

GLOBAL SEXUAL DEVIANCY: LEARNING FROM AMERICA'S MISTAKES

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Abstract

Sexual Deviancy is a global issue, and efforts to standardize treatment have produced programs that do not support cultural understanding and sensitivity. With the rise of sexual offenses around the world, and the demand for public safety, sex offender treatment programs must be examined before countries without treatment and management programs adopt the ones currently being implemented. In order to gain a better understanding on a global scale, the perceived effectiveness of sex offender treatment programs in the United States and Japan was evaluated by administering a questionnaire to a sample of the general population and by interviewing mental health professionals in order to discover if treatment modalities exist that would provide cross-cultural utility. The results suggest a need for further research on and implementation of sex offender treatment approaches that would be more effective than current programs. Results also revealed continued beliefs in sex offender myths, and a perceived ineffectiveness of current sex offender management laws.

Keywords: Treatment effectiveness, sexual offender treatment, sex offender policy, registration, Megan's law

Introduction

“I think men are universally perverted; it's just that in Japan, we do something about it.”

-Mr. Taniguchi, a 65-year-old brothel customer (Sinclair, 2006, p. 29)

Sexual offending is a problem that is not unique to any one culture, but one that crosses all geographical and societal boundaries. Governmental efforts-- including policies and laws aimed at controlling perpetrators-- as well as psychotherapeutic efforts—geared toward education and remediation have been shown to be only partially effective.

It is both interesting and humorous to note that research conducted at the end of the 19th century led to this groundbreaking revelation in the quest to understand this new breed of criminal, the sexual offender:

It may be noted that Marro, in his careful anthropological study of criminals (*I Caratteri dei Delinquenti*) found no class of criminal with so large a proportion alike of anomalies of the nose and anomalies of the genital organs as sexual offenders. (Ellis, 1927, p. 52)

Research in sexual offending has no doubt evolved since the days of Marro and Ellis, and new dimensions of these crimes, along with global pervasiveness, brought forth new areas, including the typology of sex offenses.

Types of sexual offenses are relatively the same throughout the world—exhibitionism, frotage, child sexual abuse, rape, and sexually motivated murder, to name a few. Although the list of sexual crimes can be applied to perpetrators of sexual offenses throughout the world, some crimes are more prevalent in certain countries than others, as perpetrators are motivated and aroused by a variety of personal and sexual preferences and fetishes.

Treatment also varies from country to country, and many Western countries strive to set the standards of efficient and effective punishments and laws, psychological modalities,

and sexual offender treatment programs. While some praise these efforts, others are critical, and since the purpose of this study was to investigate the problem of sexual offending from a global perspective, the United States and Japan were chosen because they share similar statistics with respect to sexual offending behavior, yet present culturally distinct approaches to conceptualizing and treating the issue.

This study investigated the relative effectiveness of current therapeutic modalities and treatment programs for sexual offenders, and sought to discover the potential utility of incorporating Japanese and American treatment modalities cross-culturally by addressing the following research questions:

1. In what ways have traditional treatment approaches to sexual offending in the US and Japan been effective and ineffective?
2. Are there differing treatment modalities specific to each country that can provide cross-cultural utility?
3. Has the introduction of Megan’s Law assisted with the treatment and reintegration process, as well as public safety, of sex offenders in the United States, and how could a similar law affect Japan?

It was hypothesized that both the general population and mental health professionals would perceive current sex offender treatment programs as insufficient for reducing new sexual offenses and recidivism rates, and that certain aspects of American and Japanese treatment approaches could provide cross-cultural utility.

Main Text

An outsider perspective on a culture’s beliefs and behaviors often provides amusement, as it is oftentimes misled by bias, misperception, and ignorance. A prime example of this skewed perspective is a study that aimed to answer the question, “Are some cultures more likely to be in love with others?”: “Because of differences in the value dimension of individualism versus collectivism, Sprecher and colleagues (1994) proposed that Americans are most likely to be in love, Russians next most likely, and Japanese least likely” (Hill, 2008, p. 295).

In Japan, sexuality and sex crimes have a complex and nuanced relationship because there are so many genres of what many consider to be sexually deviant expression. Before exploring some of the types of deviant expressions, a brief history of the sex crime that launched the country into a frenzy should be of focus.

