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SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS KNOWLEDGE ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of

Social Work

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by

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ABSTRACT

Human Trafficking is the modern-day equivalent of slavery. Those who perpetuate it do so because it is lucrative to invest in a product that can be resold multiple times (Ellis, 2017). The recent advancement of technology has tremendously helped traffickers thrive in the illicit business of Human Trafficking. Social media websites, online classifieds, and mobile applications are quickly becoming some of the major mediums perpetrators utilize to traffick their victims (Latonero, 2012). The purpose of this study was to examine social service workers' knowledge on the use of technology for Human Trafficking. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and the participants were asked a series of open-ended questions. Participants in this study were recruited from a social service agency in San Bernardino County that frequently serves survivors of Human Trafficking. The study found that all of the participants felt confident in their ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking. The study also found that most participants had little to no training in regards to the topic, and did not have any knowledge of the kind of language used by perpetrators for Human Trafficking.

In order to address the different components of the issue, social service workers should advocate for trainings in order to stay competent in regards to the issue. Social service agencies who serve the community must offer appropriate interventions and services for Human Trafficking survivors. Finally, social service workers should continue to advocate for legislature and policy that will help survivors recover versus legislation and policy that is punitive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will define and discuss the issues surrounding Human Trafficking, it's current prevalence and, the relevance it has to social work policy and practice. The purpose of the study will be introduced, which is to determine social service workers ability to identify instances of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking.

Problem Statement

Often times when Americans hear the words Human Trafficking, they think of distant places such as China, Russia, or the Philippines. Many are unaware that Human Trafficking occurs in the US and for some, it happens blocks away from where they live. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (2017), as of June 30th of this year California has had 705 substantiated cases of Human Trafficking out of 2,171 reports.

California legislation defines Human Trafficking as forced labor or sexual exploitation by means of intimidation, fraud, or "slavery-like conditions" (The State of California Department of Justice, 2017). In simple terms Human Trafficking is the modern-day equivalent of slavery. No matter the term ascribed, it is illegal and punishable by state and federal laws to own another human being. This, however, does not prevent perpetrators of trafficking from recruiting and

harboring individuals for the purpose of financially benefiting from their exploitation.

Those who perpetuate Human Trafficking, also known as traffickers, have transitioned from trafficking drugs and weapons to trafficking people because it is more lucrative to invest in a product that can be resold multiple times (Ellis, 2017). Those who traffick drugs or weapons will profit once for each item. Those who traffick people can profit anywhere from 5-7 times per day for each person, indefinitely (Ellis, 2017). This is an enormous increase in profits, which is the reason that many traffickers and organized gangs have transitioned over to trafficking people (Ellis, 2017).

Traffickers recruit their victims by first identifying a vulnerability. Vulnerable populations that are prime targets for trafficking include undocumented immigrants, and those with a low socioeconomic status (Panigabutra-Roberts, 2012). Those who are at even greater risk among these populations are females and minors (Child Welfare Gateway, 2015; National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2017; Panigabutra-Roberts, 2012). Once the trafficker has identified vulnerability and their victim has been successfully recruited, they will later use that to keep them indentured.

Victims rarely attempt to escape from their traffickers because they often entrap them with psychological and physical manipulation tactics that include: fear, isolation, threats towards their loved ones, and physical/ sexual abuse (Logan et al., 2009). Fear characteristics are often rooted in many of the other

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tactics. For instance, victims are fearful to leave their trafficker because they often threaten physical harm and even death towards the victim's friends and family members (Logan et al., 2009). They may also be fearful of being physically beaten or sexually assaulted should they be caught attempting to leave (Logan et al., 2009). Traffickers isolate their victims from everyone they knew prior to being recruited (Logan et al., 2009). This makes the victim dependent on their trafficker for affection, money, and interpersonal interaction.

For those who are undocumented, they are first promised the possibility of gaining citizenship. Once the trafficker has successfully recruited the individual, they keep them entrapped by threatening to report them to deportation and immigration agencies (Panigabutra-Roberts, 2012). The individuals never get the opportunity to apply for citizenship and it is likely they remain victim to their traffickers. Those who have a low socioeconomic status are lured in with promises of money, and a more affluent lifestyle, but they never actually receive any of the money they were promised (Panigabutra-Roberts, 2012). Females and minors are enticed with false love and affection from the trafficker (Ellis, 2017). In these instances, psychological and physical manipulation does not occur until the trafficker has secured the victim's recruitment.

Victims of Human Trafficking not only refrain from any escape attempts, but they also do not attempt to seek help from outside individuals or agencies because they perceive themselves to be perpetrators of a crime. This is because of their immigration status, they may be engaging in prostitution, and for having

run away from their parent's home (Panigabutra-Roberts, 2012). They do not realize that they are actually victims because of the negative stigmas surrounding immigration status as well as the stigmas surrounding victims of sexual exploitation (Logan et al., 2009).

