

Patterns of Grooming Among Registered Child Sex Offenders

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my wonderful husband, Brian, my amazing little boys, Chase and Jackson. It is also dedicated to my Mom and Dad for always supporting me, and my sister, Andrea, who is the strongest woman I know. Lastly, to two amazing Angels, Grandpa Rudman, and Gabriel Anthony: I feel your presence every day.

## Abstract

The practice of grooming among the child sex offending population has been studied for decades, with a major gap in knowledge regarding basic relationships between grooming strategies and characteristics of the offender and the victim, relationship status, and offense characteristics. The purpose of this study was to examine relationships between individual and relational characteristics of child sex offenders, their associated victims, and the presence of environmental and victim grooming. Research has consistently lacked a standard definition of what grooming constitutes, and this has been a point of concern throughout studies. For this dissertation, an expanded conceptualization of grooming, amalgamated with existing theoretical and conceptual frameworks was used, to highlight that the concept of grooming does not need to be hindered by the parameters that a definition might impose. Grooming types were broken into two categories, environmental and victim. The conceptualization was synthesized using the Precondition Model, an existing theoretical model by Finkelhor (1984), along with the conceptualizations of grooming derived from Craven, Brown and Gilchrest (2006), and Leberg (1997). Data were obtained from the State of Minnesota's publicly accessible predatory offender database. This dissertation looked at whether or not significant relationships existed between types of environmental and victim grooming strategies and offender and victim characteristics (e.g. race, age), relationship attributes (e.g. known vs. unknown), and offense characteristics (e.g. penetration, sexual touching). Also examined, was whether or not the total number of grooming strategies used by an offender (total environmental, total victim, and total grooming strategies) was influenced by offender and victim characteristics, relationship status, and offense characteristics.

Chi Square analysis, binary logistic regression, Quasi-Poisson regression, and Conway-Maxwell Poisson regression analyses were used to examine relationships between available child sex offender and victim demographics, relationship attributes, offense characteristics and grooming (i.e., strategies used by the offender, total number of grooming strategies used). Quasi-Poisson regression analysis was used to look at the total number of grooming strategies used and whether or not they were associated with demographic or relationship attributes. Chi Square analyses were also used to examine the relationship between environmental and victim grooming strategies.

Some of the meaningful results for environmental grooming strategies included, using a position of authority. Whites were more likely to use a position of authority than non-Whites. Using a position of authority as a grooming strategy was also more likely to occur if the child victim was 5 years of age or younger. Kidnapping was more likely to occur if the offense included at least one victim who was unknown to the offender. Non-whites were more likely to use a public space. Breaking into a residence was more likely to occur if the offender was non-White, and in cases where there was at least one unknown victim.

Some of the significant findings for victim grooming strategies showed that use of pornography was more likely to be used if there was at least one unknown victim reported. Offenders were more likely to use a computer as a grooming strategy if there was at least one male victim (same-sex). Using force was more likely to occur if the offender was non-White, the victim(s) was aged 6 through 17, and the victim(s) was female. Exposure was more likely to be used by whites, and if the victims included at least one male. Non-white offenders were more likely to use

threats/coercion/manipulation. Non-white offenders, and African American offenders were more likely to use a weapon. A false pretense was more likely to be used by non-White offenders, and offenders whose victims were female. Using an accomplice as a grooming tactic was used more by non-White offenders, and offenders whose victims were females.

Scholars (Quinsey 1977; Canter, Hughes, & Kirby 1998; van Dam 2001) have tended to focus on the notion that child sex offenders can be anyone from any walk of life. What has gotten lost amongst the studies focusing on child sex offenders as a whole, and the etiology, and the motivations behind offending, are the commonalities found in child sex offending (i.e., the process and importance of grooming). Further, there has been a gap in information about whether or not basic demographic, relationship, and offense characteristics are associated with grooming. Overall, the findings indicated that there is much to be learned when focusing on how one commonality in child sex offending is associated with basic offender and victim characteristics, relationship attributes, and offense characteristics. The findings showed that based on demographics of offenders and victims, relationship status, and offense characteristics, as well as the total number of grooming strategies used, differences in grooming strategies used do exist. The findings show that while yes, child sex offenders can come from any walk of life (i.e. race, class, age, gender), that focusing on a commonality (as opposed to the whole population) shows variations within the population.

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## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

### **Child sexual abuse and child sex offenders**

The grooming strategies used by child sex offenders, and the role they play in child sexual abuse has, oftentimes, been an underlying theme within the research that has focused on child sex offenders, victims, and abuse. Having been examined from many angles, the area of child sex offending is not new to scholars, with focuses that have included: profiling offenders; identifying behaviors, characteristics, and offense patterns; risk assessment and prevention; policy and legislation; education; and treatment. With empirical research largely devoted to understanding how a person becomes a child sex offender, it seems the importance of, and the role that grooming plays in the process of child sexual offending has been under-acknowledged. Within studies that have looked at grooming, the scope typically includes only behaviors that manipulate the child victim, but there have been growing conceptualizations of grooming, suggesting that child sex offenders have grooming processes that affect people, institutions, and environments as well as child victims. Recent social movements, media and political attention have likely contributed to an increased interest surrounding the importance of understanding how offenders manipulate children, parents, and even whole communities.

Grooming strategies can be detected in past studies that have not explicitly identified or labeled the behavior. As grooming has become a burgeoning theme in studies focused on child sex offenders, there has been a notable expansion both implicitly and explicitly stated in research. In other words, implicit studies referred to strategies that would be considered grooming strategies, but were not labeled as such, and explicit studies would refer to strategies that have been labeled, defined, or focused specifically

on grooming. In research devoted to what grooming looks like there have also been theoretical implications (Finkelhor, 1984) suggesting that grooming is a commonality in many cases of child sexual abuse. Other theoretical implications (Finkelhor, 1984) insist that sexual abuse cannot occur without multiple stages of behaviors that are very similar to those that would be considered grooming behaviors. The literature review shows that scholars have pinpointed key areas that have involved various motivations for sex offenders, and how offenders have justified the sexual abuse of a child (Finkelhor, 1984; Leberg, 1997; Craven, Brown, & Gilchrest, 2006), but have ignored how grooming strategies have or have not varied among offenders, even at the most basic levels such as race, age, and relationship. So, just how deep does the process of grooming go, and how can grooming, and variations in grooming strategies be identified? Further, how will those variations affect how child sex offenders and child sex offending is researched, how that information is disseminated, and where policy changes are needed? The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between grooming strategies used by child sex offenders, and offender and victim characteristics, relationship attributes, and offense characteristics available on the publicly accessible database of registered sex offenders in the state of Minnesota.

### **Understanding grooming**

A problem with how grooming has been studied in the past can be attributed to the fact that a standard definition of “grooming” as used by scholars has been nearly absent from scholarly literature (Craven et al., 2006; McAlinden, 2006; Bennett & O’Donohue, 2014), leaving mostly an implied understanding and recognition of grooming strategies used by offenders; creating more conceptualizations rather than

definitions. Grooming strategies that have been established by scholars are often correlated with psychological, sociological, and psychosocial aspects of the offender (Finkelhor, 1984; Finkelhor & Araji, 1986; Hall & Hirschman, 1991,1992; Marshall & Barabee 1990). Grooming, has not frequently been the sole focus of studies, but has been more of an underlying theme woven into a deeper construct of child sexual offending, with scholars conceding that it plays a large role in the process of child sex offending but that it is difficult to fully conceptualize.

In studies where the main focus has been on grooming patterns and characteristics of child sex offenders, grooming strategies have been identified to include: befriending children, desensitizing them to sexual stimuli, gaining access to potential victims, building and maintaining trust, gradually exposing children to sexual touch and sexual play, ensuring that sexual acts are kept secret, and any strategies that motivate the offender to commit a sexual act with a child (Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989; Elliot, 1995; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Beech, & Collings, 2013). A broad but encompassing conceptualization of grooming, as given by McAlinden (2006) relates the aforementioned strategies, “Many of these themes are reflected in the actual process of grooming at the personal, familial, and institutional levels. Sex offenders actively seek to create and abuse ‘trust’ in varied social contexts. They try to establish intimate and social relationships which will facilitate abuse by making use of a range of deception techniques” (pg. 346). The most prevalent themes that emerged in the literature used to describe grooming strategies included tactics of manipulation and deception.

The existing body of research has more thoroughly explained child sex offenders that offend within their families, and outside of their families (including differences in

strategies used to groom victims and families), yet there is little known about how grooming strategies are affected by those relationship differences, and how grooming strategies do or do not vary when the offender and the victim are unknown to each other. There is also little known about the role grooming has on the type of offense committed and whether certain grooming strategies are associated with specific offense outcomes (i.e., penetration, sexual touching, production of child pornography).

The child sex offending population has been shown to be heterogeneous (Quinsey 1977; Canter, Hughes, & Kirby 1998; van Dam 2001), implying that anyone, regardless of race, class, or sex, can be a sex offender, but contradictorily, that there are also several types of sex offender categories and/or subtypes within the whole. It has been noted that when examining child sex offenders, the failure to differentiate among subtypes (e.g., strategies used by pedophiles versus strategies used by hebephiles) has been problematic and has affected both treatment and policy efficacy (Bagley & Pritchard, 2000; Craven et al., 2006; Glowacz & Born, 2012; Langton & Marshall, 2001; Strassberg, Eastvold, Kenney, & Suchy, 2012), and that differentiating child sex offenders by subtype is an important action that needs to be taken in future research. Issues with reliability and consistency in labeling child sex offender's typologies are indicative that other aspects of child sex offending should be explored.

### **Statement of the problem**

Likely, there are many contributing factors that have directed research on child sex offending, and child sex offenders in directions away from basic demographic characteristics, relationship attributes, and offense characteristics, with the topic of 'differentiation,' being one of the most common. As calls for more research on

differentiating among subtypes of offenders (i.e. pedophile vs. child molester) have continued to grow, the understanding of common factors in offending, such as grooming strategies and how they vary based on basic demographic, relationship, and offense characteristics have continued to be under-researched. Differentiating among offender samples seems to be convoluted by a disconnection between criminological and psychological labeling (i.e., inaccurate use of psychological terms to samples, such as “pedophile). Inarguably, differentiation is an important area to focus on, but until criminological and psychological labeling are congruent, different approaches (i.e., steering away from etiology and focusing on one aspect in offending that is a commonality) to researching child sex offending should be utilized. A starting point is examining grooming strategies, and focusing on variations in grooming strategies based on offender and victim demographics, relationship attributes, and offense characteristics.

While the topic of grooming has become notably more prevalent, expansive and inclusive within current research, the term and methods to study the act of grooming have become somewhat complicated because of a lack of a standard definition. Amalgamating existing theoretical framework, and grooming conceptualization, a broadened conceptualization of grooming was created. This broadened conceptualization provides a measurable way to explore the depths to which the grooming strategies child sex offenders use, how far they can reach, and show who and how many people can be affected.

### **Aims**

The aims of this study were to investigate: (1) the extent to which grooming strategies were associated with offender, victim, and relationship characteristics (i.e.,

offender race/ethnicity, victim age(s), and age range; (2) whether or not grooming strategies (individual and total number) varied by offender-victim relationship status; (3) whether grooming strategies differed across various offense characteristics, for example known versus unknown offenses, same-sex versus opposite-sex offenses; and (4) whether or not there were relationships between environmental grooming strategies and victim grooming strategies.

### **Significance of Study**

Highlighted in the literature review, the process of grooming for sexual offenders affects more than just the victim(s). Grooming strategies can impact parents and caregivers, whole communities, and institutions as well. A current example of how grooming can impact these other entities can be seen when reviewing the recent sexual abuse case against Dr. Larry Nassar and USA Gymnastics. Victims stated that the abuse occurred sometimes in the presence of parents, suggesting that parents were groomed to believe that this doctor's practices were innocuous. Since past literature has tended to focus on the many aspects involved in the evolution of a sex offender, the central focus of this study is on grooming, a single commonality within many cases of child sex offending; and, how grooming strategies vary and/or are associated with different offender and victim characteristics, and how this can impact current policy and practice related to child sex offending. Also, implementing a broadened, and importantly, an explicit conceptualization of grooming that has been absent from past studies, was another primary intent of this study. Another unique attribute of this study was the choice to utilize administrative, secondary data from the public sex offender registry in Minnesota.

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Grooming**

In this dissertation, grooming is recognized as any form of manipulation of the environment, and/or the victim of an adult offender, that intended to lead to sexual contact (see Chapter 2, and Appendix 2).

**Environmental grooming** includes any act that manipulates the environment of the targeted child. This includes gaining access through family, friends, and abusing a position of authority (such as teacher, babysitter, or youth leader). Environmental grooming also includes getting the child into a physical location that is conducive committing an act of sexual abuse.

**Victim grooming** includes any act that physically grooms the child, either over a short or long period of time. This can include gradual inappropriate touching, speaking about sex explicitly, telling sexual jokes, or exposing the child to pornography. Victim grooming can also include behaviors that coerce the child such as making the child promise to keep secrets, passive aggressive threats, or making the child feel like they have a special relationship. Victim grooming also includes physical incapacitation such as using chemical agents to lower victim's inhibitions. Victim grooming can also include bribing the child to gain trust and access such as offering drugs, pornography, alcohol, tobacco, candy, or toys.

### **Child sex offender**

The term child 'sex offender' is used continuously throughout this dissertation, both in the review of the literature and as it pertains to the cases in the study. For this

dissertation, a child sex offender is recognized to be a person who is over the age of 18, who has committed a sexually based crime against a child aged 17 or younger.

### **Sex offender public registry**

Minnesota registration laws require that certain offenders comply with public notification procedures that vary from processes including victim notification only, victim and other appropriate members of the community (such as schools or daycare centers), or public community notification meetings within the city the offender will be residing, and a profile listing on the state public registry database. Registration laws in Minnesota do not require that all registrants be put on the public registry, just those that meet the criteria for likelihood of recidivism. Any sex offender listed on the public registry has been classified as a Level 3 sex offender (different community notification procedures are sentenced to levels 1 and 2); those offenders show the highest risk levels. Minnesota sex offender registration laws were primarily derived from two important pieces of legislation, The Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Predators Act (1994) and Megan's Law (1997).

**Sex offender risk level.** Minnesota statutes 609.342, 609.343, 609.344, 609.345, and 609.3451 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/>, accessed May 2017) describe the conduct that would result in a sexual offense of the first, second, third, fourth or fifth degree. In Minnesota, child sexual offenders are subject to community database registration if they meet the criteria to be categorized as a Level 3 Sex Offender, a separate categorization from the degree of sexual offense. The risk level a sexual offender is assigned is determined by the end of confinement review committee at the end of the offender's prison sentence, treatment, and/or as a condition of probation. This risk level is

determined based on a myriad of variables including severity of the crime, responses to treatment, and likelihood to reoffend (recidivate) (S. Hustad, personal communication, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017), and risk level can be changed at any time.

Definitions pertinent to the categorization and coding of data in the public registry were derived both from what is in literature about grooming and from the definitions of sexual misconduct as stated in Minnesota Statute 609.341 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.341#stat.609.341.11>, accessed May 2017).

Appendix 1 displays the statute in its entirety.

Chapter 2 introduces and highlights some of the scholarly work on grooming, child sex offending, child sex offending patterns and characteristics, and other pertinent areas related to child sexual abuse, offenders, and the process of grooming for offenders. The guiding theoretical and conceptual rationale is also introduced. Chapter 3 introduces the research questions and explains the methodology used to examine the research questions, followed by results in Chapter 4. A discussion of the results, along with the limitations of the study, and the contributions to the field are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 summarizes the study and includes a discussion of the implications.

## **CHAPTER 2: Literature Review**

For decades, child sex offending has garnered research interest from multiple fields including social work, sociology, psychology, public health, criminology, and biology. Interest in child sex offending has only increased and does not appear to be slowing down, but rather, it has evolved to include other areas. For example, the internet and social media, child trafficking, and clergy abuse are rapidly increasing topics in the area of child sex offending. Focusing on one commonality in a topic that is as complex as child sex offending is important and, arguably, more manageable for researchers. Utilizing a conceptualization of grooming that is broad, encompassing, thorough, and has the capacity to be consistently used by other scholars is needed to gain a better understanding of the variations in grooming strategies and pertinent demographic, relationship, and offense data that have been overlooked, or under-acknowledged.

### **Under-Researched Areas**

#### **Offender and victim characteristics and grooming**

How environmental and victim grooming tactics vary by offender and victim demographics has not been widely studied. For example, do male offenders groom female victims the same way they groom male victims? And do strategies vary by the age of the child?

**Offender race/ethnicity.** Racial and ethnic differences are studied among various types of criminal offenders, but there has been a clear lack of attention given to racial and ethnic differences among sexual offenders, and even more so, child sexual offenders (Wiederman, Maynard, & Fretz 1996). Common areas where race is examined within sexual offending are the areas of recidivism, juvenile offending patterns, and sentencing,

prosecutorial, and judicial outcomes. Scholars, both past and present, have not focused on whether or not grooming strategies vary based on racial and ethnic differences among child sexual offenders. A contributing factor to this lack of knowledge may lie in the widespread understanding that child sex offenders are made up of a heterogeneous population, and consequently, this key area has been ignored. Although heterogeneity is known and accepted, there is still evidence that points to racial differences in sex offending on the whole, not specific only to child sex offenders. Crime statistics show that white males are more likely to be offenders (Office of Justice Statistics, 2000; Greenfield, 1997). What is lacking is empirical research on how offenses do or do not differ based on race and ethnicity. Further, there does not seem to be empirical evidence showing variations in race and ethnicity specific to child sex offenders.

**Offender sex.** Adshead and colleagues (1994) conducted a review of what was known about female child sex offenders and compared case studies of female offenders to those of male child sex offenders. Their review showed that female child sex offenders, as has been found with male child sex offenders, make up a heterogeneous group. The implications from their study suggested that while the pathology of male offending is unclear, it is even more unclear for female offenders, so treatment approaches that are structured more for males may not be as effective (1994). Vandiver and Walker (2002) compared male and female sex offender characteristics, noting that males were less likely to have a sex offense as their first type of crime, and female sex offenders were more likely to report that their first crime was sexually based. They found that males committed more sex crimes on average than female offenders. Consideration regarding whether or not females and males respond to the same types of treatments needs to be

taken when making conclusions that affect practice (Adshead et al. 1994).

Sexual abuse by women is often overlooked (Miller, 2013), under-recognized, and underreported (Gannon & Rose, 2008), but as knowledge of child sex offending has evolved, so has the notion that females can be child sex offenders, too. It has been found that female offender's patterns and characteristics of offending are as heterogeneous as male child sex offenders (Adshead, Howett, & Mason 1994). It has also been recently noted that similar to male child sex offenders, typological classification specific to female child offenders is needed (Gannon & Rose, 2008). Sociocultural roles ascribed to women show them as maternal, kind, and less likely than men to harm children. Because it is more socially acceptable for women to engage in physical touch, closeness, and intimacy it is not uncommon for victims to be confused about whether or not a certain act was abusive (Gannon & Rose, 2008; Goodwin & DiVasto, 1979; Bouroughs, 2004).

For male offenders, it is not uncommon to see both male and female victims (Elliot et al., 1995). Much of the research devoted to child sexual offending has focused on male offenders and female victims. Less focus has been given to child sexual abuse cases where the offender is male and the victim(s) is also male, leading to a lack of knowledge regarding differences in offending patterns based on the sex of the victim.

**Offender age.** Holmes & Holmes (2009) reported that the average age of a child sex offender is 35, but relatively little is known about the age of onset of sex offending. Over the past decade, empirical work on juveniles who sexually offend has focused more on age than studies of adults who sexually offend. A study by Glowacz and Born (2013) sampled adolescent sex offenders (i.e. offenders who were juvenile at the time of offense), including adolescent peer sexual abusers (abused a peer/same-aged child), adolescent

child sexual abusers (abused a child younger than them), and adolescent non-sex offenders. One of their aims was to examine whether or not the age difference between the offender and the victim was associated with specific personality traits and characteristics. Their results showed significant differences in areas such as use of substances, the use of force in their offenses, anti-social personality differences, and differences in impulsivity, suggesting the need to treat juvenile offenders differently based on offender typology (Glowacz & Born, 2013), which may be similarly applied to adults who sexually abuse children.

**Victim age.** Age of the victim plays an important role as it is often used to categorize or describe an offender. One of the most widely used terms to separate sex offenders into groups that sexually offend against adults and those who sexually offend against children is *pedophile* or *pedophilia*. Both in the media and in scholarly work, the terms are used liberally, oftentimes generalizing the entire child sex offending population. Pedophilia in fact “denotes the erotic preference for prepubescent children” (Blanchard, Lykins, Wherrett, Kuban, Cantor, Blak, Dickey, & Klassen 2009; p. 335) and accounts for only a small percentage of the child sex offending population. The misuse of this term is problematic because pedophilia is a diagnosable mental illness given only to predators that exhibit a specific set of psychological and behavioral characteristics. Separate from other adults who sexually abuse children, as well as offenders who target adults and children, the characteristics of a pedophile do not apply to every adult who sexually victimizes a child. Pedophilia is not *the* crime (Miller, 2013; Hall & Hall 2007) but the diagnosis. Making assumptions about an entire group (i.e. child sex offenders) by

labeling them generically or failing to label them when appropriate may lead to inaccurate generalization, ineffective policy, ineffective treatment, and public response.

To illustrate this point, Blanchard and colleagues (2009) compared child sex offenders' pedophilic (relating to prepubescent children) and hebephilic (relating to pubescent children) arousal to sexual stimuli promoting prepubescent and pubescent children to assess their age preference of victims. Offenders who had previously reported a stronger sexual attraction to a specific age range showed signs of arousal only when presented with that age-specific set of stimuli. Their findings support the notion that child sex offenders have age preferences, but there is also evidence supporting the notion that offenders showed greater arousal and preference towards stimuli depicting the age of their most recent victim (Malcolm, Andrews, & Quinsey, 1993). However, there was not information on the types of grooming strategies used by those offenders and how they did or did not vary. If it was established by Blanchard and colleagues that offenders had age preferences, then future research showing how grooming patterns change or vary based on the age of the victim would be invaluable. So, while more research is needed in this area, Malcolm and colleagues' results somewhat negate the notion that all offenders stay within one specific age range, and through that showcase the inappropriateness of projecting a label onto an entire population. Further, what is unknown is whether or not the grooming strategies used by offenders vary depending on the victim's age(s). It could be hypothesized that older children would be more prone to grooming strategies that could be deemed more manipulative and aggressive due to having more knowledge.

**Victim sex.** Marshall, Barabee and Christophe (1986) looked at victim sex and offender typology by studying the effects of female sexual stimuli on three groups of

male offenders: heterosexual familial offenders (i.e., incest offenders), heterosexual non-familial offenders, and non-sexual offenders. They concluded that non-familial offenders were more aroused by sexual stimuli depicting female children, and incestuous offenders were not. Marshall and colleagues (1986) claim that the lack of arousal response to child sexual stimuli is a result of the laboratory and test setting. A threat to internal validity noted in their findings was that there were several participants who denied being child sexual offenders (but whom displayed significant signs of arousal to the stimuli). Some critical pieces of missing information include whether or not offenders had a specific preference towards female children or whether or not their female victims were convenient targets. Marshall, Barabee, and Butt (1988) focused on sexual offenders who targeted male children. Their sample consisted of male subjects who had sexually abused male children. Some reported a history of sexually abusing female children, but in all instances a male child was present and the subject admitted to sexually abusing the female child to gain access to the male child. While it is not uncommon for offenders to have victims of both the male and female sex, Elliott, Browne and Kilcoyne (1995) found that there is evidence to suggest sex preference in victims. One important finding from Marshall and colleagues' study was that same-sex oriented offenders showed greater arousal to the male stimuli than did the opposite-sex oriented offenders. Another difference shown between same-sex oriented and opposite-sex oriented offenders, was age of the victim. The same-sex oriented group tended to respond to children who were pre-pubescent, whereas the opposite-sex oriented group tended to respond to stimuli depicting pubescent males.

Some key points have not been addressed to include how offending patterns are different based on the sex of the victim(s). If studies have shown that sex is associated with variables such as the age of the victim, the sex of the victim, and the choice to target a specific victim, more research is needed to see how or if child sex offending patterns vary based on both the sex of the victim and the offender.

**Relationship attributes.** Although it is more common to find samples of parental abusers, mainly fathers and stepfathers, it is important to remember that intra-familial abuse is also perpetrated by siblings, mothers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents (to name a few) and that much less is known about these types of offenses. It has been reported that there may be patterns of father-daughter incest occurring before grandparent-grandchild incest (Goodwin et al., 1983). Margolin (1992) debunked past misconceptions that less force is used in grandparental sexual abuse, and found that in fact that force and threats occurred more frequently.

More research has been conducted on the grooming of children who are known to offenders than of those who are unknown to offenders. There is also a lack of knowledge about the grooming tactics used by offenders when they target both children who are known as well as those who are unknown to them. Williams' (2014) ethnographic account highlights an offender who targeted both known and unknown children. This offender mentioned using similar tactics that worked for each type. The offender gave the example of "freebies," explaining that children are more willing to do things when they get free things out of it, and noted that this was a particularly useful tactic for children who came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Elliott and colleagues (1995) studied the recruitment strategies of incarcerated sex offenders and found that many men

frequented places where children would be present (schools, shopping centers, parks) and while the majority of their sample groomed the environment to the point of getting to know the child and being welcomed into their home, a smaller, though not insignificant, percentage “took a chance” when the opportunity presented itself.

Fischer and McDonald’s (1998) study of intra-familial versus extra-familial abusers hypothesized that intra-familial offenses would include more serious sexual behaviors, less physical and sexual aggression, more female than male victims, younger aged victims, and longer duration of abuse. Some of their findings included younger age was actually correlated with higher incidences of physical injury, intra-familial abuse entailed more serious sexual behaviors, intra-familial abuse lasted longer in duration, extra-familial abuse involved more physical force and violence, as well as more bribery, and intra-familial offenders instructed their victim(s) not to tell more frequently. The scholars note that the difference in the use of physical and verbal force between intra-familial and extra-familial offenders decreases as the age of the victim increases, meaning as the age of the victim increases so does the use of physical force and threat by the offender regardless of intra or extra-familial status.

In general, scholars focusing on intra-familial versus extra-familial abuse have consistently found that men who abused their biological daughters showed less deviant preferences than men who sexually abused children outside of their family (Bagley & Pritchard, 2000; Rice & Harris, 2002; Greenberg, Firestone, Nunes, Bradford, & Curry, 2005). When comparing biological father sexual abuse versus stepfather sexual abuse, Greenberg and colleagues did not find significant differences related to number of victims, age of victims, use of threats or force, influence of drugs and alcohol, or

seriousness of sexual behavior. Most studies that looked at intra-familial child sexual abuse focus on fathers and stepfathers as the perpetrators and female children as the victims, but mother-daughter incest does occur, and it occurs more frequently than is reported and researched (Goodwin & DiVasto, 1979). The terms intra-familial and extra-familial are not specific enough to suggest whether or not the offender and victim knew each other, assumes some type of familial relationship. A more generalizable study examining grooming patterns might compare the findings from three groups including: parental abusers (mothers and fathers), known but non-parental abusers (e.g. a coach), and stranger abusers. So while it is known that some offenders target those children who are known, some target strangers, and some target a combination of both, it is relatively unknown whether or not there are associated grooming strategies with these variations in relationship attributes.

**Offense characteristics and grooming.** Scholars have noted differences in offense characteristics (i.e. presence of such acts as penetration, sexual touching, having multiple victims, having adult victims, and more) among child sex offenders. Studies looking at biological father abusers versus stepfather abusers have noted both differences and similarities in strategies that could be related to offense patterns and grooming strategies, suggesting that more extensive research focusing on subtype differentiation should be conducted (Goodwin, Cormier, & Owen 1983). However, the disconnect between criminological and psychological labeling in child sex offender samples has proven could be a barrier in garnering generalizable results.