In 2004, Kaoru Kobayashi, a newspaper deliveryman in Nara, was arrested for kidnapping, raping, and murdering a 7-year-old girl, and once the crime was discovered, Kaoru’s past was revealed: “In 1989, he was given a suspended sentence for molesting eight young people. In 1991, he was sentenced to three years in prison for the near strangulation of a 5-year-old girl” (Sasaki & Sumida, 2005, para. 3). The community was outraged that the public was not notified about a repeat sexual offender living and working in Nara, and more information was given that exposed a lack of communication and collaboration between law enforcement agencies.

While this specific sex crime brought sexual offenders to the forefront of criminal concern in Japan, other significant unconventional sexual behaviors were and still continue to be present, including coercive sexual behaviors, such as rape, sexual harassment, incest, prostitution, and sexually violent literature (Hatano & Shimazaki, 2004).

These sex crimes hide in the shadow of current sexually deviant behavior expressed in what some may view as “healthy” sexual expression. For example, Japanese animation, or *Anime* as it is known across the world, has been criticized for portraying women in negative ways: “These videos normally featured ‘cute’ heroines drawn in anime style, with childlike round faces and fully developed bodies” (Shiokawa, 1999, pp. 112-114). When one looks past popular Japanese animated cartoons, such as *Dragonball Z* and *Pokemon*, one finds that anime

is well known for being brutally violent and sexual, placing these childlike women “in increasingly explicit and usually violent sexual scenarios, including rape and bondage” (Shiokawa, 1999, p. 114).

While Americans fear pedophiles lurking in playgrounds, the Japanese are facing a threat that is far more a reality than it is paranoia: *lolicon*. Stemming from Vladimir Nabokov’s controversial 1955 novel, *Lolita*, *lolicon* is short for Lolita Complex, and refers to the “predilection of a middle-aged man to love and desire a young girl, who could be her father’s age” (Shigematsu, 1999, p. 129). *Lolicon manga*, or graphic comic books, are banned in many countries, and with the emergence of *toddlercon* (*manga* depicting toddler-aged children in sexual situations), there has been a push on the community and political levels to ban *lolicon* from comic book stores in Japan.

Because comics cater mostly to men, the image of women as mere sex objects needs to be addressed. This image is further depleted by Japan’s *shasei sangyoo*, or “Ejaculation Industry,” which consists of Soaplands, Telephone and Image Clubs, and Pink Salons that sell sex while finding creative ways to work around the law (Louis, 1992; Sinclair, 2006).

Similar to the United States, the percentage of Japanese female perpetrators is much lower than their male counterparts. According to Taguchi, Taira, Ikeda, and Kiryu (2010), it is not clear how many female sex criminals actually exist in society, but that number is most likely small. According to the Criminal Statistics Document of Japan (2007), from 1998 to 2007 240 female sex criminals were arrested (24 women per year, on average), making the ratio of female offenders to sex crimes 0.7% during those ten years.

While the United States offers many conflicting theories on sexual offending, Japan surprisingly is hesitant when considering the potential reasons behind sexual offending, and that is because careful consideration is being made to both define sex crimes and properly educate the public. Taguchi et al. (2010) offer insight into this hesitation:

When people hear the word “sex crime,” different people interpret the word differently – most are not too familiar with it. Some will be sensitive to the word “sex” itself. On the other hand, people with experiences with sex crimes may have a feeling of anger, fear, shame, and regret. However, the actual sex crimes that occur and how the general population perceives sex crimes are far different. You can even say many have false understandings. (p. 1)

Taguchi et al. (2010) believe that a better definition of “sex crime” that is not influenced by time, culture, and socially common ideas, is required, and that in order to prevent new sex crimes and re-offenses, it is necessary to get rid of the misunderstandings and understand the correct present state of sex crimes (p. 2). Only then are researchers able to move forward with theory and offender program implementation.

Despite this warning, sexual offender theories exist in Japan. Popular sex offender theories are based on foreign countries’ theories, namely Canada and England (although it should be noted that England models much of its sex offender programs on Canada’s model) (Fujimoto, 2008). Other theories are based on culture, societal influences, and human development (Oda, 1994).

