

Abstract

Social Workers' Knowledge of The Psychological Impact of The Aftermath of Human

Trafficking:

A Grounded Theory Approach

The goal of this study was to explore the knowledge that social workers own about the psychological impacts of the aftermath of human trafficking. This grounded theory qualitative study collected data by utilizing online questionnaires. Participants were asked about their knowledge, the characteristics, prevalence, relationship dynamics, therapeutic alliances, mental health impacts and history of human trafficking. This study was the first to research the awareness that social workers have about the psychological impacts of the aftermath of human trafficking. Results from the study indicated that social workers do not have sufficient knowledge about human trafficking or its repercussions. The findings within the study indicated that social workers were aware of the basic knowledge of human trafficking such as characteristics of victims and the different targeted populations. It was also determined that many social workers are not obtaining educational resources of human trafficking from curriculum or employment. They are learning about the crime through public knowledge, peer review articles or documentaries. Results from the study display the barriers social workers encounter when dealing with the human trafficked population. Furthermore, the study extrapolates that social workers' can be an asset to the human trafficking population if they have the expertise needed to provide tools and resources to trafficked victims.

Social Workers' Knowledge of The Psychological Impact of

The Aftermath of Human Trafficking:

A Grounded Theory Approach

by:

Lakeia Murray, LMSW

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by

Lakeia M. Murray

The committee for this doctoral dissertation consisted of:

Nancy Beckerman, DSW, Chairperson, Yeshiva University

Shannon Lane, Ph.D., Yeshiva University

Charles Auerbach, Ph.D., Yeshiva University

Marcus Crawford, Ph.D., Fresno University

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Dedication

To my husband for his unconditional love and support.

To my children for motivating me to become a better person daily.

To my family and friends who encouraged me to keep thriving during the difficult times.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Ethel Grant, who is watching me from above. You will forever be in my heart.

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Chapter One: Dissertation Overview

This study examined the knowledge possessed by social workers about the psychological impact of the aftermath of human trafficking victims. Human trafficking is a global and social crisis. Although the cases of human trafficking continue to raise concerns, social workers have not adequately addressed human trafficking. This study was a qualitative grounded approach study. According to Strauss & Corbin (1997), grounded theorists have redefined the scientific cannons for the purposes of studying human behavior. The data in this study was collected and managed through Qualtrics software. The instrument used was qualitative digital interviews (online surveys) which included closed and open-ended questions. To be qualified as a social worker, the participant must've earned a Master of Social Work degree. The following social work values were imperative to this dissertation: social justice, integrity, dignity, and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships (NASW, 2017). The core values of the social work profession support the molding of the relationship between social workers and their clients. Human trafficking will be described throughout chapter one.

Human trafficking is a global crisis that affects approximately 21 million people (Thompson and Hailey, 2018 p. 299). There are thousands of cases that go unnoticed. According to Hodge (2008), given the profession's value stance, it is perhaps surprising that the social work literature has featured a little discussion of one of the most prominent contemporary human rights abuses: the modern-day slave trade or human trafficking.

Statement of purpose

Human trafficking is known as modern-day slavery and remains a global issue that significantly affects women and girls. The undocumented nature of this horrific crime needs to come to the attention of professionals. One profession is the profession of social work. Social workers can take a lead role in advocating for clients within this population. Obtaining the adequate knowledge about the after math of human trafficking can assist social workers with properly aiding this population. As a result, further research about the knowledge that social workers possess about the psychological impact of the aftermath of human trafficking is warranted.

Human Trafficking

The United Nations defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (NIOJ, 2019 p.2). The definition of exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation (NIOJ, 2019 p.2.).

Terminology

For this dissertation, the term “sex trafficking” was used to describe individuals who are recruited, forced, or exploited into sex work (Hodge, 2008). The term” labor trafficking” is a form of human trafficking. For this study, labor trafficking was used to describe individuals who are forced, recruited, or exploited into working in harsh conditions and against one own will. Another form of human trafficking is criminal exploitation. For this study, the term criminal trafficking was used to describe individuals who are forced,

recruited, or exploited into drug trafficking against their own will (Torres & Villacampa, 2017).

Significance of the study

It remains uncertain what knowledge base there is for social workers and their ability to identify the psychological impacts associated with the aftermath of human trafficking. The lack of literature on this subject contributes to the unreported cases of human trafficking. The lack of knowledge among social workers may possibly contribute to social workers' inability to identify current or potential victims of human trafficking. A priority needs to be placed upon the prevalence of human trafficking.

Social Work Values

Several ethical principles are addressed within this dissertation. Social injustice is one of the essential tenets handled within this dissertation. Victims of human trafficking are enslaved and held against their will. The ethical principle of social injustice states that social workers challenge social injustice. Social workers have a duty to pursue social change, with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people (NASW, 2017). Social Justice is essential due to its advocacy for the oppressed and vulnerable populations. Social workers' contribution of knowledge about this population will help provide justice for the survivors. It will assist with bringing awareness to the global issue and contributing to new curriculum and training for future social workers.

Another ethical principle addressed within this study is the dignity and worth of the person. Social workers must respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person (NASW, 2017). Social workers should treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity (NASW, 2017). Social workers

promote and support a clients' self-determination. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. According to the NASW (2017), social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships. Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Strengthening the relationship between social workers and victims of human trafficking can lead to an increase in the number of cases reported by victims.

The final principle addressed is the ethical value of integrity. According to the NASW (2017), social workers behave in a trustworthy manner. To establish a good rapport with clients, the integrity of a social worker is fundamental. According to the NASW (2017), social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers must act responsibly and promote the best ethical practices for the organizations in which they are employed.

Methodology

This researcher implemented a qualitative grounded theory approach to understand social workers' knowledge of the psychological impact of the aftermath of human trafficking. In grounded theory approach, the theory may be generated initially from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Furthermore, (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) explains that the grounded theory methodology explicitly involves generating theory and doing social research as two parts of the same process. Creswell (1998) suggests that a grounded theory study should have 20-30 participants. This researcher collected data through online surveys, which was conducted through Qualtrics software. The survey will include open and closed-ended questions about human trafficking. The questions will ask participants about their

experiences of working with victims of human trafficking and the type of knowledge that they have obtained within the field about the traumas endured by victims of human trafficking.

Purposeful sampling was the primary sampling method within this study. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2016, p. 2). Participants within the study had to meet the criteria to participate in the survey. For the purpose of this study, the criteria of a social worker was defined as a professional who has a Master of Social Work degree. The sample was limited to social workers within the Tri-State area only. The Tri-State area included the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Snowball sampling was the secondary sampling method for this study, and it was conducted within the tri-state area. Participants were asked to share the solicitation and survey links with other social workers who met the criteria required. The solicitation was sent via email to the students of the Ph.D. program at Yeshiva University Wurzweiler School of Social Work. It was placed (via link) in a group forum to the members of the National Association of Social Work (NYS chapter). In addition, the Facebook group titled “New York City Social Workers” was included in the study (with permission).

Anticipated contribution

There is no qualitative literature that researches social workers’ knowledge of the psychological impact of the aftermath of human trafficking to this date. The findings of social workers’ experiences can help bring awareness to the crime of human trafficking and help social workers identify the traumas that a victim encounters when they are forced into

human trafficking. The findings will also promote social service agencies to provide adequate literature and training to social workers about human trafficking.

This study will contribute to social work education. This study can potentially lead to an increase of educational curriculum on the population of human trafficking. An increase in the curriculum will make more social work students knowledgeable of human trafficking before obtaining a job within the field. It can contribute to social service agency policy and promote trauma-informed agencies. A trauma-informed workplace is imperative for professionals within the social work profession. It recognizes trauma at an individual and organizational level.

Limitations of study

This study focused solely on qualitative research within this population. There was no room to generalize within this study due to the absence of random sampling. The study also lacked the concept of simplicity within sampling due to the absence of random sampling. Simplicity can be defined as the quality of what is easy to understand or do. Participants in this study were intentionally selected and may share similar beliefs since they all have similar or the same education level. This study was limited to the opinions and views of only social workers within the tristate area. This placed a geographical limitation on the study. In addition, this study was performed during a global pandemic.

This concludes the overview of the dissertation. The next chapter will discuss the study problem.

Chapter Two: The Study Problem

Human traffickers are motivated by greed, driven by quota, devoid of respect for human rights, preying upon the vulnerable, and damaging the psychological, and physical well-being of their victims (Toney-Butler & Mittel, 2020, p.2). Human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry globally (Toney-Butler & Mittel, 2020, p.2). The International Labor Organization's estimate reveals that 40.3 million people were victimized worldwide through modern-day slavery, 5.4 victims per every thousand in the world. The percentage of women and girls out of the 40.3 million victims in 2016 was 29 million. Toney-Butler & Mittel (2020) stated that 5 million in 2016 were victims of forced sexual exploitation globally, with children making up more than 20% of that number (p.3). Unfortunately, with over one million victims, many cases of human trafficking remain to be unidentified. Human trafficking continues to remain a significant social issue.

Shahriar (2020) estimates between 600,000 and 800,000 people fall victim to trafficking annually (p.3). "The trafficking of young women and children for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation is one of the most significant human rights abuses in contemporary society" (Hodge, 2008, p.143). There is a conception that many victims of human trafficking grow older and become sex workers or sex traffickers. According to Hodge (2008), given the profession's value stance, it is perhaps surprising that the social work literature has featured little discussion of one of the most prominent contemporary human rights abuses, the modern-day slave trade or human trafficking.

Characteristics

Human trafficking affects individuals within diverse populations. It is most known for affecting women and children. According to Villacampa & Torres (2018, p. 394), "specific

studies conducted with women prisoners have shown that some women serving sentences for crimes such as illegal entry into the country, acting as drug mules, or street theft are unidentified trafficking victims who were treated as offenders even more clearly than victims of any other types of trafficking”. Many rape victims do not report their victimization, and victims of trafficking may be even more reluctant to contact authorities (Hodge,2008, p.144). Many social workers and professionals do not have the proper knowledge to identify or aid the victims of human trafficking. Many factors may influence this reluctance. For example, victims may believe that social service providers will not take their claims seriously, that the police will charge them for some offense, or that the authorities are unable to protect them from their traffickers’ reprisals (Hodge,2008, p.144).

Government Policies

There are limited government policies that exist for human trafficking. Other vulnerable crimes such as domestic violence have a higher number of policies that exist to protect the victims. In the United States (US), 45 states have now passed anti-trafficking legislation to create better alignment to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) (Hayes & Unwin, 2016). A vital issue in the United States is the low levels of commercial sexual exploitation reported, although developments have proven that it heavily exists throughout the country. One reason for this is that the subjective interpretation of the relationship by its participants frequently reflects the abuse of power taking place (Hayes & Unwin, 2016).

The data and methodologies for estimating the prevalence of human trafficking are underdeveloped. As a result, the estimate percentage have varied and changed over time. Between 2008 and 2019, the number of identified trafficked victims increased from 30,961 to 105,787 (Szmigiera, M, 2021). In addition, the U.S state department also states that 80

percent of trafficked victims are females. Out of the 80 percent of females who are trafficked annually, 70 percent are trafficked into the sex industry (U.S department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Young girls may be recruited in the Ukraine and trafficked through Russia, Germany, France, and Canada before ending up in the United States (Hodge,2008, p. 144). No population is exempt from the threat of human traffickers.

According to The National Human Trafficking Resource Center and the TVPA, the action means purpose, or A-M-P model helps determine whether force, fraud, or coercion was present during the encounter indicating the encounter was not consensual (Toney-Butler & Mittel, 2020).). The Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End The Exploitation Of Children Act (Protect Act) aim to protect children from abuse and sexual exploitation. The White-Slave Traffic Act, also referred to as The Mann Act of 1910, makes it a felony to knowingly persuade, induce, entice, or coerce an individual to travel across state lines to engage in prostitution or attempts to do. This Act is an effective tool used to prosecute human traffickers.

Social Work Values

The role of a social worker is to create advocacy and equality for oppressed and vulnerable populations. The three distinct social work ethical principles related to practice with victims of human trafficking are social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships.

Victims of human trafficking are psychologically impacted. These victims need additional support and advocacy to help them transition through their struggle with being trafficked. A trauma-informed approach must be practiced when working with victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking victims experience complex trauma, indirect trauma,

secondary trauma, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change (NASW, 2017). A therapeutic relationship between a client and social worker is an additional value that can benefit. Engaging clients in an honest and supportive dialogue throughout the helping process can strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities (NASW, 2017). A clients' interest must always be placed first. For social workers to provide adequate service to their clients, they must be competent within their work field.

Social workers must respect the dignity and worth of the person. Everyone should be treated compassionately and respectfully, mindful of individual differences, cultural norms, and ethnic diversity (NASW, 2017). Vulnerable and oppressed populations often feel unnoticed and unworthy of the proper assistance. Social workers obtaining adequate knowledge about this population can provide this population with the opportunity of being heard. Obtaining valuable expertise will also allow social workers the chance to develop different positive coping strategies for this population.

Social workers challenge social injustice (NASW, 2017). Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people (NASW, 2017). Victims are held against their will and illegally sold to various traffickers. Many victims are afraid to identify themselves or identify their trafficker due to oppression. Despite being oppressed, this population is usually identifiable through specific characteristics. Social workers obtaining the proper knowledge can help identify

victims of human trafficking, identify local resources, and bring awareness to the victims of this horrific crime.

Summary

There is minimum knowledge known about the psychological impacts of the aftermath of human trafficking. Research indicates that the population of human trafficking suffers from trauma. There are preconceptions known about this population, but factual data is limited. Further research is needed to address the gaps within this population and the profession of social work.

This chapter reviewed the historical implications, policies and ethics that surround human trafficking. The next chapter, the literature review, will analyze existing literature relevant to social workers and victims of human trafficking.

Chapter Three- Literature Review

Introduction

Despite human trafficking being a well-known organized crime, many professionals are unaware of how to identify victims and traffickers. Survivors of human trafficking who were exposed to either sexual, labor, or criminal exploitation are often left without any aftercare services. This population experiences severe trauma and cannot manage or identify services. Victims of human trafficking may not have the ability to properly process their emotions, leading to long-term mental health disorders.

For this dissertation, the psychological impact can be defined as the effect on an individual social or psychological well-being caused by environmental or biological factors. The aftermath of human trafficking can be defined as the consequences or results from the crime of human trafficking. Social workers will be available to assist this population further once they know the impact and traumas that human trafficking brings to its victims. This section will explore human trafficking, the characteristics of victims and traffickers, and the psychological impact of human trafficking.

Methodology

The research presented was found in the following databases: Social Science Database, Social Science Full Text, and ProQuest Central. The articles were limited to these search terms 1) human trafficking, 2) social workers, and 3) knowledge of trauma. The same search terms were used within each database. Articles were excluded if they were not peer reviewed or available in full text. Articles from the United States and international articles were all included. With these search terms, ProQuest Central returned a total of 50 articles. The Social Work database produced a total of 1 article. Social science full text included a total of 1 article.

This researcher performed a second search to generate more articles within Social Science Database, ProQuest Central, and Social Science Full Text. The search terms used were 1) human trafficking and 2) trauma. With this search, 46 articles returned as a result from Social Science full text, and a total of 3 articles returned as a result from Social Science database.

All titles and abstracts of the articles were reviewed. The articles that focused on the psychological impacts of human trafficking, traumas of human trafficking, and professionals' knowledge of human trafficking were used in this literature review. This researcher eliminated all duplicated articles from this literature. A total of 102 articles were generated. The exclusion criteria included domestic violence, shelters, homelessness, and nurses. A total of 82 articles were excluded because of the exclusion criteria and duplicated articles. In final, a total of 20 articles were used in this literature review.

