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How Gender and Victim Blame Impact the Identification of Human Trafficking Victims

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

How Gender and Victim Blame Impact the Identification of Human Trafficking Victims

by

Rudee Hanna

MS, Grace College, 2015

BS, Saint Mary of the Woods College, 2014

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

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Abstract

Human trafficking is a worldwide phenomenon that uses fraud, force, or coercion to subjugate human beings into a modern form of slavery. Male and transgender victims have been excluded from previous research and as a result, the numbers of victims identifying as male, and transgender is unknown. This study examined the impact of gender and victim blame on the identification of human trafficking victims, particularly male and transgender. The theoretical frameworks of feminist theory and belief in a just world theory supported the study and supported the hypotheses. The research questions focused on the impact of gender and victim blame as it pertained to male and transgender human trafficking victims. The study was a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design, that used the Modified Victim Blaming Measure. A pilot study was conducted within the full study to determine the validity of the measure. There were 450 participants who completed the measure and an ANOVA and MANOVA was used to analyze the data from the vignette questions to determine any significance. The findings of the analysis revealed that gender and the trafficking situation both significantly impact victim blame attributed to human trafficking victims. The analysis also found that the identification of the victims was impacted by the trafficking situation suggesting that victims are less likely to be identified. This study helps support social change through the inclusion of all victims of human trafficking and by providing more information on the impact that gender and victim blame have on these victims.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to me, I am done! I have completed my lifelong dream and achieved my goal. This is to all 1st generation college students, set your bar high and let no one stop you on your path. You deserve all the best and can achieve it.

Finally, this is dedicated to all those who have been victims of human trafficking. We hear you and we are so humbled by your resilience to break barriers.

Acknowledgments

First, I want to acknowledge my husband. You have listened to me rant and cry about the injustices in our world and taken every word of it to heart even when you didn't understand. I would not be where I am without your love and support.

Second, I want to thank all of my family for your continued love and support during this long journey. You have listened to me cry, plead, and curse while working on my dissertation. Thank you for enduring all of it and allowing me to achieve my life goal. There were many times I did not believe I would finish this, and you listened with an open heart and reassured me that I knew what I was doing. I hope I have made you proud. Remember, lack of education.

I would like to also thank my research committee for sticking with me through all of this journey, Dr. Talley, and Dr. Lindahl, you both have helped me through some of the darkest parts of this journey and I appreciate all of your peptalks and support. I am forever thankful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Human trafficking is defined as using force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts, labor, or services (Contreras, 2018). Human trafficking affects millions of people worldwide and is a business that continues to grow despite antitrafficking initiatives (Contreras, 2018). Many victims are often females or children who have been kidnapped or promised work. Despite the assumption that victims are female and have been kidnapped, there are individuals who have not been accounted for as victims, such as males and individuals who identify as transgender. These victims often do not report their trafficking due to the lack of services available to their gender or trafficking situation (Contreras, 2018). While often associated with labor trafficking, male trafficking victims can also be victims of sex trafficking. Male and transgender human trafficking victims have been excluded from many studies, while the perfect victim, as noted by Uy (2011), is described as inherently always female.

Victimology is paramount to understanding the attribution of blame toward victims. Victim blame is an important concept to understand, as it can affect the victim's mental as well as physical health (Menaker & Franklin, 2015). Previous researchers have noted that the perceptions and blame attributed to the victim can be influenced by their gender and trafficking situation, as well as existing stereotypes (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). There is little research focusing on the impact gender has on victim blame in trafficking victims, and there is even less information surrounding how the victim's

trafficking situation and gender can impact the blame attributed to them (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

The study explored the effects of victim blame and gender on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims. Male and transgender victims have previously been excluded from research regarding human trafficking because of low reporting statistics (Digidek & Baka, 2020; Jones & Kingshott, 2016; Schwarz & Britton, 2015; Zimmer & Gournelos, 2014). The results of the study influenced positive social change by providing researchers and the public a better understanding of how gender and victim blame impacts identification of human trafficking victims. This is imperative, as currently males and members of the transgender community are not accounted for in the trafficking data (Schwarz & Britton, 2015). This lack of data sways the counted number of trafficking victims each year and impedes provision of federal services and monetary grants intended to help victims exit trafficking (Schwarz & Britton, 2015).

Chapter 1 includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses. It further includes the theoretical framework, nature of the study, definitions of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and a summary of what has been discussed and what to expect in the following chapters.

Background

Human trafficking is a serious violation of human rights and is estimated to affect 20 million people worldwide; it involves the transportation and recruitment of individuals for the sole purpose of exploitation or forced labor (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). Human

trafficking has been described in the literature as illegally transporting individuals for the purposes of forced labor or sexual exploitation (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The majority of research focuses on female or child trafficking victims (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). Human trafficking continues to be a global industry that is growing despite efforts to bring awareness and services to the victims (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). This study addresses the lack of information surrounding how gender and victim blame impact the identification of human trafficking victims.

While trafficking is divided into two distinct types (labor trafficking and sex trafficking), these types can overlap and engage many different victims (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). Traditionally, male victims are associated with labor trafficking and are underreported, while female victims are associated with sex trafficking and represent the largest percentage of victims (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The common perception involves a female sex trafficking victim with a male perpetrator, which supports the power imbalance between the two (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The power imbalance involves the stereotypically weak female and dominant male. Female victims are often portrayed in the media and literature as weak and in need of services (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The focus on the female gender has been a key element in driving legislation and providing services (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019); however, it has explicitly removed an entire category of trafficking victims from the view of the media and society. Victims who do not fit in the typical mold of weak and innocent are not accounted for despite some of the highest percentages of trafficking involving labor trafficking and males, while females and children become the main focus (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019).

Researchers have suggested that when a specific population is exempt from research, a stigma evolves associated with the excluded population (Bastia, 2016). This stigma suggests that males are not identified as victims and, as such, do not need to receive assistance, which further alters the male's ability to disclose and exit trafficking and locate appropriate resources to prevent re-entry (Bastia, 2016). Furthermore, researchers have demonstrated that this stigma is driven by stereotypes and assumptions that are made regarding the victims and the traffickers (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). These stereotypes include the idea of females as weak and helpless and males as commanding and in charge (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

A stereotype associated with male trafficking victims is that they are typically only associated with labor trafficking, which has often proceeded unnoticed at several levels (Martinez & Kelle, 2013). Labor trafficking is generally more underreported than sex trafficking, and at the federal level the focus is on sex trafficking rather than labor trafficking victims (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). Labor trafficking victims are usually forced, deceived, or coerced into sex work, servitude, or labor and are placed in dangerous work environments, including construction, agriculture, and factories (Contreras, 2018). In an empirical study, it was noted that many trafficking victims were unable to meet the legal definition of a trafficking victim under the Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA), as many labor trafficking victims were seeking new employment or new opportunities; however, they were not aware of the slave-like conditions (Jones & Kingshott, 2016). As a result, many of these victims are not identified as victims legally, as they do not fit the true victim stereotype and definition.

In addition to this obstacle, many of the victims are also unable to prove they experienced coercion, force, or fraud as a result of the misidentification and are then labeled by society and the justice system as labor law violators or illegal immigrants (Jones & Kingshott, 2016). While male human trafficking victims are often associated with labor trafficking, they can be victims of sex trafficking and be exposed to severe sexual abuse, including rape, torture, and humiliation (Dennis, 2008). Associating human trafficking with only female victims excludes the possibility that males can be victims of human trafficking as well (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019).

The barrier of gender has also influenced the societal view of members of the transgender community (Menaker & Franklin, 2015). There is very little research about the awareness of trafficking victims within the transgender community and what barriers have influenced their willingness to report to law enforcement or health providers (Menaker & Franklin, 2015). Many of the victims within this community affected by human trafficking are young adults struggling with a multitude of other risk factors, including homelessness, food scarcity, substance use, and the lack of a social support system (Martinez & Kelle, 2013).

Gender vulnerability has been overlooked in modern society due to expressions and assumptions portrayed in the media (Menaker & Franklin, 2015). The evaluation of preconceptions surrounding gender, stereotypes, and objectification has been addressed in previous research regarding power dynamics; however, human trafficking victims were excluded from this research, which focused solely on domestic violence victims and sexual assault victims (Dennis, 2008). Further findings have suggested that the exclusion

of these individuals can cause revictimization, as there is a lack of education surrounding the risk factors and these victims' reluctance to trust other individuals (Boswell et al., 2019). Human trafficking is one of the most damaging crimes that can be committed today (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019).however, it is still misrepresented and extremely misunderstood by the public (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The exclusion of male and transgender victims from research leads to the silence of those excluded and to their experiences being discredited, which further allows for the continuation of the exploitation of these individuals (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The study will address the gap in the literature focusing on the impact of gender and victim blame in identifying male and transgender human trafficking victims.

This study was needed to provide insight into whether gender and victim blame impact the identification of human trafficking victims. There is scant research surrounding male victims or victims who identify as transgender and the influences that impact their identification (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). This lack of identification of human trafficking victims is detrimental to both society and the victims' lives (Jones & Kingshott, 2016; Zimmer & Gournelos, 2014). Unidentified victims are unable to access services, as currently most services are only available to women and child victims (Jones & Kingshott, 2016; Zimmer & Gournelos, 2014).

Problem Statement

The problem that was addressed in this study was the lack of knowledge surrounding the potential affect that gender and victim blame have on the identification of human trafficking victims. Millions of human trafficking victims are female, children,

and male, and many of these victims have faced barriers in society that have impacted

their identification (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). Gender and victim blame have been

factors associated with female victims previously, and yet there is little research about

how gender and victim blame impact the identification of male victims and members

identifying with the transgender community (Honeyman et al., 2016). Despite increased

attention to victim blaming, there has been relatively little focus on the domain of

trafficking and even less attention to victims who are not females (Digidiki & Baka,

2020). Society plays an important role in identifying trafficking victims; however, with

preconceived notions of who normal trafficking victims are, an entire subset of the

trafficking community has been ignored (Martinez & Kelle, 2013).

There is also significantly less information involving human trafficking victims

who are part of the transgender community (Martinez & Kelle, 2013). These victims have

been left out of the narrative surrounding human trafficking situations except when

identifying factors that alter their risk level in entering human trafficking. The result of

the lack of information and the preconceived view of the public has led to the assumption

that male and transgender victims do not suffer these abuses, which leads to the failed

identification of this population (Martinez & Kelle, 2013). Males and individuals

identifying as transgender are often isolated, without any money, support, or treatment to

address the trauma that they have experienced (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019).

This study addressed the gap in the literature by delving into the influence gender

and victim blame have on identifying human trafficking victims. Although researchers of

human trafficking have developed more insight into female victims and the factors

surrounding their identification, there is still a lack of evidence regarding the plight of male victims and those in the transgender community (Digidiki & Baka, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if victim blaming and gender influence the identification of human trafficking victims who are male or identify as transgender. This was a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design, ANOVAs, and a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the interaction and effect between the independent variables and the dependent variables. There were two independent variables. The first was the trafficking situation at three levels, which are defined as labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and a non-trafficking situation. The second independent variable was gender, with three levels: female, male, and transgender. The dependent variables were the human trafficking identification and victim blame. The study focused on the interaction between gender and victim blame and the interaction between victim blame and identifying human trafficking victims. The objective was to determine how gender roles and victim blaming influence the identification of trafficking victims and whether these components play a part in the exclusion of the trafficked victims.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims?

$H_0 1$: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_a1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 2: How does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims?

H_02: The trafficking situation does not effect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

H_a2: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

Research Question 3: How does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims?

