

2020

Precursors to Human Trafficking

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Aleta J. Eldridge

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Precursors to Human Trafficking

by

Aleta J. Eldridge

MS, Walden University 2020

MS, Indiana State University 2007

BS, Southwest Baptist University 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration – Criminal Justice

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November 2020

Abstract

The problem addressed in this phenomenological study was the lack of documentation of the supported lived experiences of the precursors that children exhibit prior to being groomed by a sex trafficker into human sex trafficking. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of adults, whom as a child, were groomed into sex trafficking due to being bullied, experienced familial abuse and had used illegal drugs, concurrent. Using Ostrom's institutional analysis theory (IAT) and Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory (SDT), this study examined the three precursors of human trafficking that occurred, concurrently, prior and during the grooming of children into human trafficking. Ostrom's IAT aligned closer with the three precursors of being bullied, familial abuse and using illegal drugs concurrently, with childhood grooming as described by the five formally trafficked participants' remembrance of their lived experiences. Participants provided data which were comprised of completed open-ended questions and transcribed interviews. The method of analysis used was a combination of inductive coding and theme analysis that established the results of the study. Key findings of the study identified a significant pattern of the three precursors a sex trafficker uses when grooming a child into sex trafficking. Fundamentals of Ostrom's IAT theory and lived experiences revealed by the participants created an awareness of the grooming done by the sex traffickers. The positive social change produced from this study included giving a voice to sexually trafficked participants. Specialized training may promote awareness for first responders to combat sex trafficking of children.

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Dedication

This research study is dedicated first to Mrs. Ethel Mitchell. She has inspired, read, and suggested sections to this dissertation. She has pioneered so much in how women can succeed in anything they want to do. Her 95 years has given me the inspiration to fulfill my dreams.

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My family has been with me throughout this process. Dr. Larry Russell, Dr. Mary Beth Moore (deceased), Debbie and Lyle Wiist, Jason and Dr. Tricia McKinney, Nathan and Callie McKinney, Sara, and Austin Thornton. Great nephews Reid, Grant, Colin McKinney, Jeremy and Luke Thornton, Cynthia and Donnie McWaters, Steven and Kandace McWaters, Harold E., and Dona M. Gibbs – parents (deceased), Alana M. (Gibbs) McKinney – sister (deceased). Finally, I thank the Good Lord for allowing me to be an advocate for the children of sex trafficking.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Precursors to Human Trafficking

According to the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2016), modern-day human sex trafficking runs between 600,000 to 800,000 human beings, with children being half that number. With these many children being trafficked for sex, it is paramount to explore the precursors that lead children to this inhumane activity (Reid, 2012). Not every child that runs away from home becomes a victim of a sex trafficker, and with the extremely significant number of children being trafficked, precursor behaviors in conjunction with each other was the topic of this research. This research is important within Houston, TX because it is the fourth largest city in the United States with a population of 2,312,717 (Census Bureau, 2017) and boasts of being a diverse populous with human trafficking as the highest number of human victims nation-wide (Ricke, 2016).

A review of literature about bullied children; familial abused children and children using drugs illegally that influences destructive behaviors, and the combination of all three leads children into being more vulnerable to the sex trafficker was examined as the bases of this study. While some of the research addresses child sex trafficking through the lens of individual precursors (Kleemans, 2011; Farley, Zimmerman, Hossain & Watts, 2011), the problem is there is a lack of research that examines how multiple precursors exhibited in children makes certain children more vulnerable or susceptible to recruitment or grooming by child sex predators. In this qualitative research I examined

the research gap of why some children who run away from home, have multiple, common precursors and are more vulnerable or susceptible to being recruited into human trafficking. In this research I addressed the gap in the literature that examines the precursors of a child being bullied, familial abuse and of drug use collectively, which may provide additional information to guardians, law enforcement, first responders, and social service agencies (Brown, Brack & Mullis, 2008; Cronin, 2014). The three precursors to the susceptibility of the children in conjunction with each other will assist in the awareness, as well.

The potential social implications of this study are supported by the bill in Texas, ...that it is broad in scope, touching on many critical issues related to human trafficking. First, it improves data collection around crimes ancillary to human trafficking. This information is crucial for guiding tactics aimed at reducing the demand for illegal commercial sex, and for protecting minors and adults from violence and exploitation at the hands of buyers, pimps, and traffickers.(HB 2552 (2017)

Chapter 1 includes a critical summary of the research and how a correlation of destructive behaviors that influenced children into a lifestyle of abnormal sex. The problem statement indicated the lack of knowledge about the correlation of children being bullied, familial abuse and illegal substance abuse. The purpose of this research, the research questions, limitations of the research, and the implication for social change emerged from this study. Chapter 1 concludes with the definitions of terms, theoretical

foundation, nature of the study, the significance of the research, and the Chapter summary.

Background

The detection and investigation by law enforcement of children who are being trafficked have been left to those that are caught in prostitution (Dandurand, 2017). In this research expanded the concept that sexually trafficked children are being bullied, influenced by familial abuse, and being controlled by drugs before and during the act of being trafficked. Researchers have additionally suggested that prostitution is a result of actions forced upon these children. Furthermore, human trafficking is a global phenomenon that is borderless and a very organized crime that affects each human being intimately (Singh, 2015).

There is a need to monitor those that are trafficking children, as well as, developing a diversion program to prevent the children in becoming a victim, knowing that the human trafficker targets children. Because of the extreme trauma, both physically and mentally, there develops a need for health professionals to address the recovery process for these children to become healthy, human beings (Hemmings et al., 2016). Health professionals must be skilled in trauma-related care and must work with multiagency, as well as, from identification, and referral care of multi-agencies (Helton, 2016; Hemmings et al. 2016).

The correlation of children being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal substance abuse users to being influenced into the sex trafficking trade is a research study that will impact both the children and those that search for the children. Even the school counselor is charged with aiding the sexually abused child recognizing the indicators (Brown, Brack, & Mullis, 2008). Ultimately, lifelong skills will empower children that are vulnerable to a sex trafficker and will be displayed that increase the real-world scenarios of how to combat the sex trafficker (McPherson, King, Rudzik, Kingsnorth, & Gorter, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

As previously mentioned, modern-day human sex trafficking runs between 600,000 to 800,000 with children being half that number. Because so many children are being trafficked for sex, there is a need to explore the precursors that are leading certain children into this inhumane lifestyle. The problem addressed in this research was the lack of knowledge of the multiple precursors that are exhibited in children that makes the children more susceptible to recruitment by child predators into human sex trafficking. Therefore, in this research I attempted to build upon the research of Singh (2015) to explore the gap in knowledge that there are multiple precursors evident in children that are trafficked which make children more vulnerable to being recruited into the sex trafficking lifestyle. In this study I addressed the gap in the literature (Brown et al., 2008; Helton, 2016; Singh, 2015) where the research revealed the need to identify multiple precursors that predicts children being recruited into sex trafficking. This research

illustrated the gap concerning how being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal substance abuse simultaneously influenced children into being groomed by sex traffickers (Helton, 2016). In this study I addressed the gap in the literature that was indicated by the lack of correlation between being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal substance abuse prior to being trafficked in the Houston, Texas area.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of adults who were victims of child sex trafficking to determine the influence of precursors such as being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal drug use had on the recruitment as a child victim. In this study I used the Precursors of Sex Trafficking, a self-designed instrument created by Eldridge (2018) as a validated treatment questionnaire to interview survivors of sex trafficking. Previous researchers have documented precursors in isolation; however, the lack of multiple precursors of being bullied, familial abuse and of using drugs illegally has not been explored in combination as to the impact of being led into sex trafficking. The correlated precursors may provide greater awareness for families, law enforcement officers, and first responders that look for missing children and presumed to be trafficked (Babay, 2012). As stated earlier, the potential social implications of this study are supported by the bill in Texas, HB 2552 (2017).

Research Questions

This qualitative research sought to establish the susceptible precursors that were exhibited in adults who were involved in human trafficking as a youth. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that the qualitative study of interviewing and case studies is essential for communication that allows the stakeholders to develop a program tailored to an individual's needs and to develop a policy for future participants. Therefore, this research included the following questions:

RQ1: How does being bullied lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

RQ2: How does familial abuse lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

RQ3: How does using drugs illegally lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

RQ4: How does being bullied, familial abuse and using illegal drugs concurrently, lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

The proposed research frameworks included the conceptual framework of phenomenology, institutional analysis and development (IAD) and the social-ecological systems (SES) (Ostrom, 2011), and the conceptual framework of phenomenology by using a qualitative research design; the research produced detailed information where similarities and patterns were observed.

The conceptual framework for phenomenology is one in which the research methods are interested in the lived experiences of individuals. The phenomena are recorded from the interviewees' perceived experiences, and this was important for this study of survivors of being trafficked. The descriptions of the participants' experiences were built upon and were reflective of the precursors before being involved in human trafficking.

Institutional analysis is utilized due to the findings that are collective and experienced by a group that has commonality. This was important for this research of survivors of human trafficking because of the well-defined research questions that studied the theory of the precursors of being bullied, familial abuse and illegal substance abuse before going into sex trafficking.

These theories gave way for health care workers, law enforcement and first responders to process what the needs of the sex trafficked are, and to develop a policy of organizing specific areas for recovery (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). Ostrom and Ostrom (1971) stated, "understanding the strengths and limitations of diverse forms of institutional arrangements in different settings should be the task of public administration." This SES framework theory, which the phenomenological methodology suggests, is that in-depth interviews with formerly exploited adults may reveal what precursors led the children to become a susceptible population to sex trafficking. Then, a pattern emerged from this conceptual framework, with similarities and patterns being observed from the data retrieved.

Nature of Study

The nature of this qualitative study explored the phenomenological design. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggests research that includes a triangulation of multiple sources, investigations, and participants' personal dialogue, that will validate the research. This study used the first-person point of view of adults formally in the sex trade, using interviewing by means of emails, texting and phone conversations and using a self-designed instrument (Eldridge, 2018). This was competed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and social distancing was mandated. The literature suggested that a susceptible youth may not have the opportunity to develop into a social human being without first being recognized as having an anti-social behavior in early childhood (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). By knowledge obtained from adult participants of human trafficking as a child, an awareness assists in developing a protocol of what the susceptible youth exhibits to becoming a victim of a sex trafficker. This qualitative research consisted of evidence-based programs that dealt with co-occurring disorders that lead to discovering patterns of abnormal behavior (Eldridge, 2018). With the extensive human trafficking phenomena occurring in Houston, Texas, the documentation of the susceptible precursors of human trafficking in this region, may enable a program to develop and provide resources for preventative action for all susceptible youth across the United States, as well as, awareness for law enforcement and search and recovery squads.

Definition of Terms

Conceptual definitions that demarcated the key terms in this research are as follows:

Human trafficking: Modern-day slavery that involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of commercial sex act or labor (National Institute of Justice, 2018). *Traumatic symptoms of sexually abused children:* Signs of children's abuse range from emotional neglect, bruises, asking to use the restroom several times a day, afraid to go home after school, and even difficulty walking or sitting for long periods of time (Brown, Brack & Mullis (2008).

Law enforcement officer perceptions of human trafficking: A joint task force of health care providers and law enforcement assists with identifying victims and prosecuting of traffickers (Helton, 2016).

Bullying of children: Unwanted, aggressive behavior among children that may include verbal, social, and physical attacks (Stopbullying.gov, 2018).

Familial abuse of children: Any intentional harm or mistreatment to a child under 18 years of age and may include – physical, sexual, emotional and medical - that is within the family unit (Mayoclinic.org, 2018).

Using drugs illegally by children: The use of drugs that are not specifically prescribed by a physician and not using drugs the way intended by a physician, by high-risk children (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992).

Assumptions

An assumption in this research was that the research questions Eldridge (2018) used for data collection provided a reasonable explanation of the research topic and justified the interviewing strategy used for data collection. The significance of the research was the revealing of the phenomenological lived experiences that sex trafficked children experienced and the perceived sympathy that law enforcement and search and rescue squads developed from hearing the stories. Another assumption was that health care providers and law enforcement officers would work together as a joint task team to understand the importance of interviewing survivors to provided honest and accurate responses. The third assumption was that the sample sufficiently represented the sample of the population interviewed and surveyed.

Scope and Delimitations

As indicated, the problem under research was the lack of knowledge about the precursors that affect children who are lured into human trafficking. The scope of this qualitative research is that a phenomenological design suggested that the participants' personal dialogues formed patterned responses. The Eldridge Questionnaire (2018) survey and interviews from emails, texting and phone calls allowed this research to explore the relationship of being bullied, familial abuse and use of illegal drugs, prior to being trafficked. The Eldridge Questionnaire was in a paper and pencil format and included qualitative interview questions. The interview questions targeted former

trafficked adults that law enforcement officers and search and recovery personnel located in and around Houston, Texas.

The delimitation was that interviewees shared their lived experiences of being lured into the sex trafficking trade. The findings of this research are applicable to other trafficked adults, law enforcement and search and recovery team members.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the proposed study. First, this study rested on being able to conduct interviews of those that have been in an extremely, dangerous situation of both physical and psychological trauma of post-traumatic stress disorder. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the personal assumptions or biases from a qualitative study is balanced by the reliability and validity of those that were being interviewed by means of emailing their responses, texting their responses, or using a phone interview. This allowed the interviewee to speak openly in a safe environment and completed within a specific, timely manner (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olsen, Spiers, 2002). Therefore, interviews took place in an environment of safety and compassion and the interviewees could stop interview at any time they felt uncomfortable at an undisclosed location.

Significance

The significance of the research revealed the phenomenological lived experiences that sex trafficked adults experienced and the perception of their experiences. I attempted to correlate three specific precursors that directly influenced survivors into following the sex trafficker and why they were groomed to be in this lifestyle. The significance of this

research enumerated the trifold precursors of why certain individuals were lured into sex trafficking.

