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Criminal History and LSI-R Scores of RSAT Participants in the State of Massachusetts: Impact of Offender Age on Program Completion and Rates of Offender Recidivism

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Abstract

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by

Jewell E. Hankins

M.B.A., Westwood College, 2005

B.S., Metropolitan State College, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand how offender age impacted residential substance abuse treatment (RSAT) program success in reducing rates of recidivism for offenders exiting the judicial system. Despite passing legislation in the 1980s and 1990s, which increased the penalties for certain crimes, offender recidivism remains high, with no apparent drop in the number of incarcerations and re-incarcerations, resulting in high costs and threats to the safety and quality of life experienced within communities. Social learning theory, behavioral decision theory, and biologically based theories of behavior were the theoretical foundations. Archival data collected from a RSAT grant program at between January 1, 1999 and June 6, 2001 were examined. Data related to participant scores on the Level of Service Inventory Revised (LSI-R), acquired prior to program placement and upon program completion, were compared with the number of incarcerations before and after program completion; charges for convictions already decided and/or pending convictions, age at admission(s) and age at the time of the offender's first offense, and types of offenses (domestic or sexual) committed were explored in a factor analysis. Negative correlations identified included: sex offenders and their age at admission and between LSI-R scores and completing the RSAT program. Positive correlations identified included: new convictions and completing the RSAT program, age at admission to program and age of first offense, and date of first offense and sex offender variables. Implications for positive social change include reduced rates of recidivism among offenders with substance abuse problems.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Emily and Caleb. They are my whole world and a constant source of inspiration and support. I know I am truly blessed to have them in my life. You guys are both awesome kids!

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I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee, Dr. Lee Stadtlander – Chair and Dr. Randy Oberhoff. Thank you both for the consistent support, expertise, and your open willingness to share that expertise with me. Thank you for the support and advice you have given me to help me navigate through and overcome the many obstacles that I have faced throughout this process. I also want to acknowledge the support and encouragement I've received from my Aunt, Carolyn Kindall. Thank you for believing in me and being the resounding voice of encouragement throughout my academic pursuits.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

For over three decades, incarceration rates in the United States have remained consistently higher than any other industrialized country in the world. Much of this increase can be attributed to legislation passed in the 1980s and 1990s, which was intended to provide the U.S. judicial system with a more stringent means of controlling crime. Mandatory sentencing laws were introduced, a stronger position by law enforcement personnel was taken against drug offenders, "three strikes and you're out" laws were implemented, and "truth in sentencing" laws, which require offenders to serve a minimum of 85% of their sentences, were enacted (Skancke, 2005). These legislative policies and laws have had a drastic impact on the U.S. federal and state prison population size, increasing incarceration rates to four times that of previous rates reported in the late 1970s (Travis, 1998).

Since 1978, the high growth rate of offenders serving time in U.S. federal and state prisons has resulted in significant costs to taxpayers. Not only are the costs to incarcerate offenders significant, but federal and state governments have also used a substantial portion of U.S. tax dollars to build and expand prisons in an effort to address the overcrowding issues experienced within these facilities. Costs related to prison construction at the state level have increased by 612% and prison operations have increased by 325%. By 2003 U.S. prison populations exceeded 2.1 million with an average incarceration rate of 715 residents per 100,000 people (Skancke, 2005).

As mentioned, incarceration carries a heavy price: within the state prison system, an annual cost average $19,801.25 per offender (Skancke, 2005). Offenders serving time in federal prisons come with an average annual cost to taxpayers of over $30,000.00 each. In 1998, more than $24 billion in taxpayer dollars was spent just to incarcerate nonviolent offenders, who had not previously served a jail sentence. This figure alone is six times greater than taxpayer monies being spent by the federal government on child care and far exceeds the federal and state funds being allocated towards other programs, including welfare and education (Skancke, 2005).

In 2007 more than 1,180,469 offenders enrolled in parole programs across the U.S. were at risk of recidivism (Glaze & Bonczar, 2009). Not surprisingly the United States has a higher annual percentage of incarcerations than any other country in the modern world (Nation Institute of Corrections, 2011). In 2008 an estimated 2.3 million individuals were incarcerated at a tremendous cost to taxpayers. Even if the number of annual incarcerations for nonviolent offenders could be reduced by just one half, taxpayers would save an estimated $16.9 billion each year and incarceration rates would be roughly equivalent to the same rates seen in 1993. In addition, savings passed on to state and local governments would exceed a total of $14 billion annually (National Institute of Corrections, 2011).

In recent years, prison populations have failed to decrease in size despite what, at first glance, might be viewed as a promising decline in the rate of offenders serving time within the U.S. Justice system. For example, in 2009 a slight drop in incarcerations was

seen within the state prison system (West & Sabol, 2010). However, of the 28 states reporting a decrease in the number of new offenders serving time in state prisons, 18 states reported increases in arrest rates and four states reported little change. Further, this reported decrease in some state prison populations fails to reflect the increase of prisoners completing their sentences in federal prisons. When comparing rates of offenders serving time in federal prisons, a 4.6% increase in the number of offenders can be seen within the last decade - between the years of 2000 and 2009 (West & Sabol, 2010).

Despite the efforts being made to discourage crime by taking a tougher stance, our current judicial system still fails to provide effective rehabilitation efforts for offenders, both during their incarceration, as well as when they exit the judicial system (Skancke, 2005). Over two thirds of offenders arrested are re-incarcerated within the first 3 years after their release from prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). Not surprisingly, prison populations within the United States have more than tripled in recent decades, with states such as California and Texas experiencing a staggering eightfold increase in convicted offenders serving sentences in state jails and prisons. As such, the prison population in just these two states alone exceeds the entire population of Alaska, North Dakota, and Wyoming combined. Yet despite stricter sentencing laws, rates of reconvictions among offender populations remain high and no long-term reductions in these rates have been identified in the existing research to support theories that an increased prison term is an effective approach to reducing criminal behavior among offenders (Skancke, 2005).

Recidivism is defined as an offender's relapse or choice to again engage in criminal behavior (Fisanick, 2010). It is a huge problem within the U.S. judicial system today. As of 2006, it was estimated 67% of previous offenders would be arrested again and over half would be re-incarcerated within the first 3 years of their release (Commission on Safety and Abuse, 2006). However, achieving an accurate measure of the rate of recidivism within the prison system can be a daunting task. Currently, there is a constant influx of over 12 million individuals moving in and out of the federal prison system each year (Fisanick, 2010). These offenders serve varying lengths of time at federal facilities with some staying only a day before being transferred to another facility and others being retained for longer periods of time. This also makes the task of providing quality control services and utilizing available materials, designed to reintegrate offenders, limiting. As such, the result is very little opportunity within prisons to reduce criminal recidivism (Fisanick).

With the current "revolving door" approach to justice, offenders are not being prepared during their time in prison to be reintegrated into the communities as socially responsible individuals. Instead, 95% of offenders are simply released into their communities after serving their sentences, with many offenders repeating their criminal behaviors over and over. Not only do these offenders present substantial costs to taxpayers when they end up back in prison but the safety of our communities are also impacted due to the failure of the prison and parole systems to successfully integrate these individuals into society (Fisanick, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the surging costs of incarceration, recidivism within the judicial system is difficult to measure and often overlooked (Fisanick, 2010). However, programs designed to re-integrate offenders exiting the judicial system can play a crucial role in assisting offenders with successful reentry into society and reducing rates of recidivism within our justice system (Social Solutions Inc, 2007). Therefore, understanding the significant components of reentry programs, which directly affect recidivism rates, becomes crucially important. The present study sought to examine Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) grant programs in the state of Massachusetts, based on known information about the offender's criminal history, age, program participation, and the Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R) scores.

Background of the Study

Current estimates suggest, over two thirds of individuals exiting the judicial system will be re-incarcerated within the first 3 years following their release (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). Of these, 80% admit to having some type of substance abuse (Bureau of Assistance, 2005). Not surprisingly, a significant portion of taxpayer dollars is being spent to build and staff larger prison facilities and incarcerate this growing body of offenders (Skancke, 2005). Offender recidivism continues to be an increasing problem within the U.S. population today. Not only does it present significant financial costs to taxpayers but it also impacts the safety and well being of our communities across the United States. Substance abuse treatment programs for offenders, such as the RSAT grant

programs, are designed with the intent of reducing recidivism within the offender population. As part of the program placement process, state and local entities implementing RSAT programs, use the LSI-R tool, as discussed more in Chapter 2, to determine the offender's risk of recidivism, and based on this risk and other factors, assign the offender to an appropriate substance abuse treatment program. Thus far, a great deal of research has focused on the predictive validity of the LSI-R tool; however, little attention has been given to the impact that the offender's age plays when considering the offender's LSI-R score, offender age at the time of her/his first offense, offender age at time of admission to a reentry program, types of offenses committed, known information about substance abuse problems impacting the judgment of the offender, her/his criminal history, and the compilation of how each of these variables impacts the effectiveness of RSAT programs in reducing offender recidivism.

Purpose of the Study

In an effort to assure appropriate program placement for offenders, program staff factor in each offender's known criminal history, substance abuse history, age at time of admission, and her or his test scores on the LSI-R instrument, when making program placement decisions. More specifically program staff attempt to identify the current needs of each offender, factor in the associated criminogenic risks based on the LSI-R test scores, and then match the offender with a RAST program she/he believes will most closely address the specific areas where treatment will be most likely beneficial. Although a great deal of research has focused on the predictive validity of the LSI-R tool,

little attention has been given to the impact the offenders' age at the time they committed their first offense and the type of offense(s) previously committed, effect of (if even considered) how LSI-R scores are weighed in conjunction with known information regarding substance abuse by the offender, information regarding the offender's criminal history, and the RSAT program's effectiveness in reducing offender recidivism upon program completion. As such, this was a retrospective study, which analyzed the previous ages of the offenders to determine which factors (offender's criminal history, previous programs attended, known substance abuse issues, and LSI-R scores) most impacted RSAT program outcome as measured by rates of offender recidivism after program completion. RSAT programs, which offenders attend, are designed with the ultimate goal of reducing offender recidivism. Thus, understanding how age impacts RSAT program success is an important element to understand within this resocialization process. The present study examined how offender age impacted successful RSAT program completion and its possible influence on reducing the likelihood of recidivism among offenders. Additional consideration was given for possible influences from known information about the offender's criminal history (types of offenses committed), substance abuse records, and LSI-R scores. RSAT programs support state, local, and tribal correctional and detention facility efforts to establish and maintain community-based programs, which provide aftercare services for offenders (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010). As such, this study examined the data, used by facility staff for program completion and compared this data with additional data collected at the time offenders

were enrolled in their assigned RSAT program and the time period following their

successful completion of the program. These factors were then compared to the levels of

success/failure the offender experienced in her or his assigned RSAT program, with the

program's success in reducing offender recidivism.

Design of the Study

The basic design of this research study was quantitative in nature and entailed a

statistical analysis of convicted offenders using archival data. This data set had already

been collected by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance division

and was accessed by permission granted from the Inter-university Consortium for

Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Secondary, or archival, data were used for this

research. Therefore, a quasi-experimental design was necessary because a control group

could not be manipulated and the sample group could not be randomized. A factor

analysis of independent variables and underlying concepts was conducted to statistically

examine the relationship (if any), which existed between these variables. Variables of

interest included: LSI-R test scores, known criminal history, substance abuse history,

offender age at the time of her/his first offense, offender age at the time she/he attended

the RSAT program, and the rate of recidivism among RSAT program participants within

the first six months after program completion. Offenders were categorically classified

into three levels based on LSI-R test scores: 0-18 = minimum risk, 19-28=medium risk;

and 29 or higher = maximum-risk level (Sun, 2007). In addition to examining these

variables, this study identified factors relating to consistencies and/or inconsistencies in

age among offenders attending the RSAT program and assessed the impact that age and other factors had on the RSAT program's effectiveness in reducing rates of offender recidivism after program completion. No direct contact with offenders occurred. Data access was limited to the researcher, her dissertation chair, and her dissertation committee member(s).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

Question 1: Are there predictable qualities, related to the offender's age at the time of admission to the RSAT program and program completion?

Question 2: Are there predictable qualities related to the offender's age at the time of her/his first offense and program completion?

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Null Hypothesis 2: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Alternative Hypothesis 1: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is dependent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Alternative Hypothesis 2: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Null Hypothesis 3: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Alternative Hypothesis 3: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is dependent on the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Null Hypothesis 4: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Alternative Hypothesis 4: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is dependent of the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Theoretical Base

Social learning theory posits children are born good and later learn how to be bad from their close relationships with others (Siegel & Welsh, 2008). In other words, attitudes about crime, delinquent behavior, and so forth are learned not inborn. Thus theoretically speaking, focused efforts towards successfully re-socializing offenders within their communities could significantly reduce recidivism. In addition, behavioral decision theory, as it pertains to the resulting choices or "judgment calls" individuals make, also relates to the conceptual framework of this proposed research. Behavioral decision theory is focused on understanding the processes involved in the actual decision making process (Sears et al., 2003). It recognizes that individuals make cognitive decisions and choices without knowing all possible alternatives and without considering all possible outcomes. Instead, based on the behavioral decision theory model, decisions are made when the individual perceives them to be "good enough" as opposed to exerting

additional effort to ensure she or he makes the best decision possible (Sears et al., 2003). Thus from a theoretical standpoint, case worker program placement decisions may not necessarily account for all of the significant criteria necessary for offenders to be successful in their assigned RSAT grant re-entry programs.

Biological theories of behavior may also offer additional explanations for increased tendencies towards criminal behavior in adulthood. For example defects in the amygdale, a central brain structure, have been identified in adolescents as young as 3 years of age. These defects may actually inhibit these individuals from recognizing cues to the brain, which would normally signal fear responses to verbal threats or non-verbal cues (Phelps EA & LeDoux, 2005). The result would be an individual who experiences relatively little fear and as such may be more likely to engage in aggressive and/or antisocial behaviors. Thus, the fearlessness hypothesis theory described above may provide a causal explanation for criminal behavior (Gao et al., 2010). Classical fear conditioning behavioral theory provides yet another explanation for criminal thinking and behavior. From this perspective, the individual's fear responses are interpreted as a conditioned respond to certain stimuli. Thus individuals who are more easily evoked by certain stimuli would be more prone to aggression and other types of antisocial behavior than individuals whose responses have not been previously conditioned (Lissek et al., 2010). From the classical conditioning perspective, a heightened responsiveness of the amygdale is thought to be the reason for intensifying the individual's responses to fear conditioning (Sterzer & Stadler, 2009). Thus, the different biological functions of the

amygdale may offer explanations for certain aspects of individuals who later develop antisocial behavior tendencies and engage in criminal behaviors as they approach adulthood.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of defined terms which is intended to clarify to the reader the meaning of specific terminology used throughout this paper.