It is difficult to identify and provide for the needs of the individuals in the US who are actively being trafficked due to the tactics and methods by which traffickers operate (Panigabutra-Roberts, 2012). However, it is estimated that there will be thousands of individuals who will be trafficked by the end of this year (Farrell, A., & Fahy, S., 2009; O'Neill-Richard, A., 1999; U.S. Department of State, 2004, 2008, & 2016). A study conducted by the Child Welfare Gateway (2015) indicates that the likeliness that social service workers in California will come into contact with children or their family members who are actively being trafficked is relatively high. For this reason, it is imperative that social service workers be trained in regards to recent trends, specifically the increased use of technology for trafficking.

Technology has advanced tremendously in the past 15 years. While a great deal of these advancements benefit daily life activities, they have also contributed to the advancement of illicit activities. Human Trafficking is no exception. Social media websites, online classifieds, and mobile applications are quickly becoming some of the major mediums perpetrators of Human Trafficking are utilizing to traffic their victims (Latonero, 2012). Perpetrators are also using cellphones, and mobile applications to control, and monitor the lives of their

victims. Without proper education in regards to technology-facilitated Human

Trafficking, it could be difficult to detect when a person has become a victim

(Ellis, 2017). Therefore, it is imperative to assess to what extent social service

workers knowledge is on the use of technology for Human Trafficking.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine social service workers

knowledge on the use of technology for Human Trafficking. It is imperative that

social service workers be trained in this regard because they are likely to interact

with victims of Human Trafficking far more than any other professional (The Child

Welfare Gateway, 2015). Social service workers who are able to appropriately

identify and assist a victim may provide their only opportunity to escape, since it

is more likely that victims will not attempt or seek help on their own (Logan et al.,

2009). This study will examine the training methods used at a social service

agency to determine what are effective practices for detecting technology-

facilitated Human Trafficking in order to share these practices with other

agencies who work with victims. The intentions behind sharing best practices

among agencies who serve victims is the hope to reduce the instances that

vulnerable individuals will be exploited.

Face-to-face interviews with the participants will provide the most candid

and uninfluenced information. Therefore, the researchers have created an

instrument designed with open-ended questions for face-to-face interviews. The

subjects who will be interviewed are employed at a local social service agency

that regularly serves survivors of Human Trafficking in San Bernardino County. The research instrument that will be used in this study will measure the subjects ability to identify victims of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking. The study will be qualitative, which will give the researchers insight into what practices are most efficient.

Significance for Social Work Practice

At its core, Human Trafficking is a social justice issue that all social service workers should be properly trained on. Not only because of the enormity of the issue, but because Assembly Bill 2810(i) states that the responsibility of remaining up to date on how to identify victims of Human Trafficking, and provide for their needs is that of law enforcement officials, legal personnel, and social service workers. The reason for this recent legislation was to improve current trainings for social service workers with the intentions that it would prevent future instances of Human Trafficking.

Law enforcement and legal professionals typically work with survivors of Human Trafficking once they have been removed from their trafficker's control (Morton, 2016). The Child Welfare Gateway (2015) study estimates that 50-80% of those who are trafficked in the US were involved with a social service agency in some capacity during the time they were being trafficked. Since social service workers are more likely to come into contact with victims of Human Trafficking while they are still under a trafficker's control, it is imperative that their training on

identifying victims be current, especially in regards to technology-facilitated

trafficking (The Child Welfare Gateway, 2015).

In order to comply with California legislation, protect the community from

future instances of Human Trafficking, and uphold the values and ethics of the

National Association of Social Workers local social service agencies must ensure

their paid staff and volunteers are properly trained in measures of identifying

whether or not the clients they serve are victims of Human Trafficking. Should

such agencies be found to be sufficiently trained in this regard, their training

curriculum could be used in other social service agencies whose staff are not as

efficiently trained. This will greatly influence social service worker's ability to

directly intervene in their clients' lives should they ever become victims of Human

Trafficking.

The findings of this study will help assess what training methods for social

work practice are most effective in regards to detecting the use of technology for

Human Trafficking. This is will contribute to social work practice by ensuring that

social service workers are efficiently trained in regards to the specific kinds of

issues the populations they serve will encounter. Ensuring that social service

providers have proper training in regards to the use of technology for Human

Trafficking also directly aligns with the National Associations of Social Workers

Code of Ethics and policies. This study will contribute to social work policy, by

encouraging administers to ensure that there is a minimum level of training for

social service workers who are likely to work with populations at-risk of becoming

victims of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking. This study will contribute to the limited amount of research on this topic, and it will also encourage other researchers to examine the issue. For that purpose, the question should be asked how much knowledge do social service workers posses in regards to the use of technology in the instances of Human Trafficking?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter describes different literature reviews in connection to Human Trafficking and technology. The first section discusses background information on the use of technology and Human Trafficking. The second section describes issues relating to Human Trafficking and technology. The last section discusses the different theories in relation to Human Trafficking. At this time there is limited research on the relation of Human Trafficking and technology.