This development of decriminalizing a trafficked survivor in the criminal justice system offers the opportunity of services for recovery. This study has shown an impact reflecting a need for prevention by law enforcement and search and recovery squads and much-needed services to assist in the recovery of the abused. The literature suggests that if preventive measures are evaluated at an early stage, recovery is most positive (McPherson et al., 2016). This research supported improved law enforcement training by showing the precursors one experiences when a sex trafficker approaches.

Summary

The shared knowledge should increase the awareness of the three precursors of being bullied, familial abuse and illegal drug abuse prior to being coerced into sex trafficking. By using the IAD and the SES (Ostrom, 2011), the findings of the proposed study contributed a deeper understanding of the factors which makes some individuals more susceptible to human trafficking. In Helton's (2016) study, a joint task force of health care providers and law enforcement officers can assist with identifying victims, and this is the first step in prevention. A qualitative phenomenological research design was the most appropriate methodology for exploring the lived precursors of trafficked survivors in the Houston, Texas area. The interviews of formerly trafficked individuals gave a first-person account of what being trafficked for sex entails. Chapter 2 is inclusive

of a literature review of the combination of current research related to the problem statement and research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

According to the GAO (2016), modern-day human sex trafficking runs between 600,000 to 800,000 human beings, with children being half that number. With these many children being trafficked for sex, it is paramount to explore the precursors that lead children to this inhumane activity (Reid, 2012). Not every child that runs away from home becomes a victim of a sex trafficker, and with the extremely significant number of children being trafficked, precursor behaviors in conjunction with each other will be the topic of this research. This research is important within Houston, Texas since it is the 4th largest city in the United States with a population of 2,160,821 (2012) and boasts of being a diverse populous with human trafficking as the highest number of human victims nation-wide (Ricke, 2016). The problem addressed in this research was the lack of knowledge of the correlation of the precursors of being bullied, familial abuse and substance abuse to sex trafficking to survivors prior to becoming a victim, and the perceived perceptions of law enforcement, first responders and health providers of those that were trafficked. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the collective precursors of sex trafficking by lived experiences of sex-trafficked survivors in Houston, Texas and of law enforcement officers, first responders, and health providers.

Chapter 2 includes an analysis and synthesis of empirical research on the collective, precursors to human trafficking victims and to help provide an understanding of the lived phenomenological experiences of survivors of human sex trafficking. The

chapter includes a synthesized literature review on the historical view of prostitution by social concepts and the evolution of it to human trafficking. The two general, research designs aligned in this study is the IAD and the social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The chapter includes the history, models, and evolution of human trafficking throughout the centuries and reviews the literature about the relationship between being bullied, familial abuse and the use of illegal drug usage together to cause a victim to become more susceptible to a trafficker. The chapter includes an elaboration of how the laws governing sex trafficking assists law enforcement officers, first responders, and health caregivers to review what a victim of sex trafficking looks like and to respond in a more responsible manner of recovery. Lastly, the chapter includes a discussion on the relationship between empirical research and this qualitative study of research.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review consisted of peer-reviewed, scholarly journal articles, dissertations, professional websites, books, federal government judicial laws, and mental health professional publications. The sources of articles were Google Scholar and the following databases available from Walden University: ProQuest Dissertations, Social Science, Research Library, Public Health, and Nursing & Allied Health as well as the U.S. Census Bureau. Extensive database searches took place and included the following keywords and phrases: *precursors, survivors, victims, human trafficking, law enforcement officers, first responders, lived experiences of human trafficking victims,*

bullying, familial abuse, and illegal drug usage. The search strategies yielded over 200 articles, with 190 relating specifically to the topic under study.

Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

The proposed research frameworks will include the general research of phenomenology institutional analysis and development IAD and the social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942), as well as qualitative research design. The research may produce detailed information where similarities and patterns will be observed.

The current general research for phenomenology is one in which the research methods are interested in the lived experiences of individuals. The phenomena are recorded from the interviewees' perceived experiences, and this is important for this study of survivors of being trafficked (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2003). The descriptions of the experiences will be built upon and be reflective of the precursors before being involved in human trafficking. The victims' experiences will be the understandings of the relationship that human trafficking has had on the lives of those that have been victimized through sex trafficking (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2003).

Institutional analysis is utilized due to the findings that are collective and experienced by a group that has commonalities. The development of the institutional analysis research allows the assessment of lived experiences of victims of human trafficking to link the theory of why they become victims, to analysis and policy (Cole, 2015). This is important for this research of survivors of human trafficking because of

the well-defined research questions studies the theory of the precursors of being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal substance abuse before going into sex trafficking.

In the final analysis, these theories give way for health care workers, law enforcement and first responders to process what the needs of the sex trafficked are, and to develop a policy of organizing specific areas for recovery (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). Ostrom and Ostrom (1971) stated, “understanding the strengths and limitations of diverse forms of institutional arrangements in different settings should be the task of public administration.” This SES framework theory, which the phenomenological methodology suggests, is that in-depth interviews with formerly exploited survivors may reveal what precursors led the children to become a susceptible population to sex trafficking. Then, a pattern emerges from this conceptual framework or similarities, and patterns will be observed from the data retrieved.

Institutional Analysis and Development

Institutional analysis and development (Ostrom, 2009) is a theory that uses a specific group of rules to document the complex actions of individuals (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). IAD theory not only documents the outcomes of responses from individuals but explores the various conditions or situations that are generated from such actions (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). In this research, lived experiences of human trafficked children show a commonality that revolves around three research questions that has a well-defined study of reference to being bullied, familial abuse and use of illegal substances before going into sex trafficking. The phenomena recorded from the

interviewees' perceived experiences allows the researcher to collect and correlate the analysis of the triangulated, destructive social actions displayed by children prior to being lured into human trafficking (Anderies, Janssen, & Ostrom, 2014). With this commonality, a prediction of outcomes is formulated for preventative measures.

The institutional analysis development theory allowed the complex, emotional problems of the survivors' participation to be studied, as well as, showing the commonality of these experiences. The lived experiences of the children may or may not directly lure children into sex trafficking, but collectively, there is an indication that it does.

Young adults are influenced by institutional arrangements, the social-economic conditions and of physical environment and this study allows for the documentation of seven rules or types of descriptive responses (Ostrom, 2005). The seven areas for this study are as follows:

1. Position – There are numerous responses a child has to social interactions
2. Boundary – The destructive responses of a child, collectively, will position the vulnerable child into being in sex trafficked.
3. Choice – There are appropriate responses to being bullied, familial abuse and using illegal drugs.
4. Aggregation - When the destructive responses are accumulated.
5. Information – By documenting the responses, respectively of each precursor, the information is categorized for similarities.

6. Pay-Off - The likely reward or punishment for responding negatively in the precursors.
7. Scope – The precursors will exist if the outcome is the involvement in sex trafficking.

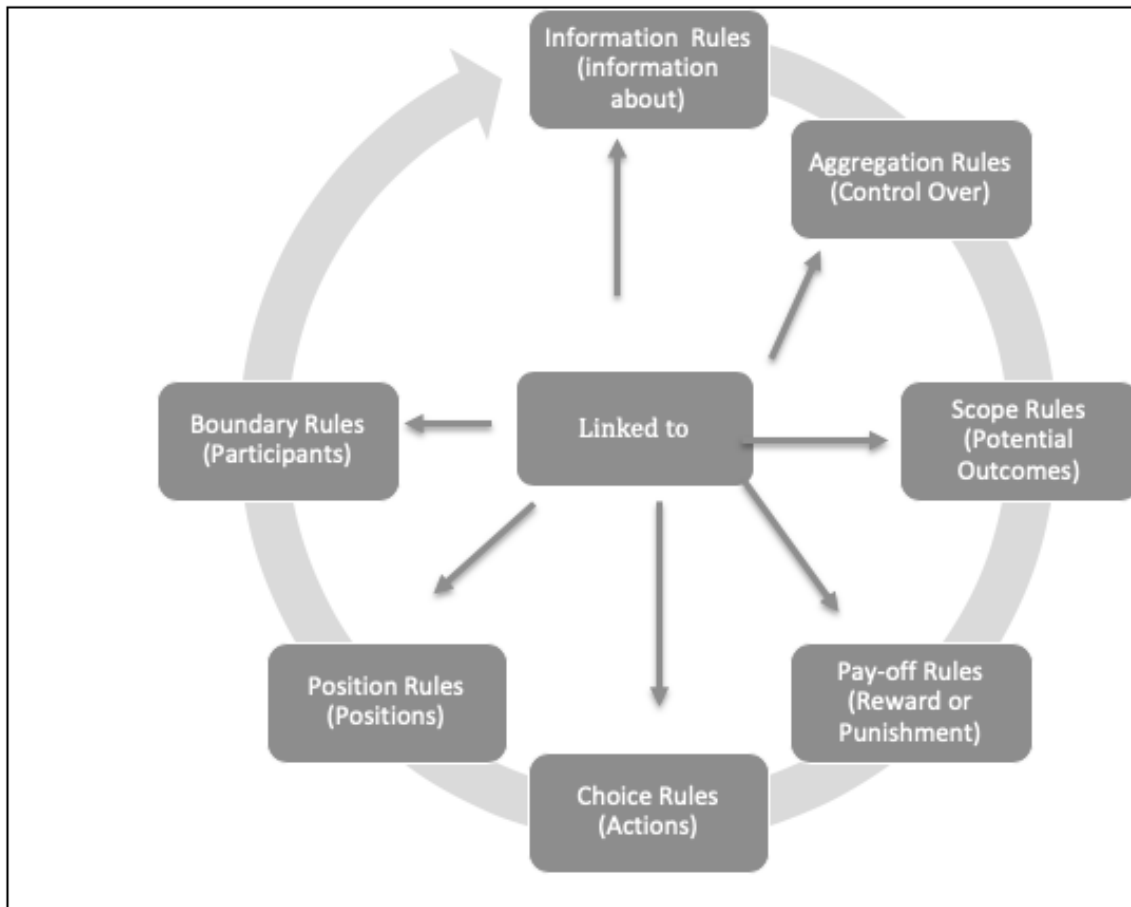


Figure 1. Institutional analysis and development.

Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942) has been used to show crime and delinquency correlating with low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, and

residential mobility. Consequently, an unstable family such as a single parent leads to a higher crime rate (Wong, 2011). Within this study, the focus is the sub societal structure and the social control to influence children into human trafficking (Ottisova, Hemmings, Howard, & Zimmerman, 2016). The observed crime of human trafficking is evident when, in a combination of the precursors listed, children are drawn into a subculture society of criminal behavior by responding to a sex trafficker approaching (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

The social disorganization theory explains that the subsociety of human traffickers, recruits susceptible children that exhibit the precursors for human trafficking of being bullied, familial abuse and those that use illegal drugs in combination (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & AB Zwi, 2002). The lifestyle of human trafficking promotes a disorganized lifestyle of antisocial and criminal activity (Sampson & Grove, 1989). The social continuity of society is broken down, and the self-worth of the victim is eliminated and replaced with deteriorating self-esteem. In this study, the examination of the precursors for human trafficking is examined through the social disorganization theory of the corruption of society. This connection is made between the marketing of children for sex trafficking to persons of lower income and the dissolution of the family unit, added with the illegal use of drugs (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

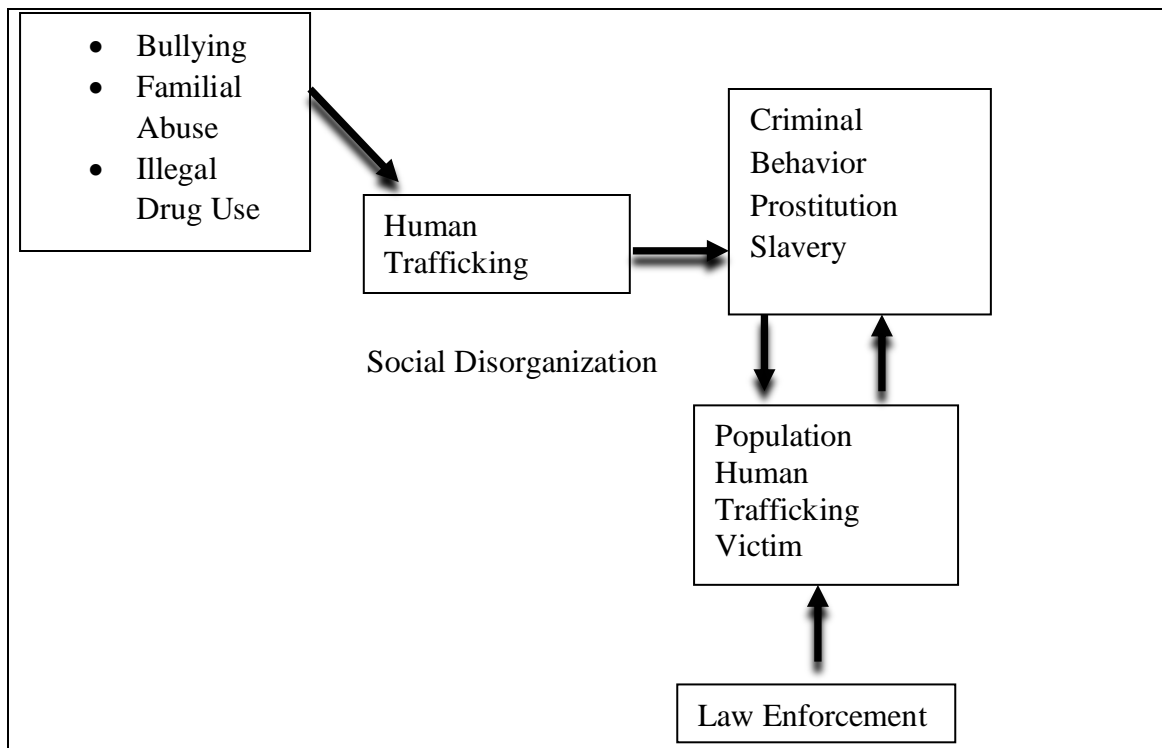


Figure 2. Social disorganization theory model for human trafficking.