Criminal justice: For the purposes of this study, criminal justice will refer to the official response taken by the justice system when a crime occurs.

Domestic offender: A convicted offender who has committed a criminal act, which is not of a sexual nature.

Judgment call: for the purposes of this study, a judgment call is defined as the process of arriving at a decision and possessing the cognitive capacity to explain how you arrived at that decision.

Offender: For the purposes of this study, an offender was defined as a person who commits an act which is punishable by law, regardless of her or his mental competency.

Offender age: For the purposes of this study, offender age was defined as the chronological age of the person who commits an act which is punishable by law, regardless of her or his mental competency.

Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R): a standardized risk and needs assessment tool designed to assess the offender's risk of recidivism by examining both static and dynamic traits/criminogenic needs (Ogloff & Davis, 2004).

Recidivism: The relapse of a previous offender into criminal behavior (Fisanick, 2010). For the purpose of this study, it will be operationally defined as the number of previous incarcerations and resulting probationary programs the offender has completed.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program: Federally funded grant programs available to each of the 50 U.S. states, five U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia, which assist states and other local entities in setting up and expanding existing programs designed to reintegrate offenders into society and reduce offender recidivism.

Risk of recidivism: For the purpose of this research, risk of recidivism was defined as using known predictive criminogenic factors to measure the likelihood that an offender will again engage in previous criminal behaviors.

Staff placement decisions: The specific programs that each offender's facility staff coordinator has required the offender to attend, both previous and current placements.

Sex offender: A convicted offender who has committed criminal acts involving sexual offenses such as sexual harassment, rape, and molestation.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

A key assumption, which may have affected the findings of this study, involved the accuracy of the predictive reliability of the LSI-R instrument. Numerous studies, evaluations, and meta-analyses have demonstrated the predictive ability of the LSI-R instrument when used for assessing risk of both general and more violent offender populations (Lowenkamp & Bechtel, 2007). The versatility of these predictive factors has contributed to the popularity of the LSI-R instrument, which is generally thought to

be one of the top instruments capable of accurately predicting post-release rates of recidivism. However, a study conducted by the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole found staff training had significant bearing on the instrument's inter-rater consistency score (Harcourt, 2007). More specifically, prior to the prison board staff's receiving additional training, study findings indicated only 33% of the 54 items on the LSI-R instrument had an inter-rater consistency score which was equal to or greater than the 80% target percentage (Harcourt, 2007). In addition, substantial disagreements existed between inter raters when attempting to assess the actual level of risk posed by prisoners. With additional training for staff, the 80% inter-rater reliability threshold was achieved. However, based on this parole board study's findings, the LSI-R may be somewhat problematic in its predictive reliability depending on how staff personnel are trained in assessing levels of risk (Harcourt, 2007). For the purposes of this research, data collected during the RSAT grant program at Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts between January 1, 1999, and June 6, 2001, were reviewed. This RSAT program used the LSI-R instrument to assess offender risk during the reentry program. It was assumed, for the purposes of this study, that RSAT program facility staff received the necessary training to properly administer and accurately assess levels of risk (low, medium, and high) using the LSI-R instrument.

There were two primary limitations of this research study: the data were not randomized, and the participants may or may not have been honest with their responses. The first limitation existed because the researcher of this study did not collect the actual

data. Instead, archival data were used, data that previously had been collected by the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice Data Resources Program, AdCare Criminal Justice services, and researchers from BOTEC Analysis Corporation, which conducted an outcome evaluation of the RSAT program being offered at the Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts between January 1, 1999, and June 6, 2001. As such, all participants within the specific time range were reviewed, and included to ensure significant power was achieved. Questions about the honesty of participant responses presented an additional limitation, which would directly impact the program placement decisions made by RSAT staff at the correctional facility. Without honest responses, offenders might have been placed in RSAT programs, which did not provide the services they needed to be appropriately re-socialized into their communities.

Delimitations

The present study was limited to the data collected for adult offenders who were previously referred to the RSAT program at the Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts between January 1999 and March 2002.

Significance of the Study

The implications for positive social change were numerous and included the following: identifying areas of additional training for staff, consistency of offender placement across RSAT programs, effectiveness of RSAT program modules on specific offender populations, and the identification of specific critical points for the offender when positive change is most likely to occur. In addition, it is hoped that this study will

support efforts to instill positive social change not only in the adult offender populations within the state of Massachusetts, but also support positive social change efforts in other states as well. Overall, it is hoped the findings from this research will positively support goals to significantly reduce recidivism rates within adult offender populations.

Positive social change can dramatically improve human and social conditions (De La Sablonniere et al., 2010). From a social learning perspective, even offenders exhibiting deviant or criminal forms of behavior can be taught more appropriate behaviors. These new learned behaviors in turn create not only stability for the individual but also support continued positive growth and social change within their communities (Akers, 2009). This social change is accomplished through the human interactions the individual has with her or his community (Bandura, 2001). Thus successfully enacting positive social change within offenders, who are exiting the justice system, benefits our communities, as well as the individuals who reside in them.

Summary and Transition

With increased levels of incarceration resulting from a tougher stance towards crime, issues with overcrowding in prisons have ensued. Yet despite sincere efforts to discourage recidivism among offenders, the revolving-door justice system currently in place across the United States has been largely ineffective in discouraging the reoccurrence of repeat criminal acts. Instead, more than 12 million individuals guilty of repeat criminal behavior continue to move in and out of the U.S. judicial system each year (Fisanick, 2010). The economic and social impact of the judicial process is

significant not only within our communities but at state and national levels as well. Reentry programs provide an alternative approach to reintroduce exiting offenders to society. These programs focus on treating substance induced abusive behavior by developing the behavioral, cognitive, social, and vocational skills of program participants, with the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism among these offenders, who will soon be exiting the judicial system.

The purpose of this research was to understand how the impact offenders age had at the time of their first offense and their age at the time of RSAT program admission are weighed in conjunction with the types of offenses committed (i.e., domestic or sex offense), LSI-R scores, substance abuse issues, criminal history, and successful RSAT program completion, all of which may impact levels of RSAT program effectiveness in reducing recidivism among the offender population after program completion.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework of social learning theory, including specific tenants, such as observational learning and symbolic modeling. Behavioral learning theory is also discussed, as well as biologically based theories of behavior. Attention is also given to theories that seek to explain factors involved when individuals make judgment calls. Next, the concepts of recidivism and the intended functionality of the LSI-R tool are discussed. Finally, the intent and modality of RSAT grant programs are discussed. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology used in the study and contains specific details of the study sample, population, statistical analysis methods used, and the research study's design. Chapter 4 discusses the study's findings and compares these

findings to the study's hypotheses. Chapter 5 continues the discussion of the study's

findings, including viable interpretations of findings, recommendations for additional

research and study, and the impact of the study's findings as they pertain specifically to

the area of social change.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

According to data provided by the U.S. Department of Justice Statistics (2010), crimes ranging from acts of violence to property damage reached a national all-time high in 2006. Yet the vast majority of this current offender population will eventually be reintroduced into society (Council of State Governments, 2005). Current legislation that was intended to take a more stringent approach towards reducing crime by increasing prison sentences and imputing harsher penalties for crime has been insufficient in reducing the number of offenders within the United States. Instead, this legislation has served to drastically increase the prison population size, while providing no long-term solutions to the issue of reducing the number of repeat crimes within the country (Fisanick, 2010). Alternatives to long-term prison sentences may offer a more affordable solution to the overcrowding issues, which still exist in our state and federal prison systems today. These alternatives may also present a significant advantage over incarceration by supporting efforts to find solutions to the high rates of recidivism, which exists within the U.S. judicial system today (Skancke, 2005).

In response to the high rates of recidivism within the U.S. offender population, former President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act of 2007 (Fisanick, 2010). This legislation targets expansion opportunities for reentry programs and services for offenders, by providing offenders exiting the judicial system with information about the community resources available to them. Further, offenders are given specific

information on such things as release requirements, personal finances, health, and employment. In addition, the plan includes programs focused on reducing recidivism by successfully reintroducing previous offenders back into society (Fisanick, 2010).

Federal grant programs such as RSAT provide crucial reentry programs for offenders exiting the judicial system. RSAT programs address substance abuse issues by providing viable treatment options, as well as additional resources designed to reintroduce offenders to society. They also provide post-release support for offenders, with the ultimate goal of reducing the rates of recidivism within the offender population.

This review of the published literature includes articles obtained through online searches, which were conducted using the following databases: PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and SocINDEX. An initial word search was conducted using the following key words: *behavioral decision theory, judgment call, moral judgment, Level of Service Inventory Revised, recidivism rates, biological behavior theories, substance abuse among offenders, age of offense, age at admission, age and recidivism, age and sex offender, age and domestic offender,* and *social learning theory.* Additional research was completed using Google Books, Google Scholar, the Department of Justice's online data repository, and accessing resources available through the public library system.

Sex Offenders

Sexual-related criminal offenses are devastating not only for the victims but for family members and others residing in our communities as well (Payne & DeMichele, 2011). These heinous criminal acts have both physical and psychological ramifications

for victims that cannot be easily overcome. Not surprisingly, additional legislation is currently in place, which specifically relates to the conviction, prosecution, parole, and eventual release of offenders convicted of committing sexually related criminal acts. For example, current federal guidelines mandate the use of global positioning system (GPS) monitoring devices, as a means of increasing the levels of supervision of these high-risk offenders (Zgoba et al., 2009). These devices are physically attached to the offender's body, and, if removed prematurely, dispatch law enforcement personnel immediately and may also result in the offender being re-incarcerated for the violation of her/his parole terms (Zgoba et al., 2009). In addition, these devices not only identify the offender's current whereabouts, but also assist in ensuring the offender complies with other restrictions, such as curfews and other geographic restrictions required to successfully complete the terms of the parole process. Other laws require previously convicted sex offenders to publicly register their current whereabouts within the communities in which they reside, and remain registered even after they have successfully completed their prison sentences and parole requirements. Despite these stringent monitoring efforts, which are meant to ensure the safety of both children and adults residing in our communities, there are still many areas of concern regarding the current monitoring and treatment processes utilized when dealing with this high-risk offender population (Zgoba et al., 2009).

Current demographic research studies suggest that despite the significantly higher rates of recidivism associated with previously convicted sex offenders, over 80% of adult

sex offenders currently reside within 2,500 ft of schools, parks, day care centers, and churches--all of which are primary areas where the majority of sexually related criminal offenses are committed (Zgoba et al., 2009). Yet no laws currently in place prohibit where these previously convicted sex offenders reside, despite the prevalent knowledge of the horrific sexual crimes they are capable of committing and the associated high risks of reoffending after they are released from the judicial system (Zgoba et al., 2009).

      Clinical treatment options for known sex offenders have also fallen under scrutiny to claims that these programs blatantly violate certain ethical codes of conduct. More specifically, current treatments for sex offenders are often thought to more closely resemble a form of punishment than a viable approach to actual treatment (Ward & Salmon, 2010). For example, the good lives model approach to rehabilitation uses the concept of paternalism when attempting to rehabilitate previously convicted sex offenders. Under this model, actual harms are knowingly inflicted on the offender. These actions could conceivably be viewed as infringements on the offender's own human rights and autonomy (Ward & Salmon, 2010). Further, these acts are many times justified by clinicians, who reason that these steps are a necessary part of the treatment process for successful rehabilitation among this offending population to occur. In addition, some clinicians state that these intentionally inflicted harms are actually beneficial for the offender when viewed from a long-term perspective (Glaser, 2010). However, ethical concerns coupled with accusations towards treatment programs, such as the good lives model, have forced many clinicians to rethink their choice of the therapeutic approaches

they employ when dealing with offenders, who have previously been convicted of committing criminal offenses of a sexual nature (Ward & Salmon, 2010).

Despite monitoring and mandatory disclosure laws, the U.S. judicial system fails to provide communities with a long-term resolution for discouraging the reoccurrence of these sexually offensive behaviors among this offending population (Payne & DeMichele, 2011). However, a growing body of research within the criminal justice system suggests that offenders' perceptions of how fairly they are treated can be highly supportive in producing positive treatment outcomes for previous sexual offenders (Taxman & Ainsworth, 2009). Programs such as RSAT seek to provide alternatives to traditional forms of treatment by focusing on treating the offender's behavior towards substance abuse, as well as developing her or his cognitive, behavioral, social, and vocational skills in the hopes of achieving successful reintegration into society and our communities in general (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005).

Judgment Calls

Judgment calls are influenced by the relationship between the moral reasoning of the individual and her or his choice of moral conduct (Bandura, 1977). Understanding the processes involved in making moral judgments may lead to helping individuals make better future judgments (Kalis, 2010). Further, how individuals act and the moral judgments they make are interrelated and depend on what social circumstances exist. People may or may not engage in behaviors that violate their moral codes of conduct (Bandura, 1977). For example, if individuals believe their moral judgment is stereotypic,

they may try to suppress this automatic moral judgment for fear that it is morally objectionable (Kalis, 2010). However, if certain conditions are present, individuals may fail to exercise restraint and engage in behaviors that violate their established moral reasoning and conduct. When this situation occurs, individuals may in fact employ moral reasoning to rationalize their approval to engage in behavior that violates their moral code of conduct, thus weakening the internal restraints that are in place (Bandura, 1977). With this said, it is possible to morally justify any reprehensible behaviors that deviate from the individual's established moral code of conduct. This rationalization process can occur in the forms of an implied duty to the existing social order or the individual may reason that the behavior is justifiable due to a matter of principle (Bandura, 1977).

Modeled behaviors can also lead the individual to question her or his established moral codes (Bandura, 1977). For example, individuals who are exposed to diverse models of thinking that deviate from traditional moral models can be influenced to broaden their ideas of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior to model (Bandura, 1977). Thus, the responses elicited by the individual, to certain social queues when present, may facilitate a response that deviates from what is deemed as socially acceptable behaviors. To counter this process, incentives can be used to promote competencies, which can be sustained for longer periods of time (Bandura, 1977).

Timing also plays a role in how moral judgments are made. For example, individuals respond differently to a situation depending on whether it has already happened or if it is something, which is expected to happen in the future (Caruso, 2010).

