

AFRICAN AMERICAN PASTORS' BELIEFS AND ACTIONS
REGARDING CHILDHOOD INCEST IN
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY

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BY

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DEDICATION

To my mother Lena K. Wells
God rest her soul,
Because of your push, I have momentum

To my father Ralph Wells, Sr.
Because of your leadership, I excelled

To my son; Shannon “Bexar” Weathersby, Jr.
Because God gave me you,
I became a parent and a better scholar

To my siblings Angelia, Rephael, Artomese, and Neyoka
Your words and actions encouraged me to never give up

To my lover, my mate, and best friend, James W. Livingston, Jr.
Who is and will always be
My Knight in Shining Armor

I have earned a Doctorate because of a journey we started,
Thank you for your love and support

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ABSTRACT

TESIA DENIS' WELLS

AFRICAN AMERICAN PASTORS' BELIEFS AND ACTIONS REGARDING CHILDHOOD INCEST IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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This quantitative study sought to explore African American pastors' beliefs and actions regarding childhood incest in the African American community and their decisions to inform the proper authorities. This exploratory study was developed in order to draw both public and academic attention to the understudied phenomenon of childhood incest within the African American community.

The participants for this study were recruited using a convenience sampling technique. The sample consisted of 52 African American male pastors with a minimum of one year as a pastor with experience among predominately African American Church of God in Christ (COGIC) congregations in the state of Texas. Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS) and Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) were used to answer the five research questions. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The results of this study indicated that African American pastors believe that childhood incest exists in the African American community. The exploration of beliefs regarding childhood incest in the African American community is that both the victim blame and offender characteristics are important in reporting childhood incest to the

proper authorities. In addition, the most significant results indicate that the educational level of pastors is very important in the attribution of blame in cases of childhood incest in the African American family and community.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, childhood incest has gained the attention of many Americans, even in the African American family and community. However, it is perceived that childhood incest was not trauma African American children would experience. This frame of thought is far from the truth today. In the African American community, according to Robinson (2000) one in three cases of childhood sexual abuse is a childhood incest case. Many African Americans are slowly admitting and addressing childhood incest in their community. Sims (2002) noted that within the African American family and community, the word incest or even the mention of sexual activities is taboo and therefore forbidden to be discussed. Recent research has showed that this frame of thought is a myth (Clear, Vincent, & Harris, 2006; Fields, Malebranche & Feist-Price 2008; Hattery, 2009; Leifer, Kilbane, Jacobsen & Grossman, 2004; Lowe, Pavkov, Casanova, & Wetchler, 2005).

Historically, in times of crisis in the African American family, the African American church and especially the pastor serve as buffers to life stressors (Ellison, Vaaler, Flannelly, & Weaver, 2006). Additionally, the interaction with organized religion and the belief practices help to manage daily stress (Marks, 2004; Rudolfsson & Tidefors, 2009). Therefore, religion influences many aspects of African American families' way of life (Wiley, Warren, & Montanelli, 2002), and religious beliefs help when coping with

difficulties experienced by the family (Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Murray-Swank, 2003; Marks, 2004). One such area of difficulty or crisis is that of childhood sexual abuse, especially incest, experienced by the African American family. Sims (2002) noted that ministers and pastors are liaisons for African Americans families when experiencing sexual abuse within the family. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the church, particularly the pastor, would have knowledge about childhood incest cases in the African American family/community.

Throughout the history of African Americans, pastors have built long-term relationships with families who were members of their church or those in the community. They have seen the family system change and relationships grow throughout the life course of the family (Ellison, Vaaler, Flannelly, & Weaver, 2006), and they provided assistance outside the church regarding needed social services and mental health assistance. African American pastors have often been used as a significant source of support of the family in times of turmoil (Ellison et al, 2006; Rudolfsson & Tidefors, 2009; Wiley et al, 2002). Today, the role of African American pastors is specifically connected to their contribution to the well-being of church members and families. This is accomplished by aiding in natural, spiritual, and emotional issues that may have an influence on the family and congregation as a whole. Concurrently, pastors of African American churches see themselves as empowering their congregation to deal with everyday life (Blasi, Husaini, & Drumwright, 1998; Hackney & Sanders, 2003). Because of the relationship between the pastor and the families, African Americans may feel a

sense of loyalty to the pastor. Therefore, when childhood incest occurs in an African American family, the pastor is likely to be the first non-blood relative to whom the family communicates.

Communication about childhood incest in the African American community is not only frowned upon but goes against family teachings and cultural mores (Robinson, 2000). What is seriously problematic is that time and denial do not cure the effects of incest. Without appropriate intervention, adult survivors may experience emotional and sometimes incapacitating turmoil later on in life (Browne & Winkelman, 2007; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). Wiley, Warren, and Montanelli (2002) noted that for African Americans receiving help has been a liability, and history has shown that several factors play in the unwillingness of African Americans to seek help for sexual abuse, especially incest. These factors include, but are not limited to the injustice, harsh treatment of the perpetrator, the perception of disbelief of the victim's account, and negative experiences with social services (Wiley et al, 2002). While the literature on the importance of the church and the African American community in general is extensive, few studies have examined pastoral care for individuals who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and incest, their families, and the perpetrators (Fortune, 2001; Robison, 2004; Sims, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The sexual interaction among family members known as incest is a phenomenon of great perplexity (Kult, 2005), particularly in the African American family (Robinson, 2000). A review of the literature indicates major gaps in research regarding the

prevalence of and intervention in the childhood incest crisis among African American families. Moreover, few studies have examined the role of the church and the African American pastor as an important resource for families involved in mental and emotional crisis, which may include childhood incest. Rudolfsson and Tidefors (2009) found that ministers refer less than 10% of individuals who seek help from them with mental and emotional issues to mental health professionals, which shows the importance of ministers trusting other professionals (especially mental health) and the importance of knowing whom to contact for help outside the ministry. In addition, Jackson and Ferguson (1983) noted that the reporting of incest and the quality of services received by the victim and offender/perpetrator, which include legal, medical, and mental services, are linked to the attributes of blame in incest.

Reckless behavior, substance abuse, eating disorders, self-destructiveness, compulsive sexual behavior, and compulsive risk-taking are only a few of the problems faced by victims of sexual abuse as children (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985; Finkelhor, 1993). Individuals who had a childhood sexual abuse experience often lack self-confidence and display an overwhelming complex in trusting people (Browne & Winkelman, 2007; Hall, 2008). Research indicates this behavior is associated with “Incest Survivor Syndrome,” which is a set of behaviors or symptoms that most victims of incest display. These behaviors include chronic and latent depression, sexual problems, anxiety, sleep disturbances, self-mutilation, substance abuse, promiscuity, unstable-

interpersonal relationships, eating disorders, and compulsive self-abuse (Kirschner, Kirschner, & Rappaport, 1993, Yuskel, 2008).

Robinson (2000) noted that an incest incident threatens to haunt the adult survivor in later life without appropriately addressing childhood victimization. Likewise, Davis and Frawley (1994) noted that adult survivors of childhood incest might exhibit obsessive thinking, dissociation, suicidal thought, guilt, and destructive perception of self (Turell & Armsworth, 2003). Similarly, Wright, Crawford and Sebastian's (2007) findings suggest that women who were sexually abused as children and utilize avoidant coping strategies have high levels of depressive symptoms. Additionally, results from a study by Leifer, Kilbane, Jacobsen, and Grossman (2004) found that mothers of sexually abused children reported in their own childhood a severe history of abuse, neglect, and serious problems in their family of origin, and as adults, less positive relationships with their mothers. Research further indicated that access to treatment is key to the health for all involved in the incest experience. However, Hattery (2009) noted that African American women who are sexually abused as girls seemingly have less access to treatment that is successful in producing healing.

Lastly, Fields, Malabranche, and Feist-Price's (2008) research on the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse found that African American men who experienced childhood sexual abuse linked their adult problems with verbal communication, interaction with people, and overall comfort with self to the trauma of childhood sexual abuse. Wilson (2004) noted that when boys are victimized, it is significantly more likely to be at the

hands of a family member. Valente (2005) noted that information about male victims has come primarily from incarcerated pedophiles and that the experiences of the young male victims have remained relatively unexamined. These individuals have problems related to a lack of trust, anger, hostility, anxiety, depression, isolation, and loss of power, along with psychological symptomatology.

Rationale for Study

While there are numerous research studies on childhood incest, many of these studies lack a significant African American presence. Although the African American families do not communicate the issue of childhood incest with the public, African Americans have been known to discuss private issues with their pastors. Consequently, pastors of African American churches are in a position to intervene in cases involving childhood incest within their congregation. Therefore, this research seeks to expand the knowledge on childhood incest research and broaden the understanding by incorporating the African American experience of this phenomenon through the lens of African American pastors. The rationale for this research is to add to the body of knowledge in hopes of shedding light on the phenomenon of childhood incest in the African American family. Furthermore, the present study focused on the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs and their decisions to report and work with individuals and families who have experienced childhood incest.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research was to examine the beliefs of African American pastors regarding the prevalence of childhood incest within the African American community and their decisions to inform the proper authorities.

Research Questions

This section will discuss two sets of questions for this study. There is a dominant set of research questions that give an overall prospectus for this study. These questions are “What are African American pastors’ beliefs about childhood incest, and how do these beliefs influence their reporting of childhood incest to the proper authorities?”

The second set of questions guided the specific research design to examine African American pastors’ beliefs and actions regarding childhood incest in the African American community. These questions are:

Q₁. What is the relationship between African American pastors’ beliefs about childhood incest and their combined agreement that their oath as ministers overrules the state’s mandate to inform authorities of childhood incest based on their Factor I (situational variables) scores as measured by the Jackson Incest Blaming Scale?

Q₂. What is the relationship between African American pastors’ beliefs about childhood incest and Factor I (situational variables) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Q₃. What is the relationship between the beliefs of African American pastors about childhood incest with regards to Factor II (victim blame) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which influences their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Q₄. What is the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and Factor III (societal values) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Q₅. What is the relationship between the beliefs of African American pastors about childhood incest with regards to the Factor IV (offender characteristics) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale that may influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Definitions

This section provides operational definitions of concepts used in this study.

1. Family member is defined as father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters, cousins, uncles, aunts, grandmothers, grandfathers, and within the African American fictive kinship refers to kinds of kinship that do not involve relations by blood or marriage (Chatters, Taylor, & Jayakody, 1994; Marks, 2004).
2. Pastor is defined as the leader of the church in the Church of God in Christ denomination.

3. Pastoral care is defined as the resource given by the leader of the church to the individual and family through advice and counsel in areas of physical, spiritual, emotional, and financial matters (Taylor & Chatters, 1988; Fortune, 2001).
4. Religion is defined as a practice based on belief in the God, gods, or other sacred spirits; a set of beliefs, practices, and involvements in the faith community (Walker, 2006).
5. Childhood incest is defined as sexual interaction between family members. The sexual interaction includes fondling, masturbation, exhibitionism, and intercourse, vaginal and anal (Valente, 2005; Bogar & Hulse- Killacky, 2006), before the victim is 18 years of age and when there is an age difference of at least three years (Texas Penal Code § 22.011).
6. Victim is defined as the individual who is experiencing the incestuous interaction at the time of communication.
7. Survivor is defined as the individual who has experienced the incestuous interaction in the past.
8. Belief is defined as the principle, proposition, or idea that guides the pastor's actions in dealing with incest activity (Sims, 2002).
9. Actions are the steps taken to stop incest activity by pastors after learning about the incest (Blasi, Husaini, & Drumwright, 1998).
10. Reporting to authorities is defined as pastors' actions to report childhood sexual abuse to the governing body, which is Child Protective Services.

