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Psychological Coercion Among Trafficked Sex Workers: A Grounded Study Approach

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Walden University

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Rebecca A. Laurento

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Psychological Coercion Among Trafficked Sex Workers: A Grounded Study Approach

by

Rebecca A. Laurento

MA, Walden University, 2013

BS, Millersville University, 1989

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

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Abstract

Millions of individuals have become involved in human sex trafficking (HST) each year. This study involved an exploration of how these individuals became victims to psychological coercion and their experiences with HST. The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to add to the current literature and provide a foundation for future researchers. Given the lack of literature on this topic, professional practitioners may not understand this problem or know how to support these victims of HST. The gap in literature this study addressed pertained to the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion for individuals involved with HST. Oppression and exploitation were used as the theoretical lens for this study. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 females who were previously trafficked or participated in prostitution from the Southeast Houston area. Data analysis using theoretical coding revealed 5 themes that emerged to help answer the study's research questions and explain the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion within HST: list themes. The findings from the study may be used by government agencies to promote positive social change and reduce the number of victims being trafficked within the United States for the purpose of the commercial sex trade as well as aid in the identification and rescue of current and future victims of HST.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Janet L. Nunemaker. You have truly been a friend, support system and confidant throughout my entire life. Your strength and courage through adversity has taught me to care about others before myself. Thank you for always being supportive of me. I love you with all my heart.

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I would like to thank my husband, Larry, and my children, Manda, Tony, and Maddi, for their endless support during my years of working long hours while also completing this dissertation. I would not have been able to complete this project if not for your constant positive reinforcement and support. You are all truly amazing.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Each year millions of individuals around the world who became involved with human sex trafficking (HST) also become victims of psychological coercion (Kim, 2011). Numerous researchers have conducted studies relating to physical violence and the consequences experienced by individuals within the HST environment (Bennett-Murphy, 2012; Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Reid, 2012; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). However, there has been limited qualitative research on the processes and dynamics explaining the psychological coercion of individuals within HST (Butler, 2012; Cwikel & Hoban 2005; Fernando-Diamond & Agoff, 2012; Fernand-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2011; Sandy, 2007). But the processes and dynamics of becoming a victim to psychological coercion are vital to understanding the challenges of rescuing and identifying individuals within HST.

There has been a growing body of literature focusing on the need for increased training for medical and other human service professionals who come in contact with HST victims pertaining to awareness and identification (Baldwin, Eisenman, Sayles, Ryan, & Chuang, 2011; Hodge, 2014; Hounmenou, 2012; Lange, 2011). According to research, victims have been rarely given the opportunity to disclose information to medical staff, as traffickers take control of medical visits and do not allow victims to speak on their own behalf (Baldwin et al., 2011; Hodge, 2014). Most often, the victims do not speak the language of the medical staff and require the trafficker to interpret on their behalf. This type of restricted communication adds to the victim's psychological control by the trafficker (Baldwin et al., 2011; Hodge, 2014; Hounmenou, 2012; Lange,

2011). Further, victims often fail to cooperate with law enforcement agencies during rescue attempts and prosecution of traffickers for fear of reprisal from law enforcement and other government officials as well as violence and retaliation against family members back home (Hodge, 2014). However, the literature provided few qualitative studies describing victims' self-reported barriers to disclosing information to medical health care professionals.

Potential social change implications as a result of the current study could include a reduction in the number of individuals being trafficked into the United States for the purpose of the commercial sex trade. The community's awareness of HST's psychological coercion to participate in the sex trade could bring about this potential positive social change. Another important change could be the increased numbers of traffickers being prosecuted as a result of victims' development of self-awareness and increased cooperation with authorities.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into several sections, beginning with the background of the study. Afterwards, the problem statement, purpose of the study, and the research questions are provided. Then, the conceptual framework, nature of the study, and definition of terms are discussed. In the remaining sections, assumptions and limitations, the scope and delimitations, and the significance of the study are highlighted. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points.

Background of the Study

Psychological coercion as it relates to HST was introduced as a concept in the United States with the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA,

2000), which was created to make a new “forced labor” felony that criminalized non-physical forms of coercion (Hopper & Hildago, 2006). The act defined human trafficking as a form of modern-day slavery and spelled out the means by which individuals are psychologically forced or coerced through manipulation and fear. This new standard for prosecution of traffickers has enabled professionals and law enforcement to identify victims not only through physical capture and torture but also through the psychological coercive methods of traffickers (Hopper & Hildago, 2006). For instance, there are associations between trauma and symptoms experienced by trafficking victims and psychological coercion (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Hossain et al., 2010). Symptoms vary from acute PTSD to dissociation disorder and self-harm as well as depression. The consequences are chronic for most victims associated with mental, physical, and psychological torture (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Hossain et al., 2010).

Researchers have also explored torture and kidnapping victims’ development of Stockholm syndrome as a mechanism for coping and survival (Adjorn, Christensen, Kelly, & Pawluch, 2012). HST is closely related to torture and abuse, and many victims develop Stockholm syndrome characteristics from years of living with sexual assault, threats of impending death, isolation, prolonged captivity, general humiliation, and physical abuse (Cantor & Price, 2007). Victims of HST may develop positive feelings toward their captives as a way to cope with traumatic events. Further, situational coercion refers to the circumstances that renders individuals vulnerable to exploitation due to abusive working conditions (Kim, 2011), which suggests the significance of psychological coercion and its impact on individuals to stay in adverse and abusive

working situations. But the law has struggled with properly defining the dimensions of coercion within the scope of HST. There have been several dimensions of coercion; to understand how they could be connected to HST, there is the Ingalls and Warren courts or the “climate of fear test” (Kim, 2011). Fear paralyzes certain individuals to submit to their employers’ demands. Though the courts have previously found in favor of defendants who suffered physical coercion, it was not until contemporary discourse set forth the prosecution of individuals for psychological coercion to compel labor within the context of human trafficking (Kim, 2011).

In addition to issues defining coercion, there is a gap in knowledge surrounding psychological coercion in the form of criminalization post-rescue (Butler, 2012; Fernando-Diamond & Agoff, 2012; Fernand-Esquer & Diamond, 2014). Butler (2012), Fernando-Diamond and Agoff (2012) and Fernand-Esquer and Diamond (2014) referred to mainly Latina immigrant workers who worked in cantinas (i.e., bars) in the southwest United States, who were at risk of being trafficked or bought and sold among traffickers due to their lack of language skills, no legal documentation to be in the country, and fear of reprisals against themselves and their families. Criminalization post-rescue refers to being legally punished by having to testify against their captors, which in turn causes psychological coercion of the victim to benefit the legal system. Though research has highlighted specific relationships between drinking, drug use, and sex work by trafficked individuals, the literature has not revealed if these practices were voluntary or coerced (Fernando-Diamond & Agoff, 2012; Fernand-Esquer & Diamond, 2014). Therefore, this

study was conducted to help address this gap in the literature and to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST.

Problem Statement

The problem this research addressed is the gap in literature pertaining to the processes and dynamics that explain psychological coercion for individuals involved with HST (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Butler, 2012; Chung, 2009; Fernando-Diamond & Agoff, 2012; Fernand-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2011; Sandy, 2007). Psychological coercion is a known method by which human traffickers keep victims from leaving their situation of sexual slavery (Adjoran, 2012; Banovic & Bjelac, 2012; Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, & Watts, 2010). Researchers describe HST as a broader global phenomenon utilizing psychological coercion as its means of exploitation to facilitate movement across borders (Kim, 2007). Individuals are offered employment or other promising situations abroad, only to be taken to a country where they do not speak the native language and find themselves in a situation of slavery and servitude. There was a need to know more about the many challenges with identifying and helping victims of HST concerning their lack of cooperation with legal authorities, health care professionals, and outreach workers (Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Farrell, Owens, & McDevitt, 2014; Fernando-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Kim, 2011; Hoper & Hildago, 2006). Results of this study can inform training for identification and understanding of the reality of sex workers and to better plan for rescue efforts for HST victims.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose for this study was to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST. Exploring the reality of individuals who may have been psychologically coerced through interviews with former victims of HST offers insights to help inform the identification and rescue efforts of current and future HST victims.

Research Questions

The research questions were formulated from literature regarding previous research findings surrounding HST, psychological coercion, and Young's (1988) theory of exploitation. The central and subquestions were developed based on recommendations for future research:

1. How does psychological coercion deter the rescue of HST victims?
2. How do the dynamics of psychological coercion contribute to victims not wanting to leave HST?
3. How does psychological coercion hinder the identification of victims within HST by professional practitioners?

Conceptual Framework

The research study used a theoretical framework of oppression as a strategy to help explain the phenomenon of psychological coercion. There were several different theories relating to oppression, but the present study focused on Young's (1988) interpretation, which referred to oppression having three distinct structures including exploitation, powerlessness, and violence. According to Young, it is not possible to

define a single set of criteria to describe the situation of oppression. Young's position toward oppression provided support for the current study by offering a foundation to generate a theory of the dynamics relating to the psychological coercion of HST victims.