Results

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is not a new social problem, but one that has undergone an evolution in its conceptualization (Sprang & Cole, 2018, p.185). Victims of human trafficking are exposed to harsh and dangerous physical and mental conditions. Also, many victims experience chronic health risks and mental health diagnoses such as PTSD from being trafficked. Several themes emerge from the topic of human trafficking. The following themes will be discussed within this section: Trauma of victims, characteristics of victims, recruitment, social worker knowledge, professional knowledge, lack of services/training for social workers, criminal trafficking, law enforcement, and identification of victims.

Trauma of victims

Victims of human trafficking are at high risk for trauma. The key findings of the qualitative research of Pascual-Leone et al, (2017) used a case study model which stated that one factor that can add significant complexity to the traumatic symptoms is the unique aspect that victims are often paid for the harm perpetrated against them. In contrast, some victims often feel confused because payment for their services and being abused conflict with one another. Many victims of human trafficking feel a strong sense of shame and self-guilt.

The article's key findings also noted that organizations face four significant challenges when assisting victims of human trafficking. These challenges are organizational funding/ financial resources, lack of housing, providing financial support to the victim, and finding counseling for the victim (Pascual-Leone et al, 2017). In terms of counseling, it is suggested that the length of time a person has access to a trauma counselor may be too long where they may be found by the trafficker again (Pascual-Leone et al, 2017). Limited treatment is one of the most significant long-term concerns for victims of human trafficking. Another key finding is that victims may report symptoms of panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, or major depressive disorder (Pascual-Leone et al, 2017). Victims of human trafficking may also experience dissociative symptoms, including forgetting many aspects of their trafficking experience. Also, substance-related disorders are common among victims of human trafficking. Financial assistance is one of the main contributors to becoming engaged with human trafficking. Agencies must provide financial assistance. An increase in organizations becoming resourceful to assist individuals with financial aid may decrease the risk of sexual exploitation.

Pascual-Leone et al. (2017) brings awareness to the various challenges' organizations face when dealing with victims of human trafficking. These challenges should be made aware

amongst agencies, especially within the child welfare system. The child welfare system is known to have one of the most vulnerable populations to human trafficking. A high correlation exists between children and youth who are currently or formerly in foster care and victims of sex trafficking (Gluck, Mathur & Focus, 2014, p. 2). To date little effort has been made to comprehensive data on the scope of the problem, but it is estimated that 100,000 children and youth are sexually exploited in the United States each year (Gluck et al, 2014, p. 1). While this article highlighted the importance of organizations when dealing with victims of human trafficking, it did not present any solutions to the lack of assistance organizations provide to victims. Gluck et al (2014) noted that understanding and recognizing that several different factors lead to children and youth becoming victims of sex trafficking and ending up in the child welfare system can inform policymakers on what resources service providers need to identify victims. There is a lack of literature that supports the need for organizations to be aided with the proper tools to assist the victims of human trafficking. According to (Gluck et al, 2014, p.3), some key factors that a minor might be trafficked include the following:

- “-Show evidence of mental, physical or sexual abuse.
- Is being controlled by another person.
- Threats have been made against the family members of the minor.”

This article did not highlight the different necessities victims need in order to come forward as a victim. According to (Gluck et al, 2014), one urgent need of victims of human trafficking is housing. Currently, there are limited shelters and homes for victims of trafficking and what is available is focused on housing females (p. 5). Another necessity that victims need is medical and mental health treatment. Medical treatment includes physical injury and mental health includes treating symptoms or any mental health diagnoses. Currently, there are large

gaps in access to services (Gluck et al, 2014). The lack of resources for victims of human trafficking can subsequently result in the victims remaining entangled in the crime.

Cole (2018) performed a cross-sectional survey of service provider who worked with at-risk youths, which was administered via telephone interviews. A dual sampling frame was used. A purposive sample was used as primary, and a snowballing sample was used as secondary within this method. This sample was created by obtaining the names of human trafficking task forces throughout the state and by reaching out to administrators in crucial agencies. A total of 587 respondents were identified. Out of the total of 587, 80 were ineligible for the survey because the person no longer worked at the agency, did not have a working phone number or the contactor referred the researcher to someone else within the agency (Cole, 2018). Twenty-six individuals declined the interview and one fourth of individuals did not complete the survey because they were never successfully contacted, which left a total 323 individuals eligible to participate in the survey. 323 individuals were qualified and contacted. Three hundred twenty-three participants completed the surveys, resulting in a response rate of 71.9% (Cole, 2018). About half of the respondents reported they had worked with a victim of male sexual exploitation. 41.8% said they had worked with a definite victim, and 36.5% reported that they had worked with a suspected victim (Cole, 2018).

Among the individuals who reported that they had worked exclusively with male victims, it was reported that 96% of the male victims were U.S citizens and lived in the same state where the professionals were employed. Individuals who said that they had worked with only female victims were estimated to be 92.4 % of the reported population (Cole,2018). A family member's exploitation was the norm for male and female victims, as reported by respondents who worked with both populations. One out of three cases for the male population said being

trafficked by a stranger, the percentage of being trafficked by a stranger was higher for female victims (Cole, 2018). According to Cole (2018), two of the typical pathways into exploitation for boys were being exploited in prostitution or pornography by a family member or engaging in prostitution to support oneself or pay for drugs. Sexual exploitation is reported less by males due to their culture or personal egos. Male victims not reporting their experiences contributes to social workers' lack of knowledge about the population of human trafficking.

The findings of Cole (2018) highlight the differences between female and male victims of human trafficking. According to (Gluck et al, 2014), a New York City study found that 45% of exploited children and youth were male, highlighting that solutions cannot only be framed around females (p. 5). Also, this article surveyed individuals who had a history of working directly with victims of human trafficking. Surveying individuals who work directly with victims of human trafficking will help provide accurate information for this dissertation's intent. The article lacked information received by male victims of human trafficking. The crime of human trafficking is usually focused on female victims which leaves limited information about male victims. In addition, about 25% of youth who are trafficked are LGBTQ. This article did not provide any information on the LGBTQ population.

Hossain et al. (2010) performed a qualitative study that was conducted where face-to-face interviews were held from January 2004 through June 2005 with women and adolescent girls aged 15-45 years. These girls and women had been trafficked and sexually exploited and were currently accessing post trafficking services provided by a non-governmental or international organization. A purposive sampling method was used within this study. Only the females who were placed in a secure setting were interviewed. The 204 girls and women in the study originally came from 12 different countries, nine in Eastern Europe and three in West

Africa (Hossain et al., 2010). Participants reported high levels of physical and sexual violence both before and during the trafficking experience. During the trafficking period, more than two-thirds of participants had been subjected to sexual violence, threats of harm to themselves, and persistently restricted freedom. Fifteen percent of participants had experienced child sexual abuse, and 25% had experienced sexual violence in adulthood before being trafficked (Hossain et al, 2010).

The findings of Hossain et al. (2010) highlights some of the traumas endured by human trafficking victims in various countries. The findings within this study exemplified the various traumas that the victims of human trafficking experience. Fifty-five percent of participants met the criteria for depression. 49% met the criteria for anxiety, and 77% met the criteria for PTSD (Hossain et al., 2010). Reported injuries during trafficking were significantly associated with depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Sexual violence during trafficking was associated with PTSD. Physical violence during trafficking was associated with anxiety symptoms. Participants who had been in the trafficking situation for at least six months had approximately two times the odds of having higher levels of depression and anxiety symptoms than those who had spent less time in trafficking (Hossain et al., 2010). The participants who had left human trafficking at least three months before their interviews were at a lower risk of depression and anxiety than those who left more recently. Restricted freedom during trafficking was associated with increased stress. Sexual violence during trafficking was associated with an increased risk of PTSD (Hossain et al., 2010). In addition to the experienced trauma, victims may be reluctant to share their experiences with social workers because they are trying to prevent themselves from re-living the trauma.

Hossain et al. (2010) did not demonstrate how victims within other countries share similarities with victims from the United States. This information would have aided with knowing if victims experienced similar traumas of human trafficking globally. The common misconception is that human trafficking only happens outside of America's borders or amongst its foreign residents is slowly being addressed at the state or federal level (Gluck et al, 2014, p.11). As stated by (Gluck et al, 2014), without nationwide training and special services provided for victims, human traffickers are successfully able to recruit.

The findings of the qualitative research performed by Botha and Warri (2020) sheds light on the characteristics of human trafficking victims. According to Botha and Warri (2020), the factors that make victims of trafficking vulnerable can be understood from an ecological perspective: individual, family, and community/ societal factors. Botha and Warri (2020) identified the following common characteristics that make trafficking victims vulnerable: they come from communities where there is poverty, a high crime rate, lack of opportunities, lack of family support, abuse, and family members working with traffickers. Victims of trafficking can be exploited in many ways, including physical labor, criminal, psychologically, and sexually, resulting in trauma, neglect, abuse, physical illnesses, and even death. Given the high levels of trauma during trafficking and other psychosocial challenges experienced post-rescue, social service provision has been identified as crucial for recovery (Botha and Warri. 2020). The characteristics of victims' play a huge role in social workers' proper knowledge about the population. A social worker cannot identify a victim of human trafficking if they are unaware of these characteristics.

The findings within this article present the identifying characteristics of human trafficking victims. According to Gluck et al (2014), abused children and youth may experience

feelings of betrayal, powerlessness, traumatic sexualization, and organization. Gluck et al (2014) also stated that the victims may link the experience of receiving affection with performing sexual acts if a particular trafficker abused them over a significant period. This article did not provide much information about how identifying human trafficking victims' features can assist social workers with adequate knowledge about the population. Developmental psychology, community psychology and later public health have been the social science disciplines most responsible for the conceptualization of developmental assets (Vimont, 2012, p. 500). Understanding a youth background and surrounding is essential to identifying victims of human trafficking. "It is best to approach the study of human experience from a perspective that integrates all facets of the individual and context in dynamic, mutually influencing relationships "(Skoranski, Coatsworth & Lunkenheimer, 2019, p. 2663).

Recruitment

A qualitative study was performed by Cole & Sprang (2018). This study used mixed methods sampling. It used a sample of 31 child welfare involved children referred for behavioral health assessment and treatment (Cole & Sprang, 2018). Data was extracted from clinical records representing a six-year period of 2011-2017 (Cole & Sprang, 2018). Within this sample, all the family members played the role of the trafficker. The mother of the victim equated to 64.5 percent (20), the father of the victim equated to 2.3 cases (10), other family members of the victim equated to 3.2 of cases (1) (Cole & Sprang, 2018). The key findings within this article noted that there was evidence of a non-familial member who assisted in the trafficking, including the partners' paramour, an acquaintance, or a stranger in just under one-half of the cases. In the cases where the mother was the trafficker, a second trafficker was involved. This second person could have been a paramour or acquaintance. About two-thirds

of the traffickers were criminally charged with a crime associated with human trafficking. In almost two-thirds of cases, victims have/had ongoing contact with the trafficker post identification of the trafficker (Cole & Sprang, 2018).

Identification of sex trafficking was most frequently antedated by a hospital emergency room report, child protective services, or discovered during a police investigation. The critical findings within Cole & Sprang (2018) were that multiple emergency room visits yielded no noted suspicion of sex trafficking or subsequent referral of victims (Cole & Sprang, 2018). In five of the cases, a law enforcement investigation of the traffickers' drug-related activity uncovered the sexual exploitation of a minor. Two out of the five cases involved a youth being a runaway. All the cases had child welfare involvement and had a primary finding of neglect, while only three cases found sexual abuse (Cole & Sprang, 2018).

A high percentage of cases involved parents who used drugs as the currency to profit from trafficking their children. In every case, the parent resided with the child during the exploitation period. Cole & Sprang (2018) reported that just under half of the population originated in rural areas, 16% originated in micropolitan areas (areas with a population less than 50,000 but more than 10,000), and 38.7% originated in metropolitan areas. In all cases, the caregiver used threats, intimidation, and parental authority to recruit and maintain the victim in prostitution, pornography, and strip club involvement (Cole & Sprang, 2018). Also, drug coercion was used to recruit and sustain victims within one-third of the cases.

Cole and Sprang (2018) noted the diverse tactics used by human traffickers. The most used tactics by traffickers to maintain control over the victims were force or coercion, fraud/emotional manipulation, alcohol or drugs, dependency, and material possessions by group (Cole & Sprang, 2018). Cole & Sprang (2018) further explained that some examples of

how male victims were lured into trafficking by force or coercion are that grandparents told brothers ‘If you want a place do what I want’, “threats and gang rape of one boy” (p, 428). The following is the interviewer’s documentation of a respondent explaining how a young boy complying with the adult family friend:” A male adult family friend forced a young boy to perform oral and anal sex. The boy was taken on trips, given large material items like a video game system, and the adult began to involve other men” (Cole, 2018, p.428). The interviewer’s documentation of a respondent’s explanation of how alcohol and drugs were used to maintain control over male victims stated that boys did not have a pimp. Instead, they were lured in with drugs. They were coerced and informed that what they were doing was illegal.

Consequently, they experienced shame because they did not identify with being gay or bisexual (Cole & Sprang, 2018). The most common mentioned vulnerability factor was compromised parenting/ unstable home. The second common vulnerability was material needs and substance misuse. Exploitation by known traffickers was the most common relationship type for the male victims of sexual exploitation (Cole & Sprang, 2018). The strong bond many victims have with their traffickers is often overlooked due to emotional manipulation and psychological coercion. Familial sex trafficking of minors was the most mentioned victim-trafficker relationship.

The findings of Cole & Sprang (2018) provided great depth about the role of family within human trafficking. In addition, the article provided methods of recruitment used to lure victims into human trafficking. Traffickers often referred to as pimps, recognize that children and youth in or transitioning out of foster care have vulnerabilities that make them easy prey (Gluck et al, 2014, p.3). Gluck et al (2014) also stated that reports indicate that traffickers will recruit children and youth near group homes, at bus stops, malls, and other places that young

people frequently visit. The article did not highlight if these traffickers were ever brought to justice for their crimes. Many traffickers are not held accountable for their crimes due to the relationships formed with their victims. Gluck et al (2014) states that traffickers were most frequently identified as “intimate partners” or men with whom young women are engaged in a sexual relationship, who initially gained the victim’s trust and dependence by providing emotional and economic security (p. 4).

A qualitative study of exploited boys and girls in New York found that 16% of the girls interviewed had been initiated into sex work by pimps. The relationships were characterized by love, loyalty, dependency, fear, and pain. (Hayes & Unwin, 2016). Purposive sampling was used within this study. A Chicago study of women and girls found that 29% of the female respondents had been recruited into prostitution by a boyfriend and 64% referred to currently being romantically involved with their pimp. It may be exceedingly difficult to offer alternative paths to young people in these circumstances without first assisting them to gain awareness (Hayes & Unwin, 2016). This could be challenging if insufficient time is available to professionals to create therapeutic relationships with children and young people.

Hayes & Unwin (2016) findings show the importance of traffickers needing to form a relationship with their victims to gain their victims’ trust. According to (Gluck et al, 2014) traffickers will take advantage of a young person’s low self-esteem and history of abuse, neglect, and rejection to make trafficking seem appealing and stable (p.3). This article did not provide any demographic information, such as ethnicity, about the recruited victims. An individual background and surrounding plays a huge role in their recruitment into human trafficking. According to (Gluck et al, 2014), a New York State study showed that up to 85 percent of trafficking victims had prior child welfare involvement. Gluck et al (2014) notes

that almost every victim of human trafficking has dealt with some form of trauma. In addition, homeless individuals are often identified as LGBTQ youth. This population represents 25% of the homeless population and have a higher incidence of being trafficked (Gluck et al, 2014).

Social Workers' Knowledge

According to Haley & Thompson (2018), the characteristics of human trafficking are not explicitly always known to a therapist or a health provider when working with victims. This empirical article uses secondary data to discuss the different struggles of professionals when dealing with human trafficking victims. The article's key findings noted that 60% of individuals whose roles are mandated reporters, such as social workers, teachers, school counselors, police officers, and other first responders, did not receive any training about identifying victims of human trafficking. Haley & Thompson (2018) explains that according to the United Nations, 49% of survivors of human trafficking are women, 18% are men, 12% are boys, and 21% are girls. Many professionals are unaware of the statistics of victims who are trafficked.