The presence of certain offense/crime descriptors (i.e., penetration, sexual touching/fondling) are oftentimes available, either through public databases, personal

interviews/surveys, or accessible in criminal records. There has been a lack of scholarly attention devoted to the presence and type of environmental and victim grooming and the presence and type of sexual offense. For example, are there significant associations with penetration and grooming strategies that are more forceful (i.e., using a weapon, or using physical force)? And how might this information be beneficial from a treatment standpoint?

### **Stepping back to reassess**

There is still so much that is unknown about how vast sex offender grooming strategies are, and can be. Starting with some of the basic establishment of relationships opens the door to explore deeper, such as how different types of grooming are or are not associated with each other, and how or if the total number of grooming strategies an offender uses has any associations with what is or is not present in the offense(s). The choice to focus only on grooming as it is related to offender and victim demographic differences, relationship attributes, such as whether or not the offender is known or unknown to the victim(s), and offense characteristics, may seem like a step backwards from the goal of understanding what makes an offender an offender. Starting with the basics will give an overall better picture of who is affected by grooming; with the end result being able to hopefully more effectively, and fluently educate stakeholders, provide better treatment for offenders, and evaluate and advocate for more effective sex offender policies. The following section introduces how grooming is currently conceptualized.

## **The Existing Conceptualization of Grooming**

### **Identifying grooming**

It has been established by scholars, (Finkelhor, 1984; Finkelhor & Araji, 1986; Hall & Hirschman, 1991 and 1992; Marshall & Barabee 1990), that grooming plays a significant role in the process of offending. The previous section highlighted both the need to focus on some basic characteristics, and also expand how grooming is conceptualized. This section introduces how grooming has been conceptualized, and some of the issues that have consistently shown up.

Recently, Winters and Jeglic (2016) investigated hindsight bias and the ability to detect grooming patterns that occurred in cases of child sexual abuse. Hindsight bias was defined using Hawkins and Hastie's (1990) definition, the "tendency for individuals with outcome knowledge (hindsight) to claim that they would have estimated in foresight (without the outcome information)" (p. 311, in Winters & Jeglic, 2016). Asking participants to read vignettes of behaviors, some knew that the person in the vignette was an offender, while others were not given the information. Their results showed that while hindsight bias was present, participants were able to identify grooming behavior. They also found that participants were able to identify grooming behaviors of non-relatives as easily as relatives, and that behaviors involving physical touch were more easily detectable. This points to the need to examine grooming strategies that fall outside of the normative ideology of what it constitutes grooming behavior. In a subsequent study, Winters and Jeglic (2017) investigated the ability of people to identify grooming patterns at various stages of the grooming process. Based on their previous findings (2016), they hypothesized that it would be easier for participants to identify grooming that involved

physical touch. However, these results contradicted those of their previous study. For this group of participants, grooming strategies were not easier to identify. The contradicting findings of these studies show both the need for a consistent construct, and conceptualized understanding of grooming. Subsequently, as the participants in the aforementioned studies were not comprised of experts in the field of child sex offending or grooming behaviors, their findings indicate a need to educate beyond scholars in the field, about what grooming behaviors, patterns, and strategies look like with a broad and encompassing conceptualization of grooming.

### **Grooming as a commonality within child sex offending**

Over the decades, empirical research has evolved from the common myths and misconceptions that the only people who commit sexually motivated crimes against children are strangers lurking in the bushes, or viewing homosexual men as the main culprits, or contradictorily, claiming that only female children are victimized (van Dam 2001). Child sexual offending, for both offenders and victims are not specific to any one race, age, sex, or social class (Quinsey 1977; Canter et al., 1998; van Dam 2001). It is important to understand that anyone can be a victim, and that anyone can be an offender; thus, highlighting further, the need for a broad and encompassing concept of grooming that has the potential to be consistently used. The literature will show that child sex offenders used grooming strategies in a myriad of ways that affected not only the child victims, but also other people in children's lives, as well as institutions, and organizations.

In the literature on child sex offending/offenders/abuse, grooming strategies were identified two ways. First, in the studies that focused more on the evolutionary process of child sex offenders, when and if grooming was addressed it was typically done briefly as

a separate and explanatory entity, or it was woven into the structure of the study under the scope of patterns and characteristics of child sex offenders. Secondly, in studies that focused on grooming primarily, there was a call for scholars to focus more on its integral role in offending (McAlinden, 2006; Craven et al. 2006), and the absence of, and need for a consistently used definition (McAlinden, 2006; Winters & Jeglic, 2016).

Bennett and O'Donohue (2014) argued that the more strategies used by an offender, the more likely it is that grooming has in fact occurred, or that it is in the process of occurring and can thus be detected and sexual abuse prevented. They offered an assessment of past definitions of grooming, concluding that two requirements, first, that there was "inappropriate behavior on the part of the adult" and "sound arguments that this inappropriate behavior functions to increase the probability of future sexual abuse" (p. 19). They focused on identifying the conceptualizations of grooming and offered a definition that they believed was encompassing, and measurable. Their definition was simply: "antecedent inappropriate behavior that functions to increase the likelihood of future sexual abuse" (p. 14). The vagueness of this definition can be seen as both beneficial and hindering. Beneficial in the sense that it has the capacity to include many, if not infinite "inappropriate" behaviors, but hindering to scholars, and educators who may need and want a more solid conceptualization of what those behaviors consist of. From a practice and policy standpoint, trying to inform law enforcement, criminal justice officials, or members of the community about what grooming looks like, the definition provided by Bennett and O'Donohue might lead to more questions rather than a well-rounded understanding of the concept.

The role grooming plays is far broader and more complex than previously thought (McAlinden, 2006; Bennett & O'Donohue, 2014). Bennett and O'Donohue (2014) argued that grooming could not be measured within constructs previously identified, particularly the conceptualizations that included stages within the process of grooming. On the contrary, I argue that a conceptualization, rather than a definition, that includes multiple stages of grooming will make studying the strategies more easily detectable and measurable; particularly, a conceptualization that includes stages will help identify possible variations in grooming strategies depending on changes in offender and victim characteristics. A definition with finite parameters, as opposed to a broad conceptualization may be more of a hindrance to a topic that includes so many different facets.

### **Grooming: A multifaceted process**

Research on child sex offending has shown that it involves multiple facets within the process. Motivation to offend, self-grooming strategies, environmental grooming strategies, and victim grooming strategies are four key areas where grooming strategies have been categorized, or identified (Leberg, 1997; Craven et al., 2006).

**Motivation.** Existing theory on the evolution of the child sex offenders indicates that an offender needs to first possess the motivation to commit an act of sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1984), and that this motivation leads to subsequent facets of grooming behavior. Urging researchers to look at motivations to abuse on a continuum to account for variations in processes that lead an offender to offend, Finkelhor and Araji (1986) stressed the importance of differentiation among subtypes of offenders (e.g., child molesters, pedophiles, hebephiles), in offending patterns, behaviors, and preferences.

Psychosocial factors have been a common thread when identifying motivation, (Simons, Wurtele, & Durham, 2008). Lee, Jackson, Pattison and Ward (2002) found that, for sex offenders, emotional abuse, family dysfunction, behavior problems, and physical and sexual abuse in childhood were common contributors to offenders' motivations to offend. Marshall and Barabee (1991) related distal factors (such as upbringing and childhood experience) with proximal factors (present day stressors and inhibitors), and argued that a child sex offender's motivation can come from a number of contributing and relating factors within and among both events that occurred in their past and their current situation. Deviant sexual development and the motivation to offend have also been linked to violent cultural upbringing and past abuse: both are situations that encourage manipulating situations to prey on vulnerable people (Bourke, Ward, & Rose 2012; Simons et al., 2008). Using a different angle, Boegaerts, Declercq, Vanheule, and Palmans (2005) examined the relationship between attachment styles and motivation to offend, finding that in childhood, both types of offenders had less secure attachment, intimacy, and friendship, and had more anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant attachment styles.

A better understanding of how offenders' psychological, social, and/or cognitive deficits influence their motivation to abuse could be a useful guiding tool for more effective treatment (Lussier, Bouchard, & Beauregard, 2011), but is difficult to study due to methodological and ethical barriers that often arise. Sampling bias has undoubtedly contributed to some inability to generalize findings because many studies include only male offenders, or non-comparative samples where it has been shown that factors influencing female child sex offenders' motivations to abuse are similar to men's, such as

presence of past abuse (verbal, physical, sexual, emotional), and that other contributing factors such as type of social status should also be taken into consideration (Adshead, Howett, & Mason 1994; Boroughs, 2004).

How offender motivation is tied to grooming patterns, and choice(s) of grooming strategies remains unclear. What has been shown in the literature that has focused on motivation is that there are commonalities that exist at the psychological, psychosocial, and sociological level within the population (Finkelhor, 1984; Finkelhor & Araji, 1986; Hall & Hirschman, 1991 and 1992; Marshall & Barabee 1990), suggesting that there would be a great deal of benefit in identifying those commonalities and examining variations within them.

**Self-Grooming.** Previous studies have introduced strategies and tactics used by child sex offenders that shape how the process of self-grooming is integral to the offending process. The literature focusing on patterns and behaviors that are consistent with self-grooming techniques, show two major themes. One theme is the concept of implicit theories, and the second is cognitive distortions.

***Implicit theories.*** Ward and Keenan (1999) introduced the concept of *implicit theories* among the child sex offending population. The authors stressed the difference of implicit theories from cognitive distortion, stating that, “cognitive distortions emerge from underlying causal theories about the nature of their victims, rather than stemming from unrelated, independent beliefs” (p. 822). Comprised of the core ideas of beliefs and desires, Ward and Keenan’s concept of implicit theories suggests that child sex offenders draw from personal experience and construct theories that are intended to help understand and control their world, as well as “make predictions about future events” (p. 823). The

implicit theory regarding the child victim is what drives the offender to justify engaging in sexual contact with them. Ward and Keenan (1999) did not present the concept of implicit theories as separate from cognitive distortions, but proposed that implicit theories preceded cognitive distortions.

Falling within a similar theme of implicit theories, a model of *expertise related competency* (ERC) held by child sex offenders was adapted by Bourke, Ward and Rose (2012) to explain how they developed beliefs and behaviors early on that contributed to both the motivation to offend and use of self-grooming methods. The ERC model sought to explain how child sex offenders have the ability to justify deviant behaviors. Similarly, Lussier, Bouchard, and Beauregard (2011) identified two strategies that aligned with the elements of ERC: (1) *event-oriented strategy*, where the offender maximized the number of offenses; and (2) a *victim-oriented strategy* where the offender maximized the number of victims. Both strategies suggested that offenders have unique characteristics that allowed them to maximize both offense opportunities, and successfully prey on vulnerable people (Lussier et al., 2011). Both studies suggested that child sex offenders may possess a unique ability to target victims, and that this ability was shaped not just by psychosocial experiences but is also developed through life experiences and lifestyles. The ERC model notes that the Lifestyle phase in their model is the main contributing factor to beliefs, attitudes, and commitments to child sexual abuse, noting that offenders' inability to cope with stress in life led to inappropriate coping strategies (Bourke et al., 2012), and thus contributes to their ability to justify or rationalize sexual contact with children.

*Cognitive distortions.* Scholars such as Blumenthal, Gudjonsson, and Burns (1999), Burn and Brown (2005), Hayashino, Wurtele, and Klebe (1995) and Murphy (1990) have focused on identifying cognitive distortions found in sex offenders that lead to offending. Cognitive distortions have been described as “attitudes and beliefs that offenders use to justify sexual contact with children” (Murphy, 1990). Scholars (Blumenthal et al., 1999, Burn & Brown 2005, Hayashino et al, 1995, & Murphy, 1990) focusing on cognitive distortions in child sex offenders have noted that they possess more cognitive distortions related to sex and children than both non-sex offenders and adult sex offenders. A child sex offender may believe that children are sexual beings, leading to the belief that it would not cause harm to engage in or pursue sexual activity with them (Ward & Beech 2006). Pollock and Hashmall (1991) also identified justifications and excuses used by child sex offenders that ranged from consent of the victim to denial of wrongdoing. The identification of cognitive distortions is a common theme in existing studies and is a key element in Craven and colleague’s (2006) identification of self-grooming. Cognitive distortions are what take the offender from the point of having the motivation to abuse (Craven et al., 2006) to committing an act of sexual abuse, and then to maintaining a sexual relationship with a child or children (Burn & Brown, 2005; Hayashino et al., 1995).

In their review of child sex offending theory and the presence of cognitive distortions, Burn and Brown (2006) noted a couple of complications and inconsistencies in existing research. First, they noted the problem of post hoc realization, meaning after the abusive incidents and in reflection of the study questions, offenders tended to shift guilt and blame for their actions onto others. Another problem they noted was a tendency

for many researchers to present the role of cognitive distortions as occurring in the same manner for all child sex offenders. They suggested investigating cognitive distortions at all points within the offense cycle.

When analyzing the distorted thinking patterns of sex offenders, Blumenthal and colleagues (1999) found cognitive distortions were more prevalent among child sex offenders compared to those sex offenders who targeted adults only. The results from a comparative study by Hayashino and colleagues (1995) showed that intra-familial and extra-familial offenders' cognitive distortions differed from rapists. In this same study, extra-familial offenders showed more cognitive distortions supportive of sexual contact with children than did intra-familial offenders. The results from these studies indicated that cognitive distortions exist but vary among the child sex offending population.

When comparing within the child sex offending population, Lang & Frenzel (1988) found that for intra-familial offenders, the process of self-grooming included cognitive distortions that misrepresented or misinterpreted children's natural curiosity; making it easier for the offender to rationalize and justify sexual contact. The identified pedophiles within their sample reported believing that their child victims enjoyed sexual activity (Lang & Frenzel, 1988), not an uncommon cognitive distortion. When comparing sexual abuse by biological fathers and non-biological fathers, Russell (1984) and Gordon (1989) both concluded that the differences in offending patterns were partly due to biological fathers having a more difficult time overcoming internal inhibitions due to having stronger bonds with their children, greater commitment to their role as a parent, and more negative attitudes about incest. It is worth noting that there has been a lack of consistency between studies that differentiate by sex offender subtype in their samples

and those that label their entire sample under the umbrella of such terms as “child molester” or “pedophile.” Some scholars, such as Lang and Frenzel (1988) state that their sample meets the DSM criteria for a diagnosable sexual disorder (e.g. pedophilia), but not all studies are explicit about this. This becomes problematic when trying to understand basic offending trends and patterns, and then further when designing and implementing treatment practices, and policy changes.

*Justifying sexual abuse.* Van Dam (2001) outlined a four-step procedure offenders use to justify the sexual abuse of a child. The four steps include: “(1) *Denial of injury*: some pedophilic organizations are proponents of healthy sex with children that creates positive benefits for the child (pg. 93); (2) *Denial of victimization*: this step introduces children as willing participants in sexual acts with adults, and in some cases shows them as being the seekers of sexual contact from adults (pg. 93); (3) *Condemnation of dissension*: in essence this step tells offenders to view opponents of sexual acts with children as the problem; that they are denying healthy, loving relationships (pg.94); and (4) *A more enlightened viewpoint*: this step focuses on liberating the child as a sexual being in a repressed and “prudish” society (pg. 94).” There are also social organizations such as NAMBLA (The North American Man/Boy Love Association) that have undoubtedly influenced sex offenders’ cognitive distortions. These types of pro “child-love” organizations are geared more towards offenders who would likely be classified as pedophiles, the use of justification is not an uncommon way for offenders to overcome their internal inhibitors to sexual abusing.

Understanding how child sex offenders justify sexual contact with a child is complicated. The broad nature of what self-grooming entails makes researching it

difficult. To date, the concepts of implicit theories, cognitive distortions, and expertise in offending have provided scholars with a solid starting point, showing that some social and psychological factors are common. What is missing is more in-depth and comparative analysis that explains why sexually abusing a child is the outcome and not another crime (not to suggest that there is not co-occurrence of crimes in offending), and further, why many people who come from similar backgrounds do not sexually abuse children. Arguably, though there are ethical and methodological barriers that need to be taken into consideration, deeper research into each of these areas could highly influence policy and treatment. In fact scholars (Fortune, Bourke, and Ward 2015) who have focused on these concepts have concluded that the benefits to treatment approaches would be many.

Motivations and processes of self-grooming have been other key areas of exploration. Motivation and self-grooming are other ways that show how far-reaching grooming is, but are less likely to be equated with or categorized as methods, strategies, or tools used to groom children or their environments for the purpose of sexual abuse. This is likely because there has been a strong focus on unveiling the etiology of child sex offending and wanting to know how and what leads a person to commit a sexual act against a child. The focus on motivation and self-grooming keeps researchers focused on the internal processes of the offender, pointing to the need to focus instead on a commonality that exists within the child sex offending population reaching beyond the offender.

## **Grooming: Broadening the Scope**

Alongside motivation and self-grooming concepts, are the areas of environmental and victim grooming. Perhaps the more commonly recognized methods of grooming, the focus on these two areas steer away from both etiology and differentiation as they relate to grooming. This dissertation employed concepts derived from other frameworks that focused on how grooming has been shown to have some commonality and consistency in its construction. Concepts of grooming were also examined to show how understanding grooming can be used better identify the role it has in the child sex offending process, in an effort to measure key differences in strategies used. In the following section, grooming, as it has been presented in the past to include aspects of the environment as well as the victim (Leberg, 1997; Craven et al., 2006) are explored, ending with the amalgamated concept of grooming that was used to guide the data collection and interpretation for this study (found in Chapter 1, and Appendix 2).

### **Environmental grooming**

Craven and colleagues (2006) described *environmental grooming* as manipulating the community, family, and friends that their victim(s) is involved with in an effort to show that they are trustworthy and safe around children, and not always occurring on a conscious level. Interweaving the idea of expertise related competency, the offender may possess the skill set to manipulate the circumstances without putting a great deal of forethought into their strategy, and they may have detailed plans to groom that they may not even recognize (Bourke et al., 2012; Terry, 2013). For example, an offender may be adept at choosing organizations or institutions that primarily involve contact with children, and have the personality traits to deceive those in higher power without

intentionally planning to do so. Conversely, some offenders may use cognitive resources to strategize their offense tactics very carefully, resulting in longer periods of time before the abuse was detected (Bourke et al. 2012). Environmental grooming in the existing literature has included both of these strategies. Common themes that have emerged are the abuse of power, the physical manipulation of an environment to remain in control, which can include waiting for changes in the environment to be more conducive to abuse, and the intentional solicitation of a parent or caregiver(s) to children (van Dam, 2001; Craven et al., 2006).

**Manipulating the environment of targeted victims.** It was shown that many different scenarios took place during the process of environmental grooming. These scenarios ranged from befriending a child and then manipulating their parents and caregivers (Craven et al., 2006), to pursuing a relationship with someone to gain access to the targeted child (Russell, 1984), to differences in the how the child was taken, when the child was taken, and where the child was taken in order for the offender to feel comfortable committing the act of abuse (Beauregard, Proulx, & Rossmo, 2005; Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989). Leclerc, Wortley, and Smallbone (2010) found that moving locations, or using multiple locations during the process of offending increased the use of grooming tactics. Some examples of those tactics were the use of isolation and violence, resulting in prolonged sexual abuse. Other variations in scenarios included how offenders' processes were or were not tactically planned out (Bourke et al. 2012).

In a qualitative study intended to influence preventative education for children, Conte and colleagues (1989) found that offenders tried to get children to live with them, and then gradually exposed them to more and more sexually explicit material and

circumstances. The environmental grooming tactic would be identified as the act of the offender inviting, or getting the child to come live with them, whereas the exposure to sexually explicit material or circumstances would fall under the category of victim grooming, which is discussed in the following subsection. Other methods of recruitment, and victim-targeting included offers to babysit, suggested sleepovers, and soliciting places like malls and arcades where children would be, using other child victims to recruit new victims, being welcomed by parents or caregivers in the child's home, or waiting for children to first approach them (Lang & Frenzel, 1988; Elliott et al., 1995). Conte and colleagues further noted, similar to the concept of ERC (Bourke et al., 2012), that the offenders in their sample claimed to have a special skill set for identifying vulnerable children.

Van Dam (2001) explored multiple types of child sex offenders' personal accounts of environmental grooming. A "self-described clean-cut" child sex offender reported that grooming of the parents in the community included presenting himself as "charming, intelligent, and a good role model." A "self-described blue-collar offender reported that it was important that he come off as a nice-guy that nobody would suspect would harm a child" (van Dam, 2001; pg. 96-97). Making the family, friends, and community of the targeted victims feel comfortable and safe was a major goal for child sex offenders when it came to grooming the environment (Elliot et al. 1995). Child sex offenders tended to detect and target opportunities to be near children and vulnerable families. Leberg (1997) noted that some offenders who were involved in youth groups, or other community organizations that worked with children frequently offered to supervise the children's events that other parents and adults might not want to volunteer for.

Manipulating the physical location also seemed to affect the strategies used by offenders. It was found that offenders sought places that they deemed safe, and that the less distance traveled, the lower the amount of violence and force used (Beauregard et al., 2005). Lang and Frenzel (1988) found that intra-familial offenders and pedophiles, with 100% of the incestuous offenses taking place within the offender's home versus 54% for pedophilic offenders. While this is only one example of one study, Lang & Frenzel's results are not surprising. Intuitively, it makes sense that intra-familial offenders' offenses took place 100% in their own home. More surprising was the outcome that pedophilic offenders' offenses occurred in their home more than half of the time. It would have been interesting and important to know whether these pedophiles were unknown to their victims prior to the offense, or known (but unrelated) to their victims, and in what capacity. In their study, Elliott and colleagues (1995) received similar results when inquiring about location of offense, with most occurring in the offender's home or the child's home, with other locations including the offender's car, outside, or even in the home of the offender's friend. For intra-familial offenders who were stepparents or caregivers, the process of environmental grooming included targeting significant others who have children in order to gain access to potential victims. In retrospective studies, some women felt that their stepfather married their biological mother with the sole intent to sexually abuse them (Russell, 1984). Margolin (1992) investigated sexual abuse by grandparents and found that in their sample, the majority of victims were abused while in the custody of their grandparents while their parents were absent. These incidents of abuse occurred in situations where the child was either temporarily in the grandparent's

care, sleeping over at their home, but also included some incidents where the child's parents were present or in the home.

Environmental grooming for the intra-familial offender has also included isolating the victim from the non-abusing parent, or isolating the non-abusing parent from other people to limit opportunities for disclosure, and to undermine the parenting skills of the non-abusing parent in front of others, making the offending parent appear more competent (Craven et al., 2006; Leberg, 1997). Intra-familial offenders were found to denote the non-abusing parent as the more authoritative parent, making disclosure to the non-abusing parent scarier, and instill a fear of losing the "special relationship" with the parent who was sexually abusive (Lang & Frenzel, 1988). Other methods used by offenders to gain access to the child, or cover up abuse, included controlling their partner's behavior through tactics of control and threats, or manipulating their partner into being involved in activities that required them to be outside of the home more (Leberg, 1997).

**Abusing position of authority.** In other instances, child sex offenders have exploited their position of authority, purposely seeking employment, or volunteering where they would have access to children (Colton, Roberts & Vanstone, 2010). Keeping in mind that parents and caregivers are most certainly viewed to be in positions of authority over their children, the difference is in how this type of grooming tactic is presented. In this scenario, the offender intentionally engaged him or herself in opportunities that put them in a position of authority over a child, as opposed to parents or caregivers who are already, by nature, authoritative figures. In Miller's (2013) review of child sex offender typologies, he noted that child sex offenders have been known to

seek employment that put them directly into contact with children. Miller (2013) observed that caretakers who abused children were oftentimes a child's primary babysitter, but that offenders were also found to be friends or acquaintances of the babysitter.

One example of abusing positions of authority that has been gaining more attention over the years is teacher sexual misconduct. Knoll (2010) investigated sexual misconduct among female child sex offenders finding that offenders targeted victims whom they felt they could control. Knoll (2010) provided a table of grooming tactics accumulated from a couple scholarly sources (Shakeshaft, 2004; Sutton, 2004), the only tactic related to environmental grooming was befriending parents and making visits to their home. To date there is not much known about the process these types of offenders use to choose their school, and to manipulate their colleagues, victim's parent(s), or other administrators, but as knowledge of teacher sexual misconduct increases environmental grooming in this capacity could prove beneficial for administrators. Morganbesser's (2010) editorial of four studies shed light on some of the gaps that existed in teacher sexual misconduct by examining the issue from various perspectives (practice/clinical perspective, victimology/trauma perspective, criminological perspective, and psychological perspective), calling for further studies that utilized different criminological and psychological lenses. In an ethnographic study, Williams (2008) highlighted a case involving an offender who successfully groomed some members of a community while other members actively knew about his past history of sexual abuse. That an entire community can be manipulated to ignore, or condone child sexual abuse, Williams' study indicated that there is a depth of knowledge to environmental grooming

that has yet to be uncovered. Colton and colleagues (2010) emphasized the tactful calculation and skillful effort that some offenders took to ensure trust was given to them in their positions, and highlighted the shock and disbelief felt by co-workers or others within organizations when allegations of sexual abuse surfaced.

**Institutional sexual abuse.** Institutional sexual abuse and environmental grooming extends beyond places like the classroom or coaching positions to include faith organizations, or sports organizations. Institutional abuse certainly embodies some of the same ideologies that are also present in those offenses that involve an abuse of power, but the literature shows that they differ in the breadth of how many primary and secondary victims are involved. The problem of sexual abuse in the clergy has become more prevalent over the past couple decades, particularly within the Catholic Church. Many of the psychological characteristics that were found to exist in clergy abusers existed within the larger child sex offending population as well (Miller, 2013), which does not denote a major difference in sex offender typology, but rather the route used to pursue victims. Because the problem of child sexual abuse within faith organizations has persisted for so long, with parishioners and officials ignoring the problem or covering it up in the past, it can only be assumed that some degree of environmental grooming occurred. Staller (2012) reviewed three separate cases of institutional sexual abuse, concluding that codes of silence along with powers that are higher-up the chain in institutions, as well as legal documents such as non-disclosure agreements are all things that impeded the process of fully examining institutional sexual abuse, understanding the grooming patterns of those offenders, and pursuing justice.

Environmental grooming includes a lot of unknown and unidentified territory, with indications that environmental grooming encompasses many arenas. These arenas have been identified to include manipulation of the environment of the child (e.g., frequenting a public space and waiting for the opportunity to make contact with a potential victim), manipulation and coercion of the caregivers of targeted children, intentional abuse of power in the workplace, or intentional misuse of position of authority, and similarly (but on a larger scale) institutionally.

When addressing this type of grooming, scholars have tended to focus on each area separately. Perhaps due to how expansive an area environmental grooming covers, some key variables are missing that might account for variations in environmental grooming strategies. These included variables that encompassed basic offender and victim demographic data such as race, ages of victims, ages of adult offenders, and whether or not there are differences in environmental grooming strategies depending on the gap of ages in the victims. Also missing are any known variations that occur between adult male-to-child female offenses, adult-female-to-child female offenses, adult male-to-child male offenses, and adult female-to-child male offenses. Further there is not a deep understanding of the impact that relationship status and how or whether or not the victim and offender knew each other on environmental grooming. Another important area that needs further explanation is how the type of environmental grooming affects the characteristics present in the actual act of sexual abuse. Do certain environmental grooming strategies lead to certain types of sexual assault (e.g. the presence or absence of penetration)? Lastly, because environmental grooming affects so much more than the child victim, it would be helpful to have a basic understanding of whether or not there are

variations in the strategies used by child sex offenders. It is unknown whether offenders of certain races/ethnicities, ages, groom the environment differently depending on demographic attributes of the victim. It is also largely unknown whether or not there are relationships between the type of environmental grooming strategy used and the presence and types of sexual crimes that occurred. Starting with these types of basic information about environmental grooming strategy variations would hopefully pave a clearer path forward in how to study, explain, detect, and teach potential victims of environmental grooming.

