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# Recidivism Rates Among Biological Fathers and Parental Figures Who Commit Child Sexual Abuse in Hawai'i

Stephanie Dixon Dixon  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Stephanie O Dixon

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Recidivism Rates Among Biological Fathers and Parental Figures Who Commit Child

Sexual Abuse in Hawai'i

by

Stephanie O. B. Dixon

MS, Counseling Psychology, Chaminade University Hawai'i, 1999

BA, Psychology, Mobile College (University of Mobile) 1990

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

August 2018

## Abstract

Sex offenders are commonly grouped into categories based on the characteristics (e.g., victim age, relationship to offender) of their victims for criminal sentencing and treatment purposes. The purpose of this quantitative, quasi-experimental study was to address the gap in the literature comparing recidivism rates among biological fathers and male parental figures who committed incestuous child sexual abuse in Hawai'i against children 15 years or younger. This study was the first attempt in the state to examine the number of inmates who had completed their maximum sentences and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offenses. Secondary data were obtained from the Safety Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) within the state of Hawai'i Department of Public Safety from the years 1988 to 2013. Areas of recidivism and crimes involving biological fathers, stepfathers, boyfriends of the victims' mothers, foster parents, and hana'i family members were included ( $N = 1,727$ ). Three hundred and ten met the criteria for the current study. The study had 2 independent variables: the offender's relationship to the victim (e.g., biological, adoptive, stepparent, foster parent or hana'i family members); or the residency status of the offender (e.g., lived with the victim versus did not live with the victim). The dependent variable was the recidivism rates of the incest offenders (i.e., new incest offense convictions). Analysis of these variables using the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$  statistical test lacked statistical significance as there was no documented evidence of recidivism in either group. The potential for social change and clinical significance still exists. Further analysis of the effectiveness of the SOTP may aid in sustaining low recidivism rates.

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## Dedication

To my husband, Dion, thank you for being you—encouraging, supportive, annoying, silly and most of all unconditionally loving. My children Dominick and Ashlei, I know that it feels like I've been in school all of your lives (because it's true), but remember everything that I do, I do it for you. My mother, "Bea", with all of the trials and tribulations that we put you through you have always been supportive of not only us as your children and grandchildren but also of the family and friends in your life. You are a great role model.

I would also like to dedicate this to the family that I married into because Tricia, Ham and Mother Dear accepted me as one of their own and not just as an in-law. All of my aunts, uncles and cousins who always asked if I was done with school yet or was I still a career student, thanks for asking. I'm officially done being a student!

To my friends who became family—Thia, Suzy, Joy, Felicidad (my FAVORITE Fely), Shawna, Cortenia, Deidre, Malin, Thomasina, Tonya, Lisa, Lori and Yvette, thank you! Thank you for letting me whine, letting me cry, letting me have my pity parties and letting me just be me!

Lastly but definitely not least, I thank God for allowing me to lean on the everlasting arms!

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	4
Problem Statement.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	10
Research Questions.....	11
Theoretical Framework.....	12
Transtheoretical Model of Change.....	12
Relapse Prevention.....	13
Nature of the Study.....	14
Definition of Terms.....	14
Assumptions.....	16
Scope and Delimitations.....	16
Limitations.....	17
Significance.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Literature Research Strategy.....	20
Theoretical Framework.....	21
Transtheoretical Model.....	21



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy ( <i>CBT</i> ).....	23
Risk-Need-Responsivity ( <i>RNR</i> ).....	25
Age of Consent .....	28
Predictors of Incest .....	30
Incest Offenders .....	31
Predictors of Sexual Recidivism.....	34
Sex Offender Assessments and Cultural Considerations.....	36
The Rapid Risk Assessment for Sexual Offense Recidivism (RRASOR) .....	39
The Static-99 and the SORAG.....	40
The PCL-R and the VRS-SO .....	40
Violent Risk Scale-Sexual Offender Version (VRS-SO) .....	41
Summary .....	43
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	45
Introduction.....	45
Research Design and Rationale .....	46
Methodology .....	47
Population .....	47
Sampling and Sampling Procedure.....	47
Power Analysis .....	47
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	48
Data Sources .....	48
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	49

Instrumentation and Operationalization.....	50
Independent Variables .....	50
Dependent Variable .....	50
Data Analysis Plan.....	51
Threats to Validity .....	52
Internal Validity .....	52
External Validity.....	52
Ethical Procedures .....	53
Summary .....	55
Chapter 4: Results.....	56
Introduction.....	56
Purpose of the Study .....	56
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	56
Organization of Chapter.....	57
Data Collection .....	57
Population .....	57
Recruitment.....	58
Descriptive analysis of demographic characteristics .....	58
Descriptive Statistics.....	59
Results	
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	60
Summary .....	61

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations .....	63
Introduction.....	63
Purpose of the Study .....	63
Overview of Current Study.....	65
Interpretation of Findings .....	66
Research Question 1 .....	66
Research Question 2 .....	68
Limitations .....	69
Threats to Validity .....	71
Recommendations.....	73
Implications for Social Change.....	75
Conclusion .....	77
References.....	78

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Introduction

On October 13, 2013, Dylan Farrow (daughter of Woody Allen and Mia Farrow) gave an exclusive interview to *Vanity Fair* reporter Maureen Orth about allegations of sexual molestation that she suffered at the hands of her father (Woody Allen) in 1992 when she was seven years old. She reported the molestation to her mother (Mia Farrow) who reported the alleged sexual assault to the police. Grogan (2016) wrote that many observers shamed the young victim for speaking out and automatically believed her father (Woody Allen), insinuating that “he said” appears to frequently carry more weight than “she said” when accusations such as these are made.

Sexual abuse is a global epidemic (Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), while there has been a growing focus on the issue of sexual abuse among governmental representatives and law enforcement agencies, particularly in Hawai'i where this study was conducted, there is no clear understanding of how to reduce sexual predatory behaviors against minors by those closest to them.

Although overall arrests for sexually related offenses decreased by 2% from 2011 to 2012 (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 2012), sexual violence continues to be a significant concern to the general public. According to Walters, Chen, and Breiding (2013), a study conducted by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center noted that approximately one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18 years old in the United States. The U.S. Department of Justice [DOJ] (2012) reported that only 10% of perpetrators of child sexual abuse (CSA) were strangers, while 60% of perpetrators of sexual abuse were known to the child but were not family members. These perpetrators could have

been family friends, babysitters, child care providers, or neighbors. The statistics further indicated that 30% of perpetrators of child abuse were family members (DOJ, 2012).

Although most community protection policies have sought to increase awareness regarding sex offenders' residency, evidence clearly indicates that most sex offenses happen within the family or by a family acquaintance. Duwe, Donnay, and Tewksbury (2010) found that in only 4% of cases did the perpetrator live in close proximity or was a neighbor of the victim. In addition, studies on attitudes toward sex offenders (Jones, 2013) were mostly based on occupations (e.g., counseling professionals and paraprofessionals, psychologist's views) who interact with these individuals professionally. Moreover, although previous studies suggested that recidivism rates among sexual offenders were not high compared with other offenders (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004; Levenson & Shields, 2012), limited research exists on the risk factors for this recidivism. As a result, many people in the public sector have continued to strongly believe that sexual offenders are more likely to commit sexually violent crimes and predatory offenses (Lam, Mitchell, & Seto, 2010). Although these studies have provided some insight about a professional's attitudes toward sex offenders, they have not provided information about the public's attitudes toward sex offenders. Inaccurate information about sex offenders can drastically influence how individuals vote on legislations regarding their rights, liberties, and even choices of residencies of these offenders pertaining to such matters. Futa, Hsu, and Hansen (2001) posited that the effects of CSA varied depending on predetermined variables such as race, gender, age, and/or sexuality. Based on these factors, in the current study, I compared recidivism rates among biological fathers and parental figures who committed child sexual abuse in Hawai'i.

A sex offender is someone who has been convicted of a sex crime (Bixler, 1983; Seto, 2008). Sex offenders who committed incest were the focus of this study. *Incest* is defined as any sexual activity between biological offspring, close blood relatives including step-relatives, someone who serves in the parental role and family members who are forbidden by law to marry (Bixler, 1983; Seto, 2008). Father-daughter incest has been reported to be the most common incest type followed by other types such as brother-sister, sister-sister, and mother-son incest (Yildirim et al., 2014). It is a problem that has been seen in all the social classes in developed and undeveloped societies. The World Health Organization classified this problem as a silent health emergency (Yildirim et al., 2014).

Incest offenders can be further categorized as follows: those who are biological parents, stepparents, adoptive parents, mother's boyfriends, hana'i family members (the word hana'i [hana ee] is Hawai'ian and is defined as close or like family) or foster parents with whom the victims resided for more than 60 days. Father-daughter incest victims usually are younger than 16 years old when the offenses begin (Itzin, 1997). Typically, though, most father-daughter incest cases never come to the attention of the authorities (Stroebel, Kuo, O'Keefe, Beard, Swindell, & Kommor, 2013).

Child sexual abuse is an intimate and complicated form of harm (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011). Little has been written on the effects of culture on incest (Fontes, 1995) and even less on how to work with families of diverse cultural backgrounds (Cumming & Buell, 1997). Despite centuries of silence and denial that have surrounded the sexual abuse of children, it was only within the last few decades that society began to see it as a significant problem and attempted to seek ways to prevent and eliminate sexual abuse (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).

This study is significant in that there had never been a study focusing on criminal recidivism rates of incestuous sex offenders in the state of Hawai'i after the implementation of the Department of Public Safety Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) during the past quarter century (from 1988-2013). According to Levenson, Ackerman, and Harris (2014), the NCMEC conducts a phone survey twice per year of state registry officials and publishes a jurisdictional count of RSOs portrayed on a map. As of July 2013, (which marked the 25th year of the implementation of the SOTP), there were 1,295 RSOs in the state of Hawai'i and a total of 1,727 convicted sex offenders since 1988.

My study was the first attempt of its kind to examine the number of adult inmates incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i DPS who had completed their maximum sentences (maxed out) and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offenses. If the hypotheses of this study are supported, the possibility of potential policy changes within the state of Hawai'i regarding allowing incest offenders to reside with their victims after they are released from prison should be considered. In addition, treatment plans and policies may need to be tailored to address the victim/offender needs based on the relationship between the offender and the victim.

### **Background**

Evidence has indicated that some sex offenders do not fit neatly into one typology, but instead present with characteristics from multiple typologies, or sometimes none at all (Blasko, 2016). Sex offenders are commonly grouped into categories based on the characteristics of their victims for criminal sentencing and treatment purposes. These characteristics include victim age (e.g., child vs. adult) and the relationship of the offender to the victim (e.g., family member vs. stranger). This division is necessary because clinicians believed that the offender's choice of

victim was a result of distinct motives and sexual disorder etiologies (Beech & Ward, 2004; Craissati, McClurg, & Browne, 2002; Glasser et al., 2001; Hudson & Ward, 2000; Matala, 2008).

In this study, I focused on recidivism among incest offenders who were incarcerated in Hawai'i. For the purposes of this study, *recidivism* was defined as the commission of a subsequent sex crime against a child after being convicted of a prior sex offense (Tewksbury & Lees, 2006). Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2004a) posited that as many as 37% of convicted sex offenders would recidivate and return to prison. Further research indicated that when compared with other crimes, sex offenders released from prison were up to four times more likely to commit new crimes (Langan, Schmitt, & Durose, 2003; Langevin et al., 2004). Punitive measures such as mandatory minimum sentences of incarceration and postconviction monitoring, which required registering on a sex offender registry for the rest of their lives, for those released from prison were implemented by the federal government to reduce recidivism ([www.americanbar.org/2008](http://www.americanbar.org/2008), accessed on October 20, 2014). Mandatory minimum sentences are arbitrarily administered and those who are required to register after conviction as sex offenders are the least likely class of criminals to reoffend, with 3.5% of RSOs released from prison in 1994 being reconvicted for another sexual offense within 3 years of their release ([www.americanbar.org/2008](http://www.americanbar.org/2008), accessed on October 20, 2014). In a study conducted by Malesky and Keim (2001), it was found that approximately 80% of mental health professionals believed that having sex offenders register had no impact on reducing the number of CSA incidents and 70% found that community notification created a false sense of security.

Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, and Baker (2007) conducted a study pertaining to public perceptions about sex offenders and community protection policies; they posited that the public would hold inaccurate beliefs about sex offenders and would strongly support community



protection policies. Their results found that community members believed that sex offenders have high recidivism rates, generalized all sex offenders as high risk, and expressed skepticism about the benefits of sex offender treatment.

In this study, I closely examined the variables of residency and familial relationship of the incest offenders to the victims as predictors of recidivism. Prior to the 1990s, evaluators had little empirical guidance concerning the factors that were, or were not, related to recidivism risks. General consensus now exists that sexual recidivism may be associated with at least two broad factors: (a) deviant sexual interests, and (b) antisocial orientation/lifestyle instability (Hanson & Bussière, 1998; Quinsey, Lalumière, Rice, & Harris, 1995; Roberts, Doren, & Thornton, 2002). Though many studies have compared recidivism rates of incest perpetrators, rapists, and other sexual offenders, none had researched and specifically broken down the variables for the state of Hawai'i as were done in this study.