Prostitution

Every country, every culture, and all political regimes have prostitution within the societies. Salmon (2018) stated that prostitution is when an individual engages in a sex act that is paid for by money or something of value. Little information is revealed before 4000 BC that prostitution existed, but as society developed religious values, brothels developed to bring the services of prostitutes to a place for men to satisfy sexual needs outside of marriage and the home.

Historically, many different professions were considered the oldest profession until in 1888, Rudyard Kipling penned the phrase in a story about Lalun, a prostitute,

being in the oldest profession. However, it was not until World War I that it was generally expressed that prostitution was the oldest profession.

Prostitution has been used to describe human trafficking synonymously.

Homeless juveniles and women will participate in prostitution for hire for the sake of survival (Cronleya, Ciminob, Hohna, Davisc, Maddend, 2016). Yet, human trafficking of children is a forced, deviate sexual behavior that eliminates any control from the child to make decisions on wellbeing at any level. Prostitution within human trafficking of children is an outcome of being forced into having sex with multiple partners by the third party in control. The continuation of prostitution after the age of consent is many times, the result of survival of the child into adulthood. The only means of surviving a sex trafficked child is to fall back into a lifestyle of what they have experienced. Prostitution, at its most basic level, has lifelong effects of both mental and physical malfeasants for adult individuals, but for children, it is manifested to significant levels (Norman, Byambaa, De, Butchart, Scott & Vos (2012).

1980s Women's Movement

The use of the term sex trafficking is a relatively new term that was developed from the women's movement of the 1980s (Hughes, 2014). Women activists were complaining that women and girls were being exploited through prostitution and pornographic materials (Hughes, 2014). It was not until the year 2000, after considerable debate from feminists, that there was a difference between free and forced prostitution.

Women began working on the movement in the 1970s to promote the idea of equal rights for women and to encourage women to have a voice in both professional and personal lives (Napikoski, 2017). White women had a voice to display the freedoms to be equal to men, but a Boston-based organization of black feminists called Combahee River Collective was emerging to examine the role of black women (Napiloski & Johnson-Lewis, 2017). This name, Combahee River Collective, came from a raid that was orchestrated by Harriet Tubman in 1863, where Ms. Tubman helped to free hundreds of slaves in the Combahee River, South Carolina area. This is significant in the realization that black feminists were able to make a statement that slavery was part of sexual exploitation that existed in everyday lives (Napikoski & Johnson-Lewis, 2017).

By reviewing the historical responses of the 1980 Women's Movement of the exploitation of women and giving specific actions within the movement a name, such as slavery, trafficking, and deviant sexual behavior, an interconnection is established to develop practical reasons to combat sex trafficking (Alvarez, 2017). Furthermore, studying the differences between prostitution and the trafficked allows a conversation of the precursors to being trafficked (Ottisova, Smith, Shetty, Stahl, Downs & Oram, 2018).

International Best Practices for Trafficking

With human trafficking being the third most criminal act of violence behind drug and weapon illicit activity internationally, it becomes the number one renewable criminal act worldwide (Rudolph & Schneider, 2017). Human beings are renewable because they can be used over and over sexually and moved from country to country by the human

trafficker (Rudolph & Schneider, 2017). The increase of victims of human trafficking is correlated to the number of migrants that travel between countries (Rudolph & Schneider, 2017). Technology also intensifies international human trafficking due to advanced technology in communications between multiple countries' traffickers (Rudolph & Schneider, 2017).

Merilainen & Vos (2015) state that human trafficking is a social and political problem that is manifested by (NGOs) Non-Governmental Organizations, to bring to the forefront the atrocities of human trafficking. To stop human trafficking, an exchanging of information to the inhumanity of sex trafficking must be published and solutions made from the details (Merilainen & Vos, 2015). Amnesty International's study (2012) indicated that human trafficking is not an isolated criminal act, but one that is interwoven with various other illegal activities. AI (2012) states that "immoral activities include rape, labor violations, sexual exploitation, kidnapping, prostitution, blackmail, governmental corruption, ill-treatment or abuse and even murder. Women and children were the most commonly reported victims of trafficking networks as they are frequently exploited as workers and sexual slaves." Even before the term of human trafficking was used, internationally, the term used was migrant trafficking (Roth, 2011), with migrant trafficking as a multi-billion dollar industry for organized crime. It has additionally been noted that human trafficking is being promoted through other entities besides organized crime, such as small networks, familiar people to the trafficked, neighbors or family members (Roth, 2011).

Other global sex traffickers may include job recruiters and mail-order marriage arrangers. Job recruiters may pose as a legitimate recruiter for international positions and after a response is made, make an offer to a young lady for that position. The company, and it may be a legitimate company, may sound irresistible to some and the young ladies are drawn into the illegal career, but can never quit or leave (Roth, 2011).

Traffickers of mail-order marriage arrangers post pictures of women in catalogs and distribute the catalogs around the world for men to choose a picture of women and purchase her for marriage (Roth, 2011). This is done both electronically and/or a hard copy. The vulnerability of victims that are wanting a better life from the country where they live has given sex trafficking a new venue (Aker, 2015). International governments will comply with the corruption to allow the poor and indigent to leave the country of origin and receive monetary compensation for this illegal mail-order bride brokering (Aker, 2015).

International child servitude is another form of sex trafficking that afflicts children under the age of 18. This includes selling a child for adoption within the country of residence as well as to another country and then forcing the child to work within that unit without pay (Allain, 2012) and forcing that child, which is usually a girl, to perform sexual encounters within the family unit, as well as outside the family unit to pay for the child's upkeep (Allain, 2012).

During the 2000 convention of the United Nations Council of Trafficking in Persons and in 2005, the Council of Europe Convention of Trafficking in Human

Beings extended the verbiage to include children as human beings under the age of 18 and that trafficking is the exploitation to include children. This is significant for how the United States views the human trafficking of children.

Many children that are abused by someone in the family continue with a lifestyle of deviant behavior. Stella Dawson (2015) comments that the term “child prostitute” is implying that the child consents to being abused and raped and under the law, are subject to be a criminal.

Precursors to Sex Trafficking

Bullying

Being bullied in prepubescence has a lasting negative effect that extends into adulthood for both the victim and the bully (van den Bedem, Dockrell, van Alphen, Kalicharan & Rieffe, 2018). Being the victim of a bully is enhanced if a child is still developing emotional self-efficacy and trying to socially deal with anger, fear, and sadness (van den Bedem et al., 2018). And bullies will prey on these uncertain children due to problems in communication skills and assumed weak (van den Bedem et al., 2018). “Bullying includes actions where there is a power or status difference, threatening, teasing, name-calling, ignoring, rumor spreading, sending hurtful e-mails and text messages, and leaving someone out on purpose” (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014; Olweus, 1993).

Most of the bullying occurs when both the victim and the person doing the bullying know each other and interact daily (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek,

2010). With bullying, there is an aggressive, potentially destructive behavior that is aimed at another and ultimately used in a methodical abuse of power and force (Cook et al. 2010). Bullies and victims of bullies are usually not connected within law enforcement, and a relationship is not seen (Rodkin, 2011). This is a disadvantage to the victim because the bullying may seem random and may be harder to correct and solve if others do not see that victims are targets.

According to the National Association School Psychologists (2012), bullying also includes social networking and sending a text which is not an attack that is physical, but very impersonal, and yet, it is still is a very powerful and manipulative form of bullying.

Cyberbullying, which is a contemporary form of bullying, is where someone will tease, and harass another using a cell phone, or computer (King, 2006). The victim may not even know who the bully is. Emotions are not seen when a person is being cyberbullied, and the victim can't see if there is a wink or smile, that makes this a tease (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012). Aftab (2011), has stated that approximately 85% of teens 12 to 13 years old have experienced cyberbullying.

With this vulnerability of youth being bullied through the internet, a whole population has new psychological effects that may exist through adulthood. There is disengagement that allows the sex trafficker an opportunity to lure a vulnerable, weak child, into a seeming comfort of the perpetrators' arms (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014). The Internet is the new playground of children, and with the trust of the information that children gain from using the internet, they may not be aware that the sex trafficker is

viewing profiles for purchasing the child (Clause and Lawler, 2013). The internet has allowed global advertising of children to be browsed by sexual perpetrators (Clause and Lawler, 2013).

Given these areas of research, acceptable ways to stop bullying of children is when adults respond to children being bullied and give the firm message that it is not an acceptable passage to adulthood to be bullied (Stop Bullying.gov). Each state has laws that are given to protect children that are potentially bullied, and in this research, the state and local laws of the state of Texas are being reviewed.

Laws against bullying, cyberbullying and any other behaviors attributed to bullying are addressed in a single law, or it may be in multiple laws or criminal codes that relate to juveniles (Stop Bullying.gov). In Texas, HB 2552 (2017) addresses certain criminal or other unlawful activity and to deter this type of activity. Additionally, sex trafficking, sexual offenses, prostitution and activities that may be understood as a public nuisance, have increasing criminal penalties. By stating specifically that sex trafficking is a criminal act intensifies the meaning and makes it stronger to prosecute those that participate in sex trafficking (Bruckert & Parent, 2002).

Clinics that perform abortions such as Planned Parenthood see children under 18 having multiple abortions and normally do not inquire to the health of the child or educating on activities that are commonly associated with human trafficking (Coolidge, 2016). Recognition of potential victims of human trafficking and methods for assisting those victims may prevent further exploitation (Coolidge, 2016). This implies that there

are common factors to human trafficking and that there is a preventative action that can be taken. Additionally, human trafficking involves sex, so it is important to inform facilities that may perform abortions to be aware that minors may be coming in for forced abortions and may be accompanied by an older man or woman (Coolidge, 2016).

Familial Abuse

It is estimated that child abuse is at an epidemic proportion due to the psychosocial factors that parent's exhibit that includes abuse as a child, substance abuse and living in poverty (Horner & Fischer, 2016). No time in our history have children been in such grave danger, and few have demanded that it stop. Children have deep ties to family life, and when that is broken through abuse, a child will react in many diverse ways. In a study of children in Romania that experienced familial abuse, there was a rise of non-suicidal, self-inflicted injury (NSSI) (Rebeleanu & Mocanu and Popa, 2016). This type of deviant behavior is significant due to the child is developing behaviors by paralleling the home life and the environment in which they exist (Rebeleanu et al., 2016).

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) studies indicated that children internalize abuse differently according to the age in which the familial abuse began and the length of the experienced abuse (Yancey & Hansen, 2010). CSA victims with a developmental disability are more likely to show an increase in recidivism to sexual abuse due to lower coping skills (Mansell, Sobsey & Moskal, 1998). The sex trafficker is more likely to be successful in obtaining developmental children due to that child's lack of understanding

that this is inappropriate behavior by an adult because of a previous experience of being abused by a family member (Mansell et al., 1998).

Sexually abused girls before the age of 18 are more likely to be revictimized at a greater rate of 3 to 5 times by the end of the high school senior year than those that didn't report abuse to authorities (Barnes, Noll & Trickett, 2009). Additional types of violence in childhood lead women to experience adult victimization (Aakvaag, Thoresen, Wentzel-Larsen & Dyb (2016). Health personnel are more likely to recognize familial abuse initially because many children will be seen by a doctor, nurse practitioner or in the ER because of the injuries that occur (Greenbaum, 2017).

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers acts of domestic violence to include "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence committed by a family member or intimate partner, as abuse." This is significant due to the nature that sexual abuse has long term effects for a victim of sex trafficking and the law has little understanding of recognizing it in its simplicity (Macy & Johns, 2011). The government usually stays out of the personal lives of those they govern, but when it involves domestic violence and familial abuse of a child, there can be severe legal ramifications (HG.org, 2018). The abuse may be physical or psychological, and the court system may only order the abusive parent to complete a parenting class (HG.org, 2018). Yet, there is no defining definition or clear circumstance that defines if an act that is physically or psychologically harming a child under the age of 18 is a criminal act.

Most abusive acts towards a child are based on a case-by-case basis and are adjudicated, and sentence applied subjectively by each state (HG.org, 2018). A familial abused child may never receive justice or medical assistance due to the courts wanting to keep families together and the parent out of jail. The familial abuse may continue, and children are sold to the human trafficker by a family member, and unless observed by officials that this is occurring, the child will never be able to be released from human trafficking. The Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) gathered information that reveals that 41% of recruitment into human trafficking is occurring by a family or relative of the child. And 51% of the children are controlled by psychological means by a parent or relative and 19% are controlled through sexual abuse (CTDC).

Illegal Drug Use

With the increase of illegal opioid dependency in this country, there has seen a relationship between human trafficking and drug addiction (The Recovery Village, 2018). A vulnerable individual that has a weakened self-defense mechanism will be more accessible to the sex trafficker by introducing drugs to that individual. There may be signs that a trafficked person is being controlled by opioids. The National Institutes on Drug Abuse reveals that unusual injuries or illnesses may include injuries that do not have any explanation for its cause; a third person may always be present with the trafficked person; the trafficked will not have any identification or know where they live. Trafficked people may only receive minimally, life-sustaining food, water, and shelter

that are necessary to exist (The NIDA Blog Team, 2017). With the added opioids and drugs, they may just barely survive.

The connection between human trafficking and illegal drug use is that they often occur at the same time. The drug traffickers may also be transporting people as another means of making an income (The NIDA Blog Team, 2017). The person that is trafficked is a renewable commodity for the trafficker, while the drug trafficker must acquire new drugs constantly. By combining the two, the trafficker increases the productivity of the trafficker.

United States Area Prone to Trafficking

Human Trafficking has come to the public's eye in the area around San Antonio, TX since President Trump has reinitiated the border wall to be built. When the Barnard family bought the 300 acres along the Mexican and American border, they understood that human trafficking was taking place across the land (Margain, 2017). The Barnard Family has been working with the Border Patrol to control the unnecessary deportations, but the decision of who is illegal and who is being trafficked is a concern. The question is who are those that are coming over into American soil? They are labeled as illegal immigrants because they have not gone through the proper area to enter (Sabawi, 2018).