The findings of Haley & Thompson (2018) highlighted that many professionals did not receive adequate training on working with victims of human trafficking. This article helped highlight the reason why research on this matter is imperative. According to Gluck (2014), understanding and recognizing that several different factors lead to individuals becoming victims of sex trafficking can inform policy makers on what resources service providers need to identify victims. This article was secondary research in which it based its findings from the results of another source.

Human rights violations are both the root cause and outcome of human trafficking. Many social workers lack the proper knowledge about trafficking due to the challenges

presented through the victims. Botha and Warria (2020) highlights these challenges in this qualitative study. Social workers need to understand that victims are reluctant to provide self-disclosing information due to the impact of human trafficking. The victims were often treated inhumanely by their traffickers, and when they are rescued, they have multiple competing needs (Botha and Warria, 2020). Many victims fear the justice system because they were rescued from a situation where what they were doing was illegal, and the legal system often threatened them. Due to the victims' fear of the legal system, they may also fear any court support. Court support can mean assisting in preparing the victim for a court appearance or even accompanying the victim to court (Botha and Warria, 2020). The professionalization of victim protection in social work challenges practitioners to question the types of interventions available for victims and the mode of delivering these services. Gender-biased economic structures limit women's vulnerability to trafficking (Botha and Warria, 2020). The findings of this article highlight that the legal system may cause a victim to be less transparent. Victims' may have a fear of being stigmatized or placed under arrest for being trafficked. According to (Gluck et al, 2014), victims of sexual exploitation often find themselves prosecuted for prostitution, substance abuse and possession, and other criminal actions. This article did not highlight any required training or programs provided to assist the victims who may end up in horrible situations due to being trafficked. Gluck et al (2014) stated that victims are in dire need of housing, medical and mental treatment. Gluck et al (2014) also states that one of the reasons why victims stay with their traffickers due to lack of resources offered to them.

Kotrla (2010) shared the struggles faced by human trafficking victims through qualitative research. According to Kotrla (2010), one of the most obvious necessities and struggles encountered by victim service providers across the country is finding appropriate safe

housing for victims because too few protective shelters exist to fully meet this population's needs. There are shelters throughout the world for homeless victims and victims of domestic violence. The protection provided for human trafficking victims is at a drastically lower percentage than the average vulnerable population. It is imperative to know that human trafficking victims should be grouped with their population as their needs are different from any other group. According to Kotrla (2010), youth who have been involved in illegal activities, including those in commercial sex industries, have traditionally been viewed as offenders or delinquents. There are still some professionals who fail to see these individuals as victims.

The key findings of Kotrla (2010) discovered that social workers are faced with the challenge of preventing discrimination and shame among victims of human trafficking. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram play a massive role within today's society and serves as an outlet to degrade individuals who may be victims of human trafficking. When the sexual exploitation of women and children is turned into games, clothing, or music, social workers must be willing to take a stand (Kotrla, 2010). Gluck et al (2014), states that once individuals receive trauma from their immediate environment, they tend to form a close relationship with their trafficker. This positive feeling that victims have toward their abusers can be identified as Stockholm Syndrome. Stockholm Syndrome can be defined as a coping measure for those who cannot mentally process the trauma that they are experiencing (Gluck et al, 2014).

Professional Knowledge

Farrell & Pfeffer (2014) performed a purposive sampling qualitative study where data was collected as part of a project by the National Institute of Justice to examine the challenges

of investigating and prosecuting human trafficking in a targeted sample of twelve U.S counties. The researcher collected data from the case records of 140 closed human trafficking cases. Interviews were conducted with 166 individuals, 90 law enforcement officers, 29 prosecutors, 40 victim service providers, and seven other court officials or legislators (Farrell & Pfeffer, 2014). This study aimed to determine how human trafficking cases are identified and the various challenges professionals face while investigating the cases.

According to Farrell & Pfeffer (2014), it was discovered that local police are confused about what human trafficking is. In addition to confusion about the definition of human trafficking, the authority that was interviewed within the study lacked an investigative culture and institutional structure to support the identification of a broad range of human trafficking cases (Farrell & Pfeffer, 2014). Police respondents reported numerous challenges to human trafficking; one of the main challenges reported is the fear of victims to report their trafficker or report any crime due to being arrested. This leads the police to approach human trafficking like they will approach any traditional crime.

The findings of Farrell & Pfeffer (2014) highlighted the lack of information about human trafficking among law enforcement. Police mislabel many victims, and often their case is overlooked. According to Gluck et al (2014), while states are slowly recognizing that children and youth who are sexually exploited should not be treated as criminals, minors in juvenile court may not be properly screened and identified as victims of sex trafficking. This article did not demonstrate the various effects that law enforcement's lack of knowledge has on human trafficking victims. Gluck et al (2014) highlighted that legal professionals who work with juveniles should be trained to identify trafficked children and youth and given training

and information on housing, medical treatments, transportation, and employment opportunities that are available for victims (p.6).

Torres & Villacampa (2017) performed a qualitative study researching criminal exploitation. Purposive Sampling was used within this study. The sample consisted of 37 professionals who either worked in the criminal justice system or within victim services. The commonality between all participants was that everyone recognized sexual trafficking as the most common form of trafficking. Trafficking for labor was the less known form of human trafficking. Trafficking for criminal exploitation was only listed as a form of trafficking in 15 of the interviews. Only 3 participants out of the professionals were knowledgeable of the Spanish framework protocol of protecting human trafficking victims. Out of the 37 professionals who were interviewed, only seven stated that they had received sufficient training on human trafficking and 17 professionals indicated that they had not received training or received it in a limited way. Eleven of the interviewees stated that they received training about human trafficking, but the training presented shortcomings and limitations. According to Torres & Villacamp (2017), the lack of professional training has led to low awareness of the reality of human trafficking for criminal exploitation. As a result, the strategies pursued in the field of law enforcement are not oriented towards finding the victims of this form of trafficking but rather almost exclusively prioritize victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Torres & Villacamp (2017) discusses that there are various stereotypes about victims of human trafficking. The different types of judgment and stigmas associated with this population contribute to the victims' trauma. The interviews showed that the professionals cherished stereotypes about a human trafficking victim that conditioned their ability to identify

such victims (Torres & Villacampa, 2017). The interviewees within this study associated human trafficking victims with an image of an undocumented and foreign woman.

The findings of Torres & Villacampa (2017) highlighted criminal exploitation and the lack of information professionals have about the type of trafficking. Minors who are sexually exploited should not be brought up on criminal charges (Gluck et al, 2014). Minors are not of legal age to consent to sexual behavior and should be provided with educational resources instead of criminal penalties. This article did not contain sufficient information about labor trafficking and the effect on its' victims. Labor trafficking is often minimized as a form of trafficking. Currently there is limited information about labor trafficking.

In the qualitative study of Farrell & Delateur (2016), the interviewees reviewed the closed case records of human trafficking investigations conducted by law enforcement in 12 sampled counties. Purposive sampling was used in this study. They completed 166 in-depth interviews with police, prosecutors, victim service providers, and court officials to investigate and prosecute these cases. Suspected human traffickers were more likely to be charged with either a human trafficking offense or other types of charges when the case had physical, demonstrative, or digital evidence (Farrell & Delateur, 2016). Many prosecutors evaluate evidence based on how they believe the judge will perceive it. In state-level cases, law enforcement may be using arrest to coerce victims' cooperation. Victims are arrested in 59% of all state-level cases. Police indicated that they often had to arrest sex trafficking victims because there was no safe and secure place to house victims, particularly minors (Farrell & Delateur, 2016). It was also reported that if shelters were available, they usually consisted of a youth shelter or shelter for victims of domestic violence that was unsecured (Farrell & Delateur, 2016).

Various interviewees admitted that they had to use different tactics to get victims of human trafficking to comply. A law enforcement official explained that arresting victims was necessary to get victims to turn against their trafficker and provide information that led to the successful prosecution of pimps and other individuals who may be a part of a trafficking network (Farrell & Delateur, 2016). A prosecutor stated, “You can’t get there (trafficking charge) without breaking a few eggs at some point in time you’ve got to be willing to charge some of these girls with prostitution or charge some people at a lower level to move up” (Farrell & Delateur, 2016, p. 12). Another finding within this study is that state prosecutors utilized human trafficking charges in only one-fifth of human trafficking cases. State and local prosecutors often operated on their own with little or no legal guidance source (Farrell & Delateur, 2016). Also, many state prosecutors are unaware of their own state’s human trafficking laws.

The findings of Farrell & Delateur (2016) highlighted the lack of assistance that victims of human trafficking receive from law enforcement. Victims are often penalized for their crime instead of being viewed as the victim. Law enforcement does not have the proper training needed to attend to the needs of this population. Minors will continue to be trafficked if a demand exist for sexual exploitation (Gluck et al, 2014). There needs to be increased efforts to enforce trafficking provisions and harsher penalties against traffickers (Gluck et al, 2014).

Stigmas/ Characteristics of victims

The stigma of victims associated with human trafficking places a strain on professionals’ knowledge. Grant-Smith, Long & Mollen (2012) descriptive quantitative study examined college women’s attitudes towards sex workers. Probability sampling was used within this study. Three hundred nine students from a midsize Southwestern University for

women chose to partake in this study (Smith et al., 2012). The instrument used within the survey was questionnaires, which asked demographics questions along with attitude scale questions. Recruitment for the study was through a flyer placed on the blackboard for students. A total of 226 participants were included in the sample. Students who participated in the study received extra credit toward their courses. Social desirability, hostility toward women, and knowing someone in the sex work industry predicted 12% of the variance in attitudes that sex workers are responsible for sexually transmitted infections (Grant Smith et al., 2012). 10% of the variance in attitudes that sex workers are unattractive and 7% of the variance in attitudes that laws prohibiting sex work would decrease other crime (Grant Smith et al, 2012).

Analyses further indicated that hostility toward women significantly and positively predicted a level of agreement that sex workers are responsible for sexually transmitted infections and a level of understanding that sex workers are unattractive (Grant smith et al, 2012). The first hypothesis tested was to determine if participants who knew someone who works within the sex industry would disagree with stereotypical attitudes toward sex workers. This hypothesis was proven to be true. The second hypothesis predicted that participants with high levels of high hostility toward women would agree with stereotypical attitudes about sex workers. This also was proven to be accurate. The current study found that 28.9% of the sample indicated that they know or have known a sex worker. Women attending college become sex workers to aid their tuition, and some are often trafficked. This creates a perplexing atmosphere for professionals. These women are fearful of disclosing the illegal activity that they are engaged in with professionals because of the risk that they will lose their school tuition.

The findings of (Grant Smith et al., 2012) highlighted that stereotypes about women contribute toward their willingness to speak with professionals about the lifestyle in which they live. This article demonstrates that women with a history of prostitution or trafficking are held in low regard. Many professionals within the legal system consider this population to be prostitutes and not as important as victims from other populations. Grant Smith et al. (2012) failed to speak about the attitudes towards men who are sex workers. There is a lack of representation about males who re trafficked. This study exemplifies that majority of the research performed about his population is centered around female victims.

According to Botha & Warria (2020), factors that make victims of trafficking vulnerable can be understood from an ecological perspective to include individual, family, and community/ societal factors. Botha & Warria (2020) identified the following common characteristics that make trafficking victims vulnerable: they come from communities where there is poverty, a high crime rate, lack of opportunities, lack of family support, abuse, and family members working with traffickers. Victims of trafficking can be exploited in many ways, including physical labor, criminal, psychologically, and sexually, resulting in trauma, neglect, abuse, physical illnesses, and even death. Given the high levels of trauma during trafficking and other psychosocial challenges experienced post-rescue, social service provision has been identified as crucial for recovery (Botha& Warria, 2020). The characteristics of the victims of human trafficking play a huge role in social workers' proper knowledge about the population. A social worker cannot identify a victim of human trafficking if they are unaware of these characteristics.

Lack of services/ training

The qualitative study of Heffron, Nsonwu & Busch- Armendariz (2014) stated that social workers' attention to the coordination of services, understanding of trust-building, and cultural competency provides a thoughtful and thorough catalyst for survivor restoration. Purposive sampling was used within this study. Fifty-five interviews were collected, and data were analyzed using qualitative iterative processes (Heffron et al., 2014). The most crucial milestone affecting services to survivors of human trafficking was the coordination and delivery of services by the social worker through the single point of contact model. Before developing this service delivery model, communication between professionals was complex and fragmented (Heffron et al., 2014). A survivor of human trafficking noted her frustrations with receiving services. The survivor stated that she was aware of making appointments and asking for time off at her job. The survivor said that everyone spoke in English whenever she called agencies for assistance, but she only spoke Spanish. The survivor explained that they were not knowledgeable about what hospital to go to, and they were not confident enough to contact their caseworker.

The findings of this article demonstrate the lack of training and services professionals own. According to the NASW (2018), cultural competency introduces language and communication to address a range of communication issues including limited English proficiency, low literacy, and disabilities. Bilingual services should be offered to victims. Heffron et al. (2014) did not highlight the correlation between coordination of services and victims of human trafficking. There is a higher risk of individuals being trafficked if they do not have access to the proper services. Gluck et al (2014) states clear contacts should be dedicated within agencies to answer questions about what services are available to trafficked victims.

Identification of victims

Hayes & Unwin (2016) qualitative research focuses on gang-related violence within the United States and the United Kingdom in this qualitative research. The importance of the relational context has likewise been identified in a study of gangs from the USA (Hayes & Unwin, 2016). The key findings noted that girls were sexually categorized by how they relate sexually to the gang members. Girls perceived to be receptive to casual sex forfeited their right to dignity, respect, and sexual self-determination. Research being shared internationally will help discover the training and educational literature and enable social workers to be more equipped to identify victims of human trafficking.

The findings of Hayes & Unwin (2016) highlight stereotypes against girls within the U.S and UK. As stated previously, women are often presumed as derogatory and often stereotyped if they are associated with human trafficking. Hayes & Unwin (2016) shared that both countries share the same view of women who are trafficked. The article did not distinguish the differences between stereotypes of girls and boys within the U.S and UK. As highlighted previously, there remains minimum literature about male victims of human trafficking. It remains unclear if male victims are held on the same stature as female victims associated with human trafficking.

Hodge (2008) qualitative research maximizes the concerns of human trafficking. Hodge (2008) discovered that one of the most challenging issues in providing services to victims of trafficking is their invisibility (Hodge, 2008). This invisibility is nurtured by traffickers, victims, and even some service providers. Hodge (2008) further explains that some service providers have made deals with pimps in exchange for being allowed to disseminate condoms. In return, providers agree to ignore prostituted children and refrain from informing

women about services that would enable them to escape prostitution. In the United States, nine and ten-year-old trafficked girls, forced to service up to 35 men an hour in deplorable conditions, have been deliberately ignored by providers (Hodge, 2008). In addition, the penalties for traffickers are not strict. Due to the lack of consequences for traffickers, human trafficking has increased within the United States. The penalties for trafficking inanimate objects such as narcotics and weapons exceed those for trafficking living human beings (Hodge, 2008). It was challenging for victims to testify against their abuser if they are released from prison soon after their arrest. Visibility is essential when working with victims of human trafficking.

The findings of Hodge (2008) share a relevant point about the invisibility of victims. Many victims choose to stay hidden, making it difficult for social workers to identify them or their needs as victims of human trafficking. There are several reasons why victims choose to remain unidentified. These reasons include fear of their trafficker, lack of connection to a social worker, no access to resources and fear of going to jail for being entangled in the crime of human trafficking. Hodge (2008) did not provide any insight about the possible solutions to resolve this global issue. Gluck et al (2014) stated that work and collaboration between the state and federal level needs to take place in order to create more programming and severe legal consequences for the traffickers.

In the study Warria, Nel & Triegard (2015), a qualitative research approach was used. Purposive sampling was conducted based on the study participants' knowledge of trafficking and child protection. The total sample of study participants was 22 key informants, seven social workers, seven child protection advocacy officers, three victim empowerment practitioners, three antitrafficking researchers, one lawyer and one detective specializing in police services

(Warria et al, 2015). The research established that the child who was trafficked socio-economic background and personal characteristics determine the level and intensity of the relationship that the child and trafficker have (Warria et al., 2015). In addition, rapid responses to trafficked children, including their identification, are hampered by a lack of awareness of the phenomenon among frontline practitioners, such as social workers. This makes initial identification challenging, as these professionals might know the trafficking definition. Still, they might have difficulty applying it in their practice with children who are presumed to be trafficked (Warria et al., 2015). Professionals may not have the proper knowledge of the various indicators that they should be searching. Professionals often struggled to recognize abuse and exploitation. Knowledge manifestation of the social issue and its consequences are imperative if a social worker is to support the trafficked victim through their healing and recovering effectively (Warria et al., 2015).

The findings of Warria et al. (2015) highlight the lack of training that professionals have about the population of human trafficking. Many professionals are unaware of the different characteristics or signs that they should recognize when identifying victims. Agencies need to provide effective protocol and screening tools to their staff to aid with the identification of victims engaged in human trafficking. As stated by Gluck et al (2014), recognizing that several different factors lead to individuals being trafficked can inform policymakers on what resources service providers need to identify victims.

What we know

Within the presented research, we know that human trafficking is a crime that affects victims globally. The trauma of individuals who have been involved with human trafficking is often unrecognized. There are minimum services for this population, especially male victims

of human trafficking. Traffickers seduce their victims with a grooming process. Also, traffickers often recruit teenagers and victims with a history of child welfare involvement. Many victims of human trafficking are compelled by their family members, including their parents. Victims are often looking for love or a fast way to earn money when they are trafficked. Many cases of human trafficking are not reported due to a feeling of fear and shame from the victim. We know that professionals have a lack of knowledge about the population of human trafficking and the different traumas/mental diagnoses that are associated with it.

Gaps in Literature

Male vs female relevance

It has been proven that females are at a higher risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. However, males are victims of human trafficking as well. There are fewer services offered to males within the population. According to Cole (2018), a significant challenge in identifying and providing boys' services is that service providers and law enforcement often fail to recognize male juveniles engaged in sexual exploitation. The literature gap shows that social workers and other professionals need additional training about how to identify male victims of human trafficking.

Lack of research performed with social workers

There are various professions presented within the results of this literature review. These professions included police officers, lawyers, and prosecutors. A limited number of studies focused on social workers working with victims of human trafficking and how the trauma of the victim influences their practice. This demonstrates that there is a gap in the literature. According to (Haley & Thompson, 2018), the need for additional social work education and training about human trafficking is at an all-time high.

Lack of knowledge about the traumas and impacts of human trafficking.

One common characteristic of children and youth who have been sexually trafficked is a history of child abuse, which includes mental, physical, and sexual abuse (Gluck et al, 2014). Many individuals who are trafficked normalize the trauma that they experience due to their history of abuse. Victims of human trafficking suffer from PTSD, depression, and other mental health illnesses. Many professionals including social workers are unable to identify the traumatic impacts associated with human trafficking.

What we do not know

There is no representation of work performed within this literature between social workers and victims of human trafficking. Within the 20 articles used within this review, less than one-third of the articles focused on social workers' knowledge and their work with victims who were psychologically impacted by human trafficking. This literature review lacks information about the influence that social workers can have on human trafficking. Traffickers typically target a particular race and economic group. This literature does not provide sufficient information about the different ethnicities that are trafficked. The research does not highlight the various mental disorders that can develop while a victim is being trafficked. According to Hossain et al. (2010, p, 1), due to the often extreme sexual, physical, and psychological abuses associated with this form of gender-based violence, women and girls who are trafficked and sexually exploited through forced sex work in other circumstances such as domestic servitude is a population of particular concern for mental health specialist. As highlighted in the research, this population will need advanced services from social workers. While the research points out the specific need for social workers and social policy, it diminishes social workers' value by

underrepresenting their importance with this vulnerable population. The research fails to include the psychological impacts that the aftermath of human trafficking has on a victim.

Implications

The literature gaps suggest that there is limited research testing social workers' knowledge about the psychological impact of victims of human trafficking and its' aftermath. Social workers are advocates for social injustice, and they must be provided with the necessary skills to aid this population. The under-identification of child victims of trafficking has been reported to be a challenge globally (Warria et al, 2015). It is further recommended that research be performed to detail the different ethnicities and racial groups of victims within human trafficking. The research lacked information about the different services offered to victims of human trafficking. The research also highlighted that there are more shelters provided to victims of domestic violence than there are for victims with a history of human trafficking. These gaps implicate the need for research to be performed with social workers. Additional research will result in proper education for social workers, other funds, and advocacy for victims. This study aims to empirically address the gap of social workers' lack of knowledge about the psychological impacts of the aftermath of human trafficking by providing a response to the following question: 1) What knowledge do social workers possess about the psychological impact of the aftermath that human trafficking has on its victims?

Conclusion

Research provided has shown that human trafficking is prevalent and is becoming more prominent at a fast rate. There is a misconception that human trafficking victims are easy to identify. Many cases of human trafficking remain unidentified. There is insufficient information on the issue of human trafficking and more attention needs to be placed on this

horrific crime. Many social workers do not have the proper knowledge or training to identify victims of human trafficking. Therefore, there is limited exploration of human trafficking from a psychological view. Social workers must become mindful of the psychological impact that the aftermath of human trafficking has on its victims’.

This concludes the literature review. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework of this dissertation.

Chapter Four-Theoretical Framework

Theory is an essential component of social work. Social Work Theory guides the creation of social workers. This study will utilize standpoint theory and social constructivism as a guide for social workers' knowledge of victims of human trafficking. This section will examine how Social Constructivism and Standpoint Theory can positively set the stage for working with victims of human trafficking. Social Constructivism will explore how knowledge among social workers' influence their work with victims of human trafficking. Standpoint Theory was used as the second theory to describe how the power struggle between victims and social workers' contribute to the barrier of a social worker creating a therapeutic alliance with a victim. This theory will discuss the struggles of the relationship between a social worker and a victim of human trafficking.

Theory

Social Work Theory is imperative to the practice of social work. It professionalizes the field and differentiates social work from those that provide non-scientific methods of help (Gilbert, 2019). Social Work Theory provides social workers with the conceptual and theoretical tools to be competent in their approaches (Gilbert, 2019). Utilizing social work theories can help social workers develop a baseline starting point for treatment and goals. Social work theories will help assess, understand a client's situation and feelings, and predict their behaviors. It can aid in developing a treatment plan. It organizes practice work around clear steps and interventions to reduce the many ways in which therapy can meander or become chaotic (Gilbert, 2019). The theory provides the social worker with the theoretical tools and frameworks for treatment. Social Constructivism was used as the primary theory,

and the Standpoint theory was used as the secondary theory to support the research within this dissertation.

Social Constructivism

Social Constructivism is a theory of knowledge that holds that characteristics typically thought to be immutable and solely biological such as gender, race, and sexuality, are human definition and interpretation products shaped by cultural and historical contexts (Subramaniam, 2010). Social constructivist approach to understanding the world, challenge the essentialist of biological determinist. It provides meaning to how we think about race, gender, and sexuality. Essentialism is the idea that persons or groups' characteristics are significantly influenced by biological factors and are therefore largely similar in all human cultures and historical periods (Galbin, 2014). A fundamental assumption of essentialism is that “a given truth is a necessary natural part of the individual and object in question” (Galbin, 2014, p. 85). Essentialism guides the contextual knowledge of social workers. To understand human trafficking and how victims are subjected to it, one must understand the victims' background and biological components.

Essentialism typically relies on a biological determinist theory of identity (Galbin, 2014). Biological determinism can be defined as a general theory, which holds that a group's biological or genetic makeup shapes its social, political, and economic destiny (Galbin, 2014). Things that are thought to be natural or essential in the world are socially constructed. Also, the social construction of difference occurs within relations of power and privilege (Galbin, 2014). For example, a victim becoming engaged in human trafficking may be generational. It may serve as generational financial support for the family,

Key Concepts

Reality is defined as a quality appertaining to the phenomena that we recognize as having independent of our own. Knowledge is defined as the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Social order is a human production; the necessity for social order stems from human biological constitution (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Externalization, objectivation and internalization are three concepts within social constructivism. Externalization refers to society being a human product. Objectivation refers to society being an objective reality. Internalization views a person as a product of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This illustrates that victims of human trafficking are a product of society.

Ethical decision making

A social constructivism model may appeal to practitioners as an alternative perspective for framing ethical decisions (Cottone, 2001). First, the model may provide a distinct view of the decision-making process. It would be distinctive in that it would be based purely on a relational view of reality. Other models tend to portray the decision maker as a psychological entity making the decision alone or within some social context (Cottone, 2001). A second rationale for developing a social constructivism model is that it may lead to empirical testing of psychologically based ethical decision-making models (Cottone, 2001). A constructivist approach provides a competitive perspective to more psychologically based models. In addition (Cottone, 2001) states because the model is parsimonious and does not involve complex steps or stages, it may be easier for counselors to implement during the stressful times that accompany an ethical challenge.

Social constructivism differentiates from other theories of right and wrong. The social constructivism approach defines the view within a social consensual domain as true within

that social context (Cottone, 2001). Social constructivist ethical decision-making means that the professional must avoid linkages of vulnerability and cultivate linkages of professional responsibility (Cottone, 2001). Relationships should be chosen wisely and in accord with the larger socio- legal consensus that pervades professional practice (Cottone, 2001). Social Constructivism ethical decision making is not classical psychological decision making. It is linkage to professional culture.

Constructivism is a philosophical position, in which knowledge or mental images are the creations of the observer interacting with the environment (Dean, 2010). According to Dean 2010), we cannot know reality apart from our interpretations of it. Social constructivism derives from social psychology. Constructivists believe that meanings arise in particular settings or traditions. Communities and cultures of which we are members determine the different ways that we view the world. As social workers' dealing with victims of human trafficking, our knowledge is based on the images we have of sex workers. Our knowledge is based upon textbooks and literature within our graduate professions.

Constructivists believe that words both name and shape our experiences of the world. The word "assessment" derived from medical and research models, implies the existence of an objective problem or condition (Dean 2010, p. 128). Using a naturalistic description, we can say that therapy begins with a meeting between individuals who are trying to articulate the reason for their meeting (Dean, p. 129. In a therapeutic inquiry, both therapist and client are in quest of understanding an elusive objective. Through understanding different clients and their situations, therapists expand their own experiences and self-knowledge (Dean 2010, p. 129).

The constructivist approach is distinguished by the emphasis on collaboration, open discussion, the use of different forms of questioning, and an attempt to agree on goals (Dean, 2010 p. 134). According to a constructivist view, we are not discovering the nature of the client; but instead creating a view of the problem together with the client (Dean 2010, p. 134). Constructivism draws our attention to multiple theoretical perspectives and the viability of multiple interpretations (Dean, 2010 p. 134). In a constructivist view, theoretical positions are fictions used to organize and make sense of clients' accounts (Dean, 2010 p.134). Constructivism reminds us of the limits of our ability to know and the powerful influences of our ways of knowing (Dean 2010, p. 134). Our theories and experiences have gradually shaped us, and who we are shapes our experiences (p. 134).

Social Constructivism and Grounded Theory

Social Constructivism and qualitative research are known to work towards obtaining knowledge within the study. The ten distinctive qualities of qualitative research include the essence of constructivism. Some of these qualities include “the absence of truth, the importance of context”, “the importance of meaning”, “participant-researcher relationship,” and “flexibility of the research design “(Roller & Lavrakas, 2015, p.2). Social Constructivism aids the researcher with obtaining research that is informative, knowledge-based, and transparent.

Grounded theory is a form of qualitative research that develops its theory from the data received from participants. It is a theory based on knowledge and the perception of reality. Social Constructivism is based on assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning (Dean, 2010). Social constructivism emphasizes the significance of culture and context in

understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on the understanding (Dean, 2010).

Grounded theory and social constructivism are both essential within this research because it helps develop a hypothesis based on the realities and knowledge of the participants within the study. Social constructivism guided the use of open-ended questions and aided the researcher with developing a hypothesis from the research. Social constructivism assisted with the transparency of social workers opinions within this research.

According to Verenikina (2010), social constructivism explains that the human mind is constructed through a subject's interaction with the world and is an attribute of the relationship between subject and the object. This theory molded the reasoning as to the correlation between social workers knowledge of the trafficked population and their interactions/attitudes toward the population. As stated in the literature review, several professionals have constructed attitudes about the population. Law enforcement such as police and lawyers, charge the population with crimes or prostitution because they believe that the population is voluntarily prostituting. Research also states that college students and professional adults also believe that people who are trafficked are sex workers. Prior research has proven that social workers have stereotypes about a human trafficking victim that conditioned their ability to identify such victims (Torres & Villacampa, 2017). Professionals associated human trafficking victims with an image of an undocumented and foreign woman. In addition, victims are reluctant to tell anyone about their experiences because of the different stigmas associated with their population and the possible views a person may hold after they are informed. Social Constructivism will lead the research to examine how fragile this population is and the reasoning why there is a lack of resources.

Relevance to Surveys

Social constructivism as the primary theory within this literature guided the type of qualitative research and the questions on the survey. Social constructivism focused on the knowledge and reality of the participants within the study. Constructivist grounded theory is a type of qualitative research that has the theory of social constructivism principles embedded within it (Khan,2014). It is an approach that establishes new theory based on the data obtained from participants within the study (Khan, 2014). Questions within the study were guided around the participants views and knowledge of human trafficking.

Standpoint Theory

The secondary theoretical framework within this literature is Standpoint Theory. Standpoint theory explained the power and social struggle within human trafficking. Standpoint Theory identifies a power differential between a group in power and an oppressed group (Medina-Minton, 2018). Medina-Minton (2018) also mentions that standpoint theory provides a theoretical framework to explore how oppressed groups experience their position and help identify a way to challenge the group in power. Standpoint theory aims to inform social science practice, positively change society, and provide another view than the dominant influence. Standpoint theory requires that all research specifically identify the intended beneficiaries of any project (Swigonski,1994). Social services researchers take on the role of agents of change. Swigonski (1994) states that research base of social work needs both passion and objectivity. Standpoint theory provides an avenue for achieving profoundly relevant and impassioned objectivity that honors and celebrates cultural diversity with a scholarly rigor.

Human trafficking is an organized crime that takes away the freedom of its victims. Many victims of human trafficking are minors, and they are powerless to their traffickers. Current professional literature explores the rights of the child and the need to protect children as a vulnerable population, as well as the history of the formation of advocacy groups for the rights of children (Medina-Minton, 2018). Standpoint theory was developed by exploring the psychological and historical concept of the master-slave relationship. Differences between the slave and the master influenced the information and the knowledge that the slaves received (Medina-Minton, 2018). For individuals within each sub-group, their identity and shared experience are shaped by the differential in power. For a child, this intranet group identity is shaped by power, or status is also evident (Medina-Minton, 2018).

Relevance of research

Social work practitioners want professional research to be relevant, contribute to understanding human behavior in the social environment, and improve practice effectiveness (Swigonski, 1994). Social work researchers want professional research to be rigorous and to meet the highest standards of science (Swigonski, 1994). Standpoint theory provides a vehicle to move social work research and practice toward a synthesis of relevance and rigor (Swigonski, 1994). This theory offers an alternative approach to knowledge justification, good science, and leads to a resolution and the commitment to rigor in professional practice and research (Swigonski, 1994).

