

Université de Montréal

**Do they all act the same? Identification of the strategies associated with different types of
online sex solicitors' discourses**

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Université de Montréal

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online sex solicitors' discourses**

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Résumé

L'avancement des technologies a permis aux agresseurs sexuels de mineurs d'avoir de nouvelles opportunités de commettre des infractions à caractère sexuel en ligne (Fortin, Paquette, & Dupont, 2018; Seto, Hanson, & Babchishin, 2011). Avec un nombre de plaintes criminelles croissant (Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2012), le phénomène du leurre informatique pose de nombreux défis pour les enquêteurs qui doivent développer des méthodes d'enquête pour distinguer les dossiers ayant le plus de risque de passage à l'acte afin d'assurer la protection du public. Le projet de recherche vise à distinguer les différents types de cyber-relations basées sur les stratégies utilisées dans les discours d'auteurs de leurre. En analysant les différences entre les auteurs de leurre qui ne demande pas un contact hors ligne, ceux qui n'ont pas été capables d'obtenir un contact et ceux qui ont obtenu un contact hors ligne, on vise à identifier les stratégies associées aux discours des interactions menant aux contacts hors ligne. L'étude utilise une combinaison d'approche qualitative et quantitative. L'analyse des conversations en ligne a été faite à partir de données policières de la Sûreté du Québec¹. La transformation des données qualitatives en quantitative a été fait pour conduire les analyses statistiques. Les résultats suggèrent que les stratégies associées aux interactions qui ont mené au passage hors ligne sont : la persistance, la pratique en ligne des fantaisies sexuelles et d'avoir des opportunités à risque limité de détection d'une figure faisant autorité. Les auteurs de leurre avec contact ont utilisé ces stratégies de manière plus récurrente que les auteurs de leurre sans contact. En outre, les victimes qui participent plus et qui résistent le plus ont été associées à des relations menant au contact hors ligne. Les auteurs de leurre ayant eu un contact hors ligne avec leurs victimes avaient un plus grand nombre de conversations, en moyenne. Donc, ils avaient plus de temps pour utiliser différentes stratégies pour surpasser les résistances des victimes. Les implications de cette recherche suggèrent que les typologies identifiées dans la littérature scientifique n'ont pas trouver les caractéristiques scientifiquement associées à chacun des types.

Mots-clés : Leurre informatique, modus operandi, exploitation sexuelle en ligne des mineurs

¹ Les opinions exprimées dans ce document sont celles de l'auteur et ne reflètent pas nécessairement la vision de la Sûreté du Québec

Abstract

The advancement of technology created new opportunities for online sex solicitors to cyber victimize minors online (Fortin et al., 2018; Seto et al., 2011). With the increasing number of police reports (Wolak et al., 2012), online sex solicitors pose numerous challenges for police practices. This research project aims to distinguish the differences between the types of interactions that seek offline contact based on the strategies seen in their discourses. By analyzing the differences between the strategies used by various types of interactions, we aimed to identify the strategies which are associated with offline contact interaction group. This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to achieve the research goal. We used a qualitative methodology to do a thematic analysis and codify the chatlogs. The strategies used for codification were taken from previous studies and observation of the police data from the Sûreté du Québec². After the codification, we transformed the thematic results into quantitative data. The quantitative research methodology was employed to test the differences in frequency of each strategy between types of interactions. The results demonstrate that the strategies associated with offline contact are persistence, fantasy rehearsal and the presence of opportunities with limited risk of exposure. Contact group used more frequently these strategies compared to the noncontact group. Moreover, contact victims showed more participatory and oppositional behaviours. Offenders who met their victims offline showed longer interactions, on average. Consequentially, offenders from the contact group had more time to use the various strategies to surpass the victims' resistances. The implication of this research lays in the contradiction of these results compared to literature's results. The particularities of each types are not associated with previous typologies.

Keywords: Online sex solicitation, sexual child exploitation online, modus operandi

² The opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the Sûreté du Québec's vision.

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Acronym List

OSS : Online sexual solicitor

PJ: Perverted Justice

SQ: Sûreté du Québec

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Introduction

The use of the Internet has become the norm in our everyday life, and has been a breakthrough in interpersonal communicative technology (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). Social network sites (SNS) have millions of users daily with around 1.7 billion users have been connecting to Facebook daily in 2020 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Clement, 2020). One of the most predominantly use features of the Internet is the communicative platforms (also known as chat forums or chat rooms). Chatrooms are a popular way to communicate simultaneously with other users regardless of geographical location as interpersonal interactions can be formed regardless of where individuals live (Kleijn & Bogaerts, 2019). Chat rooms were often used as a tool to connect strangers online or at least users that did not know each other in real space (Grinter & Palen, 2002). Nowadays, instant messaging (IM), a form of communication between individuals using the same system, has become the “newest and most popular incarnation of near-synchronous text chat technology”, often using social media as the system to IM) (Grinter & Palen, 2002).

Society uses the internet to communicate, to build interactions, and to connect. Strangers who share interests or are in proximity to one another can connect through multiple applications on their smartphones (Facebook, Instagram, Tinder, Bumble, Grindr). The Internet has created opportunities for its users to create romantic interactions, sexual interaction at a distance (using chat and webcam) (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011). Users are no longer constrained by their location to meet potential mates or acquaintances. Some of the social network sites' functions allow individuals to share their private lives, their schools' location, and their routines to strangers online (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.). Users can also exchange on numerous and revealing private information to strangers online can put anyone at risk of cybersexual exploitation, especially minors topics (Barber & Bettez, 2014). When a minor presents more types of risky behaviours online, which primarily manifests as chatting with strangers, they are more likely to experience online sexual victimization (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2007).

Offenders have adapted their offences with technological advancement, which is well documented, as the use of the web as a crime facilitator has been studied with the emergence of online sexual offences (Kloess, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Beech, 2019; O'Connell, 2003). Online sexual solicitation can be seen as the adaptation of the sexual assault of a child. Before the

technological advancement, if an offender wanted to assault a minor sexually, they were more likely restricted by their environment and social circle, which limited their choices of potential victims. The first advantage of using technology is that, before, sexual offenders had to rely on playgrounds or their social circles, while now they can search for juvenile profiles to engage in online sexual activities (Kleijn & Bogaerts, 2019). Secondly, using technology as the medium for finding potential victims for sexual activities is considerably shorter than offline sexual assaults (Ioannou, Synnott, Reynolds, & Pearson, 2018; Quayle, Allegro, Hutton, Sheath, & Löf, 2014). The third advantage is that there are more potential victims online to choose from offline (Quayle et al., 2014). The three advantages will be explained in more depth in chapter 1. Overall, due to the ability to communicate online with other users worldwide, there are more potential victims for offenders to achieve sexual gratification quicker than offenders that operate offline.

Online sexual solicitors (OSS) are sex offenders who have sexual interactions with children online. Online sexual solicitation is, also, defined by individuals who use various technologies to communicate online with children for sexual gratification and possibly to schedule a real-life meeting with a underage victim (Kloess et al., 2017; Seto, Wood, Babchishin, & Flynn, 2012). OSS target minors who are using online venues (SNS, chat rooms and gaming sites) to seduce and manipulate them into sexualized conversations (Davidson & Gottschalk, 2011; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Beech, & Collings, 2013; Wolak & Finkelhor, 2013). According to the Canadian criminal code, luring a child is the act of communicating online to facilitate a sexual offence with a person who is or whom the accused believed to be under the age of eighteen (Criminal code, 2007). In Canada, to be arrested, the offender does not need to have committed an online sexual offence. The police must demonstrate that the person was chatting has the intent to commit a sexual offence either online or offline, to have grounds for arrest. In cases of online sexual solicitations, it is essential to acknowledge that there are different ways for online sex solicitors to achieve sexual gratification. OSS can achieve sexual gratification through multiple online sexual exploitations or by meeting victims offline to assault them sexually (Broome, Izura, & Lorenzo-Dus, 2018). In online sexual solicitation, victims are sexually victimized online through the exchange of sexualized conversations or sharing of sexual photographs/video. Victims can also be sexually assaulted offline. The offender communicates with minors for the purpose of meeting them, in reality, to sexually assault the underage victims.

Online sexual solicitation has been considered a significant social issue in the last few years as more than ever before; youth spend many hours online weekly (Winters, Kaylor, & Jeglic, 2017). The number of online sexual solicitation complaints to the police continues to grow yearly (Wolak et al., 2012). Thus, with an increasing number of potential victims online, there is a need to categorize the OSS most likely to meet their victims offline to maximize juveniles' protection.

This research project will identify the most associated strategies with the groups of interaction that led to an offline contact. To identify these strategies, we will be employing a two-step methodology. The qualitative analysis will perform thematic analysis of the modus operandi. The quantitative analysis will test the thematic analysis results to highlight the differences between offenders who seek offline contact and those who obtained a contact. This master's research has four chapters. The first chapter presents the literature review and introduces the research project. The second chapter explains the two-step methodology employed to obtain the results. The third chapter shows the results of quantitative testing. The fourth chapter discusses the various results, compared them to previous literature's results. The conclusion will discuss the limits of this research and suggest directions for future research.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Chapter 1 presents the existing literature on online sexual solicitation. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part aims to understand the environment that permits sexual solicitations to occur, the online chatrooms. The second part explains the types of OSS and their modus operandi. The third part of this chapter will discuss the limitations of previous research and present this study.

1.1 Online Chatrooms

Felson and Boba (2010) studied how an individual's routine facilitates crimes by exposing and creating criminal opportunities. The convergence of three concepts defines the triangle of criminal opportunities: a motivated delinquent, a desirable target, and a guardian (Felson, & Boba, 2010). First, an offender must be motivated to commit a crime. Second, the potential offenders must find a desirable target. The targets are subjective to each offender's needs and want. Third, the absence of guardians can increase the probabilities of crime actualization as the calculated risk of detection are low (Felson & Boba, 2010). The Internet's communicative platforms create an environment that provides an opportunity for online sex solicitation. There are a considerable number of potential targets online, and they can often be unsupervised, which results in a virtual environment filled with opportunities, with a convergence of a motivated offender and a potential victim in the same environment.

Researchers have suggested that the emergence of chat forums in everyday life may contribute to the increasing rate of sexual victimization of minors (Villacampa & Gómez, 2017). In 2015, two-third of American households with children were connected to the Internet, including 97% of the 12-18 years old (Pranoto, Gunawan, & Soewito, 2015). Numerous minors are using the Internet and its communicative platform. In 2008 a survey, answered by 404 middle schoolers and 2077 high school students revealed that 33.3% of male middle schoolers and 12.5% of female middle schoolers conversed online in chatrooms with strangers (Dowdell, Burgess, & Flores, 2011). Over 50% of the high school girls knew what sexting was, and 13.4% of them had sexted online before (Dowdell et al., 2011). In the chatrooms that were not aimed for juvenile use, 41.7% of OSS were present, in contrast to 28.9% of OSS that was explicitly seen in youth-oriented

chatrooms (Dowdell et al., 2011). When minors chatted with offenders online, sexual conversations were introduced quickly by the majority of offenders. Results have shown that 63.3% of sex solicitors initiated sexual conversations within the first session; 20% introduced it between sessions 2 to 6 and 16.7% after more than 7 sessions (Dowdell et al., 2011). These results suggest that sexualized conversations were introduced quickly.

Conversing online has some advantages. Suler (2004) studied the online disinhibition effect of communicating online on human behaviours by comparing online behaviours to offline behaviours. The author found that individuals disclose personal information online that they would not necessarily say offline to strangers. The tendency towards fuller disclosure is possibly due to the feeling of anonymity, which in this context, refers to a separation between the person and their actions online and with anonymity often comes the feeling of being invisible (Suler, 2004; Whittle et al., 2013). Invisibility allows people to have the courage to behave in ways they would not necessarily want when their identity is known (i.e. in real life situation) (Suler, 2004). The Internet allows users to communicate with each other while, at the same time, they can provide little to no real information about themselves. The lack of real information about oneself facilitates deception (Chiu, Seigfried-Spellar, & Ringenberg, 2018). Minors can internally justify their behaviour by believing their identity is unknown or a representation of what they want the world to see them as (Whittle et al., 2013). Marcum (2007) explored how youth discussing sexual matters online allows them to feel more mature and safer since their identity is anonymous. Underage users may be more open to discussing sexual content with strangers online than they would in a real-life interaction, as the disinhibition effect suggests. It could be possible that if the minors are without the fear of judgement, they might be open to asking sexual questions to strangers or exploring their sexuality with other users.

Overall, we have seen that online chat platforms are a virtual space whereby users can communicate synchronously with each other worldwide. These virtual spaces offer a space where potential sex offenders can communicate online with underage users for sexual purposes (realization of sexual fantasies or as a motorway to offline sexual assault). However, it is not enough to be in the same space as a minor for online sexual solicitation to occur; offenders must chat with them to achieve sexual gratification. The following section will discuss how offenders chat with their victims and prepare them for sexual exploitation, a process called sexual grooming.

1.2 From offline grooming to online grooming

There are two forms of grooming: offline and online grooming. Before the Internet, child sex offenders that are sexually interested in minors would gradually manipulate the child, through grooming, before sexually exploiting them (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006). Sexual grooming does not have a consensual definition in scientific research. However, it is acknowledged that it is a technique to transform a sexual offender's desire into reality (Craven et al., 2006; Whittle et al., 2013). The grooming process is multileveled; it is also challenging to identify where grooming strategies begin and end during an online conversation (Gillespie, 2004; Whittle et al., 2013).