Texas has greater opportunities to study human trafficking than most states in the United States because it borders Mexico and has a large illegal immigrant population within its boundaries (Nowrasteh, 2018). With no paperwork found with any of these illegal people coming over the border from Mexico, and no means of support, sex

traffickers will approach the helpless and offer to help pay for living in America. Many of the illegals were escaping situations of extreme abuse, destitution, and torture and they trusted a friend, a boyfriend or a relative to get to America for a better life (Do Carmo, 2015). Then, a nightmare begins as they are sold across the United States to the highest bidder, with little understanding of language, not knowing the purchaser, and a slow dehumanization process begins to emerge (Do Carmo, 2015).

Houston Trafficking

Houston, TX is the leading hub for human trafficking, and even though continued efforts are being made to reduce and assist the victims of these sex crimes, the trafficker is still waiting for the next victim (McClendon & Caruthers, 2018). Illegal massage businesses are fronts for human trafficking, and these businesses are found even in some of the wealthiest neighborhoods (McClendon & Caruthers, 2018). What is more horrifying is that many (IMBs) are within walking distance of public schools and in Houston, TX, there are 214,175 students enrolled in the 2017-2018 school year, with 74.93% economically disadvantaged (houstonisd.org).

Demographics

By reviewing the demographics of human trafficking, it is only an estimation of the number of human beings that are transported into the United States (Clawson, Dutch, Solomon & Grace, 2009). Across international borders, those that are trafficked for sex are numbering in the range of 600,000 to 800,000 (Clawson et al., 2009). Trafficking has

been classified into two categories, one is sex trafficking and the other labor trafficking, but they merge together as exploiting a human being.

To look at human trafficking, it is important to examine the victims and the victims' demographics. The lured are often promised a great job, a stable lifestyle, an education or even a loving relationship (polarisproject.org, 2018). The three populations that are described as victims of human trafficking are children that are under that age of 18 that are coerced in commercial sex, the adults that over the age of 18 that get into sex trafficking by force, a fraudulent act or by coercion from a deceptive person (polariproject.org, 2018).

Although human trafficking is recorded in every state in the United States and Washington, D. C., but Houston, TX is still at the forefront of human trafficking and movement. By increasing the awareness of human trafficking in all the communities of the United States, a prevention protocol develops (state.gov, 2016). The government statistics reveal that most sex traffickers would exploit women and girls in brothels, bars, and massage parlors in years past, but now have the demographics of trafficking in hotels and private apartments. This makes the recovery of victims more difficult because there are less knowledge and accessibility for law enforcement to investigate the crime (state.gov, 2016).

Political Climate

President Barak Obama stated, "Today we continue the long journey toward an America and a world where liberty and equality are not reserved for some but extended to

all. Across the globe, including right here at home, millions of men, women, and children are victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. We remain committed to abolishing slavery in all its forms and draw strength from the courage and resolve of generations past.”

President George W. Bush signs in 2006 the bill, H. R. 972 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act into law. He states, “in today’s world, too often human traffickers abuse the trust of children and be exposed to the worst of life at a young age. It takes a perverse form of evil to exploit and hurt those vulnerable members of society. Human traffickers operate with greed and without conscience, treating the sex trafficked victims as nothing more than goods and commodities for sale to the highest bidder.”

President Donald Trump signs a bill to combat online sex trafficking on April 11, 2018. H.R. 1865 – 115-164 allows states and victims to fight online sex trafficking. He stated, “Trafficking is probably worse today than at any time in our history,” and “You are not alone.” The reason this bill is important is that it covers websites that promotes prostitution of five or more victims and “acts with reckless disregard that such conduct contributes to sex trafficking.” The verbiage about sex trafficking is vital to allowing a preventive way to develop. Laws must address the criminality of sex trafficking and to allow laws to prosecute the trafficker and to make compensation for those actions (Deering, Garcia-Moreno, Duff, Argento & Shannon, 2014). Prostitution is a by-product of sex trafficking and not the cause of it. Young women and children are forced into sex trafficking and are not willing participants. When the political climate of laws is enacted

to show that the trafficker is the responsible one, then the public will be able to fight for those that are victims of sex trafficking.

There are few political issues that bipartisan support will coexist, but child sex trafficking is one (Baker, 2018). Earlier in 2018, two laws were enacted by Congress to criminally prosecute the internet service providers who promote sex trafficking (Baker, 2018). Civil damages towards the internet providers are becoming more prevalent due to efforts of politically and ideologically anti-child-sex-trafficking movement of conservative, liberals, feminists, and evangelical Christians (Baker, 2018).

Current Research on Human Trafficking and Precursors

Weitzer, 2014 reveals that the current research on human trafficking is a qualitative study of lived experiences of complex individuals that lends itself to developing policy from the responses. Additional research has also compared various international nations that have legal prostitution and examine the prostitution cases to see if they had better or worse human trafficking record (Weitzer, 2014). This is a flawed research design due to human trafficking is not about prostitution, but it is about exploiting human beings for money and dramatic aftercare when recovered (Macy & Johns, 2010). Cho, Dreher & Neumayer, (2012) reported that data collection from many countries has various mixing of criminal behavior of smuggling, trafficking and irregular migration numbers to report. It does not reflect the specific human trafficking data of sex slavery, but a comparison of various criminal activities.

Micro-level studying of human trafficking in cities, towns or small regions of a country is more validating because: (a) victimization figures will be more concise with smaller parameters, (b) the lived experiences of the victims will be richer, (c) a targeted area of human trafficking would allow law enforcement officers to have a place of significant activity to search (Weitzer, 2014). The now-determined research in human trafficking is that it is at a magnitude unparalleled in history and growing steadily (Weitzer, 2014). Human trafficking is second or third behind illegal drug and weapon sales in organized crime among national and international countries.

Gaps in the Research

Understanding the intimate personalization of survivors of human trafficking is a gap that is constantly expanding. With approximately 600,000 victims of human trafficking, the ethnographic and sociological studies that are based on in-depth interviews are needed to gain the data on the precursors that were evident at the conception (Gozdziak, 2007). These characteristics reported through interviews that set the foundation of determining effective policy and programs to solve the precursors of human trafficking (Gozdziak, 2007). When survivors can talk about the experiences of being trafficked in a safe environment, then similar attributes can be analyzed (Gozdziak, 2007).

Research is at a stall even with a larger number of qualitative, in-depth interviewing of survivors (Foulsham, 2016). In one research completed by Sarah Godoy (2016), approximately 135 relevant literature references were collected from 1999 to 2016 with

70 qualitative interviews revealing catastrophic human trafficking atrocities. The results revealed that there were “weak methodologies in empirical evidence and small data sets that urge readers to not republish as a national representative.” Godoy (2016) goes on to state that there isn’t an adequate amount of national numbers of sampling that she found and that statistics had to place reliance upon the small sampling that was collected.

Legislation in most states of the United States has limited requirements for child welfare systems to record at-risk children and documented sex trafficked children (Godoy, 2016). In Texas, for example, legislation has been presented to require abortion clinics to provide information for those entering the clinic to receive information on sex trafficking. It still is not enough to provide information, but it must be recorded for statistical analysis. The population is still too transient to keep the type of records used by governmental agencies (Godoy, 2016). It continues to be for health practitioners to recognize the victims of human trafficking and to diagnose any health-related issues of this type of trauma (Recknor, Gemeinhardt & Selwyn, 2017).

Summary

The Chapter 2 literature review summarizes the recognizing and analyzing human trafficking in its simplicity and its significance to the healing of society. The research suggests that there is a distinction between prostitution and human trafficking and is revealed through analyzing the shared lived experiences of victims of sex trafficking and law enforcement officers, as well as search and recovery teams. Chapter 2 discusses the review of the historical literature of sex trafficking and its relationship to prostitution.

Ingrained within the general research design, sex trafficking is examined as a deviant behavior that is a physical, mental and moral abruptness of the human norm of behavior (Barbaree & Marshall, 2008). It explores how bullying, familial abuse, and illegal drug usage are precursors. The two theories that are aligned to this study's phenological design is institutional analysis theory and social disorganization theory. The chapter includes the history and progression of sex trafficking as it develops from international exploitation and then to Houston, Texas. Lastly, this qualitative study includes a historical record of what human trafficking is in an area that has an unusually high record of human trafficking and to close the gap of previous studies; to move forward for recovery by analyzing the precursors.

Consequently, in Chapter 3, the purpose of this general research design of phenological emphasis will continue to discuss modern-day sex trafficking and the precursors that encompass 800,000 human lives with children being half of that number. The purpose of this qualitative study will be to explore the lived experiences of adults who were victims of child sex trafficking to determine the influence of precursors such as being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal drug use had on recruitment by grooming to becoming a child victim. This study will use the Precursors to Human Trafficking Questionnaire (Appendix A) as the (2018) validated treatment survey instrument for face-to-face interviews of survivors of sex trafficking and survey distribution to law enforcement officers, and search and recovery squads. Prior research has documented precursors in isolation; however, the lack of multiple precursors of being bullied, familial

abuse and of using drugs illegally has not been explored in combination as to the impact of being led into sex trafficking. The correlated precursors may provide greater awareness for families, law enforcement officers and first responders that look for missing children and presumed to be trafficked (Babay, 2012). The potential social implications of this study are supported by the bill in Texas, HB 2552 (2017) which states:

...that it is broad in scope, touching on many critical issues related to human trafficking. First, it improves data collection around crimes ancillary to human trafficking. This information is crucial for guiding tactics aimed at reducing the demand for illegal commercial sex, and for protecting minors and adults from violence and exploitation at the hands of buyers, pimps, and traffickers.

This qualitative research will seek to establish the susceptible precursors that were exhibited in victims of human trafficking. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that the qualitative study of interviewing and case studies is essential for communication that allows the stakeholders to develop a program tailored to an individual's needs and to develop a policy for future participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of adults who were victims of child sex trafficking to determine the influence of precursors. Some of these precursors to be explored are being bullied, familial abuse, and illegal drug use had on recruitment as a child victim. According to the U.S. State Department, sex trafficking of human beings is estimated to be between 600,000 to 800,000, with children being half that number (U.S. Department of State, 2004). It is paramount to explore the precursors that lead children to this inhumane activity (Reid, 2012). Although not every child that runs away from home becomes a victim of a sex trafficker, this study explored the extremely significant number of children trafficked. The precursor behaviors, in conjunction with each other, were the focus of this research. This study is important within and surrounding the Houston, Texas area because it is the fourth largest city in the United States with a population of 2,312,717 (Census Bureau, 2017), and boasts of being a diverse populous with human trafficking as the highest number of victims nation-wide (Ricke, 2016).

In this chapter, I discussed the procedures for recruitment, data collection, and analyses, along with discussing the trustworthiness and dependability of the study. I examined the research gap of why some victims have multiple, common precursors and are more vulnerable or susceptible to being recruited into human trafficking. I further addressed the gap in the literature of the precursors of a victim that has been bullied,

familial abuse and used illegal drugs. The findings from this research may provide additional information to guardians, law enforcement, first responders and social service agencies (Brown, Brack & Mullis, 2008, Cronin, 2014) as a means for a policy of prevention. The potential social implications of this study were supported by the bill in Texas, HB 2552 (2017) which states:

[This bill] is broad in scope, touching on many critical issues related to human trafficking. First, it improves data collection around crimes ancillary to human trafficking. This information is crucial for guiding tactics aimed at reducing the demand for illegal commercial sex, and for protecting minors and adults from violence and exploitation at the hands of buyers, pimps, and traffickers.

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative research used a general design with a phenomenological approach to establishing the susceptible precursors that are exhibited in adults who were involved in human trafficking and are survivors. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that the qualitative study of interviewing and case studies is essential for communication that allows the stakeholders to develop a program tailored to an individual's needs and to develop a policy for future participants. Therefore, this research included the following questions:

1- How does being bullied, lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

2 - How does familial abuse, lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

3 - How does the use of illegal drugs, lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

4 - How does being bullied, familial abuse and using illegal drugs concurrently, lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking?

The central focus of this research was to listen to the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2009). The traditional research of phenomenological research is to gain an understanding of an individuals' perceptions derived from the lived experiences. Therefore, this phenomenological study involved an attempt to correlate the precursors to human trafficking by survivors of human trafficking. The objective of phenomenological research methods is to study relationships of the lived experiences and develop patterns of meaning (Creswell, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In contrast, a grounded theory approach was not suitable for this study because it will not attempt to discover a theory. Grounded theory studies originated from a variety of sources such as interviews, observations, documents and other sources (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, this research did not use a grounded theory as a strategy of inquiry, due to it derives a general, abstract of a process, action, or interaction of the views of the participants (Creswell, 2009).

This qualitative research study included interviews of survivors of sex trafficking and to collect phenomenological data as is suggested by some researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Rubin and Rubin (2012) documented that researchers who conduct limited, semi-structured interviews will discuss how events took place as an extended conversation between the researcher and interviewee, with limited questions and limited follow-up questions. Accordingly, this study presented the research questions through emailing, texting, and phone calls with survivors of sex trafficking. Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted that internet interviews are useful when communicating with people who are either hard to reach or unwilling to converse publicly. As with Zoom communicating, setting up internet interviews are time-consuming. Disadvantages to interviews include setting up the site, conducting the interviews, transcribing the interviews, and analyzing the interviews, which can all be labor intensive. However, the advantages of interviews could include being able to read diminutive expressions and being able to note visible changes in the mannerisms or moods of the interviewees. The role of language and telling of experiences to someone who understands similar situations is sympathetic and is vital to the recovery of those that were involved in an extremely volatile situation (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher for this study, I used a qualitative research study that utilized interviews that were emailed, texted or were made by phone due to the COVID-19 Pandemic that required social distancing and this helped to eliminate any bias that may

have obstructed the interview process. Rubin and Rubin (2012) ascertained that in-depth qualitative interviewing has an association with interviewees who have experience with the problem of interest. The qualitative interview strategy included primary questions, probes, and follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). There were no personal or professional relationships that involved power over the participants. Therefore, this researcher did not have an intimate involvement with any participant that is being interviewed.