This is important to understand because the individual's emotional reaction to the event has a direct impact on the moral judgments the individual makes about the observed action or behavior. As such, actions and behaviors perceived by the individual as happening at some point in the future are viewed with more intensity than those that are thought to have already occurred in the past. Thus, the individual may view certain behaviors and actions as warranting harsher punishments if expected to occur in the future because the individual's moral judgment is being influenced by more intense emotional reactions at the thought of a future event. Conversely, if the behavior or action has already occurred, the emotional response evoked by the event will not be as extreme and the individual's judgment of the situation will also be less extreme (Caruso, 2010).

The personal convictions of the individual also have a direct impact on whether she or he will try coping with whatever difficult situations arise (Bandura, 1977). It is natural for individuals to avoid, and perhaps even become fearful, when faced with threatening situations that they believe they are unequipped to deal with. Conversely when individuals feel they are capable of being successful in certain situations, they behave more affirmatively and retain a sense of perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). In situations where individuals believe they are forced to deal with a direct threat, they will make a judgment to determine the fastest way to remove themselves from the danger (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). This could take the form of passive behavior, in which the individual simply removes her or himself from the situation, or the individual could take a more aggressive or "attack" approach to ensure self-preservation. Thus, depending on

the emotional response of the individual, the judgment she or he exercises in a given situation may differ drastically (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011).

Feelings of self-efficacy serve to reduce anticipatory inhibitions and fearfulness while creating expectations of a successful outcome. Thus, these anticipatory effects ultimately affect how much effort the individual puts into coping when different situations arise. It also affects how long the individual persists when obstacles and other aversive situations are encountered (Bandura, 1977). Individuals who continue to perform activities, which they may view as subjectively threatening (although in reality they are relatively safe), will eventually eliminate their defensive responsive behaviors to the stimuli and ultimately their associated fears. However, should the individual give up prematurely, she or he will continue to experience the self-debilitating fears and associated expectations for an indefinite amount of time (Bandura, 1977).

Personal efficacy and the expectations the individual has for her or himself, affect behavior (Bandura, 1977). For example, individuals experiencing certain negative emotions, such as anger, tend to take a more aggressive stance where she or he is ready to attack (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). Whereas individuals in the same situation experiencing other negative emotions, such as contempt or disgust, tend to prefer more passive approaches (e.g., disassociating with the person or entity), which require considerably less expenditures of energy (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011). As such, by treating the individual's self-efficacy, the resulting choices the individual makes, regarding engaging in certain behaviors, can be changed. Research suggests treatment

designed to enact behavioral changes should focus on certain modes of treatment. More specifically, by engaging the individual in treatments, which focus on performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, emotional arousal, and situational circumstances, dysfunctional behaviors can be altered (Bandura, 1977).

Treatments which combine both modeling and encourage the participation of the individual, have been shown to be the most effective methods of treatment for eliminating the dysfunctional inhibitions and fears stemming from within the individual (Bandura, 1977). Thus by having the individual model the desired behavioral responses to situations, she or he engages in corrective experiences, which will allow her or him to quickly achieve positive behavioral changes. Thus the individual's own capacity to regulate her or his responses to certain stimuli provides the avenue necessary to self-regulate her or his behavioral responses (Bandura, 1977).

From a theoretical basis, focused efforts towards successfully re-socializing offenders within their communities could significantly reduce recidivism (Siegel & Welsh, 2008). In addition, behavioral decision theory, as it pertains to the resulting choices or "judgment calls" individuals make, also relates to the conceptual framework of this proposed research. Judgment calls made by case workers, clinicians, and so forth, which are intended to assess an offender's risk should not be made solely on personal judgment alone. Instead, these decisions should take into account the actuarial results of clinical instruments; thereby improving the interpretation of the instruments' used and the

decisions involving the conviction, release, program placement, and risk of recidivism (Tolman & Rotzien, 2007).

Actuarial Verses Clinical Assessment

Actuarial variables are statistically based and are determined without, or at best using very little, human judgment (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009). For example, a teacher is able to quickly determine how well a student comprehends course material by reviewing that student's test scores. Clinical variables, however, are derived (or measured) primarily by exercising human judgment. For example, determining how long a person's hair is or what color her or his eyes are can easily be determined without the need for statistical analysis. It has often been proposed to use a combination of clinical variables in conjunction with actuarial measures (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009). An example where this might be appropriate would be when measuring the current state of an individual's psychopathology. In this case, measurements would require human judgment, as well as the administration of psychological tests.

Many predictive tasks can be assessed using either statistical or human judgment as a way of measuring and assessing the variable and many risk factors related to recidivism, have been identified (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009). However, when these variables are viewed one at a time, the relationship that exists between each separate variable and recidivism is quite small. Resulting questions arise with respect to the accuracy of the various proposed instruments and methods for assessing an offender's

risk of recidivism. Are actuarial instruments preferential to evaluations, or vice versa? A combination of the two may result in the most accurate assessment.

Within the clinical field many of the clinical instruments produce numerical scores but the actual interpretation of the results involves exercising clinical judgment. As such, errors due to bias, prejudice, or partisan can occur (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009). Exercising unstructured professional judgment is widely thought to be less accurate than structured risk assessment instruments. In situations involving civil matters of serious offenders (e.g., sex offenders), using structured risk assessment tools becomes essential (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009).

Exercising personal judgment when making decisions about offenders can be useful when subjective decision-making is necessary (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009). When viewed in the context of assessing offenders, research suggests that decisions made by staff while assessing offenders for risks of dangerousness, provides information which supports effective case management. Further, the criminogenic factors (e.g., age of offender, criminal history), which are most relevant in the assessment process, may in fact not be the best predictors of recidivism (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon 2009).

As it relates to this study, program placement decisions made by correctional facility staff involve making certain judgment calls (or clinical decisions) while factoring in the test scores and known criminal history (actuarial data) about the offender. When assessing potential risks associated with the possibility of future violence, many actuarial models of assessment require the use of clinical judgment to some degree. In addition,

the clinical judgments of psychologists tend to be regarded more highly within the judicial system than when actuarial measures are used by themselves (Murrie et al., 2008). Further actuarial approaches are limited in the information they provide. More specifically, actuarial approaches simply tell us how likely someone is to act a certain way in the future. They do not provide information about who an individual is and how she or he functions in her or his environment (Murrie et al., 2008). However, despite this limitation, actuarial methods of assessing risk do have a high degree of reliability whereas clinical decisions can vary greatly depending on the level of experience and the impression the individual being assessed makes with the clinical professional (Gambrill, 2010).

Behavioral Decision Theory

Behavioral decision theory is focused on understanding the processes involved in actual decision making (Sears et al., 2003). The focus of behavioral theory is not on understanding the variability of human behavior per se; but instead understanding the determinants of an individual's conduct (Bandura, 1977). However, the fact that individuals' with similar demeanors and traits may behave differently when circumstances change, cannot be ignored. As such arguments, centering on dispositional verses situational factors as determinants of behavior, continue (Bandura, 1977).

Behavioral decision theory recognizes individuals make cognitive decisions and choices without knowing all possible alternatives and without considering all possible outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Instead, based on the behavioral decision theory model,

decisions are made when the individual perceives them to be "good enough," and not requiring the additional exertion of effort to ensure he/she makes the best decision possible (Sears, et al., 2003). Thus theoretically speaking, placement decisions made by case workers in re-entry programs may not account for all of the significant criteria necessary for successful offender program placement.

Traditionally, behavior theories can be differentiated by how actions are regulated (Bandura, 1977). For example, certain theories favor an antecedent way of regulating actions while others focus more on consequent regulations of individual actions. This distinction occurs because immediate consequences can be instrumental in either strengthening or weakening the behavior (Bandura, 1977). Although associated consequences can affect behavioral choices, the individual's control of her or his behavior does not necessarily rest solely on this factor. Instead, the behavior can also be influenced antecedently by how the individual anticipates what the reward or punishment will be for future actions in similar situations (Bandura, 1977). Thus, behavioral responses are not isolated to the consequences of a single experience; there is also an anticipatory response which takes place and involves what the individual views as the anticipated outcome for future behaviors (Bandura), 1977.

Theoretical principles discussed in early psychological theories were deeply ingrained in behavioristic principles (Bandura, 2001). Thus, the focus is on the individual's observable behavior and does not consider the possibility of internal reasons for why the behavior is occurring. Instead human behavior was somewhat mechanically

controlled by stimuli the individual encounters in her or his environment. However, with the advent of the computer, psychological theories developed which supported more complex and dynamic processes, which could be performed simultaneously, to explain behaviors. As such, people are not passive observers who are simply being programmed by the behaviors they observe in their environments. Instead, individuals use their neural networks to process environmental influences and make decisions on how to then behave (Bandura, 1977).

Classical Conditioning.

The process of learning, which takes place by pairing a response with an experience, is called classical conditioning (Bandura, 1977). Essentially, classical conditioning does not attempt to explain how the paired association came about, it simply recognizes that a response is triggered by an unconditioned stimuli. This association is cognitively mediated and is not the direct result of certain events occurring simultaneously (Bandura, 1977). Initial attempts by therapists to eliminate defensive behavioral responses to unconditioned stimuli took the shape of interviews. However, it was quickly determined that interviews did not result in changes or alterations in the individual's behavior. Current research suggests individuals need to engage in experiences focused on corrective learning. In other words, performance based treatments are better suited to effect positive cognitive changes and correct dysfunctional behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

Biologically Based Theories of Behavior

Biological theories of behavior may also offer additional explanations for increased tendencies towards criminal behavior in adulthood. For example defects in the amygdala, a central brain structure, have been identified in adolescents as young as 3-years of age. These defects may actually inhibit these individuals from recognizing cues to the brain, which would normally signal fear responses to verbal threats or non-verbal cues (Phelps & LeDoux, 2005). The result would be an individual who experiences relatively little fear and as such may be more likely to engage in aggressive and/or antisocial behaviors. Thus, the fearlessness hypothesis theory described above may provide a causal explanation for criminal behavior (Gao et al., 2010). Classical fear conditioning behavioral theory provides yet another explanation for criminal thinking and behavior. From this perspective, the individual's fear responses are thought to be conditioned to respond to certain stimuli. Thus individuals who are more easily evoked by certain stimuli would be more prone to aggression and other types of antisocial behavior than individuals whose responses have not been previously conditioned (Lissek et al., 2010). From the classical conditioning perspective, a heightened responsiveness of the amygdale is thought to be the reason for intensifying the individual's responses to fear conditioning (Sterzer & Stadler, 2009). Thus, the different biological functions of the amygdale may offer explanations for certain aspects of individuals who later develop antisocial behavior tendencies and engage in criminal behaviors, as they approach adulthood.

Social Learning Theory

The principles of social learning theory do not provide an explanation for the behaviors exhibited by the caseworkers of interest in this study. However, social learning theory does provide important insight as to how criminal behavior develops within an individual. Further, social learning theory offers explanation as to how these negative behaviors can actually be encouraged by the individual's environment. Caseworker program placement decisions can alter this negative cycle of behavior and successfully reintroduce exiting offenders to society. By understanding how criminal behaviors develop and are supported by the individual's environment, reentry programs can be designed which address these environmental influences and assist the individual in developing more socially responsible behaviors. More specifically, reentry programs can be designed which focus on changing the learned behavior. For example, offenders may be placed in programs which assist them in learning anger management skills, developing life skills, or programs designed to prevent relapses of substance abuse, and so forth.

Social learning theory posits children are born good and later learn how to be bad from their close relationships with others (Siegel & Welsh, 2008). Thus, attitudes about crime, delinquent behavior, and so forth are learned not inborn. The learning which takes place then is either reinforced or discouraged by the self-governing systems within the individual's environment. These self-governing systems may consist of other members of a group (collectivism) or involve an individual who assumes the role of a powerful authority figure (individualism) and decides what values and behaviors are considered

acceptable or rejected (Bandura, 1977). Thus as we progress from our childhood to adult years, we learn behaviors and skills from those we feel closest too (Zilney & Zilney, 2009).

Reinforcement of certain behaviors may also occur vicariously, through the observation of others (Bandura, 1977). More specifically if an individual observes another person being punished, she or he will be less likely to engage in similar behaviors; whereas, if the individual sees the behavior being rewarded, she or he is more likely to behave in a similar fashion (Bandura, 1977). As such, these incentives serve to either encourage or discourage observers from also engaging in similar behaviors. However, research suggests individuals will retain certain behaviors, which have been reinforced both vicariously and through direct reinforcement, longer than those experienced by only direct reinforcement (Bandura, 1977).

The interaction between individuals and their environment is not comprised of simple reactions to external stimuli. Instead, individuals actually select, organize, and process these external forces (Bandura, 1977). Thus, from a social learning theory perspective, human behavior involves a continuous stream of reciprocal interactions which take place between the individual's cognitive processes, behavior, and the influences present within her or his environment. As such, social learning theory rejects the idea of external stimuli in an individual's environment and internal decision mechanisms, as independent determinants of behavior. Instead, psychological functioning

is explained as a continuous reciprocal cycle of external and internal mechanisms at work (Bandura, 1977).

As already mentioned, social learning theory also accounts for human nature as something which can be shaped through direct and vicarious experiences within the confines of biological limitations (Bandura, 1977). In addition, it acknowledges that individuals have many choices and influences in how life choices are decided. Further, it recognizes multiple factors are at work, which ultimately determines whether or not an individual will engage in the learned behavior (Bandura, 1977). Essentially, social learning theory is not a positivistic theory; but instead seeks to explain the process by which offenders learn to commit crimes (Hanser, 2010). This learning extends beyond acquiring basic skills (e.g. riding a bike) to include the attitudes, values, and behaviors the individual chooses to adapt and engage in (Zilney & Zilney, 2009).

Individuals are born with only basic, innate behavioral patterns. They must learn the rest of them, either through direct experience or by observing the behaviors of others (Bandura, 1977). As part of this process, biological factors are critical components in the process of acquiring knowledge of behavioral patterns. In addition, the majority of learned behavior takes place by observing others. Thus, a person's ability to learn vicariously provides an avenue for acquiring large amounts of integrated patterns of behavior while avoiding the laborious processes involved in a trial and error approach to learning (Bandura, 1977). Further, the individual will continue to think and act in a manner which is consistent with the attitudes, values, and behaviors that are being

reinforced (Zilney & Zilney, 2009). Thus behavioral processes and experiences are retained in symbolic forms by the individual and pulled from for guidance in future behaviors. This provides a means to help the individual problem-solve and achieve alternative solutions through reflective thought (Bandura, 1977).