Background on Technology and Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking has been a problem in society for years. But the use of technology for Human Trafficking has become a growing problem in current society. The market of online technology has given traffickers the opportunity to target a larger amount of victims and the chance to promote their trafficking business across geographic boundaries (Latonero, 2012). Tidball, Zheng, and Creswell (2015) stated that technology has altered the ease, access and efficiency in the ways that people can buy and sell victims of Human Trafficking.

Latonero conducted an on-going study from the years of 2011 to 2015 on the role that social network sites and classified ads play when it comes to facilitating Human Trafficking (2011). To gather information for his research Latonero used exploratory studies gathered by the Annenberg Center. The

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Annenberg Center gathered data through a series of literature reviews based on research relating to technology and Human Trafficking. There were two key findings discovered in Latonero's study. One key finding was that the role that mobile devices and social networks play in Human Trafficking is increasing (2015). Another key finding that was discovered was that the facilitation of Human Trafficking is being used across online sites and digital platforms (2015). In Latonero research he notes that as the use of technology rises in the world the risk of being solicited for Human Trafficking increases (2015). In 2015, "79% of the population in the United States used the Internet and half of those users had at least once social media website" (Latonero, 2015). There is evidence from legal cases that prove certain Internet sites, social networks, and mainstreams sites have been used for Human Trafficking (Latonero, 2015).

Tidball, Zheng, and Creswell (2015) conducted a qualitative study about buying girls online for sex. This study used a mixture of 38 non-government organizational representatives (NGO), law enforcement officials, and public officials as the participants. From this study Tidball et at., found the different forms of technology being used online for Human Trafficking included cell phones, websites, social network sites, mobile applications and laptops (2015). Some of the websites buyers used to order the kind of girl they wanted were "Myredbook, Backpage, Craigslist, and USA Sex Guide" (Tidball et al., 2015). The way girls are bought and advertised online is based on certain terminology; for example the words "addict, college girl, flowers, fresh and hot lizards are used

in reference to young girls; and the word "rabbit" is used in reference to older

girls (Tidball et al., 2015). To advertise sex the words "adult, entertainment,

escort, parties, and sex" are used (Tidball et al., 2015). These different forms of

technology and the terminology use make it easier for buyers to gain access to

Human Trafficking victims while being able to remain anonymous (Tidball et al.,

2015). Tidball et al, also states that the "increased use of technology and the

high rates of trafficking minors leads to a need to better understand how Human

Trafficking victims are being purchased online" (2015, p. 54).

Issues Relating to Human Trafficking and the Use of Technology

According to Federal agencies, United States has a high rate in the sex

trafficking of minors (Small, 2012). Internet websites and social media sites are

platforms used in some of the trafficking cases in small states in the United

States where minors are involved in one-third of sex trafficking (Small, 2012).

Technology makes communication easy to where it can alter an individual's life;

and can be used as a supply and demand tool.

The advancement of technology plays an impactful role on Human

Trafficking. In Latonero's on-going exploratory study he found that minors who

have been involved with Human Trafficking mentioned technology tools like

websites and devices, as a source for engaging in trafficking services (2012).

Some of these networks include Xbox Live, Facebook, text messages, classified

ads, escort websites, and a variety of other popular websites (Latonero, 2012).

Sexual exploitation and abuse can happen and be accessed in minutes due to the easy access of having a cellphone, laptop, and internet (Hughes, 2001). Hughes conducted a report on the negative aspects of how a global revolution has been created through the use of technology (2001). Hughes gathered information through interviews with a variety of participants. The participants were "law enforcement officials,researchers of trafficking, prostitution,pornography and child sex abuse, computer industry consultants, and written reports from law enforcement personnel" (Hughes, 2001). The participant also consisted of "researchers and NGOS, media news stories, written material from men on the internet and original research from the internet" (Hughes, 2001). Hughes mentions the people she interviewed lacked knowledge in technology of Human Trafficking, such as the way it is used for Human Trafficking and due to this fact she could only gather partial information needed for her study (2001). But they were expertises in computer crime, such as hacking and economic, and visa fraud in relation to Human Trafficking (Hughes, 2001).

Hughe's discusses how the advancement of there are sites created specifically to stalk and sexual exploit women and minors; on these websites the women and children are recruited by pimps and traffickers (2001). Traffickers are able to use tools such as text, video chat, webcams, live video, and file sharing to reach a larger audience (Hughes, 2001, p.9). Perpetrators can mix old techniques such as emails and the mail with new technologies such as, websites

and different media outlets, to expand their Human Trafficking business (Hughes, 2001, p.6).

Thakor and Boyd (2013) conducted a study on the role that "network technologies" plays in the use for trafficking in the United States. They gathered their data through semi structured two hour phone interviews and the participants were made up of 12 anti-trafficking advocates from different organizations throughout the United States (Thakor and Boyd, 2013). Eleven out of 12 of the participants were women and all of the participants were expertise in the influencers of sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation but they also shared that they lacked the expertise on the use of technology for Human Trafficking (Thakor and Boyd, 2013, p.281). During their research Thakor and Boyd (2013) discovered that technology has changed different expressions of sex trafficking. Technology has changed the different ways traffickers can exploit and purchase Human Trafficking victims (Thakor and Boyd, 2013, p.286). With the growth of social media sites mixed with the use of mobile devices information sharing in regards to Human Trafficking has become easier.

