). Higgs, Carter, Stefenska et al. (2017) explored post-mortem sexual interference of offenders (PMSIO) who sexually assaulted their victims after killing them. The PMSIO are offenders interested in necrophilia and need to kill to become sexually aroused.

Research Approach

The analysis utilized within the current study was a thematic analysis. This type of analysis identified patterns within the data to capture similarities and differences among the case participants (see Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Reviewing the data multiple times helped to create ideas for coding. I created memos to track the data gathered from the sources that assisted with coding. Memos connected the relationships within the data concepts (Soares et al., 2015). I recorded my thoughts and additional questions to further guide the analysis.

Coding facilitated the evaluation of the relationship between the categories and subcategories (Soares et al., 2015). I extracted the codes and categories from the data to identify themes that explored the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The themes organized the data in manageable sections that helped identify data's meaning (see Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Summary

Researchers have identified a link between traumatic childhood events and a child's emotional and behavioral development related to future sexual criminal activity. The literature reviewed within this chapter consistently supported those children who experienced abuse of any kind were more likely to commit crimes starting in

adolescence. Children internalize the abuse as a rejection from their primary caregiver, leading to the misinterpretation of others' behaviors and emotions (Carter et al., 2017). As a part of this process, an offender creates sexual fantasies to escape feelings of rejection and developed paraphilic behaviors for their sexual arousal.

Theories such as TCM and RPA identify how a person fails to learn to connect and understand the way another feels. As children, serial sexual murderers are more likely to experience psychological abuse. To cope with abuse, the child dissociates and creates sexual fantasies. The sexual fantasies help them self-soothe and create feelings of revenge and control.

Past researchers have studied the characteristics of sexual offenders and sexual murderers to create distinct categories of offenders. These categories became known as typologies. The typologies are not scientifically supported and are under review. There are consistent themes among different typologies, which includes anger, sadistic, opportunistic, and compensatory behaviors (Beauregard & Proulx, 2016). These typologies do not explain why a person may escalate to commit serial sexual murder but provides characteristics of the offender.

Children could internalize trauma and create schemas, fantasies, and progress to acting out the fantasies through sexual violence. Children who feel rejected create and create a world where they feel accepted and sexually fantasize. Carter et al. (2017) reported that a past study conducted by Beauregard and Proulx (2007) found that serial murderers would disclose their sexual fantasies began during childhood or adolescence. Serial murderers who wanted to feel as though they were in control became angry when

rejected. These offenders could not feel empathy for others and were more likely than to commit violent sexual crimes such as serial sexual homicide.

Paraphilic behaviors develop from childhood abuse. Individuals use objects to create and enhance sexual arousal. They engage in hobbies or jobs that provided objects for their paraphilic behaviors. There are types of paraphilia that lead to criminal acts such as stalking, peeping, or stealing objects from victims' homes. Individuals may have multiple paraphilia and gravitate towards the one that provides the most arousal. When these, along with sexual fantasies, no longer provide the same level of arousal, an individual could escalate to acting out their fantasies on victims. Serial sexual murderers commonly use sadism and necrophilia during or after the serial sexual murder to gain a sense of control and revenge and avoid feeling rejected.

The literature reviewed in chapter 2 focused on the characteristics and etiology of sexual behaviors and criminal acts such as serial sexual murders. Researchers have revealed that sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia were part of serial sexual murder, but there was limited data regarding the descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers.

I conducted a qualitative study to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The study's findings may help expand knowledge related to the progression and motives of sexual violence. This study may assist law enforcement, school staff, and mental health professionals identify risk factors for future sexual violence and creating profiles to detect offenders' potential patterns and decrease their possibility of escalating to murder.

Chapter 3 reviews the role and responsibility of the researcher in a qualitative study. The four steps of the thematic analysis describe the steps utilized to answer the research questions. The steps include coding, categories, and the creation of the themes. Chapter 3 includes the criteria for selecting the case participants, coding, analysis, and verification of the results. Chapter 3 thoroughly reviews the criteria for the case participants, data sources, the ethical concerns, and the coding procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. A multiple exploratory case study design was selected as the methodology for this study. I conducted a thematic analysis to analyze the data and identify patterns. Through this analysis I documented the case participants' similarities and differences (see Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Data were gathered from secondary sources based on direct reports from the offender, victims, witnesses, and investigations. Chapter 3 provides the rationale for the multiple exploratory case study. This chapter provides my roles and responsibilities, which included coding and analyzing the data and identifying ways for me to minimize bias through triangulation, examination, and reflection of thoughts and emotions.

The current chapter also provides the criteria for the selection of the case participants. Each case met the FBI's definition of a serial murderer and sexual homicide. I selected 12 U.S. male case participants who were identified as serial sexual murderers. Data regarding these case participants were accessible from public records, biographies, and documentaries. Studying serial sexual murderers could have led to potential risks in the study, including the truthfulness of the offender, victims, and witnesses' statements. Truthfulness was challenging to verify because the case participant may have been deceased and direct interviews were not conducted.

The theoretical foundations of Hickey's TCM and RPA provided a foundational context to understand how human growth and development impact the progression of becoming a serial sexual murderer. Previous research indicated the characteristics of an

offender who became a serial sexual murderer (Reid et al., 2019). These characteristics consisted of distress, rejection, insecure attachment, lack of social relationships, and childhood trauma. Child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia are rooted in these contexts. Gaining this foundation provided an opportunity to explore the offender's mindset at the time of the sexual murder.

Data were analyzed and coded to identify themes. The themes helped me identify the role of sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The data were stored in NVivo 12 software and assist in the coding and identify themes. Chapter 3 presents discussions related to trustworthiness, credibility, triangulation, dependability, and conformability of the study. Findings may contribute to the early identification of risk factors for future sexual violence by creating a profile for a sexual offender who may be at risk for escalating toward serial sexual murder.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were used to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers:

RQ1: What is the role of childhood sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ2: What is the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ3: What is the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers?

The central phenomenon of this study was child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. The secondary concepts, which included trauma and social relationships, addressed the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal

paraphilia in serial sexual murders. These concepts were presented in research conducted by Reid et al. (2019) and Morono et al. (2020).

Qualitative researchers seek to understand the perspective of an individual who experienced the phenomenon. Case studies are used in the social sciences to explore the groups' reaction to the phenomenon in a meaningful way (see Ingham-Broomfield, 2015). Multiple exploratory case study was the methodology for the current study because it allowed me to gain insight and knowledge about real-world subjects related to the phenomenon (see Ingham-Broomfield, 2015). This methodology was used to analyze the real-life experiences of the case participants through stories documented within secondary sources.

Role of the Researcher

This study required me to gather, analyze, interpret, and reflect on the gathered data. I gathered data related to the case participants' child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia from secondary sources including journals, books, public records, and documentaries. These sources provided insight into the case participants' thoughts, actions, and behaviors. The data were coded to include specific words or phrases to identify themes. Data were not gathered through direct interviews or observations of the offenders, victims, witnesses, or investigators.

Qualitative research has the risk of being influenced by researcher bias. This bias can result from viewing data from a subjective perspective. Another risk is misinterpretation and omission by a single reviewer. The topics addressed in the current study may have been challenging to review because of the horrible pain inflicted on

others. The researcher's role is essential to mitigate personal biases related to different world perspectives (Costa et al., 2016). It is through the personal lens that the researcher interprets and reflects on the behaviors of others. I reflected on personal reactions, emotions, and beliefs related to the data to avoid potential bias. I limited researcher bias to increase the analyzed data's accuracy by completing thorough documentation and routinely checking personal bias. The process of verifying biases was done through an organized and structured process.

Data were entered and stored in NVivo 12 software to provide the study's structure and reduce the possibility of human error. This software provided the ability to organize and store digital data. The software assisted me in documenting codes, analyzing coded data, and identifying themes. Additional ways to sort through massive amounts of data included typing notes and memos related to the study (see Walliman, 2017).

As the researcher, I was responsible for identifying and addressing ethical obligations related to the study and selected participants. The ethical standards must be met to identify and avoid the potential for harm through this study's use or results (Walliman, 2017). Even though I did not directly work with participants, sensitive data about the offenders and victims were reviewed and handled appropriately. It was essential to protect the privacy of those involved with these participants to avoid causing additional trauma.

Methodology

When conducting a qualitative study, the researcher can identify and select the case participants. It is essential to recognize that the data can be applied to real-world experience during the selection process. I used nonprobability sample because it allowed me to explore the phenomenon and identify themes related to child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia in serial sexual murders. This process relied on my perspective regarding selecting the case participants who fell into these perspectives. When the study mirrors the real world, there is an indication that there is internal and external validity (see Walliman, 2017).

I relied on a specific phenomenon to answer the research questions and focused on the most appropriate selection method for the case participants. The multiple exploratory case study included a homogenous group. I selected 12 U.S. male case participants who met the FBI's definition of serial murder and sexual crime. The case participants described their sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. Because each participant met the selection criteria, 12 participants were expected to satisfy the saturation strategy.

The case participants were selected from those identified as a serial sexual murderers based on the FBI's definition of sexual murder. The case participants included serial sexual murderers who resided in the United States. I excluded female case participants and offenders who committed crimes toward children. I used the serial sexual murderers' criteria to explore child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia statements.

The research was conducted through a search of serial sexual murderers within the Radford University database. This database contained 4,743 U.S. and international serial killers. A second database created by Dr. Eric Hickey was used to identify the case participants further. Hickey compiled data regarding 500 serial sexual murderers. These databases provided critical data regarding the offenders' childhood, criminal histories, relationships, employment history, and an outline of the crimes committed. These databases helped me determine the participant selection based on the details provided.

Instrumentation

Qualitative research involves the researcher as the instrument for gathering data. The researcher is responsible for reviewing the data, creating codes, and analyzing data gathered from available sources. Data gathered may include verbal statements, media posts, documentaries, and journal articles. These types of sources were essential in the current study because in-person interviews were not conducted. While examining the data, I considered Hickey's TCM and RPA theoretical foundations. Once the data were gathered, they were entered and stored in NVivo 12 software.

Instruments

Qualitative research does not require specific instruments to gather data. I served as the sole instrument for the study. Researcher bias was challenging to avoid because the I could have influenced the collection and analysis of data. To prevent this from occurring, each case was coded and analyzed consistently. Coding was completed multiple times to increase the accuracy of the findings.