Social learning theory distinguishes itself from other theories of behavior in that it assigns a consequential role to the self-regulatory capacity of the individual. As such, social learning theory posits individuals have some level of control over their own choices of behaviors and actions (Bandura, 1977). More specifically, individuals have comparative judgmental processes in place which serve to vicariously reinforce or discourage the occurrence of future similar behaviors. Thus, the consequences observed by the individual provide standards, which she or he then uses as a basis for judging whether or not she or he will view the observed behavior favorably or unfavorably (Bandura, 1977).

In some situations, these learned attitudes and reinforced behaviors are inappropriate and may result in judicial punishments and corrective actions. Thus individual value judgments determine what influences motivate the individual to engage in certain behaviors. As such the higher the associated incentive value the greater the level of performance and vice versa (Bandura, 1977). However, value itself does not deter or encourage the behavior; it is the individual's own associated self-reactions generated from internal values, which self-regulate the individual's behavior. As such, the individual has the ability to self-direct herself or himself as she or he develops her or

his self-reactive functions. This differs from personality theories which merely attribute behavioral differences to associated values but fail to explain how the values held by the individual serve to regulate that person's conduct (Bandura, 1977). Thus individuals' who take great pride in their ability to excel in antisocial practices, will engage in behaviors which can result in injurious conduct unless these individuals can be deterred from engaging in the behavior by external sanctions which are placed on them.

As previously mentioned learning and the reinforcement of criminal behaviors, can take place vicariously. In fact, the majority of behaviors learned are acquired through vicarious learning in which the behavior being modeled is observed (Bandura, 1977). Thus, behaviors can be reinforced or discouraged vicariously based on how observers perceive their observations of the modeled behavior and the consequences they associate with that behavior. For example, punishments executed within the legal system serve as a primary means of deterring future occurrences of undesirable behaviors. However, should an individual have knowledge of multiple crimes occurring without the offender being caught and punished for that crime, the end result may be an increased tendency of that individual to engage in similar behaviors. Thus the association the observer perceives as the frequency of punishments executed, as opposed to the number of crimes committed without the execution of punishment, may actually serve to inform and fail to inhibit the occurrence of similar behaviors by that observer in the future. As such the observed punishments or rewards actually increase the attention the observer gives to the modeled behavior and increases the level of observational learning that takes place. Further,

modeling the behavior is the primary means by which new forms of behavior are learned (Bandura, 1977). The behavior is then coded symbolically into the observer's memory for its later use as a reference point from which to base future actions and behaviors (Bandura, 1977). For example, television programs, movies, books, and so forth, may actually encourage the viewer/reader to adapt the attitudes and behaviors, which the characters in the story model, through role-playing or even emulating the actual criminal actions of the characters (Hanser, 2010). As such, the experiences of these characters are incorporated into the thinking and behavior of the offender, teaching him or her how to commit crimes. Despite the fact that most learned behaviors are acquired vicariously, it is important to note that direct incentives of behaviors serve as a significantly greater motivator than do vicarious ones (Bandura, 1977).

Perceived Societal Roles

Social learning accounts for the impact of perceived gender differences, as defined by existing societal structures. More specifically, social learning theory posits that attitudes regarding female roles and male roles are repetitive, meaning they are passed down through each generation (Zileny & Zileny, 2009). As such, certain behaviors may be identified by the individual, as being appropriate for the expected role of what a woman or man should be. This behavior could then manifest and continue in many inappropriate ways, such as engaging in sexually offending behaviors. Men in particular are less likely to challenge inappropriate sexual behavior towards women, for fear of potentially being negatively labeled for challenging existing societal attitudes

towards sexual offenses committed by other men (Zileny & Zileny, 2009). As such, these manifested behaviors span across cultures and are passed down to each generation. They are learned by the individual then reinforced by the groups she or he associates most closely with. Thus social learning theory is linked closely with how society constructs its view of manhood and its control of women (Zilney & Zilney, 2009).

Self-reinforcement

From a social learning theory perspective, self-reinforcement is defined as the process which increases the strength of explanatory principles of reinforcement stemming from within the individual (Bandura, 1977). Thus, the individual exerts personal judgment to determine the rewards and punishments of the behavior. As such, immediate external reinforcements are not necessary for the individual to act out certain behaviors. Instead, the individual's behavior is self-regulated by the interplay of external influences and self-generated ones. In other words, certain activities have associated consequences whereas others are controlled by the individual and her or his internal set of values and standards of self-behaviors. Thus, as a result of the individual's internal reactive capacities, immediate external reinforcement of her or his behavior is not always necessary (Bandura, 1977).

Self-regulation is also influenced by how the individual perceives and justifies her or his actions towards another person (Bandura, 1977). In situations where a person is viewed by the individual as being sub-human, the individual may rationalize her or his choices to engage in dehumanizing behavior. In certain situations, the individual may

even blame her or his victim for the offending behavior instead of taking personal responsibility for her or his actions. As such, the individual effectively self-exonerates or vindicates her or himself for her or his irresponsible conduct (Bandura, 1977).

As applied to the offender population, social learning theory suggests it is possible to change the deviant behaviors of offenders and or prevent those behaviors from occurring by manipulating the processes involved when changing the individual and environmental contingencies on an implicit or explicit basis (Akers, 2009). Interventions can take place in the form of community, correctional, and treatment programs in both private and public settings. Further, existing research has shown when working with adult populations, the best approach involves using a cognitive-behavioral approach, in addition to individual and group programs. This provides the greatest levels of a successful outcome, as compared to other alternative approaches (Akers, 2009). Different strategies for reintroducing offender populations to society may be employed depending on the type of crime committed. For example, for gang related crimes, reentry programs attempt to remove the offender from the pressures and influences she or he experienced as being a gang member (Hanser, 2010).

Observational Learning

A major component of social learning theory is observational learning. Observational learning occurs during actual exposure to modeled behaviors through the use of symbolic processes in the brain (Bandura, 1977). In situations where the individual's capacity for observational learning has been fully developed, she or he will

continue to learn from what she or he sees. When the behavior is observed, learning is

taking place, and additional reinforcements are not required to learn that behavior.

However, the behaviors being executed may or may not even be observed by the

individual and as such, would not be observationally learned by that person. In fact, even

if the individual notices the behavior, she or he may devote very little attention to that

behavior and as a result not retain the observed behavior for any notable length of time.

With this in mind, reinforcement does play an important role in observational learning

and is influential in determining what the individual actually observes and what behaviors

remain unnoticed. These behavioral reinforcements may take the form of what the

individual perceives as the associated consequence (e.g. a self-generated consequence).

This perception may be vicarious in nature or consist of external consequences. Thus,

observational learning involves attention, retention, motor reproduction processes, and

motivational processes (Bandura, 1977).

Differential Association/Reinforcement

A central component of social learning is differential association, a term used to

describe situations in which an individual willingly engages in deviant behaviors because

of her or his associations with another person or group. This other person and/or group in

turn, exerts positive or negative associations/reinforcements of the individual's actions in

the form of favorable consequences for the deviant behavior (Goode, 2008; Zilney &

Zilney, 2009). Through the process of differential reinforcement the behaviors which the

individual determines as ineffectual will be discarded whereas behaviors associated with

success will be selected and retained (Bandura, 1977). The concept of learning, as a capacity of consequences of behaviors, serves several important functions: it passes along information, provides motivation, and can strengthen future behavioral responses (Bandura, 1977).

Essentially differential association focuses on the operant conditioning, which shapes or conditions the offender's behavior through the punishments and rewards, she or he continues to receive. Just as social learning theory actually attempts to define how offenders learn to commit crimes, differential association does not specify an exact process but instead merely defines the conditions which can support and encourage the offender to commit crimes and the repetition of her or his criminal behavior (Hanser, 2010.) Thus the individual is motivated to either control or repeat the criminal behavior, depending on the combination of associated rewards and punishments which she or he experiences in her or his environment (Goode, 2008).

Anticipatory Learning Capacities

Through past experiences, expectations relating to benefits, no benefits, or adverse problems, are created. As such, these potential outcomes motivate individuals to develop an anticipatory capacity (Bandura, 1977). This capacity provides a symbolic representation of possible outcomes which individuals then use to predict future consequences of behavior. Thus, from a social learning perspective, the majority of actions, which an individual chooses to engage in, are primarily regulated by her or his anticipatory control. In other words, the individual uses thoughtful foresight to anticipate

the consequences of her or his actions. As a result, her or his actions are either reinforced or discouraged for certain behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

Attentional Processes.

To learn the behaviors being modeled, the individual has to pay attention to what she or he observes. Attentional processes refer to how the individual perceives, selects, and interprets the behavior being modeled (Bandura, 1977). These processes serve to regulate the experiences an individual observes. In addition, there are certain determinants also associated with the observations an individual makes. More specifically, the people individuals regularly associate with have a significant influence on the types of behaviors which the individual repeatedly observes and as a result learns (Bandura, 1977). For example, the individual may develop a criminal mindset, through her or his observations of aggressive actions, such as those exhibited by hostile gang members. The modeled behaviors would be repeatedly observed and eventually learned by the individual (Bandura, 1977).

The individual's attention may also be gained by observing the modeled behaviors of other individuals who possess desirable qualities (Bandura, 1977). This can be exampled by celebrity endorsements for certain desired behaviors and/or the desired causes presented by other influential people when viewed on television. In fact, may culturally diverse sources of modeling can be learned merely by spending time watching television programs (Bandura, 1977). Finally attentive processes can be governed by the individual's own capacity to process the behaviors she or he observes being modeled.

This can be affected by the individual's own experiences, the setting in which the modeled behavior is observed, and ultimately how the individual interprets what she or he listens to and visually sees (Bandura, 1977).

Retention Processes

Processes involved in retention offer an explanation for how individuals selectively remember the modeled behavior they observe (Bandura, 1977). This involves the retention of modeled behaviors in the form of activities observed by symbolically encoding the behavior into the individual's memory. By transforming the modeled behavior into symbolic form, the individual transfers that knowledge into her or his permanent memory (Bandura, 1977). This symbolic imagery can then be activated through sensory stimulation when certain external events are perceived. As the modeled behavior continues to be observed repeatedly by the individual, it eventually becomes a long-standing part of the images the individual retains and pulls from as she or he models the behavior (Bandura, 1977). These associations can be as simple as associating a familiar name with a certain person, or the unconscious movements involved to successfully drive a car. In both of these situations, the learned behaviors are exercised without the individual's conscious recall of each step involved. Instead, the modeled behavior has been learned, stored in memory, and recalled when certain stimulus activate it (Bandura, 1977).

Visually observing behavior is of particular importance during the developmental years until the verbal coding of events becomes more developed (Bandura, 1977). A

second component of the retention process involves how the individual verbally codes the modeled behavior she or he observes. The majority of cognitive processes involved with the regulation of behavior are in fact verbal, as opposed to visual. For example, the individual may verbally code how she or he arrived at a particular destination by referencing a map. This provides a means for the individual to retain large amounts of information by verbally coding it into a form (e.g. assigning meanings by using labels or words) which can then be stored more easily in memory (Bandura, 1977). In summary, symbolic coding in the form of imagery or verbal coding play a crucial role in the retention of modeled behavior. In addition, the repetition of observed behaviors and the mental rehearsal of those modeled behaviors, serve to reinforce the behavioral response patterns the individual remembers and may actively engage in (Bandura, 1977).

Motor Reproduction Processes

Another component of observational learning involves developing our hands-on abilities. Thus motor reproduction processes are concerned with how modeled behaviors, which have been converted by the individual into symbolic representations, are then executed in the form of actions (Bandura, 1977). This involves the process used by the individual to organize her or his responses in a spatial and temporal format, which aligns with the previously modeled patterns of behavior. Then, when the behaviors are reenacted, organization will first take place at the cognitive level. Next, depending on the available component skills necessary to exhibit the behavior, varying levels of observational learning occur. In situations where the individual possesses a high level of

constituent elements, she or he is able to easily integrate the exhibited behavior into new patterns. However, if the individual is lacking in these necessary response components, her or his attempts at reproducing the behavior will also be lacking and flawed (Bandura, 1977). In some cases, the basic sub-skills necessary to complete complex performances are deficient. As such, modeling and practice would need to be exercised for the individual's proper development (Bandura, 1977).

The individual's ideas present yet another area of interest. Rarely are they learned observationally and when turned into actions, ideas typically contain errors during the first attempt (Bandura. 1977). For example, when an individual is trying to perfect a certain movement (e.g. doing a lay-up in basketball), she or he is only able to partially observe her or his actions. Instead, she or he has to rely on kinesthetic queues to improve the execution of this action. Thus, when symbolic representation conflicts with the execution of the idea, the individual engages in corrective action (Bandura, 1977). Perhaps the corrective action involves getting feedback from a coach or videotaping her or his attempts at doing a lay-up and then watching the video to see how the execution of this action can be improved.

Motivational Processes

Just because an individual learns something, does not mean that same individual will execute everything she or he learns. As such, social learning theory makes a clear distinction between what behaviors are learned and what behaviors are enacted (Bandura, 1977). Motivational processes focus on determining how the individual decides if

executing the behavior is worth the effort or not. Thus, if the individual determines the value and benefits of the behavior are more desirable than the associated punishments or observed consequences, she or he most likely will engage in the behavior. Further, the execution of the individual's behavior may also influence others and how they attribute the benefits and costs of the associated behavior. Thus, these associated rewards and punishments for behavior influence how the individual evaluates and chooses what behaviors she or he executes (Bandura, 1977). Essentially then, socially learning theory postulates that the actions of the individual is guided by her or his ideas on what the outcomes of certain behaviors will be, and not on what she or he has been told to do or not to do.

Rewards and Punishments

From a social learning theory perspective, whether or not our future behaviors remain in a consistent, repetitive cycle, depends largely on whether or not the group we most closely associate with condones and rewards these behaviors or adamantly condemns them (Zilney & Zilney, 2009). Thus offenders who commit crimes do not necessarily have to be past victims of those same crimes; but instead, may be identifying themselves as acting within the norms of a group with whom they closely identify and associate themselves with. For example, group reactions to offender crimes, in the form of gang related crimes, may also serve to encourage or discourage future occurrences of the behavior (Hanser, 2010).