Japan has laws in place to protect its citizens while appropriately punishing *seihanzai*, or sex criminals; however, there are no laws mandating lifetime registration for convicted sex criminals, such as the United States’ Megan’s Law. The Nara case inspired many politicians and law enforcement agents to call for the adoption of a similar requirement because even though Kobayashi did have prior convictions of sexual offenses against children, the address of where he was going to live after his release was not known by local police, as the information of the release itself and his address were not provided to the police by the Ministry of Justice, who is in charge of managing prisons and the prisoners who are released (Matsui, 2007). Moreover, during that time while he was in jail, there were very few treatments for sex offenses.

Since the Nara case, the Ministry of Justice conferred with the National Police Agency that the offenders' release information be shared between the two agencies beginning June 1, 2005, allowing for sex criminals' to be monitored (Matsui, 2007). In addition, prison law has been revised so that re-education and treatment (making perpetrators understand their victims' suffering, the results of their crimes, how to control sexually deviant urges and impulses, etc.) during imprisonment will happen.

Nonetheless, proposals for action to reduce recidivism have been gaining both public and local government support, the most notable being an anti-recidivism law that would make information on inmates available to the public. Supporters, such as Hidemichi Morosawa, a professor of criminal law policy and victimology at Tokiwa University's graduate school, states Japan needs "a system to build a database on criminals that can be shared by police, prosecutors, courts and psychiatrists" (Sasaki & Sumida, 2005, para. 17); however, Yoji Morita, a professor of criminal sociology at Osaka Shoin Women's University, says Japan isn't ready for data sharing, fearing it could lead to discrimination against those with criminal records (Sasaki & Sumida, 2005).

According to Sakuta (2006), the reasons why discussions on whether or not to implement Megan's Law in Japan come up in the first place is because of (a) the undercurrent movements of administrative and political attempts to enact new and critical law based on very specific, unique, and uncommon incidents that only occur at a frequency of once every few years; and (b) the media's sensationalizing of these crimes, which sway public opinion. If this situation remains, this could lead to public misunderstanding, so it is desired that every citizen have accurate knowledge and judgment of sex crimes, criminal rates and trends, offender treatment and rehabilitation, and victims' actual conditions (Sakuta).

Sex offender crimes and accompanying punishment, including registration, are at the forefront of Japanese legislation, with many prefectures calling for an adoption of harsher laws that will give the public a feeling of security and protection against perpetrators. Opponents argue indecent and obscene sexual acts are still ambiguous, and therefore unconstitutional. Researchers and lawmakers are debating whether registration requirements and public notification will be effective, but while experts debate, it appears that the consensus is clear: What is needed are treatments and correctional education of sex offenders in Japan that will control sexual behaviors prior to committing crimes (Matsui, 2007).

Current treatment in Japan is not standardized as it is in the United States. In April 2005, the "Study of Sex Offender Treatment Program" was launched, and the scientific and systematic recidivism prevention program was developed, which included the prevention of recidivism, protection for women and children, enhanced public safety, a collaboration between correctional facilities and probation officers, including the exchange of perpetrator information, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Relapse Prevention (Fujimoto, 2008, p. 1).

In addition, according to the Justice Ministry, Japanese prisons offer counseling to convicted sex offenders. Despite these efforts, Fujimoto (2008) warns,

Cognitive behavioral therapy is not universal, is not perfect. During the study of treatment program development, it goes without saying that there was an agreement that there is still a need for consideration of modalities for treatment and prevention of recidivism for those who do not apply to cognitive-behavioral therapy. (p. 3)

Summary

Sexually deviant behavior appears to manifest itself in different ways depending on the country, but steps have been taken on national and local levels to criminalize sexually deviant acts, understand why these acts are being committed, and treat those who commit them. The literature also revealed that the United States and Japan have both generally accepted cognitive-behavioral therapy with relapse prevention as the preferred sexual offender

treatment method, although it is unclear exactly how influential this approach is in each country and how its effectiveness is perceived.

Method

Participants

In order to address all of the research questions and hypotheses, it was necessary to recruit participants from both the mental health field and the general population in both the United States and Japan. Specifically, the samples for this project consisted of the following groups:

Ten American mental health practitioners, licensed in the state of California to practice marriage and family therapy or clinical social work, and who worked directly with sexual offenders or victims.

Ten Japanese mental health practitioners, licensed in Japan to practice the equivalent of marriage and family therapy or clinical social work, and who worked directly with sexual offenders or victims.

One hundred adult (18 years of age or older) American men and women from the general public.

One hundred adult (18 years of age or older) Japanese men and women from the general public.

The selection criteria for the American and Japanese mental health practitioners consisted of licensure, experience working with sexual offenders, and the ability to verbally consent to the interview process. Interview participants were first selected based on his or her profession (mental health counselor, marriage and family therapist, licensed clinical social worker, psychiatrist, and any other person authorized to provide mental health services to sexual offenders) and work with pertinent mental health counseling centers.

The selection criteria for members of the American and Japanese general population consisted of age (18 years of age and older), and the ability to verbally consent to participate in completing the questionnaire. Questionnaire participants were recruited in public areas, such as supermarkets, outdoor shopping centers, and train stations. Participants were approached in these areas and asked to complete a questionnaire on sexual offending and the perceived effectiveness of sexual offender treatment and laws. Because non-English speaking populations were targeted for participation in the research project, translated oral consent scripts were used, along with a Japanese interpreter.

Materials

Permission was obtained from Jill S. Levenson to use the questionnaire that was originally created for her study, *Public Perceptions About Sex Offenders and Community Protection Policies*. The questionnaire is a 51-item instrument “devised to gather information from community members about their perceptions of sex offenders, their familiarity with notification laws, and their opinions about the ability of community protection strategies” (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007, p. 9). Because the questionnaire was based on sex offender policies in the state of Florida, it had to not only be slightly altered to accommodate participants who may or may not have been familiar with California sexual offender laws, but it also had to be translated into Japanese for use with Japanese participants.

According to Levenson et al. (2007), the survey incorporated previous research considerations that inquired about offenders and community notification policies, and covered five general areas: participant familiarity with community notification, types of information that should be disclosed to the public, beliefs and perceptions about sex offenders and sex crimes, opinions about prison sentences, psychological treatments, and probation, and finally, perceived effectiveness of community protection strategies.

The structured interview questions used to interview mental health professionals on their experiences and perceived effectiveness of current sex offender treatment modalities were created for this study by the author and primary researcher, and were also translated into Japanese to accommodate the Japanese mental health practitioners. The interview contained 10 questions inquiring about professional experiences working with sex offenders, common treatments, the perceived effectiveness and ineffectiveness of traditional approaches, and opinions on Megan's Law and lifetime registration. Participants were encouraged, but not required, to answer all of the questions as thoroughly as possible.

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and *t*-tests were used to determine mean differences.

Procedure

Interview participants in Los Angeles, California, and in Tokyo, Japan, were informally contacted by email or phone for initial recruitment during the month of December 2011. No script was used for this informal communication. Upon receiving an informal written or verbal commitment to participate, the primary researcher (and the translator, when needed) visited the participants during the months of December 2011, and January 2012, and conducted the interview. An oral consent script was used prior to beginning the interview process. Because non-English speaking populations were targeted for participation in the research project, translated oral consent scripts were used, along with a Japanese interpreter. On average, the interview lasted between 10 and 20 minutes, and at no time was any personal identifying information collected or documented.

Questionnaire participants were chosen at random amongst crowds of people shopping at various venues. Attempts were made to ask each person or group of people for participation in order to not bias the sample. Potential questionnaire participants were approached in a public setting and their participation was solicited by explaining the project and reciting the oral consent form. Any questions they had were answered prior to being handed the questionnaire, and after they verbally consented, they receive the document to fill out. On average, the questionnaire took between 10 to 15 minutes to fill out, and at no time was any identifying information asked, collected or documented.

Data Preparation and Results

The data received from Japanese participants (general population and mental health practitioners) was transcribed, translated into English, and checked for linguistic accuracy by two Japanese translators. Because two countries and two samples within those countries were studied in this investigation; therefore, it will be necessary to present the results by country.

The United States

Questionnaire

One hundred adult (18 years of age or older) American men and women from the general public were given a questionnaire that measured participants' knowledge of sex offenders, sex offender laws and community notification strategies, and perceived effectiveness of these laws and treatment.