I reviewed and coded the descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia used by the case participants. As the researcher, I included the same data related to trauma and relationships based on the theoretical frameworks. It was essential to use multiple sources to assemble data to answer the three research questions. Using multiple sources and conducting multiple rounds of coding helped me prevent researcher bias.

Data Collection

Data were gathered from multiple secondary sources. These included archived records, transcripts, peer-reviewed journal articles, and biographies. Selected sources focused on 12 male serial sexual murders who resided in the United States. A careful review of the data revealed ideas, themes, and patterns. Categories were created and linked with themes. The findings may lead to the development of explanations regarding how sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia influence serial sexual murderers.

Research Question 1

Secondary source data were related to the descriptions of childhood sexual fantasies of serial sexual murderers. The data gathered from these sources were reviewed, coded, and analyzed to explore the role of childhood sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers. Theoretical foundations of trauma and relationships were used to analyze the data.

Research Question 2

Secondary source data were related to the descriptions of adult sexual fantasies of serial sexual murderers. The data gathered from these sources were reviewed, coded, and

analyzed to explore the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers.

Theoretical foundations of trauma and relationships were used to analyze the data.

Research Question 3

Secondary source data were related to the descriptions of criminal paraphilia of serial sexual murderers. The data gathered from these sources were reviewed, coded, and analyzed to explore the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers.

Theoretical foundations of trauma and relationships were used to analyze the data.

Microsoft Word and Excel documents were used to create a log and master codebook. Compiled data were entered into NVivo. This software helped me organize the data within the identified codes and analyze the data to identify patterns, prospective explanations, and answers to the research questions. The data were reviewed many times so the findings would be accurately reflected.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is flexible and useful to gather different perspectives from each case participant related to the phenomenon and themes. I gathered and analyzed the data simultaneously during this qualitative study (see Costa et al., 2016). Completing a thematic analysis involved a deductive approach because the theoretical foundation drove the development of categories and linked patterns (see Costa et al., 2016). Using this type of analysis enabled me to identify, organize, describe, and report themes from the data. I used NVivo software to store, organize, and analyze the data gathered from secondary sources.

Secondary sources included biographies, transcripts, peer-reviewed journals, and documentaries. When researching the case participants' data, I endeavored to reach a saturation point, which meant there was no longer a need for additional sampling (see Costa et al., 2016). The analysis were conducted through multiple phases.

The first phase of the thematic analysis required an in-depth understanding of the data. The data were reviewed multiple times because there was not a second reviewer or coder. While reviewing the data, I documented thoughts related to the theoretical foundation. This process allowed me to create ideas for coding.

The next phase included creating the initial codes that were identified by reviewing the data multiple times. Codes enabled me to distinguish specific characteristics that were identified in the data. A consistent approach for coding was needed to be maintained throughout the analysis. Creating a coding framework helped me increase the analysis's credibility, which was essential because there was only one coder.

A deductive process was used instead of an inductive process to establish the initial codes because the initial codes were selected based on the three research questions. The initial codes included child sexual fantasies, adult sexual fantasies, and criminal paraphilia. Once the codes were identified, I began to categorize the codes. The identification and meaning of the categories were related to the experiences of the case participants.

The fourth phase of the thematic analysis included reviewing the themes created from the coding process. Themes began to link the data through a deductive process. In this phase, the themes were refined and determined to be a coherent pattern. Validity was

ensured through the accuracy of the reflections of the meanings within the data. As the themes were reviewed, I determined that some could be collapsed into one theme or separated to make additional themes. This phase enabled me to identify more specific themes and how they were linked together if they were not relevant to the study.

After I revised the themes, I examined if they related to the study. When creating the names of the themes, I was clear as to what they described. The creation of themes was never final until all the data had been reviewed. When all the phases are completed, the findings were described in the study results section.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I used multiple sources to identify patterns that increased the credibility of the study (Suter, 2014). Creditability was accomplished through triangulation and saturation with the use of reliable data sources, multiple theories, and multiple rounds of coding. I used 12 U.S. male case participants, which fit the definition of a serial murderer per the FBI and sexual murder. These participants verbalized their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilic behaviors. As the researcher, I was responsible to be reflective to avoid researcher bias.

Transferability

When there is evidence to support the generalizations related to the study's finding, this is considered transferability (Suter, 2014). As a part of this research, I used a cross-case comparisons to increase transferability. To achieve transferability within this study, I needed to ensure that the analysis and coding were detailed. I conducted to

multiple rounds of coding to help other researchers transfer the outcomes to replicate the study.

Dependability

Dependability is a concept related to the study's reliability (Suter, 2014). If the study were repeated, research findings should be similar by completing a thorough review of the sources multiple times, taking notes, and coding. I created notes on each case to increase the dependability. The notes identified case participants with similar experiences. To ensure the process was logical, I retraced the steps I had documented.

Confirmability

I was clear and accurate with the case participants' words and actions to create conformability within this study. The findings were reflected through the conclusion of each step as well as the discussion of the findings. As the researcher, I was responsible to control personal bias (Suter, 2014). I remained neutral during all phases of the research. Confirmability was carried out through self-reflection and exploring the data with the dissertation committee chair for this researcher, the content expert. Reviewing the crimes committed by serial rapists and murderers was difficult. I needed to be mindful and alert for any rise in personal bias to prevent interference with the data reviewed.

Ethical Procedures

Using secondary historical sources, limited ethical concerns related to the treatment of the case participants. I only used sources that were publicly available. Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the study proposal to ensure participant safety and well-being.

I did not conduct in person interview or direct observations with the case participants, victims, or law enforcement involved with the cases. Confidentiality agreements were not required to be created or signed by the participants. Since there were not interviews or direct contact with human participants, there was not a concern regarding power, control, and coercion. No funding was offered or used to conduct this study.

I created safeguards to protect the data collected for each case participant. Individuals who were not a part of the study did not have access to the data. All notes were kept in a secure area, and my computer was password protected. Finally, as with conformability, I needed to remain neutral through the process. This data was challenging to review, and my personal biases had to remain out of the process.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided the rationale for the use of a multiple exploratory case study. This methodology was chosen because it was determined to be the best way to address the three research questions. This chapter provided an overview of my roles and responsibilities which included identifying way to minimize my biases through triangulation, examination and reflection of my thoughts and emotions. As the researcher, I was responsible for identifying and addressing ethical obligations related to the study and case participants.

Chapter 3 provided criteria for the selection of the case participants. I selected each participant based on the FBI's definition of serial murderer and sexual murderer. A total of 12 participants were selected and satisfied the saturation level. I gathered the data

from public records, biographies, and documentaries. Using this population could have potential limitation based on the accuracy of the data gathered from these sources. The truthfulness of the offender, victims, and witness statements accuracy could not be validated.

The phenomenon that was studied was child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of serial sexual murderers. Keywords within the searchers were used to identify sources provided data on the specific case participant. I analyzed the data to help answer the three research questions. As the researcher, I reviewed the data multiple times to help with this process. There was only one coder for this study.

To gather and analyze data it involved multiple steps. The first step consisted of coding, which allowed me to connect themes within the data. Additional themes can be created through mind mapping to review the primary terms. There was a process to create the study as trustworthy and ethical. Throughout this process, I monitored personal biases and ensured that the data gathered was from professional and reliable resources to maximize the amount of data utilized. As a single reviewer, the reflection on the personal bias occurred throughout the study. The data was stored within NVivo 12 software. Using this software helped to prevent human error when I conducted coding and provided a safe and secure area for storing data.

Case participant selection was systematic and not based on the researcher's preferences. This study consisted of 12 U.S. male case participants who met the criteria of serial murderers based on the FBI's definition and met the criteria for sexual crimes. Selecting 12 case participants was over the recommended number of cases to meet a case

study (see Walliman, 2017) and saturation. Additional data for the selected cases was based on the theoretical foundation themes of trauma and relationships.

Chapter four reviews the results of this study. Within this chapter, data is identified and discussed. An in-depth review of the data, analysis, and outcomes is provided, including the identified data sources, themes, and outcomes, and described how the analyzed data answered the research questions and the study's trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. I attempted to fill a gap regarding detailed descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia of serial sexual murderers. The research method used for this study was a multiple exploratory case study. Findings may help law enforcement, school staff, and treatment providers identify risk factors for future violence, profile potential offenders, and create appropriate treatment modalities.

Researchers have identified childhood trauma as a reason children develop maladaptive coping mechanisms such as sexual fantasies and paraphilia (Reid et al., 2019). These coping mechanisms escalate to sexual violence for the offender to gain power and control. Even though researchers have identified that serial sexual murderers suffer from child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia, limited research had been conducted to understand their role in serial sexual murders.

The central phenomenon of this study was child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. The theoretical foundations helped me identify the secondary concepts of trauma and social relationships. Recent research by Reid et al. (2019) and Morono (2020) presented concepts related to this study. A thematic analysis assisted in answering the three research questions for this study. The theoretical foundations guided the development of codes and patterns that were used to identify themes through a deductive process (see Costa et al., 2016). The following research questions were used to

explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers.

RQ1: What is the role of childhood sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ2: What is the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ3: What is the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers?

This chapter includes a review of the research setting and the collection of secondary sources. Next, descriptions of the demographics and characteristics of the selected case participants are presented. Next, I explain the steps to identify, gather, code, and create themes from data used in this study. I describe how trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were maintained. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Setting

Data regarding case participants were accessible from public records, biographies, and documentaries. Published books provided biographical and historical data about offenders' lives and facilitated understanding of their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. These sources offered insight into the case participants' thoughts, actions, and behaviors leading up to and after the sexual murder. Documentaries provided factual evidence from or related to case participants that included their life experiences, how they lived, and what they believed compelled them to kill their victims. Case participants provided descriptions of their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia within these secondary sources.

Demographics

This multiple exploratory case study included a homogenous group. For this study, the case participants met the qualifications of sexual murder derived from the FBI's definition. All serial sexual murderers included in the case study resided in the United States. I excluded female case participants and offenders who committed crimes toward children under 15. Because all participants met the same criteria, I used a sample size of 12 to ensure data saturation. Documentation included descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia as reported by the case participants (see Table 1). The level of saturation met the maximum quality of the data.