H_03: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

H_a3: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 4: How does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_04: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_a4: The victim's gender does have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

A pilot study was used to establish the validity of Modified Victim Blaming measure. The data collected helped to determine the initial internal consistency of the

items and determine if the questions, format, or instructions needed to be adjusted. Through the extensive search in literature, I determined that there was not an appropriate measure or survey to use and that I needed to develop one for the present study. Studies have previously used a similar tool with different vignettes; however, they did not have the additional questions that pertain to this study and the vignettes focused on sexual assault (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Digidek & Baka, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

One theoretical basis for this study was feminist theory, which focuses on gender inequality for both men and women and the impact gender has on many aspects of society, including oppression and power imbalances (Brabeck & Brown, 1997). Feminist theory is grounded in examining and analyzing gender inequality, and it investigates women and men's social roles, interests, politics, and experiences (Brabeck & Brown, 1997). The origin of the theory was a result of the women's rights convention and first feminist movement (Lobasz, 2009). The theory began as a grassroots accumulation of other feminist psychologists that provided their research and developed the framework for the theory. The theory is constantly evolving as a result of gender inequality-based research. The theory's approach examines society and how gender roles change the ever-changing structure of social roles. It also involves discrimination, objectification, patriarchy, oppression, and stereotyping. Furthermore, feminist theory relates to the research questions surrounding gender, victim blame, and human trafficking situation, as the theory is based on the power imbalances between genders, which is also observed in human trafficking situations (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Feminist theory aligned with the study approach as it focused on the gender imbalance of victims and how the traditional victim description no longer applies. The theory was appropriate for the quantitative approach as it bridged the independent variables and allowed for the hypotheses surrounding gender to be tested. Feminist theory provides a framework that focuses on gender and social roles and the stereotyping that is associated with those roles (Jones & Kingshott, 2016). It was expected that the independent variables of gender had an impact on the dependent variable of the identification of the human trafficking victims, as noted in research question 4, does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims. It was also expected that the independent variable of gender would impact the dependent variable of victim blame attributed to the human trafficking victims as noted in Research Question 1, does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

The just-world theory focuses on the belief that victims deserve the consequences of their actions, and as a result, the characteristics of their actions and their physical attributes influence how society identifies victims and places blame based on this thought process (Dalbert & Donat, 2015). This theory originated in a study by Lerner and Simmons (1966) in which participants were presented with an innocent victim. As a result of this study, one of the first measures, the Belief in a Just World Measure, for this theory was developed by social psychologists Zick Rubin and Letitia Anne Peplau (Lerner & Simmons, 1966).

The just-world theory was selected for this study because it was aligned with the victimology of male or transgender victims based on the blame that is associated with human trafficking situations (Dalbert & Donat, 2015). The theory supported the specific research question regarding victim blame and whether it affected the identification of human trafficking victims, as noted in Research Question 2, does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims, and Research Question 3, does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims. Belief in a just world supported the variables of victim blame and identification of the victims based on their situation (Dalbert & Donat, 2015).

These theories provided the foundation surrounding the imbalances in gender roles as well as the blame that can be attributed to victims based on their situation or other factors such as gender. A more detailed explanation of victim blame, feminist theory, and belief in a just world is provided in Chapter 2, as well how these concepts supported the study and the research questions.

Nature of the Study

This study used a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design. This design allowed me to gather and analysis data from many individuals at a specific point in time (Creswell, 2013). This design allowed me to observe the variables outlined without influencing them.

Through the review of literature, it was determined that there was little information on gender and victim blame pertaining to human trafficking victims in the context that this study encompasses. It was also determined that there was not an

appropriate measure or survey to use and that a measure would need to be developed for the present study. Studies have previously used a similar tool with different vignettes; however, they did not have the additional questions that pertain to this study and the original vignettes focused on sexual assault (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Digidek & Baka, 2020). These additional questions focused on whether the situation is identified as a trafficking situation and whether the situation is believable.

The current study modified the vignettes and the original Victim Blaming Measure to align with the variables. The variables included the independent variables of trafficking situation at three levels (labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or no trafficking), gender at three levels (female, male, and transgender), and the dependent variables of human trafficking identification and victim blame.

A pilot study was utilized to determine the internal reliability of the Modified Victim Blaming Measure (Appendix F). The internal reliability for the measure indicates how well items work together within the measure (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). The materials used included the Modified Victim Blaming Measure and nine vignettes. The vignettes were developed by me and reviewed by human trafficking victim specialist experts that provided content editing. The pilot study was conducted in two phases.

During the first phase, five individuals read the nine vignettes and they completed the questions from the original Victim Blaming Measure as well as the added questions identifying whether they thought the situation was a trafficking situation. The five individuals consisted of two individuals who were knowledgeable about trafficking and three individuals who were not familiar with or knowledgeable about trafficking. The

participation of the two knowledgeable individuals was obtained through personal connections. The three other individuals were sought from my community. Confidentiality was maintained, and no identifying information was recorded from these individuals.

Following the completion of this step, additional feedback in the form of a survey was used to determine if participants understood the questions and if the vignettes were understandable and what improvements could be made. The follow-up survey was provided directly to the individuals when they completed the initial survey was voluntary for completion. These individuals completed the informed consent process and were aware of their commitment to the pilot study. The pilot study was approved by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to it being implemented.

The second phase was completed in the same way; however, it consisted of 15 individuals whose participation was obtained through social media. The data collected during the pilot study was analyzed using MANOVAs and an ANOVA to determine the feasibility of the measure and if the measure and vignettes were valid and reliable.

In the current study, nine vignettes were used and provided to the participants. The participants read the vignette and answered the Modified Victim Blaming Measure. The participants for the study were obtained through social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram). Participants were provided a summary of the study through the recruitment flyer and the link to informed consent information as well as the link to the study once they completed the informed consent form.

Informed consent was the first page the participants saw when accessing the study. There was an additional question asking if they had been a victim of human trafficking. If they select that they had, they were excluded from the study, and free resources were provided to them. By clicking the link, as stated in the informed consent form, they agreed to participate. The participants then entered the study, using a hyperlink to complete the survey. The data was captured using SurveyMonkey, and the responses were kept confidential (Kimball, 2019).

All data was quantitative and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). MANOVA and an ANOVA were used to determine the interaction and effect between the independent variables, including the trafficking situation (labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or no trafficking) and gender at three levels (female, male, and transgender). The dependent variables were human trafficking identification and victim blame.

Definitions

This research inquiry contained the following operational definitions:

Gender: Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for males and females (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Human trafficking identification: The ability to understand risk factors, barriers, and situations that are associated with human trafficking to identify the victim as a potential human trafficking victim or as having a high susceptibility to potentially become a victim of human trafficking in the future (Schwarz et al., 2016).

Labor trafficking: A form of modern-day slavery in which individuals are forced or coerced into debt bondage, forced labor, or involuntary child labor (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Public: The aggregate of people living together in a community that concerns people (Public, n.d.).

Sex trafficking: Sexual exploitation of individuals. The victims are forced, coerced, or threatened into performing sexual services (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

*Trafficking Victims Protection Act :*Established in 2000, is an act that provides methods for protecting victims, preventing human trafficking, and prosecuting the perpetrators/traffickers (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Transgender: Any individual that may identify differently in terms of their gender (Barron & Frost, 2018).

Victim blame: Defined as when the victim of the crime or wrongful act is held responsible either partially or entirely for the crime against them (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

Victimology: Defined as the study of victims of crime (victimization) and the effects (physical, mental, emotional) on the victims (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions within research are accepted as plausible or true (Creswell, 2013). Assumptions may alter the data collected for the study and they are the things that are unable to be controlled for within the study (Creswell, 2013). There are several assumptions surrounding human trafficking victims. One assumption of the study was

that because the study focused on trafficking victims, the participants assumed that the vignettes are trafficking related and identified them as such despite the potential of the vignettes to be assigned as non-trafficking situations. This assumption would skew the data to read as though the vignettes all included trafficking situations, which would alter the data and cause a type II error. This error can cause failure to reject the null hypothesis (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013).

Another assumption was that participants attributed blame to the victim in some capacity regardless of the situation, which would again alter the data and cause a type II error (Dalbert & Donat, 2015). The third assumption was that the participants were willing to answer the questions honestly and that they would not allow other factors, such as the media or events occurring, to influence their decisions or answers to the survey (Vésteinsdóttir et al., 2019). There were also data assumptions to be cognizant about regarding the study. In using a MANOVA for the statistical analysis, I assumed that my data was normally distributed, and that the variance was approximately equal (Creswell, 2013). There are several assumptions that were made when using a MANOVA. The first assumption was that the dependent variables (human trafficking and victim blame) were measured as continuous variables (Likert scaled) and that the independent variables (gender and trafficking situation) were categorical groups. The next assumption was that the relationship between the dependent and independent variable was linear (Creswell, 2013). The assumptions for the ANOVA were similar. The first assumption was that the data was normally distributed as well. A second assumption was that the variances are equal (Creswell, 2013).

Assumptions associated with human trafficking and the victims should also be noted. It was assumed that participants see human trafficking victims as female, vulnerable, innocent, and weak as opposed to some victims who are described as willful sex workers who exchange money for their services in trafficking (Menaker & Franklin, 2015). These assumed perceptions limit victims who do not fall into the preconceived "box" of innocent and vulnerable females. This assumption could have impacted this study as the victims of focus are males and individuals identifying as transgender, both of whom do not fit into the assumed and preconceived category. This could have influenced the study as the victims were not viewed as victims because they did not meet the assumed preconceived victim definition (Creswell, 2013).

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this quantitative study was to determine how gender and victim blame affect the ability to identify human trafficking victims. The aspects of the research problem that were addressed included the relationship between gender and human trafficking and victim blame among the situations human trafficking victims experience and if they were statistically related. The specific focus was chosen as there was a significantly small amount of information and data surrounding male or transgender trafficking victims (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Dennis, 2008; Hebert, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015). In terms of victim blame, it is rarely associated with human trafficking and is often applied to the realms of domestic violence or sexual assault (Dennis, 2008; Menaker & Franklin, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015).

The participants were obtained through Facebook, LinkedIn, classified ads, Walden's Participant Pool, and Amazon Mechanical Turk. The data was collected using SurveyMonkey, and the data did not contain identifying data and only collected demographic information such as age, gender, location, and ethnicity (Kimball, 2019). The participants were any individuals over the age of 18. There were no other parameters that limited the participants besides the age range and whether they identified prior to the study that they had been victims of human trafficking. A potential problem concerned the inability to obtain enough participants for the research, which could have potentially caused a type II error as a result of insufficient power, in which I would have failed to reject the null hypothesis (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). A potential threat to generalizability was selection bias; in this instance, convenience sampling was used to obtain a sample for the study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018), and this could then manipulate the generalizability of the study if the sample size was not a broad or complete enough representation of the population. Lack of generalizability for a study occurs when the study results would not be useful for a broader group of people (Patino & Ferreira, 2018).

Additional theories were explored but ultimately not investigated or used. General systems theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory are often used in conjunction with human trafficking but are most appropriate when studying interventions (Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019). Both of these theories are often associated with human trafficking when evaluating risk factors or needs assessments for the victims. Labeling theory is also associated with human trafficking victims but pertains solely when

investigating the criminal behavior of the trafficked victim which would have been inconducive to the purpose of the current study (Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019).

Limitations

Potential barriers would have been the recruitment of participants and the challenges of using an online survey to collect data (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). The potential barrier with recruitment could have affected the participant pool, which could have caused a type II error as a result of insufficient power (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). This potential barrier can threaten external validity in the form of sampling bias, as the study used convenience sampling to identify the participants. This bias was based on the researcher's ability to obtain participants for the study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). This posed a threat to the validity of the study as the necessary amount of participants may not have been located, so I would have used different methods to obtain them, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, classified ads, Walden's Participant Pool, and Amazon Mechanical Turk (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). The validity of the study also depended on the pilot study data collection and analysis. The pilot study's purpose was to ensure that the materials and questions were consistent and ensured the validity of the measure (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). The pilot study provided the results expected, and the validity and reliability of the Modified Victim Blaming Measure was increased (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013).

The use of social media and classified ads may have helped to reach a technology-rich pool of participants; however, it may have also limited the number of participants over the age of 50, who are not as technology inclined as younger generations (Keengwe, 2016). The use of classified ads would also have generated an additional expense.

Limiting the number of participants could have altered the data received from the study and the potential validity of the study (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). With regard to the limitations involving a lack of participants, using multiple avenues to obtain the participants ensured that the appropriate number of participants is identified (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013).

An additional imitation considered was the preexisting bias involving gender and human trafficking victims; there was little that could have mitigated this bias without causing a sampling bias in choosing the participants (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). There were also unknown factors that influenced the participants, such as the media and its depiction of trafficking victims, or a history bias, where other events occurred at the same time could have altered the results (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). An additional barrier considered was that the participants may not view the vignettes as valid, due to internal bias that they have based on their experiences and perceptions of human trafficking (Davies et al., 2006).

Significance

This study examined human trafficking victims, including males and individuals who are part of the transgender community and who are often excluded or misidentified as victims of trafficking (Boswell et al., 2019). The results of this study provided insight into human trafficking victims and their difficulty in accessing resources that are currently only available to female and child victims and not to other genders, such as males or transgender persons (Boswell et al., 2019). Insights from this study provided information on the difficulties involved with the identification of trafficking victims and

the problems associated with the influence of victim blaming and gender regarding the victims' ability to receive services and exit trafficking in a safe manner. Identification of these factors and the relationship with trafficking could help to change the educational information provided to the public, including state, federal, and non-profit organizations (Digidiki & Baka, 2020). The ability to provide the necessary services to all victims of human trafficking promotes positive social change through the inclusion of all victims and education for the public surrounding how its bias and lack of education may influence the victim's willingness to disclose their trauma around human trafficking. The ability to identify human trafficking victims without the biases of gender and victim blaming may allow victims previously overlooked to be identified more quickly and allow them to access the necessary resources to exit trafficking in a safe manner.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the types of human trafficking, the victims of trafficking, and the challenges experienced by victims. The types of human trafficking focus on labor and sex trafficking and encompasses the different genders of trafficking victims. This chapter also included the background of the study and the social change that the study impacted. Assumptions for the study, as well as an introduction to the hypotheses, research questions, and variables were covered. The background of the study encompassed current literature on the human trafficking victims and the situations the victims are exposed to while trafficked. The gap in the research was also identified within this section and suggested that though research for female victims has increased, there was still a lack of evidence surrounding male and transgender victims (Digidiki & Baka,

2020). The relevant theories, including belief in a just world and feminist theory, provided the framework and foundation of the study. These theories influenced the variables of the study through their origins and the influence they have had on societal norms.