Small (2012) researched a differing view on technology and Human Trafficking. She focused on the film industry and documentations that highlights the world of Human Trafficking (2012). Small (2012) researched four different documentaries about Human Trafficking throughout the world for her report. The four films she studied were "Lilja 4-Ever (2002), Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids (2004), and Human Trafficking (2005)," (Small, 2012). Small

reported how the films all had a common theme; which was that the victims in the film represented youth and femininity and that their sexuality haunts them (Small, 2012). Even though the films are about the ugly realities of Human Trafficking, Small also describes how films on Human Trafficking can impact the viewers both in a positive way (Small, 2012). Human Trafficking films can impact the viewers in a positive because watching documentaries on the issues of Human Trafficking can get society thinking about the issue, asking questions, and bring awareness (Small, 2012).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Rational choice theory is quite relevant for understanding the issues of the use of technology for Human Trafficking. Rational choice theory gained popularity in the 1970s and is used to describe criminal behavior. Rational choice theory explains that, "criminals use reason to decide to commit a crime after looking at all the risk and benefits of doing that crime" (Hellriegel, 1995, p.29). Criminals look at what they can gain from committing a crime, the severity of punishment if they get caught, and the value that can be gained when they commit the crime. Traffickers use rationale to assist the risk and benefits of trafficking; they consider the fact that there's already a supply of potential victims, a market for trafficking, high profits and low risks of being caught. Traffickers consider if they have the proper skills, knowledge, and power to commit the act successfully (Hellriegel, 1995. p. 29).

In Gerassi (2015) the author mentioned how Reid (as cited in Reid, 2012, p. 8) connected the life course theory to the victims in sex trafficking. A person's life stage is influenced by victimization; meaning harmful events or experiences in childhood or adolescence creates a desire to be accepted and loved. These desires mixed with the combination of curiosity about sex and the need for money can result a girl to enter into a sex industry such as Human Trafficking (Gerassi, 2017 p. 8). Traffickers can solicit victims by offering them the chance to meet their desires while coming off as sincere and caring. Traffickers can reach a broader market of people who may have these desires of acceptance, love, and guidance, through use of technology.

Economic theory is that individuals make decisions about criminal activities, in similar ways that they make decisions about non-criminal activities (Lutya and Lanier, 2012). In economic theory a crime may be committed if the rewards of that crime are greater than a non-illegal crime. Human Trafficking happens when a trafficker expects to gain more rewards and benefits than he/she would if they did not partake in Human Trafficking. (Lutya and Lanier, 2012). Traffickers also use technology to maximize their benefits and rewards (i.e money). Technology gives traffickers the opportunity to reach a larger clientele and scope for victims without the high risk getting caught.

Summary

The use of technology for Human Trafficking is a growing problem. This is due to the fact that this is a newer problem in society there is limited research

that has been conducted about this problem. There is a need for more research

on the use of technology being used for Human Trafficking because this is an

ethical problem that affects a vulnerable population.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter details the methods and procedures that was used to conduct this study. In specific, this chapter describes the study's design, the sampling population, the process in which data was collected and the instruments used, steps to ensure the protection of the human subjects, and the methods in which the data will be analyzed.

Study Design

In recent years, the use of technology in Human Trafficking has increased but the amount of research on the subject has not. As a result, this study attempts to examine social service workers' preparedness to identify Human Trafficking facilitated by the use of technology.

This study used a qualitative design to collect data. A face-to-face, semi-structured, and open-ended questionnaire interview guide was used. Participants was interviewed in person, given a debriefing statement that listed the purpose of the study, and participants was also provided with an informed consent form and was required to sign an X on the informed consent form. Due to the sensitivity of the issue of Human Trafficking and the confidentiality measures that must be taken by agencies who serve survivors of Human Trafficking, availability sampling criteria was the most practical for this study. The participating agency

has 28 paid and unpaid staff. It was anticipated that at least half of those staff members would participate in the study, which would provide about 14 participants. Only 8 out of the 28 paid and unpaid staff was able to participate in this study.

The rationale for using a qualitative study included: the limited number of available participants, limited time frame, and the exploratory nature of the study. This design also provided participants with the opportunity to freely answer questions without being guided or influenced in their responses.

Despite the obvious strengths of the study, there were also limitations. The first being that the number of available subjects willing to participate in this study was small due the limited access to professionals who work with survivors of Human Trafficking. Since the sample size is small, the findings cannot be generalized on a larger scale. The study will, however, encourage other researchers to research this topic in regards to Human Trafficking.

Another limitation was the open-ended structure of the interview questions which allowed for participants to share as much information as they felt comfortable with sharing. It was possible that some participants might omit relevant information for a number of reasons: fear of their identity being exposed, or they will not recognize the potential importance of such information.