Table 1

Case Participants

Case participant	Case participant race	Case participant sexuality	# of convicted murders	Age of victims
Joel Rifkin	White	Heterosexual	9	21–39
Ed Kemper	White	Heterosexual	10	15–72
Gary Ridgeway	White	Heterosexual	48	15–38
Jerry Brudos	White	Heterosexual	3	19–23
Keith Jespersen	White	Heterosexual	8	21–41
Antone Costa	White	Heterosexual	2	16–25
Richard Cottingham	White	Heterosexual	6	19–29
Bobby Joe Long	White	Heterosexual	10	18–22
William Suff	White	Heterosexual	19	23–42
George Russell Jr.	Black	Heterosexual	3	24–36
Robert Berdella	White	Homosexual	6	20–30
Robert Hansen	White	Heterosexual	17	17–41

Data Collection

I identified the case participants by verifying they met the criteria for the study, which included male perpetrators who killed two or more individuals ages 15 and above in the United States. I selected serial murderers from Radford University's database, which contained 4,743 U.S. and international serial killers. To identify the case participants, I reviewed each serial murderer to determine whether they met the criteria for the study. I cross-referenced these serial sexual murderers using Dr. Eric Hickey's database.

I documented all male serial sexual murderers within the United States and their victims' age ranges in an Excel worksheet. Documenting the ages of the serial sexual murderers' victims assisted me in determining the final 12 case participants because the criteria for this study focused on case participants whose victims were age 15 and above. Serial sexual murderers whose victims were under 15 were excluded due to pedophilia.

Data Analysis

I gathered and analyzed data simultaneously while completing this qualitative case study. Peer-reviewed journals, videos, and biographical books provided perspectives on each case participant from the perpetrators, victims, families, and law enforcement. I reviewed each secondary source a minimum of two times to maintain accuracy and transferability. Highlighting passages from journal articles and books within the secondary sources helped me create codes. In addition, information gathered through video was transcribed and entered in Excel worksheets for each case participant and reviewed a minimum of two times to translate the information accurately.

A deductive process directed the thematic analysis in which I gathered secondary sources to answer the three research questions. I uploaded the Microsoft Excel worksheets, transcripts, and peer-reviewed journals into NiVivo 12 software. The initial codes along with 13 more were created from the review of the sources and were identified as individual nodes within Nivio 12. I merged the codes that were similar in meaning to create categories. Finally, the commonalities and differences among the categories were identified to create the final four themes.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I was the only instrument in collecting and analyzing data in this study (see Creswell, 2014). For qualitative research to be credible, data must align with the case participants' experiences, thoughts, and reactions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). An exploratory case study was the best method to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and reactions of the case participants related to the phenomenon in the three research questions (see Merriam, 2009). I was responsible for collecting , analyzing, and interpreting the data to identify themes from the information gathered.

Patterns within the multiple secondary sources increased the study's credibility (see Suter, 2014). Triangulation and saturation were ensured by using reliable data sources, multiple theories, and multiple data coding. To ensure credibility, I used 12 U.S. male case participants who met the definition of a serial murderer per the FBI and criteria for a sexual murder. These participants verbalized their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilic behaviors. I was reflective to avoid researcher bias.

Transferability

The information gathered within this study may contribute to the field of research related to the topic of study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). When there is evidence to support study's findings, that will be considered transferability (see Suter, 2014). I used cross-case comparisons to increase transferability.

I also employed detailed coding and analysis to ensure transferability in this study. Using reputable secondary sources regarding the serial sexual murderers within the United States helped me increase the trustworthiness of this study. It was important to conduct multiple rounds of coding so that other researchers could replicate the study and transfer outcomes. I described the phenomenon and experiences to account for data saturation.

Dependability

Dependability is a concept related to the study's reliability (Suter, 2014). Findings should be similar for those who may repeat the current study. The study could be repeated by reviewing the sources multiple times, taking notes, and coding. Creating notes on each case increased dependability to identify case participants with similar experiences. This process was logical and thorough to retrace the documented steps.

To determine conclusions, I created detailed descriptions related to the collection and understanding of the data. I reviewed the data and created codes and categories from the passages within the secondary sources. After multiple rounds of reviewing the data, I created four themes from the categories. Reviewing the themes multiple times helped me support the conclusions.

Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the researcher's ability to reflect the case participants' experiences, thoughts, and behaviors accurately. I was clear and accurate with the case participants' words and actions to create confirmability in this study. Throughout the study, I needed to remember that researcher bias could be a potential barrier due to me being the only researcher (see Suter, 2014). Throughout the study, I strove to remain neutral through all phases. Confirmability was ensured through self-reflection and exploring the data with a content expert. Reviewing the crimes committed by serial sexual murderers was difficult. However, taking the time to review the data and allowing time between reading about a new case participant was helpful. I was mindful and alert for any indication of researcher bias to prevent interference in the data reviewed.

Results

The data analysis indicated themes related to the three research questions based on a homogenous group of 12 male U.S. case participants. Table 2 provides an overview of the codes, categories, and themes identified in this study based on the data gathered from secondary sources. Hickey's TCM and RPA were the theoretical frameworks used to analyze the data.

Table 2*Codes, Categories, and Themes*

Code	Category	Theme
Adult sexual fantasies	Ability to harness internal anger	Motivation for possession, control, and release
Fascination with victims	Gain a sense of relief	
Harbor immense rage		
Masturbated over trophies		
Memories of the murder		
Satisfy needs		
Childhood abuse	Avoid feelings of abandonment	Escape feelings of abandonment
Childhood sexual fantasies	Release feelings of resentment	
Domineering parent		
Fetish		
Criminal paraphilia		
Pleasure from inflicting pain	Obtain a sense of control to avoid rejection	The use of objects and violent actions to gain satisfaction Create a false sense of relationships
Sex with corpses		
Teased/bullied by peers	Internalized feelings of inadequacies and helplessness	
Feeling lonely		
Rejected		

Research Question 1

Using secondary sources, I reviewed, coded, categorized, and analyzed the role of child sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers. The initial code identified within the first research question was childhood sexual fantasies. Additional codes were created and included domineering parent and child abuse. The categories labeled as avoid feelings of abandonment and release feelings of resent originated from the codes. The final stage was identifying the theme escape feelings of abandonment.

Research Question 2

Using secondary sources, I reviewed, coded, categorized, and analyzed the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers. The initial code identified within the second research question was adult sexual fantasies. After reviewing the secondary resources, additional codes were identified as fascination with victims, harbor immense rage, and masturbate over trophies. The categories labeled ability to harness inner rage and gain a sense of relief originated from the codes. The final stage was identifying the theme motivation for possession, control, and release.

Research Question 3

Using secondary sources, I reviewed, coded, categorized, and analyzed the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The initial code identified within the third research question was criminal paraphilia. After reviewing the secondary resources, additional codes from the passages included pleasure through inflicting pain, sex with corpses, teased or bullied by peers, feeling lonely, and rejected. The categories originated from the codes were labeled as obtain a sense of control to avoid rejection, internalized feelings of inadequacies, and helplessness. The final stage was identifying the themes that created a false sense of a relationship and the use of objects and violent actions to gain sexual satisfaction.

Case Participant: Ed Kemper

Ed Kemper, also known as the co-ed killer, murdered eight victims between 1972 and 1973 in Santa Cruz, California (Murderpedia, 2017c; Radford University, 2006b). In 1964, he was convicted of killing his grandparents. Kemper started life with a troubled

childhood. His parents divorced when he was 12, but prior to the divorce, the marriage was unstable. Kemper felt rejected by both parents. He developed a deep hatred for his mother. During his childhood, he pretended to play “gas chamber” with his sister (Schuster, 2017a). She reported that he would feel that was where he would end up (Burke, 2021). As a teenager, Kemper moved in with his grandparents after his mother did not want him and his father could no longer afford to take care of him. Kemper became very angry with his grandmother, who reminded him of his overbearing mother. He then murdered his grandparents. Kemper was convicted of their murders and sent to juvenile hall.

When he was released from juvenile hall, Kemper moved back to his mother’s home. They would continue to argue, and his killing spree began. Kemper preferred to pick up young college girls who were hitchhiking. He became strategic as to how he dismembered and disposed of the bodies. His hatred for his mother progressed to the point where he killed her and her best friend. Kemper turned himself in and was convicted of eight murders. He is still serving his sentence at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, CA (Radford University, 2006b).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Beginning at age four, Kemper remembered fantasizing about a mother and father who loved and cared for their children together (Edmund Kemper Stories, 2020). While he was in school, teachers labeled him as a constant daydreamer. By the age of 10, he started having sexual fantasies that revolved around death and violently hurting others (Burke, 2021). Kemper found that fantasies allowed him to escape his reality and find a

sense of security. In an interview, Kemper stated, “well, people were still around, but they were inanimate they could not affect me it could not hurt me” (Schuster, 2017).

According to his sister, she could see the changes in Kemper’s behavior because of being rejected by his father (Burke, 2021).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Kemper saw his victims as possessions. He confessed that “I wanted the girls for myself-as possessions.” (Cheney,1976, p. 150). After they were dead, Kemper could do whatever he wanted to the bodies. He said, “Taking life away from them, a living human being, and having possession of everything that used to be theirs” (Cheney,1976, p. 45).

Kemper ate pieces of his victims to possess them fully (Burke, 2021). His mother’s murder provided a sense of relief. Kemper humiliated her by having sex with her head, yelling at her, and shutting her up by putting her larynx into the garbage disposal (Schuster, 2017a).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Kemper became attached to his victims and reported, “With strangulation, there seemed to be intimacy with it” (Schuster, 2017a). He would bury the heads in a shallow grave so he could go back and visit. By killing his victims, Kemper established a relationship with them; otherwise, women were distant and unwilling to share (Cheney,1976). During an interview, Kemper stated, “I was scared to death of a male/female relationship.” (Schuster, 2017a)

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Kemper would become excited as he hunted for his victims. He became sexually satisfied while having sex with one of his victims while she died (Cheney,1976). After Kemper killed his victims, he would take them to his bedroom. Kemper fondled and admired the dead bodies for some time and then photographed the victims at different stages of the dismemberment. He reported a sexual thrill that came from decapitating the bodies. Before he would dispose of the body parts, Kemper would have sex with the victims' corpses (Cheney,1976). Kemper reported, "I would eat the bodies. Cut pieces off. Parts of the thighs. It was just little chunks" (Burke, 2021). Saving the body pieces for him to eat was erotic, and he thought it would help keep him from committing more murders (Burke, 2021).

Case Participant: Joel Rifkin

During the 1990s, Joel Rifkin committed 17 murders in New York City, NY. He struggled during his childhood to develop friends (Murderpedia, 2017g; Radford University, 2005d). As a result, Rifkin retreated into his fantasies. As he grew into adulthood, Rifkin became obsessed with prostitutes. He would work to pay for his addiction to prostitutes. Rifkin murdered his first victim in 1989 by beating her to death. He did not feel like she gave him the attention he wanted. It was another year before he committed his subsequent murder. After that, the murders happened closer together.