### **Victim grooming**

A more traditional view of grooming suggests that the grooming process is most often initiated through non-sexual contact that gradually becomes more sexual as the victims' inhibitions become lowered and trust continues to grow (Brown, 2001; Berson, 2003). Oftentimes grooming remained undetected by caregivers and others who are close to the targeted child because the process is gradual (Berson, 2003). With grooming, there is always a physical and a psychological component aimed at desensitizing the targeted child (Leberg, 1997). Physical components have included: frequent touching, 'accidental' contact with genitals or other private areas, 'accidentally' walking in on a child bathing, dressing, or using the bathroom, or walking around nude in front of the child (Craven et al., 2006; Lang & Frenzel, 1988). The psychological pieces have included: exposing the child to pornographic images, telling obscene and sexually explicit jokes, leaving pornography lying around, exposing the child to violence, and even treating the child like a peer or an adult (Craven et al., 2006).

**Physical components.** There are skill sets that child sex offenders possess that have helped researchers pinpoint common characteristics in child victims that may correlate to a higher risk of sexual victimization. Victim risk factors have included: lack of parental involvement; low self-esteem; social and physical isolation; child feeling unloved and unwanted; and past victimization (Craven et al., 2006; Conte et al., 1989; Elliott et al.; 1995; Finkelhor, 1984; Knoll, 2010). Having an understanding of victimology is pertinent to addressing patterns and tactics of grooming that lead to the physical components of sexual abuse. When probed about tactics used to engage or maintain sexual contact with their victims, offenders reported using a variety of methods including buying gifts, spending time with the victim, engaging in hugging and kissing, and playing (Conte et al., 1989). Researchers have noted that threats of violence have also been used to maintain the secrecy of the sexual relationship (Knoll, 2010; Lang & Frenzel, 1988).

Elliott and colleagues (1995) interviewed 91 convicted child sex offenders about their strategies. Their sample included offenders who were known to, related-to, and strangers to victims. Many studies do not specify whether and how the offender and victim know each other, and do not always distinguish between offenders who were related versus those who were not related to the child victim. Relating to physical grooming tactics, they found that many offenders gained gradual access to the victim by teaching them a sport or musical instrument, and similar to other studies, offenders gave bribes, and used physical affection. Physical force was also used about 19% of the time, and 8% of the offenders murdered their victim or attempted to murder their victim. When

asked about strategy, 84% reported that they used a consistent strategy that seemed to work for them.

**Psychological components.** Pertaining to the psychological aspect of grooming, Lang and Frenzel (1988) investigated the grooming patterns of intra-familial and extra-familial child sex offenders and found common patterns of intentional misuse of morals, boundaries, and standards. To maintain sexual contact, the offender might take advantage of children's natural sexual curiosity and exploit that by explaining the behavior as "normal", or telling the child that "everyone does it", or by making the sexual relationship a "special secret" (Lang & Frenzel, 1988). Similarly, offenders have been known to manipulate their victims by telling them things like "If you love me you will do this," or by telling sexually explicit jokes, and even making their voices sound "sexy" or provocative (Conte et al., 1989).

Other means of psychological grooming included the use of threats that range from telling the child her friends or family won't like them to telling them that they (the offender) will get in trouble or even go to jail. Offenders even threatened that the victim's parents would be mad, and that their parents might even kill the offender, planting fear of violence from their parent or caregiver (Conte et al., 1989; Elliott et al. 1995).

**Group differences.** One common group comparison, in existing work that includes but is not specific solely to grooming, is the difference in offending patterns between intra-familial offenders and extra-familial offenders. Lang and Frenzel's (1988) work helps support the notion that in order to have a deeper understanding of the problem of sex offending and sex abuse the specific characteristics of offender subtypes must be examined. The authors observed that grooming strategies used were found to be specific

to the offender, and varying degrees of physical force, and verbal persuasion were used/needed to coerce victims. The authors also noted that techniques ranged in severity, with offenders using tactics that included more “loving” strategies, while others used physical force and violence to gain compliance.

**Internet grooming.** Technology and the Internet have given offenders the opportunity to access victims from the comfort of their home. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachrits, Beech, and Collings (2013), “The internet provides a platform for individuals with a sexual interest in young people, to explore this in ways that were not possible 20 years ago (p.64).” The authors also describe the processes of online grooming to be similar to that of traditional grooming but identify the factor of anonymity leading to disinhibition as a key difference. Williams, Elliott, and Beech (2013) identified themes that online sex offenders use within one hour of initiating contact with child. The first theme included building a rapport through methods of being friendly and using mutual interests to engage. The second theme was sexual content, which involves a gradual introduction of a sexually based discussion that escalates into a more explicit sexual conversation. The last theme is assessment whereby the offender continually assesses for levels of comfort and trust with the child (Williams et al. 2013). Williams and colleagues (2013) have provided examples of how widespread child sexual offenders can reach, how the process of grooming has evolved from the traditional thought that only the victim is groomed, and how the role of anonymity in computer-based grooming has impacted the safety of children.

A Swedish study of online sexual grooming indicated that past research led scholars to believe that the process of online sexual grooming can serve a couple of

purposes, first, to either engage the child in offline/in-person sexual contact, or second, as a means of some type of instant sexual gratification (Shannon, 2008). Shannon (2008) examined police reports of suspected internet sexual grooming and categorized the offenses into four types: (1) Perpetrator and victim were only in contact online, (2) Perpetrator and victim were in contact on and offline without indication of a physical sexual encounter, (3) Perpetrator knew victim before online contact and used online contact to continue to pursue the victim, and (4) Perpetrator and victim made contact online and subsequent in-person, physical sexual assault occurred (p.166). Results from this study indicated that grooming techniques are variable. Many of the grooming tactics presented represent what would likely constitute aspects of psychological grooming. One important distinction this study highlights is the difference between offenders who more tactically plan out their courses of action to commit a sexual offense versus those who used the internet to commit a sexual assault that garnered them instant gratification (e.g. using a webcam for purposes of exposure). Although not specific to grooming strategies, in their review of online offenders, Kloess, Beech, and Harkins (2014) distinguished between these two types of offenders as (1) fantasy driven, and (2) contact driven (Briggs, Simon, & Simonsen, 2011). This differentiation, in subsequent research could lead to the possible identification of differences in grooming tactics used depending on the type of offender.

Online grooming seems to have at least one important commonality with in-person grooming in that offenders use many different approaches that include both psychological and (possibly) eventual physical grooming tactics. One downfall of the current studies on Internet grooming patterns is that there is not sufficient knowledge

regarding how many sexually-based grooming exchanges result in physical sexual assaults. Because cyber-crimes are not always classified separately from other sexual offenses, obtaining enough information on grooming patterns of on and offline offenses to do a deeper comparison could be difficult. As more is learned about cyber-based sexual offending, and more attention is given to it by both law enforcement and academia, it is possible that this type of comparison study could be done in the future.

One documented concern about the increase in attention given to online sexual grooming is that it will perpetuate the stereotype that sexual abuse is committed primarily by strangers, and divert attention away from studying all the aspects of grooming (McAlinden, 2006). In their examination of online, familial, and localized grooming, Williams and Hudson (2013) acknowledged that the current emphasis on media coverage related to internet grooming further heightened the public's fear of stranger assaults, coupled with the perception that familial sexual abuse and grooming were less likely to take place.

Approaches to studying victim grooming have been somewhat varied, but similar to the issues that have emerged related to studying grooming on the whole, there are inconsistencies and some key variables that remain unexamined. It is evident that regardless of the study situation, victim grooming includes both psychological and physical components. This finding has not varied between subtypes of child sex offenders. What remains unknown again is whether or not victim grooming strategies vary based on basic demographics of offenders and victims. Research has indicated that there are some demographic similarities among the child sex offending population, yet the research that exists on grooming and sex offender patterns and characteristics has not fully addressed

this. There is seemingly only a small amount of evidence supporting the notion that grooming strategies are offender and victim specific (Lang & Frenzel, 1988). A deeper understanding of how victim grooming strategies vary based on basic offender and victim demographics, and of how victim grooming strategies vary based on offense characteristics (e.g., penetration, fondling, known versus unknown offenders) would prove useful for treatment, prevention, practice, and policy efforts.

### **Summary of Gaps in the Literature**

Based on the literature gaps identified above, there is a clear pattern of missing information regarding variations in grooming strategies and basic offender and victim demographic information, the relationship between the offender and the victim, the type of offense that occurred, and the other characteristics related to the offender's history of offending. I argue that until there is a more consistent use of subtype terminology (i.e. pedophile, fixated/regressed, rapist, child molester) across both the psychological and criminological community, that broader terms, such as child sex offender, or sexual offenders against children, should be used when describing the child sex offending population. Second, focusing on the heterogeneity of the child sex offending population has seemingly led to scholars focusing on the etiology and evolution of child sexual offending and offenders, instead of how demographic differences and variations may affect patterns of child sexual offending. Third, as concern regarding internet grooming has gained momentum both in empirical research and among law enforcement, it has been suggested that the study of grooming tactics should focus more on offenses where the victim and offender are known to one another (McAlinden, 2006; Williams & Hudson, 2013), and comparisons between offenders who are known versus unknown to victims

are imperative to learn more about how grooming tactics, and characteristics can differ. This makes sense with respect to the lack of information on grooming tactics of strangers, but it has also been shown that stranger assaults do occur and that there is still very little known about how the grooming tactics of offenders who target stranger children vary from those who target non-stranger children. So as not to perpetuate myth and fear of the prevalence (or lack thereof) of stranger child sexual abuse, more comparative research between known and unknown offenders needs to take place. Lastly, there is a clear lack in consistency with how grooming is defined, with some definitions being too broad, and others being exclusive of how far reaching grooming strategies go. Employing a conceptualization of grooming that encompasses all of those potential victims, both primary (the child) and secondary (e.g., parent, teacher, coach, caregiver) will provide a deeper sense of understanding of the manipulation that can occur and to whom it effects.

### **Theoretical Lens and Conceptual Framework**

#### **Theoretical Lens**

The theoretical lens that has contributed to the framework of this study is Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition Model of Sexual Abuse. Amalgamated with Craven, Brown, and Gilchrest's (2006) and Leberg's (1997) concepts of self, environment and victim grooming, the Precondition Model has been adapted alongside the above concepts to show how the process of grooming is more prevalent in child sexual abuse than past research has presented in detail. This section begins with an overview of the Precondition Model, and an explanation of its original intent and then introduces how Craven and colleagues, and Leberg have reconstructed the concept of grooming to be more expansive and inclusive. Lastly, how this expanded conceptual understanding of grooming can be

adapted to parallel aspects of the Precondition Model and how it can be used to understand how grooming is present in and how it varies within the child sex offending population is presented.

### **Precondition model**

The Precondition Model of sexual abuse was the first theoretical model created to explain the etiology of child sex offending. Finkelhor (1984) established a temporal process of Preconditions that a child sex offender must go through in order to effectively commit a sexual crime against a child: (1) motivation to abuse; (2) overcoming internal inhibitors; (3) overcoming external inhibitors; and (4) overcoming the child's resistance. In accordance with this framework, these Preconditions must be met and fulfilled in order. What this model tries to account for, which many of its succeeding theories do not, is why a person may have a motivation or inclination to sexually abuse but does not (for various reasons) go on to commit an actual act of sexual abuse against a child. The first Precondition, *Motivation to Abuse*, seeks to explain why an adult becomes motivated or interested in sexual contact with a child. Three components make up this Precondition, but they do not all have to be met to satisfy it (Finkelhor, 1984). The first component is emotional congruence: where sexual relations with a child "satisfy an emotional need" (p.54). The second component is sexual arousal: where the child becomes an "object of sexual gratification for the adult" (p.54). The third component is blockage and refers to situations where "other means of sexual gratification are not available" (p. 54). Past theoretical models have linked identifying the motivation to abuse as a key element in the process of understanding child sex offending (Marshall and Barabee, 1991; 1992).

The second Precondition, *overcoming Internal Inhibitors*, explains the internal process that someone must go through to justify or rationalize sexual contact with a child. Work focusing on the cognitive distortions of child sex offenders offers clearer insight into how an offender gets to the point of internally justifying sex with a child. Findings specific to cognitive distortions, as well as implicit theories, can be used to buttress the original idea of this Precondition, as cognitive distortions serve as justifications to offenders (i.e. the child was seducing me). The second Precondition can include any tactic either physical or psychological that an offender uses to justify pursuing sexual contact with a child. While this Precondition might seem broad, the framework is intended to be broad so that it has the room to include many different tactics.

The third Precondition, *Overcoming External Inhibitors*, explains how an offender needs to manipulate the external environment around a targeted child or children, in order to gain access (e.g. needing to connect with a parent, or manipulating people in charge of organizations that help children, in order to gain access to children). External inhibitors include multiple factors such as parents and caregivers, physical proximity of the victim to the offender, and any number of elements in the physical environment of the child. Again, the framework of the third Precondition is broad and somewhat vague, but I argue that this is necessary when taking into account the multiple factors that make up a child's environment, and the various avenues an offender may need to pursue to seem trustworthy in order to gain access.

Finkelhor's (1984) fourth Precondition, *Overcoming the Child's Resistance to sexual contact*, aligns with the more traditional understanding of grooming, an adult offender manipulating a child into sexual contact (i.e. using bribes, threats, force,

chemical agents or other tactics to gain compliance). Within this Precondition, offenders look for different characteristics in children's behavior and different opportunities to engage a child in sexual contact. The fourth Precondition introduces a preventative component that can be taken by the potential victim such as physically fighting, screaming, or running away (Finkelhor, 1984). Again, while vague in its framework, there needs to be enough leeway to account for all of the possible methods of victim grooming that can occur.

Finkelhor (1984) pioneered the Precondition Model of Sexual Abuse as a framework for understanding the processes of a child sex offender, and this theoretical framework has been a starting point and springboard for other theoretical models and frameworks. In the past, scholars such as Ward & Hudson (2001) touted Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition model of child sexual abuse as the first model of its kind, but the model has also been criticized for not being a completely multifunctional and explanatory model for understanding child sex offending. Beech and Ward (2004) claim that it lacks clarity, is contradictory, and is difficult to test, specifically because the three components within the first Precondition, (emotional congruence, sexual arousal, and blockage) are not necessarily as exclusive as the theory suggests, meaning that they believe there may be overlap among the three components of the first Preconditions. Another criticism of the Precondition model is that the 'blockage' component is contradictory when applied to offenders who have maintained long-standing relationships with significant others (Burn & Brown, 2006; Ward & Hudson, 2001). Ward and Hudson (2001) also note that the Precondition model represents more of a framework to develop new theories rather than a sound theoretical model in and of itself. It is further argued that the Precondition model

does not demonstrate why psychological and social factors result in sex offending and not another type of behavior (Ward & Hudson, 2001).

Despite these criticisms, I advocate that this model's framework can be applied instead, to grooming, a commonality relevant and present in many cases of child sexual abuse and child sexual offending. The concept of grooming has been expanded in the following subsection briefly introduces self-grooming, but focuses on the aspects of the environment, and the victim. The section then follows Finkelhor's third and fourth Preconditions showing how they can be paralleled to reflect these ideologies.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Leberg (1997) and Craven and colleagues (2006) established similar explanations of the grooming process, concerting that it consists of the three elements: self, environment, and victim. Self-grooming is a concept that explains the internal process an offender goes through that contributes to the motivation and intent of sexually assaulting a child (Craven et al. 2006; van Dam 2001). These include justifications, denial, and the development of other cognitive distortions. Ward and Keenan (1999) describe the development of implicit theories that sex offenders develop that aid in the justification that sexual contact with a child is okay. An example of an implicit theory might be the belief that a child's action (e.g. hugging, or hand-holding) implies sexual interest or consent for physical sexuality. There is a large body of research on child sex offender etiology and evolution and I perceive self-grooming to be more pertinent to understanding child sex offenders, as opposed to how child sex offenders use different grooming strategies and why. So, although the components of self-grooming do parallel

aspects of the second Precondition, it is not as useful a tool for understanding differences in offenders' grooming strategies.

Leberg's (1997) comprehensive text detailed patterns and characteristics in child sex offenders. Specific to addressing the role of grooming, Leberg outlines three categories that grooming tactics fall into: (1) "Physically grooming the child;" (2) "Psychologically grooming the victim and her family" and (3) "Grooming of the social environment or the community" (pg. 26). Leberg described physical grooming to include normal contact between a child and an adult that gradually became more and more sexual (this can include actions such as tickling, wrestling, or hugs). Psychological grooming was described to include types of verbal cues that distracted children from realizing that abuse was taking place. Psychological grooming included making comments that suggested that the abuse was normal.

Craven and colleagues (2006) noted that many past studies included grooming, but that the act and process of grooming included a broader spectrum of behaviors than were previously identified or addressed. Similar to Leberg (1997), they introduced and categorized grooming into three common approaches taken by child sex offenders: self, environment, and victim. Craven and colleagues' concept introduced grooming of the self, and amalgamated both the physical and psychological components of victim grooming, as introduced by Leberg (1997). Grooming of the self included how an offender justified sexual activity with a child.

Grooming of the environment and significant others was described to include acts that immersed the offender into the environment of the victim, and into the lives of the significant others who are involved with the victim. Grooming of the environment

included identifying and targeting vulnerable children, approaching the parents and caregivers of vulnerable children, and integrating self into the lives of victims they were targeting (Leberg, 1997; van Dam, 2001; Conte et al., 1989). An example of environmental grooming may be a man who targets a single mother with the sole purpose of getting close enough to her child to gain access to his victim (Leberg, 1997; Craven et al., 2006). Environmental grooming also included aspects of manipulating entire communities (Leberg, 1997) so that when the abuser is caught, the community may side with or find empathy for the abuser; discounting the experiences of the victim(s). Grooming the environment takes a great deal of planning and manipulation and can often lead to offenders playing the role of the victim in the media, as well as with the community and authorities (Leberg, 1997). An example of community-based environmental grooming could include a once respected politician, a beloved coach, teacher, youth leader, or member of religious counsel who is accused of a sexual crime against a child. They may have been grooming the community for years to gain access to multiple victims, and to establish themselves as wholesome, giving, benevolent, selfless, and trustworthy members of the community. More broadly, Leberg (1997) also conceptualized environmental grooming to include any act intended gain access to children by breaking down barriers that were hindrances.

Described as the “most common form of sexual grooming” (Craven et al., 2006, p. 294), victim grooming is the process of grooming the child. Craven and colleagues identified the process of victim grooming to include both a physical and a psychological component. Whereas Leberg (1997) separated the physical and psychological components into two separate types of grooming, Craven and colleagues (2006)

categorized both as acts of victim grooming. The actions involved in victim grooming included similarly defined actions such as: bribery, threats, intimidation, and vocal justifications among many others. More generally, Leberg (1997) viewed it as a process used by child sex offenders involving the use of various tactics intended to lower a child's inhibitions in order to engage them in sexual contact (Craven et al., 2006).

Overall, one of the most important contributions of these concepts is that they have highlighted how grooming involves more than just acts against the child, and involves more than just acts of physical touch. It is imperative to understand these things to fully understand how pervasive grooming is, and how manipulative and tactical child sexual offenders are.

### **Paralleling aspects of the precondition model with the conceptual framework of grooming**

Unlike the framework of Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition model, Craven and colleagues (1996) and Leberg (1997) did not make assumptions regarding a temporal nature regarding the process of grooming within child sex offending; similar to Finkelhor, they did suggest that all offenders utilized each tactic of grooming in their offense processes.

The third Precondition, overcoming external inhibitors is intended to explain how child sex offenders address the environmental factors that interfere with offending once they have overcome their internal inhibitions. The concept of environmental grooming puts this Precondition in more actionable description by identifying tactics used by offenders to manipulate their environment and the environment of the targeted child or children.

Overcoming the child's resistance is the fourth and final Precondition in Finkelhor's model. This Precondition explains the point in time where an offender must use various tactics to engage the child in sexual contact. Victim grooming offers definitive actions that child sex offenders use to groom their victim(s).

The following subsection introduces a way to apply aspects of the Precondition model, along with aspects of these expanded ideologies of grooming to explore the role that grooming plays in child sex offending.

### **Further Exploring the Role of Grooming**

This study incorporated Finkelhor's (1984) third and fourth Preconditions, in conjunction with Craven and colleague's (2006) elements of environment and victim grooming, and Leberg's (1997) explanations of the physical, social, and psychological aspects and shows how they can be intertwined to present a unique perspective for understanding grooming behaviors; while simultaneously broadening the conceptualization of grooming that guides this study. Craven and colleagues (2006), and Leberg (1997) had already begun to take the notion of grooming further. A lot of the existing research detailed elements that could fit into the parameters of self, environment, and victim grooming, but the lack of formal definitions made these generalizations unclear. Using these components to broaden the concepts of grooming may help shed light on areas that are unclear regarding characteristics, patterns and trends.

**Expanding the concept of grooming.** The Precondition Model's third and fourth Preconditions served as a tool for incorporating what Leberg (1997) and Craven and Colleagues (2006) have identified as environmental and victim grooming. The Precondition Model provides a temporal understanding that environmental grooming

occurs before victim grooming, but that after that temporal process is fulfilled, they occur continuously. The Precondition Model also provides a guide to the different tactics that those types of grooming incorporate. Craven and colleagues, and Leberg (1997) provide another way to view environmental and victim grooming, and how they are present in real-life situations. This unification of concepts forms the conceptualization of grooming that framed both the identification and analysis of grooming in this study, as defined in Chapter 1, and also found in Appendix 2.

### **Focusing on Grooming as a Commonality and the Variations that Exist within this Commonality**

Scholars have shown that grooming, on a myriad of levels, is an important component in the child sex offending process. There are many arenas of thought to what constitutes grooming and how grooming should be defined, but most scholars have either explicitly or implicitly identified the process to start with motivation and consist of three components: self, environment, and victim.

One problem with studying self-grooming processes has been the complicated and still underdeveloped theories and ideologies that make up the process. There are also ethical and methodological issues that pose as barriers to gathering information that is specific to self-grooming. Moreover, I see self-grooming as being more related to studying the etiology of child sex offending, as opposed to focusing on a single component in child sex offending.

Environmental and victim grooming embody more traditional ideologies of grooming and have thus been studied in multiple facets for decades. As the notion of heterogeneity has taken hold, possibly in an effort to communicate that nobody should be

disregarded as a possible predator when accusations are made, basic offender and victim characteristics, and offense characteristics, as they are associated with grooming have tended to be overlooked. Disconnects in psychological and criminological labeling have made studying differentiation of subtypes of child offenders difficult, but many of the aforementioned studies have pointed to the fact that there are commonalities; grooming being a major one.

Concerning the chosen theoretical framework, while the Precondition Model has been shown to be broad and difficult to apply to studies examining the etiology of offending, it has helped identify and shape the commonality of grooming in child sex offending. The broadness of the Precondition Model's framework, when applying it to one component of child sex offending, is arguably one of its strengths.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

This study utilized the third and fourth Preconditions in conjunction with the concepts of Victim, and Environmental grooming (Leberg, 1997; Craven et al. 2006), as a framework to identify and address variations in grooming patterns among registered child sex offenders. Importantly, variations in basic offender and victim demographic characteristics, relationship attributes and available offense characteristic information were examined.

### **Research questions and hypotheses**

RQ1: To what extent do environmental and victim grooming strategies vary based on offender characteristics?

H1: Grooming strategies will be more positively associated with White male offenders than with non-White offenders.

RQ2: To what extent do environmental and victim grooming strategies vary based on victim characteristics?

H2: Differences will be observed, with grooming strategies more likely to be associated in cases where the victim is female, and when the victim is older. More force or aggressive strategies will be used when the victim's developmental age is older, and when the victim and the offender are same-sex.

RQ3: Is there an association between offender-to-victim relationship status and grooming strategies used?

H3: Differences will be observed, with grooming strategies more strongly associated in cases where the offender versus unknown knows the victim. More aggressive grooming strategies will be observed in cases where the victim is unknown to the offender.

RQ4: What is the relationship between reported offense characteristics and environmental and victim grooming strategies?

H4: Relationships will be observed between offense descriptors and grooming strategies, with environmental and victim grooming strategies that can be perceived as more aggressive having stronger relationships with offense descriptors that can be perceived as more invasive.

RQ5: Is there a relationship between environmental grooming strategies and victim grooming strategies?

H5: Relationships will be observed, with environmental grooming strategies that can be perceived as more aggressive having positive relationships with victim grooming strategies that can be perceived as more aggressive. Total environmental and total victim grooming strategies will be positively correlated with one another.

RQ6: Is there an association between offender characteristics, victim characteristics, relationship status, and total number of grooming strategies used (Part I: total environmental, and total victim; Part II: sum of all grooming strategies)?

H6: Differences will be observed as the total number of grooming strategies fluctuates. For higher numbers of grooming strategies, there will be stronger relationships with older victims, victims who are unknown, cases that include same-sex victims, and when there is a larger age gap between youngest and oldest victim.

## **Data Source**

### **Data source background**

**Legislative initiative.** On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1989 in St. Joseph, MN 11 year-old Jacob Wetterling, his brother and a friend, were stopped by a masked gunman and forced to dismount from their bikes. Jacob's brother Trevor, and their friend were forced by the gunman to run into the woods. Jacob was abducted by the gunman (Jacob Wetterling Resource Center, accessed June 2017). Jacob's story turned up many leads, including the most likely lead, which turned out to be a convicted sex offender near Jacob's home. By 1990 Jacob's parents, Jerry and Patty Wetterling had established a foundation in Jacob's name and began to work on legislation that would help protect all children. By 1994, the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act, was passed (The Wetterling Act). One of the major impetuses behind the registration act was that the Wetterlings believed that if law enforcement had known where child predators were located it would have given them a better starting point to look for Jacob (Logan, 2009). In 2016, almost 27 years after his abduction, a registered sex offender, Denny Heinrich confessed the abduction, sexual assault and murder of Jacob Wetterling.

The Wetterling Act was part of a larger Omnibus Crime Bill in 1994. The Wetterling Act, Title XVII, subtitle A, federally mandated that states establish registries

for those who have offended against children, or have committed a sexually violent crime. This piece of legislation forced offenders to register their names and addresses to local law enforcement agencies prior to their release from prison (One Hundred Third Congress of the United States of America. Title XVII, sub. A, sec. 170101).

Around the same time The Wetterling Act was passed in 1994, 7-year old Megan Kanka of New Jersey was lured into a neighbor's home, raped and strangled to death. Her neighbor was a convicted sex offender who happened to live with two other convicted sex offenders (Megan Nicole Kanka Foundation Inc., accessed June 2017). The heinousness of this crime, coupled with parents' outrage about not being notified about three convicted sex offenders started in motion a call for even tougher sex crime legislation that not only forced offenders to register but that added some provision that the communities they intend to live in be notified. These crimes led to the federal mandate of community notification across all 50 states. While federally mandated, the state is required to maintain the private and public databases.

## **Study Design**

### **Utilization of the public registry**

A cross-sectional study design was executed using administrative secondary data collected from the public portion of the Minnesota Sex Offender Registry. The public registry contains information about Level 3 predatory offenders who have been sentenced to public notification. A 'predatory offender' is a label applied by the Minnesota Department of Corrections to categorize individuals who have committed an act of sexual misconduct (defined in Minnesota statute 243.166).

For this study, the Minnesota public registry was chosen over other states' registries, primarily because of the amount of information on offense details listed on the website, which was comparatively broader than other states' public registries. Preliminary research included the examination of the type of information made available on several state registries. States from across the nation, including but not limited to New York, New Jersey, Missouri, Mississippi, California, Oregon, Washington and Texas were initially screened for website accessibility, ability to communicate with department of corrections, and most importantly the type of information listed for each offender. Only a couple of states provided information about offenders' grooming strategies.

Using secondary data, that is administratively managed, was chosen for a couple of reasons. First, secondary data allowed for a higher volume of information than what would have likely been collected through primary data, which would have involved trying to connect with offenders and their victim(s) on a one-to-one basis. Secondary data analysis ameliorated having to get IRB approval to work with a vulnerable population of individuals and instead just involved having to seek approval to use data that were already publicly accessible. IRB approval was given in 2015 before preliminary assessment of data was conducted. The use of secondary data also relieved the burden of having to provide financial incentive to participants. Easy accessibility and consistency of available information was also advantageous. Because the registry is maintained and operated by the government, and data are collected and disseminated as part of a criminal justice mandate there is more consistency in what is reported, with certain information required to be in each offender profile (Community Notification Fact Sheet, MN Dept. of Corrections, 2016).