Literature on female, male, and transgender victims was included within this overview and is discussed in depth in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 further explores the theories and provides information on the relationship between the research questions and the selected theories. The chapter expounds current research and literature surrounding human trafficking as well as the variables of gender and victim blame. The literature review breaks each variable down to explore the research that has been completed, and how in previous research the variables have been applied together and explores more studies that have previously used pilot studies associated with human trafficking victims. The chapter finally explains the gap in the research and how the study will fill that gap.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Male and transgender victims of human trafficking have been overlooked, especially regarding victim blame. Human trafficking has been described as a gender-based issue focusing solely on female victims or child victims (Zimmer & Gournelos, 2014). Though legislation has provided services to victims, it has omitted male victims and victims identifying as transgender (Barron & Frost, 2018; Hebert, 2016; Richards & Reid, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015). Thus, many human trafficking victims are not identified, as they do not meet the traditional victim stereotype of being female (Barron & Frost, 2018; Boswell et al., 2019; Menaker & Franklin, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015). Men are traditionally assumed to be involved in labor trafficking and are not viewed as victims (Jones & Kingshott, 2016). Transgender victims have also been overlooked and are often not reported to authorities due to complications within their lives that lead to high-risk lifestyles and a lack of available support (Martinez & Kelle, 2013). Further, it is not known whether there is a relationship between trafficking victims' genders and how much blame is associated because of their gender, as well as, whether this differs from stereotypical norms (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015).

Though victims of trafficking are similar to victims of sexual assault, there is little information to support whether the blame is associated with the crime or with the gender (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015). This study addressed the gap in the literature through the study of male and transgender human trafficking victims and

how victim blaming and gender affects victims' identification by the public. The study

focused on how gender roles and victim blame can affect the public's perception of the

trafficking victims and if these components play a part in the misidentification or

exclusion of the trafficked victims. The study added to the literature surrounding male

and transgender trafficking victims and helped identify how a person's perception can

influence the identification of trafficking victims.

This chapter provides information on the literature search strategy, the theoretical

foundation of the study, and the literature review. The literature review expands on the

history and current narrative surrounding human trafficking identification. The

subsections of the review focus on the types of human trafficking (labor trafficking and

sex trafficking), victim blame, and gender, with the inclusion of transgender individuals.

Furthermore, the chapter reviews current research on how gender impacts the

identification of human trafficking victims and current concerns surrounding gender as

applied to human trafficking victims and identification. The literature review also

supports the need for a pilot study and a new measure to address the study topic. The

final section of the chapter summarizes Chapter 2 and introduces Chapter 3.

Literature Search Strategy

The search engines used include PsycINFO, SAGE Journals, Google Scholar, and

a Thoreau multi-database search. The keywords searched for included *human trafficking*

victims, *male human trafficking victims*, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer,*

Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) trafficked victims, *public perceptions*, *gender roles*,

victim blame, *scapegoating*, and *blame attribution*. The scope of the literature spanned

several years but publications were limited to the last 5 years to ensure relevancy. In areas where minimal research was available, Ask A Librarian was used to locate additional studies and peer-reviewed meta-analyses.

The keyword combinations initially included *human trafficking* with a combination of the other terms. The articles were further screened by gender and date to locate articles published within the last 5 years and historical articles that provided a basis for additional searches. *Human trafficking* and *gender* resulted in 1,125 articles, whereas *human trafficking* and *victim blame* resulted in five articles published within the last 5 years. *Human trafficking* and *victim blaming* resulted in two articles, both of which were also published within the last 5 years. *Labor trafficking* resulted in 1,307 articles, and *labor trafficking* and *gender* resulted in 92 articles, and with the male-specified gender resulted in 47 articles. *Sex trafficking* and *gender* resulted in 1,028 articles. When adding gender specified as a male victim, the search resulted in 52 articles, and within the last 5 years, there were 15 results. *Sex trafficking* and *victim blame* resulted in seven articles, with only one article published within the last 5 years. *LGBTQIA+ trafficked victims* yielded no results when paired with *gender* and *victim blame*.

There were limited studies focusing on human trafficking victims that were not identified as children or female. Several researchers examined and discussed human trafficking; however, there was little information and research surrounding male victims and the research completely excluded transgender victims.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical basis for this study was feminist theory and just-world theory.

Feminist theory focuses on gender inequality for both men and women and explores the impact of gender as it pertains to the individual's experience (Brabeck & Brown, 1997). Feminist theory supported the study by exploring the stereotyping and discrimination associated with gender, which is a key variable when identifying human trafficking victims (Chevrette, 2013).

Just-world theory focuses on people wishing and needing to believe that the world is a safe and fair place, where people experience the consequences of their actions (Silver et al., 2015). The theory supported the specific research question regarding victim blame and whether it affected the identification of human trafficking victims based specifically on their situation (Dalbert & Donat, 2015).

Feminist Theory

The origin of the theory was a result of the many women's rights movements and protests spanning several years. The theory began as a grassroots accumulation of other feminist psychologists that provided their research and developed the framework for the theory (Lobasz, 2009). The theory is constantly evolving as a result of gender inequality-based research (Lobasz, 2009). Current theorists, such as Schwarz and Britton (2015), have led the contemporary discussion surrounding feminist theory and gender inequality and its connection to human trafficking, service providers, and sex work.

In previous studies, feminist theory has been applied in the context of rape victims, and it has only recently been applied to human trafficking victims (Schwarz & Britton, 2015). Due to this tendency, the literature analysis only revealed a small number of articles and journals in the last 10 years that apply directly to human trafficking and

feminist theory. Further, in previous legislation and literature, human trafficking has been described as a threat to national security, which has neglected the voices of the trafficked victims (Lobasz, 2009). The application of feminist theory supports the notion that human trafficking is a human rights and ethical issue. Therefore, in this study, feminist theory was used to focus on treating trafficked individuals as victims instead of criminals. The feminist framework is relevant to the trafficking narrative, as it expands upon the social and political structures that contribute to gender inequality and traditional gender role ideas, allowing for new ways to understand individuals' experiences (Schwarz & Britton, 2015).

Just-World Theory

Just-world theory is a result of the cognitive bias that a person's actions must have fitting consequences (Silver et al., 2015). The theory originated with Lerner and Simmons (1966), who presented participants with an innocent victim and found that the victim was devalued and blamed for their suffering if the observer was unable to change the situation of the victim (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). As a result of this study, social psychologists Rubin and Peplau (1975) developed one of the first measurements of belief in a just world. They determined that when people are threatened by injustices, they are then motivated to defend their beliefs. The consequences of this belief are a result of the bias needed for balance in just-world theory (Dalbert & Donat, 2015).

In previous research, just-world theory has been applied to rape victims (Cuda et al., 2018). Research has suggested that people who believe the just-world theory feel threatened by the perspective that an innocent woman could be victimized by forces

outside of her control. Due to this belief, individuals protect themselves from this thought by attributing the responsibility for the attack to the victim. Further research has indicated that negative rape victim perception occurs due to overcompensating for an undeserved act (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Individuals who support the beliefs of just-world theory have a motivational need to believe that the world is a just and fair place, leading them to blame victims for their actions rather than blaming the perpetrator (Dalbert & Donat, 2015).

Though just-world theory has been used in many different contexts such as sexual assault and intimate partner violence, there have been few studies surrounding the use of belief in a just world and human trafficking victims. The studies that have aligned with just-world theory have focused on rape victims and sex offenders (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). However, the research that has been conducted has focused on the blame attributed to female sex trafficking victims and the situational and individual factors that impact the victims (Digidek & Baka, 2020). For instance, public opinion is often a factor that assigned some type of responsibility to the victims of human trafficking due to the victims' situation, gender, and actions. The victims are often not judged because of the crime or victimization they experience but solely on their behaviors, attitudes, and unique attributes (Digidek & Baka, 2020). Other research has indicated that more blame is placed on a trafficked individual from the United States than on a trafficked individual from a foreign country (Silver et al., 2015).

Feminist theory and just-world theory were selected for this current study to examine the victimology of male and transgender victims based on their gender and the

blame that is associated with human trafficking situations. These theories supported the research questions, which sought to determine whether gender or victim blame affect the identification of human trafficking victims. The first research question was supported by both theories as it focused on how the victim's gender affects the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims; the second research question was supported by just-world theory as it focused on how the trafficking situation affects the victim blame attributed to human trafficking victims; and the final research questions are supported by feminist theory as they explored how the victim's gender affects the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims.

The current study benefited from these frameworks, as the findings from these studies supported the use of feminist theory as the gender inequalities occur in many different situations where power imbalances are noted (Schwarz & Britton, 2015). Guided by the framework of just-world theory, research studies by Lobasz (2009) support the belief that victims deserve the consequences of their actions, which suggests that trafficking victims are not identified because of the crime committed against them but because of the actions and characteristics of the victim, both of which are the basis of the study. This is further supported by the study completed by Schwarz and Britton (2015) emphasizing the need for understanding of the characteristics of human trafficking victims and the characteristics associated with the trafficking situation.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

Types of Human Trafficking and Gender Roles

Human trafficking is the practice of illegally transporting people from one country or area to another and is associated with labor and sexual exploitation with an element of force or coercion (Hemmings et al., 2016). Human trafficking violates many human rights, including the right to personal autonomy; the right to enjoy mental and physical health; the right to fair and just payment; the right to health care, food, and water; and, finally, the right to human dignity (Ortega et al., 2022). Human trafficking involves several types of coercion or force, including but not limited to physical or sexual abuse, psychological manipulation, torture, substance abuse, unsafe work conditions, violent crimes, and trauma (Ortega et al., 2022). These conditions can be in conjunction with sex trafficking or labor trafficking. It has been reported that sex trafficking is the most common form of trafficking, comprising approximately 80 percent of trafficking, while labor trafficking or forced labor comprises 20 percent (Ortega et al., 2022). Current estimates suggest that approximately 25 million individuals worldwide are subjected to some form of modern slavery (Ortega et al., 2022). Allais (2013) describes human trafficking as being an umbrella term for sex trafficking and labor trafficking, or when one person holds another in compelled service. He completed a literature review of all current research and information as it applied to trafficked men in South Africa. It was noted that the data and current research on human trafficking victims is limited and suggested that a more in-depth understanding is needed to explain the characteristics and needs of victims (including how these may differ among genders and experiences) and

highlighted the need for more in-depth research surrounding male victims. It was also stated that reports of male victims have been overlooked and that, as a result, there is little data regarding the trafficking of men.

In many countries in which trafficking data is collected and accessible, women and children are the predominant figures when trafficking is mentioned, whereas men are seen as migrant workers (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). Kiss and Zimmerman (2019) note that these assumed migrant workers are identified as victims of labor exploitation, which is not viewed as a crime of trafficking but rather an issue for labor and trade unions. Based on the article, the individuals are exempt from victim services and are not recognized as victims due to gender stereotypes. Many victims, after being exploited, are left with physical or psychological health problems and high debt, and often do not have access to additional assistance, such as legal remedies or financial compensation (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). The plight of the trafficked individuals and the need to identify the victims clearly and carefully, as many assumed victims are white women, is highlighted by Feminist Theory (Lobasz, 2009). This produces a gender and racial stereotype that unjustly prioritizes the "assumed" victims over others that do not meet these two descriptions, white and female (Kiss & Zimmer, 2019). Kiss and Zimmerman (2019) support the statements made by Lobasz (2009) and suggest that the most common victims of labor trafficking are male migrant workers working in agriculture, mining, fishing, and domestic work. The authors completed a review of policy and federal requirements pertaining to labor-trafficked victims. They note that from a policy perspective, little work has been completed to support the health of male trafficking victims. They argue

that progress in supporting trafficking victims must extend beyond simple fixes and needs to include additional populations and help address the underlying issues driving this problem.