Hanson (2002) found that incest offenders were the least likely to reoffend (8.4% recidivated), although rapists with adult female victims recidivated at a rate of 17.1%. Child molesters with extra-familial victims were the most likely to reoffend at a rate of 19.5%. Although all sexual offending is socially deviant, not all offenders have an enduring interest in sexual acts that are illegal (e.g., children, rape) or highly unusual (e.g., fetishism, auto-erotic asphyxia). Sexual recidivism generally increases when such deviant interests are present, as indicated by self-report, offence history, or specialized testing (Hanson & Bussière, 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004). That noted, Matala (2008) reported that recidivism rates were inconsistent throughout the recidivism literature due to methodological variability. The fact that the severity and/or degree of sexual offense charges could be changed to criminal

charges that were not sexually related meant that the recidivism numbers could also be skewed depending on the definition of recidivism used.

Research evidence indicates that incestuous abuse cases against children has been considered to be extremely heinous as these cases may cause more severe physical and emotional injury to these victims, especially in cases in which the offenders may have returned to the homes of their victims after they were released from prison (Fischer & McDonald, 1998). Davies and Rogers (2006) found that CSA was deemed more severe, yet the offender less culpable, when perpetrated by the child's biological father as opposed to a stepfather or other male figure serving in a parental role. The significance of a biological element in paternity has been thought to be of less importance to CSA than the emotional closeness between the child and her caregiver (LaFontaine, 1990). Perpetrators with an emotionally close relationship with the child may be seen as inflicting a greater sense of betrayal of caregiver trust than the sexual abuses carried out by someone who is not emotionally close to the victim (Davies, Patel, & Rogers, 2013). Not only did the victim suffer some significant upset as a result of the actual sexual abuse, but there was significant trauma associated with the disclosure of the victimization. The victim was also left with feelings of guilt for having been "selected" for the sexual abuse and wondered what was wrong with her to cause this to happen, in addition to the knowledge that the offender was "getting into trouble" because of her reporting the abuse (O'Connell, 1986). During medieval times, the commonality of incest stories highlighted not only their popularity, but the frequency with which incest occurred among the medieval population. We can be certain that the sexual abuse of children and adolescents by adult relatives did in fact occur in medieval French society and has continued into modern day. According to Gradval (1995), it was not uncommon for women to cite the reason for infanticide

as the fact or possibility that a pregnancy was a result of intercourse with her father, grandfather, or brother.

O'Connell (1986) also posited that in instances in which there had been sexual abuse of a child by an adult, it was important that the offender be removed from the family situation and have no contact with the child/victim. This was done to ensure the physical, emotional, and mental safety of the victim. O'Connell noted that the victim should not have to deal with the offender and the possibility of him "blaming her" for the trouble she has caused him. The offender also may have attempted to pressure the victim into excusing his behavior or denying the extent of the abuse or coerce the victim to recant her report altogether. Removal of the offender from the home allowed the family of the victim to focus on her needs rather than the needs of the offender and it was deemed fairer to make the person causing the problem to leave the home rather than allow the victim to suffer more upheaval and disruption in her life.

This study was significant in that there had never been a study focusing on criminal recidivism of incestuous sex offenders during the first 25 years of the SOTP (1988-2013) in the state of Hawai'i. Previous studies that were reviewed compared incest perpetrators, rapists, and other sexual deviancies, but did not appear to specifically look at residency status or victim-offender relationship as recidivism predictors. This study was the first attempt to fill this informational gap and examine the number of inmates who had completed their maximum sentences (maxed out) and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offenses.

### **Problem Statement**

Hawaii's prison population rose markedly from 1988 to 2013 for those convicted of sexually related offenses. Whatever the reason for the uptick—socioeconomic status, drug usage

or stringent sentencing laws—Hawai'i is unique in that it is one of the few states in which minimum sentences are strictly set by the paroling authority. The policy of requiring participation in sex offender treatment for those convicted of sexually related crimes has always been mandatory before inmates are considered for parole or early release and is still enforced currently. Individuals who refuse to complete the mandatory sex offender treatment program are required to complete their entire prison sentence with no time off for good behavior, except on rare occasions in which they are released from prison for compassionate reasons after it has been determined that they are terminally ill and have prognoses of less than one year to live. (Personal conversation, Dr. Barry J. Coyne, PhD, December 31, 2015).

I addressed the fact that there were no documented studies that had explored the recidivism rates of convicted incest offenders in the state of Hawai'i. I examined the unique population of sex offenders in Hawai'i. The gap in literature on incest offender recidivism rates had not addressed the factors associated with recidivism in Hawai'i. Based on Hawaii's uniqueness as a chain of islands surrounded by water rather than one contiguous land mass, I investigated the likelihood of recidivism by individuals living in Hawai'i who had committed sexually related offenses against family members. Because no studies were found that specifically addressed incest recidivism in Hawai'i, no definitive conclusions were drawn about the differences in recidivism rates between biological fathers, stepfathers, and individuals serving in the roles of parental figures.

Contemporary theories have posited that a variety of factors were associated with sexual offending (Knight & Sims-Knight, 2003; Malamuth, 2003; Ward & Siegert, 2002). These models have suggested that the breeding ground for sexual offending included an adverse family environment, characterized by various forms of abuse and neglect. Apart from sexual

deviancy and lifestyle instability, there may be three additional characteristics of persistent sexual offenders: (a) negative family background, (b) problems with friends and lovers, and (c) attitudes tolerant of sexual assault. Wood and Riggs (2008) purported that a lack of adult attachment (intimate relationships), empathy for victims, and cognitive distortions that support adult-child sex may be linked to recidivism.

Hanson and Bussiere (1998) posited that the best predictor of sexual offense recidivism is an offender with a history of sexual deviancy. Individuals with a history of prior sexual offenses were more likely than non-sex offenders to recidivate and commit new sexual offenses. In this study, I addressed the gap in literature on incest offender recidivism among males who were incarcerated in Hawai'i and completed their maximum prison sentences.

### **Purpose of the Study**

My purpose in this quantitative study was to explore and compare the recidivism rates of biological fathers and men serving in parental roles living in Hawai'i who have been convicted of and incarcerated for CSA. No studies to date have looked specifically at individuals living in Hawai'i. Based on Hawai'i's uniqueness as a chain of islands rather than one contiguous land mass and its vast multicultural population, the purpose of this pilot study was to provide the first data on this offender population that is of clinical value for current and future clinicians.

Seto and Barbaree (1999) posited that sex offenders who participated in sex offender treatment were less likely to recidivate. The goal of changing thinking patterns is by definition a key component of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) treatment programs which was considered by many to be the dominant approach in the sex offender treatment field (McGrath et al., 2010; Helmus, Hanson, BabChishin & Mann (2013). Cognitive distortions are common treatment targets (O Ciardha & Gannon, 2011). Hawai'i is unique in that it is one of the few states in which

minimum sentences for prison incarceration are strictly set by the paroling authority. Participation in sex offender treatment programs for those convicted of sexually related crimes is mandatory before inmates are considered for parole or early release, though it should be noted that participation does not guarantee an individual will actually be granted parole. Failure to complete or participate in any form of therapeutic treatment programs for those convicted of sexually related crimes would result in the sexual offenders being forced to complete their entire maximum sentences in prison rather than being given the opportunity to parole and gradually re-integrate into society.

For the purposes of this study, I used secondary data collected by the state of Hawai'i SOTP. Information from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) FBI database was not utilized due to the fact that the research being conducted was not for the state of Hawai'i DPS nor for the SOTP departmental research.

This study had two independent variables. The first independent variable was the offender's relationship to the victim (e.g., biological, adoptive, stepparent, foster parent or hana'i family members). The second independent variable was the residency status of the offender (e.g., lived in the home of the victim versus did not live in the home of the victim). The dependent variable was the recidivism rates of the incest offenders convicted of new incest offenses.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: Does the type of victim-offender relationship determine the likelihood of recidivism?

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no differences in the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There will be differences in the likelihood of recidivism among biological fathers, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

Statistical test:  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V*.

RQ2: Are offenders who reside inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims?

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no relationship in re-offense rates between offenders who do not reside in the homes of their victims and offenders who reside with their victims.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: Offenders who reside in the homes of their victims will be more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims.

Statistical test:  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V*.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Transtheoretical Model of Change**

The conceptual framework is based on the transtheoretical model (TTM) of change. The transtheoretical model is a theoretical model of intentional behavior change that was originally explained by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983). The TTM postulated that individuals advance through five phases in the change process. The stages are precontemplation—not ready to change; contemplation—thinking of changing; preparation—ready to change; action—making

the change; and maintenance—staying on track. Relapse, in which the client falls back to the old behaviors addressed in the previous stages, was later added as the sixth stage.

### **Relapse Prevention**

The relapse prevention (RP) approach has long been the predominant approach to sexual offender treatment (e.g., Laws, 1989, 2003; Pithers, 1990; Pithers, Kashima, Cumming & Beal, 1988; Pithers, Marques, Gilbat, & Marlatt, 1983) and this continues to be the case (McGrath et al, 2010), in spite of lack of evidence supporting its effectiveness with sexual offenders (Laws, 2003; Laws & Ward, 2006; Yates, 2005, 2007; Yates & Ward, 2007). RP was initially developed as a post-treatment follow-up intervention for motivated alcoholic patients who had successfully ceased alcohol use, but who demonstrated difficulty maintaining abstinence following treatment (Marlatt, 1982, 1985). In work with sexual offenders, RP has become both a cessation-oriented program and a maintenance program. RP had an intuitive appeal to clinicians delivering sexual offender treatment and was applied to the treatment of this group following revisions to adapt the model to this population (Laws, 1989; Marlatt & Gordon, 1985; Pithers, 1990; Pithers et al., 1988). The goal of RP as initially conceptualized was to assist patients to identify, anticipate, and prevent high-risk situations that could lead to temporary lapses, as well as to avoid chronic relapses (Marlatt, 1982). Treatment involved teaching patients to cope with problems and high-risk situations when they arose and to address skill deficits in patients' abilities to do so. As a result, the more coping skills the client developed, the more likely he was to succeed over the long term and the less likely he was to recidivate. I will further discuss theoretical framework and its application to my study in Chapter 2.



### **Nature of the Study**

This was a quantitative study, using secondary data gathered from the state of Hawai'i DPS, SOTP. Recidivism information was tracked from 1988 (when the state of Hawai'i implemented its official Sex Offender Treatment Program) to July 2013 (which marked the 25th year of the program). This study only included recidivism and crimes involving biological fathers, stepfathers, boyfriends of the victims' mothers, foster parents, and hana'i family members ( $n = 1,727$ ). This study eliminated offenders who had died, had left the state of Hawai'i after they maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported to their original countries of origin, were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults, and other charges that were not deemed as child molestation/pedophilia or incest.

A comprehensive database of convicted offenders was used to assess the various variables associated with this study. I was supervised by and worked closely with Dr. Barry J. Coyne, PhD, SOTP Director, to assess and review offender archival data to ensure that information was collected ethically and as accurately as possible.

### **Definition of Terms**

The terms and definitions were provided for clarification for the reader:

*Desistance*: For the purposes of this study, desistance means to abstain from committing further criminal sex offenses (Maruna, Porter, & Carvalho, 2004).

*Deterrence*: For the purposes of this study, deterrence means the use of punishment to deter individuals from committing subsequent sex crimes (Paternoster, 2010; Tuckness, 2010).

*Hana'i*: For the purposes of this study, hana'i was defined as a Hawai'ian word that means adoption into a family though no legal forms are signed. The person is essentially given

to a trusted friend or family member to raise as their own no matter how young or old the person being given away is.

*Imprisonment:* For the purposes of this study, imprisonment means incarceration pursuant to a criminal conviction, regardless of the nature of the institution in which the offender served the imposed sentence (Kaden, 1998; Western, 2007).

*Incest:* For the purposes of this study, biologically speaking, incest occurred when someone had sex with a genetic relative or a person with whom one served in the role of parental figure or sibling (Bixler, 1983; Seto, 2008).

*Recidivism:* For the purposes of this study, recidivism was defined as the commission of a subsequent sex offense against a child after being convicted of a prior sex offense (Tewksbury & Lees, 2006).

*Reduction in risk of recidivism:* For the purposes of this study, pre and post test scores on an actuarial risk assessment instrument were used to determine the reduction of risk in the study population (Andrews, 2006).

*Risk of recidivism:* For the purposes of this study, risk of recidivism is defined as the prediction that an offender will be rearrested with no conviction, reconvicted for a new offense, re-incarcerated on a previous offense, or commit a technical violation while on supervised on probation or parole. Risk of recidivism is typically measured with an actuarial risk assessment instrument (Andrews, 2006).

*Sex offender:* For the purposes of this study, a sex offender is defined as someone who has been convicted of a sex crime (Bixler, 1983; Seto, 2008).