The first structure of exploitation is a struggle between power and inequality, which maintains individuals (the exploited) in situations of subordination. The trafficker uses the social structure of power and inequality to keep the supply and demand of the sex trade alive and well in the United States and around the world. The second structure of powerlessness is the inability to operate with autonomy. Victims of HST are rarely given the power or permitted to use their individual will to make any decisions concerning their life or future. In a normal situation, people can change their circumstances and would not be met with adverse constraints or violence (Young, 1988). Victims of HST, on the other hand, are not permitted the freedom to change their situation and would be severely reprimanded with violence, starvation, and other harsh punishment if attempted. The third structure of oppression involves violence. Violence can be seen as not just physical harm but includes intimidation, harassment, ridicule, and humiliation (Young, 1988).

The three structures offered support for the study's research questions pertaining to the processes of psychological coercion used with HST victims. Young's (1988) oppression framework related to the research questions and study approach, as it allowed me to interview the participants concerning the processes and dynamics involved with psychological coercion within the HST situation. This interactive relationship produced

meaning from the data being observed by me as well as defined and interpreted together with the study participants.

Nature of the Study

Qualitative theory was appropriate for the research, as the topic required a smaller, in-depth study to understand the processes of psychological coercion of individuals involved in HST. A quantitative study lacked the necessary design to capture the intimate details needed to fully understand and address the implications surrounding psychological coercion and HST. One of the many challenges with identifying and helping victims of HST is their lack of cooperation with authorities and outreach workers (Fernando-Esquer & Diamond, 2014); therefore, a grounded theory approach was used pertaining to how the processes of psychological coercion contribute to identification and rescue of victims. This study provides a theoretical framework pertaining to the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion of HST victims based on themes that emerged from the research. Grounded theory is not one theory but rather the means by which researchers inductively develop a possible theory during a qualitative study (Glaser & Strauss, as cited in Creswell, 2014). With grounded theory, the data in this study were constantly analyzed after each interview to allow for continuous theoretical development (Creswell, 2014).

Purposeful sampling was used to interview former HST victims. The interview questions were designed by me with the intent to discover the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion experienced previously when involved in HST. The collected information was reduced into codes and themes to begin to develop an emerging theory

pertaining to psychological coercion. Information was analyzed, classified, and arranged on a continuous basis to examine relationships among themes, which were used to develop a theoretical foundation for future work on the topic of psychological coercion among trafficked sex workers.

Definition of Terms

Exploitation: A struggle between power and inequality that maintains individuals (the exploited) in situations of subordination (Young, 1988).

Human sex trafficking: Adopted from the U.S. State Department and U.S. Congress' TVPA, which highlights deception, fraud, and coercion used to induce an individual to engage in a commercial sex act (Smith, 2011).

Powerlessness: The inability to operate with autonomy (Young, 1988).

Psychological coercion: As it relates to HST, psychological coercion is the means by which dependency is created to control a victim.

Stockholm syndrome: Paradoxical development of reciprocal positive feelings between captors and their hostages for providing captives' with coping strategies of traumatic events (Cantor & Price, 2007).

Violence: Physical harm, intimidation, harassment, ridicule, and humiliation (Young, 1988).

Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that all interview participants would answer questions honestly. An additional assumption was that they are no longer involved in HST. The study attempted to explain the processes of psychological coercion among former victims of

HST. The sample was chosen for this purpose and not as a representation of a given population. Therefore, the results are not generalizable to any specific population. Details are provided in the Results section in Chapter 4 for readers to determine their usefulness.

Scope and Delimitations

The current study was conducted to explain the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion of individuals involved in HST. Using former victims of HST allowed for insight into these processes. I chose the current framework because it allowed me to address the issues of the HST victim from a perspective of oppression. Young's (1988) structure of oppression permitted me to explore the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion with the framework of exploitation, powerlessness, and violence. The intention of the study was to better understand why individuals remained in their trafficked situations as well as to help aid in the identification and rescue of HST victims.

Significance of the Study

This study is important to HST and the control and manipulation used by traffickers to keep their victims from leaving. The findings may provide psychologists and other professionals, such as law enforcement and outreach organizations working to rescue victims, with factors responsible for maintaining the dependent and coercive relationship between traffickers and victims. Identifying such factors may aid professionals in disrupting the coercion so that victims may access the assistance they need to break their psychological bonds to the trafficker. Thus, the study may help

inform and support efforts to improve victims' abilities to participate in their own liberation from HST. The research is expected to make an original contribution to efforts in rescuing sex trafficking victims within the United States. The study findings may allow workers and authorities to understand the processes and dynamics involved with psychological coercion involved in HST.

The positive social change implications from the study include a reduction in the number of individuals being trafficked into the United States for the purpose of the commercial sex trade. This change would come about as a result of community awareness of sex workers' psychological coercion to participate in the sex trade. Another possible positive social change may be the increased prosecution of traffickers as a result of victims' development of self-awareness and cooperation with authorities.

Summary

This study was focused on the processes and dynamics that explain the psychological coercion of individuals involved in HST. This study was necessary because there was significant need to improve the identification and rescue efforts of trafficked sex workers within the United States. The study addressed the gap in the knowledge pertaining to psychological coercion and sex workers involved in HST. There was a need to know more about the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion and why these individuals remain in their situations. This study has functioned from a framework of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). This framework was useful for working with the participants to create meaning from the data to uncover the processes of psychological coercion. The participants chosen were a sample of former

victims of HST who resided at a transitional living facility located in Southeastern Texas. The findings from this study can allow outreach workers and professionals to better understand the victims of the HST situation and better assist them to become self-aware and eventually fight for their own liberation.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review and synthesis describing the current literature surrounding the study topic and the relevance of the research problem. An analysis and review of the literature pertaining to the study's theoretical framework are also discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose for this grounded theory study was to help explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST. Exploring the reality of individuals who may have been psychologically coerced through interviews with former victims of HST can help inform the identification and rescue efforts of current and future HST victims. Current literature has focused mainly on the physical violence and the consequences experienced by victims of HST (Bennett-Murphy, 2012; Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Reid, 2012; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). But there is a growing body of literature that demands an increase in training and identification of HST victims (Baldwin et al., 2011; Hodge, 2014; Hounmenou, 2012; Lange, 2011). However, no qualitative studies have explored the processes of psychological coercion involved in HST. Thus, this study addressed a gap in literature pertaining to the processes and dynamics that explain psychological coercion for individuals involved with HST (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Butler, 2012; Chung, 2009; Fernando-Diamond & Agoff, 2012; Fernand-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2011; Sandy, 2007). There was need to know more about the many challenges with identifying and helping victims of HST concerning their lack of cooperation with legal authorities, health care professionals and outreach workers (Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Farrell et al., 2014; Fernando-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Kim, 2011; Hoper & Hildago, 2006).

The remainder of Chapter 2 is divided into three sections, discussing (a) the literature search strategy, (b) the theoretical foundation literature, and (c) the current

literature. The first section discusses the strategies used to obtain the literature, and then the second section provides an explanation of the foundation's validity as it pertains to the current study, including key concepts and definitions. In the third section, a review of current peer-reviewed and empirical research is discussed, focusing on key concepts and constructs relating to the current study and the research questions. Chapter 2 ends with a summary and conclusions.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy involved the Walden University library's EBSCOhost online research databases and Internet search engines to obtain information for this study. The search included abstracts of relevant articles published between 2006 and 2016 using the terms *human sex trafficking*, *psychological coercion*, *exploitation*, *violence*, *powerlessness*, and *oppression*, and *Stockholm Syndrome*. Separate searches were conducted in databases commonly used in the psychology discipline, such as PsychARTICLES database, and Sage Journals. The search was narrowed by combing terms with the Boolean operators, such as *human sex trafficking AND psychological coercion*, *human sex trafficking AND exploitation*, *human sex trafficking AND oppression*, and *human sex trafficking and powerlessness AND violence*. Also used was the Internet search engine Google Scholar to search for information. If a cited source provided an additional empirical study on my topic, information from the original research study was obtained. I found most of the articles from the Walden University's online library.

Conceptual Framework

The present study utilized a conceptual framework of oppression to understand the victim–offender relationship in HST. There were several different theories relating to oppression, but my study focused on Young's (1988) interpretation, which referred to oppression having several distinct structures including, exploitation, powerlessness, and violence. Exploitation is a struggle between power and inequality that keeps people in situations of subordination such as a trafficker, who uses the social structure of power and inequality to keep up the supply and demand of the sex trade in the United States and around the world (Young, 1988). The structure of powerlessness as described by Young (1988) is the inability to operate with autonomy. For instance, victims of HST are rarely able to make any decisions concerning their life or future without fear of violence or other punishment (Bennett-Murphy, 2012; Young, 1988). The third structure of oppression as described by Young involves violence, which includes intimidation, harassment, ridicule, and humiliation. Young's theory has shown that violence can be powerful not only when used as a physical form but as a psychological means to coerce others. HST has baffled professionals as to why many victims are reluctant to leave their violent and oppressive situation and cooperate in the prosecution of their traffickers. This theory and structures offered support for the study's research questions pertaining to the processes of psychological coercion used with HST victims.