In order to address this limitation the researchers assured participants that their identity would remain anonymous. They also informed the participants that there were no correct or incorrect responses and the participants was

encouraged to share all information regardless of their perceived importance of such information. The research question that was explored in this study was: what are social service workers' knowledge of the use of technology for Human Trafficking?

Sampling

Due to the vulnerability of Human Trafficking survivors, access to professionals who work with them was limited, which is why availability sampling was used. Participants in this study were recruited from a social service agency located in San Bernardino County that frequently serves survivors of Human Trafficking. Participants who were eligible for the study were social service providers who work with Human Trafficking victims and who resided in San Bernardino County. Access to participants was obtained and granted through written consent from the Executive Director. This agency is made up of paid and unpaid staff personnel. Ten participants were selected from the agency based upon availability.

Data Collection

The data was collected through face-to-face oral interviews by the use of semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix A). The questions were formatted in an open-ended structure. The instrument used was based off of the instruments used in two qualitative Human Trafficking studies (Nibo, 2016; Wangsnes, 2014). A strength as a result of using this instrument is that it allows

participants the opportunity to freely respond without being guided or influenced by the interviewer. But this also poses a potential limitation in that participants may omit relevant information to the study. This limitation was addressed by ensuring participants that their responses will remain anonymous. Testing and re-testing for reliability is unknown at this time.

The questions in this instrument were based off of 4 themes including: 1) demographic information; 2) social service workers' training and preparedness to serve Human Trafficking survivors; 3) social service workers' knowledge of Human Trafficking terminology and language; and 4) social service workers ability to identify trends in the use of technology for Human Trafficking. Participants were asked five demographic questions that included age, gender, ethnicity, years of work experience, and highest level of education completed.

Procedures

The first step in beginning this qualitative study was to obtain written permission to conduct the study at a non-profit counseling agency in San Bernardino County. The executive director was given a detailed research proposal describing the purpose of the study. Once written permission was obtained, paid and unpaid staff members of the counseling agency who have been trained in regards to working with survivors of Human Trafficking was asked to participate in this research study. Each participant was given a letter of introduction, and an informed consent form prior to the interview. Face-to-face

interview took place and a debriefing statement was given between the dates March 1 through March 14th of 2018.

The introductory letter (Appendix C) explains the nature and purpose of the study. It also notified the participants that their responses will remain anonymous, should they be fearful to openly answer the interview questions. Participants were interviewed in person with a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A) at the counseling agency in San Bernardino between the dates of March 1st through March 14th of 2018. Researchers numbered each participant's set of numbers to ensure the integrity of the responses and the anonymity of the participants.

Consent to partake in the research study was gained through the use of an informed consent form (Appendix B). Participants were informed of the purpose of using participants, risk and benefits to participants. Participants were instructed to either "check" or "X" on the form in order to express their consent to voluntarily participant in this study. Additionally, during the face-to-face interviews participants were not asked to reveal any identifying information, such as: their names, birthdate, address of residence, telephone number, and so forth. The semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A) contains 16 open-ended questions. Each face-to-face interview took approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. Once the participants answered each question, they were given a debriefing statement, which they may keep for their records.

Protections of Human Subjects

Despite direct questioning, participants' responses will remain anonymous. Each participant was assigned a number between 1 and 8, and no identifying information was collected at the time of the study. This ensures confidentiality for each participant because the answers were gathered and labeled with a number, instead of being labeled with identifying information. The researchers securely stored the data that was collected, and neither the agency employers nor the participants had access to the data. Once the study was completed, all of the data collected was destroyed.

Participants were informed about the nature of the study; they were made aware that this study is focusing on questions about Human Trafficking and their awareness on how technology is being used for Human Trafficking. Participants signed the informed consent with either a check or "X mark" stating they have read the informed consent. Each participant was given a copy of the debriefing statement, which states the purpose of the study.

One risk of this study is that the participants may feel like they are not fully aware on how technology can be used for Human Trafficking. Another risk is due to the nature of the study the participants may feel overwhelmed about answering the questions in the study. A benefit of the study is that the participants may realize they need to be more informed on the use of technology within Human Trafficking so that they can better help their clients. Another benefit

of the study may be that the agency may include training on the use of

technology for Human Trafficking to create stronger more informed staff.

Data Analysis

A qualitative data analysis technique was used to analyze the data. The

responses will be transcribed during the interview and later analyzed. Through

analysis the last three themes will be explored: 2) the social service workers'

training and preparedness to serve Human Trafficking survivors; 3) social service

workers' knowledge of Human Trafficking terminology and language; and 4) the

social service workers ability to identify trends in the use of technology for

Human Trafficking. These themes will be evaluated and interpreted through first

and second-level coding.