### **Assumptions**

I conducted this study assuming that the data collected and maintained with the state of Hawai'i Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) was documented and stored ethically and properly to limit the possibilities of it being compromised. I also assumed that all of the individuals convicted of intra-familial sexual assaults were guilty of the offense(s) for which they were convicted.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this study was only applicable to fathers or father figures in the state of Hawai'i who were convicted of incest related offenses and were of various ethnic, socioeconomic status, and educational backgrounds. All of the victims lived in the state of Hawai'i, knew their offenders, and were between the ages of 4 years and younger than 16 years of age. Though women commit sex offenses, it is relatively rare with only between 2% to 3% of known sex offenders being women (Tewksbury, 2004). For the purposes of this study no female offenders were included because, of the approximately 1,800 incest sex offenders arrested and convicted in the state of Hawai'i between 1988 and 2013, only six were females and only one was convicted of sexual abuse of her children or stepchildren.

This study was delimited in the use of archival and/or secondary data rather than collecting primary data for analysis. This study did not include data about convicted incest offenders from other state agencies, other states, or countries. The use of archival data for the 25- year period from 1988 to 2013 included all of the convicted and incarcerated male sex offenders in the state of Hawai'i to ensure that there were enough participants for statistical power.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of this study was the usage of archival, secondary data analysis, which limited the types of variables that could be assessed. The validity and reliability of how the secondary data was gathered, analyzed, and presented was not fully known to me. Another possible limitation of this study could be the timeliness and relevance of the data as well as the researcher being limited to accessing the variables that already existed rather than being able to implement or incorporate new variables. Moreover, because this was a quasi-experimental study with data collected from the state of Hawai'i SOTP, participants could not be randomly selected for participation, which precluded assessment of causal relationships among the variables. Geographically, the results of the study could not be generalized to sexual offenders outside of Hawai'i or to individuals convicted of non-familial sexual offenses. It should also be noted that recidivism does not necessarily reflect the actual re-offense rates, but rather those who were incarcerated for reoffending; perpetrators may have also re-offended in not only Hawai'i but other states and may not have been caught or convicted of new offenses. Schwartz and Cellini (1999) argued that predicting sex offender recidivism could inevitably result in some false positives and false negatives but could provide meaningful data for further research.

### **Significance**

This study was significant in that it could potentially produce results that would bring attention to the conviction and recidivism rates of incestual offenders. There has been little, if any, research produced to examine the history of recidivism of convicted offenders in the state of Hawai'i. According to Tabachnick and Klein (2011), those who abuse are often portrayed in the media as “monsters” and as a result people may be less likely to recognize the warning signs of sexual behavior problems in parents and children because these perpetrators are close to the

victims and are not seen by the victims as “monsters.” This could lead to family members being hesitant to report their suspicions for fear of shaming their families rather than protecting the victim(s). Though the outcome of this study may not reduce recidivism, it may perhaps suggest policy changes regarding allowing incestual offenders to resume residency in the homes of their victims within the state of Hawai’i after the offender is released from prison. In addition, treatment plans and policies may need to be tailored to address the victim(s)/offender(s) needs based on the relationship between the offender and the victim. The findings from this study may be applied on a larger scale to aid in decreasing criminal recidivism and therefore decreasing the inmate population in the state of Hawai’i.

### **Summary**

Research has indicated that there is a degree of specialization in sexual offending, in that those who prefer child victims will repeatedly target children and not select adults as victims (Freeman, 2007; Hood, Shute, Feilzer, & Wilcox, 2002); in addition, different groups of sex offenders (i.e., rapists, extra familial child molesters, and incest offenders) recidivate at different rates (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004). Hanson (2002) found that incest offenders were the least likely to reoffend (8.4% recidivated), whereas rapists with adult female victims recidivated at a rate of 17.1%. Child molesters with extra-familial victims were the most likely to reoffend at a rate of 19.5%. Victim-offender relationship and residency status may also be important predictors of recidivism rates. The findings from this study may be applied on a larger scale to aid in understanding why the offenses occur and decreasing criminal recidivism.

In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of the existing literature regarding the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM), Risk, needs and responsivity (RNR) and cognitive

behavioral therapy (CBT). I provide insight into the meaning of the words such as *sexual offender, molestation, recidivism, and incest*. Descriptions of the most commonly used assessments used with sex offenders are discussed. The levels of violence associated with sexual offenses are evaluated. I also explore biological and nonbiological incest.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review was to critically examine previously published literature on a population and topic that had been under-researched in the state of Hawai'i—the comparison of the likelihood of recidivism between biological fathers and individuals who served in the role of parental figures. I discussed the Transtheoretical Model of change (TTM) as its theoretical framework. The treatment modalities of CBT and Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) are also addressed in-depth to help the reader understand why these modalities are considered to be at the forefront of the treatment process for sexual offenders. An exploration of the unique cultural facets that result from living in Hawai'i and the large migration of different cultures from primarily Asian and Pacific Island regions and how they address issues related to incest and familial relationships are addressed. Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) pertaining to sexual offenses and the varying degrees of severity are defined. In addition, predictors of incest as well as predictors of recidivism are addressed.

In this chapter, I discuss literature research strategies, the theoretical framework, the TTM, as well as CBT, and the RNR model.

### **Literature Research Strategy**

I conducted a literature search using peer-reviewed articles through the following electronic research databases: APA PsycNET, Google Scholar, Journal of Sexual Abuse, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycINFO, Criminal Justice Periodicals, Mental Measurements Yearbook, psychology databases of Walden University's EBSCO Research database via the online library, University of Phoenix online library, SAGE, Legal Trac and SocINDEX. The literature review also included information from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of*

*Psychological Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM-5*; American Psychiatric Association, 2013), books from noted experts in the field of sex offender treatment and research. Main search terms included *incest, father-daughter incest, sexual offender, sexual offenders, molestation, recidivism, assessments and predictors*. Given the limited availability of resources key terms were expanded to allow for researching literature in other states in the U.S. and countries around the world that were similar in nature to what was found in Hawai'i. The primary years that I reviewed were 1977 through 2017.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Transtheoretical Model**

The conceptual framework of the proposed study was based on the transtheoretical model (TTM) of Change. The TTM is a theoretical model of intentional behavior change that integrates elements of Bandura's self-efficacy theory which looks at the degree of confidence individuals have in maintaining their desired behavioral change in situations that can often trigger relapse (Bandura 1977, 1982). TTM functions on the assumption that people do not change behaviors quickly and decisively, but that changes in behavior, especially habitual behavior, occurs continuously through a cyclical process (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). The TTM originally evolved through studies comparing the experiences of smokers who quit on their own with those requiring further treatment to understand why some people were capable of quitting on their own. In addition, the name TTM arose from the key concepts and constructs adopted from other theories addressing various populations and settings (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983).

The TTM has been used with differing populations seeking behavioral change, including sex offenders, since the early 1980's. As a client/treatment matching model, TTM has been an



effective tool for explaining individual behavioral change in treatment for addictions such as alcohol, substance abuse, and domestic violence to name a few (DiClemente & Hughes, 1990; DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982, 1983); Prochaska, Norcross, Fowler, Follick, & Abrams, 1992; Prochaska, Redding, Harlow, Rossi, & Velicer, 1994; Velicer, DiClemente, Rossi, & Prochaska, 1990).

The model was labeled trans-theoretical because the model includes cognitive, motivational, social learning, and relapse prevention theories (Morera et al., 1998). The TTM postulates that individuals advance through five phases in the change process. As summarized by DiClemente & Prochaska (1982), the first stage, *Pre-contemplation*, is when the individual engages in minimization or denial of the problem, blames others for their difficulties, and feel forced into treatment (McConaughy et al., 1989). The *Contemplation* stage occurs when the individual has an awareness of the existing problem, considers changing, and thinks therapy may help in the change process. *Preparation* is a time of getting ready to make a change. Action involves an individual taking steps to work toward solutions. The *Maintenance* stage is when changes have already been made, and treatment is sought out to keep previous changes in place. *Relapse*, in which the client falls back to the old behaviors addressed in the previous stages, was later added as the sixth stage (Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 2002).

According to Pantalon & Swanson (2006) TTM has been used to assess motivational readiness in psychiatric populations with dually diagnosed patients. In addition to its use as a measure of behavioral change, the TTM has been used to predict premature termination from psychotherapy. McConaughy, Prochaska, & Velicer (1983), posited that those who enter therapy at the pre-contemplation or contemplation stages are less ready for changing behaviors

and would perhaps prematurely terminate treatment earlier than those entering the therapy process when they are at the later stages of change.

Tierny and McCabe (2005), researched the efficacy of TTM with sex offenders and concluded that although more empirical research was needed with sex offending populations, "the TTM has some utility as an overarching framework to conceptualize behavior change and to design treatment interventions" (p. 153). Understanding the stages of change among incarcerated sexual offenders may provide a relatively effective method of matching therapists' interventions with the client's stage of readiness for change (Tierny and McCabe, 2005).

McGrath (1991), stated that there were three areas crucial to assessing a sex offender's amenability to treatment: acknowledgement of the crime, feeling that the sexual behavior is problematic, and willingness to enter and participate in the treatment. Acknowledgement by the sex offender that he or she committed a crime and was willing to accept responsibility for that crime was essential to any changes made in cognitions, behaviors, and feelings related to the offense (McGrath, 1991). In addition, it was beneficial if the sex offenders had a desire to change their sexual offending behaviors. Without this desire, a sex offender may be resistant to entering treatment. Finally, a sex offender's willingness to enter treatment and participate in all aspects of the treatment program was thought to speak to the benefits the sex offender will acquire (Bruhn, 2006).

### **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a hallmark of sex offender treatment and is promoted by organizations such as the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA, 2010). CBT was invented by psychiatrist, Aaron Beck, in the 1960s. He was doing psychoanalysis at the time and observed that during his analytical sessions, his patients tended to have an internal

dialogue going on in their minds, almost as if they were talking to themselves. Dr. Beck realized though that they would only report a fraction of this kind of thinking to him (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979). CBT uses a variety of cognitive and behavioral techniques, but it is not defined by its use of these strategies. CBT is a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem-solving. Its goal is to change the patterns of thinking or behavior that are behind people's difficulties, and as a result change the way they feel. It is used to help treat a wide range of issues in a person's life, from sleeping difficulties or relationship problems, to drug and alcohol abuse or anxiety and depression (Beck, 2011). CBT works by changing people's attitudes and their behavior by focusing on the thoughts, images, beliefs, and attitudes that are held (a person's *cognitive processes*) and how these processes relate to the way a person behaves, as a way of dealing with emotional problems (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979).

An important advantage of CBT is that it tends to be short, taking five to ten months for most emotional problems (Beck, 2011). Clients attend one session per week, each session lasting approximately 50 minutes. During this time, the client and therapist work together to understand what the problems are and develop new strategies for tackling them. CBT introduces patients to a set of principles that they can apply whenever they need to throughout their lives (Beck, 2008).

CBT allows therapists to utilize and borrow from many psychotherapeutic modalities, including dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), Gestalt therapy, compassion focused therapy (CFT), mindfulness, solution focused therapy (SFT), motivational interviewing, positive psychology, interpersonal psychotherapy, and when it comes to personality disorders, psychodynamic psychotherapy (Leahy, 2001). According to

Schaeffer, Jeglic, Moster, and Wnuk. (2010) the use of cognitive therapy techniques to change cognitive distortions and maladaptive beliefs in sex offenders has received empirical support. Techniques such as completion of daily thought records to identify distortions that contribute to deviant sexual behaviors, labelling of maladaptive thoughts, and the generation of more adaptive thoughts in group settings are examples of methods that have been tried and are thought to be effective. As research for programs using CBT techniques continues to grow, this therapeutic modality should be considered among the best practices for sex offenders (Beggs & Grace, 2011).

### **Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR)**

The Risk-Need-Responsivity model (RNR) is perhaps the most influential model for assessment and treatment of offenders (Blanchette & Brown, 2006; Ward, Mesler & Yates, 2007). The RNR model is not a theory of interventions, but rather a perspective that represents a wide range of effective interventions that may be used in client/therapy treatments (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). The RNR model was first formalized in 1990 by Andrews, Hoge, and Bonta (1990), who argued that factors such as biological/neurological concerns, criminal behavior, temperament, and social/cultural factors influence treatment and recidivism. The RNR model has been elaborated upon and contextualized within a general personality and cognitive social learning theory of criminal conduct (Andrew & Bonta, 2006).

The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model has been used with increasing success to assess and rehabilitate criminals around the world (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Treatment of sexual offenders is structured around the goal of reducing recidivism. Treatment approaches consistent with the RNR have been found to contribute to the reduction in sexual offense recidivism, violent recidivism, and general recidivism (Looman & Abracen, 2013).

According to Bonta & Andrews (2007), the RNR model is based on three principles: 1) the *risk* principle asserts that criminal behavior can be reliably predicted and that treatment should focus on the higher risk offenders; 2) the *need* principle highlights the importance of criminogenic needs in the design and delivery of treatment; and 3) the *responsivity* principle describes how the treatment should be provided. Additional principles that were later added described, for example, the importance of establishing collaborative and working relationships with correctional staff and their clients and managers providing policies and leadership that facilitate and enable effective interventions (Andrews, 2001; Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Andrews & Dowden, 2007).

The *risk* principle has two parts. First, at any point in time people differ from each other in the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior, and this likelihood can be predicted from a wide range of factors including current attributes and previous criminal behavior (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Level of risk is important because more crime can be prevented by targeting higher level risks offenders for service (Polaschek, 2012; Andrews, Bonta et al. 1990). Second, significant reduction for higher risk cases require intensive intervention; brief or narrowly focused programs have been found to have little impact (Andrews & Bonta, 1994).