Other Relevant Theories

Zutlevics (2002) offered a similar theory of oppression known as “resilient autonomy.” Oppression according to Zutlevics considers a correlation between justice

and oppression. A person can have resilient autonomy when he or she is able to both realize and reasonably project into the future a life plan of his choosing (Zutlevics, 2002). The addition of the justice component offers individuals the existence of both positive and negative rights claims. Zutlevics suggested that the oppressed could still maintain their dignity and values while under oppression. However, historical situations like American Chattel Slavery exhibited a system that denied slaves resilient autonomy, as they lacked the freedom to have children or get married (Zutlevics, 2002). Additionally, during Nazi Germany prior to 1933 many Jewish Germans could still own businesses, attend schools, and get married, but after 1933 they were denied any opportunity for resilient autonomy (Zutlevics, 2002). Both of these examples show society's ability to place individuals under forms of oppression and violence, which result in the lack of total autonomy. The current study related to these historical accounts of oppression in that the main theme of oppression has not changed, but the individuals have now expanded to include all races of individuals, from every part of the world.

Others offer theories based on gender such as Hewitt's (2003) differential oppression theory. Hewitt indicated that females have developed an inferior role to males throughout history based on society's views of the female within the family and community. The patriarchal society having defined the female-male relationship as unequal may have contributed to the female being defined as sexual objects (Hewitt, 2003). Further, females are doubly oppressed, as both children and adults. Found to live more restrictive lives, girls throughout society have been controlled by males and grown up under specific sexual and gender scripts making them more vulnerable toward

physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Hewitt, 2003). But previous research has shown that individuals adapt to the strain of defined roles from oppression through a concept called passive acceptance. This research related to the current research questions that inquired about the HST victims' reluctance to leave their oppressive and abusive situations.

The need for the present study was reinforced by the previous research highlighted by Young (2003), Zutlevics (2002), and Hewitt (2003). Individuals in all research experienced some type of psychological coercion within their living situations. Though the individual's race and specific situations of trafficking varied between studies, individuals had similar reactions to their oppressive conditions.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Human Sex Trafficking

HST in the current literature focuses on a several key topics in relation to the current study. Sex tourism has become big business around the world, and researchers have studied its victims to understand why the situation continues to grow (Bernstein & Shih, 2014). Findings indicated that some participants felt a sense of pride to be able to earn money and send it back to the home country to their parents. This concept known as filial piety is also prevalent in the situation of HST in the United States where many victims felt honored to be earning and sending money back to their home countries instead of feeling like the victims they were (Fernandez-Esquer & Diamond, 2014). Filial piety is not only seen in international sex trafficking but is also a known concept among individuals who are brought to the United States under pretense of finding a better

life (Cwikel & Hoban, 2005; Fernandez-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Stotts & Ramey, 2009). For example, often individuals started their journey to be smuggled into another country with the intentions of having a well-paying job waiting just to end up being trapped in a situation of human sex slavery and abuse that they were unable to escape. This has created confusion between trafficking and migrant smuggling as an industry subject to the same exploitative practices (Farrell et al., 2014; Ford, Lyons & VanSchendel, 2012; Jones, 2012; Smith, 2011). If victims of trafficking are caught outside the trafficking context, they may be treated as an undocumented migrant. On the other hand, migrant workers crossing the border for illegal work may find themselves in a situation of slavery or HST (Ford et al., 2012).

In addition to confusion about how to treat victims, like medical staff and law enforcement have shown negative attitudes toward victims of HST during interactions, which can make cooperation more difficult due to lack of trust in others (Farrell et al., 2014). Many professionals have considered victims brought into clinics to be willing participants, so they were treated with little or no respect (Farrell et. al., 2014), or many of the doctors working in the clinics were family and/or friends of the traffickers. This allowed the traffickers to avoid detection from honest law enforcement and medical professionals. Additionally, if victims are taken into the community for treatment, they are almost never left alone with medical personnel as a reminder of their constant oppression and enslavement (Bales, 2009). Further, some professionals could not seem to understand why an individual is not able to leave their situation of HST (Cwikel & Hoban, 2005; Hounmenou, 2012; Lange, 2011; Stotts & Ramey, 2009). Research also

showed victims to be scared and intimidated to speak with professionals during appointments for fear of retaliation upon family members back home and/or being arrested like a criminal (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Bennett-Murphy, 2012).

Because of ongoing conditions such as trafficking and coercion, nations have pondered the best ways to combat this modern-day slavery and human trafficking crisis and implemented legislation (TVPA, 2000). For example, the United States was the first nation to enact legislation pertaining to human trafficking. In 2000, former President Bill Clinton signed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, which provided a legal definition of “human trafficking” and to help in the prosecution of traffickers and protection of victims. According to the TVPA (2000), severe forms of human trafficking include (a) sex trafficking as a commercial act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, in which a person is induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or (b) recruitment harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. In 2009, a Connecticut man was convicted of bringing Haitian boys to the United States under the religious guise of a happy new life, only for them to end up as his personal sex slaves (Bales & Soodalter, 2009).

Despite implementation in the United States, international legislation has not contained any immigration protection for unauthorized migrant victims like the TVPA (2000) or provisions for protecting victims from prosecution under prostitution type offenses (Farrell et al., 2014). Although the institution of the TVPA (2000) has allowed

for more identification and rescue of victims, the main challenge is to get the victims to cooperate in order to prosecute their traffickers. This has been one of the major challenges in rescuing victims of sex trafficking, as they are required by legislation to testify against their traffickers in order to receive federal help to remain in the United States (Butler, 2012; Farrell et al., 2014; Hepburn, & Simon, 2010; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Lange, 2011). However, the TVPA was expanded several times to include protections to individuals coerced into servitude without requirements of physical or threatened physical force as well as special precautions for vulnerable populations (Farrell et al., 2014).

Coercion. The current literature on coercion as it related to the present study yielded limited findings (Annito, 2011; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2007; Sandy, 2007). The term *coercion* was found to have several different meanings within the literature. Legal aspects of coercion with HST showed the need for the present study as the law has struggled to properly delineate the dimensions of coercion within the scope of HST (Kim, 2011). The TVPA (2013) expanded and criminalized the use of the term psychological coercion as a means to induce labor but is still largely undefined, difficult to understand, and needs additional guidance to be explained within the HST situation (Kim, 2007). The use of coercion within this context was important to help discover the processes involved in keeping individuals in situations that are abusive.

There are several types of coercion used to maintain forced laborers and sex workers including cultural isolation, which keeps individuals dependent on traffickers (Kim, 2011). Cultural isolation means different things to different individuals, but

basically victims are taken out of their cultural comfort zone where they do not speak the language, do not have any family or friends, and have no knowledge of the country they are living in (Bales, 2009). Traffickers will take a victims' identification, means of communication and replaces comfort with fear and terror.

Also reported, but largely undefined, was the use of threats toward family members to gain and keep control of victims (Annito, 2011; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2007; Sandy, 2007). Victims are kept obedient by fearing retaliation upon family members back in the home countries. According to Kim (2007) when a victim does manage to escape and return home, they were met with the unfortunate circumstance of being enslaved and punished along with their family. This individual is then made an example of for the other victims not to attempt to escape and return to their families.

These unexplained processes of psychological coercion clearly represent a gap in the literature which the present study has attempted to fulfill. The results of the present study will have aided in the identification and rescue of HST victims through the understanding of coercive techniques used by the victim's captures. Past research highlighted the traumatic impact which psychological coercion has upon HST victims (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Baldwin et. al., 2011; Brown, Testa, & Messman-Moore, 2009; Clawson, & Dutch, 2008; Gorry, Roen, & Reily, 2010; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Hepburn & Simon, 2010). In the Baldwin et. al. (2011), a qualitative study was used consisting of semi-structured interviews conducted with professionals who come in contact or have treated HST victims in the past. This is similar to the current study and may provide important insight for implications concerning the current research questions.

Results showed victims experienced great fear of disclosing information about their situations due to several factors including: a) fear, b) isolation, c) language barriers, d) shame, and e) limited interaction with professionals (Baldwin et. al., 2011). The above factors may have contributed to victim's reluctance to cooperate with law enforcement professionals during rescue operations and prosecution of traffickers. Enticing victims with benefits and federal programs like the T-Visa had not proven to be as effective as coercive techniques performed by traffickers (Baldwin et. al., 2011; Gorry et. al., 2010).

Fear within the literature on *coercion* was an underlying theme which seemed to be present in some way throughout each study. By way of certain coercive techniques, victims were made to fear leaving their situation of HST. More specifically, this fear was found in sexual violence, physical violence, and harm to family members (Adorjan, 2012; Banovic et. al., 2012; Clawson et. al., 2008; Sandy, 2007). Other references to fear included being arrested or deported back to their home country. Past studies revealed victims would be taught to fear American police and law enforcement in an attempt to keep them from cooperating with rescue attempts and prosecution of traffickers (Adorjan, 2012; Banovic et. al., 2012; Clawson et. al., 2008).

Stockholm syndrome. A review of the literature on coercion must include information on *Stockholm Syndrome* to gain an effective understanding of how a victim may come to be psychologically coerced to remain in an abusive situation. Stockholm syndrome originated from a bank robbery that took place in 1973 in Stockholm, in which four female hostages were held captive for many days (Cantor & Price, 2007). Upon their rescue the hostages defended their captures and did not cooperate with police. This

phenomenon has been known to develop due to traumatic bonding and is often used as a defensive mechanism for captives to survive their hostage situations (Hodge, 2014). This protective measure is more likely to develop the longer one is held in captivity.