Richard and Reid (2015) argue that much of the scholarly research focuses on the victimization of girls and women, while men and boys are considered perpetrators. The authors noted that men are often not considered trafficking victims, as they are frequently underreported; there is a lack of documentation from the men and boys who speak out, as these victims are viewed as violating longstanding social norms surrounding masculinity. They further note, and previous research has supported, that this limited view on gender leads to a false conception that all women are submissive and victims, and that all men dominate and cannot be victims (Richards & Reid, 2015). The authors completed a meta-analysis examining 12 years of research that focused on sex tourism, gender, and buyers of sex. The research revealed that women and girls were identified as prostitutes when they were solicited for sex, whereas men and boys were described as gigolos or romantic entrepreneurs. The results suggest that the victimology minimizes the harm to males due to the masculine belief that they have total control over their lives (Richards & Reid, 2015). In their conclusion, they note that recent research has focused on the victimization of men and boys; however, such research has been received with skepticism about whether this change in view would impede the strides made for female victim identification (Richards & Reid, 2015). Dennis (2008) notes that most men are not considered trafficking victims, as they do not meet the profile of the assumed traditional victim. Furthermore, male human trafficking victims are often perceived in conjunction

with labor trafficking and illegal immigration and are not thought to be victims of sex trafficking. Jones (2010) notes that male vulnerability has been overlooked by modern society due to the expression of male dominance portrayed by the media.

Male sex trafficking victims are exposed to the same heinous circumstances as their female counterparts (Hebert, 2016). Male sex trafficking victims experience rape, humiliation, drug exposure and addiction, and torture. These male victims often resort again to trafficking situations to help alleviate these struggles and provide income for their families (Hebert, 2016). Furthermore, Dennis (2008) argued that many of the reasons surrounding the disparity of reporting for male trafficking victims are that they are not identified as victims in their situations. Many of their experiences occur in cross-border trafficking, and they are assumed to be migrants and are deported without investigation of other circumstances that may apply, such as sexual assault or sex trafficking. The author conducted a meta-analysis of 166 studies that involved human trafficking to better identify male human trafficking victims within historical articles. The analysis suggested that a re-evaluation of preconceptions about male and female gender roles, stereotypes, and objectification is needed to understand why men were not included in the discussion of trafficking victims. Despite being over 10 years old, the review notes that preconceptions about gender roles have been addressed prior to 2008 but had been substantially lacking in information regarding trafficking victims. The article further bolsters the academic focus and need for additional studies on gender roles/stereotypes and the lack of inclusion of men in trafficking data.

Jones (2010) argues that the lack of equal treatment for male victims ignores their vulnerability and states that this oppression and lack of power is shared by all victims regardless of gender, type of trafficking, and ethnicity. The examination of previous research focused on the TVPA and noted that the TVPA is nominally gender neutral; however, the implementation of the act has excluded male victims due to interpretation and enforcement of the laws by law enforcement and identification by other first responders.

Zimmer and Gournelos (2014) further noted that there is discrepancy with the identification of human trafficking victims due to gender exclusion within specific trafficking scenarios. Through a meta-analysis, the authors provide that information around male trafficking victims is severely limited; however, when they are mentioned, male victims are often associated with labor trafficking and rarely with sex trafficking. The result of excluding these individuals within research perpetuates the continuation of the trafficking situation and forces these individuals to be silent. The article notes that a lack of literature on male sex trafficking victims implies that men cannot be forced to have sex, despite them representing approximately 10 percent of the victimology reported in sexual assault.

Sex trafficking policies and assumptions are described as constructing identity categories and simplifying the system of sexuality and gender (Dennis, 2008; Hebert, 2016). This simplification of gender helps to perpetuate the narrative that sex trafficking is always heterosexual, where women and girls are the victims (Dennis, 2008; Hebert, 2016). There is little room within this simplification to allow for the understanding of the

victim's experiences, who identify as gender fluid, transgender, or a varying gender allowing for the marginalization of these victims within the trafficking narrative (Dennis, 2008; Hebert, 2016).

Schwarz and Britton (2015) argue that transgender victims are at a higher rate of recidivism to human trafficking due to the complications associated with their high-risk lifestyles. The authors noted that binary and simplistic terms were used rather than the complicated and diverse system of vocabulary that comprises sexuality. Sexuality encompasses an intersection of gender, sex, and sexuality, which further complicates the definitions of these items. They provide that previous research examined organizations and service providers over several years that work with vulnerable populations, such as women's shelters, homeless shelters, migrant labor organizations, and LGBTQIA+ organizations (Schwarz and Britton, 2015).

During the study, Schwarz and Britton (2015) conducted semi-structured interviews with many different assistance programs. The interviews covered general organizational questions, trafficking-specific questions, sector-specific questions, and public health questions and captured risk factors associated with the trafficked victims. The findings provided that a large majority of male or LGBTQIA+ individuals who are vulnerable to trafficking face unemployment, income insecurity, and poverty. These risk factors compel them to make unsafe decisions to survive.

These complications and risk factors are associated with their early life trauma and abuse. These risk factors lead to difficulties in providing services and developing rapport with victims, as they are more reluctant to trust individuals when removed from

their trafficking situation. It was determined that medical care was often not available to victims, which could cause more financial hardship and further health complications (Schwarz and Britton, 2015).

Martinez and Kelle (2013) support this point by noting that LGBTQIA+ sex trafficking is regularly overlooked and almost never reported by local and national government agencies. As a result, there is little information regarding the number of transgender trafficked persons.

Martinez and Kelle (2013) provide that few studies have been completed on transgender human trafficking victims. It was argued that stigma surrounding sexual violence has been the largest influence in the lack of reporting, and the inability to understand the influence this crime has on transgender victims. They further noted that societal barriers often prevent individuals from reporting their own victimization, as many of the crimes committed against them are considered taboo.

Boswell et al. (2019) found that between the years of 2014 and 2018, only 216 articles were published that fit the criteria surrounding trafficking and LGBTQIA+ victims, and none directly mentioned transgender victims. The researchers acknowledged that there is an interest in trafficking data for transgender individuals; however, the data is difficult to quantify, as there is a lack of uniform measurements. The authors suggest that the revictimization of transgender individuals can be mitigated with education of the risk factors associated with a high-risk lifestyle, such as that of runaway young adults. The risk factors associated with these individuals are a result of early life trauma and abuse, which leads to the victim's reluctance to trust other adults once removed from

their trafficking situation (Boswell et al., 2019). Furthermore, a lack of education around LGBTQIA+ and transgender victims and the risk factors associated with them can inhibit the victim's ability and willingness to disclose the abuse and identify their trafficker (Boswell et al., 2019).

Herbert (2016) found that gender has a more significant impact in identifying human trafficking victims than is currently understood in research. He further supports this, stating that if scholars and researchers fail to broaden the gender lens from the traditional male and female designations, the opportunity to obtain insight into different genders and sexual orientations will be lost.

In a recent study by Babu et al., (2022), it was found that individuals are more willing to help foreign female trafficking victims over other trafficked persons as a result of internal bias of the participants. The participants were provided a vignette depicting a victim and asked a series of questions surrounding the myths of human trafficking. The results purported that there were significant differences in the identification of the trafficking victim based on the victim's gender and trafficking situation. The study focused primarily on female and male victims and further supported the need to understand what biases influence the identification (Babu et al., 2022).

The lack of additional studies surrounding human trafficking, victim blame, and gender, provide that much of the current research is based upon the meta-analyses conducted by the researchers (Dennis, 2008; Menaker & Franklin, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015). This lack of research and information on how gender impacts the identification of male and transgender victims suggests that the research community has

much to learn and explore in terms of trafficking victims (Dennis, 2008; Menaker &

Franklin, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015).

Victim Blame and Human Trafficking

Victimology hinges on the attribution of blame toward victims (Menaker &

Franklin, 2015). This concept is important to understand, as the negative outcomes of

blame on victims can be detrimental to the victim's mental and physical health (Menaker

& Franklin, 2015). With victim blame, perceptions of the victim reflect cultural and

societal attitudes about gender, sexuality, and gender stereotypes (Cunningham &

Cromer, 2016).

Menaker and Franklin (2015) found that there were few studies and little research

surrounding the perceptions of human trafficking victims and victim blame and suggested

that a study involving the general public and individuals, who were likely to encounter

human trafficking victims, may not have the necessary information and education to

identify victims. They suggest that perceptions of blame influence decision making and

behaviors in many different situations. The primary purpose of their quantitative analysis

was to examine the blame associated with female victims. The independent variable in

the study was gendered violence vignettes, and the dependent variables were culpability

attributions, social service response recommendations, and funding for victim services.

The study noted that those who were involved with sex trafficking and were female had

more blame attributed to them in regard to the situation they were in. The authors'

research documented that there is significantly less research on intimate partner violence

and even less on trafficking victims and the perceptions of blame toward them by society.

It was also noted that there is a lack of research surrounding male victims and transgender individuals. This limited knowledge encompasses the perceptions of the victims and victim blame as it pertains to their situation. The knowledge deficit around blame and stigma experienced by this population also precludes the victim's willingness to seek assistance, limiting their ability to reintegrate into society and leave the trafficking situation safely (Menaker & Franklin, 2015).

Cunningham and Cromer (2016) studied the attribution of blame to the victims of gendered violence, intimate partner violence, and trafficking situations. It was noted that no empirical research had been completed at that time surrounding the public's attitudes toward human trafficking. The focus was on the participant's sexual trauma history and their response to a vignette about human trafficking and the believability of the trafficking situation (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). The participants were undergraduates of a private university and completed a demographic questionnaire. The vignettes portrayed a gender-neutral name, and the participants rated two statements on the believability of the situation and the extent of blame associated with the victim.

A MANOVA with gender as a two-level independent variable (male and female) and the scores of beliefs, victim blame, and human trafficking myth acceptance as the three dependent variables was conducted in the study (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). The authors noted that there were limitations surrounding the participants, who were limited to undergraduate students at a particular university, and as such, the generalizability of the study was limited. It was found that further research was needed surrounding the public's attitudes about human trafficking (Cunningham & Cromer,

2016). Results noted that the acceptance of human trafficking myths had a significant influence on belief and victim blame. It was further noted that human trafficking myths were less believable in the vignette scenario and increased blame on the victim. Men were less believing of the situation, more inclined to blame the victim, and more accepting of the trafficking myths than the women who participated (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

Gender roles play a larger part in the human trafficking realm, as the roles provide more stereotypical behaviors for the victims and defines who has been considered a victim in previous trafficking studies (Schwarz & Britton, 2015). In previous research, the most concerning issue surrounding trafficking and gender was the complete exclusion of male and transgender victims (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Digidek & Baka, 2020; Hebert, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015). The additional variable of victim blame explores the relationship between trafficking victims, their genders, and how much assumption is credited in the believability that the victims differ from stereotypical norms (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Digidek & Baka, 2020). This review supports the study regarding the identification of these underrepresented victims and shifts the focus to the impact gender can have in identification of a victim and how situational blame may be applied to the victim, furthering the difficulty in identifying these victims.

Summary and Conclusion

Human trafficking is not a new phenomenon; however, it is one in which slow progress has been made in identifying and aiding the victims involved (Menaker & Franklin, 2015). Based on the literature, much of the research surrounding human

trafficking focused solely on females and children who are victims of trafficking while excluding other populations (Schwarz & Britton, 2015). Most policies or services are adapted for females and children based on this research and continue to exclude those victims that do not fit this assumption (Schwarz & Britton, 2015).

There is extensive knowledge of human trafficking, as it pertains to females, that is changing the discussion around providing services and identifying victims; however, there is still a lack of knowledge about society's view of human trafficking victims who do not fit the normative description, such as male or transgender victims, and about the ability to identify these victims, as they are blamed for their trafficking situations (Babu et al., 2022; Ortega et al., 2022). There has been little research encompassing male and LGBTQIA+ trafficking victims, specifically transgender victims, and there is even less literature regarding why these victims have been excluded.

The current study examined the impact of gender and victim blame on the identification of human trafficking victims. It sought to identify how the perception of gender affects the identification of LGBTQIA+ human trafficking victims, how the perception of gender roles affects the identification of male human trafficking victims, and, finally, how victim blaming affects the identification of human trafficking victims. The study filled the gap in literature surrounding the impact of gender and victim blame as they pertain to the identification of human trafficking victims. The current literature has little information on genders, other than female. There is also little research examining the relationship between victim blame, gender, and human trafficking situations. This knowledge will continue to further benefit this discipline, as it works to

identify victims of trafficking in a quicker and more inclusive manner by understanding that victims of human trafficking can be anyone regardless of gender.