The *need* principle assesses criminogenic needs that are to be targeted in treatment. Criminogenic needs are dynamic attributes of offenders and their circumstances that, when changed, are followed by changes in recidivism. The word “need” is used to refer to the problematic circumstances or correctional treatment needs (Ogloff & Davis, 2004). Andrews and Bonta (1994, 1998; Polaschek, 2012) listed six, and then later eight, broad “risk/need” factors: the “big four” (anti-social attitudes, anti-social associates, anti-social temperament/permanent, and a static factor: a history of diverse anti-social behavior), and the

“moderate four” (family/marital circumstances, social/work, leisure/recreation and substance abuse). Their presence and ordering was based on meta-analytic results (Andrews and Bonta, 1994, 1998; Polaschek, 2012). Andrews & Bonta (2010) argued that the list of criminogenic needs should be the focus of treatment and non-criminogenic needs, like low self-esteem and personal distress, should not be the focus of treatment.

The last principle of the RNR model is the *responsivity*, which is also described as the “how” of intervention or an individual’s general and specific responsivity to treatment (Andrews et al., 1990). *General responsivity* refers to general behavioral and cognitive behavioral techniques and processes such as teaching skills and prosocial behavior. On the other end of the spectrum is the *specific responsivity* principle, which refers to variations among offenders in the styles and modes of service to which they respond. Hence, treatment should not only be tailored to criminogenic need, but also to other circumstances that would render the individual likely to profit from treatment (Andrews et al, 1990).

According to Aguilar (2015), Dowden & Andrews (2000), conducted a meta-analysis of studies of violent offenders to determine whether the principles of human service, risk, need, and responsivity with correctional treatment programs are associated with reduced levels of violent reoffending. The study found that programs that adhered to the RNR model were more effective in reducing recidivism than those that did not follow the principles.

Hanson, Bourgon, Helmus, and Hodgson (2009) examined whether or not the RNR principles were as effective in sex offender treatment as general offender treatment. The meta-analysis utilized 23 recidivism outcome studies and found that programs that adhered to RNR principles showed the largest reductions in sexual and gender recidivism. The SOTPs that were most effective were those that targeted criminogenic needs and were implemented in a way that

was likely to engage with the offender. Hanson et al., (2009) found that the sexual recidivism rate in untreated samples was 19% compared to 11% in the treated samples. Studies that adhered to all three RNR principles were found to produce recidivism rates that were less than half of the recidivism rates of comparison groups. The final results of this study indicated that the RNR mode was effective at reducing sexual and general recidivism (Hanson et al., 2009).

### **Age of Consent**

In the United States, the age of consent is the minimum age at which an individual is considered legally old enough to consent to participation in sexual activity. According to the website [ageofconsent.net](http://ageofconsent.net) the age of consensual consent to sexual activities is **16 years old** in the state of Hawai'i. Individuals aged 15 or younger in Hawaii are not legally able to consent to sexual activity, and such activity may result in prosecution for statutory rape.

The Hawaii statutory rape law is violated when a person has consensual sexual intercourse with an individual under age 16. Close in age exemptions exist, allowing teens ages 14 and 15 to consent to partners less than 5 years older.

The Hawai'i Revised Statutes (H.R.S.) state that:

#### **§707-733.6 Continuous sexual assault of a minor under the age of fourteen years.**

1. A person commits the offense of continuous sexual assault of a minor under the age of fourteen years if the person:

- a. Either resides in the same home with a minor under the age of fourteen years or has recurring access to the minor; and
- b. Engages in three or more acts of sexual penetration or sexual contact with the minor over a period of time, while the minor is under the age of fourteen years.

2. To convict under this section, the trier of fact, if a jury, need unanimously agree only that the requisite number of acts have occurred; the jury need not agree on which acts constitute the requisite number.

3. No other felony sex offense involving the same victim may be charged in the same proceeding with a charge under this section, unless the other charged offense occurred outside the time frame of the offense charged under this section or the other offense is charged in the alternative. A defendant may be charged with only one count under this section unless more than one victim is involved, in which case a separate count may be charged for each victim.

4. Continuous sexual assault of a minor under the age of fourteen years is a class A felony. [L 2006, c 60, §1]

**§707-741 Incest.**

1. A person commits the offense of incest if the person commits an act of sexual penetration with another who is within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity within which marriage is prohibited.

2. Incest is a class C felony. [L 1972, c 9, pt of §1; am L 1987, c 176, §1; gen ch 1992] ([www.SATCHawaii.org](http://www.SATCHawaii.org), 2017, March 12).

According to Greenfield (1997), a national telephone survey indicated that 43% of females reported that they were sexually abused before the age of 12 by a close family member, positing that almost all of childhood sex offenses are incestuous. Previous research had shown that girls who lived in homes with stepfathers were at a greater risk for father-daughter incest than those who lived in homes with their biological fathers (Stroebel et.al., 2013).



### **Predictors of Incest**

Egan, Kavanagh, & Blair (2005) posited that incest offenders were often inadequate in social functioning and diverse in psychopathological symptomology and diagnoses. Other risk factors that had been identified in previous research included a low mother-daughter closeness, low marital satisfaction, violence on the part of the father against the mother, and low income (Stroebe et al., 2013).

Deviant sexual acts included things such as sex with children or rape. It has been hypothesized that an antecedent to deviant sexual behavior was the possibility that the offender may have actually been a victim of sexual abuse during his own childhood (Worling, 1995). Worling (1995) collected the sexual abuse history of 90 adolescent male sexual offenders between the ages of 12 and 19 years old. He found that 75% of the offenders who had assaulted at least one male child reported being sexually abused, compared to 25% who assaulted female children or adults. Despite being sexually traumatized themselves, physiological arousal based on the experiences of many of the victims could later serve as a genesis for masturbation based on those experiences and could eventually lead to them seeking out victims of their own (Bein, 2011). It was important to note that even though all sexual offending is socially deviant, it did not necessarily mean that those who committed those acts maintained an enduring preference for such behavior.

In an attempt to continue research into father-daughter incest, Stroebe et al., (2013), conducted a study that sought to determine if there were some behaviors within nuclear families that could be deemed risk factors for father-daughter incest. In the study, retrospective data was collected from 2,034 undergraduate and graduate college students from six mid-Atlantic college campuses. The research was conducted by using the S-SAPE1 computerized anonymous survey

instrument. The results of this study were consistent with the idea that father-daughter incest in many families is the cumulative result of a circular pattern of interactions within the nuclear families. The data also suggested that an information program could possibly be implemented for parents and future parents that would result in reducing the risk of father-daughter incest in families who adhered to these implementations (Stroebe et. al., 2013).

Programs currently in place to prevent child sexual abuse primarily focused on teaching children how to protect themselves from sexual abuse. In the state of Hawai'i, programs such as The Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC), Parents and Children Together (PACT), Child Protective Services (CPS), and Catholic Charities and the national support program RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network) are a few of the organizations that provide assistance to victims of sexual abuse. Though these programs are excellent support networks, unfortunately, by the time the children were old enough to understand and assimilate the information, they may have already been victims of some form of incest or sexual abuse (Stroebe et.al., 2013).

### **Incest Offenders**

As defined in the DSM-5 (2013), sexual offenses are paraphilic disorders. They are described in the DSM-5 (2013) as being recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviors that are distressing or disabling and that involve inanimate objects, children, or nonconsenting adults, or inflicting suffering or humiliation of oneself or the partner with the potential to cause harm. Convictions for sexual offenses include rape, sexual assault, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, statutory rape, sexual assault with a foreign object, forcible fondling, incest, lewd acts with children, child pornography, and indecent exposure. This study focused primarily on incest offenders.

The term incest offender usually includes any offender who has sexual contact with a son or daughter related by blood, adoption, or marriage (Itzin, 1997). Paternal incest is one of the most serious forms of intra-familial sexual abuse with clinical, social, and legal relevance. Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist (2006) posited that paternal incest offenders often engage in “grooming” techniques to gain the trust and confidence of their victims and is considered essential to later having the victims comply to the requests/demands of the offender.

Most incestual child sexual offenses are a result of opportunistic situations, occurring with children with whom the offenders have already established a relationship (Finkelhor, 2009). Under United States law, a minor cannot give consent to any sexual activity with a person who is over the age of 18 (U.S. Department of Justice [DOJ], 2012). According to the U.S. DOJ (2012), only 10% of perpetrators of child sexual abuse were strangers while 60% of perpetrators of sexual abuse were known to the child but are not family members, which included family friends, babysitters, child care providers, and neighbors. The statistics indicated that 30% of perpetrators of child abuse are family members (U.S. DOJ, 2012).

Sexual offenders against children are thought of as “sick strangers” or opportunistic family infiltrators who take advantage of a decline in traditional family values (e.g., absent father), (Devine, 2010). Extreme depictions of violent, sexual predators and pedophiles as social menaces attract international media attention (Finkelhor, 2009; Horley, 2008). Contrary to popular belief, factors usually associated as safe or protective, such as marital stability and familial support, are not pardonable when identifying individuals likely to sexually reoffend against their own children (Stalans, 2004; Stinson, Sales, & Becker, 2008). The majority of reported child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by the victims’ father, stepfather or foster father, or other (hana’i) familial figures (Titcomb, Goodman-DeLahunty & De Puisseau, 2012;

Gelb, 2007; Vander Mey & Neff, 1984). Within this context, sexual abuse is often protracted and repeated (Abel, et al., 1987).

Greenberg et al., (2000), postulated that much of the previous research on clarifying and differentiating between biological and non-biological incest sex offenders was neglected. There was only one study that examined sexual abuse survival rates for biological fathers versus other specified biological and unrelated male offender subgroups, which indicated a need for more extensive studies involving non-stranger offenders against children (Greenberg et al., 2000). Blanchard et al. (2000) determined that findings on this rarely researched topic were inconsistent, and comparisons of biological and non-biological father offenders (e.g., stepfathers, hana'i family members, foster parents) failed to yield reliable results (Titcomb et al., 2012).

Child sexual abuse is recognized as a global issue despite varying prevalence rates worldwide (Lalor & McElvaney, 2010). In terms of CSA perceptions, Davies and Rogers (2009), found that the abuse was deemed more severe when perpetrated by the child's biological father as opposed to the stepfather or father figure. Davies and Rogers (2009), speculated that biological fathers are presumed more likely to partake in spontaneous as opposed to premeditated child abuse by virtue of the perceived greater emotional closeness shared with their victims (Davies et. al., 2013). Reynolds & Birkimer (2002), found CSA perpetrated by stepfathers was deemed more serious than neighbor-perpetrated CSA, suggesting that the offenders status as a "father figure" rather than the actual blood-relation of the biological father created different levels of judgment of the severity of the CSA.

## **Predictors of Sexual Recidivism**

The study of recidivism is important to show how the criminal justice system approaches any type of criminal offense (Fleck, 2011). Ideally, sex offender treatment should be individualized based on the needs of each offender (Knighton, 2014). Currently, a history of prior convictions for sex offenses is considered to be the most successful predictor of sex offense recidivism, (Firestone, Bradford, McCoy, Greenberg, Larose, & Curry, 1999); (Anson, Steffy, & Gauthier, 1993), but there are also other variables that have been and should continue to be considered. These typically include offender demographic characteristics, type of offense committed, length of prison term, type of re-offense, and the length of time it took the offender to recidivate (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004; Langan et al., 2003). When particular factors are continually found to be associated with the commission of a new offense in recidivism studies, these factors are typically referred to as “predictors” of recidivism and are used to determine the likelihood or risk of an offender recidivating following release from prison (Fleck, 2011; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004).

Though there has been a relative lack of sexual recidivism research, a meta-analysis of 82 recidivism studies conducted by Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2005) indicated that there is a general consensus that sexual recidivism is associated with at least two broad factors. The first of these two factors is an enduring affinity for deviant sexual acts that are illegal and might be the best predictor of violent and general recidivism. Sexual deviance has been identified as the primary predictor of sexual abuse recidivism (Langevin et al., 2004). The second of these two factors is an antisocial orientation or lifestyle instability. An antisocial orientation refers to an antisocial personality, a history of rule violations, and antisocial traits such as impulsivity and

substance abuse (Langevin et al., 2004). This particular factor enables sexual offending because people will not commit sexual crimes unless they are willing to hurt others, are able to convince themselves that they are not harming their victims, or if they feel unable to stop themselves (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005). Furthermore, Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2005) found that rapists were more likely than child molesters to possess an antisocial orientation, but both rapists and child molesters were likely to have indicators of hostility and lifestyle instability.

Farkas and Miller (2007) posited that the needs of sex offenders reintegrating into society are very similar to the needs of nonsexual offenders. Despite the importance of effective community supervision of sex offenders, there has been little research conducted in determining the potential predictors of recidivism (Willis and Grace, 2009). Multiple studies indicated that recidivism rates of sex offenders for new sex offenses are extremely low compared to the recidivism rates for nonsexual crimes (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Losel & Schmucker, 2005; Reitzel & Carbonell, 2006); Simourd & Malcolm, 1998; Wienrott & Saylor, 1991). Doren (2002) posited that three reasons why incest offenders have significantly lower recidivism rates compared to both child molesters as well as rapists are: (1) low recidivism rates are representative of the true base rate for incest offenders; (2) offender's family members are less likely to report additional instances of sexual assault; (3) offenders lose access to their victims due to imposed separation either as a result of court mandates, incarceration, or family members.