In contrast to ordinary conversations, interviews included a focus on the topic of the research questions, which this researcher pursued using a self-designed instrument I developed (see Appendix A). Rubin and Rubin (2012) stressed that the responsive interviewing approach accepts that both the researcher and individuals under study are people with emotions. To eliminate bias, this researcher adhered to the participants answering the research questions, instead of constructing explanations (Creswell, 2009).

Additionally, since a researcher's bias is often brought into a study, understanding reflexivity by researchers is needed to be aware of any influences over the research process (Gentles, Jack, Nicholas, & McKibbin, 2014). Therefore, this researcher did not place opinion or judgment on the experiences of the interviewees and did recognize this researcher's potential influence over the study's methodology of reflexivity. In this research, open-ended questions limited biases, and all responses were included, recorded, and transcribed by this researcher. It is also acknowledged that the survivor's answers

may be inaccurate or may not remember accurately the lived experiences of being trafficked for sex (Taylor, 2018).

Methodology and Selection of the Sample Population

For the proposed study, this researcher used a qualitative general research design with a phenomenological approach and explored the lived experiences of the targeted population of survivors. This study included interviews of five survivors and consisted of case sampling, which provided a rich and deep understanding of breakthrough insights (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants consisted of five survivors of sex trafficking (see Appendix B Demographics). This is a significant population selection due to the unique circumstances of being lured into the sex trafficking lifestyle. To this end, semi-structured interview questions that had open-ended responses were designed for this study. The questions focused on the perceptions that the three precursors to sex trafficking might be being bullied, familial abuse and abusing drugs before being involved in sex trafficking. Any other population would not be selected because the criteria would not have been met.

The ethical strategy for sampling adult, sexually trafficked persons, must include a sample population that has the identity of being trafficked as a child. In this study, the population was derived from those individuals that were trafficked as a child, placed on a missing persons' informational site with law enforcement and were located (see Appendix D). In this study, no pictures, names or identifying information was revealed. The proposed study attempted to gain an in-depth understanding of how precursors such

as being bullied, familial abused and illegal drug use can impact one's likelihood of being sex trafficked.

Each interviewee acknowledged consent to participate (see Appendix C). The information is the standard informational form documenting that the participant was missing and located by either law enforcement or the first responder team. Photos are enclosed with information when posted to social media; thus, anonymity is lost. No photos were incorporated within this study, nor were personally identifiable information revealed in this study. The sample of participants was limited to five, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the commonality of information was obtained at five, as well. The participants were contacted by letter or email and then assigned a letter and a number according to their response to participate of an email, text, or phone call. Saturation for this qualitative, phenomenological study will be five participants; this number is suggested for participants' lived experiences will be achieved between five and twenty-five (Creswell, 1998) or at least six (Morse, 1994).

This researcher used a qualitative general research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of the targeted population of survivors of sex trafficking that they experienced as a child. This study included interviews of five survivors and consisted of what Ravitch and Carl (2016) described as the single significant case sampling that provides researchers with a rich and deep understanding of breakthrough insights. The participants consisted of five survivors of sex trafficking (see Appendix B Demographics). This is a significant population selection

due to the unique circumstances of being lured into the sex trafficking lifestyle. To this end, semi-structured interview questions that have open-ended responses were designed for this study. The questions focused on the perceptions that the three precursors to sex trafficking might have been bullied, familial abuse and abusing drugs concurrently before being involved in sex trafficking. Any other population would not be selected because the criteria would not have been met.

Participation Selection Logic

The purpose of the phenomenological study explored if precursors existed for those that experienced sex trafficking. A specific organization of that locates missing persons contacts law enforcement and then in turn fills out a missing persons form and begins locating the missing. The Missing Persons' Form (see Appendix D) is completed by law enforcement or search teams to allow groups and the public to look for the missing person. These forms, when completed, are public information that includes a current picture.

When researchers collect qualitative data, the intention is to explore the topic with selected participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In a qualitative interview, it is suggested to conduct a minimum of five interviews and then check for data saturation; however, no agreed method of establishing a specific saturation has been determined (Francis et al., 2010). By interviewing five participants, enough information can be obtained (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, this qualitative study only required a limited number of survivors of human trafficking to represent the targeted participants. The

selection of five survivors will come from the surrounding counties and including the county within Houston, TX (see Appendix B). Therefore, the survivors were asked to agree to serve as participants voluntarily. The participants are no longer victims, but survivors and may wish to have a voice to tell the lived experiences of sex trafficking. The purposeful sample population voluntarily participated in the study and participated by being interviewed. This researcher did not interrupt the daily activities of the survivors. The state of Texas has an interest in hearing the lived experiences of survivors due to the expansive sex trafficking within the state. Therefore, with no respect to gender or race, survivors must have attained the age of 18 before being interviewed and either be in a recovery program or have been in a recovery program.

After this researcher secured permission by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to gain access to the survivors of human trafficking, data collection will begin. Regarding the sampling strategy, this researcher will purposefully include participants over the age of 18.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the interviews were conducted by email, texting, and phone. However, the study limitations served as strengths, as exhibited by the research design that allowed the interviewee to be a safe, comfortable place while answering the questions. The study's strengths also came from the participant pool with a focus solely on survivors of human trafficking in one localized area of Texas. This study will be the first to explore the multiple precursors of human trafficking occurring concurrently, by providing an original contribution.

Instrumentation

This phenomenological research used a questionnaire that was sent to three Walden experts to confirm content validity. (see Appendix A, Precursors to Human Trafficking Interview using a Questionnaire). Additionally, the nature of this general qualitative study explored the phenomenon using phenomenological and case study techniques. To ensure research credibility, an audio-tape recorder, as well as paper and pencil, were used to collect open-ended data from the population. Ravitch and Carl (2016) contended to not rely on memory because it will eliminate bias in an in-depth qualitative interview.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggest validating research; one must include triangulation of multiple sources, investigations, and participants' dialogue. Three Walden qualitative experts reviewed the instrument for this study in the following schools and program: School of Public Policy and Administration, Criminal Justice Program, and the School of Social Work and Human Services. Modifications included additional interview questions to answer the research questions. This study used interviews, as a research-developed instrument (see Appendix A). Knowledge obtained from the participants provided an in-depth understanding of whether factors attributed to susceptibility to the sex trafficker. This qualitative research consistent of an evidence-based program that dealt with co-occurring data (Brunette, Mueser & Drake, 2004).

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The validity of a self-designed interview protocol or questionnaire is reliable when objectives are determined to be feasible and reviewed with outcomes to see if any flaws

exist in the measuring instrument (Padden, 2013). The criteria should be based on the primary feasibility objectives. These provide the basis for interpreting the results of the pilot study and determining whether it is feasible to proceed to the main study. In general, the outcome of a pilot study can be one of the following: (a) Stop - main study not feasible; (b) Continue but modify protocol - feasible with modifications; (c) Continue without modifications but monitor closely - feasible with close monitoring and (d) Continue without modifications - feasible as is (Thabane et al., 2010, p. 410). With this research-based instrument, level 2 was used, but modified the protocol – feasible with modifications were used (Padden, 2013).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

This researcher used a purposive random sample that consisted of five participants who are survivors of sex trafficking. This researcher created a recruitment e-mail and letter of introduction that was an invitation to participate in this study. To this end, semi-structured interview questions that were open-ended were asked. One purpose of this qualitative approach was to demonstrate the reoccurring patterns for the rationale of the research questions for using a phenomenological approach. Furthermore, this researcher randomly selected the order of participation by when they responded to the email or letter. No financial compensation for any participation was given. After each participant read the invitation, they gave their consent to continue the interview by email, texting, and the phone (see Appendix B). This researcher collected individual data upon the conclusion of each interview from the site location.

Nevertheless, were no follow-up interviews planned for this study (see Appendix A) and there is no need for more than one instance of data collection. The researcher recruited participants in a random sampling. Before each qualitative interview, the confidential consent form was read by this research to the participants (see Appendix C). This researcher used a tape recorder, a notebook, and pencils and pens, emails, texting and a phone to collect all data. The time that was allotted for the interview session will was 60 minutes per participant. To ensure participant privacy and data protection, all data will be stored in this researcher's home for safekeeping.

Data Analysis Plan

Proper qualitative data analysis is a reiterative process used to establish researcher validity. Creswell and Miller (2000) noted that qualitative interviewers use a second lens that establishes the validity of the researcher's accounts: and in this study, it is the survivors' memories. Therefore, this researcher used a recording device to sustain interview integrity. Moreover, the unit of analysis that will be used is an embedded design. Thus, this researcher's study encompassed multiple units of analysis meant to ascertain consistent patterns of evidence across units (Yin, 2013). The study involved an attempt to demonstrate shared lived experiences among the survivors of sex trafficking and potential precursors, before being involved in sex trafficking. Saldaña (2016) indicated that researchers use epistemological questions to address theories of knowing and understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Hence, the semi-structured questions

were used, complemented the research design (see Appendix A). Saldaña noted that qualitative studies require coding in cycles to flush out research from in-depth interviews.

The study's data analysis involved using exploratory methods of coding that evolved into a coded pattern. Fusch and Ness (2015) reported that researchers reach data saturation after enough information is available to duplicate the study. Probing questions that were posed to the participants of the qualitative interviews also helped to achieve a point of research saturation. To this end, this study explored the at-risk youth who seemed more susceptible to sex trafficker because of being groomed through vulnerability (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated that outliers or exceptions could take a variety of forms, and McPherson and Thorne (2006) recognized such anomalies in research data sets as discrepant cases, atypical settings, unique treatments, or unusual events.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability

Rudestam and Newton (2015) reported that it might not be necessary to use the traditional terms of reliability, internal validity, and external validity in writing a qualitative dissertation. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that the alternative constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability may become evident. Rudestam and Newton noted that researchers could ascertain the credibility or truth value of findings by spending enough time with participants and exploring participants' experiences in enough detail. This researcher conducted

qualitative interviews with open-ended questions to make certain this study's transferability emphasizes a thick description.

This study's results served as the basis of the sample generalizations to other participants for future replicated studies. Rudestam and Newton (2015) also cautioned that the reliability of an instrument depended in part on the population for which a researcher uses that instrument. Thus, the researcher-based instrument achieved high reliability with one sample. However, isolated results may not necessarily attain that same level of reliability in another sample representing a different population. Finally, Rubin and Rubin (2012) established that confirmability is present when researchers report research findings in a transparent manner that allows the audience to understand the process of collecting and analyzing the data.

Ethical Procedures

This study took place in compliance with Walden University's Institutional Review Board. Minimal risk is acceptable, but researchers must provide it up front (Walden University, n.d.). That said, pregnant women, participants in crisis, and the elderly are vulnerable groups that could participate in my study. However, the exclusion of pregnant women can only happen when there is no medical harm from participation and questions causing foreseen harm to fetus from participation. The exclusion of participants in crisis can only happen when the mental crisis impairs the ability to respond to the questions and causes psychiatric harm. The exclusion of the elderly can only happen when the interview process causes physical harm such as sitting for a long

period, or sight and sound impairments prohibit the participant from fully understanding the interview questions or responding to the interview questions. However, no participant randomly selected for this study was expected to be a part of any of the vulnerable groups. To ensure participant confidentiality, this researcher stored the completed recording devices, and transcribed notes to minimize unwanted solicitation or data intrusion as a possible minimal risk.

Ethical Concerns

The strategy of the current study was to align with the lens of perceptions of survivors of human trafficking and to observe those that have been involved with human trafficking. I had the opportunity to interview and retain voluntary participants without any coercion as identified in the verbiage of the consent form. Thus, individuals had the option and right to decline to participate in the study or to refuse to answer stressful questions (see Appendix A). Also, sharing the names of individuals is not an ethical practice and did not happen in this study. Each participant responded that they felt safe and were not forced to speak with me and shall not worry about the need to provide guarded responses during the qualitative interview for fear of reprisal.

Protections for Confidential Data

Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted that the importance of ensuring that data remain transparent and that researchers keep interview notes or recordings so that anyone who wishes to check or duplicate the research, will be able. This researcher kept a recorded interview and an Excel worksheet of the analysis of information. It is suggested that a

transcribed study is more verifiable and contains more detail (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To provide clarity, this researcher logged all edited versions of the audio recording transcripts as left out of the material. This researcher kept all audio-tape recordings and transcriptions in an undisclosed location. This researcher accepts the confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C) and understands it is necessary for the study concerning access to raw data records. All personal, identifiable information is confidential, as well as analysis/write-ups. Participants' recruitment for this study was from a selected population. There were no foreseeable psychological, economic, professional, personal, or physical risks beyond daily life for the participant in this study. To this end, the research procedures did not reveal or create an acute psychological state as the goal of the study. Additionally, the researcher did not share notes or recordings with anyone at any time, unless they were involved in the study.

Summary

Chapter 3 included the rationale for using a qualitative phenomenological research design (see Appendix A) regarding how survivors perceive the precursors to becoming involved in sex trafficking. The chapter includes the research questions, research method and design, issues with trustworthiness, population and sample plan, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and ethical consideration of the participants. Chapter 3 also included the rationale for selecting a qualitative research-based design that uses a phenomenological approach. A qualitative interview consisting of open-ended questions was suitable to explore participant experiences. This chapter

included evidence to support the exploratory methods of recording a pattern of participants' lived experiences. Chapter 4 includes a comprehensive account of data analysis that includes the shared, lived experiences among human trafficking survivors. Chapter 4 also includes information about the demographic characteristics (see Appendix B) of the interviewees that participated in the qualitative interviews, as well as the coding results that emerged while exploring the participants' shared lived experiences.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of adults who were victims of child sex trafficking to determine the influence of precursors. The phenomenon was that some of these precursors impacted the trafficked child to be lured into recruitment to be a child victim. This study addressed four research questions of how does being bullied lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking, how does familial abuse lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking, how does using drugs illegally lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking and how does being bullied, familial abuse and using illegal drugs concurrently, lead to becoming a susceptible victim of sex trafficking. Findings also revealed the lived experiences of sexually exploited adults, provided me to explore the feelings and relationships that existed before being in sex trafficking. The significance of the findings of this study may increase the awareness of the susceptible precursors exhibited in sex-trafficked adults. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that the qualitative study of interviewing and case studies is essential for communication that allows stakeholders to develop a program tailored to an individual's needs and to develop recovery policies for future survivors. Thus, the social implications of this study revealed potential educational areas within the familial group that can decrease the number of children to be lured into sex trafficking and form a more stable home life.