11. Working with families is defined as pastors' intervention to help resolve issues that accompany the incest incidents (Fortune, 2001).
12. Child Protective Services is a social service agency that receives and investigates complaints of child abuse.
13. Offender/perpetrator is defined as a family member or a person in a place of authority who sexually abuses an individual that is at least three years younger than he/she is.
14. Offender characteristics are the personal traits of individuals who commit child sexual abuse or child incest.
15. Disclosure/acknowledgment is defined as the communication about the childhood incest incident that has occurred within the African American family. Disclosure, acknowledgment, and communication will be used to mean the discussion of the incest event.
16. Attributions are the beliefs of the pastors.

Assumptions

The following assumptions guided this study:

1. African American pastors are aware of childhood incest within the African American community.
2. African American pastors are aware of the law that mandates the reporting of child sexual abuse.

3. African American pastors are aware of incidents of childhood incest within their church and community.
4. African American victims of childhood incest are open and willing to allow intervention by pastor.
5. African American pastors will be truthful in their responses about incest in the African American church and community.

Delimitation

This study was confined to exploring the beliefs of African American pastors in regards to childhood incest in their congregation and community and, based on their beliefs, what actions are utilized when encountering cases of childhood incest in the African American family, congregation, and community. This study was also confined to using the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS) and a Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) developed by researcher. Lastly, convergent validity of the two instruments was not established.

Limitations of Study

Limitations to this study included the following:

1. The participants were African American pastors in Texas with the Church of God in Christ affiliation.
2. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all African American pastors and other Christian denominations.
3. The sample was purposeful and not randomly selected.

4. Pastors had a minimum of one year of pastoral care.

Theoretical Framework

This research study was guided by the attribution theory, which was developed by Fritz Heider, Harold Kelly, Edward E. Jones, and Bernard Weiner. Heider proposed the psychological theory of attribution, and Weiner, Kelly, and Jones developed the theoretical framework for attribution theory (Weiner, 1986). Attribution theory is a humanistic theory that seeks to explain or make sense of human behavior, but there is not a direct connection between behavior and the cause of the behavior (Heider, 1958). There can be one behavior arising from several different causes. Therefore, attribution theory attempts to explain the cause of individuals' actions and attributing or explaining reasons why the person behaves the way he/she does. The focus of this study was to explore African American pastors' beliefs and actions toward childhood incest. Attribution theory was chosen for this study since it examines how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their beliefs and actions. The motivation of attribution theory examines how an individual constructs the meaning of an event based on his/her motives to find a cause and his/her knowledge of the environment (Heider, 1958).

Attribution theory is also a social cognitive theory of motivation, which is centered upon the belief that past causal attributions have significance on present and future motivates (Weiner, 2000). Attribution theory has three elements, dimensions, or characteristics. These elements are internal or external (locus), stable or unstable (stability), and controllable or uncontrollable (controllability). Locus is the cause or

location of the cause, which can be internal (dispositional) or external (situational). The pastors' beliefs about childhood incest based on locus (internal or external) may link their understanding of factors that play a part in childhood incest cases. The understanding may be due to past experiences or from education on the subject of childhood incest.

Stability is whether the cause is constant or will change in the future. Pastors may believe in their ability to stabilize or prevent future occurrences of childhood incest based on their understanding of the event. Controllability is the person's ability to manipulate the cause. Pastors may believe that through pastoral counseling with the family, childhood incest victim, and offender that they are able to control, intervene, or resolve issues that may circumvent the incest incident. This may allow the family to manage the issue without outside resources.

In 2000, Weiner noted that an individual locus of control is that person's belief about the extent to which his or her actions determine outcomes. Locus of control and locus and control are two different concepts. Locus and control is unitized in attribution theory. Attribution theory recognizes that a person comprehends his/her circumstances where a positive self-image is conserved (Weiner, 1974, 1980, 1986). Attribution theory is circumscribed by four factors: ability (internal and stable), task difficulty (external and stable), effort (internal and unstable), and luck (external and unstable).

Jackson and Ferguson (1983) noted that a person places blame of incest based on aspects of their beliefs and attitudes toward incest. This may be true for African American pastors who are seen as a positive image in the African American

family/community. The way pastors attribute their understanding of childhood incest can help the victims and their families cope with the experience of childhood incest in the African American community. The pastors' attributions can also explain how pastors interact with individuals and families who have and are going through the experience of childhood incest. Thus, it is vital to explore attributions of pastors in cases of childhood incest and how the pastors' internal or external attributions guide the techniques used by pastors in responding to childhood incest in the African American family/community.

Galea (2008) stated that individuals do more analyzing and questioning of suffering than of joys, which may lead to a need to assign meaningful interpretation to many events in their lives. People in general may differ in how they attribute causes to events and circumstances in their lives by either secular or religious backgrounds. Therefore, individuals who consider themselves religious will seek counseling from a pastor or minister as a way to understand and cope with what has happened in their lives (Fouque & Glachan, 2000). This phenomenon of seeking counseling from pastors leads these pastors to have their own attributions of understanding childhood incest occurrences in the African American family/community.

The Researcher as Person

The researcher was raised in an African American Christian household that was affiliated with the Church of God in Christ. The researcher is the middle child, and she lived with her biological father, mother, brother, and three sisters. She is a survivor of a childhood incest event by a male cousin who was six years older than she. She later in

life found out that her younger sisters were also victims of childhood incest by the same male cousin. The experience of childhood incest has helped to shape her thoughts and understanding of this phenomenon in the African American family/community and has driven her passion in pursuing this topic for research.

Summary

The study focused on the beliefs of African American pastors and their actions regarding childhood incest in the African American community. This chapter describes the purpose for studying African American pastors and how African American pastors' beliefs informed their actions regarding childhood incest in the African American communities. Attribution theory provided the framework for this study. Attribution theory is utilized to explain or make sense of human behavior; therefore, this study explored the African American pastors' attributes for their understanding of childhood incest in the African American community. While there are numerous research studies on childhood incest, many of these studies lack a significant number of African American participants and the experience of the childhood incest phenomenon within the African American culture. Thus, with the very limited data on childhood incest in the African American community, this study sought to understand the issue of childhood incest through the lens of African American pastors.

This chapter also operationalized rationale for study, research question, definitions, assumptions, delimitation, and limitations of study. This study will expand on current research and attempt to fill in the gap of this phenomenon within the African

American community. There have been several research studies, both quantitative and qualitative, on childhood sexual abuse via incestuous relationship, but no study has focused solely on African American participants and their communication about childhood incest.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter contains two major sections. The first section reviews literature on childhood incest and sexual abuse. This section on childhood incest will include research on African American childhood incest and sexual abuse, childhood incest, and sexual abuse research of other ethnicities, which includes mother-child incest, sibling childhood incest, male relatives, and communication about childhood incest. The second section will review literature on religious significance in regards to childhood incest and sexual abuse. In this section, research on the spiritual aspects and pastoral counseling received by childhood incest and sexually abuse victims was reviewed.

Research on childhood sexual abuse is abundant. For this literature review, ethnicity, gender, and type of childhood incest experience will be discussed. Most research on childhood incest focuses on father-daughter incestuous experiences. Childhood incest experiences have numerous categories and are not limited to father-daughter relationships. Childhood incest typology (father-daughter, father-son, mother-daughter, mother-son, sister-sister, brother-sister, brother-brother, stepparent-stepchild, grandparent-grandchild, uncle-niece, uncle-nephew, aunt-niece, aunt-nephew, and cousin-cousin) will also be discussed.

African Americans: Incest and Sexual Abuse

Childhood incest is a phenomenon that has been widely researched. Research findings on childhood incest in the African American family/community are very limited. Therefore, the present literature review was restricted by the information that could be found on this topic. Incest is defined as the sexual interaction among family members (Kults, 2005). Kults further defines childhood incest as any sexual act between a child and any person at least three years older than the child.

Within the African American population, to admit that the childhood incest event happened is to rebel against family teaching and culture; therefore, reality is denied (Robinson, 2000). Consequently, communicating about the experience of childhood incest is considered taboo. Robinson (2000) stated that time does not cure the effects of childhood incest, and for the African American family/community, getting help is connected to being inadequate, deficient, or lacking faith. Mattis (2002) noted that the memory and experience of the abuse are still in the thoughts of adult childhood incest survivors.

Sims (2002) explored African American Christian faith ministers' attitudes and beliefs in a qualitative study about incest and sexual abuse in the African American community. Results revealed that 75% of the ministers did not know that they were obligated to report suspected child sexual abuse. Also, many ministers mentioned needing proof to report members of their congregation to the authorities. The researcher found that participating ministers expected the children in the study to willingly and

honestly discuss their sexual abuse experience. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the ministers' behaviors were greatly influenced by their beliefs and attitudes and thus, inform their behaviors and expectations in the area of childhood sexual abuse/incest (Sims, 2002). Attribution theory informs that a person's actions can be explained by cause of that action, which for these ministers was needing proof that childhood incest experience had occurred.

Leifer, Kilbane, Jacobsen, and Grossman (2004) explored the transmission risk of sexual abuse among three generations within African American families. Study results indicated that mothers of sexually abused children reported a severe history of childhood abuse, neglect, serious problems in their family of origin, and less positive relationships with their mothers. In addition, they noted that mothers of sexually abused children reported serious problems in their intimate relationships and psychological functioning. These mothers also reported conflict-filled relationships with their mothers. Another area of attribution theory is stability, whether the situation changes or stays the same over time, and with the mothers in this research study, the childhood sexual abuse continued through to the next generation.

Barrett's (2009) study explored African American female parents that were sexually abused as children. Findings suggested that childhood sexual abuse impacts parents' ability to be warm and caring. Findings also indicated that mothers in this study because of the trauma of childhood sexual abuse may overly identify parenting struggles,

economic misfortune, and social hardship, and are likely to have adversity in other areas of their parenting life.

Hestick and Perrino's (2009) research findings on African American undergraduate students' perceptions and attributions of child abuse concluded that gender influences the perception of child sexual abuse and the existence of child sexual abuse. Their research results indicated that based on the age of the victims, male participants did not regard the sexual act of female perpetrator and male victim as child sexual abuse. On the contrary, female participants perceived the sexual act as child sexual abuse, regardless of perpetrator gender, based on the age of the victim. This is one reason African American males do not report child sexual abuse. Additionally, Hestick and Perrino's (2009) study indicated that participants held parents responsible for abuse when the victim was female and perpetrator was male and when the female was younger and male was older.

Lastly, Fields, Malabranche, and Feist-Price's (2008) research on the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse found that African American men who experienced childhood sexual abuse attribute their adult problems with verbal communication, interaction with people, and overall comfort with self to the trauma they experienced as a victim of child sexual abuse. One important finding was that many of the participants in this study viewed their current same-sex desire as a result of the childhood sexual abuse.

Childhood Incest and Sexual Abuse Research of Other Ethnicities

Sexual abuse among family members is known as incest, and some research studies called this sexual act intrafamilial sexual abuse (Alaggia, 2001; Kristensen & Lau, 2007; Lau & Kristensen, 2007). Childhood incest activity appears to be universal and crosses all ethnic/cultural lines, socio-economic status, religion, age, and gender, and represents a violation of social norms (Atwood, 2007; Finkelhor, 1994; Finkelhor, & Browne, 1985; Koverla, 2007). Koverla (2007) noted in an article that childhood incest is the most offensive type of childhood sexual abuse. Research has found that childhood sexual abuse in families causes harmful and long-term consequences when it is a close and trusting relationship (Anderson, 2006; Shaw, 2001, Staller, & Nelson-Gardell, 2005; Ullman & Filipas, 2005). One harmful effect of childhood incest is self-mutilation. Research on self-mutilation of incest survivors noted that the body is vital in the childhood incestuous experience of the individual's worldview; therefore, the violation of boundaries may have severe repercussions and threatens the survivor's sense of self and existence (Turell & Armsworth, 2000).

On the other hand, Atwood (2007) posited childhood incest victims reported very few long-term damaging effects; additionally, childhood incest effects appeared to follow the normal curve, some negative, some positive, and other along the continuum of long-term emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual affects.