Rifkin was arrested in 1993 after two state troopers pulled him over for not having a license plate. While being interrogated for eight hours, he admitted to committing 17 murders. Rifkin pleaded not guilty and went to trial. The jurors took little time to

determine he was guilty and sentenced him to 186 years in prison. Rifkin attempted to appeal his sentence but was denied. He serves his time in Clinton Correctional Facility in NY (Murderpedia, 2017g; Radford University, 2005d).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Rifkin's birth mother gave him up for adoption at three weeks old. He was raised by good parents, but eventually, he failed to meet his father's expectations (Kat Wounded Cougar, 2015; Rosewood & Lo, 2018). Rifkin's father let him know that he was disappointed. He experienced abuse and mistreatment daily from his peers. Rifkin confessed, "Anyone looking to make a reputation as a local hood, I was one of the first kids they looked for" (Jesusmalaarki, 2012). He began hiding in places where he could not be found and developed a fantasy life. Rifkin stated in an interview, "I developed certain avoidance habits" (Jesusmalaarki, 2012). He would often retreat to his bedroom, where he felt safe.

Rifkin's fantasy life began to overpower his reality. The sexual fantasies became graphic and violent. He would have fantasies of women being dominated, abused, and gladiatorial fantasies of women fighting over him (Kat Wounded Cougar, 2015). Rifkin also fantasized about raping and stabbing girls (Rosewood & Lo, 2018).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

As an adult, his sexual fantasies of raping and stabbing women continued. Rifkin became infatuated and preoccupied with prostitutes. He learned that he could pay a prostitute \$20 to keep their full attention and avoid rejection (Jesusmalaarki, 2012). Rifkin confessed, "self-esteem wise as long as you had the price of admission, that was it,

there was no rejection” (Jesusmalaarki, 2012). His fantasies progressed to strangling prostitutes, which soon became a reality (Rosewood & Lo, 2018). Killing enabled him to manipulate and control his victims. By having supreme control over their lives, he began to see himself as God-like (Miladinich, 2001).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Rifkin struggled to engage in relationships with women. Relationships for him were bound by fantasy, not reality. As he became obsessed with prostitutes, they were engaged in a fantasy affair in his mind (Rosewood & Lo, 2018). He became addicted to wanting and looking at prostitutes. Rifkin stated, “It would feel a lot less lonely” (Kat Wounded Cougar, 2015). Rifkin imagined the encounter as a conventional date. He became frustrated when the prostitute did not show interest in him. He would then become violent and commented, “strangling was intimate” (Kat Wounded Cougar, 2015)

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

As time passed, Rifkin’s lust for sex grew more robust. He never saw his victims as people, just as objects to sexually abuse and kill. Capturing his victims sexually aroused him (Miladinich, 2001). His actions fed into his fetish for sexual sadism. The lust for sex grew into a greater desire to kill his victims. Rifkin kept items from his victims so he could relive the murder and become sexually aroused (Rosewood & Lo, 2018; Kat Wounded Cougar, 2015). These items included jewelry, medications, and identifications.

Case Participant: Gary Ridgway

Gary Ridgway is known as the “Green River Killer.” During the 1980s and 1990s, it is thought that he murdered a total of 71 victims in the state of Washington

(Murderpedia, 2017c; Radford University 2005a). During his childhood, he witnessed violence between his parents. Ridgway was a bedwetter up to the age of 13 (Reichert, 2004). His mother humiliated him and triggered his first emotion of revenge toward women (Reichert, 2004, p. 282). Ridgway's peers bullied him, and to protect himself, he would isolate himself from others. As an adult, Ridgway became obsessed with prostitutes. Even during the time he was married, Ridgway would solicit prostitutes. He was described as hypersexual to the point that he would demand sex multiple times per day (Reichert, 2004).

Ridgway would gain the trust of the prostitute and strangle them from behind after sex. The murders took place at his home, truck, and secluded places. Detectives arrested Ridgway on November 20, 2001, on suspicion of four murders (Murderpedia, 2017c). He was found guilty and sentenced to 48 life sentences. However, a plea bargain helped identify the remains of his victims and saved him from being executed. As a result, Ridgway is serving his life sentence at Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, WA (Radford University, 2005a).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Ridgway was a chronic bedwetter up to age 13 (Papadopoulos, 2020a; Reichert, 2004). His mother would embarrass him in front of his siblings and then wash his genital area. At times she was not fully dressed. His father would tell stories of an employee caught having sex with a corpse at the dinner table. These factors greatly influenced Ridgway's sexual fantasies. He loved watching his mother sunbathe as he imagined having sex with her. Ridgway stated in an interview, "She was more just a sex object than

a mother” (Grow With Us 420, 2019). Ridgway added violence to his sexual fantasies during early adolescence. He would imagine having sex with his mother and cutting her throat. Ridgway stated “I thought of hurting her so she would shut up and leave me alone” (Grow With Us 420, 2019).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Ridgway felt that his hate for himself would go away if he were to kill his mother (Reichert, 2004, p. 274). He learned that if he hurt others and instilled fear in them, he could remain safe (Poyntz, 2021). Ridgway enjoyed hunting for his victims. The hunt provided a sense of power and control (Reichert, 2004). The victims existed to satisfy his needs and would become his possessions. Ridgway harbored immense rage toward women and eventually took out on prostitutes (Reichert, 2004). After killing his victims, he considered the corpses his sexual property (Reichert, 2004).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

As a teenager, Ridgway became aware of whom he desired and quickly realized that they would not date him. To remain close, he would stalk the girls (Reichert, 2004). He developed a fixation on prostitutes that lasted a lifetime. Ridgway later sought prostitutes to create the idea that he could befriend them (Reichert, 2004). He expected the prostitutes to act and appear to enjoy sex with him. Ridgway would become enraged if they did not react as he wanted or rejected him.

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

As Ridgway became an adult, his sexual fantasies remained violent. He would imagine live women placed on a pole and suffering (Reichert, 2004). Watching them

suffer was sexually satisfying. After Ridgway began murdering his victims, he found that murder was no longer sexually satisfying (Reichert, 2004). Nor could he have a sexual release with a live person. Ridgway could only have sex with a warm corpse (Poyntz, 2021).

Case Participant: Jerry Brudos

Jerry Brudos was known as the “The Lust Killer” and “Shoe Fetish Slayer,” who murdered four females between 1968 and 1969 in Portland, OR (Murderpedia, 2017f; Radford University, 2005c). Brudos was raised by a mother who was disappointed he was a boy. His fetish for shoes started at the early age of five (Rosewood, 2016a). The shoes became taboo because his mother made him feel like he did something wrong after finding the hidden shoes (Rosewood, 2016a). As a teenager, Brudos began stealing women’s shoes and undergarments.

When he became an adult, Brudos began to stalk women and steal their undergarments. When he murdered his victims, he would dress in their clothes and masturbate (Rosewood, 2016a). Once the police arrested him, Brudos pled guilty and sentenced him to life in prison. However, he was only convicted for three counts of murder, not four, and is still serving his prison sentence at Oregon State Penitentiary (Radford University, 2005c).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Brudos’s mother admitted that she was disappointed when he was born because she wanted a girl (Rosewood, 2016a; Schuster, 2017b). Throughout his childhood, he felt rejected by his mother, who showed favoritism towards his oldest brother. As a result, he

began fantasizing about kidnapping girls and holding them against their will (Rosewood, 2016a). His victims would plead for mercy in this fantasy and become sex slaves. The thought of holding a women captive was sexually exciting (Schuster, 2017b). Brudos's sexual fantasies became a way for him to seek revenge against women.

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Brudos liked the feeling of overpowering women. He forced his wife to walk around the house nude and in high heels while cleaning. Brudos would break into women's living areas and steal their undergarments and shoes. The thought of having these in his possession reinforced that he was in control (Schuster, 2017b). He continued to have sexual fantasies of women being his sex slave, and seeing them afraid was sexually stimulating (Rosewood, 2016a). As Brudos began murdering his victims, he would choose which one he wanted for his pleasure and believed the victims belonged to him (Rosewood, 2016a).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Brudos was awkward around girls and struggled to date (Rosewood, 2016a). He would make blind calls to find a date hoping that one would agree. One female who agreed quickly realized that something was not right due to his questions. Brudos would pick up a young female and talk to her as if they were on a date together even though they had just met.

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

As a child, Brudos developed a shoe fetish. He would steal girls' underwear and shoes for sexual satisfaction (Rosewood, 2016a; Schuster, 201b). Brudos began to

fantasize about freezing his murdered victims. His fantasy became a reality, allowing him to dress the victims and take pictures. The photographs would bring pleasure for Brudos while he held their undergarments (Rosewood, 2016a). He would remove the victim's feet and place them in the freezer to later dress the foot up with a high heel shoe for his sexual pleasure (Schuster, 2017b). In addition, Brudos found sexual satisfaction from violating dead bodies because he could act out his sexual fantasies (Schuster, 2017b). He could be as brutal as he wanted when his victims were dead.

Case Participant: Keith Jespersion

Keith Hunter Jespersion, also known as the "Happy Face Killer," was born in Canada but moved to the United States during his childhood (Murderpedia, 2017h; Radford University, 2005e). He killed eight women in five years across multiple states. Jespersion's father was abusive and an alcoholic. He was teased and bullied by his peers. Jespersion felt rejected by his family and peer group. As a result, he found pleasure in torturing animals. As early as ten years of age, he began thinking about what it would be like to kill a human being (Smith, 2016).