The process of grooming is the preparation of the child to further commit sexual offences against them, while the purpose of grooming is to engage the child in sexual behaviour, but the end is not always coitus (Lanning, 1992). The length of the process varies between children, but it is more common to take more extended periods in order for the child to feel comfortable and safe (McAlinden, 2006). The victims' experience with grooming is unique to each child, as much depends on the offenders themselves and their strategic adaptation for each victim (Whittle et al., 2013). Offline grooming refers to the process whereby "a child is befriended by a would-be abuser in an attempt to gain the child's confidence and trust, enabling them to get the child to acquiesce to abusive activity. It is frequently a pre-requisite for an abuser to gain access to a child" (Gillespie, 2002, p. 411). In cases of offline grooming, the process often includes preparing or analyzing the child's environment (Craven et al., 2006). Analyzing the environment of the child aims to limit the probabilities of detection by an authoritative figure consequently, the online sexual solicitors can obtain sexual gratification (Craven et al., 2006). This can involve preparing the child's environment by gaining unsupervised access to the minor and ensuring the child will not reveal the grooming to an authorities figure (Williams, Elliott, & Beech, 2013). Isolation and secrecy are characteristics of the grooming process (Lorenzo-Dus, Izura, & Pérez-Tattam, 2016; O'Connell, 2003; Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, & Rogers, 2007; Williams et al., 2013). Isolation is the idea of separating the child from their environment as to limit the potential exposure the offender has while grooming the victim; Secrecy is assuring the child does not reveal to anyone the offenders' behaviour towards them (more information in section 1.3.3). The process of offline grooming necessitates an abuse of trust of the victims and evaluating the child's environment.

Specific components of grooming have forcibly required adaptations due to the reality of online communications. The first significant difference with online grooming is that offenders go “from a state of absence of interpersonal knowledge to one of deceptive trust” through the means of online communication with their victims (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016, p. 42). In the era of social media, it is more probable that potential victims are not previously acquainted with the offenders and have met on chat forums, as meeting minors has been made easier as opportunities have arisen with the numerous chat forums available at little to no cost. Potential online sexual solicitors must be able to manipulate minors and bring them to participate in sexual activities on or offline. Online grooming can also be a process in which offenders get acquainted with the victims and no longer be considered a stranger to them (McAlinden, 2006). The offenders use techniques to deceive the victims into trusting them; these techniques do not rely on prior knowledge of the child’s situation to help them deceive their victim. The second is the lack of control over the child’s environment, with no control over the computer's location used to access the chatrooms or the child’s access to computers, for example.

Online and offline grooming are also different based on the different possible outcomes of grooming a child. As stated earlier, the purpose of offline grooming a child is for sexual gratification. When it comes to online sexual solicitation, there are two potential outcomes: luring them with the intent for offline sexual contact or fulfillment of online sexual conversations with minors (Broome et al., 2018; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). However, sexualized conversations are common for both usages of online sexual solicitation. Both online and offline grooming is understood as the child's preparation for sexual exploitation. The following section explores the different stages offenders go through to choose a victim, communicate with them and obtain sexual gratification. The various grooming themes are explored as they are part of the overall modus operandi of online sexual solicitors.

1.3 Modus operandi of online sexual solicitors

The following section begins with a short comparison of key studies discussing the modus operandi of OSS, followed by discussing the observed themes in these works. Much of the research has focused on the online sexual solicitors’ modus operandi by analyzing online conversations' content, often with the intent to explain the various tiers of grooming. O’Connell (2003) observed

50 hours of online conversations in IRC between offenders and underage between over five years and was one of the first to find a five-stage grooming model ((1)friendship forming, (2) relationship forming, (3) risk assessment, (4) exclusivity, and (5) sexual stages). She concluded that offenders moved through each stages in a linear pattern. Offenders used friendship as a starting based to could eventually lead to sexual content. Williams et al., (2013) analyzed transcripts acquired from the non-profit organization Perverted Justice to perform a thematic analysis. Although the themes found in Williams et al., (2013) were similar to O’Connell, the research went more in-depth, as they included the strategies in each stage of grooming. Williams et al., (2013) found three main themes: rapport building, sexual content and assessment. Williams et al., (2013) also presented strategies and specific behaviour found in all three themes and their subthemes. Egan, Hoskinson, & Shewan, (2011) also used Perverted Justice to perform a linguistic analysis of twenty online conversations between decoy victims and online sex solicitors. Their results showed that minimizing the risk of detection was not as important as first thought. Whittle et al., (2013) reviewed the literature on grooming and the differences in grooming themes and stages. Kloess et al., (2017) and Kloess et al., (2019), studied the chatlogs’ transcript and police report from three different UK police forces. In total, they had 29 transcripts and five offenders. They found four broader themes that are more sexually connotated than other models. The various tiers of grooming to be explored in the following sections are often based on the results of these research.

The most predominant themes in online grooming are based on rapport building, risk assessment and sexual content (Elliott, 2017; Kloess et al., 2017; O’Connell, 2003; Whittle et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2013). These themes were aimed at obtaining sexual gratification while minimizing the risk of detection by an authority. The first main theme was to build an interaction with the minor; the second was to reduce the risk of detection by a third party and the third was to achieve sexual gratification through the realization of sexual fantasies or offline sexual contact. These three themes were at the core of the *modus operandi*, as seen in the literature. Additionally, some recurring themes in the literature were not always included in the study of the *modus operandi*. These themes were deception, resistance and offline planning (de Santisteban, del Hoyo, Alcázar-Córcoles, & Gámez-Guadix, 2018; Gámez-Guadix, Almendros, Calvete, & De Santisteban, 2018; Kloess et al., 2017). Deception can be either by the offender changing their identity or by being deceptive in their manipulation of the child. Overcoming a child’s resistance includes persuasion strategies that would manipulate the child into “complying” to the sexual

demands of the offenders (Kloess et al., 2019). The offline planning theme was seen in conversations whereby the offender tried to initiate a physical meeting (Kloess et al., 2017). When chatting online, it is possible to close the chat sessions of solicitors and block them. Thus, offenders had to find ways to manipulate the victim into talking to them online. OSS had “developed different persuasive strategies that were adapted to the needs of the children; with these strategies, the offenders tried to involve the minors actively in the abuse process” (de Santisteban et al., 2018, p. 210). Each of these themes included a series of explicit and implicit strategies (see the following sections for further details on each strategy).

Researchers have attempted to determine if online sex solicitors follow a pattern of progression throughout their modus operandi. While O’Connell (2003) concluded that offenders progressed linearly through the grooming’s stages until achieving sexual gratification, this conclusion was discarded in Williams et al., (2013). The themes found in Williams et al. (2013) do not appear to be used in a specific sequence or order and directly contradicts the results from O’Connell (2003), who found that offenders use the various strategies as needed throughout the conversations. Throughout the interaction, the OSS will use the strategy most appropriate at the time to maximize the probabilities of sexual gratification. In the next few sections, the themes will be presented in the order from the introduction to the end of an interaction.

1.3.1 Finding potential victims

Researchers have begun studying how OSS found their victims online to understand their modus operandi better, as before grooming could occur online, offenders had to begin by initiating contact with potential victims (Winters et al., 2017). Quayle, Allegro, Hutton, Sheath, & Lööf, (2014) studied how offenders searched for and selected potential victims on communicative platforms through the interviews of 12 European men convicted of online grooming. Their results suggested that most offenders indiscriminately chose their victims and tried to reach as many potential victims as possible. Generally, offenders did not have set requirements before choosing whom to begin a conversation. It is possible to suggest that when offenders chose victims indiscriminately, they increased their odds of obtaining some form of online sexual gratification. By opening conversations with as many potential victims as possible also increases the odds of catching a victim. However, some offenders picked potential victims on physical appearances and profiles information (Quayle et al., 2014). It remains unclear what the role of the victims’ physical

appearance had in choosing a potential victim online (Malesky, 2007; O'Connell, 2003; Winters et al., 2017). Some offenders mentioned that they chose screen names that sounded young or sexual or had information in their profile that suggested they were needy or submissive (Malesky, 2007; Quayle et al., 2014; Whittle et al., 2013). Quayle et al., (2014) discussed how the offenders interviewed described themselves as “often seeking young people because of certain information available in their profile, including images” (p. 374). For example, if an offender saw the username katiegirl69, offenders could expect the username to belong to an underage girl sexually receptive. By choosing a username/address with a sexual connotation, offenders could perceive the users as open to sexual content (Quayle et al., 2014). It is unclear, in research, how the OSS judged if a potential victim was needy or submissive by their username. Much remains unknown about the subjective process in which offenders preselect potential victims online. Once the potential victims were selected, the offender must then begin communicating with them.

1.3.2 Rapport building

Rapport building constituted the core manipulation of a child into believing that there was an emotional connection between them, which required the OSS to pursue their initial persuasion of their victims. The strategies used are adopting similar typography online, shared interest, and adaptation of their identity (de Santisteban et al., 2018; Egan et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2013). OSS used these strategies partially to please their victims, as the offenders had to make the victim trust them for the victim to be unaware of their victimization (Olson et al., 2007; Whittle et al., 2013). The core manipulation lies in making a victim participate in their own victimization.

Rapport building was a theme whereby the offender purposely manipulated a child into believing there was a relationship between them (O'Connell, 2003; Whittle et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2013). Offenders tried to make friends with their victims. The strategies included manipulative behaviours and highlighting similarities between the offender and victim. Manipulative behaviours aimed to reduce the appearance of risk a stranger posed to a minor online. The flattery, empathic response, presenting themselves as caring/friendly/trustworthy/playful or as harmless, were ways offenders appear to reduce the risk they posed to the victim. All of these strategies aimed to show the victim how these offenders could be trusted.

In rapport building, there were other methods to build a relationship with the minor. OSS could find common ground with their victim. Mutuality occurred when the offender “seeks to know the interest, life circumstances of the child in order to present themselves to be similar (Williams et al., 2013, p. 141). When an offender presented themselves as similar, the child tended to reduce their vigilance towards the stranger. Coordination occurred when offenders elevated the child's level to theirs by raising the child to an adult’s level or lowering themselves to the child’s level. Consequentially when the elevation happened, offenders thrust upon the responsibility and the feeling of control of the conversation onto the child (Williams et al., 2013). When sexual conversations were introduced, OSS tended to put the responsibility on the victim to contribute and continue the sexualized conversations. The offenders could also lower themselves to the child’s level. Lowering themselves to the child’s level could be seen when offenders adapted their online language to appear similar to the child’s online language (Egan et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2013). Adopting the online texting style can be used to be appear as appealing to their victims or to be credible for their target (Egan et al., 2011). Adopting the online texting style occurred when the written text in conversations showed similar linguistic mannerisms, such as emojis, shorthand slang or popular expressions. It is difficult to know if an offender is adopting the same online texting style to their victim or merely the actual way they chat.

At this stage in rapport building, OSS’s used of these strategies was implicit and not sexually explicit. The purpose of being implicit at this tier of the grooming process is that the child was unaware of the offenders’ sexual intention as their criminal intent was still not apparent (Egan et al., 2011). Implicit strategies could be seen when an offender portrayed an interest in the life of their victims: their hobbies, their friends, their emotions (the interest could be real or not). The goal of these strategies was to create the environment to prepare the victim for the sexual content. The offenders’ use of implicit strategy did not reveal their sexual intentions in any discernible way; thus, why this strategy was associated with a friendship forming/ rapport building stage. The offender could play a friendlier role in the victim’s life, or they could have portrayed themselves as a mentor/guide. Then, the victim could begin to trust the offender. De Santisteban et al., (2018) specified that “the offenders were interested in knowing things that were lacking in the family system and needs of the minors were not covered” (p. 209). When an offender knew what the child is missing from their environment, it became more accessible for the offender to find the child’s vulnerability needed to exploit. For example, if the child feels neglected at home, an offender who

showed affection and gave the child the attention they sought, this could increase their probabilities of sexual gratification. OSS were seen adapting their grooming style to fulfill the child's needs to increase their sexual gratification odds during the rapport-building theme.

1.3.3 Risk assessment

Risk assessment was a recurring aspect in the studies on grooming. Some offenders even acknowledged in their discourse that what they were doing was illegal or immoral (Egan et al., 2011). Thus, offenders used strategies to assess the risk of detection by an authoritative figure while communicating online with their victim. There were different approaches to minimizing the risks of being detected by any authoritative figure (Egan et al., 2011; Elliott, 2017). Strategies used within the risk assessment theme evolve around assessing risk and the receptivity around the child and analyzing their environment (Williams et al., 2013). Analyzing the child's environment permitted offenders to be aware of the probabilities of detection. Offenders might have asked victims if they told their friends about them. Offenders could want to "ensure nondisclosure to [their] parents through an assertive statement" (Kloess et al., 2017, p. 578). An example of such a statement could be a direct warning against talking about the conversations with anyone. Some offenders would analyze the child's schedules, activities, and the parents' whereabouts (de Santisteban et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2013). When the offender was aware of the parents' whereabouts, it would be easier and safer to communicate with the victims when they were absent.

1.3.4 Deception

Deception was a recurrent theme in the literature when studying the modus operandi. The theme of deception encompassed strategies that aimed to manipulate victims through deception and the illusions of truth. These strategies included the deceptive nature of praise, the offender who created a new identity, changed their age, and the use of bribery.

Although it was not commonly seen in research, deception could be used to conceal offenders' intention for sexual content (de Santisteban et al., 2018; Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2004). Through the use of implicit strategies, OSS could deceive their victims with compliments and pretend to fall in love with the victim. The notion of deceptive trust development is a core phase in online grooming (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). A form of deceptive trust is praising or complimenting the victim's physique or personality (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). Whittle et al.,

(2013) also found that compliments were a form of manipulation that resulted in victims feeling special and loved. Research has suggested that when victims felt special and loved, these feelings prompted them to participate in sexual activities online (Williams et al., 2013). It remains unknown if the compliments and the flattery were given, were honest or deceptive as it was subjective to each offender.