Whether or not the individual chooses to enact the learned behavior is largely determined by the associated consequences the individual attributes to the enactment of that behavior (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, individuals do not simply act out behaviors in response to certain stimuli; instead, they interpret and anticipate the benefits and costs of acting out the behavior. Thus instead of a simple response to stimulus situation, from the social learning perspective environmental stimuli resulting in other environmental occurrences or functions serve as predictors of the possible outcomes, should certain actions be carried out (Bandura, 1977). Essentially then, these anticipatory responses are designed to protect the individual from environmental stimuli which the person associates with threatening or painful experiences (Bandura, 1977).

Within the legal system, punishments may take the form of judicially administered punishments, such as the requirement of an offender to serve jail time. Conversely rewards may require the successful completion of certain activities, such as reentry programs, vocational training programs, or the adherence to the specific terms of a parole arrangement. Within this context, the rewards and punishments are specifically targeted at correcting the offender's criminal behavior (Hanser, 2010).

It is also important to note that reinforcement plays a facilitative role and as such, is not necessarily a component which influences what individuals pay attention to and what they fail to observe occurring around them (Bandura, 1977). For example, performers at a carnival tend to attract observers but observers do not need to see the performance over and over to be attentive to the behaviors being modeled. Thus, an

individual can be attentive to behaviors being modeled without necessarily needing additional positive incentives to increase the observational learning which takes place. Instead, the level of observational learning, which occurs, is the same regardless of what additional incentives are present (Bandura, 1977).

Symbolic Modeling

From a social learning theory perspective, social modeling seeks to explain how the individual learns by watching modeled behaviors which are acted out through different forms of media (Bandura, 1977). This could involve such things as watching televised programs, movies, or other visually observed media. This form of social learning can have a significant impact on what attitudes, conducts, and emotional responses the individual learns while watching the visual media and what she or he chooses to enact in her or his own behavior patterns. In addition, the learning which takes place from observing visual media distinguishes itself from other forms of observational learning (Bandura, 1977). For example, large numbers of people who view visual media incorporate these modeled behavior patterns into their own lives. Further, through the visual media being observed, the individual learns how to shape her or his judgments, standards of conduct, conceptual schemes, language skills and styles, and even the strategies she or he uses to process information (Bandura, 1977).

Moral judgments, involving what is viewed as acceptable and unacceptable behavior, can also be shaped by symbolic modeling (Bandura, 1977). For example, the moral judgments exercised through visual media can actually alter the individual

observer's judgments by enforcing certain judgmental standards in different morally relevant dimensions. These dimensions are tied closely with how the individual makes decisions regarding how morally reprehensible or acceptable she or he views a given behavior. Thus the viewpoints of the observer may be altered as a result of exposure to the behaviors observed via visual media, and may actually make the behavior seem more acceptable to the individual (Bandura, 1977).

Recidivism

There are many reasons why people commit crimes. These reasons are commonly referred to as "criminogenic factors." Although individuals may have some of these criminogenic factors present, it does not mean they are offenders. However, it is an accurate statement to say, these factors are more common among offenders than other segments of the population. For example, it is common among the known offender population to have one or more of the following criminogenic factors present: problems related to employment, lack of education, unstable partner/family relationships, relationships with criminal social networks, substance abuse issues, inadequate levels of functioning within the community, personal/emotional factors, and anti-social attitudes (Towl & Towl, 2003). Although it is possible for an offender to not have any of these criminogenic factors in her or his background, it can accurately be stated that the more criminogenic factors present in the offender, the greater the risk of recidivism.

While punishment can serve as a means of discouraging criminal behaviors, existing research has shown that punishment alone leads to increases in the rates of

recidivism. Thus, positive reinforcement strategies actually work better (Towl & Towl, 2003). As such, it becomes crucially important to accurately and effectively assess the needs of offenders to ensure the proper program placement. Thus instruments, such as the Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R) are crucial to establishing an effective regime for the offender, which is aimed at reducing recidivism (Towl & Towl, 2003).

Level of Service Inventory – Revised

Conducting assessments designed to determine an offender's future risk of repeat criminal behavior is standard practice in many correctional settings today (Manchak et al., 2008). These assessment results are crucially important in the decision process. More specifically, results are used by parole boards, case workers, and other justice officials when making decisions regarding offender placement and how the offender should be supervised. The LSI-R provides a standardized means of assessing an offender's risk of recidivism. It was developed specifically as a standardized actuarial tool for conducting risk assessment and making offender case management decisions (Manchak et al., 2008).

The LSI-R tool is comprised of 54-items designed to assess the following risk/needs factors: criminal history, education/employment, financial, family/marital, accommodation, leisure/recreation, peers/companions, alcohol/drug problems, emotional/personal, and attitudes/orientation (Lowenkamp & Bechtel, 2007). These 10-subscales assess both static and dynamic risk factors as they relate to the risk of recidivism and criminal behavior. Static factors assessed would include things such as the offender's age, age of first conviction, the number of past offenses committed, gender,

race, and so forth. Each of these criteria are static, meaning they are unresponsive to any correctional program interventions (Lowenkamp & Bechtel, 2007). Dynamic risk factors, such as associations with others, marital conflicts, skill deficits, and so forth, can change and each of these factors has been found to influence rates of recidivism and repeat criminal behaviors. By accounting for both static and dynamic risk factors, caseworkers and other justice officials are able to establish a baseline whereby they are able to reasonably predict the individual's risk of recidivism (Lowenkamp & Bechtel, 2007).

The static and dynamic criteria assessed by the LSI-R tool can change over time. Thus the offender's risk of recidivism can also change. This is one advantage of assessing both static and dynamic criteria. Not only are correctional areas identified but associated needs of the offender are also recognized and factored into the risk assessment process. However, because needs/risks can change, the LSI-R can be administered repeatedly to ensure the offender's risks/needs are accurately gauged and appropriate intervention strategies employed (Petersilia, 2003).

The LSI-R assessment tool administration involves a semi-structured interview and takes about an hour to administer (Petersilia, 2003). The Burgess 0-1 method is used to score the instrument, where scores are totaled to determine the risk/needs score. Scores on the subscales can be looked at individually to determine what areas should be targeted for program placement (Petersilia, 2003).

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Program

Substance abuse problems have been reported by 80% of offenders residing within the U.S. Justice System today (National Center on Addiction, 2003). The RSAT grant program was enacted by congress under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 as a way to address the issue of substance abuse within prison populations (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005). The program provides grant funding to states and local entities for reentry programs and post release treatment for offenders exiting the justice system.

Responsibility for the RSAT grant program falls with the Bureau of Justice Assistance division. RSAT programs assist states and other local governing entities in establishing and extending existing residential substance abuse treatment programs for offenders residing within state and local correctional and detention facilities (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005). Research suggests the RSAT program can be successful in reducing the number of re-arrests within this population if offenders complete the treatment program and receive aftercare treatment (Harrison & Marin, 2005).

RSAT program funding is available to each of the 50 U.S. states, as well as all five U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. In addition, the program provides states and local entities the flexibility of adopting certain existing module(s) to the RSAT program format. Its approach can also be adapted for specific types of participants, such as juveniles or adults, females or males (Bureau of Assistance, 2005). Each state decides which program module(s) should be adopted by creating a partnership between

correctional facility staff and treatment programs within the community. RSAT program models can include aftercare services, relapse prevention, skills development, and vocational training. However, each module is focused on the common goal: to help offenders deal with their substance abuse problems and successfully reintegrate them into society after they exit the judicial system.

There are four types of RSAT programs currently available: aftercare programs, jail-based treatment programs, post-release treatment, and state and local correctional facility based RSAT programs (Bureau of Assistance, 2005). Local agencies coordinate efforts at the state level to design and implement one or a combination of these RSAT programs. Modules used within each program vary from state to state but do share common elements, such as self-help groups and peer feedback. Programs can also address family and parenting issues. General education, money management, vocational training, and other transitional services, which help re-socialize the offender, can also be included as part of the re-integration process.

A mega analysis, which compared offenders who had successfully completed RSAT programs with offenders who had not participated, found positive outcomes for in-prison treatment programs. Aftercare substance abuse treatment programs were also associated with reduced recidivism (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005). Within the state of Massachusetts, over $4.5 million in RSAT grant funding has been given. Specific programs designed to treat adult offenders, reported drug free participants for the entire

treatment period. However, despite these promising results, the best combination of

program modules for specific types of offender populations has yet to be determined.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Research Methods

This chapter provides details regarding both the research design and approach that was used during this study. In addition, it provides details regarding the study participants and the specific variables of interest, which were analyzed. Finally, the instruments used during the study are discussed.

Proposed Research Design and Approach

The design of this research study was quantitative and entailed a statistical analysis of convicted offenders using archival data. Quantitative methods of research are preferable when attempting to determine cause and effect relationships, and when attempting to produce statistical results which are easily generalizable across a group (Shadish, 2010). Because archival, or secondary, data was used for this research, a quasi-experimental design was necessary since the control group could not be manipulated and the sample group could not be randomized.

A factor analysis of independent variables and underlying concepts was conducted to statistically examine potential relationships, which might exist between these variables. A factor-analysis is beneficial in reducing large numbers of variables into a more manageable form (Zamble & Quinsey, 2001). Variables of interest included: LSI-R test scores, known criminal history, age at the time of the offender committed her or his first offense, age at the time the offender was admitted to the RSAT program, the type of offense committed (either domestic or sex, or both), and the number of re-entry programs the offenders had previously attended.

LSI-R test score data were compared with other archival data collected. All data records analyzed by this study are currently accessible through the ICPSR database repository. Using archival data ensured that an appropriate level of statistical significance was achieved. This study sought to identify factors relating to consistencies and/or inconsistencies of program placement decisions made by case workers and assess the impact these decisions may have had on rates of offender recidivism within the current program(s), as well as the specific modules of each program which were implemented.

Setting and Sample

The research population consisted of convicted offenders serving sentences in the Barnstable House of Corrections in the state of Massachusetts, who were referred to RSAT grant funded programs between January 1999 and March 2002. This study focused only on adult male and female offenders ranging from 18 years of age and up who participated in RSAT grant funded programs within the state of Massachusetts. All minors were outside the scope of this study. No identifying information, other than basic demographic information was used in this study. The archival data records, which were analyzed during the study, were collected by U.S. Department of Justice at the time offenders were attending the RSAT funded programs being offered at Barnstable House of Corrections. Of particular interest were the risk assessment variables from the LSI-R scores just prior to beginning the assigned program and those obtained after program completion. Additional details related to these scores can be found in the instrumentation section of this chapter. No names or other identifying information about participants were

used; instead, participants were identified by an assigned numerical code within the SPSS database.

The primary interest was understanding the differences in reported risk prior to starting the reentry program and at the conclusion of the assigned program. As such, the test scores of the LSI-R instrument were analyzed to identify differences in related risks before and after the offender completed her or his assigned program. The offenders' age at the time they committed their first offense and at the time of admission to the RSAT program were of particular interest. Thus, a comparison of age related variables with other identifiable variables was conducted to determine if any statistically significant correlations existed and the strength of those correlations. The effects of post-treatment program resources for offenders who have exited the judicial system were also considered.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants from which the sample was drawn included all 188 female and male offenders who participated in RSAT funded programs while incarcerated at the Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts between January 1999 and March 2002. A factor analysis was used to identify any correlations within this data set. Generally speaking, the goal of factor analysis is to identify trends and other factors/patterns from the data, which may not be directly observable. As such, one of the dangers, when conducting a factor analysis, is drawing erroneous conclusions because of a small sample size. The recommendations for sample size, when conducting a factor

analysis, vary widely. Gorsuch (1983) recommends an *N: p* ratio of 5 subjects per item

being studied with a minimum number of subjects equal to 100. Comrey and Lee (1992)

stated that a sample size of 300 is good; 500 is very good; and 1,000 or more is

considered an excellent sample size.

In addition to sample size, the strength of the data itself deserves consideration

(Osborne & Costello, 2004). One study found *N:p* ratios, where *N* is the minimum

sample size and *p* represents the number of variables included in the factor analysis to be

a good predictor as to the stability of factor structures. Smaller sample sizes can also

result in successfully and correctly identifying patterns and trends through factor analysis,

which can be repeated using different samples of the same data (Osborne & Costello,

2004).

Based on a search of published between 2000 and 2005 that used factor analysis,

the *N:p* ratio was shown to provide a consistent predictor relating to the stability of the

factor structures (Osborne & Costello, 2004). Results of this journal search indicated that

almost 60% of the studies that used factor analysis statistical technique for analysis had

an *N:p* ratio (or subject to item ratio) less than 5 and 70% of the studies had an *N* less

than 100. This study focuses on three factors: offender's criminal history, offender's age,

and LSI-R scores. The initial sample size included all 188 program participants, which is

consistent with the majority of studies published between 2000 and 2005, which also

used a factor analysis model for research. These data variables were then statistically

analyzed to test the following research questions and hypotheses.

Materials

Data were exported from the ICPSR system into SPSS. All identifying

information, such as participant name, address, and phone numbers, was removed from

the data set prior to conducting the factor analysis to ensure participant rights to privacy

were respected.

Instrumentation

The LSI-R instrument provides the basis for data collected and used in this study.

The LSI-R instrument is a standardized risk assessment for offenders (Manchak, et al.,

2008). Chapter 2 included a review of the literature for the LSI-R instrument, as well as a

definition for recidivism, which can be applied to the offender population of interest in

this study. A great deal of research exists which supports the LSI-R as psychometrically

sound in terms of reliability, validity, and its use as a measure for predicting and

monitoring the level of risk offenders present (Farrington et al., 2001). In addition,

empirical studies examining its validity, suggest the LSI-R is a consistent instrument, as

compared to other measures, with moderate correlations ranging from .30 to .50 in

predicting re-arrest, institutional misconduct, reconviction, and probation/parole

violations (Melton, et al., 2007). However, unlike the majority of risk assessment

instruments, the LSI-R is based on social learning theory, not personality approaches, and

factors in the actual predictors of criminal behavior. Further, its development was

evidence driven (as opposed to taking a theory driven approach which uses hypothesized

psychological constructs) and based on known criminogenic factors. More specifically,

the LSI-R assesses a wide array of criminogenic factors including lifestyle, behavior, and attitudes (Farrington, Hollin, & McMurran, 2001).

The instrument is comprised of 54 items divided into 10 components. Participant responses are in either a yes/no format or involve a rating of 0 – 3 (refer to Table 1 for a list of LSI-R components). In addition, the LSI-R instrument measures both static and dynamic variables, suggesting that participant scores may change over a designated period of time. A great deal of empirical research suggests the LSI-R instrument can be used to successfully predict recidivism both inside and out of prison. In fact, the LSI-R is not only a valuable tool which is effective in monitoring offender risk but is all useful when making decisions regarding probation supervision, facility placement decisions, and when making decisions as what security level classifications offenders should receive while in prisons (Farrington, Hollin, & McMurran, 2001).