Jespersion became a truck driver which provided him the means to commit his murders. He would rape and strangle his victims. Jespersion would leave messages regarding his victims signed with a happy face (Parkes, 2021). On March 30, 1995, detectives arrested Jespersion. However, they did not have enough evidence to hold him (Murderpedia, 2017h). A couple of days later, Jespersion would turn himself in and confess to eight murders. Jespersion was sentenced to life in prison in Oregon and is still serving his time at Oregon State Penitentiary (Radford University, 2005e).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Jespersion was raised by a controlling alcoholic father and an extremely religious mother. He was the forgotten middle child. Jespersion was content to play by himself and created “Keith’s World,” where only he was allowed (Smith, 2016, p. 12). He saw himself as heroic in his imagination. If Jespersion were to find a friend, his father would become angry and stop the friendship. His peers also teased him, which reinforced that he did not need anyone to be in his life. Jespersion retreated further into his imagination (Smith, 2016).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Jespersion first realized that he enjoyed the feeling of control when he killed small animals because he had the power to control whether they lived or died (Parkes, 2021). Jespersion fantasized about kidnapping, overpowering, and raping girls to gain a feeling of control to make them his sex slaves (Smith, 2016). As he moved from fantasy to reality, Jespersion trapped and raped his victims before killing them. He sat by the victim’s body and felt a sense of power. Jespersion felt in control by holding the fate of his victims in his hands. He choked the victims until they were unconscious and allowed the victims to wake up (Smith, 2016). He repeated this cycle multiple times before he finally strangled them to death. Jespersion commented, “I felt so much power” “I then told her she was going to die and slowly strangled her” (Rieid et al., 2019).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Women frequently rejected Jespersion. He found he could only admire them from a distance. Jespersion had conflicting thoughts about the way women should be treated.

He thought they deserved to be treated well but then would fantasize about them becoming his sex slaves (Smith, 2016). Before having sex with his victims, Jesperson asked them to have sex as if they were in a real relationship (Smith, 2016). He told another victim that she would have to prove her love to him (Smith, 2016).

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Jesperson found enjoyment by having sex with a woman while she slept (Smith, 2016). He would tie women up, which would allow him to touch their bodies anywhere he wanted. Jesperson became sexually aroused while abusing his victims (Parkes, 2021). He would have sex with them as they were begging for mercy. Jesperson held the victim's fate in his power, which was sexually gratifying. One of his messages stated, "I beat her, I raped her, I killed her, and I liked it" (Parkes, 2021).

Case Participant: Richard Cottingham

Richard Cottingham, otherwise known as the "Torso Killer" and the "New York Ripper," committed six murders in New York and New Jersey between 1967 and 1980 (Murderpedia, 2017i; Radford University, 2007a). Cottingham remained isolated from others during his childhood to avoid his peers who teased him. However, during adolescence, he began to find big-breasted women attractive. Unfortunately, the research did not specify what triggered Cottingham to develop a fetish for big breasts.

Cottingham primarily chose prostitutes as his victims. He would have brutal sex and then murder them. While the victim was alive, Cottingham would tie them up, bite, and stab them (Rosewood, 2016b). After they were dead, he would mutilate their bodies. On one occasion, he attempted to burn the bodies. On May 22, 1980, Cottingham was

arrested and later convicted of murdering six victims. He is serving over 200 years in prison at the New Jersey State Prison (Radford University, 2007a).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Cottingham was raised by two loving parents in a middle-class society (Evans, 2014). He found it difficult to connect with his peers. His peers thought of him as “odd” (Rosewood, 2016b, p. 3). Cottingham became comfortable finding activities to do alone. He maintained his solitary activity through adolescence. Cottingham never had a girlfriend but shared that he was attracted to women with large breasts (Evans, 2014). He became obsessed with pornography and bondage.

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Cottingham gained pleasure in controlling others. He commented, “I can make people believe what I want them to believe” (Crime Scene Database, 2013). He liked the rush of adrenaline when he held a victim’s fate in his hands. Cottingham confessed, “It is Godlike” (Crime Scene Database, 2013). The control over women became sexually arousing. His victims were at his mercy and were used to fulfill his sadistic desires (Rosewood, 2016b).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Cottingham did not establish intimate relationships with women (Evans, 2014). He struggled to understand the basics of human relationships. Cottingham confused a man’s fantasy with what women would want from a relationship (Rosewood, 2016b). He only wanted to be with a prostitute because they would call him master and comply with

his sexual request. Interactions with prostitutes were labeled as a “date” (Rosewood, 2016b, p. 33).

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Cottingham developed a fetish for large breasts during childhood. His fetish continued into adulthood, along with sadistic sex. He would fantasize about torturing women who were at his mercy (Evans, 2014). As Cottingham began to murder his victims, he would leave savage bite marks on their breasts. Autopsy reports indicated victims had blood on their vagina, rectum, breasts, face, and mouth (Evans, 2014). Cottingham would force his victims to experience pain and humiliation. If they died before he was fully sexually satisfied, Cottingham would defile the bodies in horrific ways (Rosewood, 2016b). Torture was his true motivation, not the murder.

Case Participant: Dayton Leroy Rogers

Dayton Leroy Rogers, or the “Molalla Forest Killer,” was convicted of seven murders during 1987 in Oregon (Murderpedia, 2017b). He was raised by both of his biological parents. However, they adopted additional children, making him angry. Rogers then retreated into his fantasies and began committing criminal acts. As a teenager, he and his friends would shoot at cars and attempt to break into vehicles (Parkes, 2021). At 18, he was convicted of second-degree assault for stabbing a 15-year-old girl in the stomach and sent to a mental facility for sex offenders (Parkes, 2021).

As an adult, Rogers would solicit prostitutes and used the name “Steve the Gambler” (King, 2011, p.51). His suffering would be relieved by watching other people suffer. Rogers was identified after his last victim escaped in Denny’s parking lot, and a

witness ran over to help the victim. He was found guilty and sentenced to the death penalty. Rogers is still serving his time at Oregon State Penitentiary.

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Rogers grew up with an abusive father who beat him regularly (King, 2011, p. 156). His father moved the family frequently to find work, making it difficult for Rogers to develop friendships. During these times, the family would sleep in close quarters, and he stared at his sister's feet while the family slept. Rogers developed a fetish towards his sister's feet. He masturbated at night, thinking about, or looking at his sister's feet when his family slept (King, 2011). His fantasies escalated to violence, and he would imagine creating a torture chamber (King, 2011).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Rogers found that he enjoyed his sexual fantasies more than actual sex because he was in complete control. Fantasies allowed him to have control of the here-and-now (King, 2011). When he fantasized about bondage, Rogers imagined the tremendous amount of power he possessed over women who were incapacitated (King, 2011). Rogers would demonstrate his power when he captured his victims by restraining and killing them (Parkes, 2021).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

During late adolescence, Rogers attacked a 15-year-old girl with a knife because he felt that she had rejected him (King, 2011). He would tell his victims that he hated women. If his victims attempted to escape, Rogers considered this a rejection (King,

2011). He would thank his victims for going out with him and tell them he had the best time after assaulting them (King, 2011).

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Rogers bound his victims' hands together and gnawed on their feet while masturbating (King, 2011). He enjoyed the victims' wild display of fear and experienced intense sexual pleasure from the prolonged agony experienced by the victims (King, 2011). Rogers wanted his victims to resist because it was sexually arousing to him. The sight of blood caused Rogers to have an erection, and torture became a sexual thrill (King, 2011; Parkes, 2021).

Case Participant: William Suff

William Suff committed 13 murders between 1974 to 1991 in Texas and California. He was given the names "The Riverside Prostitute Killer" and "The Lake Elsinore Killer" (Murderpedia, 2017i; Radford University, 2005g). Suff grew up in an abusive home. He always strived to do things for others. Suff wanted approval from his peers and would do things that he thought gained attention.

Suff led two different lives. During the day, he went to work and appeared reasonably normal. After work, he raped, tortured, and murdered his victims. Once the victims died, he would have sex with the corpse (Tucker, 2016). Suff would cut off the victim's breast and save the meat to eat later (Tucker, 2016). The police arrested him after pulling him over for driving a stolen vehicle. Investigators gathered forensic evidence for two of his murders from the vehicle. He later admitted to killing ten other

victims and was found guilty of 12 counts of first-degree murder. Suff was sentenced to death. He is still on death row at San Quentin State Prison in California (Weller, 2016).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Suff grew up watching his father abuse his mother, and later his father abandoned his family. His mother was controlling and domineering. Suff isolated himself from others but strived to gain attention from his peers. Growing up, he was considered awkward and never had a girlfriend. He created a world where he would want to live.

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Suff learned how to manipulate people to gain control. He saw women as objects he could possess (Weller, 2016). He considered himself a woman's master and wanted them to become his love slaves. Suff would stalk females and find the hunt more exciting than the murder. Once he identified his victim, Suff would hear a voice inside his head that would tell him she was the one he wanted (Tucker, 2016). These women would become his sex slave within his fantasies and reality, making him feel Godlike (Tucker, 2016).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Suff had no attachment or bonds with a woman (Weller, 2016). At the same time, he held his victim's captive and would ask them if they loved him. Suff expected the victims to respond by saying "yes" and repeating "I love you back" (Tucker, 2016, p. 690). If they did not return his affection, Suff would become angry. However, once his victims were dead, he found that he could communicate the best (Tucker, 2016). First, Suff would ask his dead victims if they were dreaming about him even in death (Tucker,

2016). Then, he would confess his love while having sex with the dead body (Tucker, 2016).

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Suff enjoyed torturing his victims. He would brutally rape them and mutilate their bodies while they were still alive. For example, Suff mutilated his victim's breasts and tossed them like they were trash (Weller, 2016). He would continue to have sex with the victim after they were dead. The coroner found an intact light bulb in a victim's vagina (Parkes, 2020). The breast removed from his victims were frozen and later used in meals. Some say that he used the breast meat to make his award-winning chili, but that has never been proven.

Case Participant: George Russell Jr.

George Russell Jr. committed three murders in 1990 by brutally beating and rapping his victims. The murders were completed in Seattle, Washington, and he was named "The Charmer," "The Eastside Killer," and "The Bellevue Killer" (Murderpedia, 2017e; Radford University, 2005b). Russell's mother remarried when he was young. As a result, they relocated to Washington state. When he was 16, Russell was abandoned by his mother. His stepfather raised him even though he began acting out and committing minor crimes. Russell eventually quit school and moved out due to his stepfather's new wife, whom he hated.

Russell was considered charming, which helped him stay with multiple friends. He hardly worked but was able to have money. At 21, Russell began going to different clubs where he selected his victim. Once he captured them, Russell would viciously beat,

pose, and place different items, such as a gun or a vibrator, within the victims' orifices (Saffran, 2021). His friends assisted law enforcement to convict Russell of the three murders. He was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. Russell serves his time at the Stafford Creek Corrections Center in Aberdeen, Washington (Radford University, 2005b).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

He never knew his biological father and was raised by his stepfather after his mother left. Russell fantasized he had a family within the police department, where he spent much time (Olsen, 2018). However, Russell created this imaginary family while he committed minor crimes. He was very secretive about his home life and would communicate what he thought others wanted to hear (Olsen, 2018). Russell's mother moved back to Maryland when he was 16 years old. His mother chose to take his sister with her. His stepfather attempted to help, but Russell wanted nothing to do with the stepfather's structure and his new stepmother.