An element of attribution theory is controllability, and in families where childhood incest occurs, there is no manipulation of the cause of the incestuous activity.

In families where an incestuous incident has happened, the survivors report that the perpetrator has victimized not only them, but other family members as well. Incest offenders also report multiple victims within the family (Frazier, West-Olatunji, Juste, & Goodman, 2009; Robinson, 2000; Wilson, 2004). Within families where childhood incest exists, the nurturing and controlling functions of the family are displaced or do not exist in the capacity that is needed in order to allow for healthy development of childhood experiences (Cyr, Wright, McDuff, & Perron, 2002; Browne & Winkelman, 2007). In childhood incest cases, parent-child roles, expectations, fears, hesitations, potential at-risk attitudes, and beliefs about parenting should all be explored after childhood incest occurs (Fitzgerald, 2005). The family's home is to be a safe haven for children, but for the children who experience incest, the home is a place of betrayal, insecurity, powerlessness, and sexual exploitation (Schlegier, 2006).

Mother-Child Incest

The element of attribution theory that frames mother-child incest is controllability. Research on mother-daughter incest in a Canadian population by Peter (2008) found that the impact on sexual abuse at the hands of a mother has catastrophic effect on the child, especially when society views mothers as being loving, compassionate, trustworthy, and reliable caregivers. Furthermore, Reckling's (2004) study noted that pregnant women, ethnicity not provided, who were childhood incest victims where the offender was the mother, experienced fear and despair about gender of child, not knowing how to mother, and the inability to engage in some aspects of

mothering such as support and guidance. The fear of the childhood incest survivor was magnified if the unborn child was a girl, due to the mother's experience in her own childhood.

On the contrary, Fitzgerald, Shipman, Jackson, McMahon & Hanley's (2005) research included childhood incest survivors with a majority Caucasian population in the area of parenting perceptions and parent-child interaction. Findings from this study suggested that in motherhood, survivors of childhood incest have confidence in their children. A mother's interaction with her child is generally viewed as supporting and nurturing, but a history of incest reveals a weak parenting-bond and poor psychological adjustment. Parenting efficacy and attachment styles were not affected by a childhood history of incest. Lastly, if the survivor of childhood incest had a negative self-efficacy, it did not affect their positive parenting skills or positive interactions with their children.

On the other hand, Kelly, Wood, Gonzalez, MacDonald, and Waterman (2002) participants' ethnicities are 77% Caucasian, 16% Latino, 3% Asian, 3% Native American, and 2% African American. The study examined the effects of mother-son incest and noted that men experience a continuum of feeling about the incestuous experience from positive to negative, with the mixed perception causing heightened adjustment problems later in adulthood. Men are more likely to be heterosexual, but have an increased risk for psychological impairment in adulthood. Therefore, sexual abuse between mother and son appears to be connected to negative psychological functioning in adulthood for men. Additionally, Ray's (2001) study of male incest survivors noted that

male survivors had long-term after-effects that involved all areas of life. The areas included social, psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, familial, sense of self, relation to men, and relation to women. Andersen's (2008) study, ethnicity not provided, suggested that sexually abused boys are taught that secrecy allows them to keep their dignity, to become "real men," and to avoid humiliation of being exposed as "less than a man." Self-blaming, guilt of the sexual abuse, along with fear of the abuser and what people will think if the survivor of childhood sexual abuse was to tell, keeps the survivor isolated and alone to deal with the childhood sexual abuse. Finally, Atwood's (2007) study of incestuous relationship of young girls, ethnicity unknown, found they thought the sexual behavior was inappropriate but "knew" to keep it a secret, and some even acquiesced and participated.

Sibling Childhood Incest

Locus is an element of attribution theory that pertains to cause or location of cause, which can be dispositional or situational. Research on both dispositional and situational influence sibling childhood includes Bass, Taylor, Knudson-Martin, and Huenergardt's (2006) study of Latino families noted that sibling childhood incest occurs at a frequency that rivals and may even exceed other forms of incest. Sibling incest is thought to be the most common form of childhood incest (Thompson, 2009). Ballantine's (2012) study noted that because sibling childhood incest is complex and complicated this type of incest remains confidential and private. Additionally, childhood sibling incest may be considered a normal phase of sexual development for children and a form of

consensual exploration of sexual differences among males and females. Siblings' age difference may also affect the understanding of childhood incest among siblings that are young and close in age. These siblings may be confused about the extent of the sexual behaviors that are mutual (Ballantine, 2012).

Bass, Taylor, Knudson-Martin and Huenergardt (2006) also noted in their study that highly complex family dynamics often lie behind the abuse in ways that contribute to the acts themselves or to maintaining the secret. Collaborative secrecy occurred when family members united to maintain the secret of the abuse to insulate both individuals and the family from shame and embarrassment. McNevin's (2008) study noted that among an Australian population of adolescent siblings, sibling incest is experienced in the context of these relational patterns and contributes to maintaining secrecy. Thus, the meaning surrounding sibling incest will not be separate from relationship processes and how patterns of family loyalty are experienced. In the same manner, Ballantine's (2012) study noted that in families where sibling incest occurs, lines and boundaries are blurred and enmeshed, and that there are open boundaries outside of family. Ballantine's (2012) study also noted that a specific type of scrutiny is closely related to feelings of guilt and shame in cases of childhood incest. Lastly noted is that these may be dysfunctional families, and they may embrace more patriarchal norms (Ballantine, 2012). Whereas, Latzman, Viljoen, Scalora and Ullman's (2011) noted that childhood sibling incest is connected to more aggressive family dysfunction that may include family violence.

Kristensen and Lau's (2007) research studied long-term effects in terms of social functioning among a Danish population who experienced brother-sister childhood incest. Results suggested that women with a history of intrafamilial sexual abuse suffer long-term sexual abuse, and childhood victims are in a very vulnerable situation, since the perpetrator is in the home. Brothers who are perpetrators use persuasion more than violence. This study also revealed that the connection between childhood sexual abuse and psychiatric care increases if the abuse is detrimental. Likewise, Tidefors, Arvidsson, Ingevaldson and Larsson's (2010) research noted that sibling incest abuse behaviors have longer effects and are more severe.

Additionally, sibling incest research by Carlson, Maciol, and Schneider (2006) of 98 Caucasians, 10 Latinos, 4 African Americans, and 2 bi-multi-ethnic participants suggested that power differentials, long duration, presence of threats, and coerciveness were experienced along with the sexual abuse. Likewise, Rowntree's (2007) study informed that sibling childhood incest has prevented women from expressing how they feel about the sexual abuse, because when they did discuss the sexual abuse, they received no support and were alienated from family and friends. Lastly, Cyr, Wright, McDuff, and Perron's (2002) research on Quebec brother-sister, father-daughter, and stepfather- stepdaughter found that the mother's reaction to the disclosure of sexual abuse among her children was related to the identity of the perpetrator. The study also revealed varying levels of difficulty in the mother's ability to offer emotional support to her children. Victims of brother and stepfather sexual abuse are most at risk to receive poor

support for their emotional and psychological reaction if the perpetrator lives in the home.

Male Relatives

Stability is an element of attribution theory that correlates with childhood incestuous relations with male relatives. The cause of childhood incest with male relatives is constantly changing. Wang's (2007) narrative study of a Beijing woman who experienced a father-daughter childhood incestuous relationship revealed how the incest experience affected her adult life. Findings indicated that the woman made sense of the sexual abuse and dating violence that she had suffered by developing domains, which were body and *linghun* (intelligence soul). These domains became an important part of her survival. Further findings offered a new perspective of exploring father-daughter incest in the Chinese culture and suggested a new picture of women in violent relationships in the changing China society. Additionally, this study constructs one of the most dominant explanations, which asserts that violence against women is often justified and explained through "Confucian ideas regarding men as being dominant and superior" (Hester, 2004, p. 1432).

Chien (2008) studied childhood incest experiences between father-daughter in the Asian culture. Findings revealed that childhood incest survivors (when they were young) were upset that their mothers did not take further action upon learning about the incestuous act, but as adults, they understood and accepted their mothers' reactions. Further findings suggested that for sexually abused women in adulthood, the mother-

daughter relationship is strengthened, given that the mother is not the perpetrator or involved in the childhood sexual abuse. Significant findings suggested that the Asian culture factor influences the parent-child relationship, both positive and negative images of the mother-daughter bond, and that the daughter created avenues to connect in the mother-daughter dyads.

Kim and Kim's (2005) study indicated a prevalence of childhood incest in Korean families among males and females who were involved in father-daughter incest, sibling incest, and incestuous relationships with uncles. Females were more likely to be victims of incest than males, but because traditionally Koreans traditional regard sexual affairs as secret, it is likely that the prevalence of incest is higher than noted. Findings suggested that families who had an incest experience were dysfunctional with dysfunctional patterns of paternal and maternal rearing practices. Lastly, the childhood incest victim reported an unstable and an unsatisfied family life.

Brand and Alexander (2003) researched coping among childhood incest survivors for a variety of ethnicities, which included Caucasian, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Latino where the perpetrators were fathers, stepfathers, brothers, grandfathers, mothers, and other family members. The age of onset of sexual abuse was five years. Results indicate that avoidance is used as a coping strategy for childhood incest survivors. Coping was connected to distress and depression but not connected to adult functioning. Further results indicated that seeking support for childhood incest experiences was connected to distress for the survivor.

Atwood's (2007) study explored the childhood incest experience of 2,345 preadolescent girls over a five-year period. Results indicated that the highest report of incestuous relationship was fathers and daughter, which begin before the age of 10 and continued. Many of the girls reported that the mothers were permanently out of the picture, at work, or out of the house when the sexual abuse happened, and many of the girls reported participating in the sexual act on a regular basis. Other findings noted that childhood incest victims reported very few long-term damaging effects. Additionally, childhood incest effects appear to follow the normal curve, some negative and some positive, as reported in childhood incest abuse literature. Childhood incest represents a behavior of great silence and is rarely prosecuted; the childhood incest victims are reluctant reveal the perpetrator because it is someone they trust or a family member.

Turell and Armsworth (2000) studied self-mutilating father-daughter childhood incest survivors, whose ethnicities included Caucasian, Latinas, African American, Asian, and multi-ethnic. Results indicated that self-mutilation could serve a dual purpose in the survivor's life, which is to punish the body while assisting to counter dissociative tendencies. Further results indicated that the self-destructive behavior of self-mutilation, suicidal ideation, and suicidal attempts were all positively correlated with childhood incest experience. Findings concluded that the concept of embodiment (experience of self through the body) include body image distortions, somatization and increased medical concerns, physical and psychological abuse in family, and dissociation/depersonalization.

Phillips and Daniluk (2004) studied how childhood incest informs the identity of Caucasian Canadian women. Findings suggested that an essential part of the survivor's perception is the ability to embrace others and have others see her as more than a survivor of incest. Additionally, the self-definition is a critical part of the healing process and letting go of the perception of a childhood incest survivor. This step in development allows them to embrace the survivor's identity.

Lorentzen, Nilsen, and Traeen (2008) researched narratives of childhood incest survivors where the perpetrators were fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles. Findings indicated that the termination process varies among childhood incest survivors. The perception of the childhood incest survivor's role in ending the abuse, their relationships with the abusers, and memories of shame and guilt were acquired through the termination process.

Clear, Vincent, and Harris's (2006) research studied symptom presentation among childhood sexual abuse female survivors within the Hispanic, African American, and Caucasian ethnicities. Findings suggested that African American girls have a high level of trauma-related avoidance. Caucasian and African American sexual abuse victims exhibit depression symptoms, while Hispanic girls have lower depression symptoms. Lastly, the results indicated that all three ethnic groups exhibit the same or very similar psychological symptoms and reactions; it is then believed that sexual abuse reactions are universal and transcend culture.