Table 1

Summary of LSI-R components

Component	# of Items	Component	# of Items
Accommodation	3	Alcohol and drug problems	9
Attitudes and Orientation	4	Companions	5
Criminal History	10	Education and Employment	10
Emotional and Personal	5	Family and Marital	4
Financial	2	Leisure and recreation	2

Protection of Human Participants

Approval of the research design and agreement to access the data was initially

secured though an Independent Review Board (IRB). IRB approval # is 05-27-11-

0043988 was secured through Walden University's IRB board. Additional approval was

needed from ICPSR for access to the data. Data were accessed only via a computer,

which was not connected to the Internet. Data were stored by the researcher on a

password-protected drive. All data will be kept by the researcher for 7 years and then

destroyed.

Dissemination of Findings

Study findings were shared with the researcher's dissertation chair and

committee. No identifying information was given to these individuals by the researcher;

instead only subject numbers were used.

Summary

The research questions addressed in this study sought to understand what, if any,

predictable qualities exist between the offender's ages at the time her or his first offence

was committed and her or his age at the time of admission to the RSAT funded program.

Past criminal history, including the type of offense committed, in light of the offender's

LSI-R test scores, were also examined to determine how these variables influenced

RSAT program effectiveness in reducing offender recidivism after program completion.

Hypotheses explored by this study sought to understand offender age related variables

were correlated with the offender's known criminal history; offender age related

variables were correlated with rates of recidivism within the offender population; and offender age related variables were correlated with the LSI-R test scores. Immediately following this section, Chapter 4 provides the research results of this study and provides further analysis of the study's proposed research questions and hypotheses. Finally, chapter 5 discusses and interprets the study's findings and the potential impact these findings may have towards social change. Chapter 5 will also present recommendations for additional areas of study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of the current study was to quantitatively examine archival data collected between January 1, 1999 and June 6, 2001 on participants attending the RSAT grant program at Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts. This chapter discusses the results of the factor analysis conducted during the current study on this archival data. It is divided into three sections. The first section provides a description of the study participants and the related data, which was used to analyze and evaluate the study's research questions and hypotheses. The next section focuses on how the research questions and hypotheses were supported or refuted by the study's findings. Finally, the last section provides a brief summary of the chapter contents.

Evidence of Quality

The following section provides an overview of the study participants' descriptive statistics information. More specifically, age at the time the offender committed her/his first offence and whether or not the offender was a sex offender and/or domestic offender. In addition, age at admission and whether or not the offender completed the RSAT program is also discussed. Finally, a comparison between this study's hypotheses' and its actual findings is made.

Descriptive Statistics

One hundred eighty-eighty individuals were admitted to the RSAT program at the Barnstable House of Corrections between January 1, 1999 and June 6, 2001. Offenders were assigned to one of two groups: a control group consisting of 70 participants and a treatment group consisting of 57 participants. Participants in the treatment group were matched to control group participants based on RSAT outcome, while allowing sufficient time and opportunity for offending. Participants who comprised control group members were matched to treatment group participant members who were released one year prior to the time control group members were incarcerated. Data regarding criminal histories of the participants' was collected from the Criminal History Systems Board through March 2002. Additional data (offender scores on psychological inventories and RSAT program outcome) were provided by AdCare Criminal Justice Services.

Data collection for offenders occurred from January 1999 to March 2002. All offenders admitted to the Barnstable House of Corrections program during this time met the federal criteria for referral to the RSAT program. Information as to the offender's age, date at entry, birth date, and discharge dates were obtained by BOTEC Analysis Corporation researchers at the time the data was being collected. Data records contained one blank entry and records for two of the participants are duplicates. In accordance with federal guidelines, offenders participating in the RSAT program were housed and incarcerated separately for 6 to 12 months. Additional federal requirements were based on the offender's criminal record, most recent offenses, and the length of the offender's

sentence (required to be a minimum of nine months.) The program objective was to

reduce the occurrence of recidivism by (a) providing treatment for the offender's

behavior towards substance abuse and (b) developing the offender's overall behavioral,

cognitive, social, and vocational skills.

Table 2

Offender Age Ranges

Age at Admittance	n	Age at 1st Offense
18-19 years	13	17-18 years
20-29 years	72	16-25 years
30-39 years	67	17-34 years
40-49 years	30	16-36 years
50-59 years	8	17-27 years

Note. $N = 190$

Research Questions and Hypotheses Evaluation

The present study addressed the following research questions: Are there

predictable qualities, related to the offender's age at the time of admission to the RSAT

program and program completion? Are there predictable qualities related to the

offender's age at the time of her/his first offense and program completion?

Null Hypothesis 1: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Alternative Hypothesis 1: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is dependent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Analysis – Null Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 predicted that age at the time of admission to the program for domestic offenders would be a significant predictor of whether or not the offender completed the RSAT program. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the age at admission and the RSAT program completion variables. There was no relationship identified between the two variables, $r(190) = .046, p > .05$.

Table 3

Offender RSAT Completion Rates

Age at Admittance Program)	*n*	RSAT Grad	RSAT (*In*
18-19 years	13	7	0
20-29 years	72	33	0
30-39 years	67	29	1
40-49 years	30	13	0
50-59 years	8	1	0

Note. N = 190

Null Hypothesis 2: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Alternative Hypothesis 2: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of admission.

Analysis – Null Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 predicted that age, at the time of admission to the program for sex offenders would be a significant predictor of whether or not the offender completed the RSAT program. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the Sex Offender variable and RSAT Grad variables. There was no correlation between the two variables $r(190) =.011, p > .05$. However, a negative correlation was identified between the Sex Offender and Age at Admission variables $(r(190) = -.201, p < .05)$. As such, when the Sex Offender variable increases, the likelihood of offenders graduating from the RSAT program is decreases. Conversely, when the offender is not a known Sex Offender, the likelihood of her/him completing the RSAT Grad program increases.

Table 4

Sex Offender RSAT Completion Rates

Age at Admittance (Range 18 to 59 yrs)	*n*	RSAT Grad	Sex Offender
18-19 years	13	7	1
20-29 years	72	33	7

30-39 years	67	29	9
40-49 years	30	13	5
50-59 years	8	1	4

Note. N = 190

Null Hypothesis 3: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Alternative Hypothesis 3: RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is dependent on the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Analysis – Null Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 predicted that RSAT program completion for domestic offenders is independent of the individual's age the time of her/his first offense. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the sex offender's Age at 1st Offense and RSAT Grad variables. No correlation was identified between the two variables, $r(190) = .046$, $p > .05$.

Table 5

Domestic Offender RSAT Completion Rates

Age at Admittance (Range 18 to 59 yrs)	*n*	RSAT Grad	Domestic Offender
18-19 years	13	7	1
20-29 years	72	33	22
30-39 years	67	29	27

| 40-49 years | 30 | 13 | 12 |
| 50-59 years | 8 | 1 | 2 |

Note. N = 190

Null Hypothesis 4: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is independent of the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Alternative Hypothesis 4: RSAT program completion for sex offenders is dependent of the individual's age at the time of her/his first offense.

Analysis – Null Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 predicted that program completion for sex offenders is independent of the offender's age at the time of her/his first offense. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the RSAT Grad and Age at 1st Offense variables for Sex Offenders. No correlation was identified between the variables (r(190) = .046, p > .05 and r(190) = .011, p > .05).

In addition to the variables references in the hypotheses statements, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient calculations were computed to assess possible relationships, which might exist between variables for which there was data collected by the original researchers of this population sample. The results of these correlation coefficient calculations follow.

There was a positive correlation between the New Conviction Charge and New/Pend w/in one yr variables (r(190) = .677, p < .05). Thus, as the number of new conviction charges increase, the new and pending charges that occur within 1-year tends

to also increase. In addition, when new conviction charges decline, the number of new and pending charges that occur within the first year also decline.

Table 6

Offender Detail Summary

Age at 1st Offense (Range 16 to 36 yrs)	n	Sex Offender	Domestic Offender	RSAT Grad
16 years	2	0	1	0
17 years	61	7	18	32
18 years	64	10	24	27
19 years	22	2	8	6
20 years	10	2	4	2
21 years	5	1	1	3
22 years	6	1	0	1
23 years	4	1	2	4
24 years	3	0	1	1
25 years	4	1	1	1
26 years	1	0	0	1
27 years	2	1	0	1
29 years	1	0	0	1
32 years	1	0	0	1

33 years	1	0	1	1
34 years	1	0	0	0
36 years	2	0	2	1

Note. $N = 190$

There was also a strong positive correlation between the New Conviction/charge and New One yr Y/N variables $(r(190) = .832, p < .05)$. When there are increases in new conviction charges, there will also be new offenses committed within the first year. Conversely, when declines in the number of new conviction charges occur, there will also be a decline in the number of offenses committed within the first year.

There was a positive correlation between New/Pend w/in 1 yr and New One yr Y/N variables $(r(190) = .814, p < .05)$. Thus, as the number of new and pending convictions occurring within the first year increases, the new offenses committed within the first year would also increase.

Finally, a positive correlation was identified between the Age At Admission and Age at First Offense variables $(r(190) = .265, p < .05)$. A scatter plot summarizes the results (see Figure 1). Overall, there was a positive relationship between the variables. As such, as the offender's age at the time of admission increases, the age at the time the offender committed her/his first offense tends to also increase.
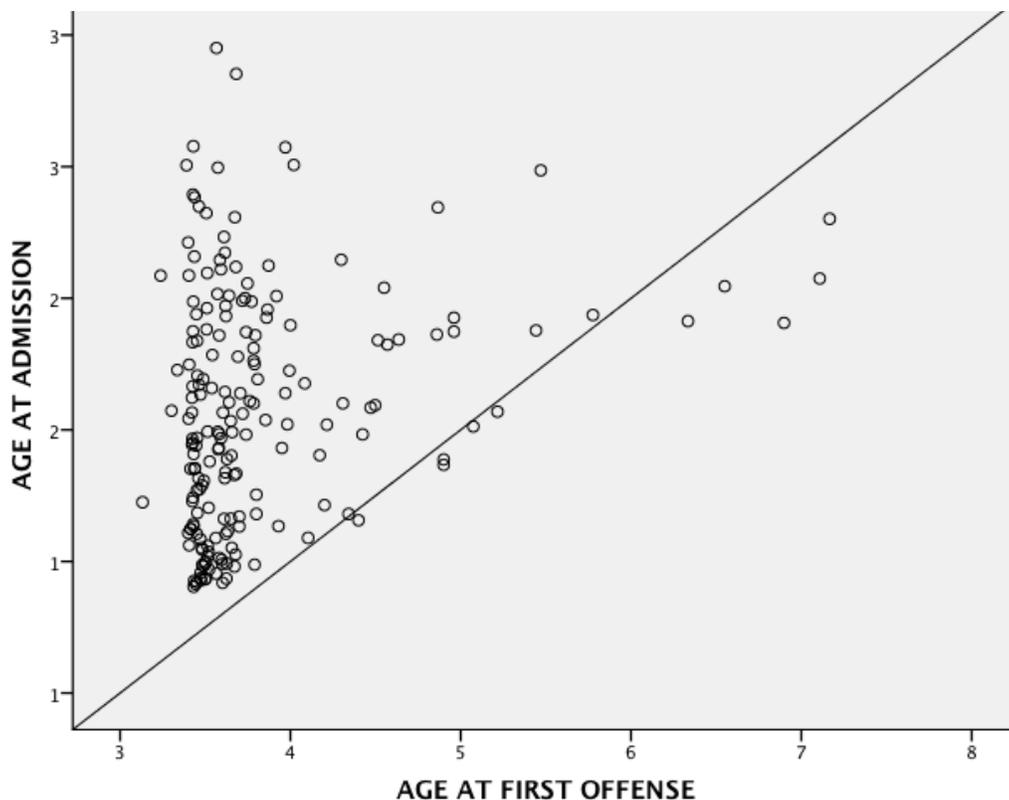
Figure 1 **Positive correlation between age of 1ˢᵗ offense and admission**

There was a negative correlation between Age at Admission and the Sex Offender variables $(r(190) = -.201, p < .05)$. Thus, as the offender's age at the time she/he was admitted increases, the likelihood that she/he is a sex offender decreases. There was also a negative correlation between New Conviction/Charge and RSAT GRAD variables $(r(190) = -.158, p < .05)$, thus, when New Conviction/Charges goes down, the RSAT GRAD completion variable increases.

There was a positive correlation between First Offense (more specifically the date of the first offense) and Sex Offender variables $(r(190) = .200, p < .05)$. Thus, the more

recent the date of First Offense variable, the more likely it is to see an increase in the

Offender variable, suggesting that sex offenders offenses may be more recent. There was

a negative correlation between Level of Service Inventory – REV and RSAT GRAD

variables ($r(190) = -.261$, $p < .05$). When scores on the LSI-R psychological inventory

increases, the likelihood of the offender completing the RSAT program diminishes

slightly.

Summary

This chapter provided descriptive details of the study's participants which

included the age of their first offense, age at admission to the RSAT program, and

whether or not they were sex offenders, domestic offenders, or neither. Next, the research

questions and hypotheses were reviewed and discussed in light of the study's findings.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Incarceration rates significantly increased during the late 1970s after stringent

legislation was passed at the federal level. Although this legislation was designed to take

a tougher stance in the hopes of discouraging those who might consider committing

criminal acts, it has not proven to be an effective deterrent to crime and fails to

effectively address the larger issue of recidivism within the offender population

(Skancke, 2005). Current estimates suggest that two-thirds of offenders, who exit the

judicial system, are re-incarcerated within 3 years of their release date (Bureau of Justice

Statistics, 2002). In addition, 80% of these offenders self-identity as experiencing some

type of substance abuse (Bureau of Assistance, 2005). In other words, the existing federal

legislation fails to address the behavioral and potential biological issues, which leads the

offender to commit criminal acts. The current study sought to understand the influence

that RSAT programs have in reducing these staggering rates of recidivism among

offenders after they exit the justice system. RSAT programs seek to address the

offender's behavior towards substance abuse and assist in developing the offender's

behavioral, cognitive, social, and vocational skills, which are considered the predecessors

that lead the offender to commit criminal acts.

The archival data used in the current study pertains to a group of 188 offenders

who attended the RSAT grant funded program at Barnstable House of Corrections in

Massachusetts between January 1, 1999 and June 6, 2001. Data collection for these

participants occurred between January 1999 and March 2002. The Criminal History

Systems Board provided data of the participants' criminal histories. AdCare Criminal

Justice Services provided information regarding the offenders' scores on psychological

inventories and RSAT program outcomes. All offenders attending the RSAT program in

place at the Barnstable House of Corrections during this time period met the Federal

criteria for referral to the RSAT program. This chapter summarizes the findings of the

current study, states plausible conclusions based on the study's findings, and makes

recommendations for further study.

Interpretation of Findings

The study's first hypothesis predicted that RSAT program completion rates for

known domestic offenders would be independent of the offender's age at the time of

admission to the RSAT program. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient

computed for these two variables did not identify any correlations. Age at the time of

admission does not significantly influence whether or not known domestic offenders

complete RSAT programs in their entirety. This is consistent with the basic tenants of

social learning theory, which posit that learning is part of a complex neural interaction

between the individual and her/his environment (Bandura, 1977). It is not dependent on

the individual's age but instead is the result of continual internal assessments, which the

individual makes in response to her/his current environment. Therefore, although

individuals can learn behaviors at an early age, it is the influences within her/his

environment, which shapes what the individual views as acceptable or reprehensive

behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

RSAT programs approach treatment simultaneously at multiple levels. This creates an environment that supports learning responsible behavior (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005). More specifically, RSAT programs include self-help groups and peer feedback. They address family and parenting related issues, and provide guidance in the areas of money management, vocational training, education, and other transitional services, designed to support successful reintegration into society. Thus RSAT programs provide an environment conducive to helping adult offenders at any age learn better, more appropriate behaviors, with the overall goal of reducing recidivism levels within the offender population (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005).

This finding differentiates from the findings of a meta-analysis that looked at the attrition rates within male only domestic offender treatment program studies that were published between 1985 and 2010 (Jewell & Wormith, 2010). Jewell and Wormith (2010) identified age, in conjunction with other factors among male offenders as a predictive variable in assessing whether or not an offender successfully completes a rehabilitative program. The authors suggested that variables, such as age, are also effective in predicting the likelihood of recidivism among domestic offenders. The current research study differed from this meta-analysis in that it included only adult offenders. All juvenile offenders were outside the scope of this study. This may offer some explanation as to why age was found to be a significant predictor in the meta-analysis but was not a significant predictor of program completion in the current study.

Behavioral learning theories posit that individuals learn what behaviors they view as acceptable and unacceptable (Bandura, 1977). As such, it is possible to successfully re-socialize offenders into their communities, by exposing them to new behaviors that can be learned while discouraging the undesirable behaviors. Re-socialization, not the offender's age, provides better supports to reduce recidivism (Siegel & Welsh, 2008). Further, program placement decisions both prior to and following the offender's release serve as better predictors of the risk of recidivism (Tolman & Rotzien, 2007).

Social learning theory recognizes that individuals may behave differently when their circumstances change. This suggests that dispositional (as opposed to situational) factors are more predictive determinants of behavior (Bandura, 1977). As mentioned previously, RSAT programs use a multifaceted approach to treatment, which provides the opportunity for offenders to learn behaviors that support successful reintegration into society (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005). Biologically based theories of behavior also offer additional explanations. For example, defects in the amygdala, which are identifiable as early as 3 years of age, may explain the greater tendencies of some individuals to engage in criminal behaviors during their adult years (Phelps & LeDoux, 2005). However, despite having a higher propensity to engage in criminal behaviors, behaviors themselves are learned and as such can be reshaped through environmental and individual reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). This may also explain why some offenders successfully complete RSAT programs, whereas others with a similar criminal and

substance abuse history are unable to successfully complete the program and instead are forced to withdraw due to behavioral issues.

The second hypothesis predicted that RSAT program completion rates for known sex offenders would be independent of the offender's age at the time of admission to the RSAT program. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient computed for these two variables identified a negative correlation between the variables. The likelihood that a sex offender will successfully complete the RSAT program declines as her/his age at the time of admission increases. In addition, the younger the age of the known sex offender at the time of admission to the RSAT program, the greater the likelihood that she/he will complete the program and graduate. This supports the existing research which suggests the offender's age at the time of her/his first offense and age at the time of her/his release has a level of predicative accuracy which is comparable to the assessments scores of standardized risk assessment measures, such as the Static-99 (Lussler & Healey, 2009).

Behavioral decision theory recognizes that immediate consequences related to how offenders actions are regulated, can be significant factors in strengthening or weakening the behavior of the offender and the choices made as to the likelihood that the offender will choose to again engage in, or abstain from, the offensive behavior (Bandura, 1977). Thus, RSAT programs provide a way for staff to shift their focus from the individual's observable behavior and instead focus on treating the internal reasons as to why the learned behavior is occurring. People are not passive observers whose

behaviors are simply being programmed by what they observe in their environments. Instead, there are many neural processes occurring simultaneously which interpret the environmental influences an offender is exposed to and supports the decisions made as to how she or he continues to behave (Bandura, 1977).

The current study's third hypothesis predicted that RSAT program completion rates for known domestic offenders are independent of the offender's age at the time of her/his first offense. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient computed for these two variables did not identify any significant correlations. This suggests that the offender's age at the time she/he committed her/his first offense has no significant bearing as to whether or not the offender successfully completes the assigned RSAT program.

Classical fear conditioning behavioral theory provides yet another insightful perspective as to why certain individuals are more likely to engage in criminal thinking and behavior. According to this behavioral theory model, individuals are conditioned to respond when certain stimuli are present (Gao et al., 2010). Thus, the age at the time of the offender's first offense may not be relevant to the conditioned, or learned, response of the offender. Instead, offenders may have been classically conditioned to respond to commit certain criminal behaviors as they approached adulthood and their choices to continue engaging in aggressive and antisocial behaviors may be more of a conditioned and learned response from their familiar environments (Sterzer & Stadler, 2009).

Social learning theory also suggests that influences within the individual's environment shape what is viewed by the individual as acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Bandura, 1977). However, because behaviors are learned, it is possible they can also be changed. Thus changing the environmental influences an individual is exposed to, can serve to either reinforce or discourage the desired behavioral choices made by the individual (Bandura, 1977).

The final hypothesis purported by the current study predicts that RSAT program completion rates are dependent on the offender's age at the time her/his first offense was committed. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient computed for these two variables did not identify any significant correlations. More specifically, the offender's age at the time she/he committed her/his first offense had no significant effect on whether or not the offender completed the assigned RSAT program.

Tenants of social learning theory suggest that reentry programs can be designed to address environmental influences that can support the individual development of more socially acceptable behaviors among offenders (Siegel & Welsh, 2008). Thus, behaviors are not inborn but learned, which suggests teaching offenders' different attitudes towards criminal offenses and delinquent behaviors, can reinforce positive behaviors that are considered more acceptable by society (Bandura, 1977).

In addition to looking at variables, which relate to the current study's hypotheses, a factor analysis was also conducted using the remaining variables contained in the archival data being analyzed. Additional relationships were found in the following

combinations of variables. A positive correlation was identified when new conviction charges and new convictions and/or pending convictions occurred within the first year following the offender's release were analyzed. When the number of new convictions increases, there will likely be an increase in the new and pending convictions, which occur within the first year of the offender's release. Further, when the number of new convictions decreases the number of new and pending convictions would also be expected to decrease.

These findings are further supported by social learning theory, which posits behaviors are learned, not inborn (Bandura, 1977). Thus offenders can be taught new behaviors that are more socially acceptable and those behaviors can be reinforced by governing bodies and other environmental influences within the communities where the individual resides. In addition the individual's internal self-governing systems, which are influenced by the offender's environment, can also serve to either positively reinforce the desired behaviors or discourage them from reoccurring (Bandura, 1977).

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient suggests that as the number of new conviction charges increases among offenders, the number of new offences committed within the offender's first year of release would also be expected to increase. Conversely, any decrease in the occurrence in number of new convictions or charges brought against the offender within the first year of her/his release, would be accompanied by an expected decrease in the number of new offenses committed by the offender. This positive correlation suggests there is an increase in the number of new and

pending convictions that occur within the first year. Based on these findings, an increase in new criminal offenses committed by the offender within one year of her/his release, would also be expected. Any decreases in the number of new and pending convictions occurring within the first year the offender is released would be accompanied by expected decreases in the number of new criminal offenses the offender commits during the first year of her/his release.

This finding can be further explained by the basic tenants of social learning theory of behavior. Social learning theory suggests that offenders learn what behaviors are considered acceptable, or unacceptable, by those closest to them (Bandura, 1977). These behaviors are then either reinforced or discouraged within the environments where the offender resides. Over time, offenders become conditioned to respond to certain stimuli without taking the time to consider all possible choices and the outcome of the chosen behaviors. However, because behaviors are learned, not inborn, and can be reinforced or discouraged depending on the environment where the offender resides, it is possible for previous offenders to learn new behaviors and to positively reinforce those behaviors while discouraging the undesirable behavior from continuing (Bandura, 1977).

A correlation was also identified between the offender's age at the time she/he was admitted to the RSAT program and her/his age at the time she/he committed her/his first offense. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient computed for these variables identified a positive correlation between the offender's age when she/he was admitted to the program and the age when she/he committed her/his first offense. More

specifically, the age of the offender at the time she/he was admitted to the Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts increases and decreases with the age of the offender at the time she/he committed her/his first offense.

Another RSAT program studied by researchers at the Sheridan Correctional Center in Illinois, evaluated the effects of age on completion rates (Olson, 2011). The study focused on offenders who attended the Sheridan Correctional Center between 2004 and 2010. Age was identified as one of eight specific variables, which influenced program completion for known sex offenders. Specifically, the longer the offender's prison sentence the greater the likelihood that she/he would be removed from the RSAT program. In addition, younger offenders with a history of prior arrests for violent crime were also less likely to successfully complete the RSAT program. These removals were the result of misconduct and other disciplinary reasons. However, the study did point out that even though some offenders were removed from the program prior to completion, there were many other offenders with these same characteristics who did successfully complete the prison phase portion of the RSAT program (Olson, 2011).

This finding is further supported by social learning theory which suggests that influences within the offender's environment serve to either enforce or discourage the behavior from reoccurring (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory recognizes the existence and impact of multiple factors which influence and ultimately determine the choices offenders make to again engage in certain offensive behaviors. The offender's attitudes, values, and the adaptive choices made, offer explanation of how offenders learn

to commit crimes (Hanser, 2010). However, because the behaviors are learned, not inborn, from a theoretical perspective offenders can also learn more acceptable behaviors and those behaviors can be reinforced by the environments where the offenders reside. Conversely, the continued occurrence of offensive behaviors can be discouraged by environmental influences (Bandura, 1977).

A trend between the type of first offense committed by the offender and whether or not the offender was considered to be a sex offender was also identified. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient computed for these variables suggests that the type of first offense committed directly impacts whether or not the offender is also classified as a sex offender. More specifically, the first criminal acts committed by known sex offenders tend to be sexual in nature, whereas the first criminal convictions for domestic offenders tend to be some type of domestic offense.

This is consistent with existing research findings, which suggest significantly higher rates of recidivism among convicted sex offenders when compared to other non-sexual criminal offenders (Zgoba et al., 2009). Not surprisingly, sex-related criminal offenses are devastating for victims and those residing in our communities, with both physical and psychological ramifications that are not easily overcome (Payne & DeMichele, 2011). However, as social learning theory suggests, if behaviors are learned, not inborn, from a theoretical basis, even sex offenders can learn new, more socially acceptable behaviors, that are reinforced by their environments. In addition, exposing

previous offenders to positive environments can also serve to discourage the reoccurrence of offensive behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

A negative correlation was identified between the offender's age at the time of her/his admission to the RSAT program and whether or not the offender was also classified as a known sex offender. More specifically, the older the offender at the time of admission to the RSAT program the more likely the individual was to also be a sex offender. Conversely, the younger the offender at the time of admission to the RSAT program, the less likely was the offender also a known sex offender. The age of the offender at the time of admission may also be a predictor of the likelihood of the offender to again engage in criminal behavior. More specifically, current research suggests that the older drug offenders are, the less likely they are to engage in more violent criminal offenses upon the completion of their prison sentence (Freilburger & Iannocchione, 2011).

Biologically based theories of behavior may offer some explanation for this finding. More specifically, biologically based theories of behavior suggest that defects in the amygdala, which have been identified in individuals, as early as 3 years of age, may explain why certain individuals are more prone to engage in deviant behaviors, such as sexual assaults and other sex offending crimes (Lissek et al., 2010). Certain defects in the amygdala are believed to decrease levels of fear conditioning within the individual. As such, the individual experiences reduced or no inhibitions when engaging in offensive behavior, such as sexual crimes committed against others (Lissek et al., 2010).

Finally, a negative correlation was identified which suggests that when scores are low on the LSI-R instrument, the likelihood of the offender successfully completing the assigned RSAT program increases slightly. Further, as the offender's scores on the LSI-R increase, the chances that the offender will successfully complete her/his assigned RSAT program decreases slightly.

The LSI-R instrument is a standardized measure, which when administered correctly, is effective in accurately assessing criminogenic risk factors 80% of the time (Baillargeon et al., 2009). It is critically important to accurately and effectively assess offenders to ensure proper program placement. Current research has shown that punishments alone are not effective in reducing recidivism. Instead, strategies which positively reinforce and instruct offenders provide a more effective means of reducing offender recidivism (Towl & Towl, 2003).

From a social learning theory perspective, behaviors are learned, not inborn, and as such, individuals can be re-taught more socially acceptable behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Assessing both static and dynamic risk factors present in the offender, in an effort to identify environmental factors which can be influential in determining how likely the offender is to again engage in the offensive behavior, provides insight which identifies environmental influences of concern. Social learning theory recognizes the influence that environmental factors have in encouraging, or discouraging, the reoccurrence of offensive behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Further, it suggests that individuals can be classically conditioned to respond to familiar stimuli within their environments without

investing the time for additional consideration. Identifying and addressing these environmental influences provides a gauge from which decision makers can effectively assess the offender's risk of recidivism (Lowenkamp & Bechtel, 2007).

This study's findings are consistent with the existing literature. Substance abuse and substance dependence are associated with increases in criminal behavior and higher rates of recidivism (Baillargeon et al., 2009). However, RSAT programs are designed to address substance abuse and dependence disorders of offenders. Research supports the reduction in rates of recidivism among offenders who successful complete RSAT programs (Harrison & Marin, 2005). In addition the program format can easily be adapted to juvenile offenders suffering from drug abuse problems (Bureau of Assistance, 2005). Identifying intervention strategies, which support the successful completion of residential treatment programs and verifying program outcomes, are essential elements to the successful treatment and prevention of continued recidivism within the offender population.