The qualitative phenomenological approach of this study provided the adult participants with the opportunity to communicate their sequential lived experiences, feelings, and insights before being sex trafficked as a child. Chapter 4 also includes a detailed account of the study's settings, such as the demographics of the population, the data collection procedures performed, the data analysis technique used, the evidence of trustworthiness, and the final results.

Research Setting

The global pandemic of COVID-19, which reached 1,070,032 cases in the United States (World Health Organization, 2020), was a prime factor in having the participants email their responses or to participate in audio interviews. Accordingly, the participants were allowed to fill out the written interviews in a calm and private venue of their choice and allow a more sincere and complete response (Tessier, 2012). The written interview questions were sent before being interviewed to five female adult sex-trafficked individuals. The written interview questions were sent to the potential participants and allowed the participants to contact me for an audio interview and emailed response. The participants were afforded this opportunity to alleviate travel expenses to the location of the face-to-face meeting and helped the participants ease the potential harm that discussing the sensitive topic of sex trafficking might occur. I sent the invitation/consent forms by mail, email, and text the week of February 24, 2020, and the data collection process began on April 13, 2020. I gave the participants two weeks to reply to the invitation/consent form to participate in this study, and when the confirmation to

participate in the study was received by telephone, email, and text, a time was confirmed for the interview. Six interview/consent forms were sent, and five agreed to participate from the Houston, Texas, and the surrounding counties. The interview questions were open-ended and took 20 to 35 minutes to complete and were either audio recorded or completed within that time frame.

Demographics

There are several reasons why the research of child sex trafficking was in and around Houston, Texas. The participants designated that they were living in either Houston, TX or one of the surrounding counties of Houston, Texas when they were trafficked for sex as a child. They also stated that they were over the age of 18 now and have been or are now in recovery programs designed for sex-trafficked children.

Data Collection

The participants in this research study were five non-gender identifiable individuals that were sex trafficked as a child. I contacted the participants through an organization that looks for missing children and works with law enforcement. The first response was sent to the invitation/consent forms for review. I received a telephone call saying that the individual did not want to participate in this research. I continued to send out five additional invitation/consent forms to request to participate in this research. After receiving confirmation that five participants wanted to be a part of this study on being a sex trafficked child, the interview questions were sent to them by email and text message. The data collection began on February 24, 2020 and continued until April 13,

2020. The initial request to the IRB was to send out ten invitation/consent forms to former sex trafficked adults the first week of the approved research study pool. Due to the global pandemic of the COVID-19 Pandemic, participants were not able to complete the interviews face-to-face; five agreed to a phone interview or to fill out answers to the interview questions by email or text and to forward the information back to me.

Each participant received a letter and a number to allow for confidentiality to participate in this research study. The example coding was to assign one of each participant a letter/number combination. Their consent came from contacting me using one of the above identifiers after having received the invitation/consent form and responding that they would participate in the study. This gave a perceived control in wanting to participate in this study.

Data Analysis

Precursors to a child being sexually trafficked have certain characteristics and may be grouped in levels to show congruity. Level one is coded in red to show relationships to their mothers, level two is coded in blue to show differences to how they were lured into sex trafficking, level three is coded in green to show frequency of abuse, level four is coded in yellow to show sequence of events that led to being trafficked, level five is coded in orange to show to whom they corresponded to and level six was coded purple to show that causation to being trafficked. The following paragraphs provide the specific response to the levels.

Level 1 of this research was to understand the phenomenon of precursors to being sexually trafficked as a child. This level was color-coded in red and began with the similarity of experiences of the participants towards their mothers as the beginning of their life of being sexually exploited. Participant A501/105 described the parent/mother as the first trafficker. Participant A901 that the mother became mentally abusive after the divorce from the father. Participant A301 describes the mother as an alcoholic and abusive. Participant A801 relates that the relationship between mom and dad was that they were not close. Mother became more distant when the dad was not around the house, and the mother was distant after the mother had a boyfriend. A401 did have an excellent relationship with her father and just a good relationship with the mother.

Level 2 of this research was color-coded in blue and included the differences of precursors that happen predictably different ways that caused them to be involved in sex trafficking. This involved question number nine that related to having a boyfriend or girlfriend in high school and how that related to sex trafficking. Participant A501/105 did not have a boyfriend or girlfriend in high school and still did not have a relationship with anyone after being out of the sex trafficking trade for approximately eight years. Participant A901 stated that they did not have a lot of boyfriends but had a few; yet, they ran away with a boy, had a baby, married twice and divorced, and had two additional children. Participant A301 had a boyfriend, got pregnant at 12, 14, and 16. She married the boyfriend who was 16. This revealed a dysfunctional relationship pattern that involved drugs and alcohol at an early age. Participant A801 was trafficked by parents

from birth and stated that they never had a boyfriend or girlfriend but talked to a few people. The differences that occurred were predictable in that the participant did not know what a relationship with someone was. Participant A401 got pregnant with her boyfriend in ninth grade.

Level 3 included the frequency of familial abuse and being bullied and was color-coded in green. Participant A501/105 stated that because her parents trafficked her at five years of age, and it continued until she was 18 years of age, familial abuse was all she ever knew. Frequency of familial abuse correlated directly to sex trafficking for Participant A501/105. Nearly 41% of children that are recruited into sex trafficking is by a family member (CTDC, n.a.). Participant A901's uncle first molesting her as a child of nine years of age and continued until they moved at age 14 to another state 2,000 miles away. Six years of familial abuse during puberty is a significant timeline of desensitizing a child. A301 was verbally abused by her mother, and her dad was violent towards her mother.

Additionally, A301 became pregnant at 12, 14, and 16 years of age. A401 had an excellent relationship with her father until he divorced her mother. Participant A401 had good relationships with friends, but by moving into the ghetto in Alabama after the divorce disrupted the family unit. She became pregnant in the ninth grade with a boyfriend and then ran away and met another guy over the internet and ran away at sixteen. Participant A801 was bullied a lot in school and ran away in 10th grade and became sexually active.

In Level 4, I compared the sequence of events that seemed to occur in a order. The color coding is in yellow. I compared the bullying, familial abuse, and illegal drug use that related to the lived experiences of each participant. Bullying, familial abuse, and drug usage were grouped with emotional and physical abuse and how the sequence of events occurred because of the abuse. The perceptions of the participants dictated their actions to running away from home, pregnancy at an early age, and not finishing high school. It was noted that it was a sequential pattern to being lured into sex trafficking.

Level 5 was color-coded in orange and labeled as a correspondence of the participants as the events in their lives that happened in relation to other activities or events. For example, the familial abuse that occurred in A501/105 happened directly concerning the different activities or events of sex trafficking. Each of the siblings of A501/105 was kept apart from each other, and they are not known to A501/105 currently. A901 stated that her best friend killed herself, and that allowed A901 to begin not to trust a close relationship and stayed to herself to keep from getting close to anyone. With A301, alcohol was the primary factor in maintaining a close relationship with her mother and father. A301 also reiterated that her mother moved them to a bad neighborhood and did not have many friends. A401 became pregnant in 9th grade and only completed to 11th grade and became distant to family and siblings. A801 additionally adds that her mother was distant after she started dating her new boyfriend. A801 had five brothers and one sister and growing up was not close to any of them. At school, A801 was bullied a lot and was believed that she was the black sheep of the family.

Level 6 was coded in purple and is the causation of events that one appears to cause another. In one literature review and journal writing on sex trafficking of a child, there is causation to childhood sexual and physical abuse and revictimization in women (Coid et al., 2019).

The questions were arranged to allow the experiences of the participants from their personal belief and feelings of how they were groomed into being involved in child sex trafficking. I offered the participants that the questions would be audiotaped in a face-to-face venue. All five of the participants were not able to meet face-to-face to give their responses, due to the global pandemic COVID-19 virus, and the quarantine at stay at home mandate. All five participants were eager to share their experiences, so four out of the five gave audio and emailed responses to the questions. And one participant responded just in the email response. The emerging themes were still prevalent in the research that is supported by Hatch's (2002) pattern coding venue. By expressing their lived precursor experiences before being sex trafficked and sharing how they got out of being trafficked by resources they utilized, proactive processes that support recovery could be implemented. The pattern coding table with color highlighting shows the correlation of responses that reveal the precursors to the trafficking of children.

Table 1

Pattern Coding

Level of Data Analysis	Purpose	Color of Codes	Representations
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Pre-Level	Highlighted / Read Significant Responses	n/a	audio/emailed responses
Level 1	Similarities	Red	abusive mothers; no father around; no father-figure in home; pregnant before 18; moved a lot; didn't complete H.S.
Level 2	Differences	Blue	ran away from home; approached by boyfriend; approached by unknown person; bullied; stripper
Level 3	Frequency	Green	abuse; ran away; sex=income; moved a lot; no father figure in home; alcohol abuse
Level 4	Sequence	Yellow	familial abuse; divorce of parents; sexual encounters before 18 yrs.; molested by family members
Level 5	Correspondence	Orange	ran away from home; sexual encounters; sex trafficked
Level 6	Causation	Purple	bullying; familial abuse; drug abuse

I applied Hatch's Pattern Coding method of analyzing data by using Microsoft Excel to correlate the data from the eighteen, interview questions. The participants

answered the interview questions by audio, telephone call, and or emailed their responses. Due to the global pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, face-to-face responses were not available because of an order by the Houston, Texas Mayor Sylvester Turner to stay-at-home. Although sex trafficking has not come to a stand-still, responses from the survivors were not available except for the reasons above. I did compare the responses within the Excel spreadsheet by color-coding the similarities and differences. Since each participant responded in their own vernacular, each response had built upon each other. The gender of the respondent was not revealed, but gender-related comments were revealed and recorded. The Excel spreadsheet allowed me to see at a glance the responses.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

There is a need to set a strategy or a tactic when establishing credibility when interviewing and recording participants' experiences. In this study, coding at the same time as transcribing the interview data allows the researcher to maintain the credibility of the interview. Ezzy (2002) recommends to code as you transcribe the interview data, maintain a reflective journal with highlighted notes, and check with the participants your understanding of their responses. The next credibility check came with the coding of extracted, casual beliefs, and why certain outcomes came about in their lives (Saldana, 2016). The search for antecedent circumstances and the actual variables that led the participants in the way they continued to live their lives. Audio recording with an

affirmation of responses as they were given was also utilized in this study. The participants' responses upheld the literature reviews on slavery and the correlation to sex trafficking.

Transferability

The specific information of the participants' interview responses applied to other situations or populations due to the similarity of responses to the same questions each were given. It was not possible to prove that the descriptions the participants gave are applicable, but there is a preponderance of the evidence to support. The saturation level was achieved early and grew as each of the participants responded, and the transferability of the research study enabled the generalizations to transfer to other comparable contexts (Saldana, 2016). The lived experience of a lured and groomed child allows their experiences to umbrella the experiences of a sex trafficked child.

Dependability

The establishment of the dependability of this research study is made by using literature reviews to acknowledge the theoretical foundation of this research and to show consistency in these research findings (Cronin, 2014). The findings in this research study increase trustworthiness because of the results of previous or similar studies are reflected in this study. Children that were bullied and experienced familial abused children that were lured into sex trafficking as the consistent responses of the participants authenticate a child. The only research question that was not explicitly answered in this study with

the literature review was the use of drugs as a precursor to being lured into sex trafficking. It is assumed and not directly mentioned.

Confirmability

By listening to the audio interviews, several times allowed an attitude of reflexivity and to provide a more impartial analysis of the participants' experiences. The actual voice of the participant blocked the preconceived ideas I may have had on child sex trafficking. They were telling lived experiences and keeping a transcribed copy of the audio interviews kept my biases out of the research process. It wasn't my voice; it was the survivors', and that was the impact that was wanted from this research study.

The Final Results

All of the participants spoke clearly about their childhood lived experiences prior, during, and after being involved in sex trafficking. Careful wording was put into the planning of the interview questions to allow the responses to be sensitive to the participants' formally unspeakable life as a child that had been sex trafficked. All responses were pertinent to the literature concepts of precursors to human trafficking. Every participant referred to their mother's influence on why they ran away from home. Only one participant acknowledged that the parents introduced them into sex trafficking at the age of five. All participants described their first sexual encounter under the age of at least fourteen, and one participant shared that the first sexual encounter was remembered at age five. One participant stated that they never attended school at any age, and three stated that they want to complete their GED, and four wanted to go to

college. All five participants were able to express their knowledge that familial abuse and being bullied was a pivotal factor in their being involved in sex trafficking as a child. Drug abuse was only referred to as a parental problem and not attributed explicitly to sex trafficking. That question was not directly asked in the interview questions.

Furthermore, the color-coded pattern coding (Hatch, 2002) was useful in identifying the participants' responses to what happened before being sex trafficked. All participants were uniformly able to share how the events of their growing up attributed to their being involved in sex trafficking. Participant A501/105 specifically stated that their parents were the first ones to traffic them at the age of five. Participant A901 named an uncle that molested them at the age of nine. Three participants, A901, A401, and A301, had children when they were under the age of 17. All but one participant understood and could describe the difference between being a prostitute and being forced into human trafficking and the slave trade when they were 13 years old. I am suggesting that further research into how childhood bullying, familial abuse, and drug usage of children under the age of 17 impacts the child to be lured and groomed into childhood sex trafficking.

This qualitative phenomenological study was meant to identify the precursors to sex trafficking of children who are now adults and are no longer being sex trafficked by using their lived responses. By providing a voice to the survivors of sex trafficking, a dialogue has begun to emerge from their experiences, and policy guidelines are developing to equip others to have a meaningful conversation about the prevention of

childhood sex trafficking. Furthermore, Participants A901, A301, A801, and A401 want to get more education for themselves and improve their life skills.