Communication about Childhood Incest Experiences

The first communication to any person about the childhood sexual abuse experience has been defined as disclosure. Based on attribution theory, communication about a childhood incest experience is dispositional or situational. The disclosure/communication can be intentional and unintentional, to persons who are sympathetic and non-sympathetic, and to individuals who have no authority and authority (Ullman, 2003). Gunduz, Karbeyaz, and Ayranci's (2009) study noted that the way family, society, and others become aware of childhood sexual abuse is usually accidental. For victims of childhood sexual abuse, delayed disclosure can be a problem and may cause various issues in adult life, specifically for the mother (Lev-Wiesel, 2006). Faber, Khurgin-Bott and Feldman (2009) noted that self-disclosure is the pathway for self-awareness, identification formation, intimacy, validation and affirmation, differentiation, authenticity, and catharsis. They concluded that an individual is more likely to communicate about the sexual abuse to someone who is not in close relation with them than with someone who is of close relation with her or him. This is because there is no sense of vulnerability with a stranger. Shame and vulnerability tend to be associated with self-disclosure of childhood sexual abuse.

Communication/disclosure of child sexual abuse is influenced by gender/sex, ethnicity and culture, which then makes disclosure a multifaceted process. Lovett's (2004) review of variables that impact child sexual abuse disclosure noted that the value placed on endurance of suffering and religion may lower communication/disclosure rates

among African Americans who seek their solace through prayer, friends, and church. Other factors are role flexibility, extended family, and strong humanistic orientation as potential protective factors for victims of abuse and for non-offending parents coping with their child's communication about the sexual abuse. Communication has been explained in both quantitative and qualitative research studies, which will be discussed in the following subsection. Quantitative research on communication about childhood incest includes timing, emotions, relationship, and age.

Within quantitative research studies, timing has been noted as an important factor for disclosure of and communicating about childhood sexual abuse. Kogan's (2004) study of disclosure of unwanted sexual experiences concluded that only 74% of the participants had told someone of the experience prior to being surveyed, in which 24% disclosed within 24 hours and 19% of the remaining disclosed within one month. Swaby and Morgan (2009) noted that timing of childhood sexual abuse is initiated before puberty and in this window of opportunity, the perpetrator is less likely to be exposed. Smith, Letourneau, Sanders, Kilpatrick, Resnick, and Best (2000) conducted a national study on delayed disclosure of childhood rape; the phenomenon of delayed disclosure is more prevalent, and the typical length of disclosure is longer, averaging 18 months. Timing of communication/disclosure and responses to disclosure appear to vary according to gender. Fewer men report childhood sexual abuse experiences than women. Ullman and Filipas (2005) researched gender difference in disclosure of childhood sexual abuse and concluded that timing of disclosure and extent of abuse are connected to gender. Results

also revealed that only 27.4% of the participants disclosed immediately after the childhood sexual abuse experience, 63.6% of the survivors told someone a year or more after the abuse occurred, and 66.5% of the participants in the study disclosed the abuse at some time in life. Communication about the childhood sexual abuse (CSA) for some was accidental, and for others, someone discovered the abuse; however for most, 87.9% CSA was purposefully disclosed. Of those who disclosed, 81% told informal sources, and the others told both informal and formal sources.

Another quantitative finding is that emotions that are associated with communication also play a part in how and when a CSA survivor discloses. Ullman and Filipas's (2005) study results suggested that women showed stronger reactions to childhood sexual abuse, distress, self-blaming, trying to forget, and greater reliance on coping strategies of withdrawal, which was related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Women were more likely to have disclosed abuse and have a positive reaction. Also in agreement are Luttrek, Orsillo, and Marx's (2005) results of the research that suggested childhood sexual abuse emotional responses and expressions are complex in nature. The low levels of positive activity were reported for both positive and negative emotion-eliciting film stimuli. This subjective deficit in positive emotional responding did not translate to a diminished expression of positive emotional words on emotional disclosure task, which may reflect the intricate nature of emotional expression among childhood sexual abuse survivors. Within Tyagi's (2001) research, participants noted reasons for not communicating included the belief that no one would believe them, which caused

feelings of fear, self-blaming, and lack of trust for adults. Communication about the incest experience was first to a friend for 11 of the participants, and in adulthood, they disclosed to family members and counselors. Support, non-judgmental attitude, sympathy, and a sense of relief were found when communicating with or disclosing to friends and peers.

A significant factor in disclosure or communication noted by quantitative studies is the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator for childhood sexually abused victims whose perpetrator was a relative had a higher level of negative social reaction to disclosure (Ullman, 2007). Study results also indicated a higher rate of abuse aftermath such as delayed disclosure, self-blaming, negativity, and disbelief for childhood sexual abuse by family member. Ullman further reported that 44.9% of participants stated that disclosure made them feel better, 40.2% of participants stated there was no difference, and 15% of the participants stated that disclosure made them feel worse. The study by Smith et. al (2000) revealed the perpetrators' use of threats and force, victim injury, victims' subjective perceptions of life threat, and the presence of a weapon were all unrelated to delays in disclosure or communication about the sexual abuse. On the other hand, not knowing the perpetrator at the time of rape was independently associated with delayed disclosure. Kogan's (2004) results suggested that disclosure of unwanted sexual experiences is doubtful if there is a closer relationship to the perpetrator and even rarer if the perpetrator is a family member. Results also revealed that fear for one's life during the unwanted sexual experience was associated with disclosure to an adult versus non-

disclosure, and it appears that survivors sought protection or safety after the use of coercion. Also, family contextual factors such as drug abusing household member was connected to the survivor being more likely to communicate about the sexual abuse. Lastly, family structure, such as never living with both parents, was associated with maintaining the secret of an unwanted sexual experience (Kogan, 2004).

Age is another important factor in the disclosing of or communicating about childhood sexual abuse. Being a young age at time of rape is independently associated with delayed disclosure (Smith et al, 2000). Kogan's (2004) study revealed that the highest vulnerable population for childhood sexual abuse is very young children. Children under the age of seven at the beginning of an unwanted sexual experience (USE) are unlikely to disclose immediately and less able to know and understand the barriers to disclosure which makes it difficult to protect them from USE. Individuals between the ages of 7 and 13, when the USE begins, are most likely to tell an adult. Children under 11 are more likely to tell an adult, but they risk delaying disclosure beyond a month. Children age 11 to 13 tend to disclose within a month of the abuse. When adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 experienced USE, they are more likely to tell their peers. Ullman and Filipas's (2005) study of disclosure found that 44.8% told about the childhood sexual abuse before 14 years of age, and 55.2% told in adulthood. Disclosure for some was accidental or someone discovered abuse, but for most, 87.9%, CSA was disclosed purposefully. Of those who disclosed, 81% told informal sources, and the others told both informal and formal sources.

Several qualitative studies have been conducted on childhood incest/sexual abuse. Solrsoli, Kia-Keating, and Grossman's (2008) study noted that barriers to disclosure exist on multiple levels of experience. Two major findings for communication about or disclosure of sexual abuse and barriers that block disclosure are shame and fear. Alaggia's (2005) study explored disclosure trauma in which findings indicated that feelings of shame, blame, and fear of negative consequences for disclosure were all factors that play a role in whether the sexually abused child told or did not tell during their victimization or delayed disclosure. In like manner, Donalek's (2001) study of the first incest communication revealed that fear for keeping the secret of incestuous experience in which participants describe frantic attempts to think, find solutions, attract attention, explain, rationalize, limit, control, and hide the sexual abuse. Crisma, Bascelli, Paci, and Romito (2004) examined the sexual abuse fears of disclosure among adolescents and found the big barrier to communication is the assumption that there is a lack of willingness in professionals and adults to listen to them and offer support. Additionally, adolescents did not disclose because they feared losing their freedom. In Solrsoli, Kia-Keating, and Grossman's (2008) study of childhood sexual abuse among male participants who described the reasons they did not disclose as children were emotional safety, readiness, and intense feelings of shame. They noted that men exist in a double bind, which is the feeling of shame for not telling earlier and at the same time they are experiencing shame as when they decide to share their past sexual abuse history. Men understand the ways disclosure can be disruptive in the relational domain and are afraid

of being accused, blamed, shamed, as well as experience feelings of depression, anxiety, and anger, which tended to outweigh their desire to disclose. While Alaggia's (2005) research noted males have an increased risk of stigmatization if he admits to being a victim of childhood sexual abuse and because the perpetrator is usually a male, this raises the male victims' fears of being labeled homosexual.

Additional findings of qualitative studies are that of powerlessness and vulnerability for childhood sexually abused individuals. Alaggia's (2004) research explored disclosure in which she conceptualized four themes. The themes were identified as purposeful disclosure, behavioral manifestations disclosure intentionally withheld, and triggered disclosure of delayed memories. She also noted that immaturity, vulnerability, and powerlessness in the sexual abuse situation could hinder disclosure. Alaggia's (2005) research findings noted women seem to be affected by culture of sexism and patriarchal attitudes inhibiting their ability to disclose. Therefore, when it comes to disclosure, women are shouldering the burden and responsibility for their victimization. They experience repercussions of telling, and they strongly anticipate being disbelieved and blamed for the sexual abuse. Crisma, Bascelli, Paci, and Romito's (2004) study suggested that one barrier to disclosure is related with the adolescents emerging desire of autonomy and maturity.

Jensen, Gulbrandsen, Mossige, Reichelt, and Tjersland's (2005) study of disclosure findings indicate that the child's perceptions of how the confidant is dealing with what the child is telling can, and will, affect what the child chooses to disclose.

Therefore, disclosure may be facilitated if the confidant is psychologically prepared to hear about the child's experiences, without showing signs of despair, disgust, or moral condemnation. The child is often concerned that their experiences would be either trivialized or things would get out of control if they talked about their experiences. These concerns became an impetus for not talking. In another study by Staller and Nelson-Gardell (2005), disclosure results indicated models involving disclosure patterns must honor inequitable power position of the adult world to the child's position and incorporate the logic that results from this relation. Research findings also suggested that family dynamics and communication aid in the willingness and ability of incest/sexually abused children to disclose.

Staller and Nelson-Gardell's (2005) research concluded that the process of disclosure must be viewed as whole and ongoing. This process includes pre-disclosure, disclosure, and post-disclosure stages, which involve interaction with others. Results from data propose a three-step framework that utilizes and is consistent with disclosure process from preadolescents' and adolescents' perspectives of self, confidant selection-reaction, and consequences. Alaggia's (2004) research findings suggested that first disclosure is usually to family, friends, or partner later in life, and the victim of childhood sexual abuse may experience a variety of responses, both supportive and non-supportive. Alaggia (2005) explored disclosure trauma that children have about sexual orientation, both in home and at school, which may hinder disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. Findings suggest that family dynamics also shaped the decision and other attempts to

disclose during the time of childhood sexual abuse simply did not lead to the termination of the sexual abuse. Crisma, Bascelli, Paci, and Romito's (2004) research noted a barrier for adolescents wanting to disclose was their wish to protect the family, even with the presence of a loving and trusting mother many of the victims choose to maintain the secret and felt that it was their responsibility to manage the situation on their own. The researcher also noted that since childhood sexual abuse has not previously been spoken about, there are few conventional routines and prompts for dialog that has such stigmatizing themes in a family to take place.

Hunter's (2010) study of childhood sexual abuse survivors and challenging of the dominance the victim and survivor paradigm noted that narratives of the childhood sexual abuse survivors had changed over time. Findings indicate that communication was difficult, but in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the barriers were respect for authority, rigid gender roles, and the taboo surrounding sexual issues, lack of supportive adults, and lack of language to describe what happened. Results suggested that for the survivors of childhood sexual abuse, the narrative of silence can be as a form of denial or adaptive coping (Hunter, 2010).