Chapter 3 includes a more in-depth explanation of the methods and methodology associated with the independent and dependent variables for the study. The chapter focuses on the hypothesis surrounding the impact of gender and victim blame on male and transgender human trafficking victims, which is the basis of this study. Chapter 3 provides the data collection method and expands upon the generalizability of the study. It also focuses on the methodology of the study and instruments used, including the need and use of a pilot study and the pilot study design. The chapter provides the population, sampling, and research design for the study and discusses the procedures for recruitment as well as the quantitative design approach. It furthermore explains the pilot study, the Modified Victim Blaming Measure, and the vignettes used to obtain data for analysis. The chapter also includes the data analysis plan, any threats to validity, and ethical procedures related to the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Human trafficking has been a topic of discussion throughout history (Babu et al., 2022). Despite efforts to combat human trafficking, it is still a global industry that continues to grow and adapt (Babu et al., 2022). This cross-sectional quantitative study determined the impact of victim blame and gender on the identification of human trafficking victims, specifically male and transgender victims.

Chapter 3 examines the research design, rationale, and methodology. Further discussed within the chapter are the population, sampling procedure, sampling frame and strategy, and power analysis used to determine the sample size. The chapter also addresses the threats to validity and ethical procedures, covering the privacy, confidentiality, and risks associated with the research and its design.

Research Design and Rationale

The study was a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design. Quantitative research uses empirical and deductive reasoning to examine the findings of the study and determine the influence, if any, observed between the variables (Creswell, 2013). The cross-sectional design was the most appropriate as it allowed for the observation of the sample at a specific point in time and made inferences based on the data received (Creswell,2013).

Through the research design, I furthered the knowledge of the factors that may impact a trafficking victim's ability to be identified. The research design was appropriate as previous research had focused on a similar manner with female victims to further

understand the barriers that inhibit their identification; however, little research had been applied to male and transgender victims. This was further compounded as there had not been any research completed that focused solely on the factors of gender as it applied to human trafficking and victim blame associated with the victim. The study focused on the relationship between gender and the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims. It further focused on how the victim's situation impacted the blame attributed to them, as the victims presented are in a labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or a nontrafficking situation.

The first independent variable was the trafficking situation at three levels, defined as: (a) labor trafficking or the exploitation of people who are recent immigrants, are undocumented individuals, or have limited English proficiency; (b) sex trafficking, defined as sexual exploitation using coercion, force, or lack of consent; and (c) a nontrafficking situation. The second independent variable was gender at three levels: (a) female, (b) male, and (c) transgender. The dependent variables were the human trafficking identification and victim blame.

The objective of the study was to determine how gender roles and victim blaming can affect the identification of human trafficking victims and if these components play a part in the misidentification or exclusion of the trafficked victims. Through the literature review in Chapter 2, it was determined that previous studies have focused on qualitative designs or meta-analyses to provide research surrounding human trafficking victims. Only a few studies had used a quantitative approach regarding human trafficking data, such as the study by Cunningham and Cromer (2016), who used a survey to determine

the attitudes toward human trafficking victims in terms of sexual trauma, human trafficking myths, and victim blame. There was little data surrounding male and transgender victims and the factors that influence their ability to be identified (Digidek & Baka, 2020).

There were perceived resource and time constraints associated with the research design. The first was that the Victim Blaming Measure was being modified from its original format to meet the needs of the study design, and the second was that a pilot study was required to determine the feasibility of the Modified Victim Blaming Measure. These both impacted the time needed to complete the study and required additional resources to ensure its validity.

Methodology

Population

The population defined for the study included all individuals of the community/society that were over the age of 18 and individuals who did not identify as human trafficking victims. The study's estimated population size was approximately 275,000,000 individuals (U.S Census Bureau, 2019). I chose this age group as it spanned across different generations and various beliefs formed, surrounding victims through the individuals' life experiences (Digidek & Baka, 2020). Participants of the pilot study were sought within this same defined parameter to ensure that generalizability was observed, and validity was maintained.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

In the study, convenience sampling was used to obtain a sample for the data collection. The use of this sampling procedure allowed me to obtain the suggested sample size through convenience to recruit participants for the study (Lavrakas, 2008). The criterion for inclusion included participants that over 18 years of age and those that were not victims of human trafficking. If the participants identified as trafficking victims, they were excluded from the study. The sample was obtained through social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram) and used the convenience or snowball method to obtain additional participants (Creswell, 2013).

To determine the correct sample size for the acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis, a G*Power analysis was completed. *A priori* power analysis was the most preferred, as it specified the desired effect size, the alpha level, and the desired power level (Erdfelder et al., 1996). In the study, a medium effect size of 0.15 was selected because of the study's design and variables. Cohen (1992) suggests that an alpha level of .05 was considered an acceptable level of risk, and a power level of .80 was also accepted. Using this information, the suggested sample size for this size of population was 385 individuals for the study. The pilot study used 20 individuals, five during the first phase and 15 during the second phase. The pilot study sample was used to determine if the questions and the vignette were easy to understand (Moore et al., 2011). The establishment of reliability and validity are further discussed in the Pilot Study section.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The participants were any individuals over 18 years of age, who had not experienced human trafficking. There were no other parameters that limited the participants besides the age range and if the participants identified as human trafficking victims. Recruitment of participants was done through social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram). I posted the target population, purpose of the study, and survey link among individuals on my Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram accounts and ask that friends and family pass along the link. This approach to recruiting participants was called snowballing and used participants to help recruit additional participants (Whitaker et al., 2017). Specific demographics were obtained, including the age, race, and location of the participants. Participants who completed the study survey and vignettes were also asked to forward the link to their friends and family. When participants completed the informed consent, two questions were asked to determine if they are over the age of 18 and if they had been a victim of human trafficking. If the individual identified themselves as being under 18, they were excluded, as they belong to a vulnerable population (Shivayogi, 2013). If the individual identified themselves as someone who has been previously trafficked, they were also excluded, as they also belong to a vulnerable population (Shivayogi, 2013).

The participants entered the study using a hyperlink that provided further information about the study, what will be discussed in the survey, and the link to complete the survey. The survey was completed using Survey Monkey, which allowed me to ensure that no identifiable information was collected. Survey Monkey also

provided the capacity to delete names and assign a participant number to the response that was provided (Pearson, 2009). SurveyMonkey maintains its security by meeting International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification and uses encryption for the survey connection (Pearson, 2009).

Informed consent and confidentiality were the first page that the participants saw when accessing the study (Appendix B). There was also an additional question asking if they have been victims of human trafficking and if they were over the age of 18. If they selected that they had been a victim, they were excluded from the study upon the completion of the consent form and free resources were provided to them through a link at the end of the informed consent form. The link included the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) referral line, which has live individuals available by phone who can locate services and identify individuals and providers with services in the victims' area (U.S Department of Health and Human Service, n.d.). This referral line is free and can help individuals connect to local mental health services. The referral line provides the individuals with information about free mental health services available in their area and is staffed by individuals who are multilingual, to help with any language barriers (U.S Department of Health and Human Service, n.d.).

The participants were encouraged to keep a copy of the informed consent form, as it included my information and a Walden University representative's information. The study used nine vignettes that represented male, female, and transgender victims in a sex trafficking situation, labor trafficking situation, or non-trafficking situation. The

participants read each vignette and answered the Modified Victim Blaming Measure

questions and a final trafficking identification question. The nine vignettes and Victim

Blaming Measure are supplied in Appendix F. When the participants completed the

questions, they were thanked for their participation and exited the survey.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted as the Modified Victim Blaming Measure had not

been used in previous research with the modified questions and the nine vignettes and the

new measure needed to be validated. The pilot study was utilized to determine the

internal validity of the items and materials to ensure that construct validity was achieved.

The materials used included the Modified Victim Blaming Measure. The vignettes of the

measure were modified from real-life examples to fit the human trafficking situation and

the gender. These situations were reviewed by human trafficking experts to ensure that

information was thoroughly provided, and the situation was believable. The vignettes and

the Modified Victim Blaming Measure are located in Appendix F.

The pilot study was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, five

individuals read the vignettes, that were developed alongside human trafficking victim

specialist experts, completed the questions from the Modified Victim Blaming Measure,

and completed the additional questions identifying whether they thought the situation was

a trafficking situation. The five individuals consisted of two individuals who are

knowledgeable about trafficking and three individuals who are not familiar with or

knowledgeable about trafficking. The two knowledgeable individuals were obtained

through my personal connections. The three other individuals were sought from my

community. All individuals completed the informed consent process and were aware of the commitments to the pilot study. The Walden Institutional Review Board approved the pilot study prior to it being completed.

The second phase was completed in the same way; however, it consisted of 15 individuals obtained through other social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram). The 15 individuals were provided with the vignettes, and they completed the Modified Victim Blaming Measure and the identification question. The data collected during the pilot study was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to determine the feasibility of the instrument. This step also helped with the internal and external validity during the study (Creswell, 2013). After this step was completed, the study used additional feedback in another survey to determine if participants understood the questions and if the vignettes were easy to read. The additional survey had three questions: one rating the clarity of the questions, one rating the clarity of the vignettes, and one asking for open feedback about the pilot study (Appendix B). Both the pilot study and the present study used the Modified Victim Blaming Measure with gender-based trafficking scenarios representing potential human trafficking victims.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

The original Victim Blaming Measure uses vignettes depicting a trafficking situation and a victim. It is a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) (van Prooijen & van den Bos, 2009). The original questions asked by the measure include:

- "I believe that what happened to (enter victim's name) was caused by her/his/their own behavior."

- "I believe that (enter victim's name) is responsible for what happened to her/him/them."

- "I think that (enter victim's name) deserved what happened to her/him/them."

- "I think (enter victim's name) has been careless."

The original Victim Blaming Measure was published in 2009 by Jan-Willem van Prooijen and Kees van den Bos (2009), located in Appendix C. The original Victim Blaming Measure uses a scenario to determine a person's tendency to blame innocent victims for their own fate. The Victim Blaming Measure aligns with the just-world theory, which suggests that individuals will blame the victim based on the victim's actions and not the crime (van Prooijen & van den Bos, 2009). The original Victim Blame Measure has alphas ranging from .67 to .92, indicating reliability, and the measure demonstrated convergent validity during the initial study. The original Victim Blaming Measure has previously been used in conjunction with female human trafficking victims in several studies (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). The original Victim Blaming Measure has also been used in studies surrounding sexual assault, rape victims, and perpetrator blame (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Sleath & Bull, 2010). The original Victim Blaming Measure has not been used when working with male and transgender victims, and as such, the vignettes and the questions were modified to reflect this population. I received permission from Jan-Willem van Prooijen to modify the Original Victim Blaming Measure, the permission to modify the measure is located in Appendix A.

The Modified Victim Blaming Measure (Hanna, 2021) used nine vignettes: three sex trafficking vignettes, three labor trafficking vignettes, and three non-trafficking vignettes (Appendix F). Each section of vignettes had victims identified as male, female, and transgender. It used a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The questions asked by the measure include:

- "I believe that what happened to (enter victim's name) was caused by her/his/their own behavior."

- "I believe that (enter victim's name) is responsible for what happened to her/him/them."

- "I think that (enter victim's name) deserved what happened to them."

- "I think (enter victim's name) has been careless."

- "Do you think that the individual in the vignette is in a human trafficking situation?"

- "Do you think that this situation could happen in real life?"

The measure was appropriate as it pertained to the current study and focused directly on the blame attributed to the individual in the trafficking situation presented through the vignettes. The study used this measure to examine the blame attributed to the victim because of the individual participant's bias, thoughts, and experiences based on gender and human trafficking situation. The current literature did not provide an instrument that would sufficiently measure all of the specific variables for the study; however, the original Victim Blaming Measure was identified that will provide a basis for the development of the Modified Victim Blaming Measure (Appendix D).

Operationalization

As the literature review did not identify a comprehensive measure that encompassed all of the needed variables, the variables were selected from multiple studies and their identified variables that support the study. The operationalization of these variables is detailed below:

Gender: defined as female, male, or transgender individuals (Barron & Frost, 2018; Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Identification of the trafficking victim: defined as the ability to recognize a trafficking situation that is presented to the participant and is measured as whether the participant believes that the victim presented in the vignette is a human trafficking victim (Schwarz et al., 2016).

Labor trafficking: defined by work exploitation of recent immigrants, undocumented individuals, or those who have limited English proficiency (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Sex trafficking: defined as sex exploitation using coercion, force, or lack of consent (Jones & Kingshott, 2016).

Victim blame: defined as blame attributed to the perceived victim (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

All variables were nominal (categorical) or ordinal levels of measurement which will provide a strong quantitative study (Enders, 2003). The variables that were measured had previously been measured in past studies but not used together when focusing on

human trafficking victims (Enders, 2003). The independent variables were measured as categorical data, while the dependent variables were based on a Likert scale.