Social work practitioners and researchers are human observers with personal and social backgrounds who need to recognize the role that research play in creating rather than merely discovering social phenomena (Swigonski, 1994). Social work commitment to working individuals as they interact in society requires an emphasis on contexts, perhaps

more than any other profession (Swigonski, 1994). A social work approach to knowledge must rigorously affirm that we live in a scientific society.

Swigonski (1994) noted that there are several similar characteristics between social work and feminist world views. Some of the similarities are the development of all human beings through service, the intrinsic worth and dignity of all human beings, the inherent importance of active participation in society, the necessity for removing obstacles to self-realization, and the prevention and elimination of discrimination in services, work, employment, and everyday human needs. The standpoint theory adheres to the ethics within social work. It is supported by the ethic of social justice in which social workers are advocating for equality in all oppressed populations. The standpoint theory highlights the cycle of power that oppressed populations encounter. have over their victims. In addition, it highlights the differential of power between social workers and victims which contributes to the barrier between the two groups. Once a person feels powerless, they tend to remain in a vulnerable state.

Standpoint theory and grounded theory

Researchers cannot engage in research without building on prior theoretical knowledge (Albert, Mylopoulos & Laberge, 2019, p. 832). “The experience and lives of marginalized peoples, as he understands them, provide appropriate research agenda for feminist researchers (Allen, 2010, p. 7). Standpoint theory is a feminist theory which simply states that knowledge is based on social position. Grounded theory is guided by the knowledge and the data received within the study. Standpoint theory will explore the population of human trafficking through the lens of an oppressed population. Through standpoint theory, the victims live in the truth of what is socially normal to them. (Albert et

al,2019) states that constructivists advocate recognizing prior knowledge and theoretical preconceptions and subjecting them to rigorous scrutiny (p.832).

In addition to social constructivism, the standpoint theory will help guide the methodology of grounded theory by allowing the participants within the study to explain what their reality is about the power struggle and barriers to connectedness between a victim and a social worker. The standpoint theory will further support the grounded theory approach by allowing a theory to be produced from the knowledge and data from the participants within the study.

Relevance to Survey

Standpoint Theory was connected to the surveys by discovering whether social workers are aware about the power struggle between the victims and their abusers. This theoretical approach will assist with examining what factors within the victims bring about the fear of their abusers. In addition, it will assist with understanding why the victims are reluctant to talk about their experience within human trafficking and form a relationship with social workers'. Lastly, it will provide clarity with determining the reason why victims believe this crime is validated within their lives. This theory was embedded and explored through the open-ended questions on the survey.

Conclusion

In summary, Social Constructivism and the standpoint theory are two theoretical approaches that support this study with the human trafficking population. Social Constructivism is a theory of knowledge in which knowledge is developed through interactions with others. Standpoint Theory is a theoretical approach that argues experience stems from social position and power. Social constructivism will explain how social workers

obtaining the proper knowledge of the population will provide greater insight into the population. Standpoint theory will assist with outlining the reasoning of why the oppressed population of human trafficking remains unidentified and less resourceful.

This concludes chapter four. The next chapter will discuss the research questions.

Chapter Five- Research Question

Formulating a research question is a fundamental skill necessary in conducting research (Neri de Souza et al., 2016). Also, Neri de Souza et al. (2016) note that “the skill of developing a research question is even more sensitive when conducting qualitative research, given the interpretive, holistic, and open nature that these methodological approaches can take” (p. 10). The research questions play an important role within the study. The research question helps guide the research and assists with formulating which direction the study will go. Ee-Ming (2005) stated that “identifying a research question and refining it is of paramount importance in any research undertaking” (p. 24). Ee-Ming (2005) also noted that “to find the right research question requires that we understand what we are asking about and know to keep the question simple enough to be answerable but challenging enough to be interesting” (p. 25).

A formulation of a question can often be considered more important than knowledge of its solution. “When generating a research question, we need to ask what it is that we are studying and plan how it will be studied” (Ee-Ming, 2005, p. 25). We will also need to ask if the expected outcomes from a research question will help find new knowledge or clinically applicable (Ee-Ming, 2005, p. 25). It is imperative to set goals for research objectives after research questions are created. According to Ee-Ming (2005), the objectives should be specific and reflect the research question that we are asking.

To obtain clarity about the knowledge that social workers have of the psychological impact among human trafficking victims, the following research question was explored:

- 1) What knowledge do social workers possess about the psychological impact of the traumas of human trafficking victims?

For this qualitative study, the following research questions were used to explore the importance of social workers' knowledge of the psychological impact of human trafficking.

Study Sub-questions

- 1: Where do social workers learn about human trafficking?
- 2: What do social workers know about the psychological differences between female and male victims of human trafficking?
- 3: What do social workers know about the occurrence of human trafficking?
- 4: How do social workers screen their clients for human trafficking?

This section presented the research questions that will guide this study. The following section will explain the research methodology.

Chapter Six- Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology that was utilized within this research. The first part of this chapter will discuss the rationale for this study. The second part of this chapter will discuss the study participants, data collection, and analysis. This chapter will conclude with the ethical considerations of the study.

Research Design

Qualitative research is believed to be more effective when exploring views and experiences of individuals. It provides a deeper understanding of the participants within the study. It is imperative to understand the experiences and knowledge of social workers who have worked with victims of human trafficking. Using a qualitative approach will allow a deeper understanding of professionals' knowledge. Also, the theories of Social Constructivism and standpoint theory are best used with qualitative research. Social Constructivism is a theory of knowledge and communication that examines the world's constructions that form assumptions about reality. Social Constructivism assists qualitative research by developing the hypothesis after all knowledge is attained. Furthermore, the empirical articles quoted within this dissertation used qualitative research.

“The qualitative stance assumes that the social locations of the research participants influence the construction of knowledge” (Silverstein et al., 2006, p. 351). Silverstein et al. (2006) stated that the goal of research inquiry is to document the subjective experiences of the participants in a way that reflects the diversity of their lived experiences (p. 351).

Qualitative research within this study is useful for researchers inside and outside academia. Qualitative research will offer more of an in-depth analysis of social workers' experiences in their work with human trafficking victims.

According to Khan (2014), qualitative research is based on three paradigms. A paradigm can be defined as framework that explains how the world is perceived. Paradigms are based on three perspectives. The perspectives are epistemology, ontology, and methodology. The epistemology perspective is based on how knowledge is acquired. (Khan, 2014). The ontology perspective is concerned about the nature of reality. The methodology perspective is concerned with process and method through which the researcher acquires knowledge about the world (Khan, 2014).

Qualitative Research Method

Grounded Theory

A grounded approach is used when the researcher goal is to develop or adopt an existing theory based on the data collected. “Studies that incorporate grounded theory approach are a step toward conceptual thinking and theory building rather than empirical testing of the theory” (Khan, 2014, p.224). In grounded theory, the research questions and literature review lead and support for conceptual thinking and building (Khan, 2014). Within grounded theory the researcher develops a theory embedded within the data from the research. Grounded theory looks at the views of the participants rather than their experiences.

“The qualitative research approach “grounded theory” was developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser & Anselm Strauss” (Khan, 2014, p. 226). (Khan, 2014) stated that grounded theory can be defined as the theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (p.226). Conceptual thinking and theory building is interrelated with the qualitative research method approach within grounded theory (Khan, 2014. P. 224). In grounded theory, the collection of data and theory stand in close

relation to one another. Since grounded theory is drawn from data, it is likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action (Khan, 2014).

“A constructivist grounded theory distinguishes between the real and the true “(Khan, 2014, p.228). The constructivist approach addresses human realities and assumes the existence of real worlds (Khan, 2014). The constructivist grounded theory assumes what we take as real, as objective knowledge and truth, is based upon our perspective (Khan, 2014, p. 228). The researcher within grounded theory constructs an image of reality that is not necessarily the truth. As stated by (McLeod, 2001),” we can never achieve a complete “scientific” understanding of the human world. The best we can do is to arrive at a truth that makes a difference that opens up new possibilities for understanding” (p. 4).

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions on inquiry that explore a social or human problem (Khan, 2014, p.225), Khan (2014) states that in qualitative research, the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analysis words, reports details of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p.225). The key to qualitative research and grounded theory is to generate enough data so that the illuminate patterns, concepts, categories, properties, and dimensions of the given phenomena can emerge (Thomson, 2011, p.46). The goal of this researcher is to achieve theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation occurs in data when: 1) there is no new relevant data that seems to emerge regarding a category. 2) The category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation and 3) the relationships among categories are well established and validated (Thompson, 2011, p.47).

Sampling, recruitment, and data collection Methods

Purposive sampling was the primary sampling method used within this research. A specific population was sought out to gain an understanding of the knowledge of social workers. Purposive sampling involves selecting certain units or cases based on a particular purpose rather than randomly (Teddlie & Fen Yu, 2007, p. 81). Utilizing a purposeful case sample of social workers can provide data that will inform us about the knowledge known of human trafficking of each social worker. The secondary sampling method that was used within this research is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling can be referred to as chain sampling where one research participant refers another participant, and then that participant refers another participant. This type of sampling was beneficial because it was unclear if the social workers participating in the study had a relevant history of working with human trafficking victims. Participants were provided with a debrief after the survey was completed. Within the debrief, participants were asked to share the survey link with other qualified social workers who possess experience or knowledge with the population.

The instrument used in this study was a qualitative digital interview (online survey), which had open-ended questions that will ask participants what they have learned or what they know about the population. For the purpose of this survey the term “learn” referred to what a social worker has learned either through curriculum or training. The term “know” referred to a social worker experience. Snowballing sampling allowed participants to share the survey with colleagues who may be more competent with the population of human trafficking.

Recruitment details/ Data management

One method used within this study to recruit participants was solicitation. The study was conducted in the Tri-state area. This included the states of New York, New Jersey, and

Connecticut. Data was collected using digital interviews (online surveys). The solicitation was sent to the following organizations to ensure participation: Yeshiva University Wurzweiler School of Social Work Ph.D. Program, the National Association of Social workers (NYS chapter), The Facebook group titled “NYC Social Workers”. This researcher sent an advertisement for the study via email to the students who attended the Ph.D. program at Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, as a form of recruitment with the link to the survey asking students who met the criteria to participate in the study. It is to be noted that because several participants within the study were in Ph.D. programs, this group had more education than your average social worker and may have shared different experiences than most social workers. This researcher placed an ad in the group forum for the NASW (NYS chapter) asking members within the organization who met the criteria and who wish to participate in the study to click on the link to the study. The Facebook group “NYC Social Workers” was included within the study sample, the solicitation and link was placed as an ad within the group forum. The link provided the details of the study and asked individuals who wished to participate to click on the survey link. Snowball Sampling was conducted throughout the Tri-State Area (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut).

Data collection and Analysis

The data used within this study was managed through ATLAS. ti. The instrument utilized for this study was an online survey, which was administered through Qualtrics. The information asked within this survey included the knowledge or training supplied to social workers about the victims of human trafficking. Snowball sampling was built into this study as a second-tier approach. Every participant was asked to share the link of the survey with a colleague who meets this study's criteria. Creswell (1998) suggest a

sample size of 20 -30 participants for a grounded theory study. The details of this study's criteria are that the individual must have a Master of Social Work degree to qualify as a social worker. This study will not need to transcribe interviews or audiotape since the platform is online surveys.

ATLAS. ti assisted with managing codes and searching for any additional data. The data was exported and manually coded within a hierarchical manner by the various themes contained. There were 6 rounds of coding to ensure theme saturation. Inductive Hierarchal Qualitative Analysis was utilized within this study. According to Thomas (2003), the general inductive approach provides a convenient and efficient way of analyzing qualitative data for many research purposes (p. 1). Open and axial coding were utilized for the purpose of this study. Open coding was applied at the start of the study. It led to axial coding, which created the different themes within the research. Once there were no more themes to be identified, coding was completed. Participants' identities were protected by removing their personal information and assigning them with an identification number. All information was stored on a secure and contained computer.

Measures

This was a qualitative study. Reliability or validity could not be accessed within this study. The terms “learn” and “know” have been operationalized for the purpose of this study. The word “learn” can be defined as to gain skills or knowledge about a particular matter through education or study. The word “know” can be defined as information and skills obtained through experience.

The instrument developed for this study was a qualitative digital interview (online survey). The survey was a 19-item questionnaire. The survey, informed consent, and debrief

can be found in appendix A, B and C. This researcher left the survey open to individuals who have either worked with or learned about the population of human trafficking. By omitting a requirement of work history with human trafficking victims, this researcher ensured a greater response rate. This instrument consisted of 2 different sections. Part I of the survey asked six open ended questions about the participant level of awareness and knowledge of human trafficking. Part IA was a sub section to part I, and it asked five open ended questions about the participant knowledge of the psychological impacts associated with the aftermath of human trafficking. Lastly, part II asked eight demographic questions about the participants' sex, age, type of degree, and the length of time they have worked with this vulnerable population.

Ethical Consideration

Informed Consent

This researcher distributed a solicitation that explained the study, its purpose, benefits, risks, and participation. This solicitation informed all participants that their participation is voluntary and at any time they can withdraw from the study. In addition, the participants' identities were protected within the survey. All the information delivered to the participants was sent through a private and secure platform.

After individuals decided to participate in the study, they clicked on the survey link which routed them to the online survey. Participants were reminded prior to beginning the survey that their information was being kept private, and participation in the survey can be discontinued at any time. Participants were informed that their data remained confidential. Participants were informed that the online survey was sent through a secure website. The survey adhered to Yeshiva University's rules and regulations. Compliance with the Western

Institutional Review Board was obtained with an exemption status prior to collecting data (see Appendix D).

Risks and Benefits for participants

There are social and emotional risks for participants. Participants who recall their experiences with trafficking victims may have to remember or relive specific traumatic experiences. Participants was provided with educational literature and contact information for resources dealing with trauma (please see appendix C). The study's benefits will allow participants to help victims of human trafficking by expressing their knowledge base of the population. Also, participants can contribute to the advancement of research.

Bias

I have prior work history within child welfare. During my employment within child welfare, I serviced individuals who resided within the Tri-State Area. I witnessed lot of minors being recruited into human trafficking. At the time, which was over a decade ago, there were a lack of resources for this population and many social workers were not equipped with the tools they needed to properly aid this population. I believed that conditions would improve for this population and professionals would gain more knowledge about resources as time and technology progressed. Witnessing the different psychological and physical changes that these individuals encountered increased my interest in performing future research on the population.

Prior to performing this research, I assumed that human trafficking victims were majority females who had a history of severe trauma and had some sort of involvement within the child welfare involvement. I assumed that there were minimal programs designed

to help this population. In addition, I believed that a huge percentage of the trafficked population would have been recruited by significant others or by a person who offered material and monetary gain. Minors are often lured into the population by receiving monetary items as an exchange. I also realized that drugs played a huge part in trafficking. Many minors were lured with the option of receiving drugs in exchange. Additionally, I assumed that majority of social workers knew the differences and the key characteristics of human trafficking victims because of its' current prevalence. I believed that professionals overlooked this population because they viewed the population as prostitutes or risky individuals rather than human beings who were severely mistreated. I realized as a social worker that this population needed additional supports from social services.

This concludes chapter six. The findings from this research will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7- Results

This chapter presents the responses from social workers about the subject of human trafficking. This researcher examined the knowledge obtained about victims of human trafficking through the lens of social workers. The surveys were distributed to social workers within the Tri- State area. The tri-state area includes NY, NJ and CT. This chapter will present a description of the demographics within the study. The data was partialized by inductive coding. The highlighted areas within this research will be presented within this section. This researcher will finalize the findings within the discussion chapter.

The participation criteria of this study required that participants had to be a Social Worker. A social worker was defined as a person with a master's degree within social work. Participants with dual degrees were allowed to participate if one of the degrees' owned was a Master of social Work. There was a total of 65 recorded responses for this study. From the 65 recorded responses, 28 responses (43.07 %) were used for the purpose of this study due to sustained responses and appropriate criteria guidelines to participate within the study. 35 responses (53.84%) were eliminated from the data because participants opened the survey link and were unsuccessful with completing the survey. Two responses (3.07%) were not utilized because the participants were not a Master of Social Work. Only completed or partially completed surveys were used for this study.