Researchers have identified four key conditions needed for Stockholm syndrome to develop including; a) a perceived threat to one's physical or psychological survival, b) small kindnesses from the capture to the captive/victim, c) isolation from perspectives other than the capture, and d) not being able to escape the situation (Cantor et al., 2007).

It has become more widely accepted within the field of study that victims of capture may fall prey to traumatic/emotional bonding for the purposes of self-preservation and survival. Many hostage negotiators and law enforcement professionals no longer view it as unusual (Adorjan et. al., 2012). Research has shown that Stockholm syndrome can be present in several different types of relationships including family, interpersonal, romantic, or any in which there is an abuser who is in a role of authority and control (Adorjan et. al., 2012; Demarest, 2009). Other researchers believed the use of the term Stockholm syndrome was over-used to label whole groups of individuals as victims and has become more of a political discourse than a useful term for victimology (Adorjan et. al., 2012).

Violence. The literature on violence has been discussed as it relates to the present study. The theoretical framework which forms the foundation for the study contains violence as one of its three key assumptions. According to Young (1988), violence is not just physical harm, but includes harassment, ridicule, intimidation, and humiliation. Research shows a link between child sexual abuse and revictimization. According to

researchers there is a link between child sexual abuse and increased vulnerability for adult sexual assault, psychological maltreatment, and physical abuse (Leidholdt, 2013). Child sexual abuse also contributed to maladaptive behaviors and attitudes which may contribute to low self-esteem and learned helplessness (Wilson et. al., 2013). Studies showed child sexual abuse victims are more vulnerable to verbal coercion from people in positions of authority.

According to Leidholdt (2013), many individuals have entered into HST by way of *domestic violence*. Domestic violence serves as a vehicle for which many traffickers recruited women and girls seeking to escape their abusive intimate-partner relationships. Little do these victims know, they are being targeted by other abusers who are going to keep them in a life of captivity and torture. Traffickers utilize a hierarchical structure similar to an abusive family as their tool of control. As explained by Leidholdt (2013), the trafficker would take the position as head of household and place himself in the position of “daddy” or “husband” and will often marry his victims. This practice of marriage will keep authorities from prosecuting the traffickers as they could not possibly be “pimp” if they were husband to the victims. Once entrapped in the situation, violence in the form of sexual abuse could be used as a tactic of power and control. Compliance could be secured through raping as a deliberate strategy to break the victim down psychologically (Leidholdt, 2013). This sexual abuse allows the traffickers to keep the victims in an acute state of constant trauma that they can never leave their situation.

Other research within the realm of violence and HST explained the complexities of rescuing and treating victims due to violence experienced by victims, prior, during,

and after being rescued from the trafficking situation (Wilson & Butler, 2013). Survivors of violence became overwhelmed with fear and terror, self-loathing, and lack the ability to trust others as well as experience intimacy and develop new relationships (Wilson et. al., 2013).

Exploitation. Exploitation as it relates to HST has been examined by researchers more in recent years due to the growing legislative and political need to define the term for legal reasons (McCain & Garrity, 2011; Munro, 2008). The most recent and formerly mentioned TVPA (2000) is an example of how legislators have interpreted the term “exploitation” to fall in line with their own political agendas. TVPA (2000) is a victim centered law which was enacted to strengthen sentencing guidelines for traffickers. Under the TVPA (2000) traffickers can receive increased sentence ranges and life imprisonment for kidnapping, death, and aggravated sexual abuse (Perez, 2015). The term “exploitation” has been used as well within recent anti-trafficking protocols established by the U.N. only to re-insert a consent threshold which ultimately excludes many vulnerable populations from recognition (Munro, 2008).

The term “exploitation” as it refers to HST has been vaguely defined within the literature (McCain & Garrity, 2011; Munro, 2008). Research has largely focused on exploitation within HST as human rights abuse. There has been an issue with this approach by some as it brings about the discussion of exactly how much coercion and deception are needed to ascertain a definition of human rights violations (McCain & Garrity, 2011; Munro, 2008). Defined by the U.N. General Assembly, trafficking people is “the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national and international

borders” with “the end goal of forcing women and children into sexually and economically oppressive and exploitive situations” (Munro, 2008, p. 242).

Research has revealed debates over exploitation as being an issue of agency versus victimhood. Dodsworth (2014) provided a qualitative study which reveals some individuals do not feel like victims, but rather have choice and resilience to choose sex work from a limited amount of money-making options. The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of how the meanings given toward protective and risk factors influenced perceptions of agency and victimhood among participants (Dodsworth, 2014). Findings revealed participant’s search for approval through the selling and/or swapping sex led to feelings of defeat or strengthened their resolve. The study also highlighted individuals coping strategies as maladaptive or adaptive.

As a result, many of the individuals refused or could be denied services and protections. These results helped inform the present study (Dodsworth, 2008). Individuals may or may not become more vulnerable to exploitation as a result of adaptations developed to cope with adversities during key life stages. Being resilient and able to make positive choices when presented with obstacles could be important factors which influence choice-making (Dodsworth, 2008; McCain & Garrity, 2011; Munro, 2008).

Individuals who have developed a resilience may be less likely to be psychologically coerced into a life of HST. Why some individuals develop these psychological processes in response to intense life stressors and others do not was still not understood (Ballenger-Browning & Johnson, 2010). Research revealed the absence of

a standard definition for resilience has led scientists to believe that any framework promoting health could lead to having resilience (Ballenger-Browning et. al., 2010). A quantitative study explored nine potential predictors of sexual exploitation as they relate to risk and resiliency across the life span (Reid, 2014). The categories linked to sexual exploitation were found to be educational attainment, intimate partner victimization, problems with substance abuse, and self-stigmatization (Reid, 2014). Among the 174 participants, 23 % were found to have been sexually exploited at some point in their life. Results relating to resiliency show that individuals who reported maternal substance abuse were more likely to fall prey to adult sexual exploitation. Women who experience sexual violence as an adolescence were also found to be more vulnerable to adult sexual exploitation, including criminal behavior to avoid abuse by a pimp or becoming homeless (Reid, 2104).

Resilience appeared from the literature not to be a static state, but to change throughout one's life course depending on types of adversity, protective factors, and environmental interactions (Reid, 2014). The concept of resilience was important to the present study as the processes of psychological coercion among victims of HST may be influenced by factors of resilience.

Summary

In summary, within this review of the literature, research was scant on the topic surrounding the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion within HST. Researchers have discovered associations between HST and various concepts including coercion, violence, and exploitation (Annito, 2011; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2007;

Leidholdt, 2013; McCain & Garrity, 2011; Munro, 2008). Studies showed how individuals who have been subjected to HST have endured different aspects of coercion often overlapping with violence and exploitation (Baldwin et. al., 2011; Clawson et. al., 2008; Gorry et. al., 2010; Munro, 2008). These findings supported the present study and gave relevance to the research questions. Understanding the dynamics related to psychological coercion and HST have offered victims increased support from various professionals including, medical providers, police personnel, and outreach workers seeking to liberate HST victims.

Studies have revealed Stockholm syndrome to be a common defense strategy used by victims within different life threatening situations (Cantor & Price, 2007; Cantor et al., 2007). Victims of HST have been found to develop traumatic bonding otherwise known as Stockholm syndrome with their captives (Adorjan et. al., 2012; Demarest, 2009). These findings support the need for the present study and has expanded knowledge pertaining to processes and dynamics within the HST situation.

The concept of oppression as it related to HST had little empirical findings within the current literature. Researchers had mainly focused on the consequences experienced by victims, and failed to provide an understanding of why victims often voluntarily remained in their situations (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Butler, 2012; Chung, 2009; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2011). The present study helped to fill this gap within the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This chapter presents a description and rationale for using grounded theory to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST. Past studies have provided a few theoretical perspectives to examine this important topic (Annito, 2011; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2007). These studies, however, provided a limited perspective of victims understanding and attitudes about psychological coercion. Because there is limited research using grounded theory methodology to examine former HST victims' perceptions of psychological coercion, this research contributes to the present body of knowledge.

The reasons for using a qualitative rather than a quantitative method of inquiry will be explained first. Next will be an overview of the method used including an explanation of why it is the most appropriate method for the study. This overview will be followed by the context of the study and where the study was conducted. The chapter will also explain data collection, sampling techniques, and the interview process. To conclude, there will be a defense of the study's evidence of quality.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were an outgrowth of previous research findings recommended for future research (Annito, 2011; Bales, 2009; Hepburn & Simon, 2010; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2007, 2011). The study analyzed former victims' processes of psychological coercion while involved in HST. Because intensive

semistructured in-depth interviewing was appropriate for grounded theory study, the following research questions allowed for adaptability and flexibility:

1. How does psychological coercion deter the rescue of HST victims?
2. How do the dynamics of psychological coercion contribute to victims not wanting to leave HST?
3. How does psychological coercion hinder the identification of victims within HST by professional practitioners?

Open-ended questions also allowed for unanticipated responses from the participants (Charmaz, 2015).