Another finding in Donalek's (2001) study of incest disclosure suggested that for women in this study, when disclosure failed, there was an experience of total abandonment and a loss of fantasy that they would be rescued, believed, and comforted. Some themes from the research that indicated the family cohesiveness included "my mother: the focus of need," "incest burden," "the secret must be kept," and "living in the

silencing home.” Jensen, Gulbrandsen, Mossige, Reichelt, and Tjersland’s (2005) research suggested that children’s accounts of abusive events help us understand how difficult it is to initiate a conversation about something distressful, incomprehensible, and embarrassing. For some victims, childhood sexual abuse has not been spoken about, and there are few conventional routines and prompt for dialog that has such stigmatizing themes in a family to take place. Findings also indicate that the child’s perception of how the confidant is dealing with what the child is telling can and will affect what the child chooses to disclose.

Tjersland, Gulbrandsen, Juuhl-Langseth, Jensen, Mossige and Reichelt (2008) noted that how the child perceived the consequences of disclosure and support by adults played an important role in facilitating his or her ability to disclose. The disclosure process was enhanced if there was a jointly experienced thematic connection in the dialogue. Staller and Nelson-Gardell’s (2005) study suggested that children’s reactions to recanting, retracting, or wavering in the acknowledgements of the sexual abuse should be interpreted in the interactive context of communication and consequences. Additionally, Solrsoli, Kia-Keating, and Grossman’s (2008) research highlighted barriers that hinder disclosure among men, which are lack of relationships or fears of losing existing relationships.

Religious Significance

Spiritual Influences

Alaggia's (2001) research studied intrafamilial childhood sexual abuse among Canadians and the influence of culture and religion on maternal response. Results indicated that some of the mothers of the victims believed the children immediately, while other mothers believed the children but did not believe that the perpetrators/offenders were their partners. Findings suggest that the maternal response is based on the cultural connection to religion and preserving the family value system. These results suggest that circumstances can place anxiety on a mother and force her to choose between trying to keep the family together at all costs or being separated from family and suffering negative repercussions from her decision.

Another study of spiritual influence was Gall's (2006) study of spiritual aspects of coping for childhood sexually abused survivors. The ethnicities included Caucasian, African American, and Arabic. Religions represented were Christian, Catholic, Protestant, Native spirituality, and Muslim. Most of the sexual abuse survivors stated that they do not attend religious services or, if they attend, it is infrequently. Results indicated that survivors use both positive and negative coping strategies when they have stress in their adult lives. Results also suggested the age of onset for sexual abuse is vital in the adult use of spiritual support. Religious forgiveness, spiritual support, and active surrender coping were used more often by survivors who had achieved peace with their childhood sexual abuse experience. Study results suggested that actively surrendering to

God may be used in situations, which are out of control and overwhelming for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Furthermore, Knapik, Martsolf, and Draucker's (2008) study findings indicated that for the childhood sexually abused individual, there is a connection between healing and spirituality. The connections allow the childhood sexually abused individual to obtain new insight that aids in their recovery, creates the possibility of being supported and guided in their struggles, and acquiring strength as a result of passing spiritual challenges.

In like manner Gall, Basque, Damasceno-Scoot, and Vardy (2007) noted that childhood sexually abused survivors who were angry with God had higher levels of depression. The study also indicated that attending religious services was related to greater resolution of the childhood sexual abuse. Significant finding in Gall, Basque, Damasceno-Scott, and Vardy's (2007) study is that for individuals who have experienced childhood sexual abuse in times of crisis, a relationship with God is an important source and sometimes only source of secure attachment. Lastly, the relationship with God helps the childhood sexually abused individual acknowledge their current limitations and understand that God has a purpose, and he has control over their lives.

On the other hand, Beveridge and Cheung (2004) studied spirituality of a Caucasian childhood incest survivor who had been sexually abused by her stepfather. Findings indicated that two basic rules can assist survivors with healing symptom relief/exploration of meaning of trauma and facilitation of the integration of self. Researchers noted that vital to spiritual healing is the process of self-integration,

disputing irrational beliefs, retrieving lost self, and gaining control of the childhood sexually abused survivors' environment.

Pastoral Counseling

Support for the claim that African Americans utilized their pastors as resources is documented by research from the National Comorbidity Survey (Molnar, Buka, & Kessler 2001). Specifically, this survey indicated that many adults in the United States sought therapy/counseling for mental illness from their pastors and that several of those individuals seeking therapy/counseling from pastors had a severe mental disorder (Molar, et. al 2001). Most of these individuals with severe mental illness did not seek treatment from mental health professionals (Wang, Berglund, & Kessler, 2003). Ellison et al. (2006) noted that pastors are seen as resilient by the congregation and are perceived to possess the ability to treat mental illnesses, addictions, family dysfunction, and other issues that affect the family. This study also stressed that African American Christians look for emotional, spiritual, and resource assistance from other church members at all times, but especially during tragedies, pastoral care becomes essential (Ellison et al. 2006).

Robison (2004) noted that the congregation of a church should be seen as a family system. Therefore, the relationship between the pastor and African American church member must be carefully tended to because of the culturally competent pastoral care provided. People in general must also pay careful attention to the hierarchical power dynamics that are inherent in the pastor and member relationship. Additionally, when

providing pastoral care, pastors must be accountable for interactions with church members.

Rudolfson and Tidefors's (2009) research states that Christians around the world often turn to their pastors, ministers, and congregations for support and comfort to help understand what happened to them during times of personal distress and crises.

Rudolfson, Tidefors, and Stromwall (2011) noted that a spiritual connection is found to be vital as a coping mechanism against negative life events and has a unique impact in providing a foundation through which painful experience may be eased. Also noted by Rudolfson and Tidefors (2009) is that faith can enhance a person's ability to cope with negative life events, and negative life events can enhance religious faith.

Rudolfson, Tidefors, and Stromwall's (2011) study revealed that knowledge and preparation on dealing with issues of incest was not a part of the ministerial educational studies provided of ministries or pastors. Therefore, the thought of asking existential questions associated with abuse was not considered. Pastors and ministers noted that pastoral caregiving involved meeting victims of sexual abuse, their ability to offer pastoral care, and knowledge about other organizations to contact for further help is lower for male victims than female victims. Pastors also noted that the likelihood of previously knowing the perpetrator and sexually abused individual and telling about the abused causes a stressful situation.

Fouge and Glachan (2000) noted that Christian symbols and themes affect the victim's cognitive understanding of the abuse and how symbols and themes are received

and interpreted in an interaction process of counseling. Pastors and minister may be familiar with and even have an ongoing relationship with the victim, which is unlike other therapeutic and helping professions. This relationship may likely lead to a situation where the pastor or minister is the first person the victim of childhood sexual abuse is able to trust and disclose. Pastoral counseling, Christian biblical counseling, and non-Christian counseling all differ in many aspects of techniques used in aiding of childhood sexual abuse. Many clergy, counselors, and leaders may make insensitive, and sometimes damaging, interpretations to Christian survivors of sexual abuse, and many biblical counselors may work outside their competence area without adequate training or appropriate supervision (Fouque & Glachan, 2000).

Incestuous Acts in the Bible

Religion and incest are important topics in today's world, but these experiences are not new. Incest has long been a part of the fabric of society and is accepted in some cultures. Demause (1991) noted incest is a dynamic force that has existed since the beginning of time, has been recorded in many ancient stories, and has been found in many cultures. Experiences of incest are mentioned in writing over 2,000 years old and are recorded in the Bible. Six biblical incestuous relationships are well known. These stories are Cain and his wife who were brother and sister (Genesis 4:16-17, King James Version), Abraham and Sara who were half-brother and sister (Genesis 20:12-13), Nachor and Melcha who were uncle and niece (Genesis 11:26-29), Amran and Jochabed who were aunt and nephew (Exodus 6:19-20), Amnon and Tamar who were brother and

sister (II Kings 13:8-12), and Lot and his two daughters. In Genesis 19:31-38, a story tells of daughters who got their father drunk in order to have sexual intercourse with him. Kult (2005) suggested a different interpretation of the story, noting that for pregnancy to occur, repeated sexual activity would have had to take place. Additionally, Low (2010) noted that Lot's daughters had sex with their father two nights in a row.

Foundation of the Church of God in Christ

Charles Harrison Mason established the Church of God in Christ in 1897. After seeking a spiritual name C. Mason was guided to (I Thessalonians 2:14; New King James Version), "For ye brethren became followers of the Churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye have suffered like things of your own countrymen even as they have of the Jews." This scripture supports the name Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Charles Mason and ministries who believed in being baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2:1-4 held the first Church of God in Christ conference in Memphis, Tennessee. This Pentecostal Christian holiness denomination COGIC is the fifth largest in the United States and internationally in 60 other nations; yet, the Church of God in Christ does not have an educational mandate for pastors who preside over the church congregation.

Summary

This chapter explored literature on childhood incest in the African American culture and was guided by elements of attribution theory. As evidenced by so little information on how childhood incest experience affects the African American family and

community, there is a great need to research the phenomenon of childhood incest in the African American family and community. In addition, this literature review included research on childhood sexual abuse and incest of other ethnicities, various forms of childhood incest, communication about childhood sexual abuse and incest, and incest relationships from the Bible. In conclusion, this chapter reviewed research on spiritual influence, pastoral counseling in the area of childhood sexual abuse, and the foundation of the Church Of God in Christ.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to examine the beliefs of African American pastors regarding the prevalence of childhood incest within the African American community, their decisions to inform the proper authorities, and their beliefs about providing pastoral care to the families, victims, survivors, and perpetrators. The results of this study will aid pastors, researchers, and mental health professionals in understanding and helping African Americans who have experienced childhood incest.

Research Design

This was a quantitative research study which utilized a no experiential design using a survey method approach; the participants for this research study were recruited through mail out surveys, and the sample was a convenience sample. The exploration of African American pastors' beliefs and actions toward childhood incest and its correlation was accomplished through two instruments. The Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) was used to capture the African American pastors' demographic. The independent variables were age, gender, relationship status, congregation size (numerically), years as a pastor, years in the ministry, education, and number of incest cases within congregation. The Jackson Incest Blaming Scale (JIBS) was a survey comprised of four factors, which are Factor I - Situational factor, Factor II - Victim Blame, Factor III - Societal Value, and Factor IV - Offender Characteristic. The four constructs derived from

the JIBS were used as the dependent variables. The pastors' scores from the Jackson Incest Blaming Scale were analyzed, and the results were correlated with the demographic data received from pastors. Descriptive and inferential statistics, which included ANOVA, Spearman's rho correlation, and Tukey HSD, were used for data analyses and interpretation.

Protection of Human Participants

Data were collected through mail-out surveys. The consent informed participants that the survey was voluntary, that participation was anonymous, and that the research would not collect any identifying data. This study was presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas Woman's University. No changes were suggested.

Sampling Procedure

The study sample size comprised of a 41% return rate of surveys mailed out. The 52 participating African American pastors were affiliated with the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in state of Texas. Inclusion criteria for study participants were African Americans with a minimum of one year experience in the ministry as pastors in the Church of God in Christ with a predominantly African American congregation. Recruitment efforts and contact information for participants were gathered with the use of the online directory for the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). The directory included names and addresses of pastors who preside over these churches in the state of Texas. The survey packet contained two data collection measurements that were mailed to participants' addresses as listed in the directory utilized in this study. The packet included

instructions for completion of the data collection measures and how to mail completed questionnaires back to the researcher using enclosed self-addressed envelopes and took the participant no longer than 40 minutes. Participation in this study was voluntary and consent was included in the demographic survey. The consent informed participants that the survey was anonymous and that the researcher would not collect any identifying data.

Research Questions

This section will discuss two sets of questions for this study. There is a dominant set of research questions that give an overall prospectus for this study. These questions are “What are African American pastors’ beliefs about childhood incest, and how do these beliefs influence their reporting of childhood incest to the proper authorities?”