Both social learning theory and behavioral theories address the role that environmental influences have in shaping what the individual views as acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Bandura, 1977). In addition, despite possible defects in the amygdala which make certain individuals more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors, the individual is still capable of learning. It is through learning new, more socially acceptable, behaviors and providing rehabilitative environments, which support and reinforce these newly learned positive behaviors, that offenders are provided the

opportunity to choose better behaviors for themselves, which support positive social change within the communities in which they reside and society as a whole (Bandura, 1977).

Implications for Social Change

Understanding RSAT program outcomes focused on reducing rates of recidivism among domestic and sex offenders with substance abuse problems has a tremendous potential for positively enacting social change for offenders exiting the judicial system. First, understanding the factors affecting the success of these programs helps identify the crucial junctures where a positive change for the offender is most likely to occur. In addition, understanding variables that positively impact social change can be incorporated into other programs focused on reducing rates of recidivism within the offender population. Further, a better understanding of the factors influencing recidivism affords additional opportunities to educate correctional staff responsible for enacting rehabilitative efforts intended to reduce rates of recidivism. Finally, empowering offenders to overcome their own recidivistic tendencies leads to safer communities and improved quality of life for our citizens, as well as former offenders. RSAT grant-funded programs focus on treating the behaviors resulting from the offenders' substance abuse by addressing both cognitive and behavioral concerns of offenders (Bureau of Assistance, 2005). More specifically, RSAT program models provide aftercare and relapse prevention services. They focus on developing the offenders' cognitive skills and providing vocational training to reinforce appropriate behaviors among offenders. RSAT

programs share one common goal: the desire to help offenders deal with their substance

abuse problems and successfully reintegrate into society when they exit the judicial

system (Bureau of Assistance, 2005).

Recommendations for Further Study

The current study conducted a factor analysis on archival data collected between

January 1, 1999 and June 6, 2001, on participants who attended an RSAT grant funded

program offered at the Barnstable House of Corrections in Massachusetts. The data

revealed multiple correlations between variables, which suggests RSAT programs do

have positive impacts on rates of recidivism among domestic and sex offenders with

substance abuse problems. The sex of the participants was not identified within the

archival data. Additional research is needed to determine if the reduction in recidivism

experienced by RSAT grads admitted to the Barnstable House of Corrections is gender

specific. In addition, the archival data used in the current study pertains to only a

relatively short period of time. A longitudinal study would be needed to determine

whether RSAT programs play a significant role in reducing recidivism for any significant

period of time after the first year the offender's release. Finally, the strong positive

correlation identified between offenses committed within the first year and new

conviction charges should be explored to further to determine if any predictable patterns

exist between the types of offenses committed within the first year after RSAT program

completion.

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Appendix A: Diagram of Program Process

Program Success → Successful social integration into the community

Offender Risk
- Low
- Medium
- High

Program Placement Decisions
- Criminal history
- Rates of recidivism
- LSI-R test scores

Offenders Exiting the Judicial System

Program Failure → Problem Behaviors

Re-incarceration

Recidivism
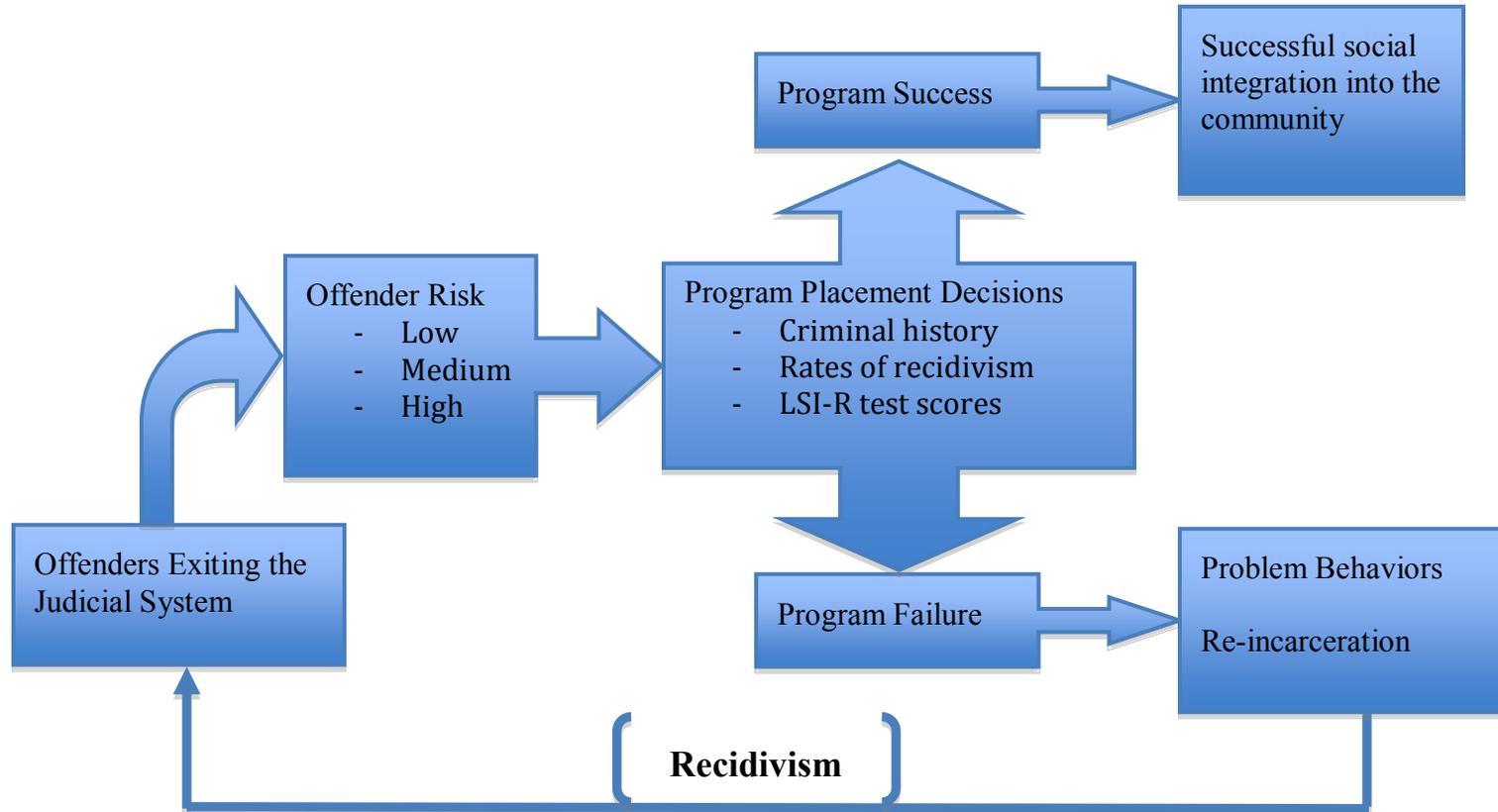
Curriculum Vitae

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Experience

Walden University, Minneapolis, MN   **2006-present**
Psychology Student
   - Academic Year in Residency: Over 500 hours of hands-on face-to-face time with instructors learning assessment and report writing skills, gaining specialized knowledge of approaches to therapy, attending seminars focused on current trends and methodologies in use today, and intensive interactive group collaboration projects and presentations with other students
   - Expanded existing knowledge of research methods
   - Exposure to different approaches to therapy and therapeutic techniques
   - Gained hands-on experience in conducting assessments and writing psychological reports
   - Knowledgeable and experienced with the administration and scoring of psychological tests including, WISC-IV, WAIS-III, H-T-P, and MMPI
   - Honor student

Mastec Advanced Technologies, Englewood, CO   **2011 to Present**
Siebel Administration Supervisor

- Manage team of eight reporting analysts
- Responsible for report creation – templates, formulas, macros
- Manage and execute daily audits
- Primary person for all data reporting development and quality assurance checking
- Perform load balancing of 5,000 field technicians located across the east coast and mid-west
- Ensure timely responses to all client inquiries regarding administrative requests and technician relocations
- Remapping to improve service in east coast regions to support fieldwork.
- Responsible for ensuring all performance metrics are met on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.
- Responsible to organizing and executing projects
- Responsible for all internal team training

Blue Heron Elementary, Littleton, CO   **2006 to 2009**
Instructional Technologist
- Worked with students and staff providing instruction on computer usage and document and presentation design
- Worked with special needs children, providing specialized assistance with integrated technology tools and techniques
- Advanced MS Office and Outlook skills
- Instructor, mentor, and trainer for teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Developed indexed online reference guides for use by teachers and staff.
- Liaison between groups. Primary person responsible for IT and Telecommunications project organization and implementation.
- Asset Management: Responsible for purchasing, tracking, repairing, and managing all computer and related peripherals for the organization.
- Handle all aspects of desktop & laptop support (e.g. troubleshooting, ordering, upgrades, installs, image creation, Wi-Fi support, directory indexing, documentation, job aid creation, and so forth)
- Evaluated and tested all requests for system upgrades and software applications to determine functionality and its effect on the system environment.
- Test and design integration strategies for new technology purchased for use within the classrooms.
- VPN and Server troubleshooting and support
- Wi-Fi networking and support, blackberry & other PDA troubleshooting and support
- Nightly server backups, data migration tasks, system restores, and network load balancing.
- Handled all aspects of the procurement process including inventory, ordering, recommendations, and assessing customer needs.
- Developed policies and procedures for IT ordering process, machine deployments, and Asset Management
- Novell administration responsibilities including setting up all network accounts, resetting print queues, and monitoring disk space usage.

- Responsible for monitoring and responding to all helpdesk calls to the building.
- Webmaster for Blue Heron Intranet

Westwood College, Denver, CO   2004 to 2005
Full Time MBA Student *(completed October 2005)*

- Gained solid knowledge base of business operations.
- Studied government regulations, finance, contracts, and employment law.
- Learned effective research and presentation methods.
- Honor student with 3.97 GPA

AT&T Broadband (Merged from MediaOne), Englewood, CO   2001 to 2003

IT Manager – Corporate Services

- Led a team of 25 employees and contractors in providing all IT support for executive level officers and their staff at corporate headquarters buildings. Also supported two nationwide call centers, corporate hanger, and development labs. Managed budget of $12M.

- Led all aspects of asset management (e.g. redeployment, loaner pools, disposals) using ITAM model.

- Reorganized dept. by improving procedures and processes, generating a cost reduction of 20%.

- Conducted monthly vender audits using statistical process controls that resulted in $5000+ monthly cost savings to the company.

- Software compatibility testing across diverse systems.

- Evaluate projects to ensure compliance with existing IT and Telecommunications infrastructure.

- Advanced MS Office User skills used to create Access databases, Excel Spreadsheet with pivot tables, linked MS Word documents with imbedded macros and customized toolbars.

- Conducted regular brown-bag training sessions for non-IT personnel.

- Met with clients to assess needs, resolve problems, and make recommendations.

- Improved team productivity and cohesiveness by developing and implementing focused group goals & objectives for IT and Telephony groups. Also led team-building events.

- Monitored call flow for the group, analyzed call data, developed reporting metrics for call data.

- Held IT budget under goals by actively managing all vendors and IT contractors. Key role in renegotiating contracts to reduce monthly costs to company by $30,000 per month.

- Developed Risk Management policies for IT related functions in the Enterprise.

- Managed key project that developed and implemented Disaster Recovery plans for all Call Centers.

- Complete monthly director level summaries of IT and Telecommunications operations group.

- Cataloged all software applications into a document repository of applications and systems used throughout AT&T Broadband's enterprise.

- Managed call flow for group, developed service levels, and monitored performance.

- Analyzed call data for IT and Telephony groups recorded in Remedy ticketing system.

- Specialize in dealing with difficult customers. Take ownership of problems through resolution.

- Meet with client to evaluate needs and make recommendations.

- After hours, on-call support with remote troubleshooting tools
- Improved uptime and IT availability while standardizing IT operations across several merged companies by writing and implementing campus wide standards and processes for on-site teams.
- Troubleshooting complex computer problems.

AT&T Broadband (Merged from MediaOne), Englewood, CO   2001
Supervisor-IT Field Operations
- Led and managed on-site support specialists for large corporate campus (approx. 3500 employees and contractors).
- Led all aspects of asset management (e.g. redeployment, loaner pools, disposals) using ITAM model.
- Conducted regular brown-bag training sessions for non-IT personnel.
- Designed and implemented a six-week project plan to transition on-site support to outsourced staff.
- Improved both termination and hiring processes by conducting exit interviews for all on-site technicians classified as employees.
- Tested software applications to determine compatibility with existing environment. Types of testing performed included functional, smoke, regression, and performance/load/stress testing.
- VPN, LAN/WAN troubleshooting and support
- Manage call flow recorded in Remedy system and produce reports based on call data.
- Complete monthly director level summaries of IT and Telecommunications operations group.
- Special projects have included:
    - Developed western region division's intranet web site.
    - Assessed customer satisfaction and implemented corrections. Escalation point for difficult issues.
    - Managed account for outsourced services including the budget.
    - Develop database for HR and Employee Relations department.

Certifications/Awards

- Outstanding Scouter Award

    Presented by the Denver Area Council Boy Scouts of America, 2009

- Blue Print Award for outstanding leadership

    Presented by VP of Corporate Services AT &T Broadband, 2002

- Outstanding Customer Service Award

Presented by VP of IT and Telecommunications Field Operations, AT&T Broadband, 2001

- Award of Excellence

    Presented by the Sr. Director of Shared Technologies Services MediaOne Group, 1999

- Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS)

    Presented by Microsoft Corporation, 1999

- Outstanding Customer Service Award

    Presented by the Director of Law Group Technologies US West/Qwest, 1998

- Steam-up Award for Outstanding Customer Service

    Presented by the IT Manager of Law Group Technologies US West/Qwest, 1997

Professional Membership

- American Psychological Association
- Psi Chi Honor Society
- Boy Scouts of America

Computer Proficiency

- Advanced MS Office User: Access, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook
- Web: HTML, HTML, JavaScript, Vbscript; Netscape/Explorer browsers; HomeSite, FrontPage, Photoshop, DreamWeaver, School Center.
- SPSS

Research Interests

- Recidivism among adult offenders
- Antisocial Personality Disorders – causes, treatment, early contributors towards its development
- Dysfunctional Relationships – sibling, parental, and spouse