For Minnesota specifically, the process of information dissemination begins with law enforcement agencies providing the appropriate information to the Minnesota Department of Corrections. The Minnesota Department of Corrections Public Registrant website, which is maintained by the Minnesota Department of Corrections Community Notification Unit, lists the information related to each offender. The process for amending an offender's profile, such as appearance changes, or residence changes, follows the same pattern starting with local law enforcement agencies providing that information to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, where the database is maintained (S. Hustad, personal communication, June 2017).

Insufficient data, at times, were a disadvantage to using secondary data from a government database, due to a lack of control over the type and amount of data that was available. A good quantity of secondary data was found to exist in the Minnesota public registrant database. However, another disadvantage was that regardless of the quantity of data available, the types of data were not always completely applicable to this specific study. This situation is a common problem when working with secondary data. It is speculated that the lack of consistency in how grooming is defined as well as a lack of consensus and knowledge about its importance in the role of child sex offending has led to important grooming strategies being omitted from cases on the registry by the Department of Corrections. The registry provides a broad amount of information and the priority of law enforcement, which is dissemination of the information in accordance to the law, was not the priority of this study, so not all of the data on the registry was applicable. For example, as the data will show, many cases were excluded due to having only offense characteristics in the absence of any identified grooming strategy; it cannot

be inferred one way or the other if or what type of grooming strategy was used by the offenders in these cases. Lack of data sufficiency goes with the limitation of having (or not having) control over the data because again, the priorities of law enforcement and the researcher are not the same; getting the best specific data to grooming strategies was a limitation. Despite these limitations, the Minnesota Public Registrant database was determined to be a viable and contributing source for this study. More on the limitations and contributions of using this data source is presented in Chapter 5.

**Public registration.** In Minnesota, there are approximately 17,500 predatory offenders; 364 have currently been assigned as Level 3, the highest level; however, after 14 days an offender has the right to appeal for Risk Level Reassignment, which may or may not result in a change to their community notification requirements. Level 3 offenders are subject to various community notification procedures, whereas offenders who have been assigned risk levels 1 and 2 are not (Community Notification Fact Sheet, Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2016). In contrast to how community notification differs for Level 3 offenders, Level 1 predatory offenders have been assessed to pose the lowest level of risk to the public, with notification of release limited to victims and family of the offender. Level 2 predatory offenders have been deemed to pose a moderate risk to the public and notification, with notification limited to family and victims as well as schools, daycares, or other organizations near the vicinity of where the offender resides. Level 3 predatory offenders have been assessed as having a high risk to the public, with notification including everything aforementioned for Levels 1 and 2 as well as a community held notification meeting by law enforcement officials, other media mass distribution methods, and profile posted on the state registration website. Risk level

assignment is given at the end of confinement, whether that confinement is prison, federal prison, or institution. The End of Confinement Review Committee, made up of law enforcement and/or treatment personnel, caseworker, and other appropriate persons to the offender, as well a victims service professional convenes to assign risk level upon completion of sentence and/or treatment (Community Notification Fact Sheet, MN Dept. of Corrections, 2016). Risk level is assigned based on several factors including but not limited to prior offenses, response to treatment, comorbidity of disorders or addictions, and presence of personal and/or therapeutic support system (Community Notification Fact Sheet, MN Dept. of Corrections, 2016).

Nationally, there are approximately 700,000 offender profiles (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2012) listed on state registries. The success and efficacy of community notification have been analyzed through the lenses of reducing recidivism, and the effects on the offender and the community, but it is unclear whether or not studies have focused on the content of what is on public registries and whether or not it reflects a more accurate picture of offending. The disconnection between actual versus perceived risk of child sexual abuse victimization and some of the factors related to sexual abuse risk suggest that more in-depth research is needed in that area. The choice to use the public registry was to set a precedent for future research that can assess the possibility that community notification, and public registration have the capacity to do more than their original intent.

### **Data collection procedures**

**Data set.** A preliminary assessment of the available offender information in the Minnesota public registrant database was conducted, starting with examining profiles

from the three largest counties in Minnesota. The assessment indicated that the amount of information varied, meaning that profiles contained information relevant only to that offender, but also that there was consistency in the type and amount of information provided. And there was indication that grooming tactics were reported in a number of cases.

Raw data from each county in the state of Minnesota were recorded into a separate database exactly as it appeared on the public registry on the Minnesota Department of Corrections website (<https://mn.gov/doc/family-visitor/search-offenders-fugitives/>). The type of information collected included offender demographics (race/ethnicity, sex, and current age), victim demographics (age and sex), relationship attributes (how the offender and victim knew each other), details of the offense(s), and grooming strategies used. In accordance with Minnesota's Community Notification Law, all of the offenders listed on the public registry have been assigned as Level 3 predatory offenders. For each profile, relationship information, offense details, victim information, and grooming tactics are represented in the "description of the offense" section and were coded using the amalgamated conceptualization of environmental and victim grooming from Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition Model and Leberg (1997), and Craven and colleagues' (2006) concepts of environmental and victim grooming (See Appendix 2).

**Study inclusion criteria.** The inclusion criteria for this study were determined in two phases, and by the results of preliminary raw data collection. The first phase mandated that the offender be an adult (aged 18 or older) who had committed a sexual offense against a juvenile (aged 17 or younger). The legal age of adulthood was chosen, as opposed to Minnesota's age of consent for two reasons. First, offenders can migrate

from other states and the age of consent varies from state to state; and second, Minnesota recognizes persons aged 17 and under to be children. At the time of data collection, 386 offenders were listed on the public registry. Phase one inclusion criteria yielded a sample of 289 Level 3 offenders who had engaged in sexual activity with a juvenile. In the second phase, offender profiles that provided information on one or more grooming tactics were retained. Grooming tactics were then coded as either Environmental or Grooming strategies (See Appendix 2 for a full listing of the concept and criteria). The resulting sample included 175 offenders from the registry.

**Study exclusion criteria.** An offender profile was excluded when the victim's age was over 17 years and there was not a child victim listed within the profile (the case was included if an offender's profile listed both adult and child victims). An offender profile was also excluded if the nature of the crime did not include an identified child victim (e.g. if the offender was convicted only on the possession of child pornography and did not have a victim or victims listed in the offense description). The public registrant database is more likely to list offenders who have committed sex offenses but also includes some offenders who have committed a violent offense only; thus, offender profiles were also excluded if the nature of the crime was not sexual (for example: if the offender physically assaulted a child, but there was not an indication of sexual assault). This sample excluded 97 offenders whose offense did not involve a juvenile. Of the 289 offenders who had at least one juvenile victim, 114 were excluded due to their profile not containing enough (or any) data regarding the grooming tactics used.

**Data recording.** Registry data were organized and recorded into six categories: offender demographic data, victim demographic data, relationship attributes, offense

characteristics, environmental grooming, and victim grooming. Raw demographic information for both victims and offenders was used as it was presented on the registry with the exception of victim age, which was represented in various ways on the registry. When there was one victim, the age of that victim was recorded. When a profile indicated that multiple victims were included, the ages were provided using a range (e.g., ages 6-15) or by listing each victim's age at the time offense (e.g., ages 5, 9, and 13). Recording the age range also included the ages of victims spanning from childhood through adult aged (e.g., ages 10 to adult). The presence of an adult victim in the profile of an offender who also had juvenile victims was not excluded. For this study, victim age was recorded two ways. First, if there were multiple victims, the age range between the youngest and oldest victim was recorded (e.g., if there were three victims ages 6, 14, and 17, the difference between the youngest victim, 6, and oldest victim, 17, was recorded). Secondly, victim ages were coded to reflect their developmental category as given by the Child Development Institute, (Child Development Institute, n.d.). Developmental categories include Infant (0-2 years), Toddler (3-5 years), School Age (6-12 years), and Adolescent (13-17 years). Coding options for each combination of developmental category were included if an offender had abused children crossing multiple developmental stages, the presence of an adult victim was recorded as a subsequent description of the offense profile.

Relationship characteristics were recorded as they were presented on the registry and identified whether or not the victim and the offender knew each other, were strangers, or if the offense(s) included a combination of both victims who were known and unknown to the offender. Offense characteristics were recorded based on what is reported

in the registry and included descriptors of the offense that were not specific to either environmental or victim grooming strategies. Offense characteristics include the presence of specific sexual acts, such as penetration, sexual touch, production or possession of child pornography, stalking, presence of a victim witness, presence of multiple victims, or history of adult victims.

Examples from two of the four strategies (environment and victim) posited in the Precondition Model were available for coding; information on offenders' self-grooming strategies was not recorded in the registry. Offenders' environmental and victim grooming strategies were coded in accordance with definitions by Craven and colleagues (2006) and Leberg (1997); see Appendix 2. For example, environmental grooming includes behaviors used to manipulate the environment of themselves and/or the victim(s), such as using a car, moving the victim from one location to another, using a position of authority as a caregiver, or babysitting. Victim grooming, or the offender's tactics to manipulate the victim(s), can include using a chemical agent such as alcohol or drugs, bribing with toys, candy, cigarettes, or other material goods, using threats, using force, or using weapons. See Appendix 3 for a codebook describing each study variable in detail.

**Data coding.** The data coding process involved several steps based on the preliminary data collection described previously (see Appendix 4). To maintain rigor, an outside colleague and graduate from a public health institution recorded and coded 15 sex offender profiles, after which cross-comparison was done to ensure reliability in coding. The process for recording and coding was conducted by going through the procedures and definitions of the variables. Next, five profiles were selected and coded at random (random offenders from random counties) in conjunction with this colleague. The

colleague then selected 15 random profiles and recorded and coded them. Upon completion, those profiles were checked against the original coding for consistency (i.e., to make sure that the profiles initially excluded were excluded by the outside colleague, and that the profiles were coded identically). Significant issues related to the clarity of the coding procedures were not found. To further test for reliability of the exclusion criteria, the outside source was also asked to document the names of the offenders whom they believed, upon first assessment, did not fit the initial inclusion criteria. The names listed were crosschecked and referred to the original data; differences or discrepancies were not observed. One issue that initially arose was confusion regarding whether or not to commence with recording profiles that listed offense characteristics but did not appear to list grooming strategies. This issue was ameliorated by deciding to record every profile (n=289) that fit the initial inclusion criteria based on age of offender and age of victim and then filtering out the profiles.

**Missing data.** Certain demographic information about the offender is mandatory to be reported on the public registry, such as sex, age, and race/ethnicity (Community Notification Fact Sheet, MN Dept. of Corrections, 2016). Assessment for other missing data was done by running frequencies in SPSS on all the study variables, and showed that missing data appeared in a couple forms.

There were 20 cases (11.4% of the sample) where the numbered age(s) of the victim(s) was not recorded but instead reported as either “juvenile” or “adolescent,” indicating that the victim was under the age of 18. The sample included 9 cases (5.1% of the population) where the relationship between the offender and the victim was not listed or was reported to be unknown. In order to determine whether or not there was a pattern

to the missing data, a review of the missing data and the county they came from was conducted. Review of frequencies suggested that data were missing at random and did not show any discernible pattern (i.e., missing data were not isolated to a specific Minnesota county).

Using secondary data did not allow for further speculation or inquiry to retrieve the missing data. The data were analyzed using only the available data, as they were found to be missing at random, and occurred very infrequently within the sample. Missing cases were kept in the sample and statistical analyses were run using pairwise deletion for those instances where age and/or relationship status was missing.

## **Measures**

### **Dependent variables**

The dependent variables in this study are grouped into two categories. “Environmental Grooming” and “Victim Grooming” include variables associated with each type of grooming. Variations in grooming strategies are addressed in each of the research questions.

**Environmental grooming.** Environmental grooming strategies were listed under the descriptions of the offense in each individual offender’s profile. Seven dichotomous variables indicate whether a particular environmental grooming strategy was used (1= Yes, 0= No). *Car* indicates whether or not a car was used in the process of the offense (e.g., offender used car to approach potential victims). *Position of authority* indicates that an offender used their position of authority to gain access to victims (e.g., an offender coaches little league to gain access to potential victims). *Kidnapping* indicates that the offender moved the victim from the point of approach to another location. *Public space*

indicates that the offender used publicly available space to approach or target victims (e.g., Public parks, malls, or schools). *Breaking into residence* indicates that an offender manipulated the residence of the victim to gain access. *Brought victim home* indicates that the offender brought the child to his/her home to engage in sexual contact. *Targeted a sleeping or unconscious child* indicates that the offender waited until the child was asleep or unconscious before engaging in sexual contact. *Total environmental grooming* represents the sum of environmental grooming strategies reportedly used by an offender that are categorized as environmental (theoretical range between 0 and 7).

**Victim grooming.** Similarly, 15 dichotomous variables indicate when a particular victim grooming strategy was used (1=Yes and 0= No). These grooming strategies were also listed on the registry as descriptions of the offense. Use of pornography indicates that the offender used pornography in a way that was intended to lower victim's inhibitions (e.g., using it to gradually expose the victim to sexual content and sexual acts). Use of a computer indicates that the offender used the computer to target and gain access to their victim(s). Use of a chemical indicates that a chemical agent such as drugs, alcohol, or tobacco was used to either lower a victim's inhibitions or gain trust. Use of force indicates that the offender used some type physical force to gain victim's compliance. Exposure indicates that the offender exposed his/herself at some point in the process of offending. Forced exposure indicates that the offender forced the victim to exposure his/her body sometime in the process of the offense(s). Use of threats/coercion/manipulation indicates that some type of threat, coercion, or manipulation occurred in the process of the offense(s). Prostitution indicates that at some point during the offense the offender engaged in prostituting the victim. Use of bribery

indicates that the offender bribed the victim(s) in exchange for sexual contact. Use of a weapon indicates that the offender used a weapon to intimidate the victim into sexual contact. Befriended child indicates that the offender engaged in a friendly relationship in an effort to gain access to the child victim for the purpose of sexual contact. Targeted vulnerable child indicates that the offender exploited the vulnerable status of a child in order to engage in sexual contact. Used false pretense indicates that the offender initiated contact with the victim by using an excuse (e.g., Can you help me find my lost puppy? OR Can I get directions?). Accomplice indicates that the offender used an accomplice in some way to gain access to the victim. Sexual talk indicates the offender used sexual language to lower the inhibitions of the child.

Two count variables, in addition to *Total Environmental Grooming*, were created from these dichotomous variables. *Total Victim Grooming* represents the sum of all victim grooming strategies reportedly used by an offender (with a theoretical range between 0 and 15). *Total Grooming Strategies* represents the sum of the total number of both environmental and victim grooming strategies used by an offender (with a theoretical range of 1-22)

### **Independent variables**

The independent variables in this study were made up of four categories. “Offender Characteristics” represented demographic information for the offender. “Victim Characteristics” included demographic information given about the victim. “Relationship Attributes” include the variables that represent how the offender and the victim knew each other. Lastly, “Offense Characteristics” included variables representing the presence or absence of certain types of behaviors in the offense.

**Offender Characteristics.** The department of corrections lists only one response for each offender for race/ethnicity. Race/ethnicity was coded three separate ways. First, *Race/ethnicity* was examined as a categorical variable with responses: White, White/Hispanic, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian. Second, *Race/Ethnicity 2* is a categorical variable with responses: White, African American, and Other. The category of “other” includes all other races/ethnicities in the sample that are neither white nor African American. Lastly, *Binary Race/Ethnicity* looks at white offenders and non-white offenders, *Age on registration* is a continuous variable (age of the offender at the time of the offense(s) was not reported on the Minnesota registry). *Offender sex* is a categorical variable with responses: 1 = Male, 2 = Female. At the time of data collection, there were no Level 3 female sex offenders listed on the public registry.

**Victim demographics.** Victims’ ages were listed on the profiles of the offenders in range form (e.g. ages 4-9), in list form (e.g. 5,7,9), or as “juvenile” or “adolescent.” *Victim age* is a categorical variable with responses: 1 = 0-2 years (infant), 2 = 3-5 years (toddler), 3 = 6-12 years (school age), 4 = 13-17 years (adolescent). Codes of 5 and above represented multiple victims as follows: 5 = Infant and toddler, 6 = Infant and school age, 7 = Infant and adolescent, 8 = Toddler and school age, 9 = Toddler and adolescent, 10 = School age and adolescent, 11 = Infant, toddler, school age and adolescent, 12 = Infant, toddler, and school age, 13 = Infant, toddler, and adolescent, 14 = Toddler, school age, and adolescent. *Binary Victim Age Category* collapses victim age category, 1 = Ages 6-17 and 2 = Includes at least one victim under age 6. *Victim age range* is a continuous variable indicating the number of years between the youngest and oldest child victims. If there are not multiple victims, or there is no age difference between victims, then the

response is 0, indicating that there are zero years difference in age range. *Sex* is a categorical variable examined in two different ways. First, with responses: 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Male and female. Second, with responses: 1= Did not include a same-sex victim, 2= Included at least one same-sex victim. This variable represents the biological difference in sex between the offender and the victim and whether or not the offenses was a same-sex, opposite-sex or a combination. Because the sample was comprised solely of male offenders, rendering victim sex and sex difference redundant, one variable, labeled “Sex” was used for bivariate and multivariate analysis.

**Relationship attributes.** *Relationship status* categorizes whether or not offenders knew their victims prior to the offense, if they were strangers, or if their victims were comprised of both known and unknown children. This is a categorical variable with the responses: 1 = Known, 2 = Unknown (stranger), 3= Known and Unknown. Relationship status was also examined as a dichotomous variable with responses: 1= Known, 2= Includes at least one unknown victim.

**Offense descriptors.** Eight binary variables indicate whether each of the following offense characteristics were reported (1=Yes, 0=No): penetration, peeping, produced child pornography, possessed child pornography, sexual touch, presence of multiple victims, history of adult victims, and having a victim witness.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used in this study. Statistical tests were performed using IBM’s SPSS data analysis software (version 23.0) and RStudio (version 1.0.143). Preliminary analyses were conducted to check the assumptions of the study and are detailed further in Chapter 4: Results.

## **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics provided an overall picture of the offenders in the sample, the makeup of the available victim information, if the offender and victim knew each other prior to the offense, details about the offenses that occurred within the sample, and the frequencies of both environmental and victim grooming strategies that were used. Univariate analysis included running frequencies for each study variable. The sums were computed for nominal and dichotomous variables. The means, medians, standard deviations, and range were computed for continuous variables.

## **Bivariate Analyses**

Bivariate analysis was used to explore research questions 1 through 5, and the first part of research question six. Chi Square analyses, and Fisher's Exact tests were used to examine categorical independent and dependent variables. Binary logistic regression was used with continuous independent variable, victim age range, and the categorical dependent variables, environmental and victim grooming strategies that do not violate assumptions of the Chi Square and Fisher's Exact tests, and Poisson regression for the count variables (Total Environmental Grooming and Total Victim Grooming), and the independent variables. Bivariate analyses were used to examine the relationships among the specific independent variables and each environmental and victim grooming strategies.

The research aims in this study were focused on examining the relationships between specific outcome variables with specific independent variables. Thus, bivariate analysis played a large role in this study. The tests conducted during bivariate analysis

allowed for a more detailed picture of grooming strategies used based on the presence of a certain predictive trait.

### **Test assumptions**

**Chi Square analysis.** Chi Square analysis assumes independence of observations. Using the guidelines of expected cell frequencies given by Yates, Moore, and McCabe (1999), it was determined that tables larger than 2x2 did not violate the assumption of Chi Square if less than 20% of their cell frequencies were 5 or greater. When the assumption of expected cell frequency for a table larger than 2x2 was violated, and the variables could be reasonably and logically collapsed into 2x2 tables, the assumption of expected cell frequency was not violated if the cell count was 10 or greater and, (Cochran, 1952; 1954 in Bannon, 2013). The contingency for violations of the sample size assumption were threefold: (1) collapsing relevant cells to increase cell count, (2) using Fisher's Exact test when Chi Square analysis included both binary predictor and binary outcome variables, and (3) in instances where the above tactics still resulted in violations, or where collapsing variables was not logically or theoretically supported, those variables were dropped from further analyses beyond descriptive analysis. The frequencies that were run during univariate analysis indicated that occurrences for several environmental and victim grooming strategies violated this assumption (with frequencies less than 5 per cell). With frequencies of less than 5 per cell, bivariate analysis did not include the following dependent variables: use of a car, targeting a sleeping or unconscious child, binging a victim home, forced exposure, use of bribery, befriending a child, and use of sexual talk.

A second assumption of Chi Square analysis is that there must be independence of observations. Each case within this study was coded only as having used or not used a

particular grooming strategy. In regard to sample size assumptions, frequency counts were used to determine if violations were likely to occur. The process used for addressing the Chi Square tests that violated the assumption of expected frequencies is further detailed in the following chapter.

After evaluating the type of data that was available from the public registry, and the degree to which the data could be coded and recoded, Chi Square analyses was primarily chosen for research hypotheses 1 through 5. The independent and dependent variables in this study were predominantly categorical or dichotomous in nature, with the exception of a few count variables. Because of this, I wanted to utilize the flexibility of data manipulation that Chi Square allows for. For example, due to sample size issues, it was expected that I would need to collapse the cells of some variables to create a 2x2 Chi Square test, and if the violation still occurred analysis using Fisher's Exact test could be conducted. Every categorical variable was capable of being collapsed into a dichotomous variable while still fitting into a model that answered my research questions. Thus, I felt that this approach preserved the integrity of my research questions.

**Binary logistic regression.** The assumptions for binary logistic regression analysis include having a binary dependent variable, one or more independent variables, independence of observations, and the absence of multicollinearity (Bannon, 2013). For the binary dependent variables in this study, the presence of multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) using a cutoff value of 10 (Bannon, 2013). The results indicated that multicollinearity was not present.

Binary logistic regression was used to determine the relationship between offender and victim characteristics, and relationship attributes and total number of

environmental grooming strategies used, and total number of victim grooming strategies used. To satisfy the assumption of binary dependent variables, for these instances, the collapsed dichotomous variables for offender and victim characteristics, and relationship attributes were used as dependent variables. This model was chosen because it controls for the effects of multiple dependent variables on the independent variable. Thus, it was believed that this was the best way to preserve the integrity of my data and answer my research question.

**Poisson regression.** The assumptions for Poisson regression include that the variable being measured is made up of count data, that there is one or more independent variables that are either on a continuous or categorical scale, independence of observation, that the distribution of counts follow a Poisson distribution, and identical mean and variance (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). Poisson regression also assumes that the data follow a Poisson distribution pattern, independence of observations, and equidispersion. Plotting distributions in SPSS (version 23.0) showed that the variables representing total environmental grooming strategies, and total victim grooming had Poisson distribution patterns. Equidispersion violations were ameliorated by applying the quasi-Poisson function in RStudio (version 1.0.143), which allowed for adjusted values due to over and underdispersed models. The standard Poisson regression model assumes equidispersion, meaning that the mean and the variance are exactly equal to one another. There were a few instances where this assumption was violated and the quasi-Poisson value was used. The quasi-Poisson model was chosen over the negative binomial regression model, which is also commonly used to ameliorate this violation. The negative binomial regression model gives weights lower counts of data heavier than the quasi-Poisson model (Ver

Hoeff & Boveng, 2007). The research questions that the quasi-Poisson models were used to answer included a lot of small values. As an example the quasi-Poisson model was used to determine the relationship between victim age range and types of grooming strategies used. It was determined that if the lower counts were weighted more heavily, that a less accurate picture would be given; particularly, for the offenders who have multiple victims ( $n=133$ ) with no age range differences (i.e., all victims are the same age) or very small range between youngest to oldest victim (i.e., 1,2, or 3 years)

### **Research Question One**

Race/ethnicity of the offender was the only demographic information given for offenders that could be used for further analysis. Chi Square analysis and Fisher's Exact test were used to determine relationships.

To answer research question one, race/ethnicity and grooming strategies were examined in two different ways. First, because of the lower frequencies of Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Hispanics in this sample, those categories were combined into a single variable representing a race/ethnicity response "other" that is non-white and non-African American. Secondly, Whites made up 56.6% of the entire sample, so race/ethnicity was further examined by creating a dichotomous variable including Whites and non-Whites, with the "non-Whites" category making up all of the above racial/ethnic groups along with African Americans; this groups represented 43.4% of the sample. The benefit to this approach is the ability to use the entire sample without violating the assumptions of Chi Square, the drawback is that inferential conclusions cannot be made for races/ethnicities that fall outside the parameters of white or African American. Again, the need to collapse cells due to frequency violations, along with the

flexibility of the models, was why Chi Square analysis was believed to be most appropriate.

### **Research Question Two**

The aim of research question two was to examine the associations between victim demographics and environmental and victim grooming strategies used. The available victim demographics included age and sex.

Victim age was reported several different ways: numerically, categorically (e.g. juvenile), or in range form (e.g. ages 6-17). Because of this, the relationships between victim age and grooming strategies were examined by developmental age category, as well as age range between youngest and oldest victim. In cases where there was only one victim reported, the age range was recorded as "0." Victim age was also categorized into a binary variable, with one category that included victims ages 6 through 17 and one that included any aged child victim where at least one victim was age 5 or younger.

Victim age was recorded according to developmental category and is first reported and analyzed according to the developmental category the victim(s) falls into. Due to violations of Chi Square assumptions, victim age was collapsed into a binary variable and results are reported by cases that included victims ages 6 and up, and those offenses that included cases where at least one victim was under the age of six. Victim age range is displayed by the number of years between youngest and oldest victims. Recording age by category as well as age range between youngest and oldest victim was done due to the nature of how the information is represented in the registry. Profiles listed age ranges of victims when there were multiple victims being reported (e.g., victims were females ages 6 to 15). Thus, it is known only that there were multiple victims associated

with the offender, but it is not determinable whether the exact ages of each victim and the exact number of each victim. When examining age range, all cases were used, regardless of whether or not the offender had multiple victims.

Low frequencies in environmental grooming led to collapsing the predictor “victim sex” into a dichotomous variable representing (1) offenses where the sexes were opposite, and (2) offenses that included at least one victim of the same sex. Low frequencies in Chi Square analyses was still an issue, so A dichotomous Chi Square model was used to determine the relationship between environmental and victim grooming strategies and the age (developmental age) of the associated victim(s). In cases where assumptions of Chi Square were still violated, Fisher’s Exact test was used for all cases involving environmental grooming strategies and sex.

### **Research Question Three**

Chi Square analysis and Fisher’s Exact test were used to examine relationships between the relationship status of the offender and the victim and the grooming strategies used. Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to determine a significant relationship between total environmental grooming and total victim grooming strategies used. Relationship status was represented and examined two separate ways. First by whether or not the offenders and victims knew each other, if the offender was a stranger to the victim, or whether or not the offender had both known and stranger victims. Violations of frequency assumptions for Chi Square resulted in a dichotomous variable that represented relationship status by (1) relationships where the victim and offender were known to each other and (2) cases where the offender had at least one victim who was unknown to them. The latter category therefore, included some cases where there was the possibility that the

offender had both known and unknown victims, as opposed to just stranger victims. Creating this binary variable allowed for an examination of how grooming strategies differed when an unknown victim was included in the case.

#### **Research Question Four**

Offense characteristics are the descriptive characteristics that occurred within the context of the case. As aforementioned, they included actions such as penetration, or sexual touching, as well as attributes such as the presence of child pornography, and whether or not the offender was associated with multiple victims. Chi Square analyses and Fisher's Exact tests were used to determine if environmental and victim grooming strategies had relationships with any of the listed offense characteristics. Each environmental grooming strategy and each victim grooming strategy were examined with each offense characteristic. Fisher's Exact test was used instead of Chi Square in instances where there were too few cases in a cell.

#### **Research Question 5**

Chi Square analyses and Fisher's Exact test were used to examine associations between environmental grooming strategies and victim grooming strategies. The aim of this research question was to see whether or not certain environmental grooming strategies were more likely to be associated with certain victim grooming strategies.

Past theoretical framework was the guiding force behind this particular research question. From theory, it would be inferred that an environmental grooming strategy occurred before a victim grooming strategy in all cases. The data source and type would not allow for as deep of an analysis to prove the theoretical framework one way or the other. However, determining if there were relationships among certain types of

environmental grooming and victim grooming strategies might lead to further research that is more conclusive (e.g., When  $X$  environmental grooming strategy is used, it is more likely that  $Z$  victim grooming strategy will be used).