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

He wanted to be known as superman. Russell believed women had no value and wanted to control their reactions (Olsen, 2018). Therefore, Russell would befriend younger individuals. He found that young teenage girls were easy to manipulate for sex. Russell did not torture them, but he felt a sense of control since they would comply with his manipulations.

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Russell would create friendships based on lies. Those who knew him best were aware of his hate towards women and obsession with sex. When Russell turned 21, he went to the local bars and surrounded himself with women who annoyed him (Olsen, 2018). He was described as very charming and frequently watched certain women through the evening. Russell's victims became his way of getting revenge on his mother and stepmother.

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Each of Russell's victims were posed explicitly in different ways (Saffran, 2021; Olsen, 2018). Victims were raped with a blunt object, bitten, stabbed, and beat postmortem (Saffran, 2021). In addition, autopsy reports found evidence that objects were rammed into his victims' anus (Olsen, 2018).

Case Participant: Robert Berdella

Robert Berdella, or the "The Butcher of Kansas City," was a homosexual killer who murdered six victims in Kansas City, MO (Murderpedia, 2017j; Radford University, 2007b). He committed murders between 1984 to 1987. As a child Berdella's peers did not accept him, and to cope with the rejection, he would isolate and become known as a loner. His father died when he was a teenager. Berdella began identifying as a homosexual and started to have sexual fantasies of capturing victims to become his sex slaves during his teens.

Berdella chose drug addicts and male prostitutes for his victims. He would offer to assist them financially and provide a room to live. The victims were unaware that

Berdella wanted to bring his fantasy into reality by creating a sex slave. He would torture his victims for weeks or however long they could survive. Berdella would rape, sodomize, electrocute, and poison his victims (Rosewood, 2015). When his last victim escaped, the police arrested Berdella. (Rosewood, 2015). When the police searched his home, they found all the evidence to charge him with the murders. Berdella pled guilty and was sentenced to life. However, he died of natural causes after four years of incarceration.

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

During his childhood, Berdella's peers bullied him. He retreated to become a loner. Berdella's father died when he was a teenager, and at the same time, he realized that he was a homosexual. When his mother remarried, he felt rejected because he was no longer a part of her current life and was only part of her past (Becker, 2021; Papadopoulos, 2020b). After Berdella watched, the movie, "The Collector," he developed deviant sexual fantasies about capturing and torturing victims (Becker, 2021, p. 17).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Berdella developed a fetish towards taking prisoners (Rosewood, 2015). He became sexually excited, thinking of confinement and control of young men. Berdella's prisoners were for his sexual gratification. The goal was to make a permanent prisoner where he no longer had to fear them trying to escape or fight back (Rosewood, 2015). He would have total control of his captives (Papadopoulos, 2020b). Berdella branded one of his victims, indicating that he was Berdella's property (Papadopoulos, 2020b). He kept

detailed documentation of his torture, which allowed him to remember the sense of power he got through torturing his victims (Papadopoulos, 2020b; Rosewood, 2015, p. 15).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Berdella would engage with drug addicts and young male prostitutes but was repeatedly taken advantage of (Rosewood, 2015). In his mind, he thought he could help them. However, if he were attracted to the victims, he wanted to keep them as his slave. Berdella found that torturing young boys was more intimate (Becker, 2021).

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Berdella would masturbate to his sexual fantasies of bondage and inflicting pain. Once he fulfilled his fantasy of capturing his victims, he experimented with different torture methods to keep them as his sex slave. The torture included sodomizing an unconscious man, crushing the bones in the victims' hands while stroking his erection, and injecting them with poisonous liquids (Rosewood, 2015). Berdella's sexual enjoyment increased the more creative he was with his torture methods. The motive was to cause pain and push the human body to its extremes (Papadopoulos, 2020b). He called his victims his "play toys" to satisfy him (Becker, 2021, p.62; Rosewood, 2015, p. 31). Berdella kept a detailed log and photographs to help him monitor how to keep his sex slaves alive but also relive the torture (Papadopoulos, 2020b).

Case Participant: Robert Hansen

Robert Hansen, otherwise known as the "Alaska's Serial Killer," committed 17 to 21 murders between 1973 and 1983 in Alaska (Murderpedia, 2017k; Radford University, 2005f). He grew up with a father who made him feel worthless and peers would bully

him. Hansen was shy and rejected by girls. As a result, he began to fantasize about getting revenge.

Hansen would select prostitutes as his victims. He would kidnap and take them to his cabin, which he could only get to by plane. The victims were forced to act out his fantasies and would need to comply to survive. A few victims were hunted like animals. After his last victim escaped, the police arrested him. Hansen confessed to law enforcement and helped them locate the victims. He was found guilty of four murders and sentenced to 461 years in prison. Hansen died at the age of 74 while still incarcerated at Spring Creek Correctional Center in Seward, Alaska (Radford University, 2005f).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Hansen grew up with a dominating father who made him feel worthless. During childhood, he developed a stutter in which his peers teased him (Ortiz, 2021). Hansen stated in an interview, “I looked like a freak, and I sounded like one” (Emslie, 2021). Hansen felt that girls were the worst bullies. As a result of not being accepted at home or in school, the loneliness caused him to become interested in isolating activities such as hunting. In addition, Henson created revenge fantasies to hurt the girls who rejected him (Ortiz, 2021).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

To feel “masculine and powerful,” Hansen would blindfold his victims and take them to his cabin (Emslie, 2021). Hansen found there were times he felt he was not in control of situations, specifically if a woman gave him a “quicky” (Ortiz, 2021). To

maintain control over his victims, Hansen would humiliate and degrade them. He felt a sense of power when he took his victims to an isolated cabin and hunted them.

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Hansen desired to relate to females but feared rejection. According to Hansen, “I wanted a relationship, a good close friendship” (Emslie, 2021). Hansen wanted a good girl interested in him and not one who just wanted money. He would “date” prostitutes to act out his revenge fantasies (Ortiz, 2021, p. 16). When he was with a prostitute, he would demand them to say specific things. One example was, “tell me you want it” (Emslie, 2021). At first, he would appear to be friendly and purchase their services but would soon turn evil. Hansen would tell his victims that he would treat them special if they liked him.

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Hansen stated, that watching prostitutes walking the streets, “give me a sexual blow-up charge” (Emslie, 2021). Hansen handcuffed and raped his victims. He wanted them to fight back because that was part of the fun. Hansen stated, “She had to make, I guess, play out my fantasy. She had to come out and say we can do it, but it will cost you some money” (Emslie, 2021). Hansen made sure he was in charge and would force his victims to do humiliating things like flashing other drivers while riding in a car (Ortiz, 2021). When angered, Hansen became violent. What excited him the most was getting away with a crime which would cause him to near ejaculate (Ortiz, 2021).

Case Participant: Antone “Tony” Costa

Antone “Tony” Costa was convicted of killing four victims between 1968 and 1969 in Massachusetts (Murderpedia, 2017a; Radford University 2006a). His mother raised him after his father died while serving in the Navy. However, his mother did remarry and had another child. At the age of seven, Costa became fascinated by death (Rodman & Jordan, 2021). He purchased a taxidermy kit even though he did not know how to use it appropriately. Costa would kill and dismember small animals to practice taxidermy. He attempted to capture a neighbor girl and tie her up during his teens. Costa later broke into her room and fondled her while she slept (Rodman & Jordan, 2021).

When Costa was 18, he married a 14-year-old girl. He began to explore bondage and other deviant sexual activities with his wife. She grew tired of the sexual acts and stopped having sex with him. Years later, he raped her, but she did not consider it rape since they were married (Rodman & Jordan, 2021). He was unhappy in his marriage and began moving around and spending time with different women. These women began to disappear, and he was questioned about his involvement because they were last seen with him. Costa denied he murdered the victims but was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. Four years into his incarceration, Costa committed suicide (Weller, 2014).

Emergent Theme: Escape Feelings of Abandonment

Costa was an infant when his father died. As a child, he became obsessed with death (Rodman & Jordan, 2021; Weller, 2014). Costa told his mother that his father visited at night. He became very interested in taxidermy and would kill animals for

further practice. Costa was standoffish, sat in the back of the bus away from his peers, and preferred to stay alone (Weller, 2014).

Emergent Theme: Motivation for Possession, Control, and Release

Costa married a young girl who was only 14 (Rodman & Jordan, 2021). Marrying a young teenager made him feel like she was dependent, and he had control. He was looking for someone who would be submissive (Weller, 2014). Costa established friendships with others who were much younger, and he would use his intelligence to influence them. Costa would get very upset if someone challenged or accused him of being wrong (Weller, 2014).

Emergent Theme: Create a False Sense of Relationships

Costa did not allow individuals to get emotionally close. No one could console him if he were upset (Rodman & Jordan, 2021). Costa would become very angry with people if they mocked or rejected him.

Emergent Theme: Use of Objects and Violent Actions to Gain Satisfaction

Costa started his sadistic sexual practices with his wife. He burned and bruised her while having sex (Rodman & Jordan, 2021). One time, Costa wanted her to beat him while he masturbated. During sex with his wife, he would drug her so that he could have sex with her while she was sleeping (Rodman & Jordan, 2021). He tried other methods, such as tying her up or suffocating her with a plastic bag. Costa's sadistic practices were later inflicted on his victims. Autopsy reports indicated his victims' bodies had cigarette burns. Costa admitted to being fascinated with dismembering his victim's bodies

(Rodman & Jordan, 2021). He cut out the sexual organs and removed the nipples (Weller, 2014). Then, Costa sexually assaulted the victim's bodies postmortem.

Summary

This study examined the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. A thematic analysis assisted to analyze the data gathered for 12 U. S. male serial sexual offenders. The phenomenon within the three research questions provided the first three initial codes. Additionally, 13 more codes were identified from the passages within the secondary sources. Categories were created by breaking similar codes into groups. The thematic analysis resulted in four final themes.

The first research question examined the role of child sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers. The initial code created for this question was childhood sexual fantasies. The secondary sources provided additional codes which were linked together to create categories. The categories included childhood abuse and authoritarian parenting. escape feelings of abandonment was the theme created and connected to the first research question.