The processes of psychological coercion of former victims involved in HST was the central concept of interest. A qualitative grounded study approach was appropriate because researchers knew little about the processes and dynamics of psychological coercion involved in HST, so this method can best illuminate the truths and nuances of former victims' perceptions and attitudes. A quantitative design interprets the world through statistics and numbers, whereas qualitative research searches for understanding through words and representations (Charmaz, 2015). Additionally, qualitative studies are inductive and generalize findings, whereas quantitative research is deductive and attempts to operationalize theoretical relationships (Creswell, 2007). A qualitative paradigm was chosen because holistically understanding former victims' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions can better inform the future rescue efforts of HST victims. The rich data revealed participants' views and findings as well as context of their lives (Charmaz, 2015).

There are several different approaches to qualitative research (Charmaz, 2015; Creswell, 2007). Ethnography is a qualitative approach to study the shared beliefs, culture, rituals, practices and values of a specific group of people in their natural setting (Charmaz, 2015; Creswell, 2007). Within an ethnographic study, researchers provide rich, full descriptions of a specific setting with the intention of revealing its human interactions with the environment (Charmaz, 2015). Though this method may be appropriate for examining a group of HST victims who have been trafficked from the same country, my goal was to understand the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST.

Additionally, a case study design is used to investigate a single case, with the intention of understanding its activities within an important circumstance (Creswell, 2007). But because this design study required only a single unit of analysis, it would not have been appropriate for the current study. The third approach considered for this study was phenomenology. It is the goal of the phenomenologist to find commonality, not discover uniqueness within each participant (Charmaz, 2015; Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology was not the appropriate method of inquiry for the present study as it was intended to generate a foundation for theory, not describe the meaning of the participant's experiences. The narrative approach was also contemplated, as it is used when researching a specific individuals' life story within a chronological series of events or experiences (Creswell, 2007). However, this method did not fit the current study because a single person's story would not provide the data needed to generate a foundation for theory.

The intention for choosing qualitative grounded theory was to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST. This research design addressed a purposefully selected group of former HST victims, analyzing the collected data, and interpreting the findings. A grounded theory study is considered to be iterative and flexible, having no preconceived hypotheses (Charmaz, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach was appropriate for the current study because it allowed for creation of themes from the participants' own experiences.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher always listens, observes, and encourages with sensitivity as the data collection instrument who explores nuances of meaning (Charmaz, 2014). I was able to constantly maintain sensitivity while encouraging the participants to share their stories. Although the participants did most of the talking during the interview, I maintained a flexible yet controlled environment to allow ideas to emerge. Grounded theorists are social beings whose assumptions, ideas, and experiences contribute to their understanding of social processes (Crowley, 2004). As a professional who worked with former victims of HST, it was not ethical to recruit participants from within my former place of work, so recruitment took place from the outside community. Recruiting participants from the community minimized researcher bias. Grounded theory also minimized bias, as the conclusions were developed from the data, aside from any personal bias (Charmaz, 2014). Within the grounded study method, the researcher's role as an instrument considers analysis as being filtered through a personal lens (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Heath & Cowley, 2004). I have a background working with the population,

so assumptions may have contributed to certain social processes being observed, but I recognized my role in the study and eliminated any use of a personal lens during the data collection phase (Fusch et. al., 2015).

Ethical concerns may also include bias in the study results from people only participating because they get paid (Russell, Moralejo, & Burgess, 2000). A 20-dollar gift card incentive was offered to voluntary participants who met criteria for the study. Financial compensation as a motivator can raise ethical concerns for regulatory bodies (Russell et al., 2000). This bias was eliminated due to the criterion purposeful sampling strategy being implemented in the current study. The use of incentives for the current study were justified as they were not coercive but payment for recognition of time and effort of participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The study was conducted in southeast Texas. Participants were residents of a hostel in southeast Texas that serves woman ages 18 and over and their children. Women can stay for up to 1 year while seeking employment, health care, and any services need to re-enter society after incarceration. I was familiar with the hostel but had no direct working relationship with the organization. Recovery coaches came to my previous place of employment from time to time to recruit possible tenants, but I had no professional or personal obligations to the hostel. I had no working relationship with possible participants. No data collection began until institutional review board (IRB)

approval was gained through Walden University. I called the hostel to confirm research participation, then proceeded with IRB application process.

Criterion purposeful sampling strategy was used to select study participants. Criterion purposeful sampling gave rich information specifically chosen from a set of predetermined criteria (Charmaz, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The study participants were chosen to represent a group that provided the best data to inform the understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007). Residents of Santa Maria Hostel were given a questionnaire to determine eligibility. All potential participants who met criteria were asked to participate until 20 residents have been interviewed. All participants were free from involvement in the sex industry at the time of the study.

Participants will met at least one of the following criteria to participate in the study: a) involved in the sex industry with or without a pimp, b) moved to, or was brought to the U.S. with the intention of employment, and became involved in the sex industry, c) engaged in a sexual act for money at the request of a boyfriend, husband, other family member, or pimp. Criteria was based on the premise that not all women who are trafficked believe they are involved in the sex industry against their will, and d) participants must be at least eighteen years of age. Twenty participants have been chosen as the appropriate number for the study.

According to Baker (2012), there is no hard-fast rule of thumb when it comes to how many participants are needed for grounded theory research. Many researchers however, said it depends on the type of research question being addressed and the methodology it is proposing to adopt (Baker, 2012). The grounded theory method is

known for its time-consuming process of data collection, coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Also considered were time constraints and demands of the institutional review board. With the former in mind, the researcher of the current study wanted to have enough interviews from participants to generate themes while still commanding respect and creating a credible analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Twenty interviews (participants) allowed the researcher to conduct a grounded theory study following the traditional iterative process aimed at saturating emergent categories.

Instrumentation

The researcher was considered the primary data collection tool for the current study. All participants were asked to sign the informed consent letter. Participants were also asked to consent to audio taping of their interview for accuracy. Numbers were assigned to each participant to provide protection of privacy and confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in a private space for participants' comfort and confidentiality. To establish internal validity, the strategy of triangulation was used (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher developed an interview guide that was aligned with the study's research questions to aide in the development of structured interview questions, as well as the use of memos. Memos have been described as theoretical notes about data as well as the conceptual connections between research categories (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher constantly compare data, through the use of memos to fight researcher bias and preconceived notions during the interview process (Cresswell, 2007).

The triangulation strategy offers a very comprehensive and reflexive way to analyze data (Charmaz, 2014). Within grounded theory study, individual interviews

reveal participants' perceptions of experiences and offer rich data (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014). A digital audio recorder was used to record each interview for accuracy and transcription purposes. A clipboard, notebook, and pen were used to make memos during each interview.

At the completion of the study, all participants were given access to appropriate mental health support services if needing to discuss any emotional discomfort or acute psychological pain experienced during the interview process (Texas Health & Human Services, 2017). No follow-up interviews were planned after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis

Initial line by line coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding were used to analyze data and develop a possible theoretical foundation for future theory (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2007). As described by Charmaz (2014) grounded theory coding processes constantly compare codes, data, and categories to develop further understanding of concepts. Line by line initial coding helped to ensure the researcher did not impart her own biases, fears, and unresolved issues into the data. Coding forced the researcher to think about the material in different ways (Creswell, 2007). Initial and focused coding within grounded theory research are both emergent processes (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2007). Focused coding allowed the researcher to sift through and analyze larger amounts of earlier coded data. According to Charmaz (2014), focused coding sharpens already coded data, and highlights what is important in the emerging analysis. Theoretical coding allowed the researcher to find possible relationships between categories already developed with focused coding (Charmaz, 2014). While the

aim of the current study was to develop a theoretical foundation for future theory and not actually develop theory, theoretical coding helped to tell an analytical story which had coherence (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical coding allowed the researcher to move in a theoretical direction.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Several strategies were used to defend the credibility and dependability of the current study. The first strategy which was used was triangulation (Patton, 2002). Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data and is best known to address a study's internal validity (Patton, 2002). Triangulation is also widely known for emphasizing depth and quality, rather than population size (Fusch et. al., 2015). The current study employed up to 20 structured face to face interviews, and memos to provide a complete and reflexive analysis of data (Charmaz, 2014; Patton, 2002). Credibility will also be established through saturation of data. According to Fusch et. al. (2015), data saturation within grounded theory research is obtained when coding produces no new data, and no new themes. To achieve data saturation, it is recommended that interview questions be structured to ask multiple participants the same questions (Creswell, 2007; Fusch et. al., 2015). Iterative questioning was also utilized to establish credibility. Probes were also used when questions required more detailed answers (Charmaz, 2014). Transferability was established by collecting thick, rich descriptions from participants' interviews. The thick descriptive data allowed for future readers to transfer shared information and concepts to other settings (Fusch et. al., 2015). The last issue of trustworthiness is confirmability and was established through reflexivity as exhibited by reflexive inquiry

(Patton, 2002). Reflexive inquiry allowed the researcher to analyze and write the report while asking questions which challenge her to learn, reflect, and understand knowledge (Patton, 2002). The researcher reported any issues which arose during the data analysis, and report writing, and included how these reflections informed the final report (Patton, 2002).

Measures for Ethical Protection

Before the study was conducted, approval was obtained from Walden University's IRB. Interview participants were asked to sign a letter of informed consent ensuring their safety and privacy. Along with the consent form, participants would receive an explanation of participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Each participant was informed of their right to end participation in the study at any time. Interviews were conducted, according to the Walden University IRB approved application, as well as outlined in the participant informed consent form.