The second set of questions guided the specific research design to examine African American pastors’ beliefs and actions regarding childhood incest in the African American community. These questions are:

Q₁. What is the relationship between African American pastors’ beliefs about childhood incest and their combined agreement that their oath as ministers overrules the state’s mandate to inform authorities of childhood incest based on their Factor I (situational variables) scores as measured by the Jackson Incest Blaming Scale?

Q₂. What is the relationship between African American pastors’ beliefs about childhood incest and Factor I (situational variables) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Q₃. What is the relationship between the beliefs of African American pastors about childhood incest with regards to Factor II (victim blame) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which influences their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Q₄. What is the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and Factor III (societal values) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Q₅. What is the relationship between the beliefs of African American pastors about childhood incest with regards to the Factor IV (offender characteristics) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale that may influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample and ANOVA, Spearman's rho correlation, and Tukey HSD were used for data analysis and interpretation. Spearman's rho correlation was utilized for data that was continuous and categorical. Answers from the Jackson Incest Blame Scale and the Personal Background Questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS 15 statistical software program to test the research questions.

Instrumentation

Jackson Incest Blame Scale

The Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS) instrument was adapted from the Attribution of Rape Blame Scale (ARBS). The items on the JIBS and the ARBS are

synonymous with only the word “rape” replaced with ‘incest,’ except to reflect the hypothesis situational differences between rape and incest; specific situational factor items of context required change. The JIBS measures attribution of blame in incest cases; there are four areas which are equally represented on the JIBS. They are situational variables, victim blame, societal values, and offender characteristics. These four factors identify sources of blame attribution and offer an explanation for the cause of incest. Situational factors are Factor I; individuals who score high on this factor attribute the blame of childhood incest to family conditions, socioeconomic status, alcohol and drugs. Victims’ behaviors are Factor II and individuals who score high on this factor attribute the blame of childhood incest to victim. Individuals who scored high on factor II believe that the child victim of incest encouraged or advocated for the incest incident to happen. Societal values is Factor III and individuals who score high on Factor III believe that childhood incest is connected to current morality, the perception of people as sex objects, and the amount of sex and violence in the media. Offender characteristics is Factor IV and individuals who score high on Factor IV believe that the offenders are mentally ill, are responsible for childhood incest, are driven to commit childhood incest by internal factors, and should be locked up for the act (Jackson and Ferguson, 1983).

Participants in the study answered 20 statements in which the blame of incest is attributed. The statements were answered on a 6-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” where 1 indicates Strongly Disagree and 6 indicates Strongly Agree. Reliability for JIBS has a Chronbach’s alpha of .71 for the total score.

This level of psychometrically is acceptable for internal consistency. The JIBS is a 20-items, self-administered questionnaire that requires 10 minutes to complete and 19 of the statements propose a reason for the cause of incest.

Personal Background Questionnaire

The Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) is a questionnaire that was designed by the researcher to obtain demographic information including age, gender, relationship status, congregation size, years in pastoral and ministry professions, educational level, annual salary, and known incest cases within the congregation. The questionnaire also included four questions as follows:

1. Do you believe that incest exist in the African America community?
2. Do you believe your oath as a pastor overrules the state mandate to report childhood incest?
3. Do you believe the behavior of a childhood incest victim is important in the reporting of childhood incest?
4. Do you believe the offender's characteristics are important in the reporting of childhood incest?

Summary

This chapter outlined the design and methodology of this research study examining African American pastors' beliefs and actions toward incest in the African American community. Participants were recruited in the state of Texas. Participants completed two surveys and returned them by mail to the researcher. Each survey

consisted of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale and the Personal Background Questionnaire. Data were collected, and statistical analysis was conducted in order to find out what African American pastors believed about incest and how African American pastors handled incest cases in their congregation and community.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports on findings derived from surveys mailed to pastors affiliated with the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) within the state of Texas. The surveys comprised of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS) and the Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) were mailed to the participants' addresses. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze sample demographics and variables that were associated with the questions. Inferential statistics were used to test the five questions that guided this study.

Sample Description

This section describes the demographic characteristics of the study sample. It includes socio-demographic information, incest cases within congregation, means and standard deviations for incest cases, reporting of childhood incest cases, beliefs about behavior of childhood incest victims, and beliefs about offenders' characteristics. The participants of this study were African American pastors affiliated with the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) churches. Of the 125 surveys were mailed out, 56 surveys were returned to researcher. Of the 56 returned, 52 of these were completed surveys.

Table 1

COGIC Participants' Demographics (N=52)

	n	Range	Mean
Age	51	37-75	58.39
Congregation size	51	15-700	130.49
Years as a pastor	52	10-38	17.28
Years in the ministry	50	6-48	30.08
Annual salary	36	12,000-185,000	53,556.94
Number of incest cases	51	1-2	.43

Table 1 displays the demographic information for the sample. The final sample consisted of 52 (COGIC) African American male pastors. The participants' ages ranged from 37 to 75, with a mean age of 58.39 years. Congregation sizes ranged from were 15 to 700, with a means of 130.490. Years as a pastor range from 1 to 38, with a means of 17.28 years. Years in the ministry ranged from 6 to 48, with a means of 30.08 years. The pastors' annual salary ranged from \$12,000 to \$185,000, with a means of \$53,569.44 per year. The pastors reported that incest cases within their congregations range from 0 to 7, with a mean of .43 cases.

Table 2

COGIC Participants' Relationship and Education Demographics (N=52)

	n	Percent
Married	46	88.5
Single	3	5.8
Significant other	2	3.8
Divorced	1	1.9
8 th grade to high school graduate	6	11.5
Some college/associate	18	34.6
Bachelor's degree	17	32.7
Graduate and post-graduate degree	11	21.2

Table 2 displays the demographic information for (COGIC) pastors' relationship status and education level. Slightly more than 88% percent of participants were married, 5.8% were single, 3.8% had a significant other, and 1.9% were divorced. Pastors with 8th grade to high school education accounted for 11.5% of participants. Pastors with some college/associate degree accounted for 34.6% of participants. Pastors with a bachelor's degree accounted for 32.7%, and pastors with a graduate and post-graduate degrees accounted for 21.2% of participants.

Table 3

COGIC Pastors' Beliefs about Childhood Incest (N=52)

	n	Percent
Incest exists in African American community	52	100
Pastor oath overrules mandate		
Yes	18	34.6
No	34	65.4
Victims' behavior important in reporting		
Yes	39	75
No	13	25
Offender characteristics important in reporting		
Yes	34	65.4
No	18	34.6

Table 3 displays the demographic information of (COGIC) pastors' beliefs about childhood incest. All the participants in this study agreed that incest exists in the African American community. Slightly more than 34% believe that their oath as a pastor overrules the state mandate to report childhood incest. Seventy-five percent of pastors believe that victims' behaviors are important in the reporting of childhood incest, and 65.4% believe that the offenders' characteristics are important in the reporting of childhood incest.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Four Factors of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale

Factors	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Factor I (situational factors)	1-6	3.16	1.00
Factor II (victims' behavior)	1-5	2.07	0.98
Factor III(societal values)	2-6	4.00	1.24
Factor IV (offender characteristics)	2-6	4.15	1.03

Table 4 displays the range, means, and standard deviation for factors on the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS). The participating pastors were asked to complete the (JIBS) with answer options on a 6-point Likert scale where 1 equals “Strongly Disagree” and 6 equals “Strongly Agree.” The Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS) has four factors: situational factors, victim’s behavior, society values, and offender’s characteristics. Each factor has five questions that comprise an independent score. Pastors in the study rated Factor I (situational factors) second to the lowest attribute of blame in childhood incest ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.00$) and Factor II (victims’ behavior) as being the lowest attribute of blame in childhood incest ($M=2.07$, $SD=0.98$). Pastors in the study rated Factor III (society values) was rated the second highest attribute of blame in childhood incest ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.24$) and Factor IV (offenders’ characteristics) as being the highest attribute of blame in childhood incest ($M=4.15$, $SD=1.03$).

Table 5

Correlation Distribution of Independent PBQ Variables and JIBS Factors

		Inc. AA	Pas. O	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
Incest exist in AA community	Correl. Coef						
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52
Pastor's oath overrules law	Correl. Coef.		1.00	-.03	-.33*	.22	-.05
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.83	.02	.11	.70
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52
Factor I	Correl Coef.		-.03	1.00	.38**	.20	.28*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.83		.00	.15	.04
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52
Factor II	Correl. Coef		-.33*	.38**	1.00	-.33	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.02	.01		.02	.80
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52
Factor III	Correl. Coef.		.22	.20	.33*	1.00	.17
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.11	.15	.02		.23
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52
Factor IV	Correl. Coef.		-.05	.28*	.04	.17	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.70	.04	.80	.23	
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52

Results of Analyses

Five questions guided the data analysis of this survey. Inferential statistics was used to test the questions. Findings and interpretations of the results are presented for each question.

Q₁. What is the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and their combined agreement that their oath as ministers overrules the state's mandate to inform authorities of childhood incest based on their Factor I (situational variables) scores of the Jackson Incest Blaming Scale?

To examine the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and their combined oath as ministers overruling the state mandate, a Spearman's rho correlation was performed. As shown in Table 5, the test results indicate no significant correlation between African American pastors believes about childhood incest and their oath as a minster over-ruling the state mandate to report childhood incest ($p > .05$) and no significant relation between Factor I (situational variables) scores of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale ($r = .22, p > .05$).

Q₂. What is the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and Factor I (situational variable) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which may influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

To examine the relationship between African American pastors' belief about incest and Factor I (situational variables) of the Jackson incest Blame Scale (JIBS) a Spearman's rho correlation was performed. No correlation was found between African American pastors believes about incest and Factor I (situational variables) of the Jackson

incest Blame Scale ($p > .05$). As shown in Table 5, a Spearman's rho nonparametric correlation revealed no correlation between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and Factor I (situational variables) of the JIBS influencing their reporting of childhood incest.

Q₃. What is the relationship between the beliefs of African American pastors about victim behavior in regards to Factor II (victims' blame) of the Jackson, Incest Blame Scale, which influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

To examine the relationship between beliefs of African American pastors' about childhood incest and Factor II (victims' blame) of the Jackson incest Blame Scale (JIBS) a Spearman's rho correlation was performed. No correlation was found between beliefs of African American pastors about childhood incest and Factor II (victims blame) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale ($p > .05$). As shown in table 5, Spearman's rho revealed no correlation between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and victims' behaviors of the JIBS that would influence the reporting of childhood incest to Child Protective Services.

Q₄. What is the relationship between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and Factor III (societal values) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, which may influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

To examine the relationship between beliefs of African American pastors' about childhood incest and Factor III (societal values) of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS). A Spearman's rho correlation was performed. No correlation was found between African American pastors' beliefs about incest and the societal values of the Jackson

Incest Blame Scale ($p > .05$). As shown in Table 5, Spearman's rho revealed no correlation between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and societal values of the JIBS that would influence their reporting of childhood incest to Child Protective Services.

Q₅. What is the relationship between the beliefs of African American pastors about childhood incest with regards to offenders' characteristics of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale that may influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

To examine the relationship between beliefs of African American pastors' about childhood incest and Factor IV (offenders' characteristics) of the JIBS, a Spearman's rho correlation was performed ($p > .05$). As shown in Table 5, Spearman's rho revealed no correlation between African American pastors' beliefs about childhood incest and Factor IV (offender characteristics) of the JIBS that would influence their incidence reporting to Child Protective Services?