The second research question examined the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers. The initial code created for this question was adult sexual fantasies. The secondary sources provided additional passages to identify codes. Categories that derived from the codes included the ability to get revenge, relive the sexual murder, release inner rage, and feel a sense of relief. The theme created from the thematic analysis was motivation for possession, control, and release.

The final research question explored the criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The initial code created for this question was criminal paraphilia. According to the passages within the secondary sources, the case participants indicated they would find sexual pleasure using behaviors that included inflicting pain, sex with corpses, and sexual arousal from specific objects such as feet or shoes. In addition, the case participants had experienced rejection from their peers and would struggle to develop healthy relationships with women. Two themes were created from the thematic analysis, which included creating a false sense of a relationship and using objects and violent behaviors to gain sexual satisfaction.

Chapter five reviews the outcomes of this study, the nature of the study, and the purpose as to why this study was conducted. In addition, the findings are summarized regarding the roles of childhood and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. The limitations and implications of this study will be reviewed in more detail. Recommendations for future research and how this study may impact social change will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Researchers have recognized how childhood traumatic events shape beliefs, cognitive processes, and behaviors throughout a person's lifespan. Maladaptive coping mechanisms help soothe negative feelings and lead to sexual fantasies and paraphilia. As the urgency for sexual fantasies and paraphilia increases, the person begins to contemplate how to bring them into reality. Previous research indicated factors that impact offenders becoming sexually violent and characteristics that determine differences between sexual offending, sexual murders, and serial sexual murderers. The current study was intended to fill a gap in the literature regarding the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia in serial sexual murders.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. An exploratory multiple case study method was selected to explore the perspectives of the serial sexual murderers, victims, families, and law enforcement. I selected 12 U.S. male case participants based on the FBI definition of serial murders and sexual murders. Each participant described child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. The following research questions were used to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers.

RQ1: What is the role of childhood sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ2: What is the role of adult sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

RQ3: What is the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers?

I collected data from multiple secondary sources including peer-reviewed journals, videos, and biographical books. To explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia, I reviewed, coded, categorized, and analyzed the data. An Excel worksheet allowed me to organize the information gathered through videos and biographical books for each case participant. The data were reviewed a minimum of two times to ensure the accuracy of the translated information. The Excel worksheets and peer-reviewed journal articles were uploaded to NVivo 12 to perform the thematic analysis.

The initial codes for this study consisted of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. The theoretical foundations helped me identify the secondary concepts of trauma and social relationships. I discovered an additional 13 codes through the review of the secondary sources. These codes reflected passages from the case participants about trauma, abuse, relationships, and rejection. Additionally, secondary sources described each case participant's emotions and reactions from feeling rejected and abandoned. Finally, passages from these sources described behaviors that provided the case participant a sense of relief from their negative feelings. As a result of the thematic analysis, four main themes were identified.

Interpretation of Findings

This section includes a discussion of the four themes identified from the thematic analysis. The findings are connected to previous literature to identify the relevance of the present study. Secondary sources provided data related to each case participant. Thematic analysis allowed me to analyze different perspectives from each case participant

regarding their child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. I identified themes linked to the three research questions.

Research Question 1

What is the role of childhood sexual fantasies involving serial sexual murderers?

The theme that emerged from the thematic analysis reflecting the perspective of the case participants in this study was escape feelings of abandonment. Experiencing trauma during childhood or adolescence may create feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, fear, anger, anxiety, and helplessness (Healey et al., 2016). In addition, interpersonal trauma can affect the development of affect regulation and shape a person's ability to cope with overwhelming emotional reactions (Bigras et al., 2017). As a result, the child will develop maladaptive coping mechanisms such as sexual fantasies, isolation, chronic masturbation, and violence to feel power and control (Hickey, 2016).

Previous research suggested that life stressors for sexual murderers included low attachment, abuse, and parental aggression (Kang et al., 2016). Karakasi et al. (2017) reported that serial sexual murderers were raised in more troubled households and had more challenging experiences. The 12 case participants in the current study described traumatic events related to their parents and peers while growing up and developed maladaptive coping mechanisms including isolation, sexual fantasies, deviant sexual fantasies, and paraphilia. These coping mechanisms helped case participants avoid feeling abandoned by a parental figure, peers, or both.

According to Reid et al. (2019), rejection pushes a child to find ways to escape their reality. Isolation and solitary activities helped the case participants create a sense of

safety. Suff and Jespersen created their own world to control who could enter and how others viewed them. Reid et al. found that 71% of serial sexual murderers in their study were loners and rejected by peers during adolescence. To soothe the feeling of loneliness, the murderers engaged in solitary activities. Kemper and Russell retreated into their imagination to feel safe and secure. Kemper reported that he was a daydreamer and would imagine having two parents who loved each other (Edmund Kemper Stories, 2020). Russell would imagine his family were officers within the police department rather than his real family (Olsen, 2018). Hansen described how hunting became an essential part of his childhood because he could be alone and not be bothered by his family or peers.

Another means of escape used by the case participants was through sexual fantasies. Sexual fantasies offered a sense of power, control, and self-soothing qualities that encouraged future fantasizing. Reid et al. (2019) determined that serial sexual murderers reported violent thoughts and fantasies on a person who appeared to be a parental figure. Adolescents will retreat into the fantasy to gain feelings of power to negate feelings of powerlessness.

Reid et al. (2019) identified that 27% of their research sample began to experience violent fantasies prior to age 18. Nine of the 12 case participants in the current study reported deviant sexual fantasies during childhood. Kemper stated that he fantasized about violently hurting others before age 10 (Burke, 2021). Berdella fantasized about capturing and torturing victims (Becker, 2021). Other participants reported that their deviant sexual fantasies were about revenge and hurting others.

Paraphilia is a maladaptive coping mechanism used to alleviate the pain experienced from a traumatic event. These behaviors occur as intense sexual arousal triggered by an atypical object or situation (Carsten & Stevens, 2016; Hickey, 2016) and are reinforced through masturbation. For example, Rogers and Brudos admitted to developing a foot or shoe fetish during their childhood. Cottingham had a fetish for large-breasted women (Evans, 2014). All of the case participants escalated to criminal paraphilia during adulthood.

Current findings indicated the different maladaptive coping mechanisms the case participants used during their childhoods to cope with the pain of the traumatic experiences. The coping mechanisms included imagination, sexual fantasies, deviant sexual fantasies, isolation, and paraphilia. Abandonment appeared to be a concern among the case participants who were left to survive independently and failed to learn how to connect with others or feel a sense of empathy. Instead, they created techniques that would protect themselves. I concluded that they would use these maladaptive coping mechanisms to escape the feeling of abandonment because it was too overwhelming and painful.

Research Question 2

What is the role of adult sexual fantasies in serial sexual murders? The theme that emerged from the thematic analysis reflecting the perspective of the case participants in this study was motivation for possession, control, and release. An individual may develop a narcissistic personality because they are self-promoting to the point that they are very grandiose, entitled, and ego driven (Pajevic et al., 2018). Those who develop narcissism

are unable to develop emotions and empathy. A narcissist will respond to rejection or criticism as a personal attack and react irrationally, leading to violence. Petreca et al. (2021) found that sex offenders' fantasies, sexual desires, and sadism influenced the use of cannibalism. Stone and Brucato (2019) indicated that an offender reverts to cannibalism because personality-based characteristics make a victim a part of them forever. I determined from the analysis that four case participants wanted to possess their victims. Kemper went so far as to eat part of the victim's body to feel he fully possessed them (Burke, 2021). Kemper would save pieces of the bodies while dismembering the victims. Other case participants verbalized that a woman was not anything more than an object. Objects are something that can be possessed or owned. Ridgeway thought of his victims' corpses as his sexual property (Reichert, 2004).

Sexualized behaviors are a means by which the offender seeks a sense of power and control if they feel disempowered (Levenson & Grady, 2016). Adult sexual fantasies provided the case participants the ability to gain control. Sexual fantasies revolved around controlling a victim through torture. While controlling the victim, the serial sexual murderer believed they were getting revenge through the pain inflicted on their victims. The victims were symbolic and related to the case participant's mother, profession, or other victim attributes that had a special meaning to the offender (Keppel & Walter, 1999). Six of the 12 case participants became obsessed with prostitutes because they knew they were vulnerable individuals who could be controlled and would accept them.

Violence decreases negative feelings and increases a sense of power created through sexual fantasies (Levenson & Grady, 2016). Positive emotions emerge from the

violence and become a motivating factor in committing criminal sexual acts. For example, serial sexual murderers create deviant fantasies of torturing and humiliating their victims. These deviant fantasies produce positive emotions to act out the violence and cope with negative feelings by gaining control and power. Sadistic fantasies are the gateway to feeling power and sexual gratification (Murray, 2017). Jespersen, Suff, Cottingham, and Rifkin described the feeling of control over their victims as God-like. Berdella and Suff had deviant sexual fantasies of creating sex slaves and keeping them for their sexual pleasure.

Paraphilia, deviant sexual fantasies, and murder helped restore or ease the psychological discomfort of the case participants during childhood (Reid et al., 2019). Their childhood sexual fantasies progressed through adolescence and adulthood. They became more robust, deviant, and provided a feeling of control. A serial sexual murderer begins to feel entitled and powerful because they control whether the victims live or die. Holding a person's fate in their hands makes them God-like. Once serial sexual murderers complete their rituals and murders, they feel soothed and calmed (Reid et al., 2019). However, the cycle starts again when they experience high stress and emotional turmoil.

Research Question 3

What is the role of criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers? The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis reflecting the perspective of the case participants in this study were create a false sense of relationships and the use of violent actions and objects to gain sexual satisfaction. All 12 case participants grew up in

unsupportive environments that created a maladaptive schema that they were unlovable and lacked trust in others, and found ways to avoid threats and unpleasant feelings (Gunst et al., 2017). These reactions hindered the serial sexual murderers from developing intimacy, which created an insecure attachment. Decisions to avoid intimacy and suppress emotions were attempts to protect themselves from feeling vulnerable and rejected (Cohen et al., 2017).

According to Levenson and Grady (2016), rejection reinforces a person's irrational judgment that they are worthless or not good enough. The case participants created intimacy through stalking, strangling, torturing, or visiting the victims' bodies after death. Rejection triggered many case participants to become angry and act out violently. They expressed hatred toward their victims but at the same time wanted to feel intimate and close. If Cottingham's victim died prior to the completion of sex, he would defile their body (Rosewood, 2016b). He saw the victim dying as a rejection.