The use of deceptive identities and age is difficult to determine unless the OSS' civic information was available. It is a misconception that most OSS will lie about their age or their sexual intention to their victim (Kloess et al., 2017). However, the online environment still favored deception (Whittle et al., 2013). Age deception referred to offenders who portrayed themselves as either younger or older than their actual age. Results from Kloess et al., (2017), Quayle et al., (2014) and Wolak et al., (2004) found most offenders did not hide that they were adults to their victims. However, they portrayed themselves as being younger than they were. In Wolak et al., (2004), only 5% of their first N-JOV study had presented themselves as a minor while another 25% lowered their ages by a few years. OSS would tell the victims they were adults but reduced their age by a few years (i.e. could say they are 32 instead of 38). In Kloess et al., (2019), one of the five offenders presented themselves as a few years younger, while two other offenders pretended to be minors, and one offender gave their real age. There could be multiple possible reasons why an offender chose to be deceptive about their ages online but one, in particular, is to present themselves as more desirable for their victims (de Santisteban et al., 2018). Offenders could lower their age as to be seen as younger, more attractive than they are in reality. To be more desirable, OSS can also change their identities. When offenders tailored themselves to their victims' preferences or what they considered attractive, it could potentially have helped them to achieve sexual gratification. Some OSS used technology to create other false identities to render their lies more credible (i.e.: photoshopping their pictures online to appear slimmer, fitter, younger or someone entirely new) (de Santisteban et al., 2018). Not all offenders used deception to appeal to their victims. Most of the sample of Kloess et al., (2019) did not change their identity while chatting online but altered their age. The use of deceptive strategies can also be considered within the risk assessment stage as offenders have could seen disguising their identity as protecting themselves from detection (Elliott, 2017).

The use of bribery was also a form of deception, as seen in research. Bribery was used to offer minors money in exchange for sex, modelling or acting jobs, or as gifts (de Santisteban et al., 2018). The purpose of using bribery is that it can be used “to maintain and enhance sexual requests and sexual interactions between the adult abuser and the minor” (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2018, p. 16). It is believed that if a victim had an incentive to participate, it could increase the odds of OSS obtaining their sexual gratification. In Shannon (2008), 47% of police cases of online sex solicitation included some form of bribery. In Kloess et al., (2019) only one of the offender bribed their victims. However, OSS did not always fulfil on their promises. If the offender claimed to want to give money for a specific sexual favour after it is performed, the victim would most likely have not received the promised incentive. Gámez-Guadix et al., (2018) used a questionnaire with a sample of 2731 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 15 (50.6% female, 48.3% male) and found that 44.7% of solicited minors had been bribed and an adult had deceived 40% of them. Deceptive strategies can take many forms, and it is essential to consider this when studying OSS’s modus operandi.

1.3.5 Online sexual behaviours and overcoming resistance

There were multiple ways in which OSS could obtain online sexual gratification. Sexual gratification can be achieved via a range of sexual suggestions, questions and requests for acts to be performed (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Olson et al., 2007). The next sections will discuss the different strategies OSS use to reach sexual gratification and the strategies OSS uses to overcome its victims’ resistance.

Research has stated that the purpose of grooming was, ultimately, a method to obtain sexual gratification. Based on a five cases study, Kloess et al., (2017) found that the exchanges of sexual pictures, the request for sexual acts, the fulfillment of online sexual fantasy, and sexually driven questions were ways for OSS to achieve online sexual gratification. Achieving sexual gratification can be achieved by receiving sexual images from their victim. Victims could have sent photographs of themselves naked or videos of themselves having performed sexual acts. In Quayle et al., (2014), some OSS established interactions with victims that allowed them to request pictures or webcam sessions (the proportion of offenders is unknown) (Quayle et al., 2014). OSS could also have requested certain poses and behaviours that they wanted to see from the victims. The fulfillment of sexual fantasies could either be based on the thrill of chatting with underage girls

about sex or merely the rehearsal of sexual behaviours with a minor as claimed by offenders in Quayle et al., (2014) study. Finally, some OSS had asked sexually driven questions of their victims by sought to know their victims' physicality, past sexual history, and sexual preference (Kloess et al., 2017). The conversations about the victims recounting their sexual activities can lead to an offender's sexual gratification. Overall, these strategies would primarily depend on how the OSS had hoped to achieve sexual gratification.

Overcoming victims' resistance to grooming and sexual behaviours was also an essential step towards sexual gratification. Even after a victim has been groomed, victims can still resist partaking in online sexual activities. There is limited knowledge of the strategies used to surpass victims' resistance. A child could resist participating in sexual behaviours at any moment during the conversation. Even if a victim participated once, they might resist further advances. Offenders must have strategies to surpass these challenges and manipulate victims to answer or participate in online sexual behaviours, even when they present signs of refusal. Results from Kloess et al., (2019) presented two approaches to overcome victims' resistance. The first approach is considered more indirect, and the involved strategies used by OSS are "being persistent, [showing] expression [of] disappointment or sadness, presenting [themselves] as desperate and in "need," begging, pressuring and reminding the victim of having made a promise" (Kloess et al., 2019, p. 84). These six strategies resulted in the victims feeling negative, obligated to comply, and wanting to please the offender. They are intended to pressure the victim indirectly by making them feel bad for not participating. These strategies aimed to overcome a minor's resistance, but they did not appear as violent and predatory.

The second approach was seen as more direct: some OSS was seen as threatening, bribing, insulting or using peer pressure to overcome a victim's resistance (Kloess et al., 2019). This more direct approach to overcome a victim's resistance seemed to have two aims, either scaring or pressuring the victims into "compliance." The purpose of these strategies was to overcome the child's resistance during the grooming process, whether through mental manipulation or forceful discourse (Kloess et al., 2019). Overcoming a child's resistance to online sexual activities was sometimes required for offenders to achieve sexual gratification. However, due to the numerous opportunities, an OSS could have deleted a non-compliant victim and selected a new one, especially if the victim had already fulfilled the offender's sexual fantasy (Kloess et al., 2017).

While some OSS might have viewed a victim's resistance as a challenge, others could have seen it as not worth the effort since other potential victims were online.

OSS could have used aggressive behaviour towards their victims as a way to entice them into sexual behaviours. Behaviours such as harassment, intimidation and coercion of victims into sexual behaviours were considered aggressive (de Santisteban et al., 2018). Online aggression differed from the physical violence seen in offline interactions. The particularity of online aggression was that it seemed to rely on blackmail and bluffing. OSS could threaten to send the victim's naked pictures to her friends. The risk of detection for online solicitors increased by sending his victims' nudes; therefore, the probabilities of the threat being real was questionable. Consequentially, the use of force, threats, blackmail, coercion and harassment are considered manipulation techniques (Whittle et al., 2013). The use of force was seen to introduce and maintain the child in sexual behaviours (Williams et al., 2013). Offenders can use aggressive strategies to "exert and maintain abusive situations while trying to avoid the exposure of the abuse" (de Santisteban et al., 2018, p. 210). The use of force and blackmail by online sex solicitors was a means for offenders to keep their control and power over their victims (Whittle et al., 2013).

1.3.6 Strategies associated with offline contact

The next step was considered the final step in the online conversation where the offender and their victim planned for offline contact. For offenders who sought offline contact to ensure minimal risk of detection, risk assessment strategies were seen. When they verified the parents' whereabouts, this was considered a way to assess the risk of offline contact (Kloess et al., 2017). How an offender assessed the risk of detection was entirely subjective, as they viewed the potential risks differently. For instance, some offenders could want the victim's parents to be informed to legitimate their actions. However, it was not every offender who would assess the risk. Theoretically, offenders who wanted to meet victims offline should have examined the risk more thoroughly. On the contrary, when offenders were focused on offline meetings, they ceased to be cautious (Egan et al., 2011).

The strategies leading to offline contact have yet to be researched thoroughly. There were mixed results within the literature regarding the proportion of offenders who met their victims offline. In the sample presented in Wolak et al., (2004), 74% of interactions progressed to offline

contact, and 93% of the 74% had sexual contact with their victims. Two studies did not find that the majority of their sample offenders progressed their interaction into offline contact. Out of the twelve men interviewed, five offenders arranged a meeting with their victim offline (Kloess et al., 2017). Kloess et al. (2017) explained that only two offenders attempted to meet their victims offline within their sample set. Some offenders discussed with their victim of eventual meeting in terms of possibilities or language that echoed a “someday” attitude where no concrete plan was seen.

The distance offenders travelled to meet their victims varied. However, half of the offenders in Wolak et al. 's (2004) study met a victim who lived within a 50 miles radius of them, while another 40% travelled across state lines or international borders. These offline meetings occurred in public spaces (46%), whereas 39% occurred in one of the two parties' residences, and 13% of an offline meeting occurred in motels (Wolak et al., 2004). In about 73% of the cases, the offline meeting occurred more than once, and most meetings occurred within six months of each other (Wolak et al., 2004). Wolak et al. (2004) found that there were violent offences in 5% of cases (rape or attempted rape). They did not find kidnapping/ sequestration over time to have occurred in their sample set. Although the results presented in Wolak et al., (2004) provided insight on the statistic around the offline meeting, they did not show how OSS proceeded to get victims to agree to an offline contact. There remains much to be known about how OSS can convince their victims to meet them offline.

The previous sections dealt with the modus operandi found in online conversations through various thematic and linguistic analysis. Although there were various stages and strategies used by online sex solicitors, not all of the strategies or themes were used consistently, as the modus operandi of offenders often depended on the typology in which they belonged. The following sections will introduce the typologies of sexual solicitors and how they behave online.

1.4 Typologies of online sexual solicitors

Online sexual solicitors groomed their victims differently based on their intention for how the interaction will end, either with offline contact or remain online. Multiple studies have

attempted to create typologies based on offenders' behaviours, grooming style and their intention towards their victim. The following section explores the various profiles of online sexual solicitors.

1.4.1 Typologies based on online behaviours

The European Online grooming project (2012) interviewed 33 male offenders convicted of online grooming in Norway, the United Kingdom and Belgium and the chatlogs from Italy were also analyzed. The European Online grooming project presented three grooming approaches: 1), the intimacy-seeking, 2), the adaptable style groomer, and 3), the hyper-sexualized. Intimacy seekers believe that offline contact with a victim is a consenting relationship (Webster et al., 2012). These offenders would converse for an extended period, but sexual conversations were not the core of their relationships. Since intimacy seekers viewed offline contact as furthering their intimate relationships with their victims, they tended to have numerous offline meetings with their victims. In contrast, the adaptable style groomers had short sexual conversations with their victims. The introduction to sexual content was often within minutes of the initial conversations. Adaptable style groomers asked sexually driven questions rapidly to their victim (more asked explicitly for photos or webcam live shows). These offenders adapted to their victims; thus, they would alter their identity and grooming approach to fit their victim with each victim. In the final group, the hyper-sexualized were not seen as interested in contact or relationships. The hyper-sexualized groomers had created different identities and sent anonymized pictures of their faces (avatar). However, the photos of their genitals were their own. In this group of groomers, they tended not to tailor their approach to the victims and were seen as not meeting their victims offline than the other two types. All three types of groomers shared their direct approach to sexual conversations, which contradicted the idea of slowly building a relationship with the victim before arriving at the online sexual victimization.

Tener, Wolak, & Finkelhor (2015) also categorized offenders by their online behaviours based on the 2009 arrests studied in Third National Juvenile Online Victimization Study from 2009. The researchers found four profiles of online sex solicitors: the first were the experts, the second was cynical, the third was the affection-focused, and the fourth was the sex-focused. The expert offenders could have had up to hundreds of victims. Their defining characteristic was that these offenders picked their victims based on distinctive characteristics that facilitated sexual gratification. The experts could also be seen bribing their victims. Some of these interactions

would have led to offline contact. The cynical offenders were similar to the expert offenders but had a smaller number of victims and often previously knew their victims before online communication. They tended to choose victims based on their personal preferences. Although cynical might have spent time grooming their victims, they spent less time talking with their victims and were less sophisticated when compared to experts. The affection-focused offenders were characterized by expressing genuine love, affection and care towards their victims. These offenders tended to meet their victims offline and continued a relationship with them afterwards. Affection-focused offenders did not manipulate or coerce their victims. It is worth noting that even though the cynical, the expert and the affection -focused all showed affection towards their victims, only the affection-focused offenders saw their behaviours as genuine. The sex-focused met their victims quickly, then continued to meet face-to-face meetings. These offenders were focused on fulfilling their sexual desires offline.

1.4.2 Typologies based intentions

Certain typologies were based on the outcome of online conversations with minors. There are three main intentions to communicate online with victims. The first is communicating online to fulfill an online sexual fantasy, the second is driven by offline contact, and the third is for prostitution. The typologies defined by two different groups will be presented in the following sections. The first is from Briggs, Simon, & Simonsen, (2011); the researchers analyzed the evaluation of 51 convicted offenders of internet-based sex offences in Colorado. These evaluations contained clinical data, behavioural data and the chat room transcripts. The second study is from DeHart et al., (2017). These researchers used a sample of 200 transcripts between offenders and undercover police officers from Alaska, California, Florida, Maryland, South Carolina, Texas and Washington to propose a typology.

Online sexual solicitors motivated by the realization of sexual fantasy online were most commonly known as fantasy-driven offenders. Fantasy-driven offenders were characterized as “engag[ing] in a variety of online sexual behaviours with the victim, including cybersex and exhibitionism projected to the victim using a web camera” (Briggs et al., 2011, p. 85). In Dehart et al. (2017), the authors referred to fantasy-driven offenders as cybersex offenders. The sought-after sexual gratification occurred during online communications. The achievement of sexual gratification is through the re-enactment of sexual fantasies executed during online conversations

with a minor. They would use flattery, fantasy role-playing as strategies to obtain sexual gratification. The cybersex offenders were defined as having tendencies to expose themselves sexually to victims and requested explicit imagery from the victims. These offenders would also take the time to ask victims about their physical appearances (i.e. breast size or pubic hair). They would take the time to build a relationship with the victims and would show concern about the child's wellbeing. Fantasy-driven offenders conversed online with their victim on average, 32 days but could last for months. The main difference between Brigg's et al. (2011)'s fantasy-driven offenders and Dehart et al., (2017)'s cybersex offender was that 54% of the cybersex offenders mentioned scheduling an offline meeting with the victim. The cybersex offender did not make any precise plans, and the talk was hypothetical or talked of "someday." Online sexual solicitors who sought sexual gratification from their victims online did not aim for offline contact.

Contrary to fantasy-driven offenders, contact-driven offenders were motivated by meeting offline to achieve sexual gratification (Briggs et al., 2011). Contact-driven offenders can also be referred to as schedulers (DeHart et al., 2017). These offenders' main characteristic was their persistence in meeting offline and the directness in their approach (Briggs et al., 2011). Contact-driven offenders spent less time communicating online with minors compared to fantasy-driven offenders (Briggs et al., 2011; DeHart et al., 2017). Nevertheless, further research has shown that contact-driven offenders took the time to build a relationship interaction with their victim overtime (Barber & Bettez, 2014; Broome et al., 2018; Grosskopf, 2010; Gupta, Kumaraguru, & Sureka, 2012; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2005; Williams et al., 2013). On average, they waited around a week before planning an offline meeting (DeHart et al., 2017). However, half of the contact-driven offenders in the Briggs et al. 's (2011) study asked for a contact within the first 24 hrs of conversing. Contact-driven offenders were considered a more significant threat to minors (psychologically and physically) (Chiu et al., 2018).

There is a third subgroup of online sexual solicitors: buyers. Buyers communicated online with minors to purchase sexual favours and recruit minors for offline prostitution (DeHart et al., 2017). This type of offender is not common in research, and 49% of the buyers found in Dehart et al., (2017) were from Florida. Online conversations were about scheduling an offline meeting and negotiation for a price for sexual practices. These offenders did not seem to seek sexual gratification for themselves but tried to recruit for street prostitution. These offenders asked

victims for their sexual pictures more for reassurance the victims are “for real” (DeHart et al., 2017). Although this type of online sex solicitor was a minority, they remain a dangerous subgroup.

The first two sections of this chapter introduced the different typologies of online sex solicitors and various modus operandi. The following section will highlight the issues in previous literature and how our research tries to fill in the literature gap.

1.5. Aim of the Study

Although previous literature has been innovative, multiple research uses the same sample set coming from the American non-profit foundation incorporated: Perverted Justice (PJ) (Black, Wollis, Woodworth, & Hancock, 2015; Drouin, Boyd, Hancock, & James, 2017; Egan et al., 2011; O’Connell, 2003; Williams et al., 2013; Winters et al., 2017). The underage decoys, represented in the sample, are civilian volunteers online who pretended to be minors to seduce potential online sex solicitors (Drouin et al., 2017; Winters et al., 2017). The organization's premise is to publicize the identities of online sex solicitors and have them arrested/imprisonment (Perverted Justice, 2008). The non-profit organization claims their practices cannot be considered entrapment according to the United States’ definition of entrapment (Perverted Justice, 2008). The underage decoys have guidelines for their online conduct, such as, never begin a conversation first with a potential OSS, or introduce sexual conversations themselves (Perverted Justice, 2008). The underage decoys’ online behaviours are tinted by the organization's mission and the criminal laws of the United States. Therefore, using PJ as a sample set poses two significant limits on our knowledge of online sex solicitors’ modus operandi.

The first limit is about the underage decoys’ intention coming into the chatrooms. The purpose of underage decoys is to have online sex solicitors arrested. Their intentions may affect the conversations' dynamic and consequentially limit a well-rounded analysis of the conversations’ content. Although there are multiple motivations for potential underage victims to converse online with adults, entrapment is less likely to be their goal. It would be more probable that a victim would yearn for a type of connection, either friendship or search for a romantic attachment. It remains unlikely that a victim’s initial motivation is conversing online with online sex solicitors to be victimized and have the offender arrested. Due to the different intentions of the underage

decoys compared to the victims, Perverted Justice based research is limited in the study of strategies employed by online solicitors in obtaining their sexual gratification online and offline.

The main consequence of using underage decoys is that it becomes difficult to analyze the offenders' strategies when victims resist participating in online or offline sexual behaviours. Since underage decoys aim to collect evidence against the online sex solicitors, it is not in PJ's interest to have victims overly resist online sex solicitors. Perverted Justice claimed the conversations have an authentic representation of the offender's grooming (van Gijn-Grosvenor & Lamb, 2016). However, the underage decoys' discourses can stir the conversations and impact the strategies employed. The notion of confrontation is observed by the obstacles the victim willingly or unconsciously upholds throughout the grooming process, and this entails the offender must alter their strategies to obtain their endgame (Gagnon, 2005). The justification a victim gives for refusing to comply with the offender's demands gives the offender more information to continue manipulating them. The idea that a victim's response to offenders' advances can be confrontational to the sexual intent is harder to see in a conversation where the decoy victim's goal is to denounce a criminal behaviour. Due to the limited number of research on actual victims in police data, it is hard for researchers examine the strategies employed when the victim resists or when (un)consciously confronts the advances. The limited research based on real dynamism of conversations justifies a study based on real online interactions so we can study a more representative image of the manipulation techniques.

Alongside not being able to study the victims' resistance to sexual content thoroughly, PJ also cannot perform the analysis of the victim potentially being sexually forward towards their offenders. The underage decoys do not introduce sexual conversations or relationships to avoid entrapment defence (Perverted Justice, 2008). Research should include all of the victims' online behaviours because it would be challenging without a certain level of victims' "collaboration" to meet a victim offline. If a victim does not reveal their location, phone number or other pertinent information, then the probabilities of offline contact are limited. The study of victims' discourse alongside the offenders' discourse remains an area of research underdeveloped in the study of OSS' modus operandi. Thus, there is limited knowledge of the victims' online behaviours, whether these behaviours are forward or resisting the OSS' strategies.

The second limitation is that since research experiments have used the same database, research is confronted with a homogenous group of OSS. Then, it is challenging to study the variance in online behaviours and their distinct characteristics with a homogenous group. The Perverted Justice offenders have been considered all contact-driven (Broome et al., 2018). The lack of diversity in the types of offenders presented in PJ has consequences for modus operandi analysis. Thus, when analyzing the conversations' content, differentiating the strategies that lead to real offline contact becomes challenging. These limits raise the question as to what the strategies are associated with offline contact when victims resist their offenders' attempts. Perverted Justice fails to present a representative sample of OSS. In a representative sample, some offenders would make no attempt at offline contact, some offenders would attempt to meet a victim offline and fail, and offenders would meet their victim offline. The consequences of using data from Perverted Justice are giving a limited understanding of the modus operandi, and it no longer furthers the knowledge on the subject. By using the same database, results will resemble each other and will not be fully representative of reality.

Previous research has neglected the role of the victims' discourses throughout the interactions. We aim to identify the strategies associated with offline contact; therefore, the victims' oppositional and participatory were essential to consider during the modus operandi's analysis. The study of victims' discourse alongside the offenders' discourse remains an area of research underdeveloped in the study of online sexual solicitation's modus operandi. This study will answer the need for a newer, more representative sample set based on actual underage victims from police data, allowing us to consider all of the victims' online behaviours for their role in the interactions' outcomes and overcome the inherent bias in the PJ sample set.

As the number of criminal opportunities for online sex solicitations continues to increase, it became essential to distinguish the online sex solicitors that use online chat platform to meet victims offline (Wolak et al., 2012). As there are two types of potential outcomes of these interactions (offline contact or online interactions), it is essential to understand and identify the strategies that lead to offline sexual contact. Due to the potential threat of transference from virtual abuse to real-world sexual assault, the efforts to understand this communicative entrapment process to protect minors who use the Internet are justified (Egan et al., 2011). Thus, this research will identify the differences in the offenders' use of strategies and the victim's behaviours by

comparing interactions based on the interactions' outcome. This research aims to describe online offenders' strategies and the victims' online behaviours in police cases of online luring files. The specific aims are 1) to compare and describe the differences between the strategies of contact offenders and noncontact offenders, identifying the strategies associated with interactions that led to offline contact 2) compare the behaviour of noncontact victims and contact.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Police data was used as this project is in collaboration with the Sûreté du Québec (SQ). We requested permission and access to analyze chatlogs from closed police investigations. The cases were selected according to the following charges: the subject had to be found guilty to at least one charge of child luring (172.1.c.c). The following sections will discuss the description of the sample set used, the criteria of inclusion/exclusion and the procedures for both the qualitative analysis and the quantitative analysis.

2.1 Data

2.1.1 Descriptive statistics of the interactions:

In total, 829 conversations were analyzed and consolidated into 52 interactions between one offender and one specific victim. There are 12 online sexual solicitors with more than one victim, and four of them were involved in two types of interactions. The term interaction is used, instead of offenders, as some offenders occasionally find themselves in more than one category of interaction. Some offenders are in both contact group and attempt at contact group. Therefore, the terms interaction refers to the entire body of conversations between one offender and a specific victim. Appendix 1 presents an anonymized table of the offenders' ID and their victims' identification number (ID). The ID was created to ensure anonymity when specific interactions are discussed. The offender's ID number is assigned by the order in which the interactions were extracted from NVivo. The victims' ID is given according to their offender's ID, and then in the order, they were coded.

The interactions between offenders and their victims differed duration: the length of the interactions varied from one day to approximately 611 days (Means= 63.65 days, Std= 116.95 days). The number of conversations in an interaction was situated between 1 and 394 (average of 15.94 conversations per interaction and Std= 54.54). The chat platform Skype is employed in 18 interactions, MSN in 13 interactions, MIRC in 7 interactions, Facebook messenger in 5 interactions, in 4 interactions the forum was unknown (the chatlogs were given in an Excel format),

Jasez.ca was used in 3 interactions, text messages in 1 interaction, and finally, Emails in 1 interaction.

There were 18 male online sexual solicitors arrested by the SQ between November 2008 and August 2016. The online sexual solicitors' average age is 32.38 (Std. = 12.40, min=19 and max= 59). The age of one OSS is unknown and could not be verified in the police files. They were found guilty or pleaded guilty to at least one charge of the luring of a child (article 172.1 of the Canadian Criminal code). Each offender victimized between 1 and 7 victims that we coded. In total, 62% of the interactions remained online (n=32), and 38% that started online and led to an offline contact (n=20). The chat transcripts were retrieved from offenders' computers and cellphones at the time of the arrest. All the online conversations between an offender and their victims were chronologically collected to assemble and reconstruct the interactions.

The sample includes 52 victims (51 underage girls and one underage boy). The victims' age ranged from 11 to 17 years old (N=39). The ages of 13 victims were not known. Most of the cases the SQ allowed us to use had been analyzed during the investigation by an analyst. The analyst had previously classified the online conversations available into categories: conversations with minors or with adults. Even with the classification, we remained cautious and searched for clues to assure the victims were underage. The victims with unknown age remained in the study as there were indicators the victims were underage throughout the interaction. For example, we analyzed the victims' dialogue for clues about mentions of their parents supervising the child's whereabouts or supervising access to the computer/ phones, the child's high school schedule and after school activities. When the name of the school is mentioned, then we would look to insure it is a high school or elementary school. For the cases where the ages of the victim were to ambiguous, the case was not coded.

This research aims to differentiate the strategies used by OSS who met their victims offline compared to offenders who did not ask for contact, and those who were unsuccessful in meeting their victim in their discourses. Table 1 presents the different types of interactions and how they were categorized.

Table 1 : Presentation of the different interactions

	Name of Interaction	Outcome	N
Noncontact Interaction	Online-only Interactions	Contact: no Demand for contact: no	22
	Attempt at contact Interactions	Contact: no Demand for contact: yes	10
Contact Interaction	Contact Interactions	Contact: yes Demand of contact: yes	20

Interactions were grouped on two deciding factors. The first is if the interaction lead to an offline contact or not. If the interaction did not lead to an offline contact, did the offenders asked their victims for a meeting. Noncontact interactions are divided into two different types of interactions: online-only and attempt at contact. Online-only interactions have offenders who did not asked for a contact nor met their victims, therefore, they would, in theory, similar to fantasy-driven offenders (Briggs et al., 2011). Attempt at contact interactions distinguished itself from the other two groups as the offenders asked their victims for a meeting but the interactions did not lead to a contact. Attempt at contact interactions were included in this study as a group to study, as previous literature did not clarify if all offenders who sought offline contact met their victims. Contact interactions showed offenders asking for contact with their victim and actualized the meeting. Contact interactions should, then, resembled contact-driven offenders (Briggs et al., 2011). The categorization of the interactions is based on facts rather than on intentions. It is with statistical test which will determine which strategies are associated with each types of interactions.

2.1. 2 Criteria for inclusions and exclusion

There were five general inclusion criteria that online interactions required. First, to be considered, at least one conversation where both parties chatted with each other. Second, the online sexual solicitors and their victims did not have a prior offline interaction before online conversations began. The victim and offender could not have known each other or had prior sexual encounters before the conversations began. Third, when conversations occurred on webcam, they were excluded because we did not have verbal transcript. However, when the online sexual solicitor typed sexual requests on Skype or Facebook messenger so that the victim would perform them via webcam, these would be coded. Fourth, the interactions had to be private between a victim and an offender. In an application such as MIRC, group conversations were not considered

as the influence of the peers could have impacted the offender's strategies in the discourses. Fifth, the victim had to be minor, so if the age was not available, there needed to be a clear indication that the victim was underage. In cases where the victim's ages were not clearly stated, had not been categorized, or the information was not available in either the investigation report or revealed in the interrogation, and there were no indicators present, these cases were dismissed from this study.

For an interaction to be considered in the offline group, one of the two criteria had to be met. The first criterion was the presence in the online sexual solicitor's police files of the victim's name alongside the charge of sexual assault. There is also the possibility that during the interrogation, the offender confessed to the meeting. The second criterion was if there was an acknowledgement during the online conversations of a previous offline meeting, although not prior to the beginning of the communication. Those interactions would be classified as an offline interaction. For example, lines such as "I cannot wait to see you again" or "did you like that? [discussion of previous sexual contact]" or confirmation that there was an offline contact. These cases were also classified as contact interactions. In cases where neither criterion was met, the interactions were automatically considered non-contact.

2.2 Analytical Strategy

This research used a two-step methodology to examine the modus operandi of online sex solicitors. A two-step methodology permitted us to test the results from the thematic analysis statistically. The first part of the analysis is a thematic analysis to study the emerging themes during online interactions. Strategies were extracted from the literature and previous observations of our dataset. These strategies are quantified by using the frequency of each strategy employed during the online conversations. Various strategies were regrouped into themes based on their ultimate goal. Then, the results from the thematic analysis were exported from NVivo to SPSS for quantitative testing. The purpose of the quantitative analysis is to verify the significance of our qualitative observations. The frequencies of the offenders' strategies and the victims' online behaviours were used to analyze the differences between the various types of interactions and identify the strategies associated with offline contact. The following section will present qualitative analysis (thematic analysis) and the quantitative approach for the statistical analysis (descriptive analysis and bivariate analysis).

2.2.1 Qualitative approach

Thematic analysis as a qualitative approach was used to study the online sexual solicitors' modus operandi. This method identifies, analyzes, discovers patterns and themes within a qualitative dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Williams et al., 2013). The thematic analysis aims to study broader themes to understand the conversations' underlying meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Within each theme, the indicators are referred to as strategies. The model presented in Williams et al., (2013) was preselected to answer the research questions and aims. The grooming model was selected because it included the grooming aspect and sexual content. It was essential to have a model that considered both manipulating the victims into sexual behaviours and the strategies used during online sexual behaviours.

Before the coding began, a smaller sample of interactions was used for preliminary coding to examine the feasibility of the chosen grooming model and see if there were no more strategies that would emerge based on these observations. During the preliminary coding, our observations led us to better additions to the model to better represent the sample's reality. First, the victims' participation and resistance were predominant in chatlogs. Second, the notion of grooming, as seen in the literature, was quasi-inexistent in our subsample. The online conversations were introduced rapidly and without building a relationship with victims in most cases. Third, online conversations were predominantly sexual in content. The focus changed from looking at grooming strategies to studying the seduction strategies and opportunity related strategies. Based on these observations during the preliminary phase, a new model was created using specific strategies from two previously published models (Kloess et al., 2017 and Williams et al., 2013) and our observations. The detailed descriptions of all the themes and strategies appear in the section below.

2.2.2 Descriptions of the strategies

The codification of the strategies was performed through a qualitative approach. Once coded, the various strategies were used as independent variables for the quantitative approach. There are 16 strategies that we included in the codebook. The definitions of all strategies are as followed below. The strategies are regrouped into their respective themes.

The first theme, *Seduction*, was an alternative to the traditional notion of grooming and rapport building. In this case, seduction refers to selling themselves to the victims as something

they want (Codoban, 2006). These strategies tried to increase the odds of sexual gratification by altering themselves to please their victims. The strategies seen in this theme were deception age, deception identity, physical compliments, flattery, compliments and affection, and a presentation of oneself as harmless. In literature, deception was a theme on its own. We observed that instead of preparing the child for sexualized content, the OSS seemed to be attempting to seduce their victim by appearing to them as a boyfriend on multiple occasions.

Deception: age was coded when an OSS lied about their age by giving the victim a younger age.

Deception: identity was coded when an OSS changes their identity to the victim by entirely pretending to be someone else. For example, pretended to be a teenage girl online to recruit girls to give him sexual favours in exchange for money.

Physical compliment: was coded when an OSS offered physically driven compliments to their victim. These physical compliments were not given during cyber sex sessions. They did not refer to a person's genitals (see Flattery, compliments and affection in the next theme). For example, these compliments were often around a victim's beauty, such as "you have such a beautiful face."

Flattery, compliments and affection: (extracted from Kloess et al., 2017). The authors did not provide an exact definition of this concept of what they intended by flattery, compliments, and affection. However, they specified this strategy was used with the intent to incite victims into performing sexual acts online. This strategy was also coded when an offender would reinforce the victim's sexual behaviour in order to have more sexual content.

Offender **presents themselves as harmless:** (extracted from Williams et al. 2013). This process was coded when an OSS represents themselves in a harmless way to the victim. OSS may have used this strategy while discussing with a minor online as a way to reassure the victim that they were harmless to them. For example, an OSS could have said, "you can trust me; I won't judge."

The second theme found was *Sexual Content*. Similar to other research, components of sexting assembled the strategies included in the theme. Ultimately the purpose of these strategies was to achieve some level of sexual gratification, whether it was through the exchange of imageries or enactment of sexual fantasies or sexually driven questions. There are none strategies found: direct introduction to sexual content, sexual receptivity, fantasy rehearsal, visual sexual content

(pictures/ webcam) and sexual questions about the victim's past, preferences/practices and physique. The strategies in this theme were seen as the core theme of the overall groups.

Direct introduction to sexual content: This strategy was coded when an OSS introduces sex into the conversation directly. An example of this introduction is opening a conversation with “anal?” or “did you ever suck a penis before?”

Sexual Receptivity: The second strategy was coded when an offender verifies or tests the victim's openness to perform sexual acts online or offline. The strategy served as a way to examine a victim's openness to sexual activities online and offline. Sexual receptivity can be identified by questions such as or “have you ever slept with a thirty-eight-year-old before?”

Fantasy Rehearsal: (extracted from Kloess et al., 2017). The strategy was a process whereby an OSS and its victims discuss a specific sexual fantasy and rehearse how they would perform them together offline. The sexual fantasy rehearsal can be understood as both an understanding of an eventual offline meeting and having a shared sexual fantasy. During online sexual conversations, when the strategy was used, the parties would practice online what would be performed offline. The use of this strategy seemed to bring forth that there was a mutual understanding of a future offline meeting. The offline component of the strategy supposed that the victim was perceived as willing to meet offline by their offender. Fantasy rehearsal included the idea of mutual fantasy or mutual sexual preferences from both parties. This strategy was coded when an OSS and a victim discuss a mutual sexual fantasy and how this fantasy will be practiced when they meet offline.

Sexual visual content: These strategies were coded when OSS requests of sexual visual content from victims. Offenders asked for the victim to either start their webcam or send pictures of themselves. These images can be of sexual acts performed but also includes non-sexual material. The visual contents were often the threshold on the openness of the victim to sexual demands (positions, acts to be performed). However, they could also serve as a security purpose. An offender could ask for a picture to verify the victim's identity.

Sexual Questioning: The last section of the sexual content was based on the types of sexually driven questions offenders asked victims. The questions were coded when an OSS asked their victims one of the following three questions: questions on the victims' physique, questions about

the victims' sexual preferences/practices and questions about the victims' sexual history. For example, an offender could ask a victim their height, weight, breast size, the clothes they are wearing are some of the examples. Another type of questioning is the question of the victim's sexual preferences and practices. These questions aimed to know what the victim's preferences in sexual positions are, what they are accustomed to do sexually with a partner. An example of this strategy would be to ask questions such as, "What is your favourite sexual position?" "do you do it often?" The final type of question was on the victim's sexual past. The offender sought to know how far the victim has gone in the past with other partners. For instance, questions such as "are you a virgin?" would be included in this strategy.

The third theme, *Criminal Opportunities*, emerged from the situational factors relating to meeting offline. The strategies included in these themes are persistence, bribery, receptivity to offline contact and opportunity. Their situational factors relate these strategies together by creating opportunities by either enticing a victim, having one or by verifying the victim's willingness to meet them offline.

Persistence: (extracted from Kloess et al., 2017), this process was coded when the OSS persistently attempts to obtain a response from their victims. The same question/statement needed to be repeated at least a second time without having been answered by the victim to be coded. It is as of the second occurrence that the strategy was coded into persistence, and the frequency continued to add as the OSS repeated the same question: persistence had two forms.

The first manifestation was **sexual persistence**. It was identifiable when an offender repeated a sexually driven question until a victim answered after either ignoring it or saying they will not answer the question.

The second manifestation was **offline persistence**, and it occurred when an offender repeatedly asked for the victim to meet them offline, despite the victim's resistance.

Offline opportunity: This strategy was coded when an OSS had an opportunity to meet their victim where there is minimal risk of detection by the victim's parents or siblings. For example, an offender could ask their victim if they could pick them up at school or if they could meet at the skate park.

Offline Receptivity: We codified this strategy when the OSS asked directly or indirectly if the victim was open to an offline meeting. An OSS could have asked the victim if they wanted to meet offline or simply, “have you ever gone offline to meet someone before?” or “wouldn’t it be fun to see each other offline?”

Bribery: Bribes were an incentive for victims to meet offline as they are promised something in return. We coded this strategy when an OSS was offering something (often money) as a motivation for victims to meet them offline.

The final theme includes the victims’ online behaviours. This theme has two sub-categories: participatory behaviours or oppositional behaviours. Participatory behaviours group actions that seemed more willing, while keeping in mind that the victims have been victimized. These behaviours were when: the victim asks for offline contact; the victim sent pictures of themselves; the victim asked the OSS for their photo; the victim introduced the sexual conversation. Oppositional behaviours were seen when the victims forwardly rejected the OSS’ requests or confronted their OSS on their behaviours. The strategies were confrontational, the victim resisted sexual conversations, and the victim resisted offline demands.

The victim introduces the sexual content to the offender: This behaviour was coded when a victim was the first to introduce the sexual content during a conversation. For example, during a conversation, a victim could say, “have you ever had sex before with a girl my age?” This example would be codified as the victim introduces sexual content, only if the offender had not brought up the sexual content.

The victim sends pictures of him/ herself: This behaviour was coded when there is a digital trace of a picture having been sent. These pictures can be of themselves nude or not.

The victim asks for pictures of the offender: This behaviour was coded when victims were seen asking offenders for a picture of the offender. Victims could ask for photos in returns for the ones they send, or it could be as a way to verifying who the other person they are communicating with online is.

Resistance: there were two instances where victims’ resistance is coded. The first was when a minor refused to participate in online or offline sexual activities. Sexual resistance was seen when

a victim refused to comply with sexual content: either refused to send visual material to the offender or answer a sexually driven question or sext. The second instance was when a victim resists the OSS' offline demands. Either sexual resistance or contact resistance generally followed a question or a statement from the offender.

Confrontation: This behaviour was coded when a victim confronts their offender sometimes by calling them a pedophile or telling the offender to stop manipulating them.

All of these strategies were coded in Nvivo using these definitions as guidelines. In most of the interactions, there were several conversations to be analyzed. The offender and the victim chatted together more than on one occasion, so we approached coding by conversations first, then we aggregated all the conversations between the same actors into 52 respective interactions. One conversation is a sequence of exchanges that begins with a greeting and ends by either a party closing the conversation. During each conversation, when the presence of a strategy appeared, it was coded in the respective strategy. Files were read and strategies coded line by line. Lines of text can contain more than one strategy. For example, a sentence such as “you are so beautiful, are you sure you don't want to send me a picture of you”. In this sentence, three strategies would be coded: physical compliment, persistence, and asking for pictures. The final step to the qualitative procedure was to transform the data into quantitative data for statistical testing by importing the files into SPSS.

2.3 Quantitative approach

The codes of each interactions were compiled to be able to obtain the total number of occurrences of each strategies and behaviours for all the offenders and victims. Once the frequencies were inserted into SPSS, the statistical analysis began. The specific aim of this study was to identify the strategies and behaviours associated with interactions that led to an offline contact by comparing types of interactions. The statistical test performed were descriptive and bivariate analysis. The first step was to present a descriptive portrait of the number of interactions presented each strategy in the different categories. The purpose of the descriptive analysis is to highlight the differences between types of interactions by the number of cases where the strategies was used at least once. The second test performed was a Kruskal Wallis to compare the different types of interactions based on the frequency of usages of each strategy. The Kruskal Wallis test

was selected as the strategies' distribution are not properly distributed. The second bivariate test was a Student T-Test. Since the 52 victims are different from one another a Student T-Test was used to identify the significant differences between the behaviours of noncontact victims and contact victims.

2.4 Ethics

Permission for the conduct of this study was granted by the Sûreté du Québec. The project also received ethics approval from the Université de Montréal Ethics Review Board on August 27th, 2019. The certificate id #CERAS-2017-18-039-D.

Chapter 3: Results

The results presented in this chapter answer our research to identify the particularities of the various types of interactions. Chapter 3 begins by presenting a descriptive analysis of the various types of interactions and the strategies studied. The descriptive analysis shows the proportion of interactions with at least one instance of each strategy. The number of victims in each type of interaction who used certain online behaviours at least once is also portrayed in the descriptive analysis. Then, we will move into the bivariate analysis. The first bivariate test was the Kruskal Wallis test; this allowed the comparisons between the types of interactions on how they employ each strategy compared to each other. The purpose of this test is to highlight how types of interactions differ from one another and how similar they are in the number of occurrences of strategy. Kruskal Wallis is used to answer the first specific goal of this research to identify the strategies associated with interactions that led to contact. To answer the second specific aim of this study, identifying the victims' behaviours associated with contact victims, a Student T-Test was performed. The interpretation of all the results will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

3.1 Descriptive presentation of the interactions

In this section the results of a descriptive analysis are presented. Table 2 portray the count of interactions who have used each of the strategy during their online interactions and they are categorized by their per type of interaction. The strategies are dichotomized (present or absent) in Table 2. For example, two online-only interactions had the presence of deception: age. The percentage refers to the number of interactions that used this particular strategy over the total number of interactions per type. Table 2 also present the results as a percentage of the total sample size.

Table 2 : Descriptive analysis: proportion of strategies found in each type of interactions

Strategy	Online-only Interactions % (N=22)	Attempt at Contact Interactions % (N=10)	Contact Interactions % (N=20)	Total % (N=52)
Seduction				
Deception: age	9% (2)	10% (1)	35% (7)	20% (10)
Deception: identity	5% (1)	20% (2)	30% (6)	17% (9)
Physical compliment	68% (15)	40% (4)	50% (10)	56% (29)
Present themselves as harmless	14% (3)	10% (1)	65% (13)	33% (17)
Sexual Content				
Receptivity Sexual	81% (18)	80% (8)	90% (18)	85% (44)
Direct introduction to sexual content	86% (19)	100% (10)	80% (16)	87% (45)
Flattery, compliments and affection	63% (14)	60% (6)	75% (15)	67% (35)
Demands of Photograph	50% (11)	50% (5)	60% (12)	54% (28)
Demands of Webcam live shows	50% (11)	60% (6)	65% (13)	58% (30)
Fantasy Rehearsal	32% (7)	60% (6)	80% (16)	56% (29)
Question on the victim's physical appearance	50% (11)	60% (6)	55% (11)	54% (28)
Question on the victim's sexual preferences or practices	54% (12)	70% (7)	65% (13)	62% (32)
Question on the victim's sexual past	54% (12)	80% (8)	50% (10)	58% (30)
Criminal Opportunity				
Opportunity	9% (2)	20% (2)	90% (18)	46% (24)
Persistence	50% (11)	70% (7)	90% (18)	69% (36)
Receptivity Contact	32% (7)	100% (10)	85% (17)	65% (34)
Bribery	5% (1)	30% (3)	50% (10)	27% (14)
Victims' Online Behaviours				
Victim asks for offline demand	14% (3)	10% (1)	40% (8)	23% (12)
Victim resists offline contact	14% (3)	50% (5)	65% (13)	40% (21)
Victim resists sexual activities	50% (11)	50% (5)	70% (14)	58% (30)
Confrontation	18% (4)	10% (1)	30% (6)	21% (11)
Victims send pictures of themselves	36% (8)	20% (2)	50% (10)	38% (20)
Victim asks for a photo of the offender	14% (3)	30% (3)	40% (8)	27% (14)
Victim introduces sexual conversations	18% (4)	20% (2)	50% (10)	31% (16)
Other information				
Offline demands	0% (0)	100% (10)	95% (19)	56% (29)
Change of medium of conversation	41% (9)	40% (4)	85% (17)	60% (30)

All the strategies under the Seduction theme were observed at least once in all types of interactions. In 19 interactions there was a use of deceptive techniques by the offenders to hide their identity or their age to their victim. There were more contact interactions' offenders who showed deceptive strategies based on the deceptive age (N=10) and deception identity (N=9), compared to the other types of interactions. In the two other types of interactions, between one and two offenders were seen using deceptive strategies at least once. The use of flattery, compliments, and affection are used in more interactions overall than physical compliments (67% vs 56%). Contact interactions had 75% of their offenders use at least one form of flattery, with compliments and affection during sexualized conversations representing the highest group. The type of interactions where the most offenders gave physical compliments were the online-only interactions group (68%). Offenders presented themselves as harmless in 33% of the interactions (N=17). Contact interactions had more offenders who presented themselves as harmless than the two other groups (N=13) compared to online-only interactions (N=3) and attempt at contact interactions (N=1).

Table 2 presents the proportion of interactions that uses the sexual strategies in the sexual content theme. In 87% of all the interactions, a direct introduction to sexual matter was observed. The average of all three groups is higher than 80%. The interaction with the lowest count of offenders who directly introduced sexual content is the contact interactions (N=16). Overall, 56% of interactions had at least one occurrence of fantasy rehearsal throughout the interaction: 80% of the interactions that led to a contact (N=16) compared to 32% of online-only interactions (N=7) and 60% of the attempts at contact interaction (N=6). More than half of the interactions pursued sexual information by asking the three types of questions (54%-62%). Attempt at contact interactions had the highest count of offenders asking the three types of questions.

Persistence was observed in 69% of all interactions; 90% of the offline contact interactions had offenders showing persistence at least once. Over 56% of the overall interactions had an offender ask their victim for offline contact at least once (N=29). Although more than half the sample had asked for a contact, only 46% of the interactions had, at least, one offline opportunity for contact (N=23). In the contact interaction group, there was 90% of interactions with minimum one opportunity to meet their victims offline (N=18). In 65% of the interactions, an offender verified the victim's receptivity to offline contact (N=34). In 32% of the online-only offenders'

interactions, offenders verified the victim's receptivity for offline contact (N=7). Although these offenders inquired about the child's receptiveness to offline contact, the offenders did not ask for a meeting. Bribery was observed in 27% of all interactions as a way to entice a victim into offline sexual participation (N=14).

Table 2 also gave the count of the victims' online behaviours. Results from the descriptive analysis show differences in the number of victims' behaviours. Over 40% of the victims had resisted, at least once, an offender's demand for contact (N=21). In our sample, 23% of victims asked offenders to meet offline (N=12). Of the 23% victims, 15% of them eventually met their offenders offline (N=8), and 6% of the victims of the online-only interaction asked for offline contact (N=3). Victims resisting sexual content from offenders were observed in 58% of the interactions (N=30). More victims from the contact interactions resisted at least once, compared to the two other groups (N=14). 21% of victims confronted their offenders on their behaviours online (N=11). Victims who went offline had confronted their offenders more than non-contact victims (N=6). In our sample, 31% of the victims introduced sexual conversations at least once during the online interaction (N=16). We observed that 19% of the offline contact victim introduced sexualized conversations on at least one occasion. Only 38% of the victims sent pictures of themselves (N=20). Out of the 52 victims, 27% of them asked offenders for their pictures (N=14).

Since previous research had focused on the typologies' distinctive characteristics, the purpose of Table 2 is to examine how homogeneous and heterogeneous the various interactions are to each other. Since the results of Table 2 suggest general homogeneity between types of interactions based on the dichotomy of the strategies, it is pertinent to focus the analysis on the frequency of the strategies used instead of dichotomized variables. The following bivariate analysis will use the frequency of each strategies as the unit of comparison for three types of interactions.

3.2 Differences between the three types of interactions

In this study, we aimed to find the significant differences between the types of interactions based the number of occurrences of each strategy. Table 3 presents the results of the Kruskal Wallis

analysis. The Kruskal Wallis is a nonparametric bivariate test. The distributions of the various strategies were not normal thus the Kruskal Wallis test was chosen. The Kruskal Wallis's results highlight the differences between the three interactions. Under the column entitled "Kruskal Wallis H Test" are the results when comparing the various frequencies of a strategy between types of interactions³. If $p < 0.16$ in the column Kruskal-Wallis H Test than there is, at least, one combination of groups where the differences are significant. To examine the significant differences further a Mann-Whitney U Test was performed. Underneath the various pairing are the significant results of the comparison of the Mann-Whitney U Test. The empty fields show there are no significant differences between these pairings.

³ To avoid making statistical errors, the Bonferroni correction was applied to deal with the problems with multiple comparisons. The significant threshold was divided by three (three groups of interactions were compared) therefore the new threshold for significant results is now at $p < 0.16$.

Table 3 : Presentation of the comparisons between types of interactions

Strategies	Online-only interactions and attempt at contact interactions	Online-only interactions and contact interactions	Contact interactions and attempt at contact interactions	Kruskal-Wallis H Test
Seduction				
Present themselves as harmless		U=99.5, Z=-3.489, p≤.000	U=45.5, Z=-2.617, p≤.009	$\chi^2((2, N=52)=15.68, p\leq.000)$
Physical Compliments				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=2.19, p\leq.335)$
Deception Age				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=4.27, p\leq.118)$
Deception: Identity				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=4.68 p\leq.096)$
Sexual Content				
Sexual Receptivity				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=1.13, p\leq.568)$
Fantasy Rehearsal		U=90.0, Z=-3.444, p≤.001		$\chi^2((2, N=52)=12.36, p\leq.002)$
Photo				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=.744, p\leq.689)$
Webcam				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=.716, p\leq.699)$
Direct introduction to sexual content				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=3.13, p\leq.209)$
Physical Appearance				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=.379, p\leq.827)$
Sexual practices/ preferences				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=.550, p\leq.759)$
Sexual Past				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=2.239, p\leq.327)$

Flattery, compliments and affection				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=1.19, p\leq.552)$
Criminal Opportunity				
Bribery		U=116.5, Z=-3.373, p \leq .001		$\chi^2((2, N=52)=11.84, p\leq.003)$
Persistence		U=96.0, Z=-3.168, p \leq .002		$\chi^2((2, N=52)=11.80, p\leq.003)$
Receptivity	U=21.5, Z=-3.807, p \leq .000	U=86.5, Z=-3.510, p \leq .000		$\chi^2((2, N=52)=18.04, p\leq.000)$
Offline Contact Opportunity		U=27.0, Z=-5.258, p \leq .000	U=25.5, Z=-3.346, p \leq .000	$\chi^2((2, N=52)=31.78, p\leq.000)$
Statistic				
#Sexual Content		U=111.0, Z=-2.789, p \leq .005		$\chi^2((2, N=52)=9.47, p\leq.009)$
#Offline demands	U=.000, Z=-5.460, p \leq .000	U=11.0, Z=-5.760, p \leq .000		$\chi^2((2, N=52)=42.19, p\leq.000)$
#Conversation				$\chi^2((2, N=52)=4.94, p\leq.085)$

* P \leq .016** P \leq .001***

The results found in Table 3 only indicate that there is a significant difference between certain groups. To understand how these groups are different, we need to use the median of each strategy per group of interactions to identify which group used the strategy more than the other. Table 4 presents the median of each strategies by types of interactions. The median is used as a unit of measurement instead of the averages, as to be not be skewed by outliers. Since the number of conversations vary between 1 and 394, the average of strategies was not the ideal measure as interactions with higher number of conversations had higher averages of strategies. Instead, the median represents the middle number of all the frequencies. The averages are also presented in Table 4 to situate the median better.

Table 4 : Presentation of the median and means of each strategies per interactions

Strategy	Online-only Interactions MD (Means)	Attempt at Contact Interactions MD (Means)	Offline-Contact Interactions MD (Means)
Seduction			
Deception: age	0.0(0.68)	0.0(0.1)	0.0(0.9)
Deception: identity	0.0(0.05)	0.0 (3.1)	0.0(0.75)
Physical compliment	1.0(1.68)	0.0(1.2)	1.0(4.1)
Present themselves as harmless	0.0(0.18)	0.0(0.2)	1.0(2.1)
Sexual Content			
Receptivity Sexual	3.0 (5.0)	4.5(6.0)	4.5(12.05)
Direct introduction to sexual content	1.0(2.59)	1.0(3.3)	2.0(5.3)
Demands of Photograph	1.0(1.55)	0.5(1.9)	1.0(6.4)
Demands of Webcam live shows	0.5(1.86)	1.0(1.2)	1.0(1.95)
Fantasy Rehearsal	0.0(0.77)	1.0(1.7)	3.0(5.4)
Flattery, compliments and affection	1.5(2.77)	2.0(3.0)	2.5(7.6)
Question on the victim's physical appearance	0.5(2.59)	1.0(4.7)	1.5(3.2)
Question on the victim's sexual preferences or practices	1.5(2.86)	3.0(4.0)	1.0 (6.25)
Question on the victim's sexual past	1.0(2.64)	3.0(3.2)	0.5(2.2)
Criminal Opportunity			
Opportunity	0.0(0.09)	0.0(0.8)	4.5(6.15)
Persistence	0.5 (2.09)	1.0(1.5)	6.0(9.95)
Receptivity Contact	0.0(1.14)	3.5(4.4)	3.0 (8.05)
Bribery	0.0(0.05)	0.0(0.6)	0.5(2.85)
Statistic			
#Offline demands	0.0 (0)	1.5(1.7)	5.5 (10.7)
#Sexual Content	1.0 (2.36)	2.5(2.7)	4.0 (9.7)
#Number of Conversations	3.0 (7.27)	3.5(6.5)	7.0(31.25)

In the seduction theme, only the presentation of themselves is statistically different between the types of interactions ($\chi^2(2, N=52)=15.68, p \leq 0.000$). The difference is statistically significant in two groups of interactions. The difference between online-only interactions and contact interactions is significant as the median of contact interactions' offenders is higher than online-only interactions (md=1 vs md=0, $U=99.5, Z=-3.489, p \leq 0.000$). The difference in median was also significant between contact interactions and attempt at contact interactions, where contact

interactions had a higher median than attempt at contact interaction (md=1 vs md=0, U=45.5, Z=-2.617, p≤.009) As the median of both attempt at contact and online-only interactions is at 0, the difference is not significant. Deceptive strategies and giving physical compliments are not significantly different between groups of interactions (p>.016).

Based on the sexual content theme, only one strategy statistically differentiates between combinations of interactions. Fantasy rehearsal is a strategy that statistically differentiates online-only interactions and contact interactions ($\chi^2(2, N=52)=-15.65, p\leq.001$). Contact interactions had a higher median of fantasy rehearsal than online-only (md=3 vs md=1, U=90.0, Z=-3.444, p≤.001). The rest of the strategies used during the sexual content theme showed no significant differences between interactions (p>.016).

Every strategy in the theme of criminal opportunities are showed significant results in Table 3. The use of bribery is significantly different between the online-only interactions and contact interactions $\chi^2(2, N=52)=-12.53, p\leq.002$). The second strategy is the use of persistence. The median of persistence in contact interaction is higher than in online-only interactions (m=6 vs m=1, U=96.0, Z=-3.168, p≤.002). Receptivity to offline contact was a strategy used that differentiates the two groups ($\chi^2(2, N=52)=18.04, p\leq.000$). Online-only interactions had a lower median compared to attempt at contact interactions (md=0 vs md=3.5, U=21.5, Z=-3.807, p≤.000). Online-only interactions also had a significantly lower median than contact interaction (md=0 vs md=3, U=86.5, Z=-3.510, p≤.000). Opportunities to meet victims offline was also a significant result ($\chi^2(2, N=52)=31.78, p\leq.000$). Opportunities differentiate statistically online-only interaction and contact interaction (U=27.0, Z=-5.258, p≤.000); contact interactions show a higher median compared to online-only interactions (md=4.5 vs md=0). Similarly, contact interaction also has a higher median than attempt at contact interaction (md=4.5 vs md=0, U=25.5, Z=-3.346, p≤.000).

Two of the results, based on the number of certain characteristics statistically, differentiate the interactions between groups. The difference in the number of sexual contents in various interactions is a significant result ($\chi^2(2, N=52)=9.47, p\leq.009$). The difference lay in the variance in the median of the contact interactions and online-only interactions (U=111.0, Z=-2.789, p≤.005). Online-only interactions had a lower median compared to contact interactions (md=4.0 vs md=0.0). The number of offline demands statistically separate two groups of interactions ($\chi^2(2,$

N=52)= 42.19, $p \leq .000$)). Online-only interactions' median is significantly lower than the attempt at contact interactions and contact interactions (md=0 vs md= 1.5 vs. md=5.5). The statistical analysis showed the significant difference between online-only interactions and attempt at contact (U=.000, $Z = -5.460, p \leq .000$) and between online-only interactions and contact interactions (U=11.0, $Z = -5.760, p \leq .000$). There is no significant difference between the various interactions ($\chi^2(2, N=52) = 4.94, p \leq .085$)). The explanation of these results will be discussed in chapter 4.

3.3 Victims' online behaviours associated with offline contact

In Student T-Test, the aim is to examine which victims' online behaviours are associated with interactions that lead to contact. Table 5 presents the Student T-Test's results comparing contact interactions to the attempt at contact interactions (N=30). The different means and standard deviations are also presented in Table 5. The association of each behaviour is illustrated by the value of eta squared.

Table 5: Victims' online behaviours associated with contact interactions

Strategies	Attempt Contact Interactions		Contact Interactions		T	Eta ²
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Victim Behaviours						
Offline resistance	0.70	0.82	4.45	5.53	-2.97***	.238
Resistance sexual	6.00	5.52	12.05	20.04	-1.041	.491
Confrontation	0.10	0.32	2.65	4.28	-1.183	.383
Victim introduces the sexual content	0.20	0.42	1.05	1.39	-2.506*	.119
Victims ask the offenders for their picture	0.50	0.97	2.20	5.78	-0.915	.087
Victim sends their pictures to offender	0.20	0.42	2.55	4.39	-2.370**	.153
Victim asks for an offline contact	0.40	1.27	1.55	2.52	-3.349**	.129
Number of conversations	6.50	8.66	31.25	86.40	-.896	.483
Number of Sexual Content	2.70	1.49	9.70	16.22	-1.350*	.234

Victims' online behaviours were analyzed to test if certain behaviours are associated with contact interactions. Overall, victims from the offline contact groups have participated more and have been more oppositional than victims who did not meet their OSS. Offline contact resistance from the victims was seen significantly, more frequently within the contact interactions. However, the correlation is weak ($\bar{x} = 4.45$ vs $\bar{x} = 0.70$, $p \leq .01$, $\eta^2 = .238$). Although offline contact victims introduce sexual conversations on more occasions than their counterparts, the correlation is weak ($\bar{x} = 1.05$ vs $\bar{x} = 0.20$, $p \leq .05$, $\eta^2 = .119$). The correlation is also weak for the differences in the number of times victims ask for their offender's picture and the number of times victims ask their offender for an offline meeting ($\eta^2 = .153$, $\eta^2 = .129$). The overall number of conversations in an interaction did not significantly differentiate between contact victims and attempted at contact victims. The average of sexual content between types of victims is significantly different; contact victims had more sexualized conversations than the attempt at contact victims ($\bar{x} = 9.70$ vs $\bar{x} = 2.70$, $p \leq .024$, $\eta^2 = .234$).

Chapter 4: Discussion

The principal aim of this study was to identify the online sexual solicitors' strategies associated with the interaction that led to contact among online sex solicitors by analyzing online discourses. To our knowledge, no other research has used a two-step methodology, such as is presented here, to identify strategies associated with contact among OSS. The benefit of using a two-step methodology is that it allowed us to analyze the modus operandi in further detail. With the quantitative analysis, we tested the specific characteristic of each group of interactions. We further expanded this research, compared to other works, by including the victims' online behaviours and the failed attempts at offline contact in studying the best predictors of contact interactions. The results of the thematic analysis highlighted the predominance of sexualized conversations online during the victimization process. The results of the quantitative testing revealed that 1) the indicators found in Briggs et al., (2011) and Dehart et al., (2017) were not replicated 2) offenders with opportunities are more likely to meet their victim(s) offline 3) victims, who presented more oppositional and participatory behaviours, were more likely to meet their offenders offline, among our sample set. The following sections will explain these findings in detail. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses our qualitative and quantitative results of the strategies used by OSS seeking contact compared to the indicators found in other studies. The second section will discuss the victims' online behaviours.

4.1 Discussion of the online sexual solicitors' strategies in their discourse

The focus of this research has been to identify the strategies most associated with offline contact among our sample of online sex solicitors. We compared three types of interactions to pinpoint strategies specifically associated with obtained offline contact interactions. This is important, as previous research has largely failed at identifying the particularities of the online sex solicitors who aimed to meet their victims offline but did not in the end. When comparing these two subgroups of interactions based on their usage of strategies and the victims' online behaviours, it is interesting to identify the differences between them seeking the same outcome. By comparing strategies per type of interactions, we were able to answer our research question. The purpose of this section is to compare previous research to ours.

One of the main differences between offenders who seek contact and those who do not is the length of their interactions with their victims (Briggs et al., 2011; DeHart et al., 2017). According to the findings in Briggs et al., (2011), low number of conversations was an indicator of contact-driven offenders. Our results do not confirm the results of Briggs et al.'s findings, whereby the fantasy-driven offenders talk more with their victims than contact-driven offenders. The average number total of conversations was noticeably higher in contact interactions compared noncontact interactions. The contracting results can be argued that by having numerous conversations, contact interactions' offenders could build an emotional relationship with the victim, which consequentially let the victims be more open to contact. It is possible that for offenders who seek contact, they needed more conversations to convince the victims to meet them. The fact that our results illustrate that contact offenders had a higher median of the number of offline demands suggest the offender might have needed more convincing of the victim to agree to meet. The differences in the length of conversations between groups were not significant. However, the result remains in opposition to the findings that offender driven by contact do not take the time to talk with victims over some time.

Similar to Webster et al., (2012), regardless of the classification, online sexual solicitors approached sexualized content directly and quickly. The differences were based on sexual behaviours in specific typologies (Briggs et al., 2011; DeHart et al., 2017). Our results showed that offenders who had contact directly approached sexual content towards their victims, which partially confirms Briggs et al.'s findings. All groups of offenders rapidly introduced sexual content; the differences show no significant results when comparing the three interactions. When analyzing offenders' sexual gratification, our results show another discrepancy with Briggs et al., (2011) and DeHart et al., (2017). It was found that fantasy-driven offenders reached sexual gratification through online communication. In contrast, contact-driven offenders obtain their sexual gratification through offline contact (Briggs et al., 2011). Our results show comparable results with the online-only interactions but differ when we analyzed contact interactions. In all three types of interactions, offenders asked sexually driven questions (victim's physique, sexual preferences, past, or practices). In general, based on all the sexual strategies, all three interactions are not different. We have no evidence to support that contact offenders do not obtain sexual gratification online. We can suggest that all of the online sex solicitors reach some form of sexual gratification online. On average, interactions where contact was sought, had a higher median of

cybersex sessions throughout their interactions. We suggest that separating offenders based on sexual gratification is not optimal as sexual behaviours do not categorize significantly well in the various interactions.

The results showed one strategy that differentiates interactions based on sexual behaviours, which is realizing sexual fantasies. Fantasy rehearsal was significantly more present in contact interactions compared to online-only interaction. The sexual acts discussed in fantasy rehearsal also showed sexual compatibility as they were acts that both parties seemed to want to do. Before an offender can use the fantasy rehearsal strategy with their victim, they must know what sexual acts the victims enjoy or is willing to do. We can suggest that offenders who asked more questions about the victims' sexual preferences and practices have more information to build on their sexual compatibility with their victims. With this information, they can rehearse the victim's sexual fantasies. Although the questions about the victims' sexual practices and preferences are not significant, the mean in contact interactions is higher than in the online-only interactions. For example, there was one particular case where the offender knew the victims' sexual preference and could rehearse their sexual fantasies online that would later be performed offline. Offender 15 and Victim 15.A spoke often about their shared sexual fantasy over furry porn. This strategy could only occur after the offender was aware of the victim's interest in furry porn. The two would then explore what they would do to each other in their costumes. After discussing sex parties in a hotel room, Offender 15 agreed to wear his furry costume, and then Offender 15 travelled to the victim's school to meet. In this particular example, the offender used fantasy rehearsal, which showed sexual compatibility and offline planning between the two parties. In this case, it is possible to see how a strategy that is not statistically significant on its own can cause another strategy to be significantly associated with offline interactions.

Our results suggest that persistence was used to overcome victims' resistance to sexual inquiries and offline propositions, as seen in Kloess et al., (2019). OSS show persistence through repetitions when victims either ignored the sexual request or resisted them. Persistence was a significant result in differentiating between online-only interactions and contact interactions. The OSS with contact aspirations were more persistent in asking their victims to meet than the other groups, asking their victims for contact significantly more than the other groups based on the median values. Offenders that showed intense persistence wore down their victim's patience, and

the victims would “comply.” In this sample set, contact offenders who were continuously seeking the same information or often demanded to meet were ultimately successful in meeting victims. Offenders were seen begging, nagging and expressing disappointment in their use of persistence, which confirms the findings of Kloess et al., (2019). However, the use of threats was observed in only one interaction. In our sample set, persistence was a way to manipulate the victim into “compliance”, and not threats.

Only a small percentage of cases involve an OSS who falsified their age or identity, which is in agreement with Kloess et al., (2019). Our results suggest that the OSS altered their identity or age to appear more appealing to their victims, such as de Santisteban et al., (2018) concluded. Most of the offenders who lied about their age, reduced their age by a few years but did not hide the fact they were adults such as seen in Kloess et al., (2017), Quayle et al., (2014) and Wolak et al., (2004). Only one offender pretended to be a minor, and merely 10 interactions had the offender lie about their age, representing less than 20% of the cases. The result of this research supports the idea that it is a misconception that online sexual solicitors need to pretend to be minors to hold sexualized conversations with victims. Only 5 offenders changed their identity when talking to their victims. Only one offender created a new identity and chatted with minors online. Offender 2 was able to meet their victims offline by deceiving their victim by pretending to be an underage girl. Offender 2 deceived Victim 2.A by pretending to be a version of himself and another girl of similar age. The apparent purpose was to recruit young girls for sexual favours in money exchanges. While pretending to be the underage girl, Offender 2 verified that the victim was open to doing sexual favours for money. Offender 2’s deception was adding an imaginary third party along with himself. With the underage persona, the offender appeared harmless as another teenage girl and pretended to have mutual likings with the victim (shopping, clothes, makeup and drinking/smoking). The persona helps lower the victim’s sense of danger because the underage persona repeated that “she was doing it too, and it is no big deal.” Deceptive strategies were seen more often in contact interactions, but they remain a small proportion of all offenders.

Bribery was a differentiating strategy between contact interactions and online-only interactions. Contact interactions had offenders bribe victims more often than online-only interactions. Results suggest that if there were more incentives for a victim to meet the offenders offline, that could be a deciding factor. Some common bribes, aside from money, were either

camera phones or more minutes on a cellphone. Information from case files informed us that the bribes were often not given to the victims even after the sexual acts were performed.