Questions number one, two, and eight reveal much with regards to the general public's views on the effectiveness and fairness of the community notification laws. In question one, 60% of the participants believed the community notification laws create little to no reduction in the number of sex offenses committed; only 5% believed the laws to be effective. The second question inquired as to the perceived fairness of the notification laws: 55% believed the laws were "mostly" to "completely fair" (40% "mostly fair," 10% "fair," 5% "completely fair"); 45% believed them to be "unfair" or "somewhat unfair" (10% "unfair," 35% "somewhat unfair"). Question eight asked participants how offenders' feelings of shame

would impact reoffending: 60% believed shame would reduce re-offenses (20% significantly reduce chances of reoffending, 40% slightly reduce).

After questions one and two, the next set of questions dealt with known methods of community notification (law enforcement or members of a community notifying residents of that community that a sex offender has moved into the area), from posted or circulated flyers to community meetings (see Table 1). The majority of participants either stated the listed notifications never occur in their neighborhood or they were unaware of them occurring, even though 40% reported local newspapers publishing the whereabouts of local sex offenders.

Participants' perceptions and beliefs were measured with the next set of questions asking for believed percentages regarding sex offenders and sex crimes (see Table 2). Participants believed 51% of sex offenders will commit another sex offense (61% of convicted child molesters, 59% of rapists), and that more than half of offenders (54%) were abused as children; participants also believed over half of boys and girls who are sexually abused are abused by someone they knew prior to the offense (53% and 52% respectively); lastly, participants estimated that 81% of sex offenders are male.

While the purpose of this study was not to replicate Levenson et al.'s (2007) study, a modified version of their questionnaire was used to gauge the public's perceived effectiveness of current sex offender treatment and notification laws. Levenson et al.'s study (2007) revealed participants' skepticism regarding the value of psychological therapy in preventing recidivism even though 73% would likely "support such policies even in the absence of scientific evidence that they achieved their goals" (pp. 12-13).

Table 3 shows the results from the question, "Which of the Following Do You Believe Would Be Helpful in Reducing Child Sexual Abuse?" (Question 35), highlighting the perceived effectiveness not of tougher laws or longer prison sentences, but of in-prison treatment (80%), outpatient programs (75%), and society education about sexual offending (70%).

Although Levenson et al.'s (2007) study was conducted five years prior to this study, the results are similar, and strongly suggest that the public continues to hold onto misconceptions about sex offenders and crimes. The results also point to an entrenched skepticism about the effectiveness of treatment and community notification laws. The results also point to a hesitancy supporting policies that lack scientific evidence of reducing sexual offenses (30% answered "Partially True" and only 5% answered "Completely True" to the question "I would support these policies even if there is no scientific evidence showing that they reduce sexual abuse).

Compared to Levenson et al.'s (2007) study, the results show an increase in the public's awareness of sexual offender crimes, policies, and a desire to find new ways to lower recidivism, including educating not only the offenders, but also the public themselves.

Interview

Ten American mental health practitioners, licensed in the state of California to practice marriage and family therapy or clinical social work, and who worked directly with sexual offenders and victims, were asked ten questions created specifically for this study. Although the interview was structured, the interviewees were not required to answer any of the questions, and the interviewer often raised other questions related to the discussion (e.g., "How effective are current treatment modalities?"). The answers were documented, and categories were identified based upon frequency of occurrence and relevancy to the main topic of sexual offenders and treatments.

Three main treatment modalities were identified based on the responses: (a) Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with a focus on Relapse Prevention (RP); (b) Psychotherapy (non-specific); and (c) The Good Lives Model (GLM) (see Table 4). The Containment Model was

also mentioned significantly, as was the need for an in-prison treatment program (currently there is no mandatory psychological counseling for incarcerated sex offenders) (see Table 4).

As Table 4 illustrates, the main treatment used for sex offender management is Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Relapse Prevention (RP). With regards to this study's research questions, interviewees listed the three main ways traditional treatment approaches to sexual offending have been effective as (a) group therapy sessions (80%), (b) sex offender education (e.g., teaching offense accountability and victim empathy) (90%), and (c) identifying cognitive distortions (70%). Interviewees also listed ineffective facets of treatment, the most notable being (a) the length of treatment (90%), (b) the setting of treatment goals (70%), and (c) the communication between therapist and parole/probation department (60%).

All respondents recognized the good intentions of Megan's Law, but admitted the system is flawed (difficulty reintegrating sex offenders into society, all offenders placed under one "umbrella"). While all respondents reported significant change in their ideas, attitudes, and approaches since working with sex offenders, none of them could identify any current treatment modality that could provide cross-cultural utility.