Data Analysis Plan

The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A statistical analysis and description of the demographic variables was completed to provide a description of the sample. The participants of the study were screened through two simple questions, if they are 18 or older, and if they have been a victim of human trafficking. To proceed, the participants selected that, yes, they were over 18 years of age, and they had not been a victim of human trafficking. All questions in the survey were answered and in the instance that incomplete surveys were captured, the data was filtered to only include completed survey responses. This eliminated any missing data or incomplete responses and cleaned the data to be analyzed. Outliers were also identified by sorting the dataset to identify any unusual data points. Outliers were filtered out as well to ensure that the dataset is accurate and represents the sample (Enders, 2003).

Research Question 1: Does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 2: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

Research Question 3: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 4: Does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

A MANOVA and an ANOVA was used, as they helped to determine the interaction between the dependent and independent variables. A MANOVA can help to detect effects an ANOVA might miss as a MANOVA focuses on multivariate relationships and not univariate relationships, and it also helps to eliminate the possibility

of a Type 1 error if only ANOVAs were completed instead (Enders, 2003). A two-way

MANOVA was suggested to be used when there are multiple dependent variables and

when a pilot study has been completed to understand the relationships between the

variables (Enders, 2003). The two-way MANOVA was best used to understand the

interaction effect of the variables in the study (Enders, 2003). A 95% confidence interval

was used when analyzing the data, with a p value of P ≤.05.

There are several assumptions that were met for the MANOVA to be used. The

study had two or more dependent variables measured as continuous variables and it had

two or more independent variables measured as categorical variables. The dependent

variables were linearly related and did not have multicollinearity. If the correlations were

low, separate one way or two-way ANOVAs were used (Enders, 2003). One-way

ANOVAs were used if the correlations were low. There were no univariate or

multivariate outliers present, and the data had multivariate normality. In the event the

data did not meet these assumptions, a Box-Cox transformation was used to help to

address the normality (Enders, 2003).

Threats to Validity

A possible threat to internal validity would have centered around participants

dropping out of the study (attrition) and potential bias from the researcher when

collecting additional participants (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). This threat to validity can be

mitigated by providing a brief explanation of the study before the participants'

involvement and by keeping the survey brief (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Another threat to

internal validity could have been the instrumentation or the changes that were made to the Victim Blaming Measure that was used.

A possible threat to external validity could have been sampling bias, as the study used convenience sampling, which was based on the researcher's ability to obtain participants for the study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). This could have been a threat to the study's validity as I may not have been able to recruit the necessary individuals and would need to use a more convenient way to obtain the participants outside of the avenues mentioned (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). This would include the threat of selection bias, as convenience sampling was used for this study to obtain a sample (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). This could have also altered the generalizability of the study if the sample size was not a broad or a complete enough representation of the population. The lack of generalizability of the study occurs when the study results would not be useful for a broader group of people (Patino & Ferreira, 2018).

An additional threat to external validity could have been the participants responses and reactivity to the study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Specifically, the focus of the study was on human trafficking victims and as such, the participants could have assumed the vignettes are all trafficking related and identified them as such. One strategy to mitigate this during the pilot study, was to have the vignettes reviewed by a human trafficking subject matter expert to ensure that they were understandable and relevant. The participants may have also allowed other factors such as media or current events to influence their answers to the survey questions.

Other potential bias to consider included preexisting bias involving gender and human trafficking victims. There was little to mitigate this bias, however by sorting the data for outliers, this helped to identify inaccurate data. The participants could have also not viewed the vignettes as valid as a result of their own experiences and perceptions.

Construct validity was also considered for the study. Construct validity is determined experimentally to demonstrate that the survey used relates to the theoretical concepts. Construct validity was ensured through the pilot study that was conducted. An assessment of construct validity can be performed during the pilot study to ensure that the constructs and the measure provide the intended results (Rahim et al, 2018). First, I provided the questionnaire items to the five pilot study participants, the participants then completed the first stage of the pilot study. The data was collected from these five individuals and analyzed, and they then provided feedback regarding the vignettes and the questionnaire. If adjustments were needed for the vignettes or the questions, they were made prior to the second stage of the pilot study. The second stage provided 15 participants with the vignettes and questionnaire. They completed the questionnaire, and the data was again analyzed to ensure that construct validity has been obtained.

Ethical Procedures

The purpose of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to evaluate collection procedures to ensure that participants are exposed to minimal risk and that human subject research's ethical principles are met (Walden University, n.d.). The IRB requires the description of data sources and partner sites to be completed when the proposal is under review by the University Research Review (URR) process. IRB approval was required

prior to recruitment. IRB approval was received and the approval number was 07-26-2022-0726954. Recruitment was completed using the previously mentioned methods: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. The information provided to the potential participants was in an easily understandable format that was free of misleading information about the study. Privacy and confidentiality were explained to the participants as well, to ensure they understood the privacy expectations (Walden University, n.d.). There was not any undue pressure regarding the completion of the informed consent, and furthermore, there was not any undue pressure once the participants agreed to participate. The participants were able to withdraw from the study at any point (Walden University, n.d.). If a participant chose to withdraw from the study, they had access to resources and services upon their exit. The SAMHSA referral line was recommended for services, as it has live individuals available by phone who can locate services and place participants in contact with services in their area (U.S Department of Health and Human Service, n.d.). This referral line is free and can help individuals connect to local mental health services. The referral line is also staffed by multilingual individuals to help with any language barriers that may occur (U.S Department of Health and Human Service, n.d.).

The data was captured through SurveyMonkey, and the responses were kept confidential, as there were no identifying factors such as name or location that could potentially identify the participants. SurveyMonkey allowed me to turn off the tracking of IP addresses and any other identifying information (Pearson, 2009). Confidentiality was also maintained through this process as well. I am the only one who had access to the

completed surveys, and they were password protected using a password I developed. SurveyMonkey is ISO certified and uses encryptions for all of its survey connections to ensure the data is protected and not accessible by anyone other than myself (Pearson, 2009).

Furthermore, my committee members and I were the only individuals with access to the survey data, and once the data had been exported, it was kept on an encrypted USB drive. The data was transmitted to me through HTTP encryption and provided in a downloadable format directly to my computer (Pearson, 2009). The participant responses and participant data were anonymous and de-identified, as the only identifying information captured was the participant's age, gender, and race. The data will be kept in a password-protected file on an encrypted USB drive in a lockbox for five years after the study and then the USB device will be destroyed. Records will be kept on when the device was destroyed, what the device held, and how I destroyed the device.

Summary

Chapter 3 covered the population, methodology, measures, the data analysis plan, threats to validity, and the ethical procedures. The study design was a quantitative cross-sectional that allowed for inferences to be made at a specific point in time regarding the responses of the participants. The study focused on the relationship between gender and human trafficking and the relationship between victim blame and human trafficking. The participants encompassed any individuals over 18 years of age and excluded individuals under the age of 18 and individuals who identify as previously trafficked victims. The independent variables were the trafficking situation and gender, and the dependent

variables were human trafficking identification and the victim blame attributed to the victim.

A pilot study was used to validate the additional questions and ensured that the questions meet the expectations for the data. Use of a pilot ensured the study was feasible and helped maintain validity. The measure that the study used was the Modified Victim Blaming Measure (Appendix D). The data was collected using Survey Monkey and was analyzed by SPSS using MANOVAs and an ANOVA and to examine the interaction effects of the variables. Chapter 4 provides the research questions, data collection, and time frame for data collection. It also includes the results of the data collection and the statistical outcomes of the data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

While human trafficking continues to be discussed on national news and throughout the world, the limited research on male and transgender victims continues to be a challenge (Babu et al., 2022). The purpose of the research was to determine the impact of gender and victim blame on the identification of human trafficking victims. The knowledge gained from the study helps to inform researchers of the continued plight in identifying human trafficking victims and the other factors that can inhibit the identification.

Overall, the study sought to understand four research questions and the hypotheses presented:

Research Question 1: Does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 2: Does the trafficking situation effect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

Research Question 3: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 4: Does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

In Chapter 4, the pilot study completion and findings are presented in depth. Information regarding the specifics of the data collection including time frame, baseline demographics, external validity are included. Further detail on the results, statistical assumptions, and the statistical findings for each research question are also provided.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted as the Modified Victim Blaming Measure had not been used in previous research with the modified questions and the nine vignettes. The Walden Institutional Review Board approved the pilot study prior to it being completed.

The pilot study utilized the Modified Victim Blaming Measure, a questionnaire consisting of six questions that were associated with individual vignettes. The measure was based off the original validated Victim Blaming Measure by Jan-Willem van Prooijen and Kees van den Bos (2009). Survey Monkey was used to disseminate the questionnaire for data collection for the pilot study as discussed in Chapter 3. An initial run of the pilot study was completed to ensure that the information and questions were accurate and sought the correct information. The initial run of the pilot study provided some minor alterations to the questions and the layout of the study questions. These minor changes were surrounding grammar and flow of the measure. The grammatical changes improved the readers ability to read the vignettes and did not change the composition of the measure. The pilot study was then completed in two phases. Participants from the study were sought through personal connections and randomly through social media. Five participants were sought for the first phase of the pilot study and fifteen participants were sought for the second stage of the pilot study.

During the first phase, five individuals read the vignettes and completed the questions from the Modified Victim Blaming Measure. The vignettes included individuals who were identified as female, male, and transgender and included situations that were identified as sex trafficking, labor trafficking, or non-trafficking. The five individuals consisted of two individuals who were knowledgeable about trafficking and three individuals who are not familiar with or knowledgeable about trafficking. All individuals completed the informed consent process and were aware of the commitments to the pilot study prior to the completion of the study. The second phase consisted of

fifteen individuals who were of the general population and were not experts of human trafficking. These individuals were sought through social media. Both phases took approximately 1 month total to obtain complete responses and had a 96% response rate. Specific demographics were obtained in the pilot study, including the age, gender, race, and location of the participants. Demographics of the participants for the pilot study were gathered, 55% (N=11) of participants identified as female and 45% (N=9) participants identified as males.

Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. For the pilot study, Cronbach's alpha was .905 for the victim blaming measures indicating a high level of internal consistency for our scale.

Content validity was determined with the Modified Victim Blaming Measure through the measure being reviewed by experts in human trafficking, these individuals each have over 15 years' experience in identifying and providing services to human trafficking victims. The experts read the scenarios to ensure that they accurately represented the intended situations. The experts also reviewed the questions to ensure that what was intended to be measured matched the questions asked by the survey. The measure was then used in the first phase with two individuals who were knowledgeable of human trafficking and three individuals who were not knowledgeable with human trafficking. The scenarios underwent minimal reformatting to provide language that was easily understandable to the average person.

Construct validity was established using the pilot study in two phases. The scenarios were built representing trafficking and non-trafficking scenarios with specified

genders to each of the scenarios. This ensured that the Victim Blaming Measure measured victim blame associated with the scenarios written.

Threats to external validity were minimized as the vignettes used were reviewed and developed alongside human trafficking experts to ensure they represented real situations (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). The snowball effect was utilized to gather the participants needed for the study.

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze the pilot study data in regard to the research questions initially posited. Results were considered statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Research Question 1: Does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Table 1

Pilot Study: MANOVA-Gender and Victim Blame

Multivariate Tests

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.907	338.840[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.907
	Wilks' Lambda	.093	338.840[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.907
	Hotelling's Trace	9.793	338.840[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.907
	Roy's Largest Root	9.793	338.840[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.907
Gender1	Pillai's Trace	.128	2.380	10.000	348.000	.010	.064
	Wilks' Lambda	.874	2.419[b]	10.000	346.000	.009	.065
	Hotelling's Trace	.143	2.457	10.000	344.000	.008	.067
	Roy's Largest Root	.129	4.473[c]	5.000	174.000	<.001	.114

In regard to research question 1, the analysis indicated that Wilk's Lambda for gender and victim blame showed a .009 significance suggesting that for the pilot study victim blame was significantly dependent on gender. Analyzing the tests of between-subjects effects, it was observed that the significance between gender and the careless variable of victim blame was statistically significant.

With research question 2 and research question 3, a one-way MANOVA was completed again to determine the effect the trafficking situation has on victim blame as it specifies to male and transgender victims.

Research Question 2: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

Research Question 3: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

Table 2

Pilot Study: MANOVA-Trafficking and Victim Blame

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.945	598.495[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.945
	Wilks' Lambda	.055	598.495[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.945
	Hotelling's Trace	17.298	598.495[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.945
	Roy's Largest Root	17.298	598.495[b]	5.000	173.000	<.001	.945
Trafficking1	Pillai's Trace	.576	14.071	10.000	348.000	<.001	.288
	Wilks' Lambda	.495	14.556[b]	10.000	346.000	<.001	.296
	Hotelling's Trace	.874	15.041	10.000	344.000	<.001	.304
	Roy's Largest Root	.655	22.780[c]	5.000	174.000	<.001	.396

Through the analysis, it was determined that the victim blame attributed was statistically significant in regard to the trafficking situation. Wilks' Lambda indicated a .001 significance for the trafficking situation and the victim blame variables. This indicates that victim blame was significantly dependent on the trafficking situation.