Demographics

All 28 participants within this study have identified as adults (21 years or older of age). The demographics within this study include details of age, gender, employment, highest level of education, length of degree and ethnicity. A total of 19 participants (67.85%) reported their gender. As displayed in graph A, thirteen participants (68.42%) were female,

and six participants (31.57%) were male. A total of 21 participants (75%) reported their ages. Most participants ages ranged between 35-55.

Participants within the study had various ranges in which they held a master's degree. The mean length of holding a master's degree amongst the participants was 8 years. 19 participants (67.85%) reported their ethnicity. As displayed in table 1, Seven participants (25%) reported to be white American. Nine participants (32.14%) reported to be black American, and 3 participants (10.71%) reported to be Latino/Hispanic. All participants reported to have a master's degree in Social Work. Three participants (10.71%) reported to have a Ph.D. and 3 other participants reported to have a different type of degree such as Master of Public Administration. Six participants (21.4%) reported to currently be within a Ph.D. program. Finally, participants held employment within child welfare, education, private practice/mental health, and administration.

Graph A

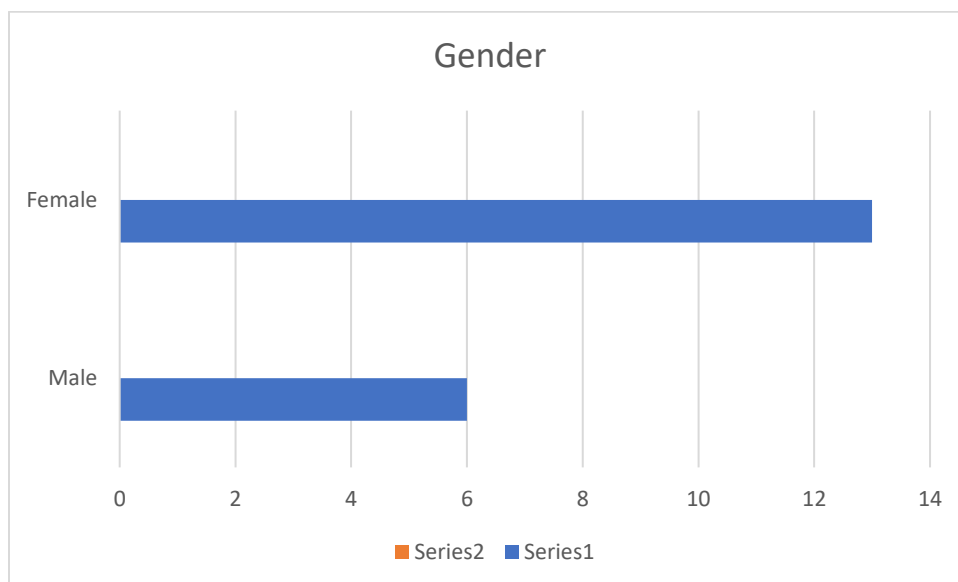


Table 1 – Ethnicity

White American	Black American	Hispanic or Latino
7	9	3

Inductive Hierarchal Qualitative Analysis was used to analyze the data within the survey. The results were organized in a hierarchal manner. Utilizing inductive coding allowed this researcher to create themes from the direct source. Inductive codes are codes that are developed by the researcher by directly examining the data (Lacko & Gozdzia, 2005). This research reached theoretical saturation. Identical themes and findings were derived from the research. It was determined that there would not be any new data discovered from the research.

“Given that many trafficking cases remain undiscovered, or that victims/survivors of trafficking are often afraid to talk about their experiences, it is very difficult to obtain firsthand knowledge from those who have been exploited” (Lacko & Gozdzia, 2005). Much knowledge about human trafficking derives from research or from what professionals know about the subject. Several major themes arouse from the data presented within this study. The themes will be discussed in the upcoming material.

No knowledge

Human Trafficking is viewed differently by various populations and professionals. Every participant within the study was asked to share their knowledge about the subject of

human trafficking. Participants were asked about the different trainings, methods, or education that they have received about the topic. In addition to what participants learned, they were asked about the general knowledge of the topic.

16 out of 28 participants (57.14%) stated that they did not have any or much knowledge about the subject of human trafficking. These participants stated that they did not know much about the characteristics, trauma or relationships formed within the dynamic of human trafficking. All 16 participants (57.14%) currently hold a job within the social service field and shared that their knowledge about the subject is limited. The 16 participants stated that they have not obtained any knowledge about human trafficking within school or within their career. One participant (6.25%) out of the 16 participants shared that they may have taken a training at their job because of their job title but the information was limited. Another participant stated, “I know slavery was a form of human trafficking and no one talks about it”.

Another participant stated, “Other than the population nothing really”. Another response received from a participant was “I know Nothing about the history”. At least 50% of the participants did not know much about the history, the prevalence, the mental health impacts, the gender differences, or the therapeutic alliances formed between victims and social workers. Some participants knew minor information about the subject based on what they have watched on tv or read within empirical articles. Less than 3 percent of the participants had experience of working with human trafficking victims.

It was noted that many participants believed that human trafficking was an invasive concern however, many professionals still lack the knowledge needed to provide the proper supports to victims. For many of the participants, most of the knowledge attained does not go

beyond what is public knowledge which demonstrates that there are many professionals within the field of social work who are not learning about this vulnerable population. This study revealed that many professionals do not have the proper tools or proper level of comfortability to work with a victim of human trafficking.

Monetary Gain

Four participants (14.28%) mentioned that human trafficking is a market for money. The participants emphasized that the goal of human trafficking is to make money off the victims. One participant stated, “people are often sold into this million-dollar market”. Another participant stated that human trafficking is “the exploitation of children and adults against their wills for exchange of money”. Three participants (10.71%) referred to human trafficking as slavery or a form of slavery because victims are forced to work while the trafficker monetarily benefits from their work. It is noted that one participant stated, “I have learned that humans have supported, maintained, and have profited from human trafficking of some sort for thousands of years”.

Pervasive Issue

Participants were asked about their interpretation of human trafficking. For instance, what did the term “human trafficking” mean to them. How would they explain it to friends/family or someone that they were teaching? The study focused on the participants understanding of the term to gain more clarity about how the subject can possibly be approached within a professional setting.

Twelve participants (42.85%) stated that the issue of human trafficking is a pervasive issue. The participants noted that it has been ongoing for centuries and has been ignored. One participant (3.57%) stated that human trafficking has been kept under the radar for centuries

because of its financial benefit to the economy. One participant stated, “Human trafficking is a profitable business, whether the intentions are to clandestinely promote slavery (for sex, forced labor) or to smuggle people across the U.S Borders.”. Another participant stated that “human trafficking can happen to anyone however, its main target is women and children”.

Six participants (21.42%) stated that victims of human trafficking include children of color, youth within foster care, undocumented individuals, and fearful individuals. Two participants (7.14%) also noticed that human trafficking consist of labor trafficking. One participant (3.57%) stated that many individuals are forced into the jobs of housekeeping, prostitution, waitresses and braiding. One participant (3.57%) stated “I have had experience working with clients that were victims of human trafficking from Central America, the continent of Africa, Asia, and the middle east. Many stories are similar. The victims will share that they had dreams of coming to the United States. Unfortunately, many were tricked into believing that for a fee they would be given the opportunity to come to the United States and automatically get working papers and have legal jobs. Many came in many different forms of transportation. Once in this country, many were illegally used for housekeeping, prostitution, cooks, waitresses, braiding in hair shops, sex slaves, and various other labor working hours that are inhumane. Many are threatened that they would be reported and arrested if they complain to authorities”.

Four participants (14.28%) displayed that human trafficking seems to be correlated with oppressed populations. Women and children, children within the foster care system, minorities and undocumented individuals seem to make up a large percentage of individuals who are trafficked. It was also displayed that human trafficking is global. It affects the entire world and several different populations. It was noted that human trafficking does not only

consist of sex trafficking, but it also consists of labor trafficking and drug/criminal trafficking. However, sex trafficking is the most common type of trafficking.

Vulnerable populations

Twenty-five participants (89.28%) stated that they know human trafficking victims come from vulnerable populations. These participants noted that vulnerable populations are targeted and forced to work within the field of human trafficking. All twenty-five participants (89.28%) stated that victims of human trafficking include children of color, youth within foster care, undocumented individuals, and fearful individuals. These participants also noted that the victims of this oppressed population have a history of trauma, low status quo, lack of resources needing to be/feel loved and mis trust towards individuals. Another participant stated, “the characteristics of people who are victims of human trafficking from my knowledge are unfortunately not able to advocate for themselves who are either from a different country or speak a different language”.

Some other characteristics of victims of human trafficking noted by participants include not understanding or knowing they are being trafficked depending on the type of trafficking. Some individuals might believe it’s “part of the job” or “not wanting to lose their job or be in the system”. Some individuals fall under the category of being lower economic class individuals, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, individuals with few to no education, and youth at risk with no parental supervision”.

Data indicated that social workers were knowledgeable of the vulnerable populations targeted by traffickers. Over two third of participants stated that they knew, heard of or was aware of the targeted populations. Some individuals believe that trafficking can happen to anyone while others believe that there are specific populations who are targeted. Participants

were able to identify that there are vulnerable populations who are an easier objective for traffickers.

Mental Health Symptoms

The crime of human trafficking can cause trauma in victims and within the professionals who work with the victims. Some of the key identifying words that participants used to describe victims of human trafficking were “PTSD, blame themselves”, “Victims become predators”, “Mistrust” and “young adult females”.

Mental Health was a major theme within this study. Twelve participants (42.85%) stated PTSD, depression, and Anxiety were among some of the popular mental health disorders that can arise from being trafficked. A victim also deals with avoidance. One participant (3.57%) stated that victims have survivors’ guilt and suicidality ideations. Two participants (7.14%) noted that victims’ responses are “fight or flight” when face with difficult choices. One participant (3.57%) stated that “the victim’s self-esteem is affected, and victims tend to act out, not make their own decisions and may become dysfunctional”.

A history of trauma was also reported as being a knowledgeable factor of human trafficking. Nine participants (32.14%) noted that victims of human trafficking have suffered and are currently suffering from trauma. These participants stated such phrases as “abusive home environments” and “traumatic history”. Mental Health diagnoses such as “PTSD, depression and anxiety” were used to describe some ongoing effects that victims are dealing with.

Sixteen individuals (57.14%) were not aware of the different traumas when asked about the psychological impact within the survey. Participants struggled to identify the variety and severity of different traumas or diagnoses that a person can develop from being a

victim of human trafficking. Many participants were unsure of the psychological impact that it imposed on victims. Majority of participants were not familiar with additional traumas that a victim must manage once trafficked.

Fight or Flight

Three participants (10.7%) stated that victims display “flight or fight” behaviors after they are trafficked. A participant also stated that victims feel “avoidance, feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem and wrong/negative perception of self, people or the whole world”. The body has a natural response to a triggering and stressful environment. Two participants (7.14%) noted that with certain victims of human trafficking they are only equipped to fight through the stress or avoid the stressful situation. One participant (3.57%) noted that victims process information differently after becoming a victim of human trafficking. One participant (3.57%) stated that “the world is viewed in different lens”. Three participants (10.71%) stated that victims stay with their trafficker “out of fear” and “having nowhere to go”.

Prevalence

Eighteen participants (64.28%) stated that they know that human trafficking is much more prevalent than what is discussed. The terms such as “It still exist” and “It’s higher than we think” were used. Another participant stated “I always assumed human trafficking was most prevalent in poorer and underdeveloped countries. However, I most recently learned based on several empirical studies that human trafficking is prevalent around the world and impact both men and women. I was more surprised to learn that much of the world's human trafficking occurs here within the United States”.

Another participant (3.57%) stated there is “no safe haven law” for human trafficking. One participant noted (3.57%) that there is no aftercare or support for the victims of human trafficking. The lack of law enforcement and programs for this population can possibly be a factor as to why this crime remains under the radar.

Global

Human Trafficking is visible, yet it also seems very blurred. This crime is known amongst several professions however, the number of cases is still rising. One participant (3.57%) stated, “Human beings are being sold and auctioned every day in several states/cities that no one is aware of”. 3 out of the 28 participants mentioned that human trafficking is international. One participant (3.57%) stated, “humans are trafficked in the United States from continental coast to coast, from Northern and southern borders”. Another participant stated that human trafficking occurs across the United States and Internationally”. Victims are lured from different countries and even continents by being told that they were able to receive citizenship to the United States or gain employment and they eventually end up being trafficked.

Power and Control

There are relationship patterns with victims of human trafficking. Identifying the key patterns is imperative when identifying a victim of human trafficking. Seven participants (25%) stated that they are aware of “power and control” within the relationship dynamics of a victim and their trafficker. Three participants (10.71%) stated that victims are psychologically and financially manipulated, and they become submissive. In addition, victims are known to have Stockholm syndrome. Two participants (7.14%) believe that victims protect their abusers which contributes to the lack of identifying traffickers within

this crime. Another participant stated that the victim may not know that they are being abused and sees the professional trying to aid them as a threat.

At least 70% of participants were unaware of any power-control and relational difficulties with victims of human trafficking. Participants noted that the victims are manipulated either psychologically or financially. Trafficked persons are often trafficked by family members or by people that they know. These individuals fail to realize the signs because of the persons who are committing the abuse. Participants neglected to indicate the long-term effect that the abuse and cycle of power and control could have on the victim. Social workers lacked the knowledge of how the cycle of power and control impacts a victim for the remaining of their life.

Trust

Creating an alliance with a client is important to a social worker. There may be a greater challenge when forming a relationship with a victim of human trafficking. There are necessary tools and skills needed to establish rapport with a victim. Participants were asked about what they have learned or what do they know about the therapeutic relationship between victims and social workers. Trust was the major theme that aroused from this question. One participant (3.57%) stated that she interned with victims of human trafficking and was successful with creating an alliance with victims. Six participants (21.4%) stated that they know there is dis trust, resentment and it is hard to engage a victim. One participant (3.57%) stated, "Trust is important from the beginning and letting them know that they have a say and can make their own decisions and empowering their strengths as individuals". Four participants (14.28%) reported that the major barrier to creating a therapeutic alliance with a victim of human relationship is lack of trust between the victim and the social worker. One

participant (3.57%) stated, “the victims were well defended and had issues around trust. Building any kind of relationship was difficult”. As proven within research, trust is a barrier that impacts the therapeutic alliance between a social worker and a trafficked person.

Male and Female victims

When seeking therapeutic services, there is a common myth that females seek treatment more than males. When asked the question about the different therapeutic differences between males and females there was a consensus among participants. 14 participants (50%) stated that they believe females seek and receive more resources than males. Three participants (10.71%) also stated that male victims are not as open to share their experiences. Victims may cope by using substances or by simply remaining quiet and continuing to remain in the unsafe conditions because they are embarrassed, or they are living in fear. One participant (3.57%) stated they believe male victims turn to substances as an outlet and female victims become promiscuous.

It is known that there are more resources for female victims than there are for male victims. One participant (3.57%) stated that male and female victims can easily become a trafficker and begin to groom victims because of their history. Three participants (10.71%) who did have a history of working with a victim of human trafficking shared that the victim is normally a female. One participant stated, “I never really see any therapeutic approaches geared towards men”.

The differences and key characteristics between the two genders were not known to 50% of the participants. Participants also noted that female victims are usually forced into sex trafficking and men are forced into labor trafficking. However, research indicates that either gender can be forced into any type of trafficking. Participants who had no knowledge

about the topic assumed based on public knowledge that very few men are victims of human trafficking.