Table 6

Correlation Distribution between JIBS Factors and Years as Pastor

Variables	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	YP
Factor I	1.00	.38**	.20	.28*	-.05
Factor II	.38**	1.00	-.33*	.04	-.05
Factor III	.20	-.33*	1.00	.17	.30*
Factor IV	.28*	.04	.20	1.00	-.13
Years as a pastor	-.05	-.05	.30*	-.13	1.00

A Spearman's rho correlation was performed using each participant's data from JIBS and Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ). As shown in Table 6 a significant positive correlation was determined between Factor III and years as a pastor ($\rho = .30, p > .05$), which indicates that as participants increase their experiences as pastors, there is also an increase in pastors' beliefs that Factor III attribute to the childhood incest phenomenon in the African American family and community. Factor I and Factor IV showed a significant positive correlation of ($\rho = 0.28, p > .05$). This suggests that participants believe that both Factor I and Factor IV attribute to childhood incest in the African American family and community. A significant positive correlation was determined between Factor II and Factors III ($\rho = .38, p > .001$). This indicates that participants believe both Factor I and situational factors attribute to childhood incest in the African American family. A significant negative correlation was found between Factor II and Factor III ($\rho = -.33, p < .05$), which indicates that when participants do not believe that Factor III attribute to childhood incest, the participants also disbelieve that Factor II attributes to childhood incest in the African American family and community.

Table 7

Correlation of Personal Background Questionnaire and Education

		Education	Incest	P. O.	V. B.	O. C.
		AA				
Education	Correlation	1.00	.	.14	.40**	.34**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.31	.00	.00
	N	52	52	52	52	52
Incest exists in AA community	Correlation	.	.	.	.	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.	.
	N	52	52	52	52	52
Pastor oath overrules law	Correlation	.14	.	1.00	.42**	.44**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.314	.	.	.00	.00
	N	52	52	52	52	52
Victim behavior	Correlation	.40**	.	.42**	1.00	.79**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.	.00	.	.00
	N	52	52	52	52	52
Offender's characteristics	Correlation	.40	.	.44**	.79**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	.003	.	.001	.000	.
		52	52	52	52	52

Table 7 displays a nonparametric correlation between Personal Background Questionnaire and education of pastors in the study. A Spearman's rho was used to find the relationship between independent and dependent variables. A correlation was revealed between education and behavior of the childhood incest victim ($r = .40$, $p < 0.01$), which indicates that as participants increase their education as pastors, there is also an increase in their beliefs that the childhood incest victim's behavior attributes toward childhood incest phenomenon in the African American family and community. A second correlation was revealed between offender's characteristics and education ($r = .40$, $p < 0.01$) which also indicates that as participants increase their education as pastors, again there is an increase in their beliefs, but this time it is about the offender's characteristics for attributes toward childhood incest phenomenon in the African American family and community. A third correlation was revealed between offender's characteristics and pastor's oath ($r = .44$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that participating pastors believe offender's characteristics attributes to childhood incest in the African American family and community. A fourth correlation was revealed between pastor's oath and behavior of childhood incest victim ($r = .42$, $p < 0.01$). This correlation may suggest that participating pastors believe the victim's behavior also attributes to childhood incest in the African American family and community. The fifth correlation was between the offender's characteristics and behavior of the childhood incest victim ($r = .79$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that participating pastors believe that both the childhood

incest victim's behavior and the offender's characteristics attribute to childhood incest in the African American family and community.

Table 8

Pastors' Education Levels, Percent, Mean, and Standard Deviation (N=52)

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
8 th grade – high school	6	11.5	3.47	1.51
Some college/associate degree	18	32.6	4.48	1.47
Bachelor's degree	17	32.7	3.41	.850
Graduate and post-graduate degree	11	21.2	4.44	.73

Table 8 displays the range, means and standard deviation of pastors' education levels. Of the 52 pastors in the study six had an education level of eighth grade to high school diplomat, and 18 had some college or an associate's degree. Seventeen pastors held a bachelor's degree, and 11 pastors held a graduate and/or post-graduate degree.

Table 9

Pastors' Descriptive for JIBS Factor III and Educational Levels

Factor III (Societal Values)	Range	95% Confidence Interval for Means	
		Lower bound	Upper Bound
8 th grade – high school	2 – 5	1.89	5.05
Some college/associate degree	2 – 6	3.75	5.21
Bachelor's degree	2 – 5	2.97	3.85
Graduate and post-graduate degree	3 – 6	3.95	4.92
Total	2 – 6	3.66	4.35

Table 9 displays the range and confidence interval for means of education for pastor in this study. Eighth grade to high school ranged from 2 to 5, with a means interval of 1.89-5.05. Some college to associate's degree ranged from 2 to 6, with a means interval of 9.75-5.21. Bachelor's degree ranged from 2 to 5, with a means interval of 2.97-3.85. Lastly, graduate to post graduate ranged from 3 to 6, with a means interval of 3.95-4.92.

Table 10

Group Variance for Education and Factor III

Factor III	Sum of Squares	df	Means	F	Sig
Between groups	13.78	3	4.60	3.40	.03
Within groups	64.88	48	1.35		
Total	78.68	51			

Table 10 displays a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), which was performed to compare the differences on the set of Factor III (Societal Values) based on education. Factor III scores were treated as dependent variables, and education was treated as an independent variable $F(3,48) = 3.40, < 0.03$.

Table 11

Multiple Comparisons of Pastors' Education and Societal Values of JIBS

Dep. Variable	Education Revised	Education Revised	Means	SD	Sig
Factor III	8 th grade – high school	Some college/assoc. degree	-1.011	.548	.266
		Bachelor's degree	.055	.552	1.0
		Graduate and post-graduate	-.970	.590	.365
	Some college/associate degree	8 th grade – high school	1.01	.548	.266
		Bachelor's degree	1.066*	.393	.044
		Graduate and post-graduate	.04	.445	1.00
	Bachelor's degree	8 th grade – high school	-.05	.552	1.00
		Some college/assoc. degree	-1.066*	.393	.044
		Graduate and post-graduate	-1.03	.450	.118
	Graduate and post-graduate	8 th grade – high school	.97	.590	.365
		Some college/assoc. degree	-.04	.445	1.00
		Bachelor's degree	1.23	.450	.118

Table 11 displays multiple comparisons between education levels and Factor III. The statistical significance between education was determined by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by inspection of all differences between pairs. For each measure, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted using Tukey HSD method to identify significant differences among education levels of pastors. A significant positive correlation was found for Factor III of the JIBS between pastors with high school and

some college/associate's degrees ($r = 1.07, p < 0.05$). A significant negative correlation of was found for Factor III between pastors with some college/associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees ($r = -1.07, p > 0.05$).

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented results gathered from survey data that was mailed to addresses of pastors who are affiliated with the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) denomination in the state of Texas. Five questions were examined in order to answer the dominant research questions. Testing each research question examined the attributes of belief for African American pastors in regards to childhood incest in the African American family/congregation/community. Three questions from the Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) tested their beliefs about incident reporting to Child Protective Services. One question tested the participating pastor's oath as minister and Factor I of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS). The last question tested the PBQ and Factor IV of the JIBS. The four factors of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS) were used as dependent variables when testing pastors' beliefs about childhood incest in the African American family/community.

Five questions guided the data analysis. No correlation was found within any of the five questions. Further analyses of PBQ and JIBS found significant correlations between educational level of pastors and Factor III of the Jackson Incest Blame Scale (JIBS). These results may indicate that the pastors' beliefs about Factor III attributing to childhood incest different from associate's degree to bachelor's degree. Lastly, pastors'

beliefs about Factor III attributing to childhood incest in the African American family/community change again after masters and/or post-graduate degree.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A quantitative research method study was conducted to explore African American pastors' beliefs and actions about incest in the African American community. This chapter includes description of sample, discussion and findings based on findings of the study. The research questions were discussed separately. Conclusion, limitations, implications, and suggestion for future research conclude this chapter.

Discussion

The sample for this study consisted of 52 participants. All of the participants were male African American pastors of a predominately African American congregation. The demographic data presented in this study showed that the majority of the pastors (88.5%) are married. The data also showed that 65.4% of the pastors had 11 years or greater as pastors, and 66% of the pastors had 25 years or greater in the ministry with an average of fewer than 100 members. The data results indicated that the majority (74.5%) of African American pastors have not had a childhood incest case within their congregation and/or community. Yet, studies noted the participation of African American childhood sexually abused and incest survivors (Anderson, 2006; Bogar & Hulse-Killacky, 2006; Brand & Alexander, 2003; Clear, Vincent, & Harris, 2006; Carlson, Maciol, Schneider, 2006; Gall, 2006; Hattery, 2009; Katernadahl, Burge, & Kellogg, 2006; Hestrick & Perrino, 2009; Kelly, Wood, Gonzalez, MacDonald, Waterman, 2002; Kogan, 2004; Lowe,

Pavkov, Casanova, & Wetchler, 2005; Luterek, Orsillo, & Marx, 2005; Shaw, Lewis, Loeb, Rosado & Rodriguez, 2001; Staller & Nelson-Gardell, 2005; Schilling, Aseltine & Gore, 2007; Smith, Letourneau, Sanders, Kilpatrick, Resnick, & Best, 2000; Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008; Turell & Armsworth, 2000; Ullman, 2007; Ullman & Filipas, 2005). Likewise Robinson (2000) noted that incest is a part of many Christian African Americans children childhood experiences.

Reporting to Authorities

The finding of this study indicated that 34.6 % of African American pastors believed that their oath as pastors overruled the mandate to report childhood incest. The element controllability of attribution theory would explain this action or behavior as pastors being able to manipulate cause through pastoral counseling with childhood incest victim, family, and offender. Similar findings were reported in the research study by Sims (2002), which noted that ministers stated not knowing about the mandate to report childhood sexual abuse.

Attribution theory element of stability may play a part in the pastors' decisions not to inform authorities about childhood incest incidents. There might be several specific reasons for pastors believing that their oath overrides the state mandate to report child sexual abuse. Pastors may believe that they are able to stabilize or prevent any future occurrences of childhood incest within the particular family the pastor is counseling. It might be the confidentiality of the communication between pastor and church member or that the pastors believe that they are working on God's behalf and communicate such

matters only to God. It also may be that pastors believe that they are doing what is best for the family as a whole, especially if the offender is the main source of income for the family unit (Alaggia, 2001, Atwood, 2007). Additionally pastors might be preserving the family value system based on religious understanding and teachings, which is in connection with findings of Alaggia's (2001) study where religion influences the family value system. Likewise noted by Rudolfson and Tidefors (2009) is that the relationship between pastor and member may lead to a situation where the pastor is the first person the victim is able to confide in and trust. Therefore, it is quite common that members of the ministry, after their initial contact with the victim, are reluctant to refer the victim and report the offender to other professionals. Findings from this study indicated that 75% of participating pastors believed that the child victims' behaviors affect the reporting of childhood incest. Findings also indicate that 65.4% of pastors believed that the offenders' characteristics are important in reporting childhood incest.

The pastor may not report to authorities and keep the incest situations confidential because he believes that the child incest victim may in the future be a member of his congregation. Attribution theory informs that the pastor will try to keep a positive self-image. This belief, as mentioned previously, might be because the pastor may be familiar with, or even have an ongoing relation to the victim and offender (Rudolfson & Tidefors, 2009). Attribution theory notes that a person will comprehend circumstances where a positive self-image is conserved, and for pastors who have developed relationships with members of their congregation, keeping a positive self-image is utmost important for the

church and community. Jackson and Ferguson (1983) noted that an individual attributes blame for incest may affect their reporting of childhood incest.

Incest and Religion

On the Jackson Incest Blame Scale, the participating pastors rated the highest attribute of blame in childhood incest to the offenders' characteristics. They also rated the victim blame as the lowest attribute of blame in cases of childhood incest. According to attribution theory, an individual's knowledge of the environment and their constructed meaning of childhood incest might aid in understanding their beliefs and actions toward childhood incest. This study data results for offender characteristics and victims' blame indicate that pastors may have some knowledge of action and behaviors of individuals in cases of childhood incest, yet childhood incest is not a topic widely discussed.