In addition to the above-stated factors associated with sexual recidivism, there are also contemporary theories that speculate that there are a variety of other theories that are also associated with the development of sexual offending (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005). These theories propose that hostile family environments are what provide the groundwork for

sexual offending (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005). Due to a lack of nurturing and guidance, the potential sexual offender develops problems in social functioning that are associated with social rejection, loneliness, negative peer relations, and delinquent behavior. This suggests that there may be three more characteristics of persistent sexual offenders: a negative family background, issues forming affectionate bonds with friends and loved ones, and attitudes that are tolerant of sexual assault (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005).

In a study conducted by Harris (2017), it was posited that although a number of psychological theories of behavioral change and criminological theories of desistance exist, a comprehensive theoretical understanding of desistance from sexual offending is lacking. Contrary to popular belief, desistance from sexual offending is an empirical reality. The majority of sex offenders will eventually stop offending either as a result of innate desire to change, societal expectation/pressure or age (Harris, 2017).

### **Sex Offender Assessments and Cultural Considerations**

Victims of incest often blame themselves for allowing the incest to occur. They often feel guilty for allowing themselves to become sexually aroused, for having sought sexual contact with the perpetrator on some occasions, or for consequences faced by the perpetrator (de Young, 1982; Herman, 1981; Meiselman, 1979, 1990; Russell, 1986; Westerlund, 1992). Within the Asian American/Polynesian communities, Futa et al. (2001) identified a variety of cultural issues that may have impacts on the identification and treatment of CSA. Xiao and Smith-Prince (2015) noted that the small size of Pacific Island communities and the pressures to maintain harmonious family relations affected disclosure decisions. Chen (2016) noted that another prominent cultural factor is the “value of harmony with the environment” and identity is often rooted in the community or group the individual belongs to. The reputation of the family

is considered to be of higher priority than the individual needs of the victim(s) of incest/sexual abuse. Children, in general, and younger children in particular, were found to be more likely to make allegations against familiar nonfamily members and strangers than parents or step' parents (Hershkowitz et al., 2005).

The assessment of risk of sexual reconviction in sexual offenders is a crucial aspect in the prevention of sexual assaults against children (Craig, Browne, Stringer & Hogue, 2008). It is thought that working with offenders to reduce the chances of reoffending will lessen the chances of previous victims and other children being assaulted (Craig et. al., 2008). A limitation of the using sex offender risk-need instruments is that they typically have used assessment paradigms that utilize either a single dynamic assessment (Thornton, 2002) or one pre- and one post- treatment assessment (Beggs & Grace, 2010, 2011; Olver and Wong, 2011). Hanson et al. (2007) felt that assessing dynamic risk factors at regular intervals during the course of services may be helpful for providers by allowing for the adjustment of the intensity and duration of services provided to offenders to match their individually changing risks and needs.

According to Gunderson (2011), language often plays a significant role in assessment and diagnosis. Individuals from different cultures may speak in different languages and dialects, which may result in clients who are not fluent in Standard American English scoring lower because they may be searching for what they assume to be the right word or phrase before answering a question. Less than one in five residents in the state of Hawai'i identify as being of Hawai'ian descent and growing up with English as their first language (Gunderson, 2011).

Gunderson (2011) posited that clinicians need to ensure that they are aware of how culture affects assessment procedures and outcomes to alleviate as much cultural bias as possible, which is of particular significance in Hawai'i, where a large majority of the population speak what is



known as “*pidgin*” English, which is a local dialect used throughout the Hawai’ian islands no matter the person’s ethnicity or race (Gunderson, 2011). The vast majority of the Hawai’ian islands population is comprised of Asians, Pacific Islanders, and migrants from other countries in which English is their second language, which resulted in the creation and utilization of the “pidgin” English.

Tsushima & Bratton (1977) conducted a study using archival data comparing *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)* scores between individuals living in Hawai’i and individuals living in the continental United States or mainland (which is how Hawai’i residents refer to the continental United States). The groups were matched according to age, education, and Performance IQ (PIQ). They hypothesized that individuals who spoke *pidgin* English would score significantly lower Verbal IQ (VIQ) scores than their mainland counterparts (Tsushima & Bratton, 1977). Their hypothesis was confirmed when the scores were compared and the sample from Hawai’i had significantly lower VIQ scores than the mainland sample. Based on these results, Tsushima & Bratton (1977) deemed that individuals who lived in geographic regions in which there was a distinct local dialect (such as those in Hawai’i) would more likely than not be at a distinct disadvantage when taking assessments based on a particularly standardized population.

There is a plethora of methodologies that are used for carrying out risk assessments that fall under two broad categories: actuarial and clinical approaches (Craig et. al., 2008). Actuarial measures are developed based on the risk factors found in the literature to be significant predictors of recidivism (Barbaree, Seto, Langdon, & Peacock, 2001). Though the use of actuarial assessments to assess the risk of further offending behavior by adult sexual perpetrators of

children is a relatively new area, this knowledge is highly relevant and important to professionals who are involved in the protection of children (Craig et. al., 2008).

Actuarial scales are important because they comprise a list of risk factors which have been identified as being predictive of sexual reconviction. The items are scored dichotomously, as either being “present” or “absent,” and the sum of these translates into an overall level of risk of being reconvicted of a further sexual offense. The risk categories are either low, medium, or high risk; the higher the risk, the greater the likelihood of an offender being reconvicted of a sexual offense (Craig et. al., 2008). Clinical approaches to risk assessment, in contrast, are primarily based on the clinician’s own judgment of the offender’s risk. Rather than using actuarial scales to estimate an offender’s risk, clinical experience and knowledge of the offending behavior are used, which is thought by many professionals to be problematic as concerns about professional/personal bias and lack of actuarial data can lead to false diagnoses and ineffective treatment methods (Craig et. al., 2008).

### **The Rapid Risk Assessment for Sexual Offense Recidivism (RRASOR)**

The RRASOR is a brief actuarial instrument designed by Hanson (1997) to predict the risk for sexually reoffending among adult male sexual offenders and is used when assessing sex offenders in the state of Hawai’i. It has four items that assess the offender’s prior sexual history, age at release from prison, victim gender, and the offender’s relationship to the victim—related or non-related. It was developed based on the results of a meta-analysis of sex offender recidivism studies with the four items receiving comprising the best independent predictors from a total of seven predictors that had correlation values of .10 with sex offender recidivism (Hanson, 1997).

### **The Static-99 and the SORAG**

Though the Static-99 and SORAG are not regularly utilized within the state of Hawai'i Department of Public Safety's Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP), they are common in assessing sex offenders. The Static-99 was developed by Hanson and Thornton (2000) using a large sample of sexual offenders to evaluate the risk of sexual recidivism by adult males known to have committed at least one sexual offense. It is a 10-item actuarial risk assessment tool consisting of items that relate to deviant sexual behavior, range of potential victims, persistence of sexual offending, and anti-sociality. The scores in the Static-99 range of from 0 to 12. In a study carried out by Looman (2006), it was found that the Static-99 was a significant predictor of sexual recidivism. The Static-99 scores were not, however, found to be significantly associated with violent recidivism.

The Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (SORAG) is a 14-item actuarial scale that is designed to predict violent recidivism among sexual offenders (Quinsey et al., 1998). Its items assess criminal history, childhood maladjustment, sexual deviance, diagnosis, marital status, age at index offense, and scores on the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) (Hare, 1991, 2003). Looman (2006) found the SORAG to be supported in terms of predicting both sexual recidivism and violent, including sexual, recidivism among high risk offenders. Because of its predictive ability with both sexual recidivism and violent recidivism, the SORAG is thought to be a more accurate assessment instrument in predicting recidivism among sexual offenders (Quinsey et. al, 1998).

### **The PCL-R and the VRS-SO**

Although the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) was originally developed as a psychometric instrument for measuring the construct of psychopathy, research shows that the

PCL-R also performs reasonably in predicting general, sexual, and violent recidivism in both prison and forensic psychiatric populations (Hill, Rettenberger, Habermann, Berner, Eher & Briken, 2012; Quinsey et al. 2006; Rice & Harris, 1995.) The PCL-R is a 20-item symptom-construct rating scale used as an assessment tool for dangerousness and recidivism risk and its use is only advisable with forensic populations (Hare, Clark, Grann and Thornton, 2000). The PCL-R is one of many assessments used to assess sex offenders in the state of Hawai'i. It has two oblique factors: factor 1 assesses the interpersonal and affective characteristics of psychopathy and factor 2 assesses chronic antisocial behavior. In the past, some studies have found a clear link between high psychopathy scores and sexual recidivism (Harkins and Beech, 2007). Each item is scored from 0-2, with a possible score of 40. A cutoff score of 30 points is generally used to signify the presence of psychopathy. Numerous studies have shown that the total PCL-R score is highly correlated with violent recidivism (Hare, 1999).

### **Violent Risk Scale-Sexual Offender Version (VRS-SO)**

Olver and Wong (2006) carried out a study to assess the predictive ability of sexual offender recidivism by using the PCL-R both alone, and with the Violent Risk Scale-Sexual Offender Version (VRS-SO) (Olver, Wong, Nicholasichuk, & Gordon, 2007) in terms of sexual offender recidivism. The VRS-SO is designed to assess risk and measure change in risk using 7 static and 17 dynamic items, each rated on a 4-point scale. The Sexual Deviance factor, which provided a structured rating of sexual deviance in the study comprises five items: Sexually Deviant Lifestyle, Sexual Compulsivity, Offense Planning, Sexual Offending Cycle, and Deviant Sexual Preference (Harkins and Beech, 2007). Olver and Wong (2006) did find, however, that the Sexual Deviance factor, as measured by the VRS-SO, was significantly related to sexual recidivism with the High Deviance groups having higher base rates of sexual recidivism

compared to Low Deviance groups, indicating that the Sexual Deviance factor is a better indicator of sexual recidivism than psychopathy.

Studies in New Zealand on the VRS-SO duplicated some of the findings in a sample of 218 low risk child molesters who participated in a prison treatment program. It was determined that the VRS-SO produced good productive validity (Beggs & Grace, 2010). During a 12-year follow-up conducted by Beggs & Grace (2011) there were considered greater associations between treatment gain and recidivism reduction. When looking at the PCL-R alone, it was evident from the study in New Zealand on the VRS-SO that the PCL-R was not as accurate at predicting sexual recidivism as previously assumed (Harkins and Beech, 2007).

Hanson and Harris (1998) conducted a study to collect information to improve community supervision practices and to help identify which offenders could be safely managed in the community. In their prior research, Hanson and Harris found that risk factors could typically be divided into either static (unchangeable) risk factors or dynamic (changeable) risk factors (Willis and Grace, 2009). Dynamic risk factors could be further divided into stable and acute risk factors (Willis and Grace, 2009). Stable dynamic factors may be used for long term risk assessment and are vital when assessing enduring changes such as treatment outcome; in contrast, acute factors such as alcohol intoxication could determine the time of re-offense (Willis and Grace, 2009). Through their study, Hanson and Harris (1998) were able to summarize the available evidence concerning recidivism risk factors for sexual offenders. Although their research did contribute to our existing knowledge of sexual offender recidivism, the 1998 study performed by Hanson and Harris produced results that concerned more static, historical factors (Willis and Grace, 2009).

In an attempt to address some of the deficiencies that were found in previous recidivism studies, researchers Bench and Allen (2013) performed a longitudinal analysis of sex offender recidivism by using arrest-conviction episodes as the unit of analysis. To track recidivistic activity, they used 11 measures containing 51 inmate and crime-related variables. To determine significances of the variables in the final model, Bench and Allen (2013) used a stepwise logistic regression formula model which was tested for predictive accuracy. The sample that was used in their study consisted of 389 male sex offenders who were under the supervision of the Utah Department of Corrections at some time between 1979 and 2005 (Bench and Allen, 2013). This sample was further restricted to offenders whose complete recidivistic information was available.

The study conducted by Bench and Allen (2013) managed to provide further insight into sex offender recidivism risk. The pattern of sex-offender recidivism that emerged from this study fell in line with the results from prior investigations which suggested that most sex offenders were not convicted of new sexual offenses after their release from prison. At the beginning of the study, there were 51 independent variables that were included in the prediction analysis. Through stepwise regression, they were able to reduce this number to four significant variables: the offender's age at the time of their first arrest, the offender's technical violations, failure of the offender to complete treatment, and the offender's level of intoxication at the time of the offense. As a result of this Bench and Allen (2013) were able to present a model that was 70% successful in predicting recidivism amongst sexual offenders.

### **Summary**

Although overall arrests declined by 2% from 2011 to 2012 (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2012), sexual violence continues to be a great concern to the general public.

Wilkinson, Rhine, and Henderson-Hurley (2005) noted that while crime affects victims, offenders, and communities, the majority of individuals who enter the criminal justice system and return to the same communities upon release, often confront a number of difficulties that they did not have to contend with prior to their incarceration. This is especially true in Hawai'i.