By incorporating the qualitative phenomenological approach of Hatch's (2002) pattern coding of similarity, differences, frequency, sequence, correspondence, and causation of the lived experiences of participants in a research study, the participants gained a voice. Also, this study provided the lived experiences of the participants to impact law enforcement, health providers, school districts, and school counselors to have a platform to build upon for awareness to the precursors to human sex trafficking of children. The lived experiences were obtained by using open-ended questions that were developed to have broad to specific responses (Trochim, 2006). Credibility and transferability of responses of this research study was the proposed theme.

Symbols and Images in the Media

The participants were all aware of the media's attempt to locate missing children and how some parents went on tv to report their children missing. Participant A501/105 stated that when they went missing and were found, they were punished for running away. A301 ran away from the sex trafficker at 18 and became a prostitute and stated that the money was coming to them and not to a pimp. The media and law enforcement changes the way they look at sex trafficked child by taking them off of the missing child flier, and they become a prostitute and a missing person. The urgency is no longer there for the media or law enforcement, and many times it goes into a cold case file. A801 revealed that when she ran away from the sex trafficker, she hid in the state capital of

Texas for three weeks until calling for assistance. Symbols and images of abducted children are relevant for the recovery of those trafficked as children because they want to know that someone somewhere was looking for them, and they were missed. With the familial abuse response, the highest causation pattern of children running away from home in this study, media releases of missing children are being questioned by law enforcement to go and look for the children, immediately.

Reciprocal Relationships

Participants answered the interview questions about their relationship with their father, mother, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, boyfriends, girlfriends, and classmates. Participant A501/105 describes the relationship with their parents as their first sex trafficker. They never knew if they had a brother, sister, aunts, or uncles due to being trafficked at the age of five and sent throughout the United States and Mexico.

Participant A901 reveals that the relationship to their parents was okay until the parents divorced at age six. A distant relationship to father after this time and mother became mentally abusive. The siblings went to live with the dad and not close to them after the divorce. The uncle molested this child at nine years of age. A301 had alcoholic parents and was close for a while with siblings, but no longer talk with them. A801 did not have a good relationship with their parents and had five brothers and one sister and was not close to any of them. Mother had a boyfriend and became even more distant to them. A401 had a wonderful relationship with the father and just a good relationship with the mother. They had a great growing up with siblings and uncles, aunts and cousins were

okay. When a child has been harmed at an early age, they are most likely to be involved with sex trafficking (Reid et al., 2017). The results from the responses of this study indicated that the familial abuse as a child led to running away and being lured into child sex trafficking.

Shared Recovery

All participants are or have been involved with a recovery program for children that were involved with sex trafficking and now are adults. The programs include healthcare, education to get GED or a college certification or degree, legal services, and spiritual counseling. A501/105 states that the recovery process is going very well, and they are utilizing free services to recovery. The experiences the participants revealed are vital to establishing a long term recovery program that addresses general and specific areas to resolve before recovery takes place. Participants A901, A301, A801, A401, have either married or have a boyfriend and will be getting married within a year.

Education

Participant A501/105 shared that they had never attended school their entire life. It was a tough message to hear because the best possible social change policy needs to begin with the birth of a child and continue through adulthood. The opportunities of getting a formal education would have allowed resources from teachers, school counselors, and spiritual advisors to address the familial abuse that was happening and offer services for the child. Although the findings in this study do not address the family unit recovery process, the discovery of the precursors to familial abuse is revealed.

Knowledge of the disparity between a family unit that is safe and secure for a child and one that is dysfunctional and abusive is paramount to saving a child from being lured or groomed into the sex trafficking world. It is suggested that education on sex trafficking be implemented in schools and places where children are participating in social activities.

Themes

Three coordinating themes emerged from the results that highlight how the lived experiences of the participants impact knowledge of the precursors of sex trafficking of children. Table 5 correlates the themes that were recognized in this study. They are familiar with abuse, undeveloped sense of self-worth, and unawareness of being lured into sex trafficking. The first theme focused on recognizing familial abuse. This theme is complicated because every family has a dynamic. Some families have two parents involved in the parenting process, and some parents are divorced and must parent separately. Every participant became descriptive of how their parents were intrinsically involved with the decision-making abilities of their sexual awareness when they were growing up. Divorced parents divided the family, and economics became an issue with the mother moving to lower-income housing. Many mothers abused their children and brought boyfriends into the household. The children were not protected from familial abuse and looked outside of the home for security and love. They became vulnerable to sex-traffickers.

Table 2

Themes and Participants' Responses

Themes	Example
Familial Abuse	Had sex with a family member before 13
Undeveloped self-worth	Parents divorced, believed it is their fault
Unaware of being lured into sex trafficking	Looked to boyfriends for security and love

The second theme was an undeveloped sense of self-worth. All participants felt that they were not important in the family unit and needed to find their place somewhere to have self-worth. Participant A901 had moved with the mother across the country after a divorce. A friendship had developed with another child, and that child committed suicide and A901 was devastated that someone who became a close friend, would hurt themselves. It reflected A901's self-worth because her uncle molested them at age nine, and that friend left them without a confidant. A301 had a lack of self-worth when the family unit became violent with them and became pregnant at twelve, fourteen, and sixteen years of age. All participants understood that the recovery services would help with developing their self-worth.

The third theme was revealed to the participants when in the recovery stage, that awareness of being sex trafficked as a child was not their fault. Healing will begin for the survivor of childhood sex trafficking by becoming aware that a variety of trauma-

informed and responsive services support their recovery. When the interview question was asked if they knew of the free services available to them, A401 said they didn't know about services to help until last year. A901 stated that they did sort of knew about the services. A301 stated that they needed a prescription and was told that there were free services for medication and counseling. All of the themes were represented within the literature reviews. Themes of protecting children by awareness, recognizing sexual exploitation, and support the healing of survivors by implementing screening tools to identify potential victims.

The results of this research study indicate that the lived experiences of the participants give a firsthand account of how vulnerable children are regarding the precursors to human trafficking. Their responses showed that Hatch's (2002) theory of pattern coding provides a valuable asset in evaluating and interpreting the importance of recognizing child sexual exploitation that is taking place in Texas and throughout the United States of America.

Summary

The experiences of exploited adults when they were children and how they became involved in sex trafficking were revealed in this study and allowed a voice to the survivor. The participants provided a platform for a dialogue of how children become lured and groomed into sex trafficking. By allowing an intimate conversation about dysfunctional familial relationships and how it promotes a child to become vulnerable to

a sex trafficker was the findings of this study. Support for the healing of survivors is achieved through diverse collaborative trauma-informed and responsive services made readily available to survivors. The education of the precursors to human trafficking will strengthen the children to make better choices.

Chapter 5 explores the ending of child sexual exploitation in Texas by analyzing and interpreting the lived experiences of participants of this study and recognizing the resources available for recovery. I request further research on how to minimize the precursors of child sex trafficking by raising public awareness of the screening tools needed to identify potential victims.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of adults that were involved in sex trafficking as children. By using audio recordings and emails, texting, and phone interviews of their first-person accounts there revealed the influence of precursors of human trafficking had in conjunction with each other. The correlating phenomenon was that there are precursors to human beings being sex trafficked as children. This qualitative phenomenological approach allowed for the study of the gap in the literature on how certain precursors, in conjunction with each other, show how a vulnerable child is groomed and lured into sex trafficking. Moreover, the importance of this study created an awareness and information on which a vulnerable child is and the awareness of the precursors to child sex trafficking.

By using the audio recordings and the emailed, texted and phone call answers to the questions of the lived experiences of adults who trafficked as children, I was able to explore the precursors to those that were trafficked and why they were vulnerable to a trafficker. This study analyzed the lived experiences of the survivors' relationships with their parents, relatives, and friends, and the impact of those relationships had on their vulnerability to being trafficked for sex. The phenomenological approach with the theoretical background of Ostrom's (2005) institutional analysis and development and Shaw & McKay's (1942) social-ecological systems provided the basis to make a correlation to the impact of being bullied, familial abuse and abusing drugs to being

vulnerable to a sex trafficker. Adult survivors of child sex trafficking were given a voice on how their childhood was abruptly changed due to the impact of being bullied, familial abuse, and the use of drugs in conjunction with each other and how they were groomed and lured into sex trafficking. Their lived experiences added an intimate perspective to the existing theories in the literature of why a child runs away and becomes involved with sex trafficking. The findings of this study provided new understandings on how precursors of human trafficking affect the vulnerable child.

Summary of Key Findings

The key findings of this study revealed three described areas to increase and promote adolescent self-worth through adversarial situations that may be traumatic when these situations occurred as a child. The three areas included recognizing awareness tools to identify potential victims, protect children and youth by building their awareness and healing resources from trauma-informed services and supports. An analysis was developed from the findings to show how precursors impacted the lived experiences of sex-trafficked children.

Interpretation of the Findings

Confirming the Literature

Awareness of child sex exploitation practices is the most compelling information that society needs to become more knowledgeable. Lack of education for parents to prevent exploitation, and for parents of victims, to prevent further victimization is displayed in the increase of childhood sex trafficking (Cooper, 2020). It was, therefore,

not unusual for the participants to describe in detail their relationship to their parents and especially to their mothers, as being abusive, distance, and unloving to them when they were between five and seventeen years of age. Yet services to assist abusive situations in the home were not obtained in time to help the children moving from the abusive home to a healthy environment. If the children in abusive homes had access to services available to them, they might not have been lured into the arms of the sex trafficker. Being bullied outside of the home was an issue for most of the participants, and they didn't tell anyone in authority what was occurring. Social services and law enforcement agencies must always consider the possibility of child abuse and talk with children when responding at a scene where there is domestic abuse, at the very least. Most of the participants stated that they attended school at some point in their lives, yet; not one school official understood the dynamics of grooming and the trauma of sex trafficking that was occurring.

Disconfirming Existing Literature

The findings challenged the impact of just hearing about child sex trafficking or reading about sex trafficking. The perception that all runaways were just mad at their parents for putting down rules they didn't like did not explain the increase in sex trafficking in the United States (Caruthers, 2020). The results of this study suggested that there is a lack of knowledge, prevention, and deterrence of familial abuse, bullying, and substance abuse of and towards children to prevent a child from being groomed and lured into sex trafficking by a sex trafficker. The participants shared how the breakdown of the family and particularly of not having a healthy relationship with their mothers allowed

them to search for an unhealthy relationship outside of the home. When a child even feels that their mothers do not love them, then a balancing of feelings goes elsewhere. Every participant stated that they went outside of the home to find a relationship to another to satisfy this situation.

Ostrom's (2005) institutional analysis and development theory provided the collective experiences of a group that allowed to show a commonality of precursors of sexually trafficked children. Additionally, Shaw and McKay's (1942) social-ecological systems theory, set a pattern that interprets a progression of events that directly draws a vulnerable child to a sex trafficker and eventually into being sex trafficked. This study findings also included the responsibility of families, social workers, schools, and law enforcement to be aware of a child being sexually exploited by protecting and recognizing children that are being sexually exploited to the point of being trafficked for sex as a minor. It is imperative to listen to the lived experiences of adults that were sexually trafficked as children to give knowledge and plans for training on how to protect children from sex predators.

Extending the Literature

I recommend expanding this study to include sufficient training of commercial sexual exploitation for those already working with high-risk youth. Increasing awareness by listening to the survivors' voices of being groomed and lured into sex trafficking will allow a plan to be developed to curb sex trafficking. The survivors provided the areas of concern that need to be addressed so parents, social agencies, and law enforcement will

gain first-hand training to prevent further victimization. Even though there are different experiences within the child that is sexually exploited and goes into sex trafficking, the precursors are within each voice. Yin's (2013) study suggests that multiple units of analysis are needed to see a pattern. The diversity of responses into a pattern is accomplished through recordings, taking notes, observations, and semi-structured questions. Participant A401 states that they tried to have a relationship with their father, but the father didn't want a relationship with them or the mother. Again, a breakdown of the family unit after a divorce. Participant A501/105 didn't have a relationship with the mother or father because they trafficked them and sold them all over the United States and Mexico. The participants' voices provide for an in-depth understanding of the silence of an abused child.

I showed through recording the precursor events of a child before being involved in sex trafficking that there is a lack of awareness or not acknowledging that some children are being neglected and abused in dysfunctional homes. The participants shared their stories to allow this study to help others see that their experiences were authentic and preventable. Finally, participants wanted to get the education that they were able to complete, and four of the five participants wanted to have an appropriate relationship with another adult.

After the findings were analyzed, two themes were seen as emerging from the lived experiences of the participants. There is a lack of recognizing the precursors to human trafficking in the education of children to become their advocate and lack of recovery

programs for children that run away from home and become involved in human trafficking as a child.

The first theme was a lack of recognizing the precursors to human trafficking. As a child, there should not be a responsibility to protect themselves from being trafficked. Three of the participants in this study stated that they were not aware of what sex trafficking was at the age of 13. The participants who did know about sex were the ones that had a child at 12 years old, and the other participant was trafficked as a child of 5 and knew about sex and sex trafficking. Based upon the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College (2020), 7% of children that had a substantiated report of child maltreatment were sexually abused. Hatch's (2002), pattern of coding suggests that there is a causation of events that one appears to cause another. With sexually abusing a child in the home, allows a pattern of a lack of self-worthiness and the child is open to follow a sex trafficker to gain self-worth.

The second theme that came from this study was the lack of recovery programs for children that run away from home and become involved in human trafficking. The Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) was created in 2018 by Texas Governor Greg Abbott to end child sexual exploitation in Texas. Four out of five of the participants were aware, at least had heard about people that could help them, if they had run away from home and needed assistance. Yet, none of the participants utilized any of the services. The one participant that was trafficked across the United States and Mexico by their parents stated that they thought that being sexually trafficked as a healthy lifestyle. The five areas that

CSTT suggests helping exploited children is one, protect child and youth by building their awareness of and resilience to child exploitation and by curbing the demand for child sex trafficking. Two, recognize sexual exploitation by raising public awareness. Three, recover victims with protective end empowering collaborative responses. Four, support the healing of survivors through a variety of trauma-informed and responsive services and supports. Lastly, bringing justice for survivors by holding exploiters (traffickers, buyers, and those who profit from exploitation) accountable. All participants agreed that they needed assistance and help and are now aware of the services that could have helped them but could help them now.