Summary

Chapter three identifies the purpose of the study, which is to evaluate the

training methods used to prepare social service workers for working with

survivors of Human Trafficking. This study used a qualitative design to collect

data and a face-to-face open-ended questionnaire guide was used. The

participants were selected from a social service agency located within San

Bernardino County, who employees works that work with Human Trafficking

victims. Each of the participants received an informed consent form about the

nature of the study and a debriefing statement. The participants' identities will

remain anonymous. The data collected for this study will then be analyzed by

using a qualitative method.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to determine social service workers knowledge of the use of technology for Human Trafficking. This chapter will discuss the responses the participants gave to the 16 questions asked of them. The researchers will first present the demographic information of the eight participants. Following that, the researchers will examine the social service workers knowledge of the issue of Human Trafficking and how technology is used to facilitate it. Next, the researchers will examine the amount of training the participants have completed in regards to detecting Human Trafficking survivors. Finally, the researchers will review the participants' suggestions for addressing the issue of the use of technology for Human Trafficking.

Presentation of Findings

There were eight participants in this study. Seven of the participants self-identified with feminine pronouns and one participant self-identified with masculine pronouns. The participants ranged in age from 21 years old to 51 years old, with the average age being 27 years old. Sixty-two percent of the participants identified as Hispanic, 25% identified as Multiracial, and 12% identified as Native American. When asked about their level of education, 62% of the participants said they had completed some college, 25% stated that they

were a college graduate with a Bachelor's degree, and 12% stated that they were a post-baccalaureate graduate with a Master's degree. All (100%) of the participants stated that they were certified crisis intervention counselors in the state of California and regularly offered crisis intervention services to the San Bernardino County Community. The average time the participants had been employed with the agency was a year and a half.

The participants were then asked to define Human Trafficking in their own words. Their responses varied. However, all eight participants agreed that Human Trafficking was something that occurs between people. Five of the participants stated that it involves components of coercion. For example, one participant said, "Human Trafficking is a type of coercion that lures people in whether it be by physical restraints or mental manipulation." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Four of the participants stated that the victims of Human Trafficking are used for labor and sexual acts. For example, "it just means a person using people against their will and without their consent for deeds, services, or labor and they do not profit from these things." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Two of the participants defined Human Trafficking as involving the purchase and selling of people. For example, the third participant said, "[It is] the purchase and selling of human beings." (personal correspondence, March 2018)

Followed by that, the participants were asked how confident they were in their ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking. The majority of the

participants stated that they felt fairly confident in their ability. For example, one participant replied, "I'll say relatively confident." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Another participant stated, "I feel very confident in serving survivors of Human Trafficking." (personal correspondence, March 2018)

The participants were asked about the types of trainings they had completed in regards to detecting trafficked survivors, five participants stated that they had some training. For example, one participant said, "Roughly two to four hours of Human Trafficking training and then [my] independent research on Human Trafficking, but no formalized training." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Two participants stated they had no training. One of those participants said, "I would be honest and say I have not had a whole lot of training, and unless the person brings it up, I would not know that they were or are victims of Human Trafficking." (personal correspondence, March 2018) One of the participants stated they had a lot of training, which consisted of attending Human Trafficking seminars, listening to educational webinars, and reading books on the topic. They said,

> I would attend a lot of community events, which trained [people]...I listen to a lot of seminars by Opal Singleton, who is an expert. She has tons and tons of podcasts about Human Trafficking, so I will listen to those. I also read books on my own. (personal correspondence, March 2018)

The participants were then asked to list the common methods by which people are recruited into Human Trafficking. All of the participants listed several

methods by which victims are recruited. A majority of them listed either a promise of money or gifts as one of those methods. Participant four said, " For example, perpetrators will use money to convince the girls to get involved." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Two participants mentioned peer recruitment as another method. One of those participants said, "Another way is having someone who is the same age as [the victim] showing them the benefits of living that lifestyle, and getting them involved in Human Trafficking that way." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Two other participants mentioned that children in the foster care system are especially likely to be recruited. In regards to that, participant one said, "Foster children are [at a] high risk because they are always taught they have to do things in order to be accepted. So they become good targets for pimps." (personal correspondence, March 2018)

When the participants were asked to discuss the risk factors that lead to Human Trafficking, they all agreed vulnerability was the greatest risk factor. Though each one described vulnerability as lacking a specific resource such as: money, shelter, a support system, and/or a stable family system. For example, participant eight said, " I think the risk factors would be not being able to have the correct resources, or victims not knowing the resources that they have, and feeling that they need to go that route." (personal correspondence, March 2018)

The participants were asked to describe what a typical recruiter looks like in their own words. Seven of the participants expressed that they believe there are no specific types of physical characteristics that make a person more or less

likely a recruiter of Human Trafficking. One participant said, "...I don't think there are any physical features. Like it could be any person, either gender, and any race or age." (personal correspondence, March 2018) The fifth participant explained that they believed most recruiters of Human Trafficking are males.

The participants were asked to explain their knowledge on the use of technology for Human Trafficking. Seven of the participants said that they were aware of the use of social media for recruiting victims. One participant said, " ...Snapchat, Instagram, and things like that are used to recruit girls into Human Trafficking." (personal correspondence, March 2018) Other participants discussed the use of online websites for the advertisement of trafficked victims. Participant two stated, "They [perpetrators] set up an ad on Backpage or Craigslist, or other sites that are similar, to advertise their victims or escorts." (personal correspondence, March 2018)

When asked what age range is most vulnerable to being recruited for Human Trafficking by the use of technology, all of the participants said that teenagers were at the greatest risk. Participant two stated,

> I would think it would be teenagers. Probably like 12 to 16 years old. They would seem like the most vulnerable because they are just accepting of anything online. They are just too willing to try anything online. (personal correspondence, March 2018)

When the participants were asked about their awareness in regards to the language commonly used by perpetrators/recruiters of Human Trafficking on

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social media all of the participants said they had no knowledge. For example, participant number five said, "probably not as much as I should, but I think that I would have a general knowledge of it." (personal correspondence, March 2018)

Finally, the participants were asked what they believed was the best method for addressing the issue of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking. Seven out of the eight participants suggested that awareness about the issue would be the best way to address technology-facilitated Human Trafficking. Participant number three advised,

> Probably just try to look for the warning signs, try to spread awareness to those who are not aware to the issues, and just remaining aware of those you associate [with]. Human Trafficking can happen to anyone whether its male or female, or rich or poor, it can happen to literally anyone. (personal correspondence, March 2018)

Summary

In this chapter the researchers employed a qualitative data analysis approach in order to analyze the participants' responses. Characteristics of the demographics indicate that there is an underrepresentation of male presenting social service workers and an overrepresentation of Latino identifying social service workers. The study also found that all (100%) of the participants felt confident in their ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking. Furthermore, the study revealed that 62% of the participants said they had some training in regards to the topic of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking. Finally, the study

found that 87% of those interviewed believed that the best method for addressing

the issue of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking was creating awareness in

the community in regards to the issue.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter examines the key findings and their importance in regards to the Social Work field. The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research on this topic will be presented and discussed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with recommendations for Social Work practice, and policy.

Discussion

The purpose of the study is to examine social service workers knowledge on the use of technology for Human Trafficking. The study found that all of the participants were confident in their ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking. There is currently no previous research that examines this topic. However, future researchers should explore this topic in order to determine how social service workers' confidence levels in their abilities affect their ability to serve their clients

Despite being confident in their ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking, the study also found that 88% of the participants had received some or no training in regards to the issue. This is contradictory to their feelings of confidence in their ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking. It also demonstrates that there is no basis for their confidence. Ross-Sheriff and Orne (2015) found that it is imperative that social service workers be trained in regards to the topic of Human Trafficking. According to Ross-Sheriff and Orne (2015), it is

difficult to identify survivors of Human Trafficking due to the secrecy and lucrative

nature of the industry. Social service workers must be thoroughly trained on the

issue of Human Trafficking so that they can detect any victims they come into

contact with. Their level of training directly impacts their knowledge of behavioral,

linguistic, and physical cues that an individual is actively being trafficked. Without

such training, social service providers may be unaware if they were to ever come

into contact with victims of Human Trafficking.

Furthermore, the study found that the participants did not have any

knowledge of the kind of language used by perpetrators of Human Trafficking.

This is also contradictory to their confidence levels in their ability to serve

survivors of Human Trafficking. It also directly impacts the participants' ability to

detect potential Human Trafficking survivors who may be referring to themselves

using this kind of terminology. This finding is consistent with the study of Tidball

et al. study (2015) that found that specific terminology was used when traffickers

were advertising online and on social media sites. These terms make it easier for

people to find ads and profiles online. It also helps the Johns access traffickers

while keeping their identities anonymous (Tidball et al., 2015). Tidball et al. also

stated that it is important to be aware of the kind of methods and languages used

by traffickers so that they may not go undetected (2015).

Finally, the study revealed that the participants had knowledge of the

different kinds of technology used for recruitment and advertisement of Human

Trafficking. When asked if they were aware of the use of technology for Human

Trafficking, many of the participants listed the following social media sites: Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram as sites that traffickers use for recruitment and advertisement purposes. The participants also had knowledge on what kinds of websites are used for Human Trafficking such as Craigslist and Backpage. This is consistent with findings in the Tidball, Zheng, and Creswell (2015) study. The researchers concluded that cell phones, websites, social networking sites, mobile applications and laptops are being used online for recruitment and advertisement of Human Trafficking. The study also found that the common websites used by traffickers and Johns were "myredbook, backpage, craigslist, and USA Sex Guide" (Tidball et al., 2015, p. 54).

Limitations of Study

Upon further examination of the data, there were a few limitations uncovered in this research study. One limitation was the small sample size, which prevents the findings from being generalized on a large scale. This was due to limited access to social service practitioners who work with Human Trafficking survivors. Another limitation was that only one agency was utilized to recruit participants. This resulted in the findings being specific to one agency's culture and training practices on the issue of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking. Had some of the participants been recruited from other agencies within San Bernardino County this would have resulted in more diverse perceptions and opinions on the topic.

The final limitation was the lack of probing questions. This prevented participants from elaborating and expanding on some of the questions that were asked of them. As a result, some of the participants provided very brief, and vague responses. For example, the question, "How confident are you in your ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking?" could have been followed by a question which asked the participants if they felt as though the trainings they have completed contributed to their level of confidence. The inclusion of more probing questions could have provided more insight into the participants' knowledge of technology-facilitated Human Trafficking.