The literature reviewed in this study examined the risks of incest recidivism when comparing biological fathers and individuals serving in the roles as father figures. Various processes of treatment for convicted incest offenders in the state of Hawai'i utilizing the Transtheoretical Model (TTM), Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR), Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) and various assessments were also researched and discussed in depth. Addressing the RNR principal was previously proven to be effective in reducing the risk of sexual recidivism amongst sexual offenders (Hanson, Bourgon, Helmus & Hodgson, 2009a & 2009b; Friendship, Mann, & Beech, 2003; Lovings, Lowenkaamp, & Latessa, 2009).

Though many expressed a desire to be informed when an offender was released back into their communities, the aspect of the cultural uniqueness of the populations in Hawai'i, which consists primarily of Asian and Pacific Islanders and their attitudes towards community acceptance and respect, were also addressed in this literature review.

Chapter 3 will address the research methods of the proposed study and contains the following sections: research design and rationale, methodology of the study—including research questions and hypotheses, population sources of data, the sampling frame, the independent and dependent variables, the data analysis plan, threats to validity, and ethical implications.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

My purpose in this quantitative study was to explore and compare the recidivism rates of biological fathers and men serving in parental roles, living in Hawai'i, who had been convicted of and incarcerated for child sexual abuse. There have been numerous norming studies pertaining to sex offender recidivism rates in the continental United States and other countries throughout the world, but none looked specifically at individuals living in Hawai'i. Based on Hawai'i's uniqueness as a chain of islands rather than one contiguous land mass and its vast multicultural population, the purpose of this study was to provide the first of its kind data that are of clinical value for current and future clinicians.

In this quantitative study, I used a quasi-experimental design to compare recidivism rates among biological fathers and parental figures who committed incestuous child sexual abuse in Hawai'i. The quantitative method was the best way to assess a large number of variables as it utilized a method to examine and draw comparisons between two or more variables (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative method is a systematic approach with the purpose of defining and measuring variables to define relationships between variables (Patton, 2002). The quantitative method has been tested and implemented in many research studies to date (Gay & Airasian, 2000). This method also allowed the opportunity for comparison between the two groups in reference to incest sex offence recidivism rates. This was the first study conducted in the state of Hawai'i to examine the number of inmates who completed their maximum sentences (maxed out) and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offences between the years 1988 and 2013.



In this chapter, I address the following topics: research design and rationale, methodology of the study, including research questions and hypotheses, population sources of data, the sampling frame, the independent and dependent variables, the data analysis plan, threats to validity, and ethical implications. Though many studies have compared recidivism rates of incest offenders, rapists, and other sexual offenders, none had researched and specifically broken down the variables for the state of Hawai'i as were done in this study.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

My study had two independent variables. Independent variables are those that may cause, impact, or predict outcomes, thereby influencing the dependent variables (Creswell, 2009). The first independent variable was the offender's relationship to the victim (e.g., biological, adoptive, step-parent, foster parent, or hana'i family members). The second independent variable was the residency status of the offender (e.g., lived with the victim versus did not live with the victim). Dependent variables are those which depend on the independent variables for outcomes and effects, hence they are influenced or predicted by the independent variables (Creswell, 2009). The dependent variable for this study was the recidivism rates of the incest offenders (i.e., new incest offence convictions).

In this quasi-experimental study, I used secondary data collected from the state of Hawai'i SOTP. One strength of using a quasi-experimental design is the use of naturally-occurring comparison groups rather than randomly assigned control groups as the baseline. O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner (2003) posited that secondary data was important and useful for researchers to conduct experiments and gather information which would not be possible under other conditions. In this study, constraints associated with the acquisition of longitudinal information required the use of secondary data. Without the availability of the state of Hawai'i

government agency statistics and information pertaining to the study population, this research could not have been conducted.

## **Methodology**

### **Population**

Sex offenders who were convicted of incest related offenses in the state of Hawai'i from 1988-2013 were the focus of this study. According to Levenson et al. (2014), the NCMEC conducts a phone survey twice per year of state registry officials and publishes a jurisdictional count of RSOs portrayed on a map. As of July 2013, there were 1,295 registered sex offenders in the state of Hawai'i.

### **Sampling and Sampling Procedure**

I used secondary or archival data; as a result, the population and sample was not considered to be a random sample. I included only recidivism and crimes involving biological fathers, stepfathers, boyfriends of the victims' mothers, foster parents, and hana'i family members ranging from age 18 years and up in the state of Hawai'i. I eliminated offenders who had died, had left the state of Hawai'i after they maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported back to their country of origin, were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults, and other charges that were not deemed as child molestation/pedophilia or incest. No female offenders were included, because from 1988 to 2013 there were six female offenders and only one was convicted of sexual abuse of her children or stepchildren. Excluding individuals who met the above ineligibility criteria resulted in a sample size of 1,727.

### **Power Analysis**

A priori power analyses were conducted using G\* Power software (G\*Power 3.1.92) for  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$  to determine appropriate sample size. With the following parameters of .1

for a small effect size,  $\alpha=.05$ , power  $(1-b) = .80$ , degrees of freedom = 5, the total sample size needed to detect a small effect is 1,283. Because the secondary data analysis sample had 1,727 participants, there was sufficient power to detect a small effect size in the sample.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

For the purposes of this study, secondary data collected by the state of Hawai'i SOTP was utilized, hence all information in the present study was archival and no face-to-face contact with any incarcerated or released prisoner was required.

### **Data Sources**

Secondary data that was obtained for purposes other than this study was used. Actuarial data, demographics, and relation to victim was recorded on data collection forms created specifically for the present study under the supervision of the Dr. Barry J. Coyne, Ph.D., Director of the SOTP. Dr. Coyne assisted the author by extracting data from the archival files of sex offenders within the SOTP. An application for Use of Records and Files was submitted to the office of the Director of the state of Hawai'i DPS, and research approval was granted (Exhibit A).

To meet the above eligibility criteria, the dataset included all males, ages 18 years and up, convicted of incest sex offenses of victims 15 years or younger. The database provided information regarding individual criminal charges, the term or duration of incarceration, and any subsequent criminal charges. With the assistance and supervision of the Dr. Coyne, the author of this study reviewed each individual's record and compared that information to the public informational records available to the public. Secondary de-identified data was used for the purpose of this study. Names, dates of birth, criminal charges, and case dispositions were reviewed to ensure that a) each member of the population met the study parameters, and b) to

guard against any duplication of offenders in the dataset. Specifically, information used in this study from data resources included the description of the criminal convictions, conviction date, re-offence date, and new charges (if any). A de-identified (no names or other identifying factors) printout of sex offenders' crimes, relationship to victims, residency status (resided with the victim/did not reside with the victim) and the dates of sentence completion (max out) were generated by Dr. Coyne. Demographics, and the types of sex offenses were recorded on research data collection forms created by Dr. Coyne and maintained in his office.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1: Does the type of victim-offender relationship determine the likelihood of recidivism?

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference between the likelihood of recidivism and the type of offender (biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents).

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There will be a relationship between the likelihood of recidivism and the type of offender (biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents).

Statistical test:  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$

RQ2: Are offenders who reside inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims?

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no relationship in re-offense rates between offenders who do not reside in the homes of their victims and offenders who reside with their victims.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: Offenders who reside in the homes of their victims will be more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims.

Statistical test:  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V*.

If the hypotheses of this study were supported the possibility of potential policy changes within the state of Hawai'i regarding allowing incestuous offenders to reside with their victims after they were released from prison could be considered. In addition, treatment plans and policies could be tailored to address the victim/offender needs based on the relationship between the offender and the victim.

### **Instrumentation and Operationalization**

This study utilized an archival dataset created based on data obtained from the state of Hawai'i DPS, SOTP. There were multiple predictor variables in this study.

### **Independent Variables**

Though individuals continue to be incarcerated within the state of Hawai'i penal system for numerous illegal acts, this study only sought to address males who had been incarcerated and completed prison terms for incest-related sexual offenses. This study had two independent variables: the type of offender and the residency status of the offender. Types of offenders were coded based on the groups (1=biological father; 2=adoptive father; 3=stepfather; 4=mother's boyfriend; 5=hana'i; and 6=foster parent). Residency of the offender was coded "0" for those offenders who did not live in the home with the victim and "1" for offenders who lived in the home with the victim.

### **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable for this study was the recidivism rates of the incest offenders convicted of new incest offenses. For the purposes of this study, biologically speaking, incest occurs when someone has sex with a genetic relative or a person with whom one serves in the

role of parental figure or sibling (Bixler, 1983; Seto, 2008). Recidivism was coded “0” for did not reoffend and “1” for those who reoffended.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

In this first of its kind study in the state of Hawai'i, the variables of residency and familial relationship of the incest offenders to the victims were closely examined as predictors of recidivism. An analysis of the dependent and independent variables was conducted utilizing the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* statistical test. This analysis allowed for an in-depth assessment of recidivism predictability for sex offenders against children with respect to the variables in this study.

The two research questions were analyzed using  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* statistical test. The Cramer's *V* statistic was used as a measure of the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Every statistical test has assumptions about how the data are constructed and what they look like before analyses are run. Because  $\chi^2$  is a nonparametric test comparing two categorical/nominal variables, the only statistical assumption is the independence of cases (not repeated measurements) (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2012). This assumption is met as part of the design of the study in that each case represents the post-release behavior of each released male. Based on this information  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* analysis was deemed to be suitable for this research project.

Analyses was conducted utilizing SPSS version 24.0 (IBM, 2016), but before beginning any data analyses the information was cleaned/sanitized which included examining for missing data and outliers. Data was interpreted by reporting significant correlation coefficients in regard to how  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* findings are interpreted.

## **Threats to Validity**

Accounting for and overcoming bias as a threat to internal validity was important for the study outcome to be valid. The validity and reliability of how the secondary data was gathered, analyzed, and presented were not fully known to the researcher. Validity is the best approximation to the truthfulness of a claim or research conclusion.

### **Internal Validity**

The concern of internal validity is whether experiment outcomes are true indicators of actual research events. Reliability refers to a measure of consistency without error; when conducting quantitative studies, the researchers are seeking quantitative results that reflect true scores. In statistics, reliability is a very important concept that determines the precision of measurements (Babbie, 2007; Trochim & Donnelly, 2007).

Consideration was given to the data collection methods and information included for this study. The institutional files of each offender utilized in this study were closely reviewed by this researcher under the guidance of Dr. Barry J. Coyne, Ph. D., SOTP Director. The details of each individual case was assessed and cleared to determine if they were suitable for inclusion as part of the study population to ensure that consistent data are gathered for analysis between the years 1988 and 2013.

### **External Validity**

External validity is applicable to generalizing the study results to populations outside of the study. The underlying question regarding external validity was whether the research findings could be applied to other populations in other geographic areas or at other time periods (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). Geographically, the results of the study may not be generalized to sexual offenders outside of Hawai'i or to individuals convicted of non-familial sexual offences.

It should also be noted that recidivism does not necessarily reflect the actual re-offence rates, but rather those who were incarcerated for reoffending; offenders may have committed other offences but may not have been caught or convicted of new offences. Based on the literature review, the offenders age ranges, criminal sex history, residency, and incarcerations were common factors found in repeat sex offenders and could be found in all individuals in the study population, hence resolving non-probability biases (Walker, 2008).

### **Ethical Procedures**

The American Psychological Association's (APA) (2002) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct requires that researchers safeguard ethical treatment and protection of participants. The research for this study used archival databases from the state of Hawai'i DPS. The fundamental ethical rule for therapeutic treatment providers and clinical researchers is to do no harm to research subjects. This is especially true for populations that have been identified as vulnerable. Individuals who have been or are in the penal system are clearly defined as a vulnerable population and therefore care must be taken to ensure their protection (Babbie, 2007). As this study employed secondary data from human participants, ethical issues were considered and addressed.

Data was obtained from an existing computer database at the SOTP Director's office. The computer in which the information was stored was not connected to any other computers (via internet, intranet, file-sharing, shared server, or internal office network). Per Dr. Barry J. Coyne, Ph. D. (personal conversation, December 31, 2015), data from the computer database was never transferred to a disk or used in raw form on any other computer. Data was also obtained from inmates' files, under Dr. Coyne's tutelage and supervision, which were stored in a



locked file cabinet in the office of the SOTP Director. Consent to access this data was obtained from the office of the Director of Public Safety for the state of Hawai'i.

I coded and stored the information for this study. The codes were transferred to research data collection sheets. While in transport between any locations and while stored at my home the coded data was stored in a locked miniature safe that only I had access to. Upon completion of this study the coded datasheets were returned to the SOTP Director for the state of Hawai'i to maintain or destroy.

I took the necessary precautions to ensure that convicted offenders could not be identified in the research results and other data sections throughout the dissertation. Although information on each individual in the study was and remains publicly available, the personal identifiers were removed from the dataset prior to analysis to protect individuals in the study from potential harm, minimizing risks to the studied population. Only data collection forms with extracted information were taken with consent from the SOTP office and were stored in a miniature safe that only I had access to. Criminal charges and case dispositions were reviewed to ensure that a) each member of the population met the study parameters, and b) there was no duplication of offenders in the dataset. Collected data was stored in an encrypted and secure database at the state of Hawai'i office of Dr. Barry Coyne, Ph.D. Reviewing the data ensured accuracy, completeness, and no duplications. Ensuring the accuracy of the data was important in protecting participants who could potentially be harmed by inaccurate information. Approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to proceed with this study was obtained on January 24, 2018. The IRB approval number is 01-24-18-0137046.