The results of this research study indicated that when a child is aware of the precursors to human trafficking, and the services available to assist them are available, a recovery plan could be implemented to safeguard a child and prevent being groomed and lured into sex trafficking. By giving a voice to a survivor is a foundation to recovery and allows society to reflect on what precursors are in luring children to a sex trafficker.

Limitations of the Study

Several methods of limitations of this study were addressed. The methods that were limited included utilizing an audio recording with a face-to-face interview and transcribing the interview. Because of the Global Pandemic of COVID-19, my face-to-face interviews at the selected public location legally barred the participants and me from attending. I decided to email the consent form and interview questions to the selected participants. They were given my telephone number and then assigned a letter and

number. When addressed, they were told that they would be addressed as a letter and number to maintain confidentiality within the study. A folder with their information has the transcribed notes from the interviews. The participants were then given the option to send their responses in a text message or email and participate in a phone interview. Four of the five participants provided a phone interview, and one participated by emailing their responses to the interview. It was essential for the participants to be able to share their experiences that, even if a face-to-face interview was not possible, they still wanted to share their lived experiences before being involved in child sex trafficking.

Lastly, I want to mention that the participants that decided to do the interviews did not want to be compensated for their interviews. Only after the Global Pandemic of COVID-19 was fully active did the remaining potential participants want to be compensated for their responses. As was stated in the consent form, no compensation would be given for this research study, and those participants were not selected for the study.

Recommendations

This study brought up several areas that scholars need to examine in a more in-depth way. The Department of Family and Protective Services, which may be the first to be contacted, is lacking the training of commercially sexually exploited children. This lack of awareness and education is preventing and allowing children to continue to be at risk of being lured into sex trafficking. A more profound need is to access students in schools to provide human trafficking training. This training would include resiliency education

that focuses on emotional, cognitive, mental, physical, and spiritual resilience. This will enhance the quality of life and decrease stress and anxiety to view life's inevitable challenges as opportunities. Children are born into the family unit, and they do not choose who their parents will be, so facing challenges may be a way of life.

Implications

Implications for Positive Social Change

This study provided the lived experiences of sexually exploited children and how to be aware of the precursors to human trafficking. By increasing the voice of survivors to human trafficking will allow agencies to develop policy plans to promote awareness of children that are at risk. The policy plans will most likely address how parents look at their child and how first responders understand who the victims are. They will be able to apply trauma-informed principles that would increase disclosure of victimization. Since investigations are too dependent upon survivor cooperation, knowledge of who are potential victims is paramount for the society to have this knowledge. Shaw & McKay's (1942) social-ecological systems theory, set a pattern that interprets a progression of events that directly draws a vulnerable child to a sex trafficker and eventually into being sex trafficked. The findings of this study focused on the lived experiences of childhood sex trafficking precursors. This study recorded the perspective of adults that were sexually trafficked as a child helped address how a child is groomed and lured into sex trafficking.

The legislation is vital for the discovery of an exploited child. House Bill (HB 3800) relates that it is required by peace officers and prosecutors to report human trafficking cases. State Bill (SB 586) to the training of peace officers for family violence and sexual assault assignments. At the very least additional legislation has been enacted for programs for sex trafficking prevention and victim treatment from 86(R)HB 1113.

The findings of this study aligned with Ostrom's (2009) institutional analysis and development theory that used a specific group of interview questions to document the complex actions of individuals. As with the social disorganization theory of Shaw & McKay (1942), it has been shown that a higher crime correlates to residential mobility and ethnic heterogeneity and low economic status. With familial abuse and the breakdown of the family unit, a sub-societal structure develops, and a child becomes vulnerable to those who prey on those attributes of society. By expressing their lived experiences of being lured into sex trafficking, participants indicated that they could help others and gain the confidence to get their education and help to better their relationship with other people.

Recommendations for Practice

The participants' recording of their lived experiences of childhood sex trafficking has the potential to increase awareness of the precursors to human trafficking. The findings in this study pointed to that not every child that runs away from home will be lured into sex trafficking by a sex trafficker, it did indicate that a dysfunctional familial unit is a factor to being groomed by one. The personal insights on childhood precursors

were developed from the participants' revealing intimate details of how they became involved in the sex trade. It wasn't one thing, but a combination of several situations. The findings allow policymakers to develop resources to combat childhood sexual exploitations through educating both the survivors and the future al

Conclusion

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study's conclusion regarding how there are precursors to the human trafficking of children from the lived experiences of those that went through sexual exploitation. The analysis of the findings indicates a definite impact of precursors to being trafficked as a child is present when recognition of the precursors is made known. A combination of events occurring allows the vulnerable child to look outside of the home to satisfy the needs that are not being met. The implications of this study addressed childhood sex-trafficked children from their perspective and how their awareness of the signs of being lured into being trafficked for sex as a child, may have been prevented.

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Appendix A: Precursors to Human Trafficking Questionnaire, Eldridge, 2018

- I: Would you describe your relationship with your parents or guardian when you were growing up?
- I: What was your relationship to your brothers or sisters?
- I: Describe your relationship to uncles, aunts, cousins?
- I: Describe where you lived when you were growing up?
- I: Did you have a pet when you were living at home?
- I: How would you describe your relationship with your friends? Your classmates?
- I: What type of high school activities did you participate in while in high school?
- I: What high school level did you complete?
- I: Did you have a boyfriend or girlfriend in high school?
- I: If you ran away from home, what were the influences that you experienced that contributed to you running away from home?
- I: Did you run away with someone that you knew, or did you meet on the internet?
- I: What was/is your relationship with your parents or guardian after this event in your life?
- I: What is your level of education, now? Would you like to finish high school or go to college and what are your interests?
- I: Can you describe the difference between being a prostitute and being forced into human trafficking and the slave trade when you were 13 years old?
- I: Describe where you stayed when you left your home and for how long?
- I: Describe what you told your family, friends, a school counsellor or a pastor about your experiences while you were involved with human trafficking? Or, did you tell anyone about your experiences?

I: Could you explain the services were being offered to you, free of charge? Did understand that health care, education, legal services and spiritual counseling were available to you?

I: Do you have any additional questions or comments that we haven't discussed that you would like to share?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix B: Sampling

This researcher used a purposive random sample that consisted of five participants who were victims of sex trafficking as children. This researcher created a recruitment e-mail and letter of introduction that explained the purpose of this study. To this end, a structured face-to-face interview with open-ended questions was designed, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, no face-to-face interviews were conducted. Instead, email, texting and phone conversations were utilized to focus on the perceptions that the three precursors to sex trafficking might be being bullied, familial abuse and using alcohol or drugs, as the basis for research design. This was a letter of invitation to review for participation. One purpose of this qualitative approach demonstrated the correlation between the three precursors. This researcher randomly selected the order of participation. There was no financial compensation for any participant. Each participant received an informed consent form with information about a voluntary participation and a space to provide consent in place of a signature. A recorded agreement by email, texting or over the phone acknowledged the consent form to participate. This researcher collected individual data upon the conclusion of each interview by email, texting or phone conversation which was recorded. The reliable interview questions have a descriptive design approach that collected answers from the participants.

Appendix C: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Researcher

During this research, this researcher will be reviewing data from “Precursors to Human Trafficking,” and this researcher will access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. It is acknowledged that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant’s name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after the termination of the job that The Researcher will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix D: Missing Person File

**NCIC Missing Person File
Data Collection Entry Guide**

Agency Case # _____

NCIC Initial Entry Report																							
Message Key (MKE) (See Categories, page 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Disability (EMD) <input type="checkbox"/> Catastrophe Victim (EMV) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (EMO) <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile (EMJ) <input type="checkbox"/> Involuntary (EMI) <input type="checkbox"/> Endangered (EME) <input type="checkbox"/> Caution		Date Reporting Agency (ORI)																					
Name of Missing Person (NAM)		Sex (SEX) <input type="checkbox"/> Male (M) <input type="checkbox"/> Female (F)																					
Aliases																							
Race (RAC) <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander (A) <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native (I) <input type="checkbox"/> Black (B) <input type="checkbox"/> White (W) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown (U)		Place of Birth (POB)	Date of Birth (DOB)																				
Date of Emancipation (DOE)	Height (HGT)	Weight (WGT)	Eye Color (EYE) <input type="checkbox"/> Brown (BRO) <input type="checkbox"/> Hazel (HAZ) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown (XXX) <input type="checkbox"/> Black (BLK) <input type="checkbox"/> Gray (GRY) <input type="checkbox"/> Maroon (MAR) <input type="checkbox"/> Multicolored (MUL) <input type="checkbox"/> Blue (BLU) <input type="checkbox"/> Green (GRN) <input type="checkbox"/> Pink (PNK)																				
Hair Color (HAI) <input type="checkbox"/> Sandy (SDY) <input type="checkbox"/> Blue (BLU) <input type="checkbox"/> Purple (PLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Brown (BRO) <input type="checkbox"/> Gray or Partially Gray (GRY) <input type="checkbox"/> Green (GRE) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown or <input type="checkbox"/> Black (BLK) <input type="checkbox"/> Red/Auburn (RED) <input type="checkbox"/> Orange (ONG) Completely Bald <input type="checkbox"/> White (WHT) <input type="checkbox"/> Blond/Strawberry (BLN) <input type="checkbox"/> Pink (PNK) (XXX)		FBI Number (FBI)																					
Skin Tone (SKN) <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow (YEL) <input type="checkbox"/> Lt. Brown (LBR) <input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy (RUD) <input type="checkbox"/> Albino (ALB) <input type="checkbox"/> Dk. Brown (DBR) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (MED) <input type="checkbox"/> Sallow (SAL) <input type="checkbox"/> Black (BLK) <input type="checkbox"/> Fair (FAR) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium Brown (MBR) <input type="checkbox"/> Dark (DRK) <input type="checkbox"/> Light (LGT) <input type="checkbox"/> Olive (OLV)		Scars, Marks, Tattoos, and Other Characteristics (SMT) (See Checklist, page 8)																					
Has the missing person ever been fingerprinted? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, by whom? _____		Other Identifying Numbers (MNU)																					
Fingerprint Classification (FPC)* <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>																							
Social Security Number (SOC)		Operator's License Number (OLN)	Operator's License State (OLS)	License Expiration (OLY)																			
Missing Person (MNP) <input type="checkbox"/> Missing Person (MP) <input type="checkbox"/> Catastrophe Victim (DV) <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abduction (CA) <input type="checkbox"/> AMBER Alert (AA)		Date of Last Contact (DLC)	Originating Agency Case Number (OCA)																				
Miscellaneous (MIS) Information such as build, handedness, any illness or diseases, clothing description, hair description, should be included. If more space is needed, attach additional sheet.**			Missing Person Circumstances (MPC) <input type="checkbox"/> Abducted By Stranger (S) <input type="checkbox"/> Runaway (R) <input type="checkbox"/> Abducted By Non-custodial Parent (N)																				
License Plate Number (LIC)	State (LIS)	Year Expires (LIY)	License Plate Type (LIT)																				
Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)			Year (VYR)																				
Make (VMA)	Model (VMO)	Style (VST)	Color (VCO)																				

**NCIC Missing Person File
Data Collection Entry Guide**

Agency Case # _____

Caution and Medical Conditions (CMC)					
Code	Description	Code	Description	Code	Description
00	Armed and dangerous	25	Escape risk	65	Epilepsy
05	Violent tendencies	30	Sexually violent predator - contact ORI for detailed information	70	Suicidal
10	Martial arts expert			80	Medication required
15	Explosives expertise	50	Heart condition	85	Hemophiliac
20	Known to abuse drugs	55	Alcoholic	90	Diabetic
		60	Allergies	01	Other
Has the missing person ever donated blood? (MIS) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Blood Type (BLT) <input type="checkbox"/> A Positive (APOS) <input type="checkbox"/> B Positive (BPOS) <input type="checkbox"/> AB Positive (ABPOS) <input type="checkbox"/> O Positive (OPOS) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown (UNKWN) <input type="checkbox"/> A Negative (ANEG) <input type="checkbox"/> B Negative (BNEG) <input type="checkbox"/> AB Negative (ABNEG) <input type="checkbox"/> O Negative (ONEG) <input type="checkbox"/> A Unknown (AUNK) <input type="checkbox"/> B Unknown (BUNK) <input type="checkbox"/> AB Unknown (ABUNK) <input type="checkbox"/> O Unknown (OUNK)			
Circumcision? (CRC) <input type="checkbox"/> Was (C) <input type="checkbox"/> Was Not (N) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown (U)		Footprints available? (FPA) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Y) <input type="checkbox"/> No (N)		Body X-Rays? (BXR) <input type="checkbox"/> Full (F) <input type="checkbox"/> Partial (P) <input type="checkbox"/> None (N)	
Does the missing person have corrected vision? (SMT) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Glasses <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Con Lenses			Corrective Vision Prescription (VRX)		
Jewelry Type (JWT) (See Checklist, page 20)			Jewelry Description (JWL) (See Checklist, page 20)		
DNA Profile Indicator (DNA) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Y) <input type="checkbox"/> No (N)		DNA Location (DLO)			
Complainant's Name					
Complainant's Address				Complainant's Telephone Number	
Relationship of Complainant to Missing Person			Missing Person's Occupation (MIS)		
Missing Person's Address					
Close friends/relatives					
Places Missing Person Frequented (MIS)					
Possible destination (MIS)					
Reporting Officer		Reporting Agency Telephone Number		Investigating Officer and Telephone Number (MIS)	
Complainant's Signature			Date		NCIC Number (NIC)