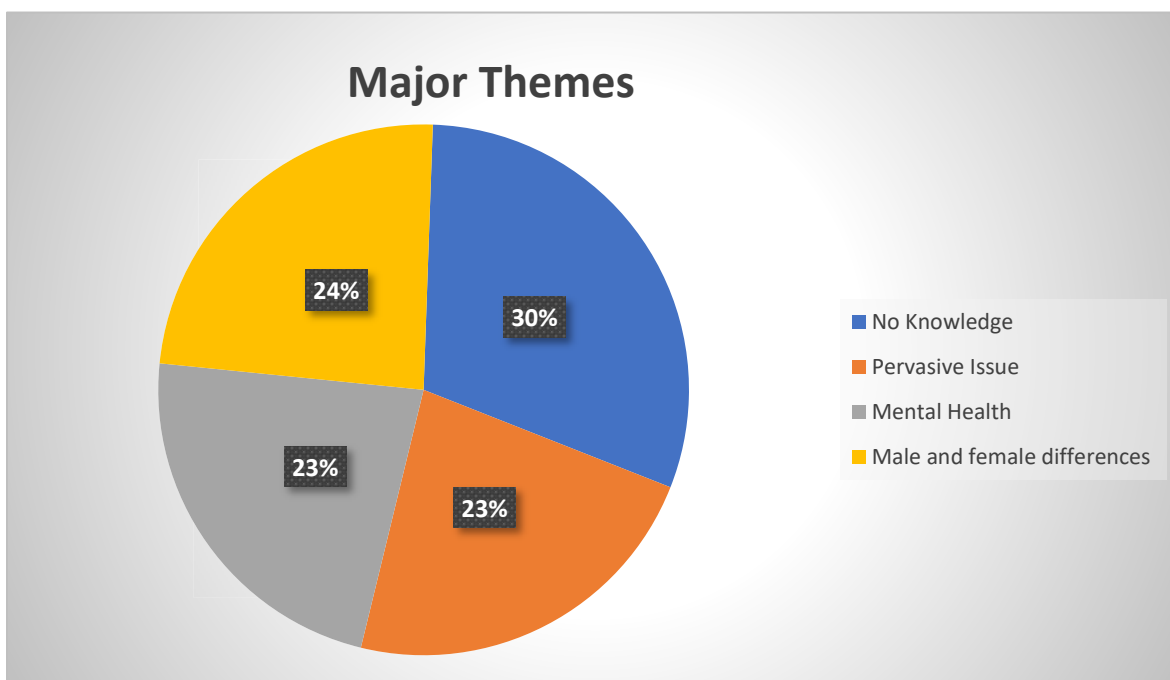
Myths

There are several myths that exist about human trafficking victims. Six participants (21.42%) noted the myths associated with the crime. The six participants stated that they did not know the information, but they described what they heard or learned through public knowledge about the topic. One myth is that trafficking only happens to females and children. Another myth is that males who are trafficked are trafficked into labor trafficking and not into sex trafficking. Research has showed that males are sexually exploited as well. A participant stated that “human trafficking is a pervasive issue; can happen to both males and females; can happen to all ages not only includes sex trafficking”. Another myth that exists is that men who are trafficked do not like to discuss their experiences while females are open to discussing their feelings more. A participant stated “men tend to suppress the memories of the traumatic experiences and refuse to discuss their experiences. Females tend to develop a low sense of self and have difficulty forming trusting relationships with people around them”. Within this crime it is assumed that women are the more suppressed population out of the trafficked victim. Another myth is that human trafficking can only happen to individuals of a minority ethnicity. One participant stated “it can happen to anyone and to any age group.

There seemed to be a commonality in the research about the opinions of human trafficking. As noted in Graph B, the 28 participants (99.99%) acquaintance with human trafficking were either that they were not knowledgeable, thought it was a pervasive issue, understood that it affects the mental well-being of the victims, and that there are male and

female differences within the organized crime. Graph B displays the percentage of 28 participants knowledge correlated with each major theme. However, as displayed, 30% of the participants do not have adequate knowledge about any subject or question that was asked about the population. Twenty-three percent of the population had basic knowledge about the pervasive issue of trafficking. Twenty-four percent owned the basic knowledge about differences between male and female victims. Twenty-three percent of participants were deemed knowledgeable about some of the mental health diagnoses a person of human trafficking encounters. As stated by one participant, “Human trafficking is a social problem that is not being addressed head on due to the lack of knowledge and understanding”.

Graph B



Summary

Demographics

The results of this study were persuaded by the demographic details of the participants. One noticeable factor is that the mean of the ages of participants within the study were between 35-55 years old. A mean age of participants within a lower age range may have altered different responses due to the publicity that human trafficking has received over the past decade. In addition, this study was purposed to interview Master of Social workers. Different professions such as law or health care administration would've provided different insight about human trafficking which would've shifted the results. Gender also played a key component with the results of the study. Thirteen females (46.42%) and six males (21.42%) participated within this study. Nine participants (32.14 %) did not report their gender. The results would've shifted if the participants were an equal number of female and males or if the participants were all the same sex. According to Morse (2008), in grounded theory the criteria for sample election changes according to the theoretical needs of data analysis at the moment. An entire group of participants may be targeted and interviewed until the researcher understand what is necessary for comprehending the developing explanation or theory (Morse, 2008).

This chapter represented the voices and opinions of social workers within the social service field with or without a history of working with victims of human trafficking. This chapter revealed that there are several components to human trafficking and to the barrier of social work education with the population. Mental health, trauma, power and control, and lack of trust are among some of the concerns mentioned when discussing human trafficking. Some of the minor themes noted were global issue, fight or flight, and monetary gain for human trafficking. There is one commonality that remains amongst social workers and

professionals. The information that stood out the most within this section is the lack of knowledge that many professionals have about human trafficking. Human trafficking can potentially be at risk of never depleting if professionals are unable advocate for victims on a micro, mezzo and/or macro level due to their lack of knowledge about the subject.

Chapter Eight-Discussion

This chapter will summarize the key components within this grounded theory study about social workers knowledge of the psychological impacts of the aftermath of human trafficking. This study is important within the profession of social work because the subject of human trafficking is often dismissed or overlooked. The findings will elaborate on what we know, the limitations of the study, implications for the field of social work and what is needed within future research.

Despite the recent attention that human trafficking has received, there is still minimum research of what social workers know about the crime. Current research of human trafficking focuses on the victims and the different populations that are targeted. Human trafficking is also viewed as sexual exploitation and other forms of trafficking such as labor and criminal trafficking are often deemed invisible to society. According to Gozdziaik & Collett (2005), human trafficking can be defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion. Human trafficking numbers are rising. However, there is limited research indicating social workers knowledge or skill set when working with human trafficking survivors.

Lack of Research with Social Workers

As stated in the results section, “No Knowledge” was a major theme within this research. Despite the dire nature of human trafficking, there is still a tendency for society to ignore the depth of the problem (Mahapatra, Faulkner & Schatz, 2016). Mahapatra et al. (2016) also mentioned that mental health and emotional wellbeing is seriously impacted by the trafficking experience. The findings within this study are substantiated by prior research

performed with this population. Research has indicated that there is a lack of knowledge that professionals hold about the subject of human trafficking. As noted within the literature review, Torres & Villacamp (2017) highlighted that there was a lack of professional training about human trafficking. It was mentioned that due to the lack of training amongst professionals, individuals who are trafficked are charged for crimes instead of being treated like a victim.

Initial identification of victims is challenging for social workers. As stated within the literature review, many social workers are not knowledgeable about the different characteristics or signs to look for when dealing with a victim of human trafficking. The results indicated that social workers are unaware of key indicators and therapeutic needs of a victim of human trafficking. Furthermore, social workers do not have much experience with this population. The 28 participants within the study were social workers with different backgrounds. However, there was a significant number of social workers who lacked the proper knowledge. It is to be noted that out of the 28 participants within the study, less than 3 percent had a history of working with victims of human trafficking.

Lack of knowledge about traumas of human trafficking

According to Hopper & Gonzalez (2018), research focusing on sex trafficking survivors has found notably high rates of depression. Many trafficking survivors acknowledge suicidal ideation (Hopper & Gonzalez, 2018). Several participants noted that victims end up with depression after being trafficked. Also, one participant noted that a victim can become suicidal because of human trafficking. It is also noted that victims of human trafficking suffer from complex PTSD. Hooper & Gonzalez (2018) also mentioned that many survivors of trafficking experience various forms of maltreatment prior to being

trafficked, which includes childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect. Participants within the study mentioned that they are aware that many victims have a history of trauma or child welfare involvement. Social workers also highlighted that victims' have a history of PTSD and anxiety. Research indicates that a result of human trafficking is PTSD. Hooper & Gonzalez (2018) stated that symptoms consistent with Complex PTSD have been described in trafficking survivors across several studies.

The different traumas noted by social workers within the study were traumas that were public knowledge. As evident within the literature review, lack of experience with the population is a correlation as to the reasoning of why social workers are not knowledgeable of the different traumas. As presented within the literature review, limited treatment is one of the most significant long term concerns for victims of human trafficking (Pascual-Leone et al, 2017). Social workers lacked knowledge of dissociative symptoms that human trafficking victims experience. Victims of human trafficking can forget their experiences and in addition may be diagnosed with different substance use disorders. Victims can develop OCD or panic attacks. Many victims are paid for their work as a trafficked person which may cause a higher rate of confusion within the victim. Despite the several mental diagnoses that a victim may gain from being trafficked, social workers were only aware of the most common diagnoses.

Male vs Female relevance

Results indicated that many social workers thought it was easier to identify a female victim of human trafficking over a male victim of human trafficking. As stated in the literature review, both genders are trafficked. However, based on prior research, social workers not being able to identify the key differences between the two genders and believing

that the trafficking happens to females more often, will place the attention on female victims. Male victims are more reluctant to expose their history of trafficking because of the noticeable difference of treatment between male and female victims. Female victims are provided with more resources than male victims. The literature review noted that male victims are trafficked as much as female victims. A New York City study highlighted solutions around trafficking cannot only be framed around females (Gluck et al, 2014).

Social workers believed that male victims seek counseling and professional help less than females. This finding was consistent with previous research which indicated that sexual exploitation is reported less by males due to culture beliefs and personal egos. Males were also trafficked by family members and means to get drugs while females were known to be trafficked by strangers more often. As evident within the literature review, females were reported to encounter higher levels of sexual violence and restricted freedom. From a social constructive view, social workers within the study believe that females are the dominant gender within the trafficked population due to vulnerability, low self-esteem, and prior traumas within their lives. According to Hebert (2016), in July 2006, 113 polish men were forced into slave labor camps in Southern Italy where they had been lured with the promise of well-paying agricultural jobs. The men were forced to work within a field picking fruit for over 10 hours a day. Hebert (2016) also noted that over the past decade thousands of children in Ghana, mostly boys, have been sold to fishermen by their impoverished parents. Literature clearly demonstrates that trafficking occurs to both genders, however, male victims' experiences or traumas were not highlighted by participants. Male victims are often overlooked within this population because the focus is often on females who are trafficked. The misrepresentation of male victims of human trafficking can be a potential cause of the

lack of research performed with the gender. As proven by research, social workers are not knowledgeable of the significant differences between male and female victims of human trafficking.

Importance of Social Workers

The research indicates that social workers know minimal knowledge about the topic of human trafficking. “Pervasive Issue” was a common theme that aroused within the study. Many participants noted that human trafficking is a pervasive issue. Many participants stated that they did not have knowledge of a specific topic of human trafficking. One may ask how the topic can be a pervasive issue, but still social workers do not have much knowledge about the topic. In correlation with the literature review, human trafficking characteristics are not always known to a therapist or health care provider (Haley & Thompson, 2018). Individuals who roles are mandated reporters have not received adequate training about the population. Research indicates that Service providers will need to receive resources and proper tools on the population to help identify the victims.

Social workers stated that they are unsure of the characteristics or protocols that are associated with the human trafficking population. Based on prior research, it was indicated that social workers were confused about identifying victims of human trafficking. Research within the literature review also discussed that social workers do not have the proper training or resources to help this vulnerable population. Despite the growing interest of scholars in studying human trafficking, the body of academic research on trafficking in North America is still very small (Gozdziak & Collett, 2005).

Participants called human trafficking modern day slavery and noted that it is global. One participant stated that the United States is the country with the largest number of cases

of human trafficking. More than two-third of participants stated that they did not learn any knowledge about human trafficking within school or within their place of employment. Research has proven that social workers are not learning about the topic of human trafficking.

Although human trafficking has increased attention in the scholar literature, the topic has not been widely addressed in social work (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). As noted in chapter two, the profession of social work is based upon the code of ethics which promotes a client best interest and social justice. Therefore, it is surprising that the human trafficking population has not been addressed assertively by social workers. Social Workers require a systematic understanding of the problem of human trafficking which moves beyond sex work and prostitution (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). It is obvious that human trafficking is a bypassed population. As stated by Alvarez & Alessi (2012), social workers in direct practice play a pivotal role in identifying trafficked persons in such settings as emergency rooms, health clinics, and shelters. Alvarez & Alessi (2012), also stated since there are no distinct physical and emotional symptoms by which clinicians can identify victims of trafficking, knowledge of industry related morbidity and conditions of vulnerability can help facilitate identification through comprehensive psychosocial assessments. Research has solidified that social workers' play a vital role in victims' lives. However, as evident by the participants in the study, social workers who play a vital role in the lives of victims lack the essential tools needed to assist the population.

Power and Control

Findings indicated that participants were knowledgeable of some of the relational patterns between the trafficked person and the trafficker. Research indicates that victims are

impacted psychologically by being trafficked. It also demonstrates that victims are in a cycle of being controlled through mental, physical, and psychological abuse. As stated in the literature review, some victims are recruited into trafficking by their family member or other close of loved ones. According to Cole & Sprang (2018), the mother of the victim has the highest percentage of recruitment.

Some of the participants noted that victims remain within the cycle of human trafficking due to Stockholm syndrome. This belief is supported by research within the literature review. Botha and Warria (2020) stated that victims are lured into trafficking by people who they share a relationship with. Victims are controlled by drugs and monetary items. Many social workers did not have any knowledge about the impact of power and control and its effect on human trafficking victims. This is further substantiated by prior research which indicates that victims remain with their traffickers because the legal system is a cause for victims to be less transparent to professionals (Botha and Warria, 2020). It is evident that social workers are not trained or experienced enough to identify victims or individuals who are fragile. Unfortunately, this pattern will become inevitable if social workers and other professions lack the necessary resources to assist this population.

Vulnerable Population

From a social constructivist lens the vulnerable populations of human trafficking are the same reason why they remain invisible. For example, if a professional views an individual as “troubled” or “not worthy” then they will be less inclined to help the individual. Participants were knowledgeable of the vulnerable populations within human trafficking. Some of the populations labeled as vulnerable were females, children, minorities, undocumented individuals, people living in poverty. This is supported by research within the

literature review. It is stated that women, victims in poverty, substance addicted individuals and children within the child welfare system in particular victims who are runaways are often recruited and targeted by traffickers.

This population is often labeled the “forgotten” population. From a constructivist point of view, individuals living in poverty, minorities or even children who are run away are often labeled as drug dealers, drug addicts, homeless or troublemakers. Professionals and the legal system overlook this population and often commit them of criminal activity instead of assisting them because their backgrounds. Research has stated that victims of sexual exploitation often find themselves prosecuted for prostitution, substance use and other criminal actions (Gluck et al, 2014). Victims within these populations feel powerless. The population provides challenges to social workers because they make it difficult to form a relationship.

Wheaton, Schauer & Galli (2010) suggests that poverty, lack of education, employment opportunities, cultural thinking and attitude, traditional practices, domestic violence, corruption, conflicts, and difficulty in acquiring visas are populations with a higher chance of being trafficked. In addition, factors such as political instability and income differentials between different economic classes and countries often lead individuals to migrate to different locations to seek a better way of living. Migrant individuals are often trafficked because of their lack of education and resources. In correlation with this research, prior research indicated that females were often targeted by their significant others. A Chicago study of women and girls found that 29% of the female respondents had been recruited into prostitution by a boyfriend and 64% referred to currently being romantically involved with their pimp. Once victims are recruited into trafficking, they create a barrier

between themselves and professionals. Research shows that power played a role between victims and their feelings towards professionals.