Japan Questionnaire

One hundred adult (18 years of age or older) Japanese men and women from the general public were also given the same questionnaire that measured participants' knowledge of sex offenders, sex offender laws and community notification strategies, and perceived effectiveness of these laws and treatment, translated into Japanese. Although Japan does not have sex offender laws and methods of community notification similar to those in the United States, there has been much publicity over the potential implementation of similar laws and notifications, and therefore most of the participants were familiar with the content and understood the hypothetical nature of this portion of the study.

As stated in the previous section, the first two questions create a foundation for the proceeding questions, as they inquire about the general public's views on the effectiveness and fairness of the United States' community notification laws: 35% of the participants believed the community notification laws would create little to no reduction in the number of sex offenses committed; 35% believed the laws would be effective or very effective. The second question inquired as to the perceived fairness of the notification laws: 75% believed the laws were "mostly" to "completely fair" (42.5% mostly fair, 22.5% fair, 10% completely fair); 25% believed them to be "unfair" or "somewhat unfair" (5% unfair, 20% somewhat unfair).

After questions one and two, the next set of questions dealt with known methods of community notification (see Table 1). Although Japan has no national or local laws requiring sex offender registration of information or community notification (the majority of responses fell into the "Never" or "Don't Know" categories), 2.5% of Japanese participants reported local newspapers publishing the whereabouts of local sex offenders.

The next set of questions asking for believed percentages regarding sex offenders and sex crimes. Participants believed 57% of sex offenders will commit another sex offense (60% of convicted child molesters, 62% of rapists), and that 42% were abused as children; participants also believed close to 40% of boys and girls who are sexually abused are abused by someone they knew prior to the offense (37% and 39% respectively); lastly, participants estimated that 85% of sex offenders are male (see Table 2). Interestingly, participants believed that strangers commit 55% of sex assaults (see Table 2).

Table 3 shows the results from question, "Which of the Following Do You Believe Would Be Helpful in Reducing Child Sexual Abuse?" (Question 35), highlighting the perceived effectiveness not of tougher laws or longer prison sentences, but of in-prison

treatment (62.5%), outpatient programs (52.5%), and society education about sexual offending (60%). Almost half of the participants believed GPS monitoring would be helpful in reducing sex crimes (see Table 3).

Although Levenson et al.'s (2007) study was never conducted in a foreign country, conducting it in Japan is significant because many parts of the country are considering adopting similar, if not identical, community notification and sex offender registration policies and procedures. The results reveal the Japanese general public continues to hold onto misconceptions about sex offenders and crimes, is skeptical about the effectiveness of treatment and community notification laws, but would be willing to support policies that lack scientific evidence showing they reduce sexual offenses (25% answered "Partially True" and 32.5% answered "Completely True" to the question "I would support these policies even if there is no scientific evidence showing that they reduce sexual abuse).

Despite this revelation, the questionnaire results also reveal a desire to find new ways to lower recidivism rates besides registration and community notification, being mindful of publicly shaming and ostracizing members of Japanese society who commit a sex crime.

One questionnaire participant wrote,

Sex crimes cannot be forgiven, however, when it comes to community notification, there are damages that family members and people around will suffer as well. I believe that the communication notification is necessary when sex crime has been committed twice or more.

Another participant wrote,

Although I think it is necessary for a measure to stop sex offender recidivism, in a close-knit society like Japan, there is also a risk of people retaliating those who are desperately trying to get back on their feet. It is important that the society as a whole understands and responds to these problems correctly.

Another warned,

I have been a victim of a sex crime. There is a very strong curiosity of wanting to know the criminal's information, however, if notifying the community invades the right of the offenders, it seems as though it may lead to a more flagrant crime. Therefore, it is questionable whether community notification law prevents recidivism.

Interview

Ten Japanese mental health practitioners, licensed in Japan to practice the American equivalent of marriage and family therapy or clinical social work, and who worked directly with sexual offenders and victims, were asked ten questions created specifically for this study. Like the interviews conducted in the United States, the interview was structured, and although the interviewees were not required to answer any of the questions, other questions were raised throughout the process. The responses were documented, and categories were identified based upon frequency of occurrence and relevancy to the main topic of sexual offenders and treatments.