The case participants struggled to develop relationships because they could not feel empathy and instead felt entitled (Higgs, Carter, Stefanska et al., 2017). Sexual or paraphilic behaviors, in the offender's mind, create a connection with their victims. They believe their victims consent and want to participate in a sexual act (Hickey, 2016). Ridgeway expected prostitutes to act as if they enjoyed having sex with him. Suff commented that he felt the closest to his victim when he sat by their dead bodies. Kemper killed his victims to establish a relationship with them (Cheney, 1976). Cottingham believed women had the same sexual fantasies as men. Jesperson and Suff expected their victims to prove their love for them and tell them they loved them. Kemper, Rifkin, and

Berdella saw strangulation and torture as a means of intimacy. Costa and Russell provided little information regarding relationships and rejection. Russell reported deep hatred for women. He used his victims to get revenge on his mother. Sources described Costa as being emotionally distant and did not allow anyone to become close to him. However, if he felt rejected, Costa would become very angry.

All 12 case participants struggled to engage in relationships. As a result of traumatic events, the case participants developed an insecure attachment during childhood that progressed to an avoidant attachment in adulthood. The case participants wanted to have relationships but would find ways to keep people at a distance to avoid rejection. Instead, the case participants used their victims to create romantic relationships. Many of them described how they became attached after the victim died. They would choose victims such as prostitutes whom they would pay and would not reject them. In their mind, they had a relationship with their victims even when the victim wanted nothing to do with them.

Paraphilia can start during childhood to cope with distressing and traumatic situations such as child abuse and can intensify into adulthood. For example, Brudos developed a fetish for shoes by the age of 5 because he received mixed messages from his mother. Rogers developed a foot fetish, and Cottingham was obsessed with women who had large breasts. These fetishes progressed to criminal paraphilia in adulthood.

Two common motivations for sexual homicide are sadism and anger. Offenders motivated to commit sexual homicide became connected to sexual gratification gained through sadistic behaviors (Higgs, Carter, Stefanska et al., 2017). Sexual sadists fantasize

about how they will commit their act of violence, such as by torturing or using whatever sexual practices are most sexually gratifying. To make their fantasies a reality, the offender will kidnap, confine, humiliate, and torture their victims (Stefanska et al., 2015). Hunting victims sexually aroused Hansen, Rifkin, and Ridgeway.

Sexual fantasies may be the driving force behind achieving euphoria through sadistic behaviors (Chan et al., 2017). The sadistic fantasy provides psychological gratification. However, when that ends, the individual may attempt to act out their fantasy (Chan & Beauregard, 2016). For example, Berdella, Brudos, and Suff fantasized about having sex slaves whom they attempted to capture as an adult.

All 12 case participants committed sadistic acts on their victims. They thought of their victims as objects for sexual pleasure rather than humans. Victims were symbolic, and violence was related to seeking revenge on those who rejected them. Berdella's sexual excitement increased the more creative the torture. Jespersen and Hansen wanted their victims to fight back and ask for mercy, which intensified their sexual gratification.

Five of the 12 case participants acknowledged they sexually violated their victim's corpse. Necrophilia was a means for the serial sexual murderer to feel intimacy without the fear of being rejected. Brudos was able to act out his sexual fantasies on his dead victims. After Ridgeway began murdering his victims, he found that murder was no longer sexually satisfying (Reichert, 2004). Nor could he have a sexual release with a live person. Ridgeway could only have sex with a warm corpse (Poyntz, 2021). Autopsy reports found Russell raped his victims after death. There was evidence Russell rammed different objects into the orifices of his victims (Olsen, 2018).

Deviant sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia allowed the case participants to avenge those who rejected and abandoned them. All 12 case participants were sadistic and would become even more brutal if they felt rejected. Berdella was particularly interested in creating a sex slave which he had fantasized about since childhood. The slave was for his pleasure only. Brudos would keep the victims' feet to later place shoes on them to masturbate. Rogers would bite women's feet to the point they bled. Sadism provided the case participant to feel as though they were in control and got redemption towards those who had hurt them. Sex with corpses reinforced another means of avoiding rejection but feeling the connection for which, they strived.

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative research is not consistently recognized as a legitimate study strategy because of limited protocols (Yazan, 2015). A limitation of the current study resulted from the limited number of case participants. The study results cannot be generalized to all serial sexual murderers because this study used 12 male serial sexual murderers who resided within the United States I excluded female serial sexual murderers, those who resided outside of the United States and offenders who murdered children. There are limited documented cases of women who committed serial sexual murderers. This study focused on sadism and necrophilia and not pedophilia. Victims were limited to ages 15 and older because 15 is closer to adulthood.

Case participants were selected based on the availability of information gathered through secondary sources, which provided descriptions of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. This study collected data from biographical books,

documentaries and peer-reviewed literature provided by the offenders, victims, family members, and law enforcement personnel. Despite taking every precaution possible to minimize the collection of wrongful information, it is crucial to keep in mind that a study focusing on the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers depends on perspectives and willingness to discuss their experiences within the secondary sources honestly. I attempted to cross-reference the information within the secondary sources. However, there is not a way to prove everything that is written from the perspective of those involved is fully truthful.

I was the only researcher to collect, code, and analyze the data from secondary sources. As a result, rater bias may have been presented during the coding process, particularly when categorizing motives and styles of cases. Data regarding each case participant was reviewed and coded multiple times to address and minimize rater bias concerns.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations based on the results of this study. The first recommendation is to expand participants to include serial sexual murderers outside the United States to identify similar themes. This study explored serial sexual murderers whose victims were ages 15 or older. After selecting the final 12 case participants, I identified many more serial sexual murderers who murdered children under 15 and resided outside of the United State.

All 12 case participants developed criminal paraphilia which included sadism and necrophilia. Sadism was used by each of the case participants and seven of the 12

admitted to necrophilia. A second recommendation is to further explore cannibalism and dismemberment involving serial sexual murderers. Choplin and Beauregard (2021) conducted a study which found dismembering a body was a sexual deviance. As stated above, Kemper found this to be a way to feel he could fully possess his victim. However, research by Petreca et al. (2021) referred to cannibalism as sadistic. Therefore, further studies about cannibalism and dismemberment could lead to a deeper understanding of the role these factors have on serial sexual murderers.

The final recommendation is to study generational trauma. Eleven out of the 12 case participants were raised by parents who were verbally or physically abusive. They were also emotionally distant which indicated an insecure attachment. As reviewed above for the offenders, insecure attachments develop because of trauma. Understanding how generational trauma can provide more insight and possibly identification as to those who could progress to becoming serial sexual murderers.

Implications

This research was unique because it was designed to explore the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. Serial murderers who have experienced childhood abuse may develop paraphilia, leading to criminal sexual violence (Drury et al., 2017). Childhood fantasies are an escape to allow the child to feel secure and in control. As the child moves towards adolescence and adulthood, the fantasies become stronger and more deviant. Increasing the knowledge of behaviors developed through child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia can help create preventative measures to reduce the future risk of harm. Early identification

can interfere with the progression of sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia. Murray (2017) reported sexual fantasies develop within childhood, which can be identified earlier if adults involved with the children understood maladaptive coping mechanisms.

This study provided insight into the traumatic experiences of the 12 case participants and how they attempted to escape the pain. Law enforcement has the potential to intervene at different stages of a child's life because they are in contact with families as it relates to reported abuse and criminal cases. The officers can refer the child and family to services. In addition, police can notify schools that provide staff with additional important information about the living environment, which can impact the child's ability to learn.

This study may help law enforcement identify other critical behaviors and patterns of maladaptive coping mechanisms of serial sexual murderers. Morono et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of understanding the life histories and personalities to create an offender profile and provide law enforcement with a possible reason for the modus operandi. This study found that learning more about how the victims are symbolic is essential. The 12 case participants used their victims as a means of revenge and were selected to avoid rejection. This study showed that the case participants started with deviant sexual fantasies as a child. These deviant fantasies along with paraphilia escalated through adolescence and adulthood. Sadism was a means of revenge and necrophilia helped them to avoid rejection while experiencing intimacy.

This study may help law enforcement develop a deeper understanding of paraphilia and sexual fantasies used by serial sexual murderers. Law enforcement

examines the victims closely to understand more about the offender. They have an ability to create a better profile and possible motivation for the crime by understanding the type of paraphilia used by the offender. The results of the study indicated that the wounds on the victims were related to the paraphilia of each serial sexual murderer. For instance, Jerry Brudos cut off women's feet to place a stiletto heel on later to masturbate. Richard Cottingham had a fetish with large breasts, and he left bite marks on his victims' breasts. George Russell Jr., brutally beat his victims and violated the dead bodies. He was seeking revenge towards his mother and stepmother while killing his victims. Providing law enforcement with the details of the offenders' sexual fantasies can help to gain a deeper understanding of their behavior such as seeking revenge, selecting symbolic victims, and avoiding rejection.

Conclusions

This study explored the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. Four themes were created from the thematic analysis which include escape feelings of abandonment, motivation for possession, control, and release, create a false sense of relationships, and the use of violent actions and objects to gain sexual satisfaction. This study revealed that the case participants used maladaptive coping mechanisms, which included sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia, to cope with traumatic childhood experiences. They also provided a sense of control and safety. The participants retreated and created a world over which they had control, felt satisfaction, and avoided feelings of abandonment.

This study revealed that the case participants had an upside-down view of intimacy. The serial sexual murderer strived for intimacy but could not obtain it because they did not have empathy. Instead, they were narcissistic, believing they were entitled to sexual acts and inflicting pain. The case participants used deviant sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia to create intimacy because they learned these behaviors satisfy their needs. Serial sexual murderers avoided rejection by creating a false sense of their relationships with their victims. They avoided the possibility of rejection by creating a sense of intimacy after the victim died. The case participants felt as though they could do or act any way without being told no after the victim was dead.

Finally, serial sexual murderers struggled to feel they had control within their lives. To regain a sense of control, they fantasized about getting revenge on those who hurt them. Once the sexual fantasy no longer produced a soothing feeling, they acted out the fantasy. Criminal paraphilia such as sadism provided the serial sexual murderer an ability to control their victims through pain and torture. If the serial sexual murderer felt rejected, these behaviors would become even more brutal.

It is important to continue to explore the themes which are connected to the role of child and adult sexual fantasies and criminal paraphilia involving serial sexual murderers. This information can provide insight to possible risk factors that lead a child to become a serial sexual murderer. Earlier interventions and competent school staff, licensed clinicians, and law enforcement can help to save people from sexual violence and death.

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