### **Research Question 6 (Part I)**

Binary logistic regression analyses and Poisson regression analyses were used to determine relationships between the total number of environmental grooming strategies used, and total victim grooming strategies used, and the predictor variables. Binary logistic regression analysis examined the relationship between offender and victim demographics, and relationship status on the total number of environmental and the total number victim grooming strategies used. Poisson regression analysis examined the association of age range on the total number of environmental grooming strategies used, and the total number of victim grooming strategies used. After data collection commenced, the final value for offenders who had multiple victims (and were thus likely to have a range between youngest and oldest) was 133 out of 175. However, when examining the variable, age range, it did not fit a normal distribution pattern, and instead fit a Poisson distribution pattern. When analyzing count data, the Poisson model was believed to be the most appropriate model to preserve the research questions because the objective was to see whether or not the independent variable in question (age range, total victim grooming strategies, total environmental grooming strategies, and total grooming strategies used) had an effect on the type of grooming strategies used. Due to violations in equidispersion, quasi-Poisson regression values were used.

## **Multivariate analysis**

### **Research Question 6 (part II)**

Multivariate analysis was used to address part II of research question 6, which examined the relationship between the total number of grooming strategies and the presence of the available offender and victim demographic information, as well as the relationship status between the offender and victim. The variable representing the total number of grooming strategies used by an offender is made up of count data and followed a Poisson distribution. Thus, Poisson regression analysis was conducted. The variable representing total grooming strategies used is made up of count data as the observations are discrete, represent positive integers, and do not occur on a measurement scale. Independence of observations was not violated. Presence of Poisson distribution was assessed using descriptive analytics SPSS.

The bivariate analyses looked at the strength of the relationship and predictive ability of specific demographic, and relationship attributes on specific grooming environmental and victim grooming strategies, as well as specific environmental and victim grooming strategies and their relationships with specific offense descriptors, and lastly relationships between the two sets of grooming strategies. Multivariate analysis examines whether or not the demographic and relationship attributes observed in this sample are predictive of the total number of grooming strategies used, both environmental and victim. To examine this predictability, Poisson regression was first conducted.

The Poisson model fits best when there are reasonably balanced groups among categorical covariates; therefore this Poisson model used the binary variables created for

offender race/ethnicity, sex, victim age, and relationship status. This did not yield an ideal balance between the categories, but it closed the gaps significantly. Poisson regression models also assume that there is not over or under-dispersion, to assess for this an examination of the mean of the dependent variable, “total grooming strategies” and standard deviation was conducted. The mean was 1.77 and the squared standard deviation ( $1.095^2$ ) was 1.2, giving a ratio of 0.7 ( $1.2 \div 1.77$ ) which is less than 1; this indicated that the assumption of equidispersion was violated. Underdispersion is further indicated with a Pearson Chi Square value of 0.542. The omnibus test indicated that this model remained statistically significant as each of the independent variables were added. To adjust for under-dispersion of data, Conway-Maxwell, or COM Poisson regression was conducted.

The Conway-Maxwell Poisson regression model has been described as a flexible model that can ameliorate problems when count data are over or underdispersed (Sellers & Shmueli, 2010). When answering the second part of research question six, which inquired looked at the effects that the total number of grooming strategies used by an offender (combined total of both environmental and victim) had on the characteristics of the offender, characteristics of the victim, and relationship attributes. Under a Poisson model, these data would have to meet the assumption of equidispersion, yet, the COM-Poisson model has the flexibility to account for different levels of dispersion without disturbing or skewing the interpretation of the data (Sellers & Shmueli, 2010).

## CHAPTER 4: Results

### Offender characteristics

The majority of offenders in this sample were White (56.6%), followed by African American (32.6%), American Indian (8.0%), White/Hispanic (1.7%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (1.1%). Because some racial/ethnic categories had low frequencies, the responses were collapsed during analysis into trichotomous (White, African American, Other) and dichotomous (White, Non-White) variables. All of the offenders in this sample were males. Birth date of the offender was the only age-identifying characteristic on the registry. Age of the offender at the time of offense(s) was not listed. Offender age ranged from 24 years to 70 years ( $M= 46.54$ ,  $SD= 12.245$ ).

**Table 4.1**

***Offender Race/Ethnicity (N=175)***

Race/Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	99	56.6	56.6
African American	57	32.6	89.2
American Indian	14	8	97.2
White/Hispanic	3	1.7	98.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	1.1	100.0

## **Victim Characteristics**

Out of the 175 offenders in this sample, 14 cases were missing specific ages or age ranges for associated victims. The victims associated with the offenders in this sample were most frequently adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 years old (39.4%), followed by a combination of adolescent and school aged victims between the ages of 6 and 17 years old (30.9%), then school aged children between the ages of 6 and 12 (10.3%), and a combination of victims from the toddler and school age categories, ages 3-12 (5.7%), then a combination of victims in the categories of toddler, school age, and adolescent children, ages 3-17. Victims from the categories with any variation that included infants were least likely to be reported. The most frequently reported ages of child victims were between the ages of 6 and 17, with categories that included variations of infants and toddler occurring in only 11.4% of the cases (see Table 4.2).

As displayed in Table 4.3, among multi-victim offenders ( $n=133$ ), the number of years between the victim ages ranged from 0 (28.0%) to 14 (0.6%), with a mean age difference of 3.26 years ( $SD= 3.36$ ). In 49 cases there was no range (in years) between youngest and oldest victims, followed by 1 and 2 years (17 cases each, 9.7%), 3 years (8.4%), 4 years (7.4%), and then 7 years (6.9%). These frequencies include all of the cases with complete data ( $n=161$ ). When examining age range, frequencies and subsequent analyses did not exclude offenders who did not have multiple victims.

These frequencies include all of the cases with complete data ( $n=161$ ). When examining age range, frequencies and subsequent analyses did not exclude offenders who did not have multiple victims.

**Table 4.2*****Victim Age Categories (n=161)***

Age Category	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative
			Percent
Toddler (3-5 years)	2	1.1	1.2
School age (6-12 years)	18	10.3	12.4
Adolescent (13-17 years)	69	39.4	55.3
Infant and toddler	1	0.6	55.9
Toddler and school age	10	5.7	62.1
School age and adolescent	54	30.9	95.7
Infant, toddler, and adolescent	2	1.1	96.9
Toddler, school age, and adolescent	5	2.9	100
Ages 6 through 17	141	80.6	87.6
Includes at least one victim 5 or younger	20	11.4	100

**Table 4.3*****Victim Age Range (n=133)***

Age Range	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative
			Percent
0	49	28.0	30.4
1	17	10.6	41.0
2	17	10.6	51.6
3	15	9.3	60.9
4	13	8.1	68.9
5	8	5.0	73.9
6	11	6.8	80.7
7	12	7.5	88.2
8	6	3.7	91.9
9	4	2.5	94.4
10	3	1.9	96.3
11	3	1.9	98.1
13	2	1.2	99.4
14	1	0.6	100.0

The victims associated with the offenders in this sample were more often female/opposite sex (73.7%) than male/same sex (12.0%). In 25 (14.3%) cases the victims included both female and male victims (see Table 4.4).

In this sample, the offenders more often knew their victim (53.7%), than not (22.3%), but in 37 cases (21.1%) offenders victimized multiple children who were both known and unknown to them. Missing data related to relationship between offender and victim was present in five cases (see Table 4.5).

**Table 4.4**

***Differences in Sex Between Offender and Victim(s) (n=175)***

	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Same sex (male victims)	21	12.0	12.0
Opposite sex (female victims)	129	73.7	73.7
Same and opposite	25	14.3	100.0

**Table 4.5**

***Offender-Victim(s) Relationship (n=170)***

	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Known	94	53.7	55.3
Unknown (stranger)	39	22.3	78.2
Known and Unknown	37	21.1	100

Table 4.6 lists the frequency that specific characteristics occurred within offenders' criminal profiles. Penetration was most commonly reported (80.0%), followed by multiple victims in 76.0% of the cases, sexual touching occurred in 45.7% of the cases, the presence of adult victims occurred in 19.4% of the cases, and the rest of

the characteristics within this category occurred in less than 5.0% of the cases (see Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6**

***Offender Crime Characteristics (N=175)***

	<i>N</i>	Percent
Penetration	140	80.0
Multiple victims	133	76.0
Sexual touching	80	45.7
Adult victims	34	19.4
Produced child pornography	5	2.9
Possessed child pornography	5	2.9
Peeping	2	1.1
Victim witness	1	0.6

Among the 175 offenders in this sample, a total of 315 grooming strategies were reportedly used. The minimum total number of grooming strategies used by any one offender was 1 and the maximum was 7 ( $M= 1.8, SD= 1.09$ ). A total of 55 environmental strategies were reported and 260 victim strategies were reported. Offenders used between 0-4 environmental grooming strategies ( $M= 0.31, SD= 0.6$ ) and 0-5 victim grooming strategies ( $M= 1.49, SD= 0.93$ ).

Frequencies for each type of grooming strategy are reported in Table 4.8, with 7 types of environmental grooming strategies and 15 types of victim grooming strategies. The most frequently occurring types of environmental grooming strategies were: the use

of a public space to approach potential victims (10.3%), kidnapping (7.4%), using a position of authority (4.6%), and breaking into a residence (4.0%). For victim strategies, force was listed most frequently (55.4%), the next highest victim grooming strategy was the use of threats, manipulation, or coercion (15.4%), followed by exposure (14.9%), and use of a weapon (11.4%). The remaining victim grooming strategies were reported at a frequency of less than 10.0%.

**Table 4.7**

***Grooming Strategies Reportedly Used by Male Offenders (N=175)***

<b>Environmental</b>	<i>N</i>	Percent
Use of a public space	18	10.3
Kidnapping	13	7.4
Used position of authority	8	4.6
Breaking into residence	7	4.0
Use of car	4	2.3
Target sleeping/unconscious child	2	1.1
Brought victim home	3	1.7
<b>Victim</b>		
Use of force	97	55.4
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	27	15.4
Exposure	26	14.9
Use of a weapon	20	11.4
Vulnerable child	17	9.7

Use of a chemical agent	16	9.1
Use of an accomplice	13	7.4
False pretense	9	5.1
Prostitution	12	6.9
Use of pornography	7	4.0
Use of a computer	5	2.9
Sexual talk	4	2.3
Forced exposure	3	1.7
Bribery	3	1.7
Befriended child	1	0.6

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### **Bivariate Results**

Bivariate analyses examined whether certain offender and victim characteristics were associated with specific types of grooming strategies. Several grooming strategies had extremely low frequencies, which limited some of the scope of this study's bivariate analyses. The bivariate analyses in this study aimed to answer research questions 1 through 5. For all tests, a *p*-value of 0.05 was used to determine significance. All results reported for Chi Square analyses came from the observed and expected counts given in the matrices for the output in SPSS. Organized by research question, the following subsections display the results.

#### **Research Question 1: To what extent do environmental and victim grooming strategies vary based on offender characteristics?**

**Environmental grooming.** Table 4.8.1 displays the results of Chi Square analyses for race/ethnicity and environmental grooming strategies with race/ethnicity broken down into 3 categories: White, African American, and other. The results from the matrices of Chi Square analysis indicated that the use of a public space as an environmental grooming strategy significantly differed by race/ethnicity of the offender ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175] = 10.62, p = 0.005$ ). Whites were least likely to use a public space with 53.7% of offenders having a response code of “no.” African Americans were more likely to use a public space as an environmental grooming strategy, with 6.9% of the sample having “yes” responses, as opposed to Whites with 2.9%, and other races and ethnicities using a public space 0.6%. An effect size of 0.246 indicates that race/ethnicity has a medium effect on whether or not an offender chooses to use a public space as a grooming strategy. Other environmental grooming strategies including using a position of authority, kidnapping, and breaking into a residence had cells with expected counts less than 5 in more than 20.0% of the cases (those cases violated the first assumption of Chi Square analysis, so further examination of race as a trichotomous variable was not able to be conducted).

Table 4.8.2 displays the results from the matrices from Chi Square analyses and Fisher’s Exact tests when race/ethnicity was collapsed into two groups: white and non-white. Use of public space as a grooming tactic differed between Whites and non-Whites at a statistically significant level ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175] = 6.77, p = 0.009$ ) with non-Whites (7.4%) being more likely to use a public space than Whites (2.9%). Breaking into a residence was more likely to occur if the offender was non-white (3.4%) versus white (0.6%). Using a position of authority was also statistically significant, with Whites being

more likely than non-Whites to use this grooming strategy. This indicated that the relative proportions of offender race/ethnicity are not independent for these types of environmental grooming strategies. Significant differences between racial/ethnic groups and the use of kidnapping as an environmental grooming strategy were not found. Overall, there are relationships between race/ethnicity of the offender and environmental grooming strategy(ies) used.

**Table 4.8.1**

*Chi Square Analysis of Whites, African American and Other Races/Ethnicities and Environmental Grooming (N=175)*

	$\chi^2$	Cramer's V	df	$\alpha$
Use of a public space	10.62	0.25	2	0.005

**Table 4.8.2**

*Chi Square Analysis of Whites and Non-Whites and Environmental Grooming (N=175)*

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher's 2-sided	$\alpha$
Position of authority	6.44		1	0.009	
Kidnapping	3.81	0.15	1	0.049	0.051
Use of a public space	6.77	0.2	1	0.009	0.009
Breaking into residence	5.31		1	0.027	

**Victim grooming.** Chi Square analysis of the relationship between victim grooming strategies and Race/Ethnicity (White, African American, and Other) indicated that use of force ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 11.29, p= 0.004$ ), and use of a weapon ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 12.99, p= 0.002$ ) were statistically significant. Whites were more likely to use force (25.1%), followed by African Americans (22.3%), and then all other races/ethnicities (8.0%). African Americans were more likely to use a weapon (7.4%) than Whites (2.3%) and all “Other” races and ethnicities (1.7%) (the effect size for the covariate, “race/ethnicity” on the use of both force and weapon is medium for both outcomes). Use of a chemical agent, use of exposure, use of threats/manipulation/coercion, and targeting a vulnerable child as victim grooming tactics were not significantly associated with whether or not the offender was White, African American, or categorized in the “Other” race/ethnic category. Use of a computer, prostitution, using a false pretense, use of an accomplice, and use of pornography yielded cells with expected frequency counts of less than five, violating the assumption of Chi Square.

Several differences in use of victim grooming strategies were observed when the Chi Square matrices of the offenders’ race/ethnicity were examined for differences among Whites and non-Whites. The statistically significant outcomes included: use of force ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 11.13, p= 0.001$ ), exposure ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 5.15, p= 0.023$ ), use of threats/coercion/manipulation ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 4.96, p= 0.026$ ), use of a weapon ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 12.29, p < 0.001$ ), false pretense ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 7.98, p = 0.005$ ), and use of an accomplice ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]=13.66, p < 0.001$ ). Preference of victim grooming strategies based on the race/ethnicity of the offender is suggested in this sample. Results from the Chi Square matrices showed that Whites (11.4%) were more likely than Non-Whites

(3.4%) to use exposure as a grooming tactic, non-Whites were more likely to use force (30.3%) than Whites (25.1%), non-Whites (9.7%) were more likely to use threats/coercion/manipulation than Whites (5.7%). Non-Whites (9.1%) were also more likely to use a weapon than Whites (2.3%), non-Whites (4.6%) were more likely to use a false pretense than Whites (0.6%), and Whites were more likely to use an accomplice (0.6%) compared to non-Whites (6.9%). Each grooming strategy showed a small effect size. Fisher's Exact test showed that use of force, exposure, use of threats/manipulation/coercion, use of a weapon, use of a false pretense, and use of an accomplice are not independent of race/ethnicity of the offender.

Differences in the use of a chemical agent, prostitution, and targeting a vulnerable child were not significantly associated with offender race/ethnicity. Use of pornography and use of a computer as victim grooming strategies still yielded low expected cell counts, Fisher's Exact test was used to examine these variables with race/ethnicity and neither were found to have a significant relationship. Tables 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 outline the results of Chi Square analyses when examining differences in victim grooming strategies among Whites and non-Whites in this sample.

**Table 4.8.3**

***Chi Square Analysis of Race/Ethnicity and Victim Grooming Strategies (N=175)***

	$\chi^2$	Cramer's V	df	$\alpha$
Use of chemical agent	1.54	0.094	2	0.463
Use of force	11.29	0.254	2	0.004

Exposure	5.29	0.174	2	0.071
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	5.26	0.173	2	0.072
Use of a weapon	12.99	0.272	2	0.002
Targeting vulnerable child	3.96	0.150	2	0.138

**Table 4.8.4**

*Chi Square Analysis of Whites and Non-Whites and Victim Grooming Strategies  
(N=175)*

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher's 2- sided	$\alpha$
Use of a chemical agent	1.06	-0.08	1	0.223	0.303
Use of force	11.13	0.25	1	0.001	0.001
Exposure	5.15	-0.17	1	0.031	0.023
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation		0.17	1	0.022	0.026
	4.96				
Prostitution	1.78	-0.10	1	0.151	0.182
Use of a weapon	12.29	0.27	1	0.000	0.000
Targeting vulnerable child	1.51	0.22	1	0.166	0.220
False Pretense	7.98	0.21	1	0.006	0.005
Use of an accomplice	13.66	0.28	1	0.000	0.000
Use of a computer	3.95		1	0.055	

Use of pornography

2.52

0.113

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**Research Question 2: To what extent do environmental and victim grooming strategies vary based on victim characteristics?**

**Age**

**Environmental grooming.** Using a position of authority was the only environmental grooming strategy where results indicated a relationship with victim age ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]=13.45, p= 0.005$ ). Table 4.9.1 displays the values for Fisher's Exact test. For environmental grooming tactics, using a position of authority was the only strategy that was shown to not be independent of victim age, with offenders being more likely to use a position of authority when the victims included children aged 5 and under (2.5%) compared to when the victims were aged 6 to 17 (1.9%).

**Table 4.9.1**

*Chi Square Analysis of Environmental Grooming Strategies and Victim Age (N=175)*

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Environmental Strategies	$\chi^2$	df	Fisher's 2-sided
Position of authority	13.45	1	0.005
Kidnapping	1.68	1	0.221
Use of a public space	.75	1	0.343
Breaking into residence	.88	1	0.445

---

**Victim grooming.** The results of Chi Square analysis showed that victim age is significantly related to using force ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 5.90, p= 0.015$ ). Offenders were more likely to use force when the victim was an adolescent (26.1%), followed by when victims were school aged and adolescent (19.9%), then School aged only (5.6%), and lastly Infant through adolescent (3.7%). At the bivariate level, offenders were more likely to use force with the victims were aged 6 through 17 (51.6%), versus if the offense included at least one victim aged 5 and under (3.7%).

**Table 4.9.2**

*Chi Square Analysis of Victim Grooming Strategies and Victim Age (N=175)*

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher's 2-sided	$\alpha$
Use of a chemical agent	0.39			0.457	
Use of force	5.90	-0.19	1	0.014	0.015
Exposure	4.1		1	0.053	
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	0.00		1	0.604	
Prostitution	2.93		1	0.141	
Use of a weapon	0.88		1	0.310	
Targeting vulnerable child	0.65		1	0.317	
False Pretense	0.00		1	0.663	
Use of an accomplice	1.51		1	0.255	
Use of a computer	0.73		1	0.511	
Use of pornography	0.10		1	0.555	

## **Age range**

Binary logistic regression was used to investigate whether or not grooming strategies were associated with the difference in number of years (age range) between youngest and oldest victims ( $n=161$ ), with the minimum possible number of years being 0 and the maximum possible years being 17. Binary regression was conducted with victim age range as the predictor of environmental and victim grooming strategy use. Table 4.8.3 shows a representation of binary regressions examining the ability to associate the use of environmental and/or victim grooming strategies as changes do or do not occur in the age range of victims.

**Environmental grooming.** Results showed little variation in environmental and victim grooming strategies that could be attributed to changes in the age range between youngest and oldest victim. Among the environmental grooming strategies, changes in age range are related with the use of a public space ( $\beta = -0.24, p = 0.038$ ). An odds ratio of 0.79 suggests that as the age range of the victims decreases, the likelihood of an offender using a public space as a grooming technique decreases. In every other instance of environmental grooming strategy, significant relationships were not found between the specific technique used and whether or not it is associated with changes in the age range between the youngest and oldest victim.

**Victim grooming.** With respect to victim grooming strategies, exposure was significantly associated with changes in the age range of the victim ( $\beta = 0.21, p = 0.001$ ). Between 6.8% and 12.0% of the variation in the use of exposure as a grooming strategy can be attributed to a changes in the age range between the youngest and oldest victims.

The odds ratio of 1.23 suggests that as the age range between victims increases, so does the likelihood of exposure being used as a victim grooming strategy.

Using an accomplice was the only other victim grooming strategy significantly associated with age range ( $\beta = -0.43, p = 0.040$ ). An odds ratio of 0.65 suggests that as age range between youngest and oldest victims decreases the likelihood of use of an accomplice decreases. In all other instances of victim grooming, significant relationships were not found between the specific grooming strategy and the age range of the victims.

**Table 4.9.3**

***Poisson Regression of Age Range between Victims and Grooming Strategy (n=133)***

	$\beta$	Wald	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke	Sig.	Exp. ( $\beta$ )	Up	Lw
<b><u>Environmental Grooming</u></b>								
Used position of authority	0.05	0.23	0.00	0.01	0.631	1.053	0.85	1.30
Kidnapping	-0.22	2.57	0.02	0.05	0.109	0.805	0.62	1.050
Used public space	-0.24	4.34	0.04	0.07	0.038	0.791	0.63	0.99
Breaking into residence	-0.45	2.56	0.03	0.11	0.110	0.639	0.37	1.106
<b><u>Victim Grooming</u></b>								
Use of a chemical agent	-0.01	0.003	0.00	0.00	0.957	0.995	0.84	1.17
Use of force	-0.09	3.20	0.02	0.03	0.073	0.917	0.84	1.01
Exposure	0.21	11.047	0.07	0.12	0.001	1.232	1.09	1.39
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	0.003	0.003	0.00	0.00	0.961	1.003	0.88	1.14
Prostitution	0.07	0.57	0.003	0.01	0.451	1.067	0.90	1.26
Use of a weapon	-0.15	2.51	0.02	0.04	0.113	0.861	0.72	1.04
Targeting vulnerable child	0.02	0.09	0.001	0.001	0.764	1.023	0.88	1.19
False Pretense	-0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.906	0.987	0.80	1.13
Use of an accomplice	-0.43	4.21	0.05	0.12	0.040	0.652	0.43	0.98

Use of a computer	-0.09	0.93	0.01	0.03	0.336	0.836	0.58	1.20
Use of pornography	0.10	0.83	0.01	0.02	0.362	1.106	0.89	1.37

\*Up and Lw represent the upper and lower limits of the confidence interval

## Sex

The second available victim demographic was the sex of the victim. As stated above, all of the offenders in this sample were male, so the variable “victim sex” served to examine whether there were differences based on the victim’s sex and whether or not the offense(s) were opposite sex (male offender and female victim), same sex (male offender and male victim), or same and opposite (male offender and both male and female victims). Victim sex and grooming was also examined by opposite sex offenses (male offender and female victim) and those offenses that included at least one same sex victim (male offender and at least one male victim).

**Environmental grooming.** Chi Square analyses were run and Fisher’s Exact test was used to determine whether or not differences in victim sex were associated with environmental grooming. Results from the analyses indicate that the environmental grooming strategies in this study were not significantly associated with differences in the sex of the victim. Using a position of authority was more likely (2.9%) among opposite sex cases than among cases with at least one same-sex victim (1.7%). Kidnapping was also more likely among opposite-sex cases (6.9%) compared to those where at least one victim was of the same sex (0.6%). Using a public space occurred at higher rates among cases where the sex was opposite (7.4%) than among cases where at least one victim was the same sex as the offender (2.9%). Lastly, breaking into a residence only occurred

within the cases where the victim and offender were opposite sex (4.0%) (see Table 4.8.4).

**Victim grooming.** Results of Chi Square analysis showed that the use of force was significantly associated with sex ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 10.38, p= 0.006$ ), with a small effect size (0.24). Opposite sex offenses were associated with force (45.1%), followed by offenses that included both same and opposite (7.4%) and lastly, offenses where the victim and offender were same sex (2.9%) (see Table 4.8.5).

Results from Chi Square analysis at the 2x2 level showed that use of force ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 6.7, p = 0.010$ ), and also exposure ( $\chi^2 [1, N=175]= 4.05, p = 0.044$ ) were significantly related to sex. Force was more likely to be used when the victims were opposite sex (45.1%) versus when there was at least one same-sex victim (10.3%). Offenders were more likely to use exposure as a grooming tactic if at least one victim was male (8.6%) versus if their victim(s) was female (6.3%) Results from Fisher’s Exact test indicated that use of a computer and use of an accomplice were also significantly associated with differences in victim sex. Offenders were more likely to use a computer if at least one victim was male/same-sex (24.0%), versus female/opposite-sex (2.3%). Using an accomplice was more likely to be used if the victim was a female (26.3%), versus if a male victim was reported (0.0%) (see Table 4.8.6).

**Table 4.9.4**

***Chi Square Analysis of Sex and Environmental Grooming Strategies (N=175)***

	$\chi^2$	df	Fisher’s 2-sided
Position of authority	0.54	1	0.435

Kidnapping	2.51	1	0.098
Use of a public space	0.02	1	0.537
Breaking into residence	2.60	1	0.113

**Table 4.9.5**

*Chi Square Analysis of Victim Grooming Strategies and Sex (N=175)*

	Cramer's			
	$\chi^2$	V	df	$\alpha$
Use of force	10.38	0.24	2	0.006

**Table 4.9.6**

*Bivariate Analysis of Victim Grooming Strategies and Sex (N=175)*

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher's 2-	
				sided	$\alpha$
Use of a chemical agent	0.02		1	0.584	
Use of force	6.71	-0.20	1	0.008	0.010
Exposure	4.05	0.15	1	0.042	0.044
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	2.17	-0.11	1	0.105	0.141
Prostitution	0.01		1	0.610	
Use of a weapon	3.09	-0.13	1	0.061	0.079
Targeting vulnerable child	0.79		1	0.267	
False Pretense	0.08		1	0.564	
Use of an accomplice	5.01		1	0.016	

Use of a computer	7.67	1	0.017
Use of pornography	3.58	1	0.079

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**Research Question 3: What is the relationship between offender-to-victim relationship status and grooming strategies used?**

**Environmental grooming.** Chi Square analyses showed that several variables violated assumptions with expected cell counts less than five. To remedy this violation, relationship status was collapsed into a binary variable with responses including ‘Known’ and ‘Includes unknown.’ Kidnapping ( $\chi^2 [1, N=170]= 7.79, p= 0.005$ ) was more likely to occur in offenses that included at least one unknown victim (5.9%) than for those offenses that included only known victims (1.2%), with a small effect size (0.21). With a medium effect size (0.43), for those offenders who used a public space, this grooming strategy was more likely to be used if at least one victim was unknown to the offender (10.0%) versus when the victim was known (0.6%). Fisher’s Exact test showed that breaking into a residence was also significantly associated with relationship, with offenders who had at least one unknown victim being more likely (3.5%) to break into a residence than those where the victim was known (0.6%) (see Table 4.9).

**Victim grooming.** When examining relationship attributes and victim grooming, three types of victim grooming strategies did not violate Chi Square assumptions: the use of force, exposure, and use of threats/coercion/manipulation. At the 2x3 Chi Square level, victim grooming strategies were not significantly associated with relationship attributes. When examining victim grooming strategies with relationship attributes as a binary variable, results showed significant relationships with use of a weapon, using a false pretense, and using pornography. Using a weapon ( $\chi^2 [2, N=170]=13.50, p< 0.01$ ) was

more likely to occur when the offender had at least one victim who was unknown to them (9.4%) as opposed to a victim(s) who was known (1.8%). Using a false pretense ( $\chi^2 [2, N=170]= 11.75, p< 0.001$ ) was also more likely to be used by an offender who had at least one unknown victim (5.8%), compared to those offenders whose victims were known to them (0.0%). Offenders were more likely to use pornography ( $\chi^2 [2, N=170]= 5.90, p< 0.05$ ) when the victim was known to them (4.1%), versus among the offenders who had an unknown victim (0.0%). (see Table 4.9).