Three main treatment modalities were identified based on the responses: (a) Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with a focus on Relapse Prevention (RP); (b) Psychotherapy (non-specific); and (c) in-prison treatment programs (see Table 4). (It should be noted that while in-prison sex offender treatment is a part of the Japanese legal and mental health system, programs are government operated, and therefore they are difficult to monitor. The one interviewee who listed in-prison treatment as a utilized modality would not provide sufficient details for elaboration in this study.)

As Table 4 illustrates, the main treatment approach used for sex offender management in Japan is Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Relapse Prevention (RP). Because sex offender treatment is relatively new to Japan, and imported from other countries, traditional treatment for sex offenders was limited to imprisonment. Thus, most interviewees (90%)

stated the current preferred treatment modality (CBT and RP) was an improvement. Almost all interviewees (90%) also said the most ineffective treatment approach as the standardized, “one size fits all” approach to sex offender treatment (one interviewed declined to answer this question). As one interviewee explained, “I do not believe that there is only one treatment that can be applied to sex offenders. Treatments must be individualized, flexible, and fitting to the patients’ needs (psychologically, socially, financially, culturally, spiritually), meaning it is not “one fits all”. Because there is a tendency of “one fits all” premise in traditional treatments, I believe they are ineffective.”

All respondents expressed skepticism with regards to the effectiveness of Megan’s Law in the United States, and its impact on Japan should the country adopt a similar law. None of the interviewees listed any treatment modalities that could provide cross-cultural utility because, as one interviewee stated, “No sex offender treatment approach originates from Japan. The approaches currently used to treat sex criminals come from outside Japan.”

Table 1
Methods of Community Notification

Method	Never		Sometimes		Most of time		Regularly		Don’t know	
	US	Japan	US	Japan	US	Japan	US	Japan	US	Japan
Flyers are posted in my neighborhood to show and/or warn of convicted sex offenders who live nearby.	80%	97.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	2.5%
The police or someone else goes door-to-door to inform neighbors that sex offenders live nearby.	85%	97.5%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	2.5%
My neighborhood holds meetings to inform neighbors of the presence of sex offenders who live nearby.	50%	92.5%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	45%	7.5%
Flyers are sent home with school children to alert families that sex offenders live nearby.	35%	92.5%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%	7.5%
The local newspaper in my neighborhood publishes the whereabouts of sex offenders who live nearby.	40%	82.5%	10%	2.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	15%

Table 2
Perceptions about Sex Offenders and Sex Crimes

Question	N		Mean		SD		Median		Mode	
	US	Japan	US	Japan	US	Japan	US	Japan	US	Japan
What percentage of sex offenders commit another sex offense?	100	100	51%	57%	26.5	21.7	50	60	20,50,70,90	30,50
What percentage of child	100	100	61%	60%	21.9	22.1	60	60	80	50

molesters reoffend? What percentage of rapists reoffend?	100	100	59%	62%	22.5	24.7	60	70	60,80	70
What percentage of adult offenders were sexually abused as children? What percentage of sex assaults of adults are committed by strangers?	100	100	54%	42%	26.5	24.6	55	45	70	50
What percentage of sex offenders are severely mentally ill?	100	100	26%	55%	13.3	22.6	25	50	30	50,70
What percentage of children find sex with an adult a positive experience?	100	100	7%	9%	8.5	12.2	5	0	0	0
What percentage of boys are abused by someone they knew prior to the offense?	100	100	53%	37%	29.8	30.5	55	30	90	10
What percentage of girls are abused by someone they knew prior to the offense?	100	100	52%	39%	23.2	29	50	30	50	10
What percentage of sex offenders are male?	100	100	81%	85%	13.1	8.6	80	90	80	90

Table 3
Which of the Following Do You Believe Would be Helpful in Reducing Child Sexual Abuse?