The population sample for the study was considered a vulnerable population, so additional safeguards were taken by the researcher to ensure there were adequate ethical protections in place. Due to the sensitive nature of the interview questions, participants may re-experience psychological trauma during the interview process. The participants were screened for non-participation in sex-related activities to be eligible for the study but may still have underlying and/or unresolved issues. All participants received information for counseling services to help deal with any issues or acute psychological pain which may have arisen as a result of their interviews (Texas Health & Human Services, 2017).

All transcripts, memos, and digitally recorded interviews were kept in a secure location for confidentiality and privacy of participants. Copies were also saved electronically.

Summary

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methods used for this qualitative grounded theory study. This methodology was chosen because it does not force data into preconceived theories. The current study attempted to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST. While other designs were considered, the grounded theory was found to be most appropriate to address the central research questions. The setting for the study was a transitional living facility for women located in Southeastern, Texas. The participants were selected using criterion purposeful sampling. Data was triangulated by using multiple sources of data collection strategies, including in-depth interviews and memos. Every consideration was taken to ensure ethical standards. Strategies to ensure trustworthiness include triangulation, data saturation, and thick description of participants' interviews. Data was coded and analyzed using grounded theory methodology including, initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2015). Research findings are presented in chapter 4 along with emergent findings for social change implications.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this grounded study was to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST, which can offer insights to help inform the identification and rescue efforts of current and future HST victims. I used the theoretical framework of oppression (Young, 1988) to help explain the phenomenon of coercion. Grounded theory method was used for analysis, which can result in the development of mid-level theory as a result of data collection and subsequent analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This chapter provides an overview of the key results of interview participant stories. I describe participant recruitment, research setting, data collection and analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, overall findings, and the summary.

The Research Setting

I conducted research for this study in Houston Texas Metro area. Ten face-to-face interviews were conducted during June 2019. The interviews were conducted in a private meeting room at the hostel where these women had stayed. I maintained a participant contact log recording only the participant's first name and contact information to preserve confidentiality. When participants responded to my invitation letters, we mutually agreed upon a scheduled interview date and time.

Demographics

Table 1 contains the demographics for participants that were collected.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Prostitution	Sex act	Relocate	Promise employment	Pimp
1	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
2	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
3	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
4	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
5	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
7	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
8	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
9	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
10	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

The Data Collection Process

This study's data collection was guided by the inductive nature of qualitative inquiry, combined with the methodology of grounded theory. I recruited a homogeneous sample of 10 self-identified females staying at a hostel in southeast Texas. I distributed participant invitation letters in person after receiving approval from Walden University's IRB. Potential participants were given the option to respond immediately or call me with a response to the invitation. If interested, participants were given a screening form to see if they were eligible to participate in the study. Upon completion of the study, participants were given a 20-dollar gift card. Participants were not aware of the gift card until after they completed the study.

Recruitment

As described in Chapter 3, I used criterion purposeful sampling to select participants for the study. My goal was to recruit a smaller, homogeneous sample, as reaching saturation can be achieved using a smaller sample size with this type of

population (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The participants were chosen to represent a group that would provide the best data to inform the understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007). I initially sought to recruit 20 individuals; however, I ended up with 10 eligible participants through attrition. Eligible individuals met at least one of the following criteria to participate in the study: (a) involved in the sex industry with or without a pimp; (b) moved to or was brought to the United States with the intention of employment and became involved in the sex industry; (c) engaged in a sexual act for money at the request of a boyfriend, husband, other family member or pimp, and (d) at least 18 years of age.

A pattern can be seen in data using only one case or research study, but more than one is preferred (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Saturation was reached well before interviewing the 10th participant. My study was conducted over two consecutive Sundays in June 2019. During the first Sunday of interviews, I sought to recruit approximately 10 female participants, transcribe the recorded audio, perform a self-assessment, and identify gaps in the research. The first set of interviews consisted of five eligible participants after interested individuals filled out the questionnaire. During the second Sunday, I interviewed five more individuals. The same interview questions were asked, but I narrowed my focus and probe in the areas where my analysis revealed a gap.

For member checking, I played back the interviews for each participant and allowed them to listen and approve each recorded interview, rewinding and listening over if needed. I did member checking in this manner as most of the participants are transient residents at the hostel. I wanted to give each participant a chance to participate in

member checking in case they would be leaving the hostel before my transcription was finished. All participants approved their recorded interviews.

Interview Process

After receiving informed consent for participants, according to protocol identified in Walden University's IRB application, I provided each participant with a resource for community mental health services. Participants gave verbal informed consent for interviews. Each participant also gave verbal permission to have their interview audiotaped. Interviews took place, face to face, in a private meeting room at the hostel in southeast Texas. All interview notes and related documents were stored in a secured location as identified in my IRB form.

Ethical Considerations

Each ethical protocol identified in Chapters 2 and 3 were followed. The Walden University IRB approved the research protocol for this study as well as the informed consent forms associated with the study. Participants were given a questionnaire to determine eligibility to participate in the study. If found eligible, each was read informed consent, which if agreed upon was given verbally prior to the interview. Prior to their interview all participants were informed of the risks, benefits, and expected duration of the interview. As defined in Chapter 3, all participants were provided a local mental health resource should they experience any mental discomfort during or after the interview. A monetary incentive was given for participation in the interview process, but this was not disclosed until after the interview was completed. Each eligible participant was given a unique numerical identifier, so that all information and materials may be

easily identified and cross referenced and kept confidential. All interview data were stored in a locked office and were in password protected computer files. Audio files were deleted after each interview was transcribed.

Unusual Circumstances

Two circumstances were encountered that could be considered unusual during the data collection process. First, I had to deny four individuals the opportunity to participate in the study because they did not meet the criteria for inclusion. The second was a participant who had a primary first language of Spanish. A bilingual person interpreted the interview questions and answers.

Data Management and Tracking

Data management techniques involved organizing all the data using consistent management practices including password-protected files and secured research journals. The research journal contained both interview transcriptions and field notes as well as coded interviews. All data storage procedures identified in my IRB application were followed. I gave each participant a unique number identifier for confidentiality purposes.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory research is an iterative process of collecting data, analyzing data, identifying gaps in the research, and the formulation of a theoretical model (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach that results in context specific theory, grounded in data (Charmaz, 2006). My primary goal of data analysis was to manage, understand, and organize raw data into categories and themes

that could contribute to construction of a theory. To accomplish this task, I used in vivo coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding.

I was originally going to use NVIVO to analyze data but decided to manually analyze all qualitative data. Manual thematic analysis is the process where in the researcher will read the interview transcripts and interpret possible themes and topics from the data (Charmaz, 2006). I used a journal and recorded topics as I transcribed each interview. I organized the topics according to each interview question. This enabled me to form relationships between topics and develop codes. Once all transcripts were transcribed, I formed clusters of codes that had connections to similar meanings. The clusters allowed me to develop the resulting themes outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2	Subtheme 3
Enslaved by drugs	Prostitute for	Controlled by	All relations
Role of mother	Loss of child	Not wanted	
Suspicious, mistrusting, misguided	Family	Friends	Service providers
Fear	Physical harm	Homeless	Drugs
Negative self-worth	Caused by pimp		

There were five themes that emerged from the data analysis process: (a) enslaved by drugs; (b) role of mother; (c) suspicious, mistrusting, misguided; (d) fear; and (e) negative self-worth. Each theme was able to answer at least one of the three research questions. Some themes were able to answer more than one due to the subthemes.

Evidence of Trustworthiness and Credibility

Credibility is involved in establishing that the results of the qualitative research are believable and consistent (Goldfshani, 2003). The researcher must put aside any personal biases to ensure credibility is achieved. I ensured credibility through qualitative rigor by carefully following my identified research protocol outlined in my IRB application and proposal. This process included managing my biases and thoughts using memos, performing members checks, and seeking advice and support from my dissertation chairperson. I used memos to record my thoughts and reflections as well as managing any personal biases. Member checking was accomplished by having each participant review their recorded interview after the interview because most of the participants were transient residents at the hostel. All participants approved of their recorded interviews. Finally, I checked in with my dissertation chairperson to seek advice and feedback during various phases of the coding and analysis phase.

Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

Transferability refers to the degree to which results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents (Hadi, 2016). To achieve transferability, I created detailed descriptions of the participants' views to help support the development of my interpretation of the data as well as a theoretical narrative. The interview process brought forth the rich data. To preserve meaning from the participants, I used in vivo coding to retain participants' voices (Charmaz, 2006).

Dependability refers to the stability of the research and how it holds up over time (Goldfshani, 2003). Dependability involves participant involvement to evaluate and

interpret accurate data within the research (Hadi, 2016). I managed dependability of my research through dissertation committee oversight and member checking with research participants.

Confirmability is defined as the degree to which the results of an inquiry can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Goldfshani, 2003). I established an audit trail by carefully following all steps outlined in my research protocol and approved IRB data collection process.

Results

There were five themes that emerged from the data analysis process: (a) enslaved by drugs; (b) role of mother; (c) suspicious, mistrusting, misguided; (d) fear; and (e) negative self-worth. There were several subthemes underneath the themes that provided further elaboration to content within each theme. Theme discrepancies will be reported individually as they may relate to subthemes.