**Table 4.10**

***Bivariate Analysis of Environmental and Victim Grooming Strategies and Relationship between Offender and Victim (N=175)***

<b>Environmental Grooming (2x2)</b>	$\chi^2$	Phi	Cramer's <i>V</i>	df	Fisher's 2-Sided	$\alpha$
Position of authority	3.52			1	0.061	
Kidnapping	7.79	0.21		1	0.006	0.005
Use of a public space	20.15	0.34		1	0.000	0.000
Breaking into residence	4.97			1	0.032	
<b>Victim Grooming (2x3)</b>						
Force	0.64		0.06	1		0.727
Exposure	4.32		0.16	1		0.116
Threats/coercion/manipulation	0.82		0.07	1		0.664
<b>Victim Grooming (2x2)</b>						
Use of a chemical agent	0.86	-0.07		2	0.258	0.354
Use of force	0.59	-0.06		2	0.270	0.443

Exposure	0.13	0.03	2	0.442	0.720
Threats/coercion/manipulation	0.07	-0.02	2	0.481	0.789
Prostitution	3.74		2	0.053	
Use of a weapon	13.50	0.28	2	0.000	0.000
Targeting vulnerable child	0.10	-0.02	2	0.483	0.758
False pretense	11.75		2	0.001	
Use of an accomplice	3.43	0.14	2	0.059	0.064
Use of a computer	2.60		2	0.125	
Use of pornography	5.90		2	0.015	

**Research question 4: What is the relationship between offense characteristics and environmental and victim grooming strategies?**

Chi Square analyses were used to examine whether grooming strategies and offense descriptors (i.e. penetration) were related, and correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between total environmental grooming strategies and total victim grooming strategies. The offense characteristics and grooming strategies with frequencies of 10 or more were examined: penetration (140 reports), sexual touching (80 reports), multiple victims (133 reports), and adult victims (33 reports).

**Environmental grooming.** Results as shown in table 4.10.1 indicated that the presence of multiple victims was related to using a public space ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 4.60, p= 0.037$ ), with offenders who had multiple victims being more likely to use a public space (5.7%) compared to those reported as having only one victim (4.6%). The presence of an adult victim was not related with the environmental grooming strategies present in this study. Kidnapping ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 5.21, p= 0.023$ ) was less likely to occur (1.1%)

among those offenses that included sexual touching, compared to those that did not include sexual touching (6.3%). Fisher's Exact test showed that breaking into a residence was less likely to be reported as a grooming strategy when sexual touching was reported. Both penetration and the presence of an adult victim were not significantly associated with the environmental grooming strategies in this study.

**Victim grooming.** Chi Square analysis showed that exposure was related to having multiple victims ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 5.44, p= 0.035$ ), with offenders being more likely to have used exposure as a grooming strategy when there were multiple victims (13.7%) than when there was only one reported victim (1.1%). Chi Square analysis showed that in offenses that included sexual touching, force was less likely to be used (21.1%) as a grooming strategy than if the offense(s) did not include sexual touching (34.3%), ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 5.03, p= 0.025$ ). In cases where exposure was used as a grooming strategy, Chi Square analysis showed sexual touching was more likely to occur if exposure was used (11.4%) than in cases where exposure was not used as a grooming strategy (3.4%) ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 11.99, p= 0.001$ ). Results showed that sexual touching was less likely to occur in cases where a weapon was not used (8.6%) than in cases where a weapon was used to gain compliance (2.9%) ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 3.05, p= 0.049$ ). Using an accomplice as a grooming strategy was also related to sexual touching. Using an accomplice was less likely to occur in offenses that included sexual touching (1.1%) versus those offenses that did not include sexual touching (6.3%) ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 5.21, p= 0.023$ ). Lastly, sexual touching was more likely to be reported if pornography was used as a grooming strategy (3.4%) than if it was not reported as a grooming strategy (0.6%).

Chi Square analysis indicated that penetration was related to the use of force, the use of exposure and the use of pornography. Penetration was more likely to occur if force was reported as a grooming strategy (51.4%) than if it was not reported as a grooming strategy (4.0%) ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 22.23, p < 0.01$ ). Penetration was less likely to be reported in cases where exposure was used as a grooming strategy (8.0%) than in cases where exposure was not reportedly used as a grooming strategy (6.9%) ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175]= 21.86, p < 0.01$ ). Penetration was less likely to be reported in cases where pornography was reportedly used as a grooming strategy (1.7%) than in cases where pornography was not used as a grooming strategy (78.3%), ( $\chi^2 [2, N=175] = 6.29, p = 0.012$ ). As with environmental grooming strategies, the presence of adult victims was not significantly related to any type of victim grooming strategy Results from bivariate analyses of victim grooming strategies and offense characteristics are displayed in table 4.10.2.

**Table 4.11.1**

***Chi Square Analysis of Offense Characteristics and Environmental Grooming Strategies (N=175)***

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher's 2-sided	$\alpha$
<b>Multiple Victims</b>					
Used position of authority	0.005		2	0.613	
Kidnapping	0.353		2	0.381	
Using a public space	4.598		2	0.037	
Breaking into residence	0.084		2	0.553	
<b>Adult Victims</b>					

Used position of authority	0.166		2	0.483	
Kidnapping	1.154		2	0.229	
Using a public space	0.098		2	0.522	
Breaking into residence	0.389		2	0.409	
<b>Sexual Touching</b>					
Used position of authority	0.952		2	0.270	
Kidnapping	5.206	-0.172	2	0.020	0.023
Using a public space	0.013	-0.009	2	0.556	0.909
Breaking into residence	6.140		2	0.013	
<b>Penetration</b>					
Used position of authority	4.716		2	0.052	
Kidnapping	0.187		2	0.497	
Using a public space	0.139		2	0.496	
Breaking into residence	1.823		2	0.203	

**Table 4.11.2**

*Chi Square Analysis of Offense Characteristics and Victim Grooming Strategies*

*(N=175)*

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher's 2-sided	$\alpha$
<b>Multiple Victims</b>					
Use of a chemical agent	0.27		2	0.435	
Use of force	1.76	-0.10	2	0.125	0.185
Exposure	4.45	0.16	2	0.024	0.035
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	2.98	-0.13	2	0.073	0.085

Prostitution	1.73		2	0.168	
Use of a weapon	3.17	-0.14	2	0.071	0.075
Targeting vulnerable child	0.30		2	0.386	
False Pretense	2.17		2	0.142	
Use of an accomplice	0.35		2	0.381	
Use of a computer	0.05		2	0.654	
Use of pornography	0.38		2	0.467	

**Adult Victims**

Use of a chemical agent	1.95		2	0.162	
Use of force	1.47	0.09	2	0.154	0.225
Exposure	1.10	0.08	2	0.214	0.294
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	0.43	-0.50	2	0.359	0.510
Prostitution	1.01		2	0.281	
Use of a weapon	0.45		2	0.341	
Targeting vulnerable child	0.71		2	0.318	
False Pretense	0.42		2	0.449	
Use of an accomplice	0.12		2	0.481	
Use of a computer	1.24		2	0.335	
Use of pornography	1.76		2	0.214	

**Sexual Touching**

Use of a chemical agent	0.13	0.04	2	0.459	0.718
Use of force	5.03	-0.17	2	0.018	0.025
Exposure	11.98	0.26	2	0.001	0.001
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	0.02	-0.01	2	0.528	0.885
Prostitution	0.80	-0.07	2	0.280	0.372
Use of a weapon	3.90	-0.15	2	0.039	0.049
Targeting vulnerable child	0.16	-0.03	2	0.447	0.693
False Pretense	0.01		2	0.607	

Use of an accomplice	5.21	-0.17	2	0.020	0.023
Use of a computer	1.37		2	0.242	
Use of pornography	4.70		2	0.036	
<b>Penetration</b>					
Use of a chemical agent	0.62		2	0.341	
Use of force	22.23	0.36	2	0.000	0.000
Exposure	21.86	-0.35	2	0.000	0.000
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation	1.58	0.10	2	0.160	0.209
Prostitution	1.43		2	0.199	
Use of a weapon	3.18		2	0.058	
Targeting vulnerable child	2.35		2	0.106	
False Pretense	1.05		2	0.159	
Use of an accomplice	3.51		2	0.049	
Use of a computer	1.29		2	0.262	
Use of pornography	6.29		2	0.030	

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**Research question 5: What is the relationship between environmental grooming strategies and victim grooming strategies?**

Bivariate analyses examined whether or not certain environmental grooming strategies were significantly associated with certain victim grooming strategies (i.e. is using a position of authority as an environmental grooming strategy associated with using force as victim grooming strategy?). Analyses utilized only the variables that had frequencies higher than 10, including environmental strategies (using a position of authority, kidnapping, using a public space, breaking into a residence) and victim strategies (using a chemical agent, use of force, exposure, use of threats/coercion/manipulation, prostitution, use of a weapon, targeting a vulnerable child,

using a false pretense, use of an accomplice, use of a computer, use of pornography). Due to low frequencies, in most cases Fisher’s Exact test was used to determine significance.

Results of Fisher’s Exact test showed that kidnapping was significantly associated with use of a weapon, with kidnapping being less likely to occur in cases where a weapon was used (2.3%) than in cases where a weapon was not used (5.1%). Results indicated that using a public space and using a false pretense were significantly associated with each other, with a using a false pretense being more likely to occur when a public space was used (2.9%) versus when it was not (2.3%). Lastly, breaking into a residence was significantly associated with the use of a weapon, with using a weapon being less likely to occur if the offender also used breaking into a residence (2.3%) than if the offender did not break into a residence (9.1%). Table 4.12 reports the results of Chi Square analyses of environmental and victim grooming strategies.

**Table 4.12**

***Bivariate Analysis of Association of Environmental Grooming Strategies with Victim Grooming Strategies (N=175)***

	$\chi^2$	Phi	df	Fisher’s 2-sided	$\alpha$
<b>Used Position of Authority (Env.)</b>					
Use of a chemical agent (Vic.)	0.84		2	0.457	
Use of force (Vic.)	3.14		2	0.080	
Exposure (Vic.)	0.04		2	0.661	
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation (Vic.)			2	0.357	
	0.59				
Prostitution (Vic.)	0.42		2	0.440	
Use of a weapon (Vic.)	1.08		2	0.371	

Targeting vulnerable child (Vic.)	0.07		2	0.566	
False Pretense (Vic.)	0.46		2	0.650	
Use of an accomplice (Vic.)	0.67		2	0.532	
Use of a computer (Vic.)	0.25		2	0.789	
Use of pornography (Vic.)	1.58		2	0.284	
<b>Kidnapping (Env.)</b>					
Use of a chemical agent	1.41		2	0.274	
Use of force	2.63	.123	2	0.090	0.105
Exposure	2.45		2	0.114	
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation			2	0.323	
	0.63				
Prostitution	0.02		2	0.616	
Use of a weapon	5.19		2	0.045	
Targeting vulnerable child	0.07		2	0.633	
False Pretense	3.02		2	0.136	
Use of an accomplice	5.00		2	0.059	
Use of a computer	0.41		2	0.677	
Use of pornography	0.59		2	0.577	
<b>Use of Public Space (Env.)</b>					
Use of a chemical agent	2.02		2	0.162	
Use of force	0.00	.001	2	0.597	0.991
Exposure	1.37		2	0.213	
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation			2	0.550	
	0.02				
Prostitution	1.48		2	0.260	
Use of a weapon	2.31		2	0.131	
Targeting vulnerable child	0.05		2	0.545	
False Pretense	21.07		2	0.001	

Use of an accomplice	2.49	2	0.135
Use of a computer	0.59	2	0.577
Use of pornography	0.84	2	0.461
<b>Breaking into Residence (Env.)</b>			
Use of a chemical agent	0.73	2	0.505
Use of force	0.01	2	0.619
Exposure	1.27	2	0.317
Use of threats/coercion/manipulation		2	0.303
	1.33		
Prostitution	0.54	2	0.603
Use of a weapon	15.05	2	0.004
Targeting vulnerable child	0.79	2	0.483
False Pretense	0.40	2	0.686
Use of an accomplice	0.50	2	0.423
Use of a computer	0.21	2	0.813
Use of pornography	0.30	2	0.748

**Total grooming.** Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the relationship between total environmental grooming and total victim grooming strategies used. Pearson's correlation ( $r = -0.028$ ,  $p = 0.71$ ) indicated that there is not a significant correlation between the total number of environmental grooming strategies used and the total number of victim grooming strategies used.

**Research question 6 (Part I): What is the relationship between offender characteristics, victim characteristics, relationship status, and total number of grooming strategies used (Part I: total environmental, and total victim; Part II: sum of all grooming strategies used)?**

**Total Environmental grooming.** Results showed a positive relationship between relationship status and the use of environmental grooming strategies ( $\beta= 1.26, p< 0.01$ ). The number of environmental grooming strategies used by an offender was attributed to relationship status between 9.7% and 13.0% of the time. The odds ratio (3.53) indicates that environmental grooming factors used by offenders increased if the victim is known to them. The results of Poisson regression showed that as the age range in years increases, the total number of environmental grooming strategies used decreases by about 14.0%.

**Total Victim grooming.** This sample included 260 reported victim grooming strategies ( $M= 1.49, SD= 0.93$ ). The highest number of victim grooming strategies reported by an offender was five, the minimum was 0. Results indicate a positive relationship between the total number victim grooming strategies and the race of the offender ( $\beta= 0.46, p= 0.011$ ). Results also showed that total number of victim grooming strategies used by an offender can be attributed to race/ethnicity between 4.0% and 5.4% of the time. The odds ratio (1.58) indicated that the use of victim grooming strategies by offenders increased if the offender was white.

As age range increases by one year there is a less than 1.0% chance that there will be a change in the total number of victim grooming strategies. The results from Poisson regression indicated that age range was not significantly associated with the total number of victim grooming strategies used.

**Table 4.13.1**

***Binary Regression of Total Environmental and Total Victim Grooming Strategies and Demographics and Relationship Status (n=161)***

	$\beta$	Wald	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke	df	Sig.	Exp( $\beta$ )
<b>Total Environmental Grooming</b>							
Race/ethnicity	0.48	3.15	0.02	0.03	1	0.076	1.168
Victim age	-0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.972	0.966
Relationship status	1.26	13.71	0.10	0.13	1	0.000	3.525
Sex	-0.03	0.98	0.01	0.01	1	0.327	0.721
<b>Total Victim Grooming</b>							
Race/ethnicity	0.46	6.54	0.04	.054	1	0.011	1.579
Victim age	-0.34	1.20	0.01	.016	1	0.274	0.714
Relationship status	0.31	3.20	0.02	.026	1	0.074	0.508
Sex	-0.28	1.83	0.01	.016	1	0.176	0.758

**Table 4.13.2**

*Poisson Regression of Total Environmental Grooming Strategies and Age Range*

*(N=133)*

	$\beta$	Std. Error	T-value	Sig.	Exp ( $\beta$ )
(Intercept)	-0.79	0.19	-4.12	6.04e-05	0.46
Age range	-0.14	0.06	-2.41	0.02	0.87

**Table 4.13.3**

*Poisson Regression of Total Victim Grooming Strategies and Age Range (N=133)*

	$\beta$	Std. Error	T-value	Sig.	Exp ( $\beta$ )
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(Intercept)	0.41	0.07	5.96	1.58e-08	1.50
Age range	-0.01	0.02	-0.62	0.533	0.99

### **Bivariate Conclusions**

**Environmental grooming.** Table 4.13 displays a comprehensive list of each environmental and victim grooming strategy used for bivariate analysis and the independent variables that showed a significant relationship. *Using a position of authority* was significantly related to race/ethnicity and victim age. In this sample, Whites were more likely to use a position of authority than non-Whites. Using a position of authority as a grooming strategy was also more likely to occur if the child victim was 5 years of age or younger. In this sample, *Kidnapping* was more likely to occur if the offense included at least one victim who was unknown to the offender. In this sample, *using a public space* was significantly associated with race/ethnicity, age range, and relationship status. Non-Whites were more likely to use a public space, as age of the victim decreased, the likelihood of the offender using a public space decreased, and the offenders in this sample were more likely to use a public space if at least one victim was unknown to them. *Breaking into a residence* was more likely to occur if the offender was non-white, and there was at least one unknown victim. Relationship status and age range were associated with the total number of environmental grooming strategies used by an offender.

**Victim grooming.** *Use of pornography* was significantly associated with relationship status, showing that pornography was more likely to be used if there was at least one unknown victim reported. Offenders were more likely to *use a computer* as a grooming strategy if there was at least one male victim (same-sex) reported. In this

sample, *using force* was more likely to occur if the offender was non-white, the victim(s) was aged 6 through 17, and the victim(s) was reported to be female. *Exposure* was more likely to be used by Whites, and if the victim included at least one male. The use of exposure as a grooming tactic was also likely to increase as the age range between victims increased. Non-white offenders were more likely to *use threats/coercion/manipulation*. Non-white offenders, and African American offenders were more likely to *use a weapon*, as were offenders whose victims were female. *A false pretense* was more likely to be used by non-white offenders, and offenders whose victims were female. In this sample, *using an accomplice* as a grooming tactic was used more by non-white offenders, and offenders whose victims were females. Further, the likelihood of an offender using an accomplice decreased as the age range between victims decreased. The *use of a chemical agent*, and *prostitution* were not significantly associated with available demographics or relationship attributes. Lastly, the *total number of victim grooming strategies* used by an offender was higher for white offenders in this sample.

**Table 4.14**

***Summary of Bivariate Relationships***

<b>Environmental Grooming Strategy</b>	<b>Associated Independent Variables</b>
Using a position of authority	Race/ethnicity Victim age
Kidnapping	Relationship status
Use of a public space	Race/ethnicity Age range Relationship status

Breaking into a residence	Race/ethnicity
	Relationship status
<hr/>	
<b>Total environment strategies</b>	Age range
	Relationship status
<hr/>	
<b>Victim Grooming Strategy</b>	
<hr/>	
Use of pornography	Relationship Status
Use of a computer	Sex
Use of a chemical agent	N/A
Use of force	Race/ethnicity
	Victim age
	Sex
Exposure	Race/ethnicity
	Age range
	Sex
Threats/Coercion/Manipulation	Race/ethnicity
Prostitution	N/A
Use of a weapon	Race/ethnicity
	Relationship Status
Use of a false pretense	Race/ethnicity
	Relationship Status
Accomplice	Race/ethnicity
	Age range
<hr/>	

Sex

<b>Total victim strategies</b>	Race/ethnicity
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Table 4.14 lists the significant relationships between the grooming strategies and the independent variables. Race/ethnicity was significantly associated with using a position of authority, using a public space, breaking into a residence, use of force, exposure, use of threats/violence/coercion, using a weapon, using a false pretense, using an accomplice, and total victim grooming strategies used. Sex/sex difference was significantly associated with use of a computer, use of force, exposure, and use of an accomplice. Victim age range was significantly associated with using a public space, total environmental grooming strategies used, exposure, and use of an accomplice. Relationship status was significantly associated with kidnapping, use of a public space, breaking into a residence, total environmental victim grooming strategies used, use of pornography, use of a weapon, and use of a false pretense. Victim age was significantly associated with using a position of authority, and use of force.

**Table 4.15**

*Sum of Relationships*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Sum</b>
Offender Race/Ethnicity	10
Relationship	7
Sex	4
Age Range	4
Victim Age	2

## Multivariate Analysis

### Research Question 6 (Part II)

Multivariate analysis was used to answer the second part of research question 6, which examined whether or not the total number of grooming strategies used by the offenders in this sample were associated with demographic characteristics of the offender and victim, as well as the relationship status between them. There were 17 cases that had missing data related to victim age, and/or relationship between offender and victim. Pairwise deletion was used to account for missing data; thus, the total number of cases used in this analysis was 158 ( $N= 175$ ). Results from COM-Poisson regression showed that offender race is associated with the total number of grooming strategies used. In this sample, non-white offenders were significantly more likely to use a higher number of total grooming strategies than white offenders. Results showed that the total number of grooming strategies used is about 1.5 times greater for non-white offenders than for white offenders (95.0% CI, 1.08 and 1.84,  $p = 0.05$ ). Results also indicated that the total number of grooming strategies, for offenders where it was reported that there was at least one unknown victim increased by about 1.97 times (95.0% CI, 1.57 and 2.36),  $p= 0.000$ ), showing that if an offender had an unknown victim, the total number of grooming strategies used by them was greater than those offenders whose victims were known to them. In this sample, the total number of grooming strategies used by an offender was not associated with differences in the age of the victim(s), differences in the age range between youngest and oldest victims, or whether or not the offender had at least one victim of the same sex. Table 4.15 displays the results of COM Poisson regression analysis.

**Table 4.16*****Conway Maxwell Poisson Regression: Demographics and Relationship, and Total Victim Grooming Strategies Used (N=133)***

Parameter	Parameter Estimates					Parameter Estimates			
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Lower	Upper	Z-Score	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
(Intercept)	1.59	0.28	1.03	2.14	5.61	2.09e-08	2.24	1.68	2.79
Race	0.38	0.19	3.19	4.15	1.96	0.05	1.46	1.08	1.84
Victim Age	0.01	0.29	-0.56	0.58	0.04	0.969	1.10	0.53	1.67
Relationship	0.68	0.20	0.29	1.07	3.39	0.000	1.97	1.58	2.36
Sex Difference	-0.23	0.23	-0.66	0.19	-1.07	0.285	0.79	0.37	1.22
Victim Age Range	-0.02	0.03	-0.04	0.08	-0.73	0.465	0.98	0.92	1.04

The following chapter discusses the extent to which the results of these analyses are supportive of other research, and where this study transcends the significant findings found in the past.

## **CHAPTER 5: Discussion**

The diversity of offender racial/ethnic background and ages ranging from 24 years to 70 years old, results support past empirical research describing the child sex offender population as heterogeneous (Quinsey 1977; Canter et al., 1998; and van Dam 2001). This finding provides insight into how stepping away from the idea of heterogeneity and focusing on grooming as one commonality (as opposed to etiology) can uncover some useful information that has been overlooked in the past. The expanded conceptualization of grooming used to guide this study has provided a stepping-stone for more research that can potentially offer deeper insight into how grooming is woven deeply into the process of child sex offending.

Significant relationships were observed relating to race/ethnicity, victim age, age range, between offender and victim, the sex difference between the offender and the victim, if the victim was known or unknown to the offender, types of offense characteristics present in the offense, the total numbers of grooming strategies used, and the relationships between types of grooming strategies. Findings also indicated that individual grooming strategies were associated with total (environmental, victim, and combined) grooming strategies used by child sex offenders on the public registry. Only some of these relationships supported the hypotheses, which were derived from the results of previous studies.

### **Race/Ethnicity**

Beyond garnering statistics on sex offenders (not specifically child sex offenders), race and ethnicity have not been a large focus when studying behaviors, patterns, or characteristics of child sex offenders. In the past, race and ethnicity and associations the

with sexual offending have been limited to mostly studying recidivism, studying variations in race among juvenile offenders, and studying sentencing outcomes. Race and ethnicity had significant relationships with various grooming strategies in this study, which suggests that some patterns to child sex offending may have been overlooked.

Derived from crime statistics, it was hypothesized that relationships between grooming strategies and other variables would be stronger for white offenders given that prior research indicated white males to be more likely to be sex offenders (Office of Justice Statistics, 2000; Greenfield, 1997). This study showed that race/ethnicity of the offender was associated with environmental grooming strategies, including: using a position of authority, which was more frequent for Whites; kidnapping, and breaking into a residence, which were more frequent among non-Whites. Race/ethnicity was also associated with victim grooming strategies: including using exposure, and an accomplice, which were associated with White offenders; using threats/coercion/manipulation, using force, a weapon, and a false pretense were all associated with non-White offenders. Results showed that race/ethnicity was not independent of grooming strategies; non-White offenders had more frequently occurring grooming strategy usage than White offenders.

This study revealed that several significant relationships were observed between grooming and race and ethnicity, however, those observations did not match the hypothesis. Whites were more likely to use a position of authority as an environmental grooming strategy. It has been reported that white males are more likely to be placed in positions of power within the workplace than are females and minorities (Elliott & Smith,

2004). Logically, this seems to make sense with a corresponding association between using a position of authority as a grooming strategy and being White.

If crime statistics report that white males are more likely to be sex offenders, how do those results impact the findings of this study? Non-Whites were more likely to use a public space, and break into a residence as part of their environmental grooming strategies. Could there be a link between the type of environment the offender(s) was in (e.g., rural, urban, suburban)? Non-specific to sex offending, in his study on offending patterns in rural and urban areas, Laub (1983) did not observe racial differences. The results of this study suggest that there are likely differences in child sex offending patterns that would lead non-White offenders to use the grooming strategies they did. Racial segregation in housing, and neighborhoods could be a likely contributor. Fischer (2003) found that poor Black families were more likely to experience segregation from higher income families, as well as other racial groups. Fischer's study showed that both race and income had an impact on residence.

Both Laub (1983) and Fischer (2003), point to new directions in research regarding race and ethnicity and grooming strategies. Theoretically, if income is low an offender might use breaking into residences to both offend and rob the victim(s), and they may be more likely to be in public places if housing is insufficient. More research is certainly warranted in this area.

For victim grooming strategies, one important observation was made when examining the use of force as a grooming strategy. When race/ethnicity was studied as a trichotomous variable, Whites were more likely than both non-Whites and other races to use force. However, when race/ethnicity was studied as a dichotomous variable, being

non-white was significantly associated with the use of force. Whites were more likely to use exposure as grooming tactic, and non-Whites were more likely than Whites to use threats, coercion, and/or manipulation, use weapons, use a false pretense, and use an accomplice. White offenders were likely to use more total victim grooming strategies than non-white offenders. One possible explanation for white offenders using more victim grooming strategies overall could be that non-white offenders used grooming tactics that can be viewed as more forceful and aggressive, making it less likely for them to need to use more grooming strategies to establish the manipulation needed to gain victim compliance. White offenders were also more likely to abuse positions of authority, which might account for the need to use more grooming strategies. For example, if the offender is a teacher, the grooming process may take longer as there are more people involved beyond the child victim and their direct caregivers.

The results of the COM-Poisson regression indicate that offender race was significantly related to the number of total grooming strategies used, with the likelihood that grooming strategies would increase as the offender's race changed from white to non-white; with non-Whites using more grooming strategies on average than Whites.

Results indicated that on the whole, racial/ethnic group differences do exist, but not as fully as hypothesized. Further, results indicated that there is a probability that more differences would be observed in studies that are able to utilize larger sample sizes. With white offenders constituting over half the sample, the overall picture of race/ethnicity in this falls in line with what has been found in other studies, that white males are more likely to be penalized (Maxwell et al. 2003; Walsh, 1987), except for when it comes to sexual offenses that cross racial barriers. Past work has shown an evident gap in

knowledge on race/ethnicity and child sex offenders, and more specifically the grooming characteristics of child sex offenders. Hopefully, these results shed light on the need to learn more about whether or not and how race/ethnicity as well as other offender demographics (age, sex) are associated with environmental and victim grooming strategies, and that future research should steer away from the blanket approach that the population is heterogeneous.

This study utilized data from the public portion of the Minnesota sex offender registry, leaving out offenders who have or had been labeled with lower levels than Level 3 (most likely to reoffend). The results of this study show the need for a larger sample size to adjust for possible reporting, sentencing, or end-of-confinement review committee biases. Are offenders of a certain race/ethnicity more likely to show up on the public registry? This sample showed more White offenders than non-White offenders, but it does not account for those offenders who are incarcerated, who have been granted stays of adjudication, or who have been assigned to a lower risk level.