Standpoint Theory

Standpoint theory addresses the power differential between people within the same group. It explains how individuals within the same group such as women can feel inferior to one another due to their economic class or profession. Social Workers and victims of human trafficking are both connected through the fact that majority women represent the profession of social work and majority of women fall victim to the crime of human trafficking. As stated in prior research, one of the biggest reasons why social workers are not equipped with the necessary tools they need to aid this population is because of the population's invisibility and barriers to professionals. Victims are often reluctant to share information due to lack of trust and the power differential between professionals and the victims. As stated within the literature review, victims fear the legal system and the possibility of them being prosecuted for the crimes they commit while being trafficked. Victims perceive social workers as they do any law officer and immediately notice the power difference which often places a wall between them and the social worker.

Participants noted that some barriers between the victims of human trafficking and social workers are fear, trust, and lack of relatedness. Research within the literature review, highlighted the fact that victims felt a difference within power because they could not relate to social workers. One victim stated that her social worker could not speak her language which made her feel powerless and placed a barrier between herself and the social worker (Heffron et al., 2014). Prior research has also indicated that many victims come from traumatic environments and abusive relationships. The cycle of power and control places a

victim in a space where they feel powerless. A victim is likely to go back to their abuser because of the lack of connection that they feel with a social worker. Research suggests that a victim's abuser was successful with contacting them by use of force because social workers and resources are limited with this population.

Analysis

There has been minimum initiative taken by social workers to further educate themselves about additional resources for the trafficked population. Human trafficking will continue to remain the unforgotten population if no profession decides to learn or is properly trained about the impact of its traumas. The findings within this research were startling because it demonstrates that social workers are knowledgeable that the human trafficked population is a vulnerable population however, they lack the knowledge or resources to thoroughly assist this population. In addition, the findings of this study displayed minimal knowledge known about the different policies formed to protect trafficking victims such as the TVPA. This population is still viewed as "invisible" by society and professionals within different positions. This study demonstrates that there is a major barrier between trafficked individuals and social workers. Power and trust play a huge role with the barrier. Several participants noted that victims of human trafficking have a barrier when it comes to developing relationships with social workers and that barrier is trust.

The knowledge that was obtained through the lens of social workers was from public knowledge or peer review articles. This researcher was stupefied to know that many social workers did not receive any education or training on human trafficking while in school or through their current employment. In addition, it was surprising to discover that many institutions and places of work did not use a trauma approach with their employees. Social workers did not know the different impacts in which the crime of human trafficking can have

on an individual. This study revealed that there is a lack of competent social workers and resources available to the population of human trafficking. Providing therapy to the population may be difficult due to professionals not knowing the psychological impacts of the crime. This study has displayed that this population is extremely underrepresented. Social workers promote social justice, it will be difficult to help this population obtain justices that they deserve when there is a lack of knowledge about the overall population. According to (Shively, Kilorys, Wheeler & Hunt, 2012) a very small portion of traffickers are ever arrested, due to large part of reliance upon frightened and/or reluctant survivors to make cases against their abusers. Sadly, this researcher does believe that this pattern will be continuous because professionals are unable to properly aide this population. This will only persuade the victims to remain in their current situations out of fear of the “unknown”.

Limitations of the Study

The first noted limitation within this research is that the sample is non-random, and this sample was not generalizable. Non-random sampling decreases the chance of knowing how well the population is represented. Also, there is a possibility that the study may have produced a bias within the Ph.D. /advanced degree sample.

Second, this study was limited geographically to only represent social workers within the Tri-State area. While social workers' findings will help dictate the various tools needed within this field, it will not speak for every social worker within the United States and internationally. In addition, causation cannot be determined within this study due to its qualitative design.

Third, the study was only conducted with social workers. This study did not include the feedback of the actual victims of human trafficking. Also, this study attempted to

highlight an oppressed population. Due to this population's vulnerability, social workers may not have gained a substantial working experience with the victims. Understanding the needs of victims of human trafficking can help identify the information that is lacking amongst professionals. The study solely focused on the professionals who work, have a history of working or have learned about victims of human trafficking.

Lastly, the study was performed during a global pandemic. Due to the global pandemic, the instrument was limited to online questionnaires which was reflected in the response rate. It should also be noted that during this time individuals were mentally drained and were less inclined to agree to in person interviews or zoom interviews. Therefore, the instrument used was not personable. The surveys provided leisure for participants to provide incomplete responses. In addition, the survey was long and asked similar questions. Many individuals opened the survey but were unsuccessful with completing it. Finally, the demographics of the participants shared commonalities within age and education. The research would've benefited from a more diverse sample.

Future Research

Social Work Practice

The study identified that different characteristics and traumas are associated with being a victim of human trafficking. Social Workers will benefit from working within a trauma informed workplace and being able to identify the different traumas that an individual face once they are trafficked. According to Williams & Smith (2017) clinicians and managers reported that trainings from their workplace had increased their awareness and knowledge and had a positive impact towards Trauma informed Care.

According to the literature review, social workers lack the resources that they need for this population, including proper screening tools. Social Workers will benefit from having a screening tool that assesses for human trafficking within every work setting. As proven within prior research and within this study, there is a lack of training and education among this population. Social workers will need an increase of mandatory trainings offered on human trafficking. Future research should focus on the different ethnicities that are affected by human trafficking. In addition, future research should be implemented to explore the differences in treatment between male and female victims of human trafficking. Finally, future research should investigate if there are any biological components that places a person at risk of being trafficked.

Social Work Education

This study displayed that many social workers are not learning about human trafficking within their curriculum. It displayed that the topic of human trafficking is public knowledge and individuals are learning about it through their own inquiries such as social media platforms, streaming services, peer interactions and peer review articles. For the future, it will be beneficiary if the topic of human trafficking was a part of a social workers curriculum. For future research, it will be recommended to research if social workers ability to identify traits of human trafficking immediately after obtaining their master's degree, influences the identification of human trafficking cases. Furthermore, future research should be conducted to determine whether other professions can contribute to the identification of cases by learning about human trafficking within their Masters' program. At last, future research is needed to determine whether the topic of human trafficking should be taught prior to graduate school.

Social Work Policy

This study demonstrated that human trafficking is not well versed within practices, education and policies. Chapter two of this dissertation titled “the study problem”, addresses some of the policies that were created to protect victims of human trafficking. The TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act) and The Mann act of 1910 were two policies that were created to protect children and victims who are trafficked. Future research should be performed to determine if these policies are being utilized to protect victims and if so, how often.

In addition, establishments such as hotels, police departments, hospitals, clothing stores and even banks should have a policy when a victim of human trafficking is suspected or identified. According to Gluck (2014), understanding and recognizing that several different factors lead to individuals becoming victims of sex trafficking can inform policy makers on what resources service providers need to identify victims. Future research should disclose and challenge those policies to determine whether the policies are effective in assisting this vulnerable population. Lastly, future research should investigate the different type of policies that are available to aid a victim’s mental health short and long term after dealing with traumas such as human trafficking.

Additional Social Work Research

Additional research for this population will benefit from a larger sample size. Future research will also benefit from qualitative in person interviews. Online questionnaires placed a strain on the research. Future research will also benefit from quantitative research. Social workers should be researched globally to determine the information that is obtained by social

workers in different regions about the topic of human trafficking. Additional factors should be considered within future research such as professionals body language when talking with victims and different screening tools that are used to assess and identify victims of human tracking. Future research can include a wider variety of professionals. It will be beneficial in the future if other professionals with different educational backgrounds disclose their knowledge and experience on the topic of human trafficking.

Conclusion

This researcher inquired about the knowledge social workers have about the psychological impacts of social work. Purposive sampling was used as the primary sampling method within the study. The findings in the study indicated that very few social workers have obtained the proper knowledge when dealing with the population of human trafficking. The study demonstrated that professionals are obtaining knowledge from secondary sources such as documentaries and empirical articles. Professionals are not obtaining adequate knowledge about this population within school or their place of employment.

Standpoint Theory was used to highlight the vulnerable populations and power differentials within human trafficking. Women, children and marginalized groups were among some of the populations that were identified as being targeted. Social Constructivism was utilized to highlight the views of the trafficked population through the lens of social workers. There are several theories that aroused from this study and its findings. Within this grounded theory study, it is speculated that social workers do not have sufficient knowledge about human trafficking and the psychological impact of its' aftermath on victims once they are trafficked. The dearth of knowledge obtained by professionals can lead to a larger

number of undiscovered cases, lack of services, and lack of emotional support for the victims of human trafficking.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

Dear Colleague:

My name is Lakeia Murray. I am a doctoral candidate at Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work. I am seeking your participation in a research study about the knowledge social workers possess about the psychological impact of the aftermath of human trafficking. I am interested in learning if the lack of social workers' knowledge about the psychological impact of human trafficking contributes to the unreported cases. The results of this study will contribute to aiding social workers with the proper tools and training when dealing with the population. The deadline for the survey to be received is June 1st, 2021.

Consent Information: The attached survey is about understanding the knowledge that social workers have about the psychological impact of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a traumatic experience for its victims. This study will address the different trauma and impacts associated with human trafficking. The survey will ask open-ended questions about your work and knowledge of victims of human trafficking. Following the open-ended questions, the survey will ask basic demographic information about you (with no identifying information).

This information is being researched to help inform social workers about human trafficking and the impact it has on its' victims. In addition, the research is being performed to see the level of knowledge that social workers hold about the human trafficking population. The survey should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. You can discontinue participating in the survey at any time without any consequences. All written and published information reported

within the research was reported as group data without mentioning any names or identifying information.

Thank you for your participation. Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at Lakeia.murray@yu.edu. Yeshiva University does not own any information regarding your identity, so there is no need to identify yourself via phone.

Appendix B

Survey Debrief

Social Workers Knowledge of the psychological impact of the aftermath of Human Trafficking: A Grounded Theory Approach.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the study listed above. The goal of this study was to explore what knowledge social workers possess about the psychological impact that human trafficking has on its' victims.

There is a dire need to investigate this matter due to the relevance of human trafficking within today's' society. Human trafficking cases are increasing, and the actual crime is not being reported. The results of this study were used to generate additional tools, curriculum, and training needed for social workers.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would share the details about this study and the link to this survey with anyone else that you believe may be qualified and interested in participating.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I can be reached at

Lakeia.murray@yu.edu.

Please note that by completing this survey, you consented to participate in this study.

Survey

The purpose of this portion of the survey is to help us gather information about your work experience and knowledge about the human trafficking population. All participants in this study were provided with the same survey.

Please feel free to be completely honest. This survey is confidential. The answers that you provide will not have a name or IP address attached to it.

There are eleven interview questions, which consist of open-ended questions. Following the open-ended questions was the demographic questions. Eight demographic questions will ask about the level of education, age, setting you work in, , history of working with victims of human trafficking, the number of years you have been in the field, and your time as a social worker.

Please answer all questions within your comfortability. Please feel free to screenshot or print out a copy of your responses.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in the survey.

Part I. Interview Questions

In this section, the researcher will ask about your level of awareness and knowledge of human trafficking.

1: Tell me what you know or have learned about human trafficking?

2. Tell me what you know or have learned about the history of human trafficking?

3. Tell me what you know or have learned about human trafficking prevalence within the world today?

4. What differences do you see in the type of therapeutic treatment pursued by men who are trafficked and females who are trafficked?

5. What do you know or have learned about the characteristics of people who get into human trafficking?

6. Tell me more about what you have learned from social work education about the dynamics of the relationship between a victim and their trafficker?

Part IA

In the next section, this researcher will ask about the psychological impact and the aftermath of human trafficking.

7: Tell me what you know or have learned about the after-effects of human trafficking?

8: Tell me what you know or have learned about some of the mental health symptoms in human trafficking victims?

9: What have you been told by victims of human trafficking about the reasons why they stay with their trafficker?

10: Tell me about any difficulty you experienced while forming a therapeutic alliance with a victim of human trafficking?

11. Tell me what you know or have learned about the psychological impacts (cognitive and behavioral functioning) that are associated with human trafficking?

Part II. Demographic Questions

In this last section, the researcher will ask for basic demographic information about you. This information was kept confidential.

1. Do you currently work with or have a history of working with victims of human trafficking?

- A) Yes
- B) No

2. How long have you held a Master of Social Work degree?

3: What is your gender?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female
- 3) Non- binary

4: What is your ethnicity?

- A) American Indian or Alaska Native
- B) Asian
- C) White

- D) Black or African American
 - E) Hispanic or Latino
 - F) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
-
-

5: What is your level of education?

- A) Master of Social Work
 - B) Ph.D.
 - C) Other
-

6: If enrolled in school, what level of education are you currently at?

- A) Another Bachelor's degree
 - B) Another Master's Degree
 - C) DSW
 - D) Ph.D.
 - E) Psy.D.
 - F) Other
-

7: What is the setting that you work in?

- A) Child Welfare
 - B) Domestic Violence
 - C) Homeless Shelter
 - D) Administration
 - E) Education
 - F) Private Practice
 - G) Health
 - H) Other
-
-

8. What is your age?

- A) 21years- 35 years
 - B) 35 years- 55 years
 - C) 55 or older
-
-

This concludes chapter six. We will discuss the limitations of the study in chapter seven.

Appendix C

Mental Health Resources

Recalling trauma or work with a vulnerable population can possibly lead to suppressed feelings of anger, anxiety, or sadness. Please feel free to reach out to me at **917-932-6646** if you wish to talk or need information about additional mental health resources.

Below are some resources to assist with trauma or mental health needs:

Yeshiva University Counseling Center

Address: 500 W 185 St, New York, NY 10033

Contact: 646-592-4200

The counseling center is temporarily remote and open between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

Samaritans 24-Hour Crisis Hotline

Contact information: 212-673-3000

This hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides free crisis support.

Mentalhealth.gov

Phone number: 877-726-4727

This hotline is available between 8 am – 8 pm EST to provide mental health information and treatment referrals.

Crisis Text Line:

Text HOME to 741741. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides free crisis support and information via text.

Lines for life

Contact information: 800-273-8255

This hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides free crisis support and information.

Appendix D

May 5, 2021

Nancy Beckerman, MSW
Yeshiva University
2495 Amsterdam Avenue, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10033

Dear Dr. Beckerman:

SUBJECT: IRB EXEMPTION—REGULATORY OPINION
Investigator: Nancy Beckerman, MSW
Protocol Title: Social Workers' Knowledge of the Psychological Impact
of the Aftermath of Human Trafficking : A Grounded
Theory Approach

This is in response to your request for an exempt status determination for the above-referenced protocol. WCG IRB's IRB Affairs Department reviewed the study under the Common Rule and applicable guidance.

We believe the study is exempt under 45 CFR § 46.104(d)(2), because the research only includes interactions involving educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior; and the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

This exemption determination can apply to multiple sites, but it does not apply to any institution that has an institutional policy of requiring an entity other than WCG IRB (such as an internal IRB) to make exemption determinations. WCG IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions. You are responsible for ensuring that each site to which this exemption applies can and will accept WCG IRB's exemption decision.

WCG IRB's determination of an Exemption only applies to US regulations; it does not apply to regulations or determinations for research conducted outside of the US. Please discuss with the local IRB authorities in the country where this activity is taking place to determine if local IRB review is required.

Please note that any future changes to the project may affect its exempt status, and you may want to contact WCG IRB about the effect these changes may have on the exemption status before implementing them. WCG IRB does not impose an expiration date on its IRB exemption determinations.

If you have any questions, or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Tara Coffin, PhD, MEd, at 360-252-2418, or e-mail RegulatoryAffairs@wirb.com.

TBC:dao

D2 Exemption – Beckerman (05-05-2021)

cc: WCG IRB Accounting

WCG IRB Work Order #1-1430709-1