Enslaved by Drugs

There were three subthemes within this theme that answered the first and second research questions: (a) Prostitute for, (b) Controlled by, and (c) All relations. Several participants share how drugs were the center point for most of their lives. Decisions to participate in prostitution were made to satisfy the need to take drugs or pay for a drug habit. This was true for participant 6 who said that almost all relations revolved around drugs in some way: “Then the business got deeper and than I got to know different people certain managers certain owners and they weren’t just managers and owners they were also pimps. Drugs came involved in all money I made.” She explained how she became

indebted to her pimps for using drugs and alcohol: “I was paying for everything when I thought the customer was paying for it.”

Some participants would not even realize they were being physically held captive because they were so strung out on drugs. Participant 8 explained how she was kept locked in a motel room only to be let out to have sex for money: “I was stuck in the motel room and not allowed to answer the phone. The guy would move me to different States. He took me to six different States.”

Participant 1 shared how being on drugs affected her daily life: “It didn’t make sense. I wasn’t thinking right. I was doing drugs so I wasn’t in my right mind.”

Participant 2 elaborated about her expensive daily drug habit and having to prostitute herself to pay for the drugs:

It was really bad. It was a 400 dollar a day habit. He (the pimp) would make me go out and tell me that I couldn’t come back until I had something either money or drugs. He had my two little kids inside and I couldn’t get back in until I had something. It was either that or he beat me with a pipe.

Participant 4 was the only participant to mention any type of religion when asked about her feelings toward herself. She shared her Christian religious upbringing, and explained that she developed a drug habit for the following reason: “I grew up in a Christian home. You were supposed to get married before you had sex, so I used drugs in order to block out the way I was feeling and what people had to say.”

The Role of Mother

This theme answered research questions one and two, however there are discrepancies within the participant interviews on the viewpoint of the role of the mother. Some participants were forced out of the life of prostitution because they became pregnant, where as others made the decision to leave the life for fear of their children's or their own well-being. Participant 1 describes her experience once she found out she was pregnant: "He actually dumped me when he found out I was five months pregnant. I went to visit my son and when I came back he had another girl in there."

Participant 2 called the police when she found out she was pregnant:

They helped me get everything out of the house and well to me the last straw was him. He tried to cut my throat in my friend's yard, and it was in front of my two kids, while I was pregnant.

Participant 2 also described her sacrifice of food for her children:

So I would go three to four days without eating to make sure that my kids had twenty dollars of food in the fridge to last three days. As soon as I would get my food stamps I's go to the store and buy as much as I could of groceries. By the next day he (pimp) had taken them and sold them back in bags down the streets.

The only reason participant three got out of prostitution is because she, "got pregnant than incarcerated." (participant 3) For some, the role of mother happened from a distance, and it was the fear of losing their children that kept them controlled by their pimps and traffickers or deterred their rescue. Participant 6 shared her feelings of being a mother to nine children she lost due to her lifestyle:

It's a scary world, it's a challenge to be a mother. I don't know anything about being a mother. I'm forty now and I left the business five years ago and I still have nothing to show for myself for other than that I will never go back.

The fear of her child's death by her pimp was so strong it finally enabled participant 7 to have the strength to leave her HST situation: "What made me leave was when he told that either my baby or me was going to die. I remember jumping down off the second story balcony and running when he fell asleep." Similar to participant 7, was participant 10 who feared having her baby stolen and sold by her sister's gang of meth users: "People on meth take people's identity because they are up all night tweaking. I was afraid they would take my daughter and sell her, I'm not crazy. My sister is in a bad gang."

Suspicious, Mistrusting, and Misguided

The theme of Suspicious, Mistrusting and Misguided answered all three research questions. There were 3 subthemes which emerged from this theme: (a) Family, (b) Friends, and (c) Service Providers. Several participants shared experiences after finding out they could not trust the people in their life:

Participant 1:

If I loved him I would do it, have sex for money for him. I couldn't understand that I mean I am very young so I mean I was trying to understand how that makes sense. But it didn't. I guess I love him and I was young and dumb.

Participant 3: "I had a friend already doing it and she talked me into to doing it."

Participant 2: “He started selling me to the adult men, and it just wasn’t right when he didn’t have money or just to do it.”

Participant 3’s uncle tried to be her pimp when he was released from prison. She shared her feelings: “I felt really low. You know I mean like you would think this person would try to get you out of the lifestyle, that they’re losing you. That was my blood.”

Participant 4 believed she was free, and shared an experience after meeting someone at a club:

When I was stripping at the club I started talking to this guy and I thought we were just going to be friends and stuff like that. He used to keep me in the house, and he would take my money and threatened to beat me.

Participant 7 was only fifteen years old when a friend invited her to come along and make some money with her. She didn’t realize their school friend named “John” who would be their driver, would actually end up as their pimp: “For some reason my friend wanted a pimp. She wanted that life.”

Also misguided was participant 6 who wanted only to dance at the club. She explains how she was manipulated into having sex with customers for money:

So after a while you been the first one and the new one and your not doing so much. They are losing customers. The regulars spend a lot of money so they’re getting upset and they don’t want them to leave. So they came to me and told me hey you need to do a little bit more because were losing some customers, find somewhere else to work.

Similar to participant 6, was participant 5 who came from Mexico to America with the dream of working because she was homeless. Participant 5 only spoke Spanish, so according to the interpreter during the interview, she was put on a bus and taken to a club in the U.S. to dance as a stripper. “She didn’t know it would be that way. In order to gain more hours and get more money she had to sell herself.”

Participants shared experiences they had with police service providers. These experiences caused the participants to have distrust in all police after these encounters. For example, Participant 1 said, “He pulled out his gun and he told me either you give me all the money and I was like man, no look, I already did what I had to do. Your going to kill me over twenty dollars?” Participant 1 gave the police officer all her money and left the house, but soon realized she left her cell. Upon return to retrieve her phone, she was greeted by the officer at the door with his badge and a shotgun. She never got her phone. Also mistrusting of police officers after an encounter is participant 7. She described her encounter: “Only one dirty cop said he would arrest me if I didn’t have sex with him. Showed me his badge. When you get an image of one bad person it messes it up for everyone else”

Participant 10 shared her thoughts concerning her sister: “My sister tried to pimp me. She put me on facebook and the internet. She pimped me out before. She said, ‘you owe me.’”

Fear

There were three subthemes within the theme of Fear which answered two of the research questions. Participants talked about fear dealing with physical harm, fear of

homelessness, and fear surrounding drug addiction in different ways. The fear was different depending on each participant's unique situation. Participant 4 talked about fear of death from her pimp: "I had no choice but to do what I was doing, and I was afraid because I was afraid If I did something I'd just die."

Participant 2 shared similar experiences of fear of physical harm from her pimp: He beat the crap out of me if I came back with nothing. He would run across the bed and jump. He would kick me in the chest and throw me to the next room. I'm blind in one eye form the abuse, and he detached a retina. I have a cracked breastplate from him kicking me.

Participant 7 described a situation of fear that her pimp would use to control her:

If one would leave, he would take one of us with him to find her to show us what he would do if we tried to leave. He had a gun, shooting at her out the car window. Sometimes I tried to leave, and he just popped up and beat me to the point where, I didn't recognize my own face.

Another fear which was shared was the fear of homelessness. Participant 3 shared her pimp's statics of abandonment to attempt to keep her in her situation: "He left me stranded without my shit, left me stranded with no clothes, no nothing. He did leave me stranded. He would pretty much threaten me." Participant 8 also shared fears of homelessness. "I mean I'm scared. If you leave me I have no place."

Drugs had emerged as a focal point in several participants lives during the study. A few participants shared fears surrounding their actions relating to their drug use. Participant 8 said,

On the times I was afraid I was very, very mean. I was very rude. I would fight with them. I would fight with anybody. I would fight with the customers so they would hold me up in the back and leave me drunk and messed up.

Participant 9 felt fear surrounding her drug addiction. She shared her thoughts: “I would blackout maybe four to five days. I got into it with everybody I knew because of my drug issue.”

Negative Self Worth

The subtheme of Caused by Pimp emerged from the theme Negative Self Worth to help answer two of the research questions. Participants shared their feelings of negative self-worth. Participant 1 stated, “I was young and dumb. I was like, okay.” Participant 2 said, “I had no self-esteem and that would make me use more, just to get through you know, while I was there. It would just take me away.” Participant 2 recalled what her pimp what say to keep her down:

He told me I could never get anyone else that I would be lucky to find somebody. Someone that would look at me as a woman. Who would want me with all my kids? Who would want someone like me? I mean he did everything to just tear me down. He said I was fortunate to have somebody like him because he could be with skinny, beautiful women.

Participant 3 shared thoughts when she was working with a pimp: “I didn’t really care about myself, especially when I had a pimp. That’s when I felt the lowest about myself because I was in some money pit. I thought it must have been something I’ve done.”

A few participants tried to get sober while working in the HST situation.

Participants 6 and 8 described their feelings. Participant 6 said, “When working sober I felt ugly. I felt humiliated.” Participant 8 stated, “When on the streets I felt worthless. I felt like I had no family.”

After leaving her situation, Participant 2 explained still feeling low self-worth:

I met someone that got me out of the life, and I had my baby, and thank god she’s healthy. That man is still in my life, and he doesn’t use, he doesn’t drink or anything. He wants the best for and he’s trying to keep my self-esteem back up. He tried for years and I still think that I’m not worth it.