Education of Pastors

Based on pastor education level in this study, societal values contribute to childhood incest in the African American community. Pastors with high school and some college believed that societal values according to the Jackson Incest Blame Scale attributed to incest in the African American community. This could be based on the pastors' education of societal effects on the family life of African Americans. In contrast, pastors with bachelor's degrees believed that societal values according to the Jackson Incest Blame Scale may not attribute to childhood incest in the African American community. This change in understanding of societal effects on African American family

life of may be due to a knowledge gained in course work in higher education. Therefore, further research is required to comprehend this change in pastors' beliefs and actions.

Despite the fact that incest experiences are noted in the Bible, ministers in Rudolfson, Tidefors, and Stromwall's (2011) research study stated that their education in theology or seminary did not prepare them to handle sexual abuse cases. An important finding of this study is that pastors' educational level is a major factor of how pastors understand childhood incest and what pastors do in cases of childhood incest in their communities.

Historically in the African American community, ministers are called by God to preach the gospel of Christ, and pastors are led by God to open a church. Sims's (2002) study noted that within African American community neither ministers nor pastors need to attend theology school, or seminary, or have a formal education.

Because the church in which they preside over does not hire most pastors, it is not likely that the congregation can fire the pastor. Within the Church of God in Christ, a few pastors are appointed, and this happens only when a pastor dies or retires. These appointed pastors have guidelines to follow, which are set by the overseers of the church of God in Christ; however, none are based on education. In the Church of God in Christ, pastors are called by the Lord-God, and this is the qualification needed to start a church. There is no secular or spiritual mandate for education of pastors. Pastors are encouraged to pursue degrees in theology but are not mandated to do so. Likewise, in the Baptist Christian denominations, pastors' qualifications are out of the Bible (1 Timothy 3:1-7;

Titus 1:5-9) “look to the Bible for the persons to serve as pastor.” These qualifications are in two categories, character and gifts for ministry. Unlike in the Church of God in Christ, in the Baptist churches when the church is pastorless, the congregation elects a pastor search committee to prayerfully evaluate the qualifications of various persons to be the church pastor.

On the other hand, in the United Methodist Church, by answering the call from God, the licensed local pastor serves the mission of Jesus Christ through working with the local congregation. The licensed local pastor in the United Methodist Church has the authority of a pastor only within the setting and during the time of the appointment and shall not extend beyond it. The licensed local pastor is not ordained in the United Methodist Church but is licensed for pastoral ministry to perform the duties of a pastor. Academic requirements for a licensed local pastoral are 1) the individual must have graduated from an accredited high school or have received a certificate of equivalency before becoming a certified candidate, and 2) must pursue theological education through an approved seminary or in the course of study.

Conclusion

Childhood incest is an understudied phenomenon in the African American community, and Robinson (2000) noted that one in three cases of childhood sexual abuse is a childhood incest case. This study identified a need for African American male pastors to become educated about childhood incest in the African American family, community, and especially within their church congregation. The findings of this study indicate that

African American pastors may or may not inform the proper authorities in cases of childhood incest based on the victim's blame and the offender characteristics. Even though sexual interaction with a child is against the law, the crime of childhood incest goes unreported by some pastors. Atwood's (2007) research noted incest represents a behavior of great silence and is rarely prosecuted. An incest victim is reluctant reveal the perpetrator because it is someone they trust or a family member.

This study indicated a need for pastoral training in cases of childhood sexual abuse. Additionally, a course should be offered in their educational pursuit about childhood incest and how to handle the matter, what to do in case of childhood incest, and who to talk to about childhood incest. Results of this study also indicate that pastors need to be educated and understand the state mandate to report childhood incest and sexual abuse.

This study also indicated that pastors should have some knowledge of resources that they can offer a victim, family, and offender in times of sexual crises. Pastors should also be able to make contact with other professions including doctors, social services, and mental health services to secure adequate help for all involved in this type of family crisis or trauma. Furthermore, African American pastors should work with resources outside of the church, particularly with mental health professionals, to aide individuals who have experienced childhood incest with any mental, emotional, physical, and psychological problems that may have occurred as a result of the childhood incest incident. It is vital that all professionals working with the childhood incest victim, perpetrator, and family

must understand the relationship between the African American church member and the African American pastor in regards to communication about the childhood incest incident.

An individual who experiences incest in the religious family and is exposed to other forms of sexual abuse is often extremely traumatized. This individual makes self-destructive decisions, which become difficult to change in his or her future. Millions of families attend church throughout their lives; however, attending church does not give them immunity to the experience of incest.

Limitations to Results

This study faced the following limitations:

1. The sample was not randomly selected, so findings cannot be generalized to all African American pastors.
2. Only pastors whose addresses were in the directory received a mailed survey packet. The inclusion of all Church of God in Christ pastors in Texas might have yielded different results.
3. Only African American male pastors whose addresses were in the directory of Church of God in Christ within the state of Texas completed the survey.
4. Participants answered the survey in private and at their convenience. Answers may be different in a face-to-face collection of data.

5. No specification about education was asked to understand if the education level given by pastors on Personal Background Questionnaire (PBQ) was secular or theological education.

Implications

Implications drawn from this study may have value for the Church of God in Christ leaders, family sciences educators, family therapists, counselors, other mental health professionals, and students' interest in childhood incest. Data from the study indicated that 34.6% of pastors believed that their oath as a pastor over rules the stated mandate to report childhood incest with in a form of child sexual abuse. Furthermore, data from this study implied that a number of African American members in the Church of God in Christ may be suffering from issues related to childhood incest. The extent of this issue and the percentage of members within the Church of God in Christ that struggle with Incest Survivor Syndrome is unknown. Pastors in this study had limited knowledge of childhood incest and intervention strategies for this phenomenon in the African American community. Additionally, networking with other social agencies was limited.

Education of pastors in the study was limited, and because pastors are a major source of counseling for many African Americans in their congregation and pastors work closely with families, some families may have refused to seek formal therapy with counselors or family therapists within the mental health field. The education of the pastor is significant, because when counseling with families, pastors need to know what resources to offer the families who have experienced childhood incest incidents. Lastly,

given the role and responsibility of pastors in the Church of God in Christ, the principles of attribution theory seem to provide theoretical guides for future research on issues related to childhood incest and the meanings pastors create for childhood incest in the African American community.

Recommendations

The findings from this study suggest the following recommendations:

1. That the Church of God in Christ incorporates an educational mandate for all pastors with the purpose of enhancing their awareness about childhood incest, developing intervention skills, and identifying prevention strategies related to childhood sexual abuse.
2. That the Church of God in Christ create a policy and set in place procedures for working with and counseling families involved in childhood incest incidents.
3. That the Church of God in Christ organizes support systems and outreach programs for individuals who have had childhood incestuous experiences.
4. That the governing body of the Church of God in Christ explores the issues of accountable for the action and non-actions in all cases of child sexual abuse, especially incest.
5. That pastors develop cooperative networking systems with families and children protective services and mental health agencies.

Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study illuminated certain areas that could contribute to further exploration of the incest phenomenon in the African American community. Suggestions for future research are for quantitative and qualitative as follows:

Quantitative Studies

1. In the interest of being able to generalize findings, utilize a random sample of African American pastors and ministries in the Church of God in Christ in Texas. The ministry staff in the Christ of God in Christ includes both male and female clergy.
2. To duplicate study with other Christian denominations, including Baptist, Catholic, Methodists, Lutheran, and Latter Day Saints.
3. To further explore African American pastors' decisions to inform the proper authorizes with a qualitative research study, which will create a deeper understanding of the pastors' attributes.

Qualitative Studies

1. To understand society values and the educational differences among pastors with high school diplomas versus bachelor's degrees and bachelor's degree versus graduate and post-graduate degrees.
2. To understand the pastors' attributions of childhood incest and their decisions to inform the proper authorities.

3. To explore families who have sought counseling from pastors about childhood incest experiences.
4. To study the understanding of survivors' meanings of incest, molestation, and sexual abuse.
5. To initiate a qualitative study for understanding whom African American pastors communicate with considering childhood incest in the African American community.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Letter

Dear Pastor,

My name is Tesia D. Wells and I am a doctoral candidate in Family Therapy at Texas Woman's University. I need your assistance. Your name was selected from the Church of God in Christ directory to participate in study. The study is on African American pastor's beliefs and actions about childhood incest in the African American community. This study is the final requirement for my doctoral degree in Family Therapy. This topic is a passion of mine and I am hoping that the results can help in assisting individual who struggle with this life changing event.

I am enclosing the survey for you to fill out. This will only take about 20 minutes of your time, as I know that your time is precious. There are two parts to this survey, the first demographic data and the second is a 20-question survey with answering ranging from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. After completion of enclosed material, please place both demographic and survey questionnaires in stamped self-address envelope.

Thank you for your time and participation

Sincerely,

Tesia D. Wells, PhD Candidate

Contact information: (940) 206-9180 or TWells@twu.edu.

P.S. Pastors, who would like a copy of results, please be in contact with me by the information listed above.

Appendix B
Informed Consent
and
Personal Background Questionnaire

Personal Background Questionnaire

African American Pastors Demographic Survey

The return of your completed questionnaire constitutes your consent to act as a participant in this research. Responses are **confidential**; there is no place on the survey for participants' names. Participation is **voluntary** and participants can withdraw participation at any time. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading and Internet transactions.

For the following questions please mark X for your answer:

Your age: _____

Gender: ____ Male ____ Female

Relationship Status: ____ Single ____ Married ____ Significant other
____ Other: please specify

Congregation size (numerically): _____

Years as a Pastor: _____ **Years in the Ministry:** _____

Annual Salary (in US dollars) _____

Do you have an e-mail address? ____ Yes ____ No

Education: ____ 8 th grade and below	____ Associate degree
____ High school	____ Bachelor degree
____ GED/High graduate	____ Graduate Degree
____ Some College	____ Post Graduate Degree

Number of incest cases within congregation since you've been pastoring: _____

Do you believe that incest exist in the African America community? ____ Yes ____ No

Do you believe your oath as a pastor overrules the state mandate to report childhood incest? ____ Yes ____ No

Do you believe the behavior of a childhood incest victim is important in the reporting of childhood incest? ____ Yes ____ No

Do you believe the offender's characteristics are important in the reporting of childhood incest? ____ Yes ____ No

Appendix C

Jackson Incest Blame Scale

Jackson Incest Blame Scale

Please circle the number that best describe your answer to the following statements when considering childhood incest:

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1. There is a strong connection between the current morality and the crime of incest	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The amount of sex and violence in the media today strongly influences the offer to commit incest	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. When incest occurs, it is the offender's fault	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. There is a strong relationship between people being regarded as sex objects by our society and the crime of incest	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The prevalence of incest is directly related to our societal values	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Persons who commits incest should be locked up for the act	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. People who commit incest are "mentally ill" or psychologically disturbed	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Incest can be mainly attributed to peculiarities in the offender's personality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. It is the victim who entices the offender to commit incest	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Incest is a product of a sexually unhealthy society	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Victims provoke the act of incest by using bad judgment, acting seductively, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. People are victims of incest because they deserve it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Incest can be avoided by the victim.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Incest is more likely to occur in broken homes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Alcohol and drugs are significant factors in the occurrence of incest.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Incest is more likely to occur in families with poor interpersonal relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. There is a certain kind of person who becomes a victim of incest.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Incest is more likely to occur in slum or "bad" areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Offenders are driven to incest by internal factors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Incest is more likely to occur in families that are socially isolated from the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix E

Approval for the use of

Jackson Incest Blame Scale

Dr. Jackson,

First, thank you again for returning my call on last Thursday, March 3, 2011. The call gives us an opportunity to discuss the JIBS and permission to use it by one of my doctoral students.

The present email is to formally thank you for your explanation regarding the copyright status of the Jackson Incest Blaming Scale and your permission for it to be used by Tesia Wells in her dissertation research on incest. Although the scale is not copyrighted, for our IRB process, documentation of permission is important. This note will serve that purpose.

Again, thank for making your Jackson Incest Blaming Scale available to researchers interested in investigating incest.

Sincerely,

Larry LeFlore, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair