

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

2013

San Bernardino County social workers' level of assessment skills and knowledge of resources on victims of domestic minor sex trafficking

Elizabeth Marie Alvarado-Estrada

Juanita Maria Angelica. Guevara

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Alvarado-Estrada, Elizabeth Marie and Guevara, Juanita Maria Angelica., "San Bernardino County social workers' level of assessment skills and knowledge of resources on victims of domestic minor sex trafficking" (2013). *Theses Digitization Project*. 4050.
<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/4050>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SOCIAL WORKERS' LEVEL OF
ASSESSMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF
RESOURCES ON VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC MINOR SEX
TRAFFICKING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Elizabeth Marie Alvarado-Estrada
Juanita Maria Angelica Guevara

June 2013

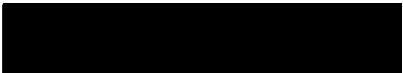
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SOCIAL WORKERS' LEVEL OF
ASSESSMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF
RESOURCES ON VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC MINOR SEX
TRAFFICKING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino


by
Elizabeth Marie Alvarado-Estrada
Juanita Maria Angelica Guevara

June 2013

Approved by:


Dr. Herb Shon, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

6-7-13
Date


Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

The occurrence of domestic human sex trafficking is evident within San Bernardino County, California. It is a particular challenge for San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS), as human sex trafficking often involves minors this agency is responsible for providing protection and services to. A challenge for CFS social workers in identifying and working with trafficking victims is that clients themselves do not believe they are victims.

Researchers began the study by requesting permission to conduct the research project within San Bernardino Children and Family Services (CFS). Upon receiving approval from San Bernardino County CFS, Social Worker IIs, Social Service Practitioners (SSP), Supervising Social Service Practitioners (SSSP) within the seven CFS offices were surveyed throughout the county. Researchers developed a brief 5 point likert-type scale questionnaire that assessed social workers' level of assessment skills and knowledge of resources on victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. A total of 99 respondents participated in the study. After completing the data collection, researchers examined the survey results using quantitative data analysis through SPSS.

The data revealed social workers in higher positions, with more education, and training on the problem were able to identify victims versus workers with less education, in lower positions, and no training. It also revealed that social workers had minimal knowledge of resources for victims within San Bernardino County.

One of the implications for social work is that attention needs to be focused on improving awareness and education for professionals who are most likely to work with this population.

There were two implications for this study. The first would be to conduct a more complex and in-depth survey and data analysis for researchers to gain a better understanding of the professionals and their needs to serve the population. The second implication would be to incorporate training on assessment skills and resource knowledge for minor victims of sex trafficking in the education of new social workers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would first like to express our sincerest thanks and deepest appreciation to our research advisor, Dr. Herb Shon. Dr. Shon, you empowered and motivated us throughout this entire process and provided us with a path to graduation. Liz and I will forever have one-way ANOVAs, t-tests, and linear regressions ingrained in our memory, thanks to you!

Secondly, we would like to thank both San Bernardino County Children and Family Services and the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation for allowing us to conduct this study and showing us support throughout the research project. And a special thanks to Anne-Michelle Ellis for her incredible insight, community work, and dedication to the victims we've written about.

Lastly, we would like to thank our fellow Queen and King Bees, our MSW cohort. All the moral and social support we have received throughout these past two years from each and every one of you has paid off! We grew together and became a forgiving family ready to eat delicious food at our place at the ecumenical table! Oh the places we'll go!!!

DEDICATION

I'd like to dedicate my M.S.W. degree to my entire family. To my mother Gloria Marie Alvarado, who didn't get to see the end of this journey, but believed I would find the connection to my rainbow. She taught me kindness begins with me. To my father Joe Alvarado, who never discouraged my academic journey, but instead taught me how to wrestle for it.

As for my HUSBAND Charles Allan Estrada II, your self-sacrifice, endless love, and patience has not gone unnoticed. There is no way I could have gotten this degree without you. You earned it with me, Baby! To our Mattle-Rattle-Muffin, Madelyn Gloria, I love you! Mama wants you to know that when you have a dream - chase it!

And I'd like to give a special thanks to Debbie and Chuck for all of your hours of "Madelyn support". You have both been gracious in-laws and friends.

Juanita Guevara, oh, research partner! You have been the perfect balance to this crazy year of chaos. Your cool and calm way has always been reassuring that everything would be okay. You are truly a queen bee! Now sting!

I want to dedicate this project and my degree to my parents, Francisco Javier and Maria Angelica Guevara.

No one else could have shown me how important it is to persevere when times are hard and it seems as though no one understands. Thank you for always encouraging and supporting me to be the person I was meant to be. Mami, I know you are watching me and I hope I've made you proud!

I would also like recognize my amazing research partner, Mrs. Elizabeth Marie Alvarado-Estrada. Partner, we've struggled our way through this together and lived to tell about it! I'm so grateful this program brought such a beautiful soul into my life. I love you!

I never knew how important it would be to have such a loving and supportive partner by my side. Ryan Callahan, I'm so happy we found each other and am really surprised at how far we've come. Words don't give justice to the love that I have for you. Thank you, Callahan!

To my work family, my fellow UPSers, thanks for listening to me vent, encouraging me, and giving me time off to finish this year strong!

Lastly, we would like to dedicate this research to all of the girls and boys of the night and all vulnerable populations. You are the reason we became social workers. We will fight for you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Problem Statement.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Significance for Social Work.....	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction.....	13
History of Domestic Human Sex Trafficking.....	13
Policy on Human Sex Trafficking.....	19
Service Needs of Trafficking Victims and the Community.....	23
Identifying Victims of Sex Trafficking.....	28
Theory Guiding Conceptualization.....	31
Summary.....	33
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction.....	35
Study Design.....	35
Sampling.....	38
Data Collection and Instruments.....	39
Procedures.....	42
Protection of Human Subjects.....	43

Data Analysis.....	44
Summary.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Introduction.....	46
Presentation of the Findings.....	46
Summary.....	58
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Introduction.....	59
Discussion.....	59
Limitations.....	63
Implications for Future Research and Social Work Practice.....	64
Conclusion.....	65
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	66
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT.....	70
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT.....	72
REFERENCES.....	74

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Demographics of Participants.....	49
Table 2.	Differences between Education Levels and Identification of Victims.....	51
Table 3.	Differences in Education Levels and Working with Victims.....	52
Table 4.	Differences in Children and Family Services Job Titles and Identification of Victims.....	53
Table 5.	Differences of Children and Family Services Job Title and Awareness of Resources in San Bernardino County.....	54
Table 6.	Linear Regression Result for Years of Employment by San Bernardino County Children and Family Services.....	56
Table 7.	Training and Identification of Minor Victims.....	57
Table 8.	Training and Identification of Resources Minor Victims.....	57

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Human trafficking has received a great amount of attention as an international problem, however; many people in the United States have been unaware that this has been a profound domestic problem. According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) legislation of 2000, Human Sex Trafficking has been defined as the recruitment, transportation, supply, or harboring of a person through the use of force, fraud, and coercion for an involuntary purpose in which a commercial sex act requires a person to perform sex acts and or is under the age of 18 (as cited in Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009; TVPA, 2000). The occurrence of domestic human sex trafficking has been evidenced within San Bernardino County, California. This was a particular challenge for San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS), as human sex trafficking often involves minors. CFS is responsible for providing protection and services for children and families within the county.

It has become an even greater challenge for CFS social workers to identify and work with minor trafficking

victims. It has been difficult for social workers to identify victims of minor sex trafficking because the clients themselves do not believe themselves to be victims. One common reason most individuals do not identify themselves as victims has been related to their safety and the safety of their families. Other reasons victims do not identify themselves or seek help were because they have been completely dependent on their traffickers for their basic needs, including shelter, food, or clothing. Victims lived in fear of the abuses subjected on them by their traffickers, who conditioned them to believe the lifestyle they lead is their sole purpose. The physical, verbal, and emotional abuse traffickers subjected the victims to breaks down their self-esteem and self-worth, thus creating a vulnerable population.

It has been important to study CFS social workers' assessment skills and knowledge of minor sex trafficking to see if they were able to provide the appropriate referrals, resources, and timely services to assist in empowering victims while also ensuring their safety. Furthermore, it has been crucial that social workers have crisis intervention skills to respond to emergency situations and have the ability to create safety plans with victims.

Implementing training regarding minor sex trafficking in social work practice was essential to help children and families have the opportunity to become aware of the issue and also rehabilitated after being subjected to the sexual exploitation and abuses of trafficking. There has been little research available on social workers' assessment skills and knowledge regarding resources for the population; thus, this study attempted to fill a gap in this area.

While there was a substantial amount of literature that focused on human trafficking as a global issue and further discussed different types of labor and sex trafficking, there was a gap in literature related to social workers' ability to identify domestic trafficking victims. In addition, it was suspected due to missing literature on social workers' ability to identify minor sex trafficking victims, was not known whether social workers would benefit from trainings that could be utilized to help them identify potential victims on their caseload. Thus it was important to fill in the gap in literature and make a proper assessment regarding how CFS social workers serve victims of domestic minor sex trafficking on their caseloads.

Professional social work training in human trafficking needed to be studied in response to current societal and familial needs. The needs were related to the socioeconomic decline, unemployment rate, poverty, and lack of awareness of minor sex trafficking. Domestic minor sex trafficking has been a problem many people are unaware of. However, minor sex trafficking has been a pertinent issue that needed to be addressed for the health and well-being of victims and required community action. Under the National Association Social Work (NASW), six core values that applied to both the profession and training for social workers in regards to minor sex trafficking have been: services, social justice, dignity and worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competency. These values have served as an ethical guide to provide services, show the worth and value of victims, the importance of continuing a professional education, and maintaining honesty.

In 2000, President Bush passed legislation on behalf of victims of human trafficking to address the issue. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was the legislative solution used to provide services for victims, prosecute traffickers. The United States would have due

diligence to prevent human trafficking from occurring in the U.S. countries around the world. (Robby, Turley, & Cloward, 2008). TVPA has been altered since 2000, in an effort to help victims' have access to services.

Unfortunately, the modifications made did not provide significant improvements for victims. It has been noted even after modifications were made in 2006 to the TVPA, victims were still in need of supplemental support and protections.

The Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.) has been dedicated to raising awareness and advocating for victims of minor sex trafficking within the local community. C.A.S.E. was created due to an increasingly vulnerable population and lack of appropriate legal protection and resources for these individuals. Currently, this coalition has made a commitment to fight trafficking and helped raise awareness by being a stakeholder in creating proposition 35, which was passed in the November 2012 election. The proposition called for an increase in prison terms for traffickers, convicted sex traffickers would be required to register as sex offenders, registered sex offenders would be required to disclose internet accounts, there would be criminal fines for convicted human

traffickers which would be used to help victims, and law enforcement would be mandated to receive training on human trafficking (CASE Act, 2012). Unfortunately, even with C.A.S.E.'s work within the county and Proposition 35, a large part of the community has continued to be unaware of what domestic minor sex trafficking is and how it impacts their cities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to examine the assessment skills and knowledge of resources San Bernardino County social workers have to work with clients who have been exploited in minor sex trafficking. Human trafficking has been an overwhelming issue within the county and many social workers, especially those within Children and Family Services (CFS), may encounter victims throughout the various cases and clients they come across. It was important for county social workers to, at the very minimum, have the awareness of the identifying characteristics of trafficking victims in order to be able to provide comprehensive assessments and proper resources for the clients served.

Social workers should be able to differentiate clients who may be victims from others in order to provide them with the appropriate protection and services. It would not only be important for social workers within San Bernardino County to recognize identifying characteristics in current victims, they would also be aware of risk factors. Social worker could provide education to their clients and their caregivers with information such as recruitment strategies of traffickers and areas frequented by traffickers and victims. This could be one of many reasons why organizations, such as the Polaris Project, have identified signs and symptoms professionals and community members can look for in children and young adults. However many professionals, including social workers, are unaware that some of the signs include: paranoia, submissiveness, depression, fear, not owning any personal possessions, being disoriented to time and place, and lacking control over own identification documentation (Polaris Project, 2012). For this reason, it was imperative that social workers become familiar with common risk factors and signs in children through a formal training.

There is a lack of research available to understand domestic minor sex trafficking in the U.S. It has been approximated 70% of trafficking victims were introduced to the commercial sex industry before 18 years of age (Kotrla, 2010; Hughes, 2007). Victims of domestic minor sex trafficking were often viewed negatively by society because prostitution has been considered a personal choice as opposed to the modern day slavery of young victims (Kotrla, 2010). Victims of minor sex trafficking have found it difficult to leave the lifestyle. The traffickers have created an environment that has left the victim completely dependent on them for all their basic needs. Resources such as transitional housing, medical and mental health services, legal protection, and job training were necessary and needed to be accessible for this population (Williamson & Baker, 2008). For this reason, it was imperative to have trained social workers familiar with community resources available to victims trying to exit trafficking. This would have reduced the likelihood of victims returning to their traffickers and the lifestyle. Upon exiting the trafficking arena, it would be important for victims to reshape their lives and begin their path to redefining themselves as survivors.

An influential task social work practice should engage would be advocacy for clients who are victims or survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking. This population has been criminalized and not perceived as victims (Kotrla, 2010). According to Williamson and Baker (2008), the collaboration between multiple community members and agencies would have allowed them to "become acquainted, learn about the organizations and services they provide, and discuss how they could collaborate in order to provide a continuum of care for these women and children." (p.21). This approach seemed to be taking place within San Bernardino County through the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.), which brought together multiple county agencies that came into contact with trafficking victims on a regular basis, and provided continual learning opportunities regarding awareness of the issue and events that allowed members to raise awareness within the community.

Social workers in San Bernardino County CFS could be a voice of change for this population and collaborate with law enforcement, behavioral health, the district attorney's office, and other community partners to help the county change its approach in interactions with victims and

survivors of trafficking. CFS could coordinate professional trainings with C.A.S.E. for all of its social workers to create awareness and allow them to add new assessment skills to their practice. This would be beneficial to the CFS because it would allow social workers to assess for victims, and educate clients most at risk for being trafficked within their caseloads.

The research method used was a quantitative survey design. This allowed the current study to sample a large number of social workers within a short time frame. Only CFS social workers within San Bernardino County were surveyed through the county's interagency emailing system.

Significance for Social Work

The research was important in increasing awareness of domestic minor sex trafficking in San Bernardino County. Since there was a high concentration of trafficking within the county, there was a greater likelihood for CFS social workers to encounter victims of trafficking as clients.

Findings of the current research would provide the county with information on the level of the assessment skills their CFS social workers have regarding victims involved in domestic minor sex trafficking. It also

encouraged the county to mandate training focused on identifying indicators of minor sex trafficking, provided CFS social workers with the skills to decipher indicative characteristics of victims and become aware of risk factors for clients within their caseloads, and encouraged CFS social workers to become familiar with community resources available to help victims in need.

This study provided more knowledge and insight for policy makers and encouraged them to provide more funding and support for county CFS social workers to enhance their competency. It also raised awareness and incited policy makers to change or create new policies, like Proposition 35, that helped trafficking victims and subjected their traffickers and clientele to harsher punishment.

The study added more knowledge to domestic minor sex trafficking related to the field of social work. It allowed professionals to see how effective additional training in identification of victims could be beneficial to this population of individuals. The findings of the study were useful in assessing and formulating a basis of what social workers' needs were in relation to professional competency. This allowed both the county and the field of

social work to address professional trainings available to social workers.

It was hypothesized that social workers who had previous exposure to training related to victim identification would be more likely to identify victims and be familiar with community resources and services for victims. It was also hypothesized that social workers who do not have previous exposure to training related to victim identification would be less likely to identify victims and be less familiar with community resources and services for victims.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of professional literature was conducted to look for the characteristics and challenges social workers face when working with victims of human trafficking. This chapter has been divided into five sections: history of human sex trafficking, policy of human sex trafficking, service needs of trafficking victims, identifying victims of sex trafficking, and theory guiding conceptualization. Since literature was limited on social workers' identifying victims the following literature reviews were used to complete a comprehensive review on domestic minor sex trafficking thus far in research. Lastly, the chapter concluded by applying a theory to conceptualize and guide the research study.

History of Domestic Human Sex Trafficking

Alvarez and Alessi (2012) presented the historical roots of the trafficking of female victims in the context of early anti-prostitution campaigns in the 19th century. Researchers stated Josephine Butler, an early British

feminist, campaigned against the "White slave trade" in her efforts against both trafficking and sexual exploitation. Butler founded the "International Abolitionist Federation in 1875", which dealt specifically with trafficking and sexual exploitation. (p.144). According to Alvarez and Alessi (2012), this was a big factor in why, currently, human trafficking was directly linked to sexual exploitation. In the U.S., trafficking was an important issue in the "violence against women (VAW) movement" in the 1970s (Alvarez and Alessi, 2012, p.144). The movement used trafficking to combat the inequality of men and women within a patriarchal society (as cited in Alvarez and Alessi, 2012; Ray, 2006). Another aspect of human trafficking this research touched on was the media's portrayal of human trafficking to the public. Although the media was able to bring public awareness of trafficking to the attention of its consumers, it also presented stereotypical scenarios that insinuated the victim was on a kind of "moral crusader" (Alvarez and Alessi, 2012, p.146). This often discounted true-life conditions faced by trafficking victims. Conditions included childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and poverty: and portrays an inaccurate image of this population. Some documentary

films were able to capture the experiences of victims and conveyed that "trafficking victims are not just secluded to places like brothels and sweatshops but are among us, traveling with us, and perhaps providing services or producing the goods that we consume" (Alvarez and Alessi, 2012, p.146). This being so, it was important for social workers to be properly trained in assessments for this type of client because they could be encountered in a variety of settings.

Victim life experiences have been very important in understanding the population and have clarified the ease for a certain type of individual to be victimized by traffickers. Social workers need to acknowledge that most victims face structural inequalities have a history of early childhood sexual abuse or physical abuse because these factors increase the likelihood that a minor will be victimized again (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). Victims needed to have a sense of value and it was integral that social workers, and other service providers, were aware of the circumstances the girls and women were subjected to prior to becoming trafficked. Other factors that required attention from social workers, in relation to the current research, included a victims' loyalty towards traffickers.

Victims often believed their traffickers, regardless of the abuses they inflicted, cared about them. Many viewed male traffickers as their boyfriends or father figures, which further deepened victims' loyalty. Aside from the illusion that the trafficker was emotionally invested, many victims relied on their trafficker for basic needs to survive. These individuals have find it harder to escape their situations and seek help from law enforcement and social services because of the isolation and stigmatization felt from society.

In another study, Busch, Fong and Williamson (2004) examined human trafficking and domestic violence and explored the similarities and differences in their dynamics. The article discussed that the similarities can be useful with regard to services in place for domestic violence victims. Service providers working with victims of domestic violence assisted in providing services for victims of human trafficking because they had experience with clients facing similar issues of abuse.

Both sex trafficking and domestic violence have been issues that have appeared to be very similar because victims in both situations experienced the same types of emotional and physical abuses (as cited in Busch et al.,

2004; Hynes, Gomez & Rusakova, 2002). The similarities between these issues included: a majority of solely female victims; physical, verbal, and emotional abuses by the perpetrator; and controlling behaviors used by perpetrators to establish submission.

The article suggested that poverty is feminized because women are marginalized this made young women and girls more vulnerable to being trafficked or abused (as cited in Busch et. al, 2004; Kelly & Regan, 2000; Konrad, 2002). Another suggestion researchers put forth regarding the similarity between both issues was that both domestic violence perpetrators and traffickers do not fear the consequences of abusing young women and girls, neither perpetrator feared legal repercussions or consequences for their behavior towards their victims (Busch et al., 2004). In both human trafficking and domestic violence, the perpetrator's ultimate goal was to usurp total control over the victim. The motive for control, however, differed between the two because a trafficker desires control over the victim due to financial gain whereas the domestic violence perpetrator does not.

Women who undergo the abuses related to human trafficking and domestic violence often were more at risk to similar

health issues, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, suicide, and substance abuse (Busch et al., 2004). Victims of trafficking also faced these issues, but had a higher likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted infections and death (Busch et al., 2004). Because both types of victims undergo various traumas, their decision-making skills become affected. Busch et al. (2004), suggests that this was related to increased helplessness and hopelessness in the victims (Busch, et al., 2004). Often times both types of women are socially isolated and lack a support system to help evade their perpetrators.

According to Busch et al. (2004) there were problems related to collecting data on human trafficking. This was related to the illegal nature of sex trafficking and the inability of researchers to use a standard method of research with the population. Because of the barrier to an accurate data collection, information that was available was not always the most representative for the scope of the problem. Many victims might not participated in researchers' studies because of their mistrust of researchers or because they were fearful of retaliatory abuses from their traffickers. In relation to research, those agencies that work with this vulnerable population

were unable to collect data for research to track the clients they serve, as they were often dealing with distressed clients and collecting data might have interfered with the confidentiality of the victim.

Policy on Human Sex Trafficking

The U.S. has implemented legislation to combat sex trafficking within the country. There were differing opinions on the effectiveness of these policies. Potocky's (2010) commentary on the Victims of Trafficking Protection Act (VTPA) of 2000 was an examination of its origin and effectiveness. The VTPA "prevented trafficking, protected victims, and prosecuted traffickers" (Potocky, 2010, p. 373). Initially, VTPA's focus was international trafficking for labor and commercial sex. The researcher suggested the policy was created to placate certain lobbyist groups, such as business groups lobbying against labor trafficking and conservative religious and feminist groups who weighed heavily against commercial sex trafficking. VTPA was mainly an immigration policy, and has begun to focus on prostitution related to domestic victims (Potocky, 2010). Despite the policy's assertion that it took a stance as anti-slavery in the labor and

commercial sex realm, the majority of its effectiveness had served the prostitution aspect. Potocky (2010) discussed accountability between multiple government agencies and the lack of recorded and accessible information gathered on the issue. This has had an effect on current research due to the fact that there was a lack of prior information and research related to human trafficking. This has created a disadvantage for future research. The VTPA has not been as effective as expected in preventing trafficking. It has been noted, according to Potocky (2010), that it was imperative to have a "baseline count" of trafficked victims, however, there are "no reliable estimates" (p.374). In cases where VTPA is effective, there is also a lack of evaluation of the long-term outcomes for victims who have received protection and services under VTPA. According to the article, the last implication of VTPA's ineffectiveness, was when U.S. attorneys prosecuted trafficking cases, the success rate had been very high however they often decided not to prosecute a high percentage of trafficking cases compared to a low percentage of federal criminal cases because it was more difficult and problematic to prosecute sex trafficking cases (Potocky, 2010).

The information in this article was pertinent to current research because it allowed researchers to understand why this issue was very prevalent in the U.S. The policy, although intended to help victims of human trafficking, was unable to help the entire population of intended victims due to various circumstances from verbal technicalities to enforcement of the policy. This further implied that social workers need to advocate for victims of human trafficking, especially those involving minors in commercial sex trafficking.

Since the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, there have been three separate amendments to modify the TVPA. The amendment changes have increased victim protection, prosecuted traffickers more effectively, and educated and raised awareness of human trafficking in communities (Okech, Morreau, & Benson, 2011). The problem with all of the improvements made on TVPA was that it continued to face many challenges and could benefit from another reauthorization of legislation. Research also addressed the implication to social workers based on their professional values and the lack of training and awareness regarding this form of inhumane abuse. A notable trend

mentioned was the lack of literature on improving identification of victims.

The article made suggestions to strengthen the identification of trafficking victims by amending TVPA, to extend current programs and increase funding, in an effort to improve delivery and services. Okech et al. (2011) addressed other factors necessary to strengthen identification of victims by: continuing to educate the community in the event they come into contact with victims, raising awareness on all the different forms of human trafficking, teaching the warning signs to all human service workers and raising public awareness. Regarding service delivery improvements, Okech et al. (2011) examined social work practice and how it could benefit by having an updated intake and assessment form to determine the likelihood that they were working with a victim. They also indicated that it was of the utmost importance to reauthorize the TVPA to provide additional funding for shelters and services to victims working with social workers who specialized in human trafficking. It would be helpful for the social work practice for San Bernardino County CFS and C.A.S.E. to examine the suggested improvements of the TVPA so both agencies could advocate

for additional resources for trafficked victims through funding from the legislation.

Service Needs of Trafficking Victims and the Community

In this qualitative research, Williamson and Baker (2008) collaborated with community agencies and developed a type of coalition that met regularly over the course of a year from 2005 to 2006. At these meetings, members of the group developed ways to raise community awareness, victim identification and prevention, service activities and plans to stop domestic minor sex trafficking and prostitution in Toledo, Ohio.

Prior to the collaborative meetings, they conducted a qualitative study that served as a needs assessment for victims of human trafficking. In this study, 53 female victims of human trafficking were interviewed. The findings of this study showed that many victims of trafficking faced intense violence from their traffickers, often had mental health needs, and were deprived of medical services (Williamson & Baker, 2008). Victims also disclosed that they were often unable to get their basic needs concerning their health and living arrangements met. They found that this population would need a specific

approach of treatment from professionals that included a safe place to live, non-judgmental support, and long-term treatment by professionals (Williamson & Baker, 2008).

The collaborative group, gathered and was composed of partners from law enforcement, health care providers, social service, religious groups, citizens, and survivors of trafficking to have a comprehensive approach to address the issue of human trafficking (Williamson & Baker, 2008).

In order to evaluate and monitor the progress of the roundtable, researchers surveyed members for the initial nine months of the roundtable meetings to evaluate their prior knowledge of the meeting topics regarding trafficking. They found that from the initial meeting in January 2005, there was a lower level of knowledge in comparison to the final meeting in November 2005 where there was a high level of knowledge regarding trafficking. (Williamson & Baker, 2008).

Williamson and Baker (2008) found, through their roundtable research project, they were able to bring together various community and state agencies to collaborate and address the issue of human trafficking in Toledo Ohio. As they did this, they were able to decipher specific needs within their community for victims of human

trafficking. Some of the services needed included: an emergency center open 24 hours where girls could rely on a safe environment and have the opportunity to get counseling services; transitional housing for victims transitioning out of their previous lifestyles; john schools that provide intense treatment for the men who attempted to purchase services from victims counseling and also record their DNA into a database to hold them accountable for their actions; harsher prosecution of traffickers by the criminal justice system; services to provide support and raise awareness of services for victims who continue to be trafficked; assessment questions to help professionals screen for possible victims who may not be forthcoming with information regarding their situations; and family focused services which would help families reconnect and address internal issues.

In a different qualitative study conducted by Florida State University in conjunction with the Florida Department of Children and Family Services, Coonan (2004) examined: the experiences of victims and their needs after escaping their traffickers, potential policy suggestions to address the needs of victims, the establishment of protocol to

assess and identify victims, and ways to create community awareness and response to trafficking.

Coonan (2004) interviewed 11 Spanish-speaking victims of trafficking, 10 were trafficked for commercial sex and 1 was trafficked for domestic servitude. Their ages ranged from 21 to 40 years, however, they reported being trafficked as young as 14. The sample was purposive, as they were referred through their lawyers at the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center. Two separate instruments were used, one was intended for the victims of commercial sex and the other was used for the victim of domestic servitude. The instruments used were carefully translated and constructed to prevent re-victimization through the interviewing process. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to share their responses without being lead.

This study produced various findings important for social workers to understand when working with this population. Victims reported being recruited by people they knew as family or friends. The girls had exposure to other community members and were not completely isolated. After severe beatings or incidents, they were taken to emergency rooms, however due to language barriers, victims

were unable to escape their trafficker, as the trafficker would often lie to medical staff claiming to be her husband and would be allowed to stay with the victim. The girls also reported having contact with law enforcement, however, again due to language barriers, they were unable to communicate with them. The victims reported that their most important need was protection from their traffickers after exiting the lifestyle (Coonan, 2004).

Coonan (2004) found that this group of women experienced extreme human rights violations, yet demonstrated a high level of resiliency. Although this study was very helpful in establishing a perspective of trafficked victims, it did so for internationally trafficked victims. The experiences of internationally trafficked versus domestically trafficked victims were very similar (Coonan, 2004; Williamson & Baker, 2008). However, there were factors, such as language barriers, that might not have affected domestically trafficked women as greatly, thus creating a difference in experiences between victims. This was important to know because social workers serving domestically trafficked victims need to understand what victims' values were and the type of support they need from the social worker. Another important area that needed to be

covered with this population was the long-term effects of trafficking. Even though it was imperative and useful to research the experiences of the victims to serve them well, it was also necessary to track their progress and growth. This established an understanding of the effectiveness in treatment they received following their liberation from modern-day slavery.

Identifying Victims of Sex Trafficking

Few studies have been conducted in assessing social workers' knowledge on human trafficking and their ability to identify trafficking victims. Christenson's (2012) social work study conducted in Minnesota looked at the missing literature in human trafficking and began to build where data was missing. The study used a quantitative and qualitative cross sectional design with a convenience sample of 16 hospital social workers as participants. The purpose was to examine a social workers ability to look beyond a client's presenting problem, and determine if that client was a trafficking victim. (Christenson, 2012).

One finding of the study indicated that, a common problem human service professionals' encounter was that victims did not want to be identified or were unaware that

they were victims of human trafficking. Another key finding for the study revealed that, hospital social workers working with trafficked victims should provide timely and appropriate treatment services to patients. (Christenson, 2012). The limitations of the study included: limited time frame, small sample size, participants were selected on a convenience sample instead of randomly, and the participants for this study may not represent social workers in other fields of practice.

According to Christenson (2012), in past literature it was evident that there was a deficit in social worker knowledge on human trafficking. This article was crucial in building upon human trafficking knowledge and expanding professional awareness in serving a vulnerable population. Furthermore, it was important to continue research studies that helped professionals identify and work with victims of human trafficking and helped them find effective ways to assess victims, provide resources, and determine what the most effective intervention strategy would be.

There has been a concern within the counseling community that professionals have not been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of trafficked victims, causing them to treat victims without addressing the issue

of sex trafficking. According to Stotts and Ramey (2009), trafficked victims were not only forced to live in poor living environments, but they were exposed to brutal physical, emotional, mental abuse and torture. Previous victims reported that their health needs were ignored and isolated from society and other victims. Common characteristics victims have or experiences included: lack of education, denial, depression, self-loathing, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, infertility, abortions, rape, broken bones, and even death. (Stotts & Ramey, 2009). The counseling profession has indicated their view toward sex trafficking as a social injustice that needs to be addressed. Research by Stotts and Ramey (2009) recommended counselors educate themselves because there was a higher likelihood they would come across victims in homeless and domestic violence shelters, or have spoken to victims on crisis hotlines. There was also an urgent need for counselors to implement their training and share it with the public, so that the community could take part in an effort to help end the inhumane treatment of people who were trafficked.

There was a trend of limitations addressed in this article where the number of trafficking victims is unknown.

Since human trafficking had its own culture, there was no way to find out how many victims fell into it. Another limitation Stotts and Ramey (2009) suggested needed to be addressed, was the improvement toward the identification of victims. Identification of victims was important because researchers wanted to know intrusive information so it became important for researchers to be able to identify trafficking victims to collect that information.

Theory Guiding Conceptualization

A problem in identifying trafficking victims was that there were multiple factors that contributed to victims going unidentified. The factors that led to unidentified victims included: lack of victim awareness, being trapped by their traffickers, being confined by their situation, having no personal information to identify themselves, and traumatic experiences that inhibited them from leaving the trafficking life style. (Hooper, 2004). Even though there was an abundance of literature presented on the history and different forms of human trafficking, there was a considerable gap in literature to address social workers' and other professionals' working with trafficking victims

that could be used to help them identify domestic minor sex trafficking victims.

The theory that used to conceptualize this research proposal was the systems theory. Systems theory examined people individually and all the groups that a person or people have been associated with in their lives. The theory separated each group a person was associated with into a category, known as a system. Examples of groups people could be associated with included: a biological family, foster family, friends, work, church, community, social service agency, therapist, health care organization, political party, and world. Additional information to describe systems theory involved groups of systems and people within organizations that operated independently, but were interrelated through the interactions with one another. (Lesser and Pope, 2011). It was imperative to understand that each group within the entire system of an organization represented its own system. However, each system impacted other systems overall functioning whether the system was aware of it or not.

When applying systems theory to victims of domestic minor sex trafficking, victims would be involved in various systems. The victim's existing system usually included:

their family of origin where abuses may have occurred, their traffickers and fellow victims, law enforcement involvement where criminalization and abuse of power may have occurred, involvement with medical service professionals who might not have identified them as victims and intervened, and involvement with social services that may not have protected them from being trafficked. When a social worker is knowledgeable with proper assessment skills and has existing awareness of community resources available to trafficking victims, a social worker could intervene and provide new beneficial factors into the victim's system. Upon intervention, the social worker may be able provide adequate medical services, mental health services, transitional living services, adequate legal representation, job training and possibly connect the victim with former victims or other positive influences to provide a stronger support system.

Summary

There has been a continued problem in San Bernardino County with a rising number of domestic minor sex trafficking victims. San Bernardino County CFS social workers have often been a resource that could be a

supportive system for victims. Unfortunately, many social workers have been unable to identify victims and provide them with the proper services; while at the same time, victims tended to be unaware that social workers had the ability to help them. Domestically minor trafficking victims have been interrelated with the systems interacting with CFS social workers because many are vulnerable children social workers serve as clients. A current problem between victims and social workers involved in domestic minor sex trafficking has been that social workers lack adequate assessment skills while working with these victims. Provided that San Bernardino County CFS social workers received training on how to approach clients involved in sex trafficking, they can be effective agents of change in the lives of these children.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This section included a detailed outline of research methods used to conduct the study. The section also entailed information related to study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

Study Design

The study examined San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS) social workers' assessment skills and knowledge of resources available for clients involved in domestic minor sex trafficking. Social workers should have the skills to recognize clients who may have been victims in order to provide them with the appropriate protection and services. Social workers have been responsible for advocating on behalf of victims and their caregivers by educating them on risk factors related to commercial sex trafficking. The study included forms such as an informed consent, survey questionnaire, and the debriefing statement.

The research method utilized a quantitative survey design using self-administered questionnaire. The self-administered survey questionnaire was emailed and examined the level of familiarity San Bernardino County CFS social workers have with the history of domestic human sex trafficking, policy on human sex trafficking, service needs of domestic minor trafficking victims and the community, and identifying victims of human trafficking.

The rationale in choosing a quantitative survey design was to ensure that the study would be completed within a realistic time frame. Also, using this method for gathering data would be cost effective in collecting a large amount of data. This survey design was ideal for this study and appealing to CFS social workers participation in the study due to its convenience. This allowed professional social workers the opportunity to contribute to research and spread their knowledge in working with victims of domestic minor sex trafficking, while maintaining anonymity throughout the study.

There were many positive attributes to utilizing a quantitative survey design. However, there were some limitations. One important limitation was that participants would not have the opportunity to describe

their rationale for their survey answers, as the survey did not allow this. This may have limited researchers' interpretation of the data since they only relied on participants' responses to questions using the Likert scale. Another limitation was that there was no way to evaluate non-verbal behaviors of respondents because the survey was self-administered. The surveys were sent via email, researchers would not have the opportunity to observe participants' behavior as they completed the survey. And finally, there was no assurance that the questionnaire would be completed and returned to researchers to evaluate the data. There was a possibility that county social workers would not complete the survey due to disinterest in the subject, forgetting to complete, or not reading the email message.

It was expected that social workers who have had previous exposure to training related to victim identification would be more likely to identify victims and more familiar with community resources providing adequate services to victims. It was also expected that social workers who did not have previous exposure to training related to victim identification would be less likely to

identify victims and less familiar with community resources providing adequate services to victims.

Sampling

San Bernardino County social workers would be the only participants selected in this study. San Bernardino CFS has seven social service offices. The region's offices include: Barstow, Carousel Mall in San Bernardino, Gifford Street in San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga, Rialto, Victorville, and Yucca Valley. All seven offices house social workers that would be eligible to be included in this study. However, CFS social workers required a job title of a Social Worker II, Social Service Practitioner (SSP), and Supervisor Social Service Practitioner (SSSP) to participate in this study. An additional requirement for CFS social workers to partake in this study was that they needed to work directly with children and families. Not all San Bernardino CFS staff were eligible to participate; the following workers would be excluded from this study: administrators, social work interns, and support staff from all offices.

The CFS programs for which social workers deliver services included: adoptions, emergency response, voluntary

and mandated family maintenance, family reunification, foster care, and permanency planning. A selection of this sample considered the different levels of child abuse that social workers encountered among different service programs, and the likelihood that social workers are potentially serving minors of domestic minor sex trafficking. It was important to restrict the sample of social worker participants by screening their background to the criteria previously mentioned to examine the relationship between social workers' professional knowledge, work and training experiences with victims in San Bernardino County.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data for this study was obtained through an emailed questionnaire that was self-administered. The independent variables for this study included a social worker's assessment skills and knowledge of resources for victims of trafficking. The dependent variable was the ability of the social worker to identify a victim involved in human sex trafficking.

The differences between the variables were that a CFS social worker's ability to identify a trafficked victim was

dependent on the training received. If the CFS social worker lacked training on domestic minor sex trafficking they may not have been able to identify the adequate resources needed by victims. CFS social worker participants answered survey questions by utilizing a Likert scale.

The survey instrument contained demographic questions on participant's: age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, job title, years of employment at San Bernardino County CFS as a social worker, and previous trainings (Alvarado-Estrada & Guevara, 2013). The dependent variable, social worker's ability to identify victims, was measured with questions such as, "I was aware my client was a victim of sex trafficking while the client was on my caseload." The first independent variable, social worker assessment skills of victims of human sex trafficking, was measured with questions such as, "I am able to identify trafficking victims." The second independent variable, social worker's knowledge of community resources for trafficking victims, was measured using questions such as, "I am familiar with the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation's (C.A.S.E.) services."

This study's instrument was created by the researchers, due to a lack of existing instruments available on social workers' assessment skills and knowledge of victims. Researchers pre-tested the instrument on eight social workers from different units within the San Bernardino CFS Gifford office. The social workers that participated in the pre-test of the instrument included: three intake social workers, two new initiatives social workers, and three adoptions social workers. They were asked to review the questionnaire for clarity and understanding. The social workers provided constructive feedback, which researchers used to modify the instrument. The instrument was further reviewed by the project coordinator from C.A.S.E., a San Bernardino CFS manager and the San Bernardino County statistical analyst. This review enabled researchers to shorten the survey length, which may have increased subject participation in the study.

One of the strengths of this questionnaire was that it would be distributed via email and sent out to participants quickly and directly. Participants would be made aware of the study via email by the head administrative assistant of each of the seven CFS offices. The administrative assistant distributed a uniform message from researchers

and a link to the survey questionnaire to the entire office. Therefore, it was expected that there would be a high response rate.

Procedures

Researchers began the study by requesting permission to conduct the research project within San Bernardino CFS. Researchers submitted a research proposal describing the study to the administrators of CFS. Upon receipt of approval, researchers surveyed all Social Worker II, Social Service Practitioner (SSP), and Supervising Social Service Practitioner (SSSP) working within San Bernardino County CFS. San Bernardino County currently employs over 300 social workers. With this study being specific to the social workers that can participate, it was estimated that a sample size could be applicable to 120 social workers that met the study's criteria. Then researchers created an email address specifically for data collection to preserve the participants confidentiality. Next, an email was sent containing the survey questionnaire the informed consent, questionnaire, and debriefing statement. Researchers provided step-by-step instruction for participants to follow and complete the survey.

Participants were directed to open and read the attached informed consent file. After reading and agreeing to participate, participants were instructed to open the questionnaire file and complete the survey. Agreement to participate in the study would be determined by participant's completion and submission of the survey to researchers. Upon completion of the survey, participants were then instructed to open and read the attached debriefing statement. Participants will be given from March 11th – March 22nd to complete and submit the survey. Researchers printed out survey submissions and code them immediately to preserve participant confidentiality. Then the data was stored in the email account for the duration of the data collection. Once researchers completed the study, the data was deleted and the study's email address was deactivated to preserve confidentiality of participants.

Protection of Human Subjects

The protection of participant rights and privacy were upheld throughout the research study. First, participants were provided with an informed consent to ensure confidentiality measures. Participants were informed that

their participation was completely voluntary and that they had the option to withdraw from the study without penalty. Next, the questionnaire given did not ask for identifying information from the participants to further ensure privacy. Finally, participants were provided with a debriefing statement that provided them with the supervising faculty's contact information, projected time of completion and location of study findings, and mental health referral should the participant need services due to stress. Findings were presented anonymously within the comprehensive data analyses on, or around, June 14, 2013. All survey questionnaires were stored in a secured location and destroyed upon researchers' completion of the project.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of data collection, researchers used quantitative data analysis techniques to examine the relationship between CFS social workers' previous trainings regarding domestic minor sex trafficking and knowledge of community resources for trafficking victims. The study used descriptive statistics to summarize demographic information and other items by utilizing frequency distributions, measures of central tendency (e.g. mean),

and measurements of variability (e.g. standard deviation). Inferential statistics including ANOVAs, t-tests, and linear regressions were also used.

Summary

A quantitative survey design was the research method utilized to analyze the study via a self-administered e-mail questionnaire. The opportunity to participate in this study was given to all CFS Social Worker II, SSP, and SSSP social workers that work out of the seven CFS offices within San Bernardino County. The sample included participants' demographic information related to their gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, job title, number of years served as a social worker within the county, and their level of training on domestic minor sex trafficking. In creating the questionnaire, the independent variable assessed participants' assessment skills regarding human sex trafficking and their knowledge of resources provided based on any training they had received. Whereas, the dependent variable focused on the services social workers delivered to clients. The analysis of the data utilized descriptive inferential statistics to determine relationships between all the variables.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This section outlines the results obtained through the surveys researchers distributed to San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS) social workers. The information will be presented by summarizing the demographic data of the participants. Then researchers will discuss the overall data within the areas pertaining to social workers' previous exposure to the identification of domestic minor sex trafficking victims and a social workers' awareness on community resources and services available for victims. Following this will be a in depth analysis that will look at the independent variable of participants receiving human trafficking training and their years of experience with CFS versus the dependent variable of being able to provide services to human trafficking victims.

Presentation of Findings

The sample size of this research study consisted of 99 participants. Of this sample size there were 13 males

(13.4%) and 84 females (86.6%). Out of the 99 participants 2 chose not to respond. Due to a significant disproportion between male and female social workers represented in the sample, researchers did not measure differences between these two groups.

The age of the participants in this study ranged from 25 to 70 years with the mean age of 43 years. Of the participants, 57.6% identified as Caucasian ($n = 57$), 18.2% identified as Latino/Hispanic ($n = 18$), 16.2% identified as Black/ African American ($n = 16$), 2% identified as Asian ($n = 2$), 6.1% identified as "other" ($n = 6$). Participants were surveyed on their level of education, with specific levels including bachelor's degree ($n = 16$, 16.2%) master's degree without a license ($n = 63$, 64.9%), masters' degree with a license ($n = 14$, 14.4%), doctorate degree ($n = 2$, 2.1%) and "other" ($n = 2$, 2.1%). Two participants chose not to indicate level of education.

Participants were asked to indicate their job titles within CFS, and 16.3% were Social Worker II ($n = 16$), 63.3% were Social Service Practitioners (SSP) ($n = 62$), 16.3% were Supervising Social Service Practitioner (SSSP) ($n = 16$), 4.1% identified as "other" ($n = 4$), and one participant chose not to indicate job title. Participants'

employment with CFS ranged from 0 years to 29 years with a mean of 8.75 years. There were two participants who chose not to respond to this question. Over two-thirds (67.7%) of participants attended human trafficking training ($n = 67$) and 32.3% did not ($n = 32$) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographics of Participants (N= 99)

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	[^] 98	
Male	13	13.4
Female	84	86.6
Age	[^] 93	
25 – 34	27	29.1
35 – 44	23	24.8
45 – 54	25	27.1
55 – 64	15	16.3
65 – 70	3	3.3
Ethnicity	99	
Caucasian	57	57.6
Latino/ Hispanic	18	18.2
Black/ African American	16	16.2
Asian	2	2.0
Other	6	6.1
Education Level	[^] 97	
Bachelor's Degree	16	16.5
Masters Degree without license	63	64.9
Masters Degree with license	14	14.4
Doctorate	2	2.1
Other	2	2.1
CFS Title	[^] 98	
SWII	16	16.3
SSP	62	63.3
SSSP	16	16.3
Other	4	4.1
Years of Employment	[^] 97	
0 – 9	58	59.8
10 – 19	31	32.0
20 – 29	8	8.2
Training	99	
Yes	67	67.7
Variable	(n)	(%)
No	32	32.3

[^]Contained Missing Data

Variance of Level of Education with
Identification of Victims of Domestic Minor
Sex Trafficking and Resources

A one-way ANOVA test was performed to assess for a relationship between the CFS social workers' level of education and ability to identify victims of minor sex trafficking, and their awareness of community resources available to victims. This test assessed for differences in means between the type of degree held by the social worker, including those with a bachelor's degree, master's degree without a license, and a master's degree with a license. Researchers did not include the respondents with a doctorate degree or those in the "other" category, since there was such a small number of them, including them would have skewed the data analysis values.

The dependant variable was measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale that measured knowledge of identification of victims of domestic minor sex trafficking, ranging from "1" to "5", where "1" represented strongly disagree and "5" represented strongly agree.

One-way ANOVA analysis was used to assess the relationship between the differences of educational degrees and license in relationship to being able to identify trafficking victims. It was found that those who had a

master's degree and a license had a significantly increased ability to identify victims over those with a bachelor's degree ($F(102, 3) = 10.75, p < .001$) (see Table 2). A Tukey's HSD post-hoc test was used to identify the differences among educational degrees and license showed that participants with a bachelors degree scored lower ($M = 2.38, SD = 1.20$) than employees with a master's degree and license ($M = 3.86, SD = .86$) Participants who had a master's degree without license ($M = 2.98, SD = .78$) did not significantly differ from the other groups.

Table 2. Differences between Education Levels and Identification of Victims

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	16.54	2	8.27	.000
Within Groups	68.44	89	.77	
Total	84.90	91		

** $p < 0.05$

A one-way ANOVA was used to analyze differences between participants at CFS who could identify that they had worked with a minor sex trafficking victim by their educational degrees and licensing. Statistically significant differences were found between participants who held a master's degree and licensed and those with a

bachelor's degree in their ability to identify whether they had worked with a minor sex trafficking victim ($F(102, 3) = 4.31, p < .012$) (see Table 3), however those who held a master's degree and no license did not differ from these other two groups.

Table 3. Differences in Education Levels and Working with Victims

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	19.90	2	9.95	.02
Within Groups	207.66	90	2.31	
Total	227.57	92		

** $p < 0.05$

An additional one-way ANOVA analysis was used to determine the differences in ability to identify victims of human trafficking by CFS job title. A statistically significant difference was found between SSSP ($M = 3.56, SD = .89$) and SW II ($M = 2.56, SD = 1.26$), suggesting the latter were less likely to identify trafficking victims ($F(102, 3) = 4.46, p < .010$) (see Table 4). Tukey's HSD was used to identify where these between-groups differences occurred between job titles. There was no significant difference between the SSP and the two other groups ($M = 3.05, SD = .86$).

Table 4. Differences in Children and Family Services Job Titles and Identification of Victims

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	8.00	2	4.00	.01
Within Groups	80.27	90	.90	
Total	88.73	92		

** $p < 0.05$

A one-way ANOVA was used to compare job titles and their ability to identify if they worked with minor victims of sex trafficking. Social Worker II participants had a mean score of 2.44 ($SD = 1.63$), SSP participants had a mean score of 2.60 ($SD = 1.56$), and SSSP participants had a mean score of 3.12 ($SD = 1.45$). There was no significant relationship found between job titles ($F(102,3) = .93$, $p = .40$).

A one-way ANOVA was used to assess participant's educational level and awareness of resources within San Bernardino County. Participants with a bachelor's degree had a mean of 3.06 ($SD = 1.29$), participants with master's degree and no license had a mean of 3.41 ($SD = 1.24$), and participants with a master's degree and license had a mean of 3.57 ($SD = 1.28$). There was no significant relationship found, $F(102,3) = .688$, $p = .51$.

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if participants' awareness of resources within San Bernardino County varied due to job title. There was a significant difference in awareness of resources between SSSP ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .94$) and SSP ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.25$) where the latter were less aware of resources within the County, ($F (102, 3) = 3.95$, $p < 0.18$) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Differences of Children and Family Services Job Title and Awareness of Resources in San Bernardino County

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	11.74	2	5.87	.02
Within Groups	132.17	89	1.49	
Total	143.91	91		

** $p < 0.05$

A one-way ANOVA was used to compare participants' educational level in relationship to their familiarity with the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.). Participants with a bachelor's degree had a mean of 3.27 ($SD = 1.03$), participants with a master's degree without a license had a mean of 3.60 ($SD = 1.30$), and participants with a master's degree with a license had a mean of 3.71 ($SD = 1.64$). It was determined that there was no significant relationship ($F (102, 3) = 1.60$, $p > .18$).

The final one-way ANOVA assessed participants' job title and familiarity with C.A.S.E. Social Worker II participants had a mean score of 3.40 ($SD = 1.06$), SSP participants had a mean score of 3.48 ($SD = 1.36$), and SSSP participants had a mean score of 4.13 ($SD = 1.26$). There was no significant difference found between the groups ($F(102,3) = 1.745, p > .18$).

Correlation of Identification Skills and Years of Children and Family Services Employment

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict social workers' identification of minor victims skills based on their number of years employed by San Bernardino CFS. The regression equation was not significant ($F(1, 94) = .000, p > .05$) with an R^2 of .000. The number of years employed by CFS is not a significant predictor of social workers' identification of minor victims skills (see Table 6).

Table 6. Linear Regression Result for Years of Employment by San Bernardino County Children and Family Services

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Years of Employment	9.702E-6	.015	.000

Variance in Training on Minor Sex Trafficking

An independent-samples *t*-test comparing the mean scores of training received by CFS social workers to identify minor victims and training not received found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t(96) = 2.08, p < .05$). The mean of the training received was higher ($M = 3.14, SD = .97$) than the mean of the training not received ($M = 2.71, SD = .97$) (see Table 7).

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean scores of training received by CFS social workers to identify resources for minor victims and training not received found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t(95) = 5.09, p < .05$). The mean of the training received was higher ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.15$) than the mean of the training not received ($M = 2.56, SD = 1$) (see Table 8).

Table 7. Training and Identification of Minor Victims

Training	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	df	<i>p</i>
Yes	67	3.1493	.97318	96	.040
No	31	2.7097	.97275		

Table 8. Training and Identification of Resources Minor Victims

Training	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	df	<i>p</i>
Yes	65	3.8000	1.14837	95	.000
No	32	2.5625	1.07576		

Summary

The data was presented by first stating the demographic information describing the sample. Then results from the one-way ANOVA analyses were presented to describe significant and non-significant relationships between the independent variable, e.g. social worker education levels and CFS job titles, and dependent variables, e.g. identification of minor victims, working with victims, knowledge of resources and knowledge of C.A.S.E. A linear regression analysis was included to describe the relationship between length of employment and social worker identification of minor victim. Finally, a *t*-test was utilized to analyze the relationship between social workers who received training versus those who did not receive training.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study and explores future implications for social work, including improvement to social work practice. The limitations for the study are also discussed and implications for future research are addressed.

Discussion

The study examined the responses of 99 San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS) social workers. Within this sample, there were 13 men and 84 women surveyed. This reflects the overrepresentation of women in the field of social work, due to this, researchers were unable to analyze differences in gender on a significant level. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 70 years. This factor did not contribute to the expansion of knowledge related to training and resources for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. Over half of the social workers within the sample identified themselves as

Caucasian and the remainder of the participants identified themselves as a minority or did not specify an ethnicity.

Participants' level of education was utilized to determine if there was a relationship with being able to identify human sex trafficking victims based solely on their education level. The dependant variable was measured using a five-point Likert-type scale that calculated the knowledge of participants and their ability to identify trafficking victims. The responses from the Likert-type scale ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 represented strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree.

The researchers examined two specific questions within the survey that measured both social workers' ability to identify victims and the ability to identify having worked with a victim on their caseload in relation to their level of education. The researchers found a significant difference between social workers with a bachelor's level of education and social workers with a master's level of education with licensure. This difference can be attributed to the number of years of continued schooling, exposure to diverse populations, various trainings needed for licensure, and continuing education units that licensed social workers are required to complete. Whereas the

bachelor's level social workers do not have to meet the same demands educational or licensing demands.

In looking at a social workers' job title and their ability to identify trafficking victims, the literature has indicated there was a significant relationship between SSSPs having an increased capability of identifying victims, as opposed to SW IIs that had a decreased likelihood to identify trafficking victims. Within San Bernardino County CFS, SSSPs have greater responsibilities and exposure to a wider variety of experiences within social work, whereas workers at the SW II level are limited in the cases assigned to them due to their lack of specialized knowledge that SSSPs have. In examining social workers' job title and their ability to identify victims they have worked with there was no significant relationship found between SSSP and SSP workers. Researchers were curious by this finding and suspected the reasons for non-significance related to both job titles requiring the same level of education. Another reason there may have not been a difference between SSP and SSSP workers could be that the SSSP workers do not carry a case load, they are responsible for the SSP and SW II workers who do.

In examining social workers' education level and job title related to their awareness of resources in San Bernardino County and familiarity with C.A.S.E. no significant relationship existed. Researchers attribute social workers' knowledge on this subject matter to the scarcity resources for victims of sex trafficking in San Bernardino County. Another reason could relate to the length of time C.A.S.E. has been in existence. This coalition has been in effect for a few years, which could explain why many social workers within the seven CFS offices not aware of the services C.A.S.E. provides.

Researchers measured CFS social workers' ability to identify minor victims in relation to the number of years of employment with the agency. The results of this did not demonstrate any significant differences between variables. This may be due the lack of attention placed on the problem of minor sex trafficking as a whole within society over the years. Recent emphasis has been placed on this social problem and awareness continues to grow among professionals and the community.

The effect of supplemental training on sex trafficking of minors in relation to social workers' ability to identify victims was examined in this study. There was a

significant difference between participants who received the training and their ability to identify victims and resources for victims versus participants who did not receive the training. Those who received training were able to identify victims and resources for minor sex trafficking. This could be attributed to the participants receiving supplemental information regarding this social problem and having more education on identifying factors within individuals after the training.

Limitations

Despite the exploratory nature of this study, there were limitations present. The limitations could be attributed to a short survey. Although this may have increased participation of CFS social workers, the brevity of the survey did not allow researchers to assess social workers' opinions or biases. As a result of multiple revisions to the survey instrument, some questions were omitted and others were modified as to not conflict with another study relating to trafficking that was being conducted within the county. As researchers examined the data, it became clear that there needed to be more questions assessing identification of victims and community

resources to obtain a better understanding of the CFS social workers' knowledge and abilities.

Implications for Future Research and Social Work Practice

The study conducted was a quantitative research design. Future studies can incorporate a mixture between a qualitative and quantitative study to assess for personal responses from social workers to receive data that can provide an in depth analysis of participants' knowledge and reasoning for their responses. The information obtained could assist in improving education and services regarding domestic minor sex trafficking within San Bernardino County by listening to the professionals who have first hand contact with the population.

Another implication this study involves includes improving training social workers on assessment skills and knowledge of resources for victims. This could be accomplished by incorporating this information in academia for schools of social work and job trainings provided by county agencies, such as San Bernardino Children and Family Services.

Conclusion

Social work professionals should lead the way in educating and advocating for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking by continuing research and collaborating with other agencies, such as law enforcement, the healthcare system, school districts, and other service providers working with potential victims. This study has provided a starting point for future research to be conducted on an issue that is receiving more national attention. It is important for professionals to be aware of the lack of information and resources available for professionals themselves and the community. If the gap between awareness, education, and resources for this population remains, more victims of minor sex trafficking will continue to suffer quietly at the hands of their traffickers.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire

It is not mandatory, however, it would be greatly appreciated if you could answer the following questions by selecting the appropriate responses. Please write or circle your answers.

1. What is your gender?

Male
Female

2. What is your age?

3. What is your ethnicity?

Caucasian
Black/African American
Hispanic/ Latino (a)
Asian
Other

4. What is your highest level of education?

Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree without license
Master's degree with license
Doctorate
Other: _____

5. What is your title within Children and Family Services?

Social Worker II
Social Service Practitioner (SSP)
Supervising Social Service Practitioner (SSSP)
Other:

6. How many years have you worked as a social worker for Children and Family Services?

7. Have you attended previous trainings/workshops regarding domestic human sex trafficking?

Yes
No

Human Sex Trafficking

This study has been designed to determine how prepared Children and Family Service social workers are when working with Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC). Please answer the questions by selecting the most appropriate answer. Please be as honest as honest as possible.

1. Sex trafficking is only an international problem.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

2. Individuals engaged in sex trafficking have been abused before entering the lifestyle.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

3. I am able to identify trafficking victims.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

4. I am able to identify Commercially Sexually Exploited Children.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

5. I have worked with a minor victim of sex trafficking as a social worker with Children and Family Services.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

6. I am familiar with minor sex trafficking issues in San Bernardino County.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

7. I am aware of the resources in San Bernardino County that serve trafficked victims.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

8. I am familiar with the services offered by the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.).

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

5

9. I am familiar with the Trafficked Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

5

Developed by Elizabeth Alvarado-Estrada and Juanita Guevara

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study that you are being asked to participate in is designed to investigate San Bernardino County Social Workers' assessment training status and knowledge of resources for victims of human sex trafficking. This study is being conducted by Elizabeth Alvarado and Juanita Guevara under the supervision of Dr. Herb Shon, Assistant Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Social Work Subcommittee school of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to examine San Bernardino County social workers' assessment training and knowledge of resources for victims of human sex trafficking.

DESCRIPTION: If you take part in this study, you will be asked to fill out a brief survey that asks questions related to previous training, experiences and knowledge you have regarding the human sex trafficking of minors.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: The information you give will remain anonymous and no record will be made, or kept, of your name or other identifying information. The anonymous data from the surveys will only be seen, by the researchers and the information gathered from the surveys will be protected in the researchers computer files. The results will be conveyed to San Bernardino County Child and Family Services via group form only.

DURATION: Filling out the survey should take no more than 15 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to taking part in this study.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to the participant. However, indirect benefits to participants may help San Bernardino County Child and Family Services plan future training regarding human sex trafficking for the CFS social workers.

CONTACT: If you have any questions or concerns about this study you can contact Dr. Shon at (909/537-5532) or hshon@csusb.edu

RESULTS: The results will be available at the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino after December 2014.

By marking below, you agree that you have been fully informed about this survey and are volunteering to take part.

Place a check mark here

Date

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

**Study of Social Work Assessment Skills and Knowledge of Resources
for Victims of Human Sex Trafficking
Debriefing Statement**

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate San Bernardino County CFS social workers' assessment training status and knowledge of resources in relation to minors involved in human sex trafficking. Many professionals, like social workers, who work with this population of individuals lack the proper training to identify clients who are involved in human trafficking. Along with not knowing the traits to look for in minors, social workers may be unaware of the resources available to these victims. We are interested in the exposure and utilization CFS social workers have to trainings and workshops on the issue of human sex trafficking.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussion the content of the questions with your colleagues. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Herb Shon at (909) 537 – 5532. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact the Pfau Library at the end of the Fall Quarter 2013.

REFERENCES

- Alvarado-Estrada, E. & Guevara, J. (2013). San Bernardino County social workers' level of assessment skills and knowledge of resources on victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, San Bernardino, San Bernardino, California.
- Alvarez, M.B. & Alessi, E.J. (2012). Human trafficking is more than sex trafficking and prostitution: Implications for social work. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, (27)2, 142 – 152
- Busch, N.B., Fong, R. & Williamson, J. (2004). Human trafficking and domestic violence: Comparisons in research methodology needs and strategy. *Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation*, (5)2. 137 – 147.
- CASE Act (2012). Proposition 35 Act Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: <http://www.caseact.org/case/factsheet/>
- Christenson, K. (2012). Social worker practitioner and the identification of human trafficking victims. *Master of Social Work Clinical Research Papers*.
- Hooper, E. (2004). Underidentification of human trafficking victims in the United States. *Journal of Social Work Research*, (5)2, 125-136.

- Kotrla, K. (2010). Domestic minor sex trafficking in the United States. *National Association of Social Workers*, 55(2), 181-187.
- Lesser, J. & Pope, D. (2011). *Human Behavior and The Social Environment Theory and Practice*. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Okech, D. , Morreau, W. , & Benson, K. (2012). Human trafficking: Improving victim identification and service provision. *International Social Work*, 55(4), 488-503.
- Polaris Project (2012). Recognizing the signs. Retrieved from: [http://www.polarisproject.org/humantrafficking/trafficking/recognizing-the signs](http://www.polarisproject.org/humantrafficking/trafficking/recognizing-the-signs)
- Stotts, E., Ramey, L. (2009). Human trafficking: a call for counselor awareness and action. *Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*. 44, 36-47.
- Williamson, C. & Baker, L.M. (2008). Helping victims of prostitution and trafficking: It takes a community. *Groupwork*, (18)3. 10 - 29.