The final research question focused on the effect gender has on the identification of the trafficking situation specifically for male and transgender victims.

Research Question 4: Does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

*H*₁: The victim's gender does have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Table 3
Pilot Study: ANOVA-Gender and Trafficking Identification

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.233	2	4.117	1.407	.248
Within Groups	517.767	177	2.925		
Total	526.000	179			

The analysis indicated that for the research question, the gender was not statistically significant for the trafficking identification for the male and transgender victims. Identification was not dependent on gender of the victim with a significance of .248, indicating that the victim's gender did not affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender victims.

Findings from the pilot study indicate that the Modified Victim Blaming Measure is both reliable and valid and provides a structure for the study. The findings from the pilot also indicate that a larger sample size is needed to have a better understanding of the effects of the independent variables and the dependent variables. No additional changes were needed for the measure or the data analysis strategies.

Data Collection

The data collection was completed over the course of 3 months and gathered responses from individuals over the age of 18 years, who did not identify as human trafficking victims. Participants were gathered from social media (Facebook, LinkedIn,

and Instagram). Snowball sampling was used to gain additional responses from contacts of the participants or through anyone that interacted with the shared social media posts. There was a 73% completion rate among the participants and the survey took an average of 12 minutes to complete the survey. The suggested sample size for this size of population was 385 individuals for the study and 568 responses were gathered. Of the initial responses, 9.8% (N=56) of respondents identified as being victims of human trafficking and were removed from the study. Missing data was removed from the dataset to allow for the data analysis to be completed, 62 additional responses were eliminated as they were missing various question responses or were incomplete. The survey questions did not allow for multiple answers to questions, which helped to mitigate any additional errors in the study. As a result, 450 individuals completed the study, and their responses were used for the analysis.

Individuals were provided with a brief description of the survey and information on how to access the survey. Once individuals selected the link to Survey Monkey, they were provided with the informed consent page, which explained the requirements of the study as outlined in chapter 3. If they wished to continue, they selected yes and moved forward to the two screening questions. The first question asked if they were over the age of 18 and the second question asked if they had been a victim of human trafficking.

The vignettes used, as noted in the pilot study, were reviewed and developed alongside human trafficking experts minimizing the threat to external validity (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Snowball sampling was utilized to gather the participants needed for the study and ensure generalizability to the larger population. The participants in this study

were any individual over the age of 18, who did not identify as a human trafficking victim. A final *N* of 450 was obtained for the study. Participants were mostly male, ages 25-34, and had completed an associate degree in education. Participants were randomly selected through snowball and convenience sampling, as discussed in Chapter 4, with the use of social media to identify participants. A full report of the demographics is explained below in the results section.

Results

Demographics were gathered from all participants. 38.4% (N=173) identified as female, 47.3% (N=213) identified as male, and 14.2% (N=64) identified as transgender. Participant ages ranged from 18-65+ with the largest group being 25-34 at 31.1% of participants (N=140). Location was also identified from the participants and placed into rural, suburban, and urban categories. Education was also collected from the participants; 22.7% (N=102) selected that they had received an Associate degree, 27.3% (N=123) selected that they had received a Bachelor degree, 20% (N=90) selected that they had received a Graduate degree, 13.1% (N=59) selected that they had received a high school degree, and 16.9% (N=76) selected that they had received some college but no degree.

There were several assumptions that were discussed in Chapter 1 that needed to be accounted for during the study. The first assumption was that the participants would assume that all the victims within the study would be victims of human trafficking. The assumption was accounted for though the use of different scenarios built into the measure as 3 of the scenarios were non-trafficking situations.

Regarding the statistical analysis, there were several data assumption that I needed to be cognizant about for the MANOVA. The first was that the data was normally distributed, and that the variance was approximately equal (Creswell, 2013). The next assumption was that the variables were measured as intended, continuous and categorical. The final assumption for the MANOVA was that the relationship between the dependent and independent variable was linear. The ANOVAs completed had similar assumptions as well that were ensured. Assumptions for an ANOVA included that there would not be any univariate or multivariate outliers and the data must have morality. If normality was not met, a Box-Cox transformation would be used to address the normality.

For the statistical analysis, MANOVAs and ANOVAs were used to determine the interaction between the dependent and the independent variables. Results were considered statistically significant at $p<0.05$. The results for each of the research questions are below.

Research Question 1: Does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Table 4

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.838	5210.786[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.838
	Wilks' Lambda	.162	5210.786[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.838
	Hotelling's Trace	5.154	5210.786[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.838
	Roy's Largest Root	5.154	5210.786[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.838
Gender1	Pillai's Trace	.034	17.528	8.000	8090.000	<.001	.017
	Wilks' Lambda	.966	17.632[b]	8.000	8088.000	<.001	.017
	Hotelling's Trace	.035	17.735	8.000	8086.000	<.001	.017
	Roy's Largest Root	.032	32.642[c]	4.000	4045.000	<.001	.031

MANOVA- Gender and Victim Blame

Regarding research question 1, the analysis showed that Wilks' Lambda for gender (male and transgender) and victim blame showed a .001 significance suggesting that the interaction of victim blame, and gender (male and transgender) was statistically significant, $F_{(8,8088)} = 17.632$, $p < .005$; Wilks'$\Lambda = .966$, partial $\eta^2 = .017$.

Table 5

Between Subjects-Gender and Victim Blame

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Behavior	48.040[a]	2	24.020	7.083	<.001	.003
	Responsible	33.880[b]	2	16.940	5.145	.006	.003
	Deserved	118.920[c]	2	59.460	23.849	<.001	.012
	Careless	19.240[d]	2	9.620	3.278	.038	.002
Intercept	Behavior	46879.220	1	46879.220	13824.235	.000	.774
	Responsible	47678.720	1	47678.720	14480.299	.000	.782
	Deserved	25719.120	1	25719.120	10315.728	.000	.718
	Careless	59168.000	1	59168.000	20161.466	.000	.833
Gender1	Behavior	48.040	2	24.020	7.083	<.001	.003
	Responsible	33.880	2	16.940	5.145	.006	.003
	Deserved	118.920	2	59.460	23.849	<.001	.012
	Careless	19.240	2	9.620	3.278	.038	.002
Error	Behavior	13723.740	4047	3.391			
	Responsible	13325.400	4047	3.293			
	Deserved	10089.960	4047	2.493			
	Careless	11876.760	4047	2.935			
Total	Behavior	60651.000	4050				
	Responsible	61038.000	4050				
	Deserved	35928.000	4050				
	Careless	71064.000	4050				
Corrected Total	Behavior	13771.780	4049				
	Responsible	13359.280	4049				
	Deserved	10208.880	4049				
	Careless	11896.000	4049				

The Between-Subjects Effects showed that gender and the behavior and deserved variables of victim blame were statistically significant at .001, while responsible was .006 and careless was .038, both of which were also statistically significant. The analysis

indicated that we reject the null hypothesis and accept that the victim's gender does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Research Question 2: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims.

Research Question 3: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The trafficking situation does not have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The trafficking situation does have an effect on the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims.

Table 6

MANOVA-Trafficking and Victim Blame

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.867	6595.587[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.867
	Wilks' Lambda	.133	6595.587[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.867
	Hotelling's Trace	6.524	6595.587[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.867
	Roy's Largest Root	6.524	6595.587[b]	4.000	4044.000	.000	.867
Trafficking1	Pillai's Trace	.534	368.333	8.000	8090.000	.000	.267
	Wilks' Lambda	.529	379.413[b]	8.000	8088.000	.000	.273
	Hotelling's Trace	.773	390.577	8.000	8086.000	.000	.279
	Roy's Largest Root	.562	568.134[c]	4.000	4045.000	.000	.360

Through the analysis, it was determined that the victim blame attributed was statistically significant in regard to the trafficking situation. Wilks' Lambda indicated a .000 significance or $p < .001$ for the trafficking situation and the victim blame variables. A .000 significance occurs when SPSS rounds the output, and it is closer to .000 than to .001. This indicated that victim blame was significantly dependent on the trafficking situation.

Table 7

Between-Subjects Test-Trafficking and Victim Blame

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Behavior	4032.640[a]	2	2016.320	837.861	<.001	.293
	Responsible	3662.440[b]	2	1831.220	764.264	<.001	.274
	Deserved	2510.040[c]	2	1255.020	659.718	<.001	.246
	Careless	1900.120[d]	2	950.060	384.648	<.001	.160
Intercept	Behavior	46879.220	1	46879.220	19480.180	.000	.828
	Responsible	47678.720	1	47678.720	19898.831	.000	.831
	Deserved	25719.120	1	25719.120	13519.605	.000	.770
	Careless	59168.000	1	59168.000	23955.159	.000	.855
Trafficking1	Behavior	4032.640	2	2016.320	837.861	<.001	.293
	Responsible	3662.440	2	1831.220	764.264	<.001	.274
	Deserved	2510.040	2	1255.020	659.718	<.001	.246
	Careless	1900.120	2	950.060	384.648	<.001	.160
Total	Behavior	60651.000	4050				
	Responsible	61038.000	4050				
	Deserved	35928.000	4050				
	Careless	71064.000	4050				
Corrected Total	Behavior	13771.780	4049				
	Responsible	13359.280	4049				
	Deserved	10208.880	4049				
	Careless	11896.000	4049				

The Between-Subjects Effects indicated that all variables of victim blame were statistically significant in relation to the identification of human trafficking victims. These results indicated that the victim blame components of behavior, responsibility, deserving, and carelessness were all statistically significant when identifying human trafficking victims.

Research Question 4: Does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims?

H_0: The victim's gender does not have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

H_1: The victim's gender does have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Table 8

ANOVA-Gender and Trafficking Identification

ANOVA

Trafficking

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	80.680	2	40.340	12.362	<.001
Within Groups	13206.300	4047	3.263		
Total	13286.980	4049			

The final research question focused specifically on how gender effects the identification of male and transgender victims. An ANOVA was completed for the analysis and indicated that gender was statistically significant for the trafficking identification of male and transgender victims. The significance level of .001 indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected, and that gender does have an effect on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Post-hoc analyses were completed using the Tukey HSD test for the results of RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. Statistical significance was determined at the $p<0.05$.

Table 9

Post-Hoc Analysis- Gender and Victim Blame

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Gender1	(J) Gender1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Behavior	Female	Male	-.27*	.071	<.001	-.43	-.10
		Transgender	-.14	.071	.118	-.31	.03
	Male	Female	.27*	.071	<.001	.10	.43
		Transgender	.13	.071	.174	-.04	.29
	Transgender	Female	.14	.071	.118	-.03	.31
		Male	-.13	.071	.174	-.29	.04
Responsible	Female	Male	-.22*	.070	.005	-.38	-.06
		Transgender	-.07	.070	.545	-.24	.09
	Male	Female	.22*	.070	.005	.06	.38
		Transgender	.15	.070	.090	-.02	.31
	Transgender	Female	.07	.070	.545	-.09	.24
		Male	-.15	.070	.090	-.31	.02
Deserved	Female	Male	.11	.061	.149	-.03	.26
		Transgender	.41*	.061	<.001	.26	.55
	Male	Female	-.11	.061	.149	-.26	.03
		Transgender	.29*	.061	<.001	.15	.44
	Transgender	Female	-.41*	.061	<.001	-.55	-.26
		Male	-.29*	.061	<.001	-.44	-.15
Careless	Female	Male	-.16*	.066	.040	-.31	-.01
		Transgender	-.13	.066	.133	-.28	.03
	Male	Female	.16*	.066	.040	.01	.31
		Transgender	.03	.066	.869	-.12	.19
	Transgender	Female	.13	.066	.133	-.03	.28
		Male	-.03	.066	.869	-.19	.12

The analysis for gender and victim blame indicated that the female and male group affected all of the victim blame variables at .05 or lower. The transgender group

was statistically significant in the victim blame variable of deserved and responsible. A Post-Hoc analysis was completed below for the trafficking situation and victim blame. The analysis for the trafficking situation and victim blame indicated that all gender groups affected victim blame significantly at $p<0.05$ or lower. The analysis provided that there was not a statistical significance with sex and labor trafficking affecting the victim blame variable of deserved.