Summary

I will discuss all findings in greater detail in chapter five. I will connect the findings to the conceptual framework and existing literature that underpinned my research. I will highlight the implications of the study for community service providers, and outline limitations. Finally, I will provide future research recommendations while concluding the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative grounded study was to explain the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST. This study was important due to the limited research conducted on the processes and dynamics explaining the psychological coercion of individuals within HST (Butler, 2012; Cwikel & Hoban 2005; Fernando-Diamond & Agoff, 2012; Fernando-Esquer & Diamond, 2014; Hopper & Hildago, 2006; Kim, 2011; Sandy, 2007). Three interview questions were used to facilitate exploration of Research Question 1, four interview questions were used to facilitate the exploration of the second research question, and two interview questions were used with the third research question.

Five themes emerged from the analysis of the data along with subthemes that answered at least one of the three research questions. For Research Question 1, “How does psychological coercion deter the rescue of HST victims?,” the themes enslaved by drugs, fear, and negative self-worth applied. For Research Question 2 (“How do the dynamics of psychological coercion contribute to the victims not wanting to leave HST?”) and Research Question 3 (“How does psychological coercion hinder the identification of victims within HST by professional practitioners?”), enslaved by drugs applied. Findings from the study will add to the literature and help aid in the rescue and identification of victims from their HST situations.

Interpretation of Findings

Research Question 1

The first research question was related to the deterrence of the rescue of victims within the HST situation due to psychological coercion. Three themes helped answer Research Question 1: (a) enslaved by drugs; (b) fear, and (c) negative self-worth. Within the theme, enslaved by drugs, there were three subthemes: (a) prostitute for; (b) controlled by; and (c) all relations. Within the theme fear, there were also three subthemes: (a) physical harm, (b) homeless, and (c) drugs. Within the theme of negative self-worth, there was one subtheme: (a) caused by pimp.

The first theme, enslaved by drugs, identified participants who described being consistently under the control of a drug to be able to function and/or psychologically escape from their daily lives. The study gave new insight to research by Fernando-Diamond and Agoff (2012) that addressed relationships between drug use and sex work but were unable to reveal if these were indeed voluntary or coerced. Many participants developed a dependence on drugs and would prostitute for either the drugs or the money to purchase the drugs. Drugs were also described as being an overwhelming part of all participants' relationships and interactions.

Fear was an overarching theme for most participants. Almost all described fear of being physically harmed if they attempted to leave their situations. The present study supported the findings by Wilson and Butler (2013) that survivors of violence became overwhelmed with fear, terror, self-loathing, and were unable to trust others as well as experience intimacy and develop relationships. Others feared homelessness, which

brought along with it not having a car or money to access their drugs. The theme of negative self-worth described those participants who did not believe they could survive outside their situation on their own. These participants shared being constantly verbally degraded by their pimps and others within their daily lives.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 related to the dynamics of psychological coercion that contribute to the victims not wanting to leave their situation of HST. The following themes and subthemes helped to answer Research Question 2: enslaved by drugs, Subtheme 1: prostitute for, and Subtheme 2: controlled by. These described how participants felt enslaved to their situation by drugs and unable to move about within relationships. Relationships with others, especially pimps, were described as controlled using drugs to keep them prostituting and making money. Participants developed drug dependence that would be difficult to overcome long after leaving their HST situations. The theme, role of mother, also described how participants were protective of their children while in their HST situation. Several participants had their children's well-being threatened if they attempted to leave or became noncompliant. After becoming pregnant, others feared never seeing their unborn children being born if they did not cooperate with their pimp or trafficker.

In relation to Research Question 2, fear was a major contributing factor for most participants. They described being physically harmed and threatened with harm or death for attempted escape and noncompliance. Others were threatened with the fear of having harm come to their children and other family members. Also described were fears of

homelessness and not having a car or money. Money specifically was important for being able to sustain a daily drug dependence. Regarding the theme of Negative Self-Worth, participants described having low self-esteem which caused feelings of not being empowered to leave their HST situations. Specifically, sub-theme Caused by Pimp, was a major contributing factor. Participants shared being constantly verbally degraded by their pimps, as a means to control their behavior. The present study supported findings by Leidhdt (2013) as many victims would ultimately feel trapped due to becoming pregnant and/or in what they believed to be a hierarchical abusive relationship with their pimp/trafficker. While no participants described being married to their pimp/trafficker, they did refer to them as their “boyfriends.”

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 relates to psychological coercion hindering the ability for professional practitioners being able to identify victims within HST. The theme, Suspicious, Mistrusting, Misguided, described participant’s struggles within the HST situation, specifically with professional practitioners. Many participants were not permitted by their pimps, to visit medical clinics due to the fear of being discovered. Other participants were constantly guarded as to not give them a chance to escape or answer questions from service providers. The present study supported findings from Bales (2009) which found that victims were taken in the community for treatment, but almost never left alone with medical personnel. This was a reminder to the victims of their constant oppression. Two participants shared experiences with police officers which included threats of physical harm and gun violence if they were non-compliant.

The study supports findings from Farrell et. Al. (2014) which found negative attitudes of most professionals interviewed toward victims which could have made cooperation more difficult due to lack of trust with others, including medical providers and police professionals.

The theme Fear also played a role in helping to answer research question number 3. As the over arching theme of the study, the participants described fear of being punished if they would attempt to escape or become noncompliant. Watching the physical torture of other prostitutes was a common occurrence to dissuade any attempts at unwanted behaviors. Other participants were sure they were in love with their pimps. These findings support findings from other major research. According to Cantor & Price (2007), victims of HST may develop feeling toward their captures as a way to cope with traumatic events.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher's unique perspective with data collection, analysis, and reporting posed no limitations to the study, as a result of biases influencing findings. The researcher controlled for implicit biases within the research by maintaining constant sensitivity with participants during the data collection process. The researcher considered her own biases and set any aside prior to data collection and analysis. Member checking was also used within the research study, for all participants to confirm the validity of the findings. Also considered a limitation was the lack of ability to generalize the findings.

Recommendations

Future research could include a study of former HST victims' perspectives on their own addiction and treatment for drug abuse. This research would give former victims an opportunity to express their voices and share their perceptions about their own experiences. This would add to the very limited research on this subject.

Researchers might also focus on the impact motherhood has on the victim of HST. Studying the different ways in which motherhood impacts the role, such as, fear of losing ones' children or no longer being desired due to being pregnant. Research could help inform rescue from the HST situation.

Future study might include a former HST victims' perspective of their own feelings of self-esteem and, self-worth as they relate to developing and keeping relationships. This would allow former victims to share insights and express their own perceptions. The research would add to the literature and help inform future victims of HST find the courage to leave their HST situations.

And finally, researchers might want to gain the valuable perceptions of former HST victims when it comes to dealing with fear. Research on fear within the HST situation would give continued insights and allow the former victims to express their voices and share intimate stories. This research would add to a limited body of research on this important subject.

Implications

Research has shown that there is a growing body of literature focusing on the need for increased training of professional service providers who come in contact with

HST victims (Baldwin et. al.,2011; Hodge, 2014; Hounmenou, 2012; Lange, 2011). One of the prevalent findings of this study was the suspicion and mistrust for service providers by former victims. Additionally, this study offers multiple phenomena for researchers to explore fully in future studies: enslaved by drugs, role of mother, fear, and negative self-worth. These findings may also be applicable across other specialty areas such as health and human services and nursing researchers. The insights and implications from this, although preliminary, confirm that suspicion, mistrust and fear are significant to the psychological functioning of the former HST victim.

Positive Social Change

This research was conducted with the goal of positive social change in mind. I sought to understand the victim's perspective and to give voice to the social problem. It is my hope that this study will add to the research and help bring community awareness of HST's psychological coercion to the forefront, and potentially reduce the number of victims being trafficked within the United States for the purpose of the commercial sex trade, as well as aid in the identification and rescue of current and future HST victims.

I plan to disseminate this study's findings to the research community and professional conferences. This distribution is paramount to raising awareness concerning the processes of psychological coercion among individuals involved in HST, with the hope to inform the identification and rescue efforts of current and future HST victims.

Conclusion

It is my belief that transformative change can come about through research. This study offers the opportunity to pursue additional research channels. For example, women

in the study were found to shut down and succumb to their drug addiction within their HST environments. Therefore, it is crucial for professional practitioners to find a means of reaching these women prior to their drug addiction phase through preventative strategies, and research. This study now provides a foundation for future researchers to build upon.

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Appendix: Research Screening Questionnaire

Research Screening Questionnaire

Directions: Please circle the best answer.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. What is your gender? | M | F |
| 2. Are you 18 years of age or older? | Yes | No |
| 3. Have you ever been involved in prostitution? | Yes | No |
| 4. Have you performed a sex act at the request of another? | Yes | No |
| 5. Did you relocate to the U.S then become involved in prostitution? | | |
| | Yes | No |
| 6. Were you brought to the U.S. by someone who promised you a job, then became involved in prostitution? | Yes | No |
| 7. Have you ever had any involvement with a pimp? | Yes | No |
| 8. Have you been away from prostitution for at least one month? | Yes | No |

Eligible for Study: Y N

Researcher Signature: _____

Unique Code: _____