	Percentage in Support of US	Percentage in Support of Japan
Community notification for sex offenders	55.0%	45.0%
Requires sex offender treatment in prison prior to being released	80.0%	62.5%
Restricting where sex offenders live	25.0%	17.5%
Outpatient treatment programs for sex offenders	75.0%	52.5%
Treatment programs for the entire family of sex offenders	30.0%	17.5%
Society education about sexual offending	70.0%	60.0%
Chemical castration for sex offenders	40.0%	27.5%
Restitution or community service by sex offenders	25.0%	40.0%
Prison sentence	35.0%	40.0%
Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring of an offender's location	40.0%	47.5%

Table 4
 Interview with Mental Health Practitioners (MHPs)

Treatment Modality Used	Number of MHPs	
	US	Japan
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Relapse Prevention (RP)	7	9
Psychotherapy (non-specific)	2	1
Good Lives Model (GLM)	1	0
Containment Model	8	0
In-Prison Treatment Program	0	1

Conclusion

Interviews with Japanese and American mental health professionals revealed a preferred therapeutic approach to sex offender treatment: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Relapse Prevention. Because America--particularly Los Angeles, California, where the US portion of the study was conducted--is so multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual, one would assume multicultural counseling techniques would be incorporated; however, interview responses seem to point toward a “one-size-fits-all” approach that mental health professionals have deemed relatively effective, but yet also in desperate need of an overhaul. Japan, although only slightly culturally and ethnically diverse in Tokyo and other large cities, does not incorporate Japanese indigenous psychologies, such as *Morita* and *Naikan* Therapy, and, like their American colleagues, struggles with a “one-size-fits-all” approach.

The United States uses more approaches (e.g., Good Lives Model), but generalizes treatment, and, as one interviewee bluntly expressed, “The US is concerned with punishment and public shaming” (referring to lifetime registration). In contrast, Japan is interested in providing treatment for offenders as soon as they are incarcerated, although interviews suggest these in-prison programs are not very accessible, as the Japanese government monitors them. Japanese interviewees also acknowledged hesitation with regards to adopting new policies and treatment programs, such as Megan’s Law and the Good Lives Model, because as a Japanese interviewee stated, “People are different and need to be treated differently. Sex offenders are far more complex, and you cannot generalize about them when considering treatment. Culture needs to be taken into consideration.”

It was hypothesized that both the general population and mental health professionals will perceive current sex offender laws and treatment programs as insufficient for reducing new sexual offenses and recidivism rates, and both the general population questionnaire and mental health professional interview responses support the need for further research and development of sex offender treatments and laws.

It was also hypothesized that certain aspects of American and Japanese treatment approaches could provide cross-cultural utility, and while this study was unable to identify unique aspects utilized by American and Japanese practitioners beyond cognitive-behavioral therapy and relapse prevention, there are clinical, professional, and legal implications each country should consider:

- The United States might benefit from considering creating an in-prison treatment program that will provide consistent sex offender treatment upon conviction of a sexual offense.

- The United States could focus more on a holistic, empathetic approach to sex offender treatment rather than attempting to reduce sex crime rates via standardized treatment methods, public shaming, and social ostracization.

- Japan could benefit from more thorough research into different therapeutic approaches, such as the Good Lives Model-Comprehensive (Ward & Gannon, 2005), and incorporate them into current treatment programs.

- Both countries need to reevaluate what the effects of lifetime registration, community notification, residency restrictions, and similar policies have on the community, the victims, and the offenders before proceeding with further development and adoption of new and existing policies.

- Both countries need to consider public education programs aimed at eliminating sex offender myths while supporting safe integration of sex offenders back into the general population.

- Both countries need to consider creating prevention programs (e.g., professional development program aimed at educating teachers-in-training to the realities and dangers of committing a sexual offense) while discovering new ways to strengthen existing intervention programs.

In conclusion, although the United States and Japan have many obvious differences, their attitudes toward sexuality paint a picture of societies that paradoxically promote sex while admonishing overt sexual expression. Reasons for sexually deviant thoughts and actions vary with each perpetrator, and because of this a variety of theories have allowed mental health professionals to examine and further understand the complexity of sexual offending. However, this research has shown the need for more effective treatment approaches and laws that take into consideration more than just the crime committed. Treatment approaches and laws punishing and monitoring offenders would benefit from becoming more flexible, culturally sensitive, and proactive in their support of both intervention and prevention strategies. While it may be impossible for one theory, treatment, and set of laws to be applied to sexual offenders on a global level, this overarching goal of understanding cultural motivations and treating them appropriately should not be abandoned, for as technology, business, and intercultural relationships bring the world closer, there will be a need for something greater.

Unfortunately, and in spite of these global changes, the world's countries continue to segregate themselves, and local, state, and national budgets, political motivations, myth and paranoia hinder many of the movements working toward achieving what the California Coalition on Sexual Offending (2001) state as their organizational vision: A world without sexual abuse.

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