Table 10

Post-Hoc Analysis- Trafficking and Victim Blame

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Trafficking1	(J) Trafficking1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Behavior	Labor	Non-Trafficking	-2.43*	.060	<.001	-2.57	-2.29
		Sex	-.96*	.060	<.001	-1.10	-.82
	Non-Trafficking	Labor	2.43*	.060	<.001	2.29	2.57
		Sex	1.47*	.060	<.001	1.33	1.61
	Sex	Labor	.96*	.060	<.001	.82	1.10
		Non-Trafficking	-1.47*	.060	<.001	-1.61	-1.33
Responsible	Labor	Non-Trafficking	-2.33*	.060	<.001	-2.47	-2.19
		Sex	-1.07*	.060	<.001	-1.21	-.93
	Non-Trafficking	Labor	2.33*	.060	<.001	2.19	2.47
		Sex	1.26*	.060	<.001	1.12	1.40
	Sex	Labor	1.07*	.060	<.001	.93	1.21
		Non-Trafficking	-1.26*	.060	<.001	-1.40	-1.12
Deserved	Labor	Non-Trafficking	-1.67*	.053	<.001	-1.79	-1.54
		Sex	.01	.053	.991	-.12	.13
	Non-Trafficking	Labor	1.67*	.053	<.001	1.54	1.79
		Sex	1.67*	.053	<.001	1.55	1.80
	Sex	Labor	-.01	.053	.991	-.13	.12
		Non-Trafficking	-1.67*	.053	<.001	-1.80	-1.55
Careless	Labor	Non-Trafficking	-1.54*	.060	<.001	-1.68	-1.40
		Sex	-1.35*	.060	<.001	-1.49	-1.20
	Non-Trafficking	Labor	1.54*	.060	<.001	1.40	1.68
		Sex	.19*	.060	.004	.05	.34
	Sex	Labor	1.35*	.060	<.001	1.20	1.49
		Non-Trafficking	-.19*	.060	.004	-.34	-.05

Summary

Chapter 4 covered the results of the pilot study, the data collection, and the results of the study. The results from the statistical analysis showed that for all four of the research questions initially provided, we should reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis indicating that gender and victim blame impact the identification of human trafficking victims. Further discussion on the interpretation of the findings, implications to future research and the recommendations are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Globally, human trafficking continues to be a problem for all agencies and individuals (Digidek & Baka, 2020). The purpose of the study was to understand the impact of gender and victim blame on the identification of human trafficking victims. As a result of the nature of human trafficking, there is a need to understand the factors that can impact trafficking victims in their identifications and impede their ability to exit their trafficking situation (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Digidek & Baka, 2020; Hebert, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015). The findings of the study extend the knowledge of understanding surrounding the public and their ability to identify human trafficking victims based on gender and the trafficking situation.

The quantitative study sought to examine the impact of gender and victim blame on the identification of human trafficking victims. The study sought to answer 4 research questions.

Research Question 1: Does the victim's gender affect the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims?

Research Question 2: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to male human trafficking victims?

Research Question 3: Does the trafficking situation affect the victim blame attributed to transgender human trafficking victims?

Research Question 4: Does the victim's gender affect the identification of a trafficking situation for male and transgender human trafficking victims?

A MANOVA was used for each of the first 3 research questions to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. An ANOVA was used for the final research question to determine the effect. Statistical significance was observed respectively for tests performed indicating that for each research question, the rejection of the null hypothesis was accurate. This provided that for each research question the independent variable did affect the dependent variable.

The key findings of this study revealed that gender impacted the identification of human trafficking victims for specifically male and transgender victims. It was further revealed that gender affected the victim blame attributed to the human trafficking victims. Trafficking situation also impacted the victim blame attributed to male and transgender victims. Within victim blame, there were 4 sub-variables that were observed within each of the scenarios. All 4 sub-variables were statistically significant during the analyses indicating that the behavior, responsibility, deserving, and careless aspects all impacted the victim blame.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of the study illustrated statistically significant relationships between gender and victim blame, the trafficking situation and victim blame, and gender and the identification of the trafficking victim. Therefore, the current study adds to the literature surrounding human trafficking and the factors that impact the bias and identification for the victims. The knowledge helps to further the research and allow for a better understanding of the main factors that can impact the identification of human. These factors are presumably some of the barriers that impact human trafficking victims' ability

to exit their trafficking situation. The research helps to shrink this gap and provide the groundwork for future studies to better understand what other factors impact this.

As stated throughout Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, there is a dearth of research surrounding human trafficking victims and the factors that impact their ability to be identified and exit their trafficking situation. Trafficking victims are often identified as female, and a lack of research has been identified surrounding other victims that do not identify as female. As a result, legislation and services are focused on female victims only (Barron & Frost, 2018; Hebert, 2016; Richards & Reid, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015). As mentioned in previous chapters, victims of trafficking are often similar to victims of sexual assault, however, there continues to be little research on whether gender effects the blame associated (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015). This further extends the knowledge, as throughout Chapter 2, it was mentioned that research surrounding male and transgender victims was minimal. Gender was thought to be a large barrier in influencing the identification of human trafficking victims. This was evidenced by the multitude of research surrounding females, while excluding male victims (Barron & Frost, 2018; Boswell et al., 2019; Menaker & Franklin, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015). The study provided a baseline understanding on the impact of gender and victim blame toward the identification of human trafficking victims, while also providing the groundwork for future research.

Human trafficking is a complex situation. In trafficking situations, the typical victimology and barriers with humans are involved however, trafficking also introduces a level of force or coercion to the victims (Zimmer & Gournelos, 2014). Human trafficking

victims are forced to work in dangerous situations and navigate dangerous power dynamics to ensure they survive in any capacity. The study found that the trafficking situation did impact the level of victim blame that was attributed to the victims. This confirmed that the trafficking situations are viewed differently depending upon the situation rather than as a holistic crime involving the force or coercion of other humans.

Historically, human trafficking victims have typically been portrayed as female or child victims, this was demonstrated through the lack of literature involving other victims. The power dynamics and the conditions that trafficking victims are forced to endure as male and transgender victims are not readily reported or tracked. The lack of information increases the difficulty in understanding how male and transgender victims differ from women and children in their experiences. The longstanding social norms surrounding masculinity have impacted the victims' experiences however, as a result of the little literature and reporting, it is not known to what extent they have been impacted. It was noted in Chapter 2, that when male victims have been included in the literature, it was solely within the construct of labor trafficking and not in sex trafficking (Zimmer & Gournelos, 2014). Analogous with much of the research on gender and human trafficking (Barron & Frost, 2018; Digidiki & Baka, 2020; Hebert, 2016; Richards & Reid, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015) the current study found that gender impacted the victim blame attributed to the human trafficking victims, supporting that gender plays more of a role in determining how guilty or how much blame should be attributed to the victims. The current study also supported that gender impacted the identification of the male and transgender human trafficking victims in the scenarios provided, adding to the scarce

knowledge on these two categories of human trafficking victims. This further supported the research by Menaker and Franklin (2015) that found little research surrounding the perceptions of human trafficking and called for additional research involving the public. This confirmed and extended the research previously by Cunningham and Cromer (2016), who initially studied the blame attributed to victims of gendered violence, whose participants were limited to undergraduate students and not the public. The current study also expanded the research by Cunningham and Cromer (2016) by including additional vignettes with different genders. Furthermore, the current study supported the research by Babu et al. (2022), which surrounded the identification of human trafficking victims based on their gender. The study supported this as the analysis showed that gender did affect the ability to identify trafficking victims when presented with different genders.

The theoretical basis for the study were feminist theory and just-world theory as discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of the study. Feminist theory focused solely on the gender equality that is afforded to the individuals and how gender can impact multiple areas of an individual's life (Brabeck & Brown, 1997). As demonstrated by the statistical analyses, gender impacted both victim blame and the identification of the human trafficking victims depicted in the scenarios, suggesting that gender does play a larger role in how we view victims. The study supports the theory in suggesting that the social and political structures that contribute to gender inequality apply to the male and transgender human trafficking victims. Just-world theory as discussed in Chapter 2, provides that people believe the world is a safe and fair place, where others experience the consequences of the actions (Silver et al., 2015). Just-world theory supported the

research questions focusing on the victim blame attributed to the victims depicted in the scenarios. Through the analysis of the study, it was determined that victim blame was attributed to the victims based on their situation and based on their gender. The study supports the theory in suggesting that the cognitive bias attributed to the actions of the victims had fitting consequences (Silver et al., 2015).

Both of the theories were supported in the results from Chapter 4. The research questions focused on the victim blame attributed to the trafficking victims dependent on the gender or the trafficking situation. Victim Blame was defined in 4 components as the behavior, the responsibility, the deserving, and the carelessness. All of the victim blame components were statistically significant for male and transgender victims. These results confirmed that the trafficking situation did affect the blame attributed to the human trafficking victims. In regard to gender and victim blame, the 4 components were statistically significant in the behavior and the deserving components at p<.001. Responsibility and carelessness also were statistically significant but not at the highest significance.

Limitation of the Study

Several limitations of this study were discussed in Chapter 1 and included the recruitment of participants and selection bias. Initially, the recruitment of participants was a limitation to the study. This initially could have proved to be a problem; however, the use of snowballing was also used to gain additional participants. Initially, the sample size for the study was determined to be 385 participants for the study. The study was also distributed in a public social media post to allow for additional participants to be obtained

allowing for the participant count to be 450. I utilized many different forms of social media to obtain my participants including, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. I also utilized the snowball method, and the participation link was emailed and sent via text from my original social media post by other individuals.

One threat to generalizability for the study was the selection bias for the participants, as convenience sampling was used to obtain the sample for the study. The study results span over various demographic locations, ages, and education levels ensuring that generalizability was addressed, as the sample used was representative of the population by using a medium sample size (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Participant demographics ranged from ages 18-65+, were male, female, and transgender, spanned different educational backgrounds, and locations. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. Cronbach's alpha was .905 for the Modified Victim Blame Measure indicating a high level of internal consistency for the scale. Content validity was determined with the Modified Victim Blaming Measure through the measure being reviewed by experts in human trafficking as previously discussed in Chapter 4.

Recommendations

This study brought up several areas that still need further exploration to understand the depth of human trafficking and the intricacies that are involved in the victimology. As a result of the lack of knowledge and information available surrounding male and transgender victims, future research could be expanded to include the barriers, such as social support and victimology, that significantly impact the exiting of human

trafficking situations. Future research could look at the impact of social support, lack of resources, or additional victimology biases that encompass male and transgender human trafficking victims and their perpetrators. Future research on the current topic could focus more on using additional factors associated with human trafficking or by providing more descriptive scenarios of human trafficking. By providing additional trafficking scenarios, we can expand on the knowledge of the public to include more aspects and scenarios than currently discussed, to better understand what specifically in trafficking they are not familiar with.

Additionally, it is recommended that additional research be completed to better understand how the victims are observed through the perpetrator's assumptions and biases. The additional research for the perpetrators could help to further the knowledge on why they select male and transgender victims. This information could further support how to best provide resources to the victims and help them exit the trafficking situations safely. A profound need to understand the human trafficking victimology still exists as this study only represented a specific scenario of male and transgender victims and their identification. The current study was conducted over the span of 3 months and could have been provided through more academic or professional areas, such as law enforcement, medical personnel, or universities in my area, to better understand how professionals that encounter trafficking perceive the victims. Further research would provide a better understanding of professional biases toward the victims as well when encountering male and transgender human trafficking victims.

Implications

This study provided the exploration on how gender and victim blame impact the identification of human trafficking victims. By increasing the knowledge and research surrounding this topic, we will begin to better understand how to assist all victims in exiting their situations safely. Currently, the lack of information has proven to cause additional problems by limiting the services available to only female and child victims (Digidiki & Baka, 2020). Legislature and society have had little interaction with human trafficking victims outside of the typical female and child victims, allowing biases to form and assumptions to be made (Digidiki & Baka, 2020). The study provided a starting point in understanding the biases that influence the identification of human trafficking victims, specifically male and transgender victims.

The lack of knowledge surrounding male and transgender human trafficking victims provides its own barriers to an already complex situation. As we have uncovered more about female and child victims, the marginalized victims are not provided the resources that they need, and in most cases are not recognized as victims as a result of the societal biases housed in gender roles (Schwarz & Britton, 2015). The feminist theory framework supported this and provided the initial groundwork to build upon the current study.

The impact of gender and victim blame promotes positive social change as the study supports that biases do exist in regard to the gender and trafficking situation of the victim. The study results indicated that further research is needed to allow for the inclusion of all trafficking victims in their ability to receive the necessary services to exit

trafficking and to better inform the public (Digidiki & Baka, 2020). On a societal level, the study impacts positive social change as well. To begin, literature on trafficking victims not identifying as female or child victims is scarce (Barron & Frost, 2018; Boswell et al., 2019; Menaker & Franklin, 2015; Schwarz & Britton, 2015). Therefore, this research extends the knowledge related to male and transgender victims and the impact of gender and victim blame. It also helps to provide a framework in determining what other biases may impact the identification. By providing the study findings, a measurement for human trafficking and victim blame, and the recommendations for human trafficking research, this study sets the foundation to explore the victimology of human