Implications for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Technology-facilitated Human Trafficking is an ever-growing issue in San Bernardino County. It is imperative that social service workers be trained in this regard because they are likely to interact with victims of Human Trafficking far more than any other professional (The Child Welfare Gateway, 2015). Social service workers who are able to appropriately identify and assist a victim may provide their only opportunity to escape, since it is more likely that victims will not attempt or seek help on their own (Logan et al., 2009). This study examined the training methods used at a social service agency to determine what are effective practices for detecting technology-facilitated Human Trafficking in order to share these practices with other agencies who work with these victims. The intentions behind sharing best practices among agencies who serve victims is the hope to reduce the instances that vulnerable individuals will be exploited.

In order to address the different components of the issue, social service workers should advocate for regularly scheduled, and mandated trainings in order to stay competent in regards to Human Trafficking. There should also be a shift from intervention methods to prevention methods. Social service workers should focus on preventative measures because it will greatly reduce the number of those impacted by Human Trafficking. Social service agencies who serve the community must be diligent and dedicated to offering their clients the most appropriate interventions and services for Human Trafficking survivors. They can ensure that they do this by committing to provide competency trainings for their staff. Finally, social workers should continue to advocate for legislature and policy that will help survivors recover versus legislation and policy that is punitive.

Conclusion

This chapter covered four key findings that were found from the analyzed data. The four key findings were: the participants confidence in their ability to serve Human Trafficking victims, the lack of training and knowledge the participants had in the regards of Human Trafficking, and the knowledge the participants did have about the language used for Human Trafficking. Next, this chapter acknowledged the limitations in the study, such as a small sample size and the lack of probing questions. Finally, this chapter discussed the implications for the field of Social Work.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1) What is your preferred gender pronoun?

2) What is your age?

3) What is your ethnicity?

4) What is your highest level of education?

5) How many years have you worked in your position?

6) In your own words, define "Human Trafficking":

7) What is your position with the agency and what duties are you expected to complete?

8) How confident are you in your ability to serve survivors of Human Trafficking?

9) Please tell me about the trainings have you completed in regards to detecting trafficked survivors?

10) What are some of the common methods by which people are recruited into Human Trafficking?

11) What risk factors lead to Human Trafficking?

12) In your own words describe what a "typical recruiter" looks like:

13) Please tell me about your knowledge of the use of technology for Human Trafficking?

14) What age range is most vulnerable to being recruited for trafficking by the use of technology?

15) Are you aware of the language used by recruiters/ perpetrators on social media when they are recruiting victims?

16) In your own words, what is the best method for addressing the issue of the use of technology for Human Trafficking:

Developed by: Raquel Monique Holguin and Athena Noel Barber

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine social services workers perception on the use of technology for human trafficking. The study is being conducted by Athena Barber and Raquel Holguin, two MSW students under the supervision of Dr. Janet Chang professor in the School of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-Committee, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to examine social services workers perceptions on the use of technology for human trafficking.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked of a sixteen questions on their knowledge of technology used for human trafficking, and some demographics.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Your responses will remain anonymous and data will be reported in group form only.

DURATION: It will take 20 to 30 minutes to complete the survey.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at 909-537-5184 (email: jchang@csusb.edu).

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks (http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu) at California State University, San Bernardino after December 2018.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

_____   _____
Place an X mark here   Date

I agree to be tape recorded: _____ Yes _____ No

909.537.5501 · 909.537.7029
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

The California State University . Bakersfield Channel Islands Chico Dominguez Hills East Bay . Fresno Fullerton Humboldt Long Beach Los Angeles Maritime Academy Monterey Bay Northridge Pomona Sacrament San Bernardino San Diego San Francisco San Jose San Luis Obispo San Marcos Sonoma Stanislaus

APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate social service
workers knowledge on the use of technology for Human Trafficking living in the
San Bernardino County. We are interested in assessing the awareness of that
Social Services Workers have when it comes to the use of technology for Human
Trafficking. We are also interested in how these workers define Human
Trafficking and the different methods used for Human Trafficking. This is to
inform you that no deception is involved in this study.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study,
please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at 909-537-5184. If you would like to
obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact the ScholarWorks
database (http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/) after September 2018.

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where the authors collaborated throughout.

However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary

responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

    Raquel Holguin

2. Data Transcription and Analysis:

    Team Effort: Raquel Holguin and Athena Barber

3. Interview Questionnaire:

    Team Effort: Raquel Holguin and Athena Barber

4. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

    a. Introduction

        Team Effort: Raquel Holguin and Athena Barber

    b. Literature

        Team Effort: Athena Barber and Raquel Holguin

    c. Methods

        Team Effort: Athena Barber and Raquel Holguin

    d. Results

        Team Effort: Raquel Holguin and Athena Barber

    e. Discussion

        Team Effort: Raquel Holguin and Athena Barber