The high number of offline opportunity offenders is significantly associated with contact interactions. In the contact interactions, it seems as though there was the convergence of a desirable target, a motivated offender and an opportunity with limited risk (Felson and Boba, 2010). Offline opportunity differs from online-only interactions and contact interactions, as to count as an 'online-only' interaction, the offenders did not ask for contact, and therefore it would be difficult for them to have an offline opportunity. Offline opportunity significantly separates the offenders in attempted from successful contact interactions. Although offenders asked for an offline meeting, attempt at contact's offenders had a significantly lower number of opportunities, based on median and means compared to contact offenders. Contact offenders had a higher number of opportunities, and more offenders had at least one opportunity. As seen in Table 2, 90% of offenders in the contact interactions group had a minimum of one opportunity for offline contact. There was two contact interaction where the offender did not appear to have an opportunity during the online conversations. These two interactions also presented with loss of information due to a change of medium of telecommunication. In 17 of the contact interactions, we found that there was a change of medium communication. When an offender changed the medium of conversations for video call or phone call, we did not have those transcripts and thus, some information was lost. We can suggest that during one of the conversations the offenders had with their victim presented an opportunity. In the end, two attempted at contact interactions presented at least one opportunity. Nevertheless, the interaction failed to reach offline contact. It is difficult to pinpoint what made some offenders meet with their victims over those who tried but did not. As seen by our results, contact interactions often showed higher means and median of strategies compared to attempt at contact interactions. It is possible that the deciding factor does not come from the offender's repertoire of strategies but instead, the victims' online behaviours.

In sum, our results have shown that strategies associated with OSS that sought offline contact are not the same indicators found in the works of Briggs et al., (2011) and Dehart et al., (2017). The lack of significant differences between the type of OSS interaction informs us that, for the most part, the various OSS types are not mutually exclusive groups. It is possible to observe that groups have common strategies within all the themes. Broome et al. (2018) found that

typologies often intertwined both types of OSS indicators. Our results support that the strategies or indicator groups of offenders share the most common strategies. A key observation is that online sexual solicitors who had opportunities to meet their victims, sexually rehearse their fantasy with their victims, were more persistent had interactions most likely associated with offline contact.

4.2 Discussion of the victims' online behaviours and their association with offline contact

The victims' online behaviours were tested to examine the impact they have on the outcome of online interactions when offline contact was sought after. As they are two parties interacting it is interesting to see the differences in the behaviours of victims who met their offender offline, compared to those who were asked to meet but did not. The following section will be elaborate on the behaviours that were associated with offline contact and try to explain these results based on situational factors.

Contrary to what is seen in the literature, the notion of grooming is not how offenders manipulated their victims in our sample set. We had to reject, in this current study, the notion of grooming as preparing the child for sexual behaviours. Our observations found that the victims in our sample had previous sexual experiences and were aware of their sexual preferences. When offenders introduced sexual content, victims were able to reject or partially reject sexual conversations or requested online sex performance. Since the conversations during the interactions were mainly sexually connotated, we had to forgo the idea that victims were being groomed into sexual behaviours.

The results of the bivariate analysis have shown that offline victims, generally, participated and resisted more than those who did not meet their offender offline, even when asked. The number of conversations was not a factor that differentiated the contact offenders from the other groups, but it is important to keep in mind to better understand the results of which behaviours are most associated with contact interactions. Our results have illustrated that contact victims resisted their offender more often. This result seems counter-intuitive, yet, to understand the reason behind it, we must consider the length of the interaction. Kloess et al., (2019) stipulates that offenders are not required to overcome the victim's resistance since there are other potential victims online. Therefore, the relatively minimal degrees of resistance from the noncontact group in addition to

the persistence of the offenders within the contact interactions could suggest 1) the offender did not attempt to overcome the victim's resistance, or the victim stopped answering the offender or 2) that the offenders facing resistance tend to adapt and employ an alternative strategy, namely persistence. Contact victims had a higher count of conversations, on average, which could mean that they had more opportunity to resist their offender over a more extended period. The higher level of offline resistance also suggests that victims who went offline needed more convincing to meet their offenders. This could explain why victims who resist the offender's offline demands more often are most associated with contact. Moreover, many of the victims who did not meet their offender used a public chat forum online, such as MIRC, where many had only one conversation with the offenders. With one conversation, there are a limited number of resistance that can be analyzed. In the end, even if the number of conversations is not a significant difference between groups of victims, it is an essential element to contextualize the significant results.

Victims who asked for offline contact was a behaviour significantly associated with offline meetings. In a context where offenders are looking for offline contact with a victim, it was evident that this behaviour is associated with offline contact. If the victim asked their offender for contact, we can see they are more open to contact. The cases where victims asked for offline contact was often when the victim was manipulated into thinking they were in a romantic interaction with their offender. There were three cases where the victim asked to meet the offender, and the offenders did not show interest in meeting. There was only one case where the victim asked for a contact, and the offender had shown interest in contact, but the interaction ended online. In the 8 remaining cases, victims asking for contact ended in a meeting, representing 40% of the contact interactions. Although this result is significantly associated with offline contact, the victims' resistance to offline contact is a stronger indicator of offline contact than victims who ask their offenders directly for contact.

Previous research had found that OSS had to adapt their styles to their victims (Whittle et al., (2013). In our sample, we had 12 OSS with more than one victim. We were able to see if the OSS adapted themselves to their specific victims or employed the same strategies every time. Although there were variances, the offenders had the same approach with their victims. This was particularly apparent with Offender 13 and Offender 14. For example, Offender 14 had seven victims in this sample set. His modus operandi was similar for all seven victims. Once he found a

victim open to converse with them, he would show sexual persistence, offline demand persistence. He would be keeping up constant communication with them. Out of the seven victims, Offender 14 successfully met four of them at their school. Offender 13 shared a similar modus operandi, whereby he would continuously attempt to start conversations with his victims and introduced the same sexualized questions frequently. Although their respective victims were different, the OSS approached them in the same manner. The tailoring of approaches to the victims does not seem to be used by all online sexual solicitors. Perhaps the OSS who have a significant number of victims will not adapt themselves to each victim but instead use one modus operandi for them all.

In sum, incorporating victims' online behaviours allowed this research to better understand the dynamics of online interactions. When offenders were faced with sexually awakened victims, the need to slowly build interactions towards sexual conversations seemed optional. The differences in behaviours between PJ's underage decoys and our victims could be explained by cultural differences or generational, as PJ's sample date back further. Perhaps as the youth generations change, they are more exposed to online sexual material at a younger age and thus, do not require as much grooming as before. It is also possible that the victims' continuum of online behaviours can only be found in Quebec. Until more testing is performed, this remains a working theory.

Conclusion

Online sex solicitation has grown into a common phenomenon online. With easy access to the Internet, it is possible to see why the incidence rate continues to rise (Wolak et al., 2012). Online sexual solicitors have more sexual gratification opportunities as they are countless potential victims online, and the distance does not restrict them. Over time, the study of online sex solicitation became necessary. Research on online sex solicitors has focused on establishing typologies and studying the modus operandi. Previous studies created typologies by separating groups of OSS by their intention or non-intention to meet offline their victims, and by their online behaviours. This study focused on categorizing interactions based on facts, rather than motivation, and finding the strategies used more often by each interaction type.

By using the interactions' conversations as the unit of analysis, we analyzed the range of online behaviours between the offender and the victim. This study aimed to compare and identify the differences between the three types of interactions on their usage of the strategies. We were able to identify the strategies most used in contact interactions. Our main results suggest that offenders with more opportunities, who are more persistent and sexually rehearse their fantasy with their victims are associated with offline interactions. In contrast, offline contact victims were seen to participate more and resist more often than the non-contact victims.

There are limits to this study that need to be addressed. The first limit of this study is the small sample size for quantitative analysis. Our sample size was limited, and the multivariate analysis could not be adequately performed. With the time constraint, we were able to codify 829 conversations and aggregated them into only 52 interactions. The sample-set was not large enough to adequately performed a multivariate analysis. With more time, the number of interactions that lead to offline contact would be higher, and we could perform a multivariate analysis. There are significantly more online sexual solicitors that remain online than offline, as seen in the SQ's data. As the codification continued, finding case files where the contact offenders with specifically known victims became hard. We were limited by the number of available cases at the SQ during the time frame of this research. We limited ourselves by taking interactions with real victims and not police decoys. By narrowing our sample set for authenticity reason, we remain with a smaller

sample size. The second limit is that due to time constraints and Covid-19, an inter-rater reliability test has not yet been performed on this research. Although the codification has only been performed once, the creation of the codebook was overseen by two other researchers. The codification of a smaller sample set will be performed at a later date.

Our results have contradicted the literature that stated that contact-driven offenders have shorter interactions do not obtain sexual gratification online, and do not build an interaction with their victims compared to non-contact offenders. The disparities between our results and previous research can be explained by either the fact that we used a different methodology or that the sample did not originate from PJ. We pushed this research by using statistical testing to confirm or infirm the strategies associated with offline contact. The considerations of victims' online behaviours were also a novelty in the research of online sex solicitors. The two-step methodology approach complemented each other to analyze the modus operandi of OSS. The quantitative results told us that our observations were statistically significant and the qualitative provided observations to test.

The theoretical implication of this research is that it allowed us to understand better how groups differentiate themselves from others. Previous research has categorized offenders based on their intention or not to meet victims offline (Briggs et al., 2011; DeHart et al., 2017). The results of this research invite future studies to consider online sexual solicitors' behaviours on a continuum rather than creating exclusive categories. The descriptive analysis highlighted that when we only considered the presence of strategies in their discourse, groups of OSS do not differ drastically. When we compared the medians and means of each strategy by types of interactions, we were able to highlight the significant differences. The second implication is that our research included victims' online behaviours to examine if some behaviours could indicate the probabilities of an offline meeting occurring. The victims' online behaviours remain understudied for the impact this has on the offender's modus operandi. The theoretical implications of this research aimed at advancing the way we considered the characteristic in typologies and the necessity to study both parties.

The results of this research have potential practical implications for police practices. Since these results have never been retested nor been tested with a larger sample size, it would be too early to propose changes to police practices based on the current results. However, there are three

potential practical implications that our results put forward. The first is that results have shown that online sex solicitors who have opportunities, who were persistent and practicing their sexual fantasies, will most likely be meeting their victims. These strategies can be considered when assessing potential risk for offline contact. The second implication is that the number of offenders who will meet their victims offline seems to be only a small percentage of online sexual solicitors when the victim is not a decoy. Although more than half of our sample interactions had an offender attempted to obtain offline contact, many are unsuccessful, possibly due to the victims' higher resistance and lack of opportunities. Contact offenders remain an active group of offenders that rarely had only one victim in our sample set. All of these findings together tell us that although contact offenders represent a danger to society, there are not many online sex solicitors who meet their victims offline. The third implication is that online interactions of all types move quickly. The length of interaction is often less than a week, and for many, one day. Only exceptions had interactions that lasted months. This means that police have a limited window of time to intervene before a sexual assault occurs online or offline. Even though these implications cannot change police practices yet, these results have allowed us to understand more about online sexual solicitors who seek offline contact.

Based on our results, we recommend that future research should consider using a sample other than from Perverted Justice, or in addition to Perverted Justice. Future research should consider comparing the victims' online behaviours to PJ's underage decoys. If PJ's underage decoys' online behaviours differ from the results seen in this study, research should explore these differences further. With a larger sample size, it would be pertinent to produce a predictive model to determine which strategies are best associated with offline contact.

With the constant evolution of communicative technologies, online sexual solicitors will continue to have numerous and diverse opportunities to chat with minors online. The number of potential opportunities continues to rise as more populations are connected through social media. From this perspective, it remains important as a society to maximize the protection of youth online and offline.

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Appendix 1

Offender ID	Victim ID	Type of interaction
Offender 1	Victim 1. A	Online Only Interaction
Offender 2	Victim 2. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 2	Victim 2. B	Contact Interactions
Offender 2	Victim 2. C	Contact Interactions
Offender 3	Victim 3. A	Online Only Interaction
Offender 3	Victim 3. B	Online Only Interaction
Offender 3	Victim 3. C	Online Only Interaction
Offender 3	Victim 3. D	Online Only Interaction
Offender 3	Victim 3. E	Online Only Interaction
Offender 3	Victim 3. F	Online Only Interaction
Offender 4	Victim 4. A	Online Only Interaction
Offender 4	Victim 4. B	Online Only Interaction
Offender 4	Victim 4. C	Online Only Interaction
Offender 5	Victim 5. B	Contact Interactions
Offender 5	Victim 5. A	Online Only Interaction
Offender 6	Victim 6. A	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 7	Victim 7. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 8	Victim 8. A	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 8	Victim 8. B	Online Only Interaction
Offender 8	Victim 8. C	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 8	Victim 8. D	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 8	Victim 8. E	Online Only Interaction

Offender 8	Victim 8. F	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 8	Victim 8. G	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 9	Victim 9. A	Online Only interaction
Offender 9	Victim 9. B	Online Only interaction
Offender 9	Victim 9. C	Online Only Interaction
Offender 9	Victim 9. D	Online Only Interaction
Offender 10	Victim 10. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 11	Victim 11. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 11	Victim 11. B	Contact Interactions
Offender 11	Victim 11. C	Contact Interactions
Offender 12	Victim 12. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 12	Victim 12. B	Contact Interactions
Offender 13	Victim 13. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 13	Victim 13. B	Contact Interactions
Offender 13	Victim 13. C	Contact Interactions
Offender 14	Victim 14. A	Online Only interaction
Offender 14	Victim 14. B	Online Only interaction
Offender 14	Victim 14. C	Attempt at Contact Interaction
Offender 14	Victim 14. D	Contact Interactions
Offender 14	Victim 14. E	Contact Interactions
Offender 14	Victim 14. F	Contact Interactions
Offender 14	Victim 14. G	Contact Interactions
Offender 15	Victim 15. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 16	Victim 16. A	Contact Interactions
Offender 17	Victim 17. A	Online only Interaction

Offender 17	Victim 17. B	Online only Interaction
Offender 17	Victim 17. C	Online only Interaction
Offender 18	Victim 18. A	Online only Interaction
Offender 18	Victim 18. B	Online only Interaction
Offender 18	Victim 18. C	Attempt at contact Interaction