### **Victim age**

With the previous studies in mind, and the knowledge that reporting rates are low in general (Hinkelman & Bruno, 2009), I hypothesized that more grooming strategies would be associated with older children. Contrary to the hypothesis, for environmental grooming strategies, using a position of authority was associated with cases that reported having at least one victim aged 5 and under. Some reasons for this relationship might be linked to the developmental stage of younger children, requiring more authoritative grooming, or that grooming younger children by abusing positions of power is more convenient for access. After reviewing the literature, I hypothesized that it would be less

likely to see relationships with younger children because of their developmental stage, and also because children younger than school-aged are likely less educated about sexual abuse, and likely have less adults in their lives to disclose to. In fact, this may still be true, but children are taught to respect and obey people who are in positions of authority, thus, it would make sense for offenders who target younger children to pursue avenues where they would be in a position of power. When examining victim grooming strategies, force was more likely to be used when the victim(s) were between the ages of 6 and 17, the school-aged (or “older” child category). This finding aligned with the hypothesis that relationships would be seen with older victims, under the belief that older children would likely need to be more manipulated than younger children. It also aligns with past studies that children are more at risk in that age range (Hinkelman & Bruno, 2009). It has also been shown that younger children are more at risk for force (Fischer & McDonald, 1998). Because age was dichotomized to include a large range, the findings from this study may or may not be supported by previous findings.

Findings from past studies suggested indications of age preference among child sex offenders (Blanchard & colleagues, 2009), but I found that possible misuse and misapplication of psychological labels convoluted the notion of age preference. This study showed that some offenders had victims crossing multiple developmental age categories (both prepubescent and pubescent, and even through adult), while others had victims within only one age category. It was unknown whether there was any sort of relationship between the victims listed in each case, so a possible reason for multiple ages and developmental stages might include the need to manipulate others within the environment in order to gain access to the intended target, or the target of age preference.

This also highlights the need for scholars to use the term pedophile appropriately and emphasizes the importance of criminological studies using accurate psychological terms. It could be argued that true “pedophiles” would be less likely to be present in a sample of criminally prosecuted sex offenders because offenders with a psychological diagnosis might be more likely to be in treatment facilities. However, as studies have shown, there is not always a label used to differentiate child sex offenders, leading to possible misapplication of the term. It is indicated, from the results from this study that the ages of victims can and do vary and that grooming strategies change depending on the victim’s age, and also that there is a need to further study the relationships among victims, as well as the intentions of the offender.

It is confusing, and arguably dangerous to apply a psychological term to a sample, as a characterization of an entire population because it can lead to misconceptions. Scholars have urged researchers to differentiate between subgroups of child sex offenders (Bagley & Pritchard, 2000; Craven et al., 2006; Glowacz & Born, 2012; Langton & Marshall, 2001; Strassberg, Eastvold, Kenney, & Suchy, 2012), to better understand motivations, etiology, patterns, and characteristics. In this study, it has been shown that offenders do not always stick within one age group or developmental stage (i.e. prepubescent); and in fact, 19.4% of the cases included adult victims as well as child victims. With consideration to the type of data that was collected, the frequencies of victim ages may not be fully accurate reflections of those that occur in the entire population of sex offenders, registered or unregistered, but more reflective of the type that are likely to show up on the public registry. However, victims from nearly every

developmental age category were represented, with the majority of the victims falling between the ages of 6 and 17.

Findings drive home the bigger question derived from the review of the literature, which is whether or not to focus on differentiation or commonalities. Both are necessary in order to understand child sex offenders, and grooming, as well as to better educate the public. The forum of community notification is only one avenue to disseminate research findings and to educate. More practical uses for information dissemination are discussed in the following chapter.

### **Same-sex versus opposite sex victims**

It has been established that more female children than male children are sexually victimized, and also that true numbers of sexual abuse broken down by victim's sex have been difficult to attain because males are less likely than females to report sexual abuse (American Psychological Association, accessed October 2017). Further studies that are able to use larger sample sizes, and varying types of samples may continue to shed more light on this misconception, and provide more effective methods of information dissemination. For this study, it was hypothesized that relationships would be observed, particularly for cases where the victim was female, and in a developmentally older age category.

In this study, a combination of male and female victims was less likely to be reported than female victims only, and slightly less than male victims. These results are supported by previous studies showing that offenders generally have a preference for one type of victim sex over the other (Elliott et al. 1995). Elliott and colleagues also noted that their results found that some child sex offenders whose primary target was a male

victim initially victimized a female child if it helped them to gain access to the male child. Because the present study was not designed to assess the motivation behind the offender's behavior, it is unknown whether or not there was a primary male target in cases where the offender victimized both female and male children. In the future, it would be worth examining reporting rates among same-sex and opposite-sex offenses, as those could have a large impact on the results of a study such as this one. Further research on victims' choice to report or not report and why, would also be useful. It might make sense that for victims who identify as heterosexual, that shame, and confusion might occur on a larger scale, and act as a deterrent to disclose abuse. Sexual identity of offenders and victims would be an incredibly worthwhile avenue to explore in terms of grooming strategies used.

Limitations with the sample did not allow for explication or addition to past findings that sex has some association with sexual arousal, choice of victim but did lead to exploration of grooming patterns related to sex of the offender and victim, showing that sex has significant relationships.

In this study, sex did not have significant relationships with environmental grooming strategies. For victim grooming strategies, the sex of the offender and the victim was associated with using a computer, using force, using exposure, and using an accomplice.

The literature on sex suggests that some characteristics of offending are associated with the sex of the offender and the sex of the victim, indicating that limitations due to study design and sample size are a likely contributor to this outcome. The results for victim grooming strategies and sex showed that offenders who had at least

one same-sex victim were more likely to use a computer. Offenders who had only victims of the opposite sex were more likely to use force, exposure, and an accomplice as victim grooming tactics. Because there are several significant relationships between sex and victim grooming strategies used, a study design that would allow for assessment of the motivation behind why a certain grooming strategy is more likely to be used when the victim and offender are a specific sex would help to understand why. Hindsight studies that examine sexuality, history of childhood sexual abuse, and grooming strategies experienced could be a likely next step to help understand grooming and sex on a deeper level.

A possible explanation for these findings is that this study only accounted for the environmental grooming and victim grooming strategies that were identified on the public registry. There are many types of grooming strategies that are likely unlisted that could possibly be affected by the sex and sex difference between the victim and the offender. These results suggest that larger sample sizes, as well as more information regarding offense behaviors and characteristics would lead to more conclusive results. Both sex and sex difference were associated with victim grooming strategies but not environmental strategies. This could be due to the fact that victim grooming strategies were more frequently observed in the study, which is supported by previous studies' findings that victim grooming strategies are more commonly recognized (Brown, 2001; Berson, 2003).

### **Relationship status**

Prior research has failed to consistently confirm whether or not grooming strategies vary, and/or how they vary when the offender and the victim are known to each

other versus when they are unknown to each other. Some studies concluded that offenders used similar grooming tactics regardless of relationship, and others suggested that grooming strategies varied when the offender and the victim were related versus unrelated. Much of the literature has focused on offenders who have known their victim(s), as opposed to those who do not. Interestingly, the misconception that offenses are more likely to be committed by strangers has persisted in the general community (van Dam, 2001). With an estimated 90% of child sexual offenses being committed by someone who is known to the child (US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Statistics, 2000), it is imperative that more be understood and studied about how relationship status affects offense strategies, patterns, and characteristics so that this misconception can be cleared. What this study showed is that offenders targeted unknown children almost as frequently as they targeted a combination of known and unknown children. Why is this? And if combined together, the general results show nearly half of the offenses including an unknown child. Is it possible that targeting unknown children is more likely to result in an assignment of Risk Level 3? Is it a sentencing consequence? Is it a reporting consequence? Maybe it includes all of the above. An important area for further research would be looking at whether or not the victims were known to each other, and if that had an impact on the grooming strategy or strategies used by the offender. Because there is such an enormous discrepancy (for many legitimate reasons) between what the Office of Justice Statistics reports, and the findings of this study (90% versus 53%), there are certainly many angles to approach for further research.

It is more likely for an offender and a victim to be known to one another than to be strangers (US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Statistics, 2000), leading to the hypothesis that group differences would be observed between cases where the offender had known victims. The results of descriptive analysis regarding relationship status are consistent with previous findings that, more often than not, a sexual predator who targets children is known to their victim(s) (National Sex Offender Public Website, accessed October 2017), with 53.7% of the cases in this sample involving an offender and a victim who were listed as being known to each other, compared to 22.3% who were unknown, and the remaining 21.1% comprising offenders who had victimized children who were both known and unknown.

For this sample of offenders, it makes sense that findings showed that kidnapping, using a public space and breaking into a residence would be more likely to occur if at least one victim was unknown. This is consistent with prior research findings that offenders manipulate their environment to make it more comfortable and conducive to commit an offense (Beauregard et al. 2005; Conte et al. 1989). Because having an unknown victim was more highly associated with environmental grooming strategies, it is worth further investigation to see how those strategies are more or less likely to be observed when the offender knows the victim versus when they do not.

Many of the studies highlighted in Chapter 2, did not focus on victims who were unknown to the offender, but more on whether or not they had familial relations. This led me to hypothesize that grooming strategies that could be perceived as more invasive or aggressive would be associated with cases where at least one victim was unknown. The hypothesis held up with environmental grooming strategies, as well as the more

aggressive victim grooming strategy, using a weapon. However, this relationship was not significant for other perceivably aggressive strategies such as the use of force, or the use of threats/coercion/manipulation. One possible reason for these results could be the likelihood that offenders who target strangers or who target both might be more likely to be perceived as having a higher risk of re-offense. Also, it could be that the offenders who are most likely to re-offend are not released into the general public, but are sentenced to civil commitments, and are in treatment facilities.

The other significant finding related to the relationship between the offender and the victim was the total number of grooming strategies used. COM-Poisson regression indicated that if an offender's victim included at least one child who was unknown to them, their total number of grooming strategies used was likely to increase than if their victim(s) was known to them prior to the offense. These findings point to future directions for research questions, such as: Can these results be due to the fact that children who are strangers would need more grooming strategies, or different strategies to lower their inhibitions, than known children? Or again, could this be a reporting issue? The process of grooming is intended to be sneaky and manipulative, potential victims and/or parents and caregivers may not realize that they are being groomed when it is occurring or even after the fact (Russell, 1984).

### **Offense Characteristics**

Significant relationships were observed between grooming strategies and offense characteristics listed on the public registry. It was hypothesized that differences would be observed, and also that grooming strategies that could be perceived as more aggressive (i.e., using a weapon or force) would be associated with offense descriptors could be

perceived as more aggressive (i.e., breaking in, penetration, sexual touching). Offenders who had multiple victims listed on their profile were more likely to have also used a public space as an environmental grooming strategy, and more likely to use exposure as a victim grooming strategy. In cases that involved sexual touching, kidnapping was less likely to have been used as an environmental grooming tactic, and force was more likely to be used as a victim grooming strategy. Sexual touching was also more likely to occur in cases where exposure was used, and also more likely to occur in cases where pornography was used as victim grooming strategies. Sexual touching was less likely to occur in cases where a weapon was used, and in cases where an accomplice was used to gain compliance. Penetration was more likely to occur in cases where force was used. Penetration was less likely to occur in cases where exposure was used, and in cases where pornography was used.

One possible explanation for these findings could possibly be attributed to a likelihood of being sentenced to public registration if offense characteristics and/or grooming strategies were more aggressive or violent. Offense characteristics were present in 389 cases involving a child on the public registry. Due to a lack of grooming strategy also documented, 114 cases were excluded. Further research examining offense characteristics and demographics only might be a plausible next step in addressing the gaps in knowledge.

### **Grooming Strategies**

**Significant environmental and victim grooming relationships.** Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition model, along with the concepts of self, environment, and victim grooming (Leberg, 1997; Craven et al. 2006) suggest that there should be some

significant relationships between environmental grooming strategies and victim grooming strategies. With the exception of a few, significant relationships were not observed between the groups. It was hypothesized that environmental grooming strategies perceived as more aggressive would be associated with victim grooming strategies perceived as more aggressive, and that a positive correlation would be observed between the total number of environmental grooming strategies used and the total number of victim grooming strategies used. Results showed that the relationships aligned with the hypothesis. Kidnapping, and breaking into a residence were more likely to occur if there was use of a weapon. Use of a false pretense was more likely to occur if the offender used a public space. Significant relationships between total environmental grooming strategies used and total victim grooming strategies used were not observed.

**Total grooming strategies.** It was hypothesized that differences would be observed as the number of grooming strategies fluctuated, and that as the total numbers of grooming strategies rise, stronger associations would be shown with older victims, victims who are unknown, cases that include same-sex victims, and when there is a larger age gap between youngest and oldest victim. As Chapter 4 reports, there were some significant relationships between total environment, total victim, and total grooming strategies and age range, relationship status, and race/ethnicity.

The literature indicated that manipulation of parents, communities, and other organizations that involve children is a common tactic used by offenders in the process of environmental grooming (van Dam, 2001; Lang & Frenzel, 1988; Elliott et al., 1995), so it was surprising that gaining access through “babysitting,” or “befriending parent/guardian” was not reported more frequently in the database. A possible

explanation for this could be that the terms such as “using a position of authority” and “use of a public space” (for example) is reasonably ambiguous and can encompass a number of scenarios that may fit into the scope of what past literature suggests. This is another limitation when working with secondary data and terms that were previously undefined. Another plausible contributing factor to the lack of information given on environmental grooming is because those tactics tend to also include the manipulation of parents and caregivers, and the community, and their part in the offense process is less likely to be reported on a public registry that is more concerned about offenders’ behaviors with victims. However, from a community knowledge standpoint, this could be an area in which the public registry may want to consider expanding what is included in profiles as parents, caregivers, and the community are less likely to recognize that they are being manipulated.

Victim grooming is often associated with a gradual process of lowering the child’s inhibitions over time, to make sexual assault more conducive and less likely to be reported (Burn, 2001; Berson, 2003). This study shows several victim grooming strategies that involve more force, than direct or explicit manipulation, where it is unknown if the process was gradual and then presumably a more forceful tactic was used. The results of this study were not supportive of what previous scholars found, that there was both a physical and a psychological component to victim grooming (Leberg, 1997).

The lack of significant relationships between types of environment and victim grooming strategies, and the lack of correlation between total environment and total victim grooming strategies can also be attributed to the fact that only a portion of the Precondition model was utilized to frame and guide this study, and further that the model

was applied to an aspect of child sex offending as opposed to the etiology of child sex offending. With that in mind, some important relationships were observed. Also important was that this study showed how the Precondition model, or aspects of the model can be used to frame larger studies devoted to examining grooming and/or other aspects of child sex offending.

The grooming strategies listed in this study are by no means conclusive nor are they comprehensive of the many types of grooming strategies that can occur during the processes of grooming for child sex offenders, but they are merely a reflection of what was reported on the public registry. What these results suggest is that there are likely environmental and victim grooming strategies that are significantly associated, but that there are limitations to the study design that may not have allowed for a better examination of them.

The theoretical framework used to guide this study drove the hypothesis that as the total numbers of grooming strategies rise, stronger associations would be shown with older victims, victims who are unknown, cases that include same-sex victims, and when there is a larger age gap between youngest and oldest victim. Also, environmental and victim grooming strategies would be significantly correlated, and would show a varying degree of significance, with more aggressive or violent types of grooming being related with each other, and that positive relationships would be significant between strategies that used deception and environmental grooming strategies that were positively related with using victims where at least one victim was unknown.

### **Study Limitations**

The depth of analysis in this study was significantly limited due to the type of secondary data available on the public registry. The primary intent of the public registry is to notify the community that a level 3 predatory offender moved into a specific area, whereas the primary intent of this study was to analyze the offending patterns of those level 3 predatory offenders on the public registry. At the outset of this study, it was known that my priorities and those of the state would not be similar, but that there was enough information to develop a starting point regarding grooming and demographic and relationship attributes, and that this starting point would contribute to the field of research in areas that have not been largely explored in the past. This was true, but a future step would certainly be to try and get more information about specific crimes that occurred. Criminal records can be obtained, but the process can be lengthy and met with administrative roadblocks. With a different data collection plan and timeframe, it would be useful to move forward by collecting a smaller sample from within this sample, try to obtain those records and see what, how much, and the type of information that is left out of the registry and do a comparative analysis between what is on the registry and what is on the criminal record.

From a demographics standpoint, this study was limited by the fact that there were no female offenders listed in the public registry, so there was no way to conduct comparisons between male grooming strategies and female grooming strategies. Certainly, this does not mean that there are not female sex offenders on the Minnesota registry, what it means is that at the time this data was collected, there were not any females assigned a risk level 3 and sentenced to public notification. The lack of female offenders in this sample is supportive of the literature stating that males are more likely to

be accused of sexual crimes against children than are females. As community notification and public registry requirements vary state-to-state, it is possible that larger samples that include female offenders can be gathered; and comparative studies would be a substantial contribution to the field.

There were likely several contributing factors as to why there were no female offenders on the registry. It has already been established that offenses committed by females are less likely to be reported (Gannon and Rose, 2008 Goodwin and DiVasto, 1979; Bouroughs, 2004), and that on average, males do commit more sexual offenses than females (Vandiver and Walker, 2002). This sample was contingent upon only those offenders who were assigned a level 3 risk in the state of Minnesota, and sentenced to community notification and registration on the public registry. Without digressing into the area of criminal justice and sentencing procedures, disparities among the treatment of males and females is another plausible explanation for female child sex offender not being represented in this sample.

Environmental grooming strategies were reported less frequently than victim grooming strategies, and speculatively this could be due the common conception that grooming is purely victim-centered. But also, environmental grooming tactics may be less recognized by those who are being groomed, and thus less likely to be reported as significant information related to the predatory offender's profile. Similarly, 114 cases were excluded because the profile failed to report a grooming strategy. Theory implies that grooming had to occur for an offense to take place. If theory holds true, a comparative analysis of criminal records and registry profile information might uncover patterns regarding what information tends to end up on the registry and what type of

information is left off. These limitations made it difficult to make strong and definitive conclusions.

Reporting bias is another plausible limitation of this study. The literature on grooming lists many variations of grooming strategies used by offenders. Without the primary criminal record there is no way to assess whether or not every grooming strategy was reported on the registry, or if some were selectively left out. The 114 cases missing the reporting of grooming strategies altogether is a strong indication that reporting bias occurred within this study sample.

The theoretical framework came with some limitations, as well. First, while Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition Model provided a solid foundation to build on, using Craven and colleagues' (2006) and Leberg's (1997) concepts of self, environment, and victim grooming, the original temporal nature that the offending process must take (in accordance with the theory) would be impossible to apply to this type of secondary data. Under the conditions of the model, environmental grooming would have to precede victim grooming, and if the theory held strong, every case that listed victim grooming would have a preceding environmental grooming strategy identified. Because there was such a disparity in grooming strategies listed, with far more victim grooming strategies being identified in cases, the Precondition Model was not fully satisfied. Further, there was an initial observed total of 289 sex offenders who had victims under the age of 17. However 114 cases failed to list a grooming strategy that was used, which also did not hold up to the conditions of the theory. Having addressed those theoretical violations, there were also strengths that emerged as a result of amalgamating the Precondition

Model with the concepts of self, environment, and victim grooming, which will be discussed in the succeeding section.

Additionally, because only a portion of the Precondition Model was used to categorize, explain, and develop the concept of grooming, the associated outcomes within this sample could not be fully fitted to the model. To explain further, the temporal order could not be assumed for two reasons. First, this study utilized secondary data on a public registry, so the available information was determined by the state. Second, the original Precondition Model includes four stages of Preconditions that parallel the concepts of self, environment, and victim grooming and include a starting point of having the motivation to offend. Without incorporating all four Preconditions in this study, it was not possible to explore the motivation and self-grooming characteristics of this sample.

Sample size was a notable limitation. To meet the assumptions of some statistical tests, a number of variables with very low frequencies were eliminated from bivariate and multivariate analyses and others were collapsed into binary variables (e.g., Offender Race, Victim Age, Relationship Status, and Sex). Collapsing the variables addressed statistical test violations, but also eliminated the possibility of examining relationships between every observed variable response. There was still a significant amount of analysis able to be conducted between the specific independent variables and specific grooming strategies, but the collapsing of categorical variables into binary response variables limited the depth of the investigation. The most notable example of this is with offender race/ethnicity. There were five racial/ethnic categories that were originally observed, however, because of the low frequencies observed of several minority race/ethnic groups, the best methodological approach was to examine race/ethnicity as

Whites vs. non-Whites. This limitation can be avoided in the future studies with larger sample sizes.

Further, the low frequency counts of environmental and victim grooming strategies was a limitation of this study. Some of the strategies that had to be omitted were strategies that have been shown to be common grooming tactics (e.g. befriending parent; using bribery) within past studies. Again, this is a drawback to using secondary data. One of the reasons for low frequencies could be the priority of information disseminated, and disconnect between what are the most pertinent pieces of information that a community should know about an offender. Is the primary purpose of the database to inform the community about that offender, or is it to inform the community about child sexual abuse? This topic is further explicated in the following section in a discussion about the implications of community notification laws, what has been shown in the past, and what this study contributes.

Lastly, one of the disadvantages to using secondary data is loss of the intimate details of the offense that is gained through direct data collection procedures, such as interviewing (which has been a common methodology in the past). Any detail, large or small, can be lost in translation, but with primary data collection and analysis, the researcher has the opportunity to go back to a specific case. With secondary data analysis, the information that is given is finite.

## **Chapter 6: Study Contributions and Implications**

### **Contributions**

Despite the existing limitations, this study contributes to the field of research in child sex offending, and child sex offenders in a number of ways. From a theoretical perspective and conceptual perspective, this study explicitly outlines what and how grooming is or can be identified; in contrast to many past studies that have attempted to either broadly defined the terms, or have interwoven the concepts within studies focusing on the etiology of child sex offending. Critics of the Precondition model were correct in several key areas, including the model being difficult to apply to the study of child sex offender etiology. This study showed that the catalytic Precondition model could be adapted to fit within one area of child sex offending and provide measureable outcomes. Utilizing components of the model, study findings illustrate how complex grooming is, the varying approaches that have been taken by the offenders in this modest sample, and highlighted the attention that needs to be given to the possibility of incorporating, within the public registry, more information about the grooming process used by these offenders. Moreover, the findings show that grooming strategies include multiple facets within and around the targeted child, and are so vast and all-encompassing in nature that it is imperative to determine how to best educate each and every stakeholder, including parent, child, caregiver, policy makers, and law enforcement professionals. Just as the notion that anyone can be a child sex offender, it seems that anyone can, not only be victimized, but can potentially be groomed.

Further, study findings add the component of how race/ethnicity plays a role in child sex offending. In the past, studies that focused on race/ethnicity typically looked at

how it affected arrest rates, prosecution outcomes, and sentencing. Along with race, basic demographic information was assessed for variations in grooming tactics used, which is an angle that had not been studied in depth. Breaking down one component present in many cases of child sex offending to examine demographic variations is a newer approach that paves the way for further studies.

This study provides a framework for possible comparative studies between sex offenders that target children and those that target adults, as both are included within the registry. Further, as scholars have called for a more cohesive and encompassing definition of grooming (Williams, 2014; Craven et al. 2006, 2007), instead, for this study, a conceptualization of grooming was implemented to include infinite patterns and behaviors used by child sex offenders. It was also shown that a broad and encompassing conceptualization of a multifaceted and deeply reaching problem, such as grooming, can steer researchers just as well, if not in clearer directions than the parameters that formal definitions impose.

From a policy perspective, which will be discussed further in the following section, this study demonstrated how public registries may be useful in areas other than the originally intended goals. Public registries might have the capacity to hold information that can show how grooming is broad and how it affects more people than just the child victim. Although this study was limited by its modest sample size, as noted in Chapter 4, because this study utilized a public database as the data source, replication is possible.

## **Implications**

Most importantly, what the results of this study point to, is the vastness, the depth, and the complexity of grooming strategies used by child sex offenders. The results, combined with past research show that grooming involves more than just the child victim, it can and oftentimes does include parents, caregivers, whole communities, and even institutions. These results mean that in order to effectively educate all of the stakeholders, and possible victims of grooming, more research needs to be done, and more importantly, we need to look at how research is disseminated, and to whom.

Despite the limitations of this study there are policy, research, and practice implications that can be taken away from both the design of the study and the results.

### **Policy implications**

Sex offender legislation has largely been developed and implemented in the wake of tragedies that have garnered the nation's attention, where the community as well as legislators have called for and demanded justice. The kidnapping of Jacob Wetterling initiated the mandate of a law enforcement database of all predatory offenders, and the rape and murder of Megan Kanka by a sex offender who lived on her street initiated the mandate of various levels and methods of community notification. This study provided the groundwork for viewing existing sex offender policies, and their efficacy from a different angle. More importantly though, it highlights the need to reevaluate many types of sex offender legislation: how those pieces of legislation are implemented, and to whom that information gets disseminated. A publicly accessible database is a good start to show that there is important information that can help bridge the gap in knowledge between law enforcement and the community, but it is contingent upon the community being

invested in looking at that overall picture, and knowing what to look for. Policy makers need to evaluate behaviors that are more prevalent, and present legislators and policy makers with empirically sound data before policies are enacted or amended. The results might point to changes in how information is presented in the school systems, and changes in how parental involvement in sexual abuse education is utilized in the school systems. Further, the results might suggest changes in how information is presented at any or all of the community notification processes.

This study demonstrated that community notification procedures have the capacity to do more than what their original intent was. At the time of data collection, there were a total of 289 offenders who had victims under the age of 18. Of the 289 offenders, only 175 cases had grooming tactics that were named and listed on their profile page. It cannot be determined whether or not the 114 excluded offenders used grooming tactics in their offenses, but it does highlight a lack of consistently available information. Appendix 5 lists all 289 cases and their corresponding county code, showing that there is not a distinguishable pattern of “excluded” information on grooming. Some potential next steps might be to assess how many people access this database and how much information they are learning from it, followed by a deeper investigation of how and why certain information gets listed for some offenders and not for others. If it can be shown that citizens who access the database and look at the profiles of offenders with their grooming strategies listed are more knowledgeable about grooming tactics and how or if they are likely to be victimized, a good case could be made for listing information about grooming strategies.

Theoretically, if a publicly accessible database lists more information about grooming strategies, an area that is pertinent to many sex offenders and offenses, then it is plausible that it can be used to help disseminate information that may help better educate the community. Again, this change could start by speaking with legislators and law enforcement nationwide, and presenting imperative information on grooming, and offering tangible options beyond community notification and the public registry, to get the information out to everyone.

Beyond legislation, there are thousands of private, and non-profit organizations devoted to educating about the risks of sexual abuse. Information about the depths of grooming could have a positive effect and impact on how those organizations disseminate their information, changes to their information, and to whom they present their information. The key is being able to reach and educate more people.

### **Research implications**

**Demographic research.** The results of this study point to demographic factors, such as race and age of the victim that warrant further investigation. To see whether or not environmental grooming and victim grooming strategies are significantly associated with the race beyond a comparison of White and non-White offenders, larger scale studies that can break down race further to reflect more categories would undoubtedly be beneficial. Other areas specific to race and grooming might compare how or if grooming strategies differ when the offender and victim are of the same race/ethnicity, or when they are of different races/ethnicities. Studies that can compare grooming patterns where the age difference between the offender (at the time of the offense) and the victim (at the time of the offense) is another area for future research. As the age range between the

offender and the victim decreases or increases, what is the pattern for grooming strategies?

**Examining commonalities.** This study focused on one aspect of child sexual offending that is highly prevalent, and addressed the diversity of patterns within that commonality. Grooming has been a consistent theme within literature, either implicitly or explicitly, and because of this, more research devoted to how grooming is influenced by external factors is a direction that should be taken. If the processes and tactics of grooming are as heterogeneous as the findings from this study suggest, that information would be quite informative for both policy and practice approaches. It was found in this study that race had some significant relationships with types of environmental grooming strategies and types of victim grooming strategies; however these findings were limited by the size of the sample and the resulting inability to make broad generalizations. Research that examines race and ethnicity along with contributing factors such as socioeconomic class, and cultural differences among races and ethnicities would likely help shed light differences in grooming strategies.