## Summary

This quasi-experimental study utilized secondary data to compare recidivism rates among biological fathers and parental figures who were incarcerated for child sexual abuse (victims < 16 years of age) in the state of Hawai'i. Predictor variables included residency status as well as type of relationship to the victim. The outcome of this study on recidivism was analyzed with the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* statistical test. Ethical procedures and threats to validity were considered and/or addressed. Chapter 4 explores and provides statistical analyses of the results of this paper.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, quasi-experimental study was to compare recidivism rates among biological fathers and male parental figures who commit child sexual abuse against children 15 years or younger in Hawai'i. In this chapter, I addressed the following research questions: a) Does the type of victim-offender relationship determine the likelihood of recidivism? and b) Are offenders who reside inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims? This chapter presented the results of the study. Statistical analysis was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 for Windows.

#### Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study was guided by the following two research questions:

RQ1: Is the type of victim-offender relationship associated with the likelihood of recidivism?

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no differences in the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There will be differences in the likelihood of recidivism among biological fathers, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

RQ2: Are offenders who reside inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims?

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no difference in re-offense rates between offenders who do not reside in the homes of their victims and offenders who reside with their victims.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: Offenders who reside in the homes of their victims will be more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims.

### **Organization of Chapter**

This chapter described the data collection process utilizing secondary data obtained from the Hawai'i DPS SOTP. This included discussion of the population, demographics and variables of the sample. A review of the descriptive statistics before proceeding into the results section discussing statistical analyses of covariates and  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* tests were also included. Finally, the chapter was summarized with a review of the rejection and/or acceptance of the null hypotheses.

### **Data Collection**

#### **Population**

This study utilized and analyzed archival, secondary data from the DPS SOTP in the state of Hawai'i. This quantitative data (which spanned 25 years from 1988 to 2013) compared recidivism rates among biological fathers and male parental figures who committed incestuous child sexual abuses in Hawai'i against girls 15 years or younger. This study was the first attempt in the state of Hawai'i to examine the number of inmates who had completed their maximum sentence (maxed out) and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offenses in the Hawai'i. Individuals 18 and over who had been convicted of sexual offenses and incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i were required to participate in SOTP while incarcerated before they would be considered for parole or early release from prison.

IRB approval to conduct this study was granted by Walden University on January 24, 2018. The IRB approval number for this study is 01-24-18-0137046. Approval to collect data was also granted by the state Director of the Hawai'i Department of Public Safety, Nolan Espinda. (Appendix A).

### **Recruitment**

The archival, secondary data was collected under the direct supervision of Dr. Barry Coyne, Hawai'i SOTP Director. This study did not involve any direct contact with the population being analyzed, therefore the population and sample was not considered a random sample.

For the purposes of this study, participation inclusion criteria consisted of the following: fathers or father figures in the state of Hawai'i who were convicted of incest related offenses and had completed their maximum prison sentences (maxed out), offender's residency (all of the offenders lived in the state of Hawai'i), victim residency (all of the victims lived in the state of Hawai'i) and victims were between the ages of 4 years and less than 16 years of age. Incest offenders were further categorized as follows: those who were identified as hana'i family members (the word hana'i [ha na ee] is Hawai'ian and is defined as close or like family) or foster parents with whom the victims resided for over 60 days.

### **Descriptive analysis of demographic characteristics**

The preliminary analysis of the data consisted of running basic statistics for the demographic characteristics of the sample. The covariates or control variables for this study originally consisted of all convicted sex offenders ( $n = 1,727$ ), from the inception of the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) in 1988 through June 2013, in the state of Hawai'i to

ensure that there were enough participants for statistical power. As of July 2013, registered sex offenders totaled ( $n = 1,295$ ) in the state of Hawai'i registry.

This study eliminated offenders who had died, left the state of Hawai'i after they maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported, were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults and other charges that are not deemed as a child molestation/pedophilia or incest. All participants in the study were male aged 18 years and older. Female offenders were excluded because during the time of this study (1988-2013) there were six females arrested in Hawai'i for sexual offenses and only one was convicted of the sexual abuse of her children and stepchildren.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

A total of 310 offenders were included in the study. Of the 310 offenders, there were 110 biological fathers (35.5%), 109 stepfathers/adoptive/hana'i fathers (35.2%), and 91 mother's boyfriends (29.36%) (Table 1).

Table 1

*Frequency Table-Relationship of Offender to Victim*

Relationship	Frequency ( <i>n</i> )	Percentage (%)
Father	110	35.5
Stepfather	109	35.2
Boyfriend	91	29.3
Total	310	100.0

In this study it was determined that the majority of the offenders lived in the homes of their victims. Of the 310 offenders, 305 (98%) lived in the homes of their victims: biological fathers (36.1%), stepfathers (35.2%), and boyfriends (29.3%). 5 (2%) of the offenders did not live in the homes of their victims though they were the victim's mother's boyfriends (Table 2).

Table 2

*Frequency Table-Percentage of Offenders Who Lived at Home*

Residential status	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Living at home		
- Father	110	36.1%
- Stepfather	109	35.7%
- Boyfriend	86	28.2%
Not living at home		
- Boyfriend	5	100%
Total	310	100.0

**Results****Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1-- Does the type of victim-offender relationship determine the likelihood of recidivism?

H<sub>0</sub>1--There will be no differences in the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends.

H<sub>a</sub>1: There will be differences in the likelihood of recidivism among biological fathers, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, and mother's boyfriends.

These results proved to be non-significant in assessing the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather and the mother's boyfriends. Because there were no findings of recidivism in any of these groups, no statistical analyses were run as the findings were not significant and did not reveal any offenders who had recidivated. The expected recidivism in the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's V formula was zero (0). Hence,  $\chi^2$  could not be computed because it would require division by zero (0).

RQ2--Are offenders who reside inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims?

H<sub>0</sub>2-- There will be no relationship in re-offense rates between offenders who do not reside in the homes of their victims and offenders who reside with their victims.

A<sub>0</sub>2: -- Offenders who reside in the homes of their victims will be more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims.

These results also proved to be non-significant in assessing the likelihood of re-offense rates between offender groups who resided in the homes of their victims when compared to those offenders who did not reside in the homes of their victims. Because there were no findings of recidivism in any of these groups, no statistical analyses were run as the findings were not significant and did not reveal any offenders who had recidivated. The expected recidivism in the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's *V* formula was zero (0). Hence,  $\chi^2$  could not be computed because it would require division by zero (0).

### **Summary**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore and compare the recidivism rates of biological fathers and men serving in parental roles living in Hawai'i who had been convicted of and incarcerated for child sexual abuse. Prior to this study there had been no documented studies that had looked specifically at individuals who had committed CSA and were incarcerated and later maxed out on their prison sentences in the Hawai'i DPS.

I hypothesized that: 1). Non-biological fathers or men serving in the roles as father figures were more likely to recidivate or re-offend by committing other familial related sexual offenses; and 2). Men who resided in the homes of the victims were more likely to recidivate or re-offend by committing other familial related sexual offenses. Upon analysis of the archival



data spanning 1988 to 2013, it was determined that of the original 1,727 convicted male sex offenders in the Hawai'i penal system, 310 of those convicted were identified as fathers, stepfathers or males who served in the roles of parental figures and were convicted of sexual assaults against their daughters and/or step-daughters. Data indicated that of the 310 offenders there was no documented recidivism within the groups. No statistical analyses were run as the findings were not significant and did not reveal any offenders who recidivated.

Chapter 5 summarizes the study and presents conclusions about the findings. Chapter 5 also discusses the social change implications (if any), the limitations of this study, and future recommendations for continued research in this area.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

### Introduction

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore and compare the recidivism rates of biological fathers and men serving in parental roles living in Hawai'i who were convicted of and incarcerated for child sexual abuse. This study was significant in that there had never been a study focusing on criminal recidivism rates of incestuous sex offenders in the state of Hawai'i since the implementation of the DPS SOTP over the past quarter century (from 1988 to 2013). This study did not explore whether or not the offender received strong familial support upon release from prison, whether the family moved the victim away from the offender (not allowing them to reside in the home with the victim) or whether the offender sought and/or received therapeutic help to aid in the decreased likelihood of recidivism.

Hawai'i is unique in that it is the only state in the United States in which minimum sentences for convicted felons is set by the paroling authority rather than the courts unless the courts set a mandatory minimum sentence that must be completed before individuals are considered for parole. Sexual offenders incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i are/were required to participate in and complete a mandatory SOTP during their incarceration before they are/were considered for parole from prison. Individuals who opted not to participate in sex offender treatment are/were required to complete their entire prison sentence rather than being allowed to be considered for early parole release.

This study was the first attempt of its kind to examine the number of adult inmates incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i DPS who had completed their maximum prison sentences

(maxed out) and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offenses. Based on Hawai'i's uniqueness as a chain of islands rather than one contiguous land mass and its vast multicultural population, this study provided the first data on this offender population that is of clinical value for current and future clinicians. For the purposes of this study, secondary data collected by the state of Hawai'i SOTP, under the supervision of Dr. Barry J. Coyne, (SOTP Director) was used. This research was approved by Nolan Espinda, Director of the State of Hawai'i Department of Public Safety. (A).

This study posited two research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: Does the type of victim-offender relationship determine the likelihood of recidivism?

Null Hypothesis 1: There would be no differences in the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There would be differences in the likelihood of recidivism among biological fathers, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

RQ2: Are offenders who resided inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims?

Null Hypothesis: There would be no relationship in re-offense rates between offenders who did not reside in the homes of their victims and offenders who resided with their victims.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: Offenders who resided in the homes of their victims will be more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not resided with their victims.

### Overview of Current Study

Sex offenders are commonly grouped into categories based on the characteristics of their victims for criminal sentencing and treatment purposes. These characteristics include victim age (e.g., child v. adult) and the relationship of the offender to the victim (e.g., family member v. stranger). This division is necessary because it is believed that the offender's choice of victim is a result of distinct motives and sexual disorder etiologies (Matala, 2008; Beech & Ward, 2004; Craissati, McClurg, & Browne, 2002; Glasser et al., 2001; Hudson & Ward, 2000).

Compared to other crimes, sex offenders released from prison were up to four times more likely to commit new crimes (Langan et al., 2003; Langevin et al., 2004). There is now a general consensus that sexual recidivism is associated with at least two broad factors: a) deviant sexual interests, and b) antisocial orientation/lifestyle instability (Hanson & Bussière, 1998; Quinsey et al., 1995; Roberts et al., 2002). Hanson (2002) found that incest offenders were the least likely to reoffend (8.4% recidivated), while rapists with adult female victims recidivated at a rate of 17.1%. Child molesters with extra-familial victims were the most likely to reoffend at a rate of 19.5%. Although all sexual offending is socially deviant, not all offenders have an enduring interest in sexual acts that are illegal (e.g., children, rape) or highly unusual (e.g., fetishism, auto-erotic asphyxia). Sexual recidivism increases when such deviant interests are present, as indicated by self-report, offence history, or specialized testing (Hanson & Bussière, 1998, Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004).

The goal of this study was to analyze secondary data, using  $\chi^2$  tests, from the state of Hawai'i DPS SOTP between the years 1988 to 2013. Individuals 18 and over who had been convicted of sexual offenses and incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i were required to participate in sex offender treatment programs while incarcerated before they would be considered for parole

or early release from prison. The quasi-experimental study was originally proposed to compare recidivism rates between biological fathers and men who served in the roles as father figures and were convicted of sexually related crimes against their daughters. However, while conducting the analyses it was ascertained that there were no documented recidivists from the treatment program, therefore no statistical analyses were run.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

#### **Research Question 1**

Research question one examined whether or not the type of victim-offender relationship determined the likelihood of recidivism. For the purposes of this study incest offenders were further categorized as follows: biological parents, stepparents, adoptive parents, mother's boyfriends, hana'i family members (the word hana'i [ha na ee] is Hawai'ian and is defined as close or like family) or foster parents with whom the victims resided for over 60 days.

As of July 2013, (which marked the 25th year of the implementation of the SOTP) there were 1,295 registered sex offenders in the state of Hawai'i and a total 1,727 convicted sex offenders since 1988. This study eliminated offenders who had died, left the state of Hawai'i after they maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported (as they were illegally in the United States), were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults and other charges that are not deemed as a child molestation/pedophilia or incest. All participants in the study were male and 18 years and older. Female offenders were excluded because at the time of this study (1988-2013) there were six females arrested in Hawai'i for sexual offenses and only one was convicted of sexual abuse of her children and stepchildren. As a result of attrition, the final number of offenders in the study totaled 310. Of the 310 offenders, there were 110 biological

fathers (35.5%), 109 stepfathers/adoptive/hana'i fathers (35.2%), and 91 mother's boyfriends (29.36%)

In assessing the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather and the mother's boyfriends the results proved to be non-significant because there was no formally documented recidivism. In addition to the factors listed above, which included individuals who had died, maxed out on or completed their prison sentences or had been deported, an additional hypothesis regarding the lack of recidivism could be that individuals may have committed other incest offenses or other crimes that were not reported to law enforcement either by the victims or family members. Offenders may have gotten better at hiding their behaviors from law enforcement, hence, they were able to avoid being arrested for new offenses.