The evolutionary process that takes place for a child sex offender , is undoubtedly important and equally fascinating, Even as knowledge about other important components of child sex offending, the research devoted to sex offender etiology has not slowed down. There is still, however, a disconnect in knowledge, and a misconception of victimization still prevalent within the community, (Levenson, Zgoba, & Tewksbury 2007). As an example of the knowledge disconnect people continue to view and fear strangers as offenders versus someone they know, even though it has been shown that predators are more often people known to the victim (Beck & Travis, 2004; Department of Justice,

2000). I argue that the idea of heterogeneity has been a plausible hindrance to researchers, and possibly policy implementation, reformation, as well as treatment approaches.

**Replication.** With further development, this study has the capacity to be replicated on a larger scale, regardless of whether the same type of database was used. The expanded conceptualization can be applied to other types of databases, to gather both primary data, and or secondary data. For example ethnographic research could utilize this conceptualization, case record examination could also utilize this conceptualization to identify all of the possible grooming strategies that are used, and how many people those grooming strategies effect.

There were also observations during data collection that pointed to the potential of further research that could incorporate adult victims. There is a lack of research showing whether or not sexual predators who target adults versus children use grooming strategies. Further, if sexual offenders who target adults do use grooming strategies, do those strategies have distinguishable patterns of self, environment, and victim grooming processes? The current study utilizes a public database that houses the criminal information for all predatory sexual offenders, which opens the door for comparative research between those offenders who target adults versus those offenders who target children.

This study showed that the Precondition model, along with aspects of the conceptualizations of victim and environmental grooming, were able to be used as a framework to guide a study focused on one aspect of child sex offending, as opposed to studying the evolution of child sex offenders. Many scholars have focused on all of the

factors that may contribute to a person becoming a child sex offender citing similarities in sociological, psychosocial, and psychological traits, but again, emphasizing that the population as a whole is heterogeneous (Quinsey 1977; Canter, Hughes, & Kirby 1998; van Dam 2001). At its inception, the Precondition model was unique in that it theorized a temporal order of events that needed to occur before a person became a child sex offender, that any person had and has the propensity to become an offender, and that offenses can be stopped by that person in the midst of the of the process, and even suggests that victims have the potential to stop an offense if they fight off the offender or resist in a way that interferes with the fourth Precondition, overcoming the child's resistance (Finkelhor, 1984). Critics of the Precondition model have stated that they found it to be difficult to apply to studies examining child sex offender evolution due to the broad nature of the model's framework (Ward & Hudson, 2001; Beech & Ward, 2004; Burn & Brown, 2006). Amalgamating the Precondition model with the concepts of environment and victim grooming (Leberg, 1997; Craven et al. 2006) provided a stronger framework for this study, and helped create broader yet more concise conceptualization of grooming that was applicable to one area that has been shown to be highly prevalent in child sex offending.

### **Practice implications**

The results of this study suggest that certain relationship attributes are predictive of grooming strategies. Having a deeper understanding about how child sexual offenders use grooming tactics based on the sex of the child, as well as their relationship status with the child prior to the offense (for example whether that child was known, unknown, groomed through a website, or a family member) could potentially influence treatment

methods. If studies can be designed to account for offenders' proclaimed self-grooming strategies, treatment and practice could be positively influenced to yield more effective results in terms of successful rehabilitation and less recidivism. As an example, pending more research, results could point to offenders who utilize certain types of grooming strategies being more receptive to a cognitive behavioral therapy approach, whereas offenders who use a different type or combination of grooming strategies may be more receptive to a dialectical behavioral therapeutic approach. Conversely, if practitioners see positive differences in offender treatment that addresses specific grooming strategies, and combinations, treatment possibilities and efficacy could also change for how victims of child sexual abuse are approached.

These results could benefit how child sexual abuse education is given in the schools, the content of the information disseminated, and the approach used. In particular, if results from further research show that specific grooming strategies are more associated with ages, the information given to that age group could reflect those findings. Further, it might alert school officials to potential grooming that might be happening from teachers, administrators, fellow classmates/students, or other officials, aiding in earlier detection, and hopefully reducing the likelihood of offenses taking place.

### **Conclusion**

This study was driven by the gaps in the literature on grooming, in particular how grooming strategies were related to basic offender and victim characteristics, relationship status, and offense characteristics, as well as the absence of a formal construct of grooming. A secondary driving force was derived from the observed influx of attention on grooming given through various media outlets. Some of these observations have

included the allegations of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, most recently, the conviction of Larry Nassar for sexually abusing dozens of young gymnasts involved in USA Gymnastics, as well as popular television shows like *To Catch a Predator* (to identify just a few). The presence of these stories in the media has simultaneously shed light on the various avenues child sex offenders use to pursue and groom victims and potential victims, as well as their families. What these highly publicized news stories helped show was that grooming tactics reach far beyond just affecting the victim, indicating a need to better understand the role of grooming in child sex offending; leading to a study that also sought to understand grooming through a broader lens.

Unlike other studies devoted to child sex offending, this study showed that demographic and relationship attributes have significant relationships with the types of grooming strategies used by child sex offenders, as well as the total number of grooming strategies used by offenders, and further points to many areas where future research could continue to have implications. Grooming strategies reach further than they have been traditionally viewed (e.g., that they just affected the victim), to include multiple facets. It is only fair and ethical that grooming continue to be researched in ways that account for all possible stakeholders. The broadened conceptualization of grooming proposed and implemented in this study provides a basic starting point to be able to research the depths of grooming—not just from public registries, but through primary data collection, and other types of secondary data sources, as well. It allows researchers to identify multiple behaviors that are present in the grooming process, beyond what grooming has been thought to consist of in the past.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Minnesota Statute 609.341

Not all of the terms within this statute were present within cases in this study, but the definitions shed light on how the state defines what the crime details are, and are thus subsequently relevant to how grooming was identified and coded for each case in this study.

#### Figure 1

609.341 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1.Scope.

For the purposes of sections 609.341 to 609.351, the terms in this section have the meanings given them.

Subd. 2.Actor.

"Actor" means a person accused of criminal sexual conduct.

Subd. 3.Force.

"Force" means the infliction, attempted infliction, or threatened infliction by the actor of bodily harm or commission or threat of any other crime by the actor against the complainant or another, which (a) causes the complainant to reasonably believe that the actor has the present ability to execute the threat and (b) if the actor does not have a significant relationship to the complainant, also causes the complainant to submit.

Subd. 4.Consent.

(a) "Consent" means words or overt actions by a person indicating a freely given present agreement to perform a particular sexual act with the actor. Consent does not mean the existence of a prior or current social relationship between the actor and the complainant or that the complainant failed to resist a particular sexual act.

(b) A person who is mentally incapacitated or physically helpless as defined by this section cannot consent to a sexual act.

(c) Corroboration of the victim's testimony is not required to show lack of consent.

Subd. 5. Intimate parts.

"Intimate parts" includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks, or breast of a human being.

Subd. 6. Mentally impaired.

"Mentally impaired" means that a person, as a result of inadequately developed or impaired intelligence or a substantial psychiatric disorder of thought or mood, lacks the judgment to give a reasoned consent to sexual contact or to sexual penetration.

Subd. 7. Mentally incapacitated.

"Mentally incapacitated" means that a person under the influence of alcohol, a narcotic, anesthetic, or any other substance, administered to that person without the person's agreement, lacks the judgment to give a reasoned consent to sexual contact or sexual penetration.

Subd. 8. Personal injury.

"Personal injury" means bodily harm as defined in section 609.02, subdivision 7, or severe mental anguish or pregnancy.

Subd. 9. Physically helpless.

"Physically helpless" means that a person is (a) asleep or not conscious, (b) unable to withhold consent or to withdraw consent because of a physical condition, or (c) unable to communicate nonconsent and the condition is known or reasonably should have been known to the actor.

Subd. 10. Position of authority.

"Position of authority" includes but is not limited to any person who is a parent or acting in the place of a parent and charged with any of a parent's rights, duties or responsibilities to a child, or a person who is charged with any duty or responsibility for the health, welfare, or supervision of a child, either independently or through another, no matter how brief, at the time of the act. For the purposes of subdivision 11, "position of authority" includes a psychotherapist.

Subd. 11. Sexual contact.

(a) "Sexual contact," for the purposes of sections 609.343, subdivision 1, clauses (a) to (f), and 609.345, subdivision 1, clauses (a) to (e), and (h) to (o), includes any of the following acts committed without the complainant's consent, except in those cases where consent is not a defense, and committed with sexual or aggressive intent:

(i) the intentional touching by the actor of the complainant's intimate parts, or

(ii) the touching by the complainant of the actor's, the complainant's, or another's intimate parts effected by a person in a position of authority, or by coercion, or by inducement if the complainant is under 13 years of age or mentally impaired, or

(iii) the touching by another of the complainant's intimate parts effected by coercion or by a person in a position of authority, or

(iv) in any of the cases above, the touching of the clothing covering the immediate area of the intimate parts, or

(v) the intentional touching with seminal fluid or sperm by the actor of the complainant's body or the clothing covering the complainant's body.

(b) "Sexual contact," for the purposes of sections 609.343, subdivision 1, clauses (g) and (h), and 609.345, subdivision 1, clauses (f) and (g), includes any of the following acts committed with sexual or aggressive intent:

(i) the intentional touching by the actor of the complainant's intimate parts;

(ii) the touching by the complainant of the actor's, the complainant's, or another's intimate parts;

(iii) the touching by another of the complainant's intimate parts;

(iv) in any of the cases listed above, touching of the clothing covering the immediate area of the intimate parts; or

(v) the intentional touching with seminal fluid or sperm by the actor of the complainant's body or the clothing covering the complainant's body.

(c) "Sexual contact with a person under 13" means the intentional touching of the complainant's bare genitals or anal opening by the actor's bare genitals or anal opening with sexual or aggressive intent or the touching by the complainant's bare genitals or anal opening of

the actor's or another's bare genitals or anal opening with sexual or aggressive intent.

Subd. 12. Sexual penetration.

"Sexual penetration" means any of the following acts committed without the complainant's consent, except in those cases where consent is not a defense, whether or not emission of semen occurs:

(1) sexual intercourse, cunnilingus, fellatio, or anal intercourse; or

(2) any intrusion however slight into the genital or anal openings:

(i) of the complainant's body by any part of the actor's body or any object used by the actor for this purpose;

(ii) of the complainant's body by any part of the body of the complainant, by any part of the body of another person, or by any object used by the complainant or another person for this purpose, when effected by a person in a position of authority, or by coercion, or by inducement if the child is under 13 years of age or mentally impaired; or

(iii) of the body of the actor or another person by any part of the body of the complainant or by any object used by the complainant for this purpose, when effected by a person in a position of authority, or by coercion, or by inducement if the child is under 13 years of age or mentally impaired.

Subd. 13. Complainant.

"Complainant" means a person alleged to have been subjected to criminal sexual conduct, but need not be the person who signs the complaint.

Subd. 14. Coercion.

"Coercion" means the use by the actor of words or circumstances that cause the complainant reasonably to fear that the actor will inflict bodily harm upon the complainant or another, or the use by the actor of confinement, or superior size or strength, against the complainant that causes the complainant to submit to sexual penetration or contact against the complainant's will. Proof of coercion does not require proof of a specific act or threat.

Subd. 15. Significant relationship.

"Significant relationship" means a situation in which the actor is:

(1) the complainant's parent, stepparent, or guardian;

(2) any of the following persons related to the complainant by blood, marriage, or adoption: brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, first cousin, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, grandparent, great-grandparent, great-uncle, great-aunt; or

(3) an adult who jointly resides intermittently or regularly in the same dwelling as the complainant and who is not the complainant's spouse.

Subd. 16. Patient.

"Patient" means a person who seeks or obtains psychotherapeutic services.

Subd. 17. Psychotherapist.

"Psychotherapist" means a person who is or purports to be a physician, psychologist, nurse, chemical dependency counselor, social worker, marriage and family therapist, licensed professional counselor, or other mental health service provider; or any other person, whether or not licensed by the state, who performs or purports to perform psychotherapy.

Subd. 18. Psychotherapy.

"Psychotherapy" means the professional treatment, assessment, or counseling of a mental or emotional illness, symptom, or condition.

Subd. 19. Emotionally dependent.

"Emotionally dependent" means that the nature of the former patient's emotional condition and the nature of the treatment provided by the psychotherapist are such that the psychotherapist knows or has reason to know that the former patient is unable to withhold consent to sexual contact or sexual penetration by the psychotherapist.

Subd. 20. Therapeutic deception.

"Therapeutic deception" means a representation by a psychotherapist that sexual contact or sexual penetration by the psychotherapist is consistent with or part of the patient's treatment.

Subd. 21. Special transportation.

"Special transportation service" means motor vehicle transportation provided on a regular basis by a public or private entity or person that is intended exclusively or primarily to serve

individuals who are vulnerable adults or disabled. Special transportation service includes, but is not limited to, service provided by buses, vans, taxis, and volunteers driving private automobiles.

Subd. 22. Predatory crime.

"Predatory crime" means a felony violation of section 609.185 (first-degree murder), 609.19 (second-degree murder), 609.195 (third-degree murder), 609.20 (first-degree manslaughter), 609.205 (second-degree manslaughter), 609.221 (first-degree assault), 609.222 (second-degree assault), 609.223 (third-degree assault), 609.24 (simple robbery), 609.245 (aggravated robbery), 609.25 (kidnapping), 609.255 (false imprisonment), 609.498 (tampering with a witness), 609.561 (first-degree arson), or 609.582, subdivision 1 (first-degree burglary).

Subd. 23. Secure treatment facility.

"Secure treatment facility" has the meaning given in sections 253B.02, subdivision 18a, and 253D.02, subdivision 13.

## **Appendix 2: Environmental and Victim Grooming**

The expanded conceptualization of grooming to be used in conjunction with the rubric that follows to guide recording, organizing, and coding data.

**Environmental grooming** includes any act that manipulates the environment of the targeted child. This includes gaining access through family, friends, and abusing a position of authority (such as teacher, babysitter, or youth leader). Environmental grooming also includes getting the child into a physical location that is conducive to the offender to commit an act of sexual abuse.

**Victim grooming** includes any act that physically grooms the child, either over a short or long period of time. This can include gradual inappropriate touching, speaking about sex explicitly, telling sexual jokes, or exposing the child to pornography. Victim grooming can also include behaviors that coerce the child such as making the child promise to keep secrets, passive aggressive threats, or making the child feel like they have a special relationship. Victim grooming also includes physical incapacitation such as using chemical agents to lower victim's inhibitions. Victim grooming can also include bribing the child to gain trust and access such as offering drugs, pornography, alcohol, tobacco, candy, or toys.

## Appendix 2: Continued

This rubric shows how the concepts of environmental and victim grooming intersect with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Precondition.

	<b>Environmental Grooming</b>
<b>Overcoming External Inhibitions</b>	1. Involvement in youth group
	2. Befriending parents/caregivers
	3. Babysitting
	4. Marrying parent to access child
	5. Use a position of trust or authority
	6. Manipulate community members and/or adults who are close to the child
	7. Isolated victim's family
	8. Luring child into car
	9. Offending child at a specific location (i.e. offender's residence)
	10. Using public spaces to approach potential victims
	11. Breaking into a residence, habitat, or specific location to gain access
	12. Waited until child was in a sleeping state
	<b>Victim Grooming</b>
<b>Overcoming Child's Resistance</b>	1. Use of a chemical agent <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Provided access to alcohol, drugs, tobacco</li></ul>
	2. Physical force <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Physically restraining, hitting, kicking, punching</li></ul>
	3. Use of a weapon <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Assaulted with weapon</li><li>b. Intimidated or threatened with weapon</li></ul>
	4. Coercion
	5. Verbal threats against child
	6. Verbal threats against child's loved ones
	7. Isolated victim
	8. Engaged in sexually explicit conversation
	9. Exposure to pornography
	10. Bribery
	11. Telling sexually explicit jokes
	12. Exposure of self, or forced exposure of victim
	13. Solicited victim for sex or engaged in prostitution with a minor
	14. Befriended child
	15. Used a false pretense (i.e. "Can you help me find my dog?")
	16. Use of an accomplice

### Appendix 3: Codebook and Definition of Variables

Variable	Independent /Dependent	Description	Variable Name	Variable Type	Values
<b>Offender</b>					
<b>Demographics</b>					
Offender sex	Independent	Sex of the offender	OFFSX	Nominal	1 = M 2 = F * = Unspecified/Missing
Race/Ethnicity	Independent	Race and/or ethnicity of the offender	OFFRE	Nominal	1 = White 2 = White/Hispanic 3 = Black 4 = Black Hispanic 5 = Hispanic 6 = Asian/Pacific Islander 7 = American Indian 8 = Unknown Hispanic 9 = Other 10 = Unknown 11 = Other Hispanic * = Unspecified/Missing
Race/Ethnicity 2	Independent	Race/ethnicity collapsed into 3 categories		Nominal	1= White 2= African American 3= Other
Race/Ethnicity 3	Independent	Binary variable categorizing Whites and non-Whites		Dichotomous	1= White 2= Non-white
Age on registration	Independent	Age the offender will turn in the current calendar year (if birth date as not passed)	OFFAG CC	Continuous	## * = Unspecified/Missing
<b>Victim</b>					
<b>Demographics</b>					
Victim(s) developmental category	Independent	Age(s) of the victim or victims. Some states record the exact age of the victim at the time of the assault; whereas	VICAG	Nominal	1 = 0-2 years (infant) 2 = 3-5 years (toddler) 3 = 6-12 years (school age) 4 = 13 -17 years

		other states use age ranges.			(adolescent) 5 = Infant and toddler 6 = Infant and school age 7 = Infant and adolescent 8 = Toddler and school age 9 = Toddler and adolescent 10 = School age and adolescent 11 = Infant, toddler, school age and adolescent 12 = Infant, toddler, and school age 13 = Infant, toddler, and adolescent 14 = Toddler, school age, and adolescent * = Unspecified Juvenile/Missing
Victim Age Collapsed	Independent	Victim ages dichotomized		Dichotomous	1= Ages 6 through 17 2= Includes ages 5 and under
Victim(s) age range	Independent	Number of years in between youngest and oldest child victim (maximum child age is 17)	VICAG R	Continuous	##
Victim(s) sex	Independent	Sex of the victim(s)	VICSX	Nominal	1 = M 2 = F 3 = M and F * = Unspecified/Missing
<b>Relationship Attributes</b>					
Sex difference	Independent	Was the offender of the same sex as the victim or	OVDIFF SX	Nominal	1 = Same-sex 2 = Opposite-sex

		opposite sex			3 = Same and opposite * = Unspecified/Missing
Sex difference 2	Independent	Dichotomized sex difference where at least one victim was the same sex as the offender		Dichotomous	1= Opposite sex 2= Includes at least one same-sex victim
Relationship	Independent	Whether or not the victim was known or unknown prior to the offense	OVREL	Nominal	1= Known 2 = Unknown (stranger) 3= Known and Unknown * = Unspecified/Missing
Relationship 2	Independent	Binary variable where at least one victim was unknown to the offender		Dichotomous	1= Known 2= Includes at least one victim that was unknown

<b>Offense Details</b>					
Penetration	Independent	Includes sexual intercourse, oral penetration, anal penetration, and attempted penetration	ODPEN	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Peeping	Independent	Offender has a history of voyeurism; “peeping tom,” or forcing victim to undress	ODPEEP	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Produced child pornography	Independent	Promoted or produced child pornography	ODPRO CP	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Possessed child pornography	Independent	Had child pornography in addition to face-to-face victims	ODPOS SCP	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Fondling	Independent	Sexual contact/touching, attempted sexual touching OR forced sexual touching between victims	ODFON D	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Presence of multiple victims	Independent	Offender assaulted two or more victims	ODPMV	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No

HX of Adult Victims	Independent	Offender also assaulted adults included in the age range	ODAV	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Victim Witness	Independent	Offense included a secondary victim witness	ODVW	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Stalking	Independent	Offender stalked victim	ODSTK	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
<b>Victim Grooming</b>					
Use of Pornography	Dependent	Used pornography to lower victim's inhibitions, provided pornography to victims	VGPRN	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Use of Computer	Dependent	Presence of a computer in the crime, gained access to victim(s) online. This is coded as 'Victim Grooming' because literature suggests that offenders use the internet to meet potential victims and use grooming tactics such as sending explicit images and using sexual language to lower victims' inhibitions	VGCOM P	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Use of Alcohol/Drugs/Chemical Agent	Dependent	Provided drugs or alcohol, used a chemical agent to gain compliance (NOT to bribe)	VGCA	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Use of force	Dependent	Offender used physical force to gain compliance; physically overpowered victims; use of verbal force	VGFOR	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Exposed self	Dependent	Exposed self to victim(s); exhibitionism	VGEXP S	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Forced Exposure	Dependent	Offender forced victim to	VGEX	Dichotomous	1 = Yes

		undress	P		0 = No
Threatened/Coerced	Dependent	Used threats, coercion, or manipulation to gain compliance	VGTHC	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Promoted prostitution/Solicitation	Dependent	Promoted prostitution; approached victims to prostitute them; or solicitation	VGPRO S	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Use of Bribery	Dependent	Bribed or lured child with rewards (such as candy, games, toys)	VGBRB	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Use of Weapon	Dependent	Used a weapon to gain compliance	VGWP	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Befriended child	Dependent	Befriended child to gain access	VGBFC H	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Targeted Vulnerable Child	Dependent	Targeted a child with physical or mental deficits	VGVC	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Use of False Pretense	Dependent	Offender initiated contact via false pretenses (needs directions, needed help...etc.)	VCFP	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Accomplice	Dependent	Offender used an accomplice to help gain victim's compliance	VGACC	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Sexual Talk	Dependent	Offender used sexually explicit remarks	VGST	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Total Victim Grooming	Dependent	Total number of victim grooming strategies used	TOTVG	Count	

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**Environmental**

**Grooming**

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Use of a Car	Dependent	Approached victim in car, pulled victim into car, or assaulted victim in car	EGCAR	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Position of authority	Dependent	Used position of authority or trust to gain access to victim(s)	EGPOA	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Befriended parent/caregiver	Dependent	Befriended a parent or adult in child victim's	EGBFPC	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No

Babysat	Dependent	life to gain access Offender assaulted victim(s) while babysitting, or gained access via babysitting or offering to babysit	EGBBY S	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Kidnapping/Impri sonment	Dependent	Offender moved child from one location to another to commit offense and/or held victim against his/her will; OR forced victim to transport them	EGKID N	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Public Space	Dependent	Offender gained access by meeting victims in a public space	EGPS	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Breaking into Residence	Dependent	Offender broke into the residence of the victim	EGBE	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Targeted sleeping or unconscious child	Dependent	Offender targeted a child who was already sleeping or unconscious (this is an environmental grooming tactic because the offender didn't manipulate the child into the unconscious state; offender waited for the environment to change into a conducive state)	EGTSU C	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Brought victim to home	Dependent	Offender brought child to his/her residence to engage in sexual contact	EGHOM	Dichotomous	1 = Yes 0 = No
Total Environment Grooming	Dependent	The total number of environmental strategies used	TOTEN V	Count	
Total Grooming	Dependent	Total number of grooming strategies used	TOTGR M	Count	

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## **Appendix 4: Data Collection Notes and Procedures**

### **Inclusion Criteria**

**I:** For an offender to be included in the sample they must have contact with victims aged 17 and under

(a) Those cases that include offenders who were convicted of “possession of child pornography” only are NOT included in this study

**II:** Once it has been established that the offender has had sexual contact with a victim or victims aged 17 and under, they must have at least one recorded grooming technique within their profile

### **Classifying relationships**

(1) If an offender is “known” to their victim(s) it will be recorded as it is displayed within the case profile

(2) If an offender is “unknown” to their victim(s) it will be recorded as it is displayed within the case profile

(a) If it specifies that the offender met the victim online and then pursued a sexual relationship or sexual contact with the child, the relationship status will be recorded as “unknown”

(3) If the case involves both known and unknown victims, it will be recorded as such

(4) If the relationship is not recorded this variable will be listed as missing

(5) Partial information is recorded as missing

(6) If the case specifies that the offender was known to one victim and that there are multiple victims, the case will be recorded as both known and unknown

(7) If the case specifies that the offender and the victim had “just met” prior to the assault, the relationship status is recorded as unknown

### **Racial demographic data**

(1) Race description is recorded as represented on the registry. If a registrant is reported to be “white” but looks “black” they will be recorded as the registration record depicts.

### **Age**

(1) For raw data, age is recorded as it is displayed

(a) If a range is given, the range is recorded (i.e. 6-9)

(b) If all ages are given, all ages are recorded in the raw data (i.e. 6, 8, and 9)

(C) the case is still used if labeled “Juvenile to adult” for age range

(2) Offenders who have child victims and adult victims are included and labeled as either “juvenile” or “adolescent”

(a) If adult victims are also present in the case, the age range will reflect ONLY that of the child victims up to the age of 17

(1) Age of the victim(s) is coded in two separate ways

(a) Coded first by developmental category

(b) Coded then by the age gap between the youngest victim and oldest

(2) Age for offender will be recorded as given, but only used for purposes of descriptive analysis

(3) Partial information is recorded as missing

## **Sex**

(1) For raw data, victim sex is recorded as displayed

- (a) female
- (b) male
- (c) male and female

(1) Coding victim sex includes three categories

- (a) same-sex
- (b) opposite-sex
- (c) same and opposite-sex

(2) Sex of the offender is recorded as given

## **Race/Ethnicity**

(1) Race/ethnicity is recorded as it is given on the registry profile

(a) separate racial/ethnic categories are created as indicated by the raw data

**Offense details:** Offense details include the information about the offense that is not specifically grooming and is not a demographic or relationship attribute.

(1) If the offense details indicate that an act was “attempted,” it will be coded as if the act had been completed; due to the intent being there

(2) If the offender has a history of child pornography possession ONLY it is NOT included

(3) If there is specification that the offender has a past history of sexual contact with a minor but that that contact is not part of their online profile, then it WILL NOT count as the offender having multiple victims

(5) Offense details are not recorded if they are specific to crimes committed when the offender was a juvenile

**Grooming:** The concepts and rubric given in Appendix 1 will be used as the guiding instrument for categorizing, organizing, recording, and coding environmental and victim grooming information

(1) “Knocking on door” is recorded as using a false pretense

(2) If a verbal threat of a weapon was specified, the grooming tactic is coded as “used threats/coercion/manipulation” and not “use of a weapon”

(3) If offense details/grooming strategies are specific to adult offenses they are NOT included

## Appendix 5: Missing grooming strategies by county

I	County		Total Grooming Strategies Used							Total	
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6		7
As S	A	Count	5	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	12
		% of Total	1.7%	1.4%	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%
	B	Count	25	32	22	13	4	0	0	0	96
		% of Total	8.7%	11.1%	7.6%	4.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.2%
	C	Count	14	8	6	4	0	1	1	2	36
		% of Total	4.8%	2.8%	2.1%	1.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	12.5%
	D	Count	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
		% of Total	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
	E	Count	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		% of Total	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	F	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	G	Count	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
		% of Total	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
	H	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	I	Count	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	6
		% of Total	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
	J	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
K	Count	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
	% of Total	0.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	
L	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
M	Count	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	
N	Count	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
	% of Total	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	
O	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
P	Count	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	
	% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	
Q	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
R	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
S	Count	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	
	% of Total	0.0%	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	

T	Count	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	% of Total	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
U	Count	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
V	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
W	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
X	Count	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	% of Total	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Y	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Z	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
AA	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
BB	Count	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
CC	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
DD	Count	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
EE	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
FF	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
GG	Count	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
	% of Total	1.7%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%
HH	Count	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	% of Total	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
II	Count	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
	% of Total	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
JJ	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
KK	Count	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
LL	Count	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
MM	Count	2	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	6
	% of Total	0.7%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
NN	Count	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2

	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
OO	Count	10	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	22
	% of Total	3.5%	2.1%	1.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%
PP	Count	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	% of Total	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
QQ	Count	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	% of Total	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
RR	Count	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	% of Total	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
SS	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
TT	Count	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	% of Total	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
UU	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
VV	Count	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
	% of Total	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
WW	Count	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
XX	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	Count	114	90	48	28	5	1	1	2	289
	% of Total	39.4%	31.1%	16.6%	9.7%	1.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	100.0%