I did not look at complete criminal histories of the offenders and whether or not the offenders had committed other crimes such as burglary, theft, assault to name a few. The sexual offenders could possibly have expanded their sexual offenses beyond incest in the homes to non-familial members or strangers. Had more information on the criminal behaviors of the offenders in general been assessed it might have allowed for further insight into subsequent criminal or offense behaviors.

I did not find any actual documentation or statistical data evaluating the effectiveness of programs utilizing CBT, RP and/or the TTM and their effectiveness in reducing or preventing recidivism rates. It should also be noted that recidivism does not necessarily reflect the actual re-offense rates, but rather those who were incarcerated for reoffending; perpetrators may have also re-offended in not only Hawai'i but other states and may not have been caught or convicted of new offenses.

Because there were no findings of recidivism in any of these groups, no statistical analyses were run as the findings were not significant and did not reveal any offenders who had recidivated. The expected recidivism in the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$  formula was zero (0). Hence,  $\chi^2$  could not be computed because it would require division by zero (0).

## **Research Question 2**

Research question two examined whether offenders who reside inside the home of their victims are more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims. For the purposes of this study incest offenders were further categorized as follows: biological parents, stepparents, adoptive parents, mother's boyfriends, hana'i family members (the word hana'i [ha na ee] is Hawai'ian and is defined as close or like family) or foster parents with whom the victims resided for over 60 days.

Again, as a result of attrition the final number of offenders in the study totaled 310. In this study it was determined that the majority of the offenders lived at home. Of the 310 offenders, 305 (98%) lived at home: biological fathers (36.1%), stepfathers (35.2%), and boyfriends (29.3%). 5 (2%) offenders did not live in the homes of the victims for more than 60 consecutive days, but all were the victims' mothers' boyfriends.

I also eliminated offenders who had died, left the state of Hawai'i after they maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported (as they were illegally in the United States), were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults and other charges that were not deemed as a child molestation/pedophilia or incest. All participants in the study were male and 18 years and older. Female offenders were excluded because at the time of this study (1988-2013) there were six females arrested in Hawai'i for sexual offenses and only one was convicted of sexual abuse of her children and stepchildren.

Because there were no findings of recidivism in any of these groups, no statistical analyses were run as the findings were not significant and did not reveal any offenders who had recidivated. The expected recidivism in the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$  formula was zero (0). Hence,  $\chi^2$  could not be computed because it would require division by zero (0).

### **Limitations**

One strength of using a quasi-experimental design is the use of naturally-occurring comparison groups rather than randomly assigned control groups as the baseline. O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner (2003) posited that secondary data is important and useful for researchers to conduct experiments and gather information which would not be possible under other conditions.

A limitation of this study was the usage of archival, secondary data analysis which limited the types of variables that could be assessed. The validity and reliability of how the secondary data was gathered, analyzed, and presented were not fully known to the researcher. Another limitation was the timeliness and relevance of the data as well as being limited to accessing the variables that already exist rather than being able to implement or incorporate new variables. This study did not factor in the demographics of race and ethnicity, which I am sure would present drastically different statistical results. Without the availability of government agency statistics and information pertaining to the study population, this research could not be conducted in a more in-depth manner.

Moreover, because this was a quasi-experimental study with data collected from the state of Hawai'i SOTP, participants could not be randomly selected for participation, which precludes assessment of causal relationships among the variables. Geographically, the results of



the study may not be generalized to sexual offenders outside of Hawai'i or to individuals convicted of non-familial sexual offenses.

It should also be noted that recidivism does not necessarily reflect the actual re-offense rates, but rather those who were incarcerated for reoffending; perpetrators may have also re-offended in not only Hawai'i but other states and may not have been caught or convicted of new offenses. For the purposes of this study, recidivism was defined as the commission of a subsequent sex offense against a child after being convicted of a prior sex offense (Tewksbury & Lees, 2006). Recidivism rates are typically based on officially recorded information, such as an arrest, criminal conviction, or incarceration. Reoffending was defined as any offense committed in a one-year follow-up period and receiving a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one-year follow-up or a further six months waiting period. Similar to recidivism, reoffending rates are typically based on officially recorded information including arrest, criminal conviction and incarceration. A second limitation was that this study utilized secondary or archival data; as a result, the population and sample was not considered to be a random sample. This study was limited to non-female offenders because, of the approximately 1,727 incest sex offenders arrested and convicted in the state of Hawai'i from 1988-2013, six were females and only one was convicted of sexual abuse of her children or stepchildren.

This study focused only on sexually related crimes involving biological fathers, stepfathers, boyfriends of the victims' mothers, foster parents, and hana'i family members ranging from age 18 years and up in the state of Hawai'i. 1,295 males were actually incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i penal system for sexually related crimes in 2013, but through attrition the final number of offenders included in this study was 310. As a result of attrition this study eliminated offenders who had died, had left the state of Hawai'i after they

maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported, were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults, and other charges that were not deemed as a child molestation/pedophilia or incest.

The third limitation that emerged, was that aside from the fact that Hawai'i is comprised largely of Asian/Pacific Islander populations, scientifically and historically these populations have different cultural norms on matters pertaining to familial incest. Scientifically and historically many cultures choose to maintain harmony and avoid familial shame (not discussing sexual assaults) rather than safety for the victims. These cultural factors and the uniqueness of Hawai'i being an isolated chain of eight islands with populations ranging from less than 150 people on the least populated island to over 1,500,000 people on the most populated island may have been one factor in low recidivism. The possibility of public exposure, which included being identified as and having to register as sex offenders with their home addresses and places of employment included in a publicly accessible registry may also have been a deterrent to them recidivating. Recidivating would be a contributing factor in bringing more shame not only to themselves but also their families, which likely included their victims.

### **Threats to Validity**

Accounting for and overcoming bias as a threat to internal validity is important for the study outcome to be valid. The validity and reliability of how the secondary data was gathered, analyzed, and presented were not fully known to the researcher. Validity is the best approximation to the truthfulness of a claim or research conclusion. The concern of internal validity is whether experiment outcomes are true indicators of actual research events. Reliability refers to a measure of consistency without error; when conducting quantitative studies, the researchers are seeking quantitative results that reflect true scores. In statistics, reliability is a

very important concept that determines the precision of measurements (Babbie, 2007; Trochim & Donnelly, 2007).

External validity is applicable to generalizing the study results to populations outside of the study. The underlying question regarding external validity is whether the research findings can be applied to other populations in other geographic areas or at other time periods (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). Geographically, the results of the study may not be generalized to sexual offenders outside of Hawai'i or to individuals convicted of non-familial sexual offences. It should also be noted that recidivism does not necessarily reflect the actual re-offence rates, but rather those who were incarcerated for reoffending; offenders may have committed other offences but may not have been caught or convicted of new offences. Based on the literature review, the offenders age ranges, criminal sex history, residency, and incarcerations are common factors found in repeat sex offenders and can be found in all individuals in the study population, hence resolving non-probability biases (Walker, 2008).

Greenberg et al., (2000), postulated that much of the previous research on clarifying and differentiating between biological and non-biological incest sex offenders was neglected. There was only one study that examined sexual abuse survival rates for biological fathers versus other specified biological and unrelated male offender subgroups, which indicated a need for more extensive studies involving non-stranger offenders against children (Greenberg et al., 2000). Blanchard et al. (2000) determined that findings on this rarely researched topic were inconsistent, and comparisons of biological and non-biological father offenders (e.g., stepfathers, hana'i family members, foster parents) failed to yield reliable results (Titcomb et al., 2012).

## Recommendations

This study was a quasi-experimental research design on sex offender recidivism involving adult males incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i who commit sexual assaults against their daughters, step-daughters or females for whom they serve in the role of father. Family members are thought to be the first-line in decreasing the likelihood of recidivism of incest related crimes.

This study was unable to demonstrate statistical significance for the hypotheses introduced. Though the outcome of the proposed hypotheses:

RQ1: Does the type of victim-offender relationship determine the likelihood of recidivism?

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no differences in the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather, the mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There will be differences in the likelihood of recidivism among biological fathers, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, mother's boyfriends, hana'i and foster parents.

RQ2: Are offenders who reside inside the home of their victims more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no relationship in re-offense rates between offenders who do not reside in the homes of their victims and offenders who reside with their victims.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: Offenders who reside in the homes of their victims will be more likely to reoffend than offenders who do not reside with their victims.

were found not significant, the limitations of the demographics of the male subjects being studied may have hindered an enhanced exploration of recidivism amongst individuals who were incarcerated in the state of Hawai'i for incest related crimes against their daughters or step-daughters.

People who commit sexually related crimes against children are thought of as “sick strangers” or opportunistic family infiltrators who take advantage of a decline in traditional family values (e.g., absent father; Devine, 2010). Extreme depictions of violent sexual predators and pedophiles as social menaces attract international media attention (Finkelhor, 2009; Horley, 2008). The majority of reported child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by the victims' father, stepfather or foster father, or other (hana'i) familial figures (Titcomb, Goodman-DeLahunty & De Puiseau, 2012; Gelb, 2007; Vander Mey & Neff, 1984). Within this context, sexual abuse is often protracted and repeated (Abel, et al., 1987).

A recommendation for future research would include duplicating a quantitative study and extending this study by utilizing the primary secondary data that was collected by the Hawai'i SOTP from 1988 to 2013 and reassessing that information from 1988 to 2018 which would extend the data collection by five years and gather a broader perspective of the recidivism rates of incest offenders in the state of Hawai'i. This expanded study would delve deeper into other demographics such as age, ethnicity and length of time in the United States to allow for a more in-depth evaluation of cultural norms for incest offenders incarcerated in the Hawai'i penal system. Recommendations also may call for research on cross-cultural norms which would be beneficial in helping the victims and their family members understand the long-term psychological, emotional and physical impact of the sexual assaults that the victims were subjected to.

### Implications for Social Change

This study is significant in that it definitely brought attention to the gap in literature on sex offender recidivism in the state of Hawai'i. This gap may potentially produce results that could lead to social change and would bring attention to the conviction and recidivism rates of incestual offenders. There has been very little, if any, research produced to examine the history of recidivism of convicted offenders in the state of Hawai'i. Though the outcome of this study does not indicate reported incidences of recidivism in this study, it can perhaps promote social change by encouraging further review and analysis of the effectiveness of the SOTP to better understand and enhance what is working with the program to continue to sustain a low recidivism rate among not only incest sex offenders but all sex offenders within the Hawai'i Penal System.

From a social change stand point, if the sex offender treatment programs in Hawai'i were indeed effective in producing low recidivism rates, then it suggests that other states should look at implementing and providing sex offender treatment programs for incarcerated sex offenders prior to their release from prison.

Schwartz and Cellini (1999) argued that predicting sex offender recidivism inevitably results in some false positives and false negatives but will provide meaningful data for further research. There were no findings of recidivism in any of the offender groups included in this study. No statistical analyses were run as the findings were not significant and did not reveal any offenders who had recidivated. The expected recidivism in the  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$  statistical test formula was zero (0). Hence,  $\chi^2$  with Cramer's  $V$  statistical test could not be computed because it would require division by zero (0).

This study eliminated offenders who had died, left the state of Hawai'i after they maxed out on their prison sentences, were deported (as they were illegally in the United States), were convicted of rape of strangers, sexual assaults, assaults and other charges that are not deemed as a child molestation/pedophilia or incest. All participants in the study were male and 18 years and older. Female offenders were excluded because at the time of this study (1988 to 2013) there were six females arrested in Hawai'i for sexual offenses and only one was convicted of sexual abuse of her children and stepchildren.

In assessing the likelihood of recidivism among the biological father, adoptive father, stepfather and the mother's boyfriends the results proved to be non-significant. In addition to the factors listed above an additional hypothesis regarding the lack of recidivism could be that individuals may have committed other offenses that were not reported to law enforcement either by the victims or family members. One factor that continued to be a concern in this research was whether or not these offenders really did not reoffend or if they were reoffending but became more sophisticated in their offenses and were able to avoid coming to the attention of law enforcement with subsequent offenses either because they were not reported or if they relocated out of the state of Hawai'i.

The intent of this secondary, quantitative data (which spanned the years 1988 to 2013) compared recidivism rates among biological fathers and male parental figures who committed incestuous child sexual abuses in Hawai'i against girls 15 years or younger. This study was the first attempt in the state of Hawai'i to examine the number of inmates managed by the state of Hawai'i SOTP who had completed their maximum prison sentence (maxed out) and were later returned to prison for new felony incest offenses in the Hawai'i.

## **Conclusion**

This study did not produce the desired outcomes that the researcher had hoped for in possibly implicating policy changes or affecting overall significant changes in sex offender relapse prevention. It is my hope that though there were no significant statistical outcomes in this study, social change may be achieved by addressing the gap in literature for incest sex offender recidivism in the state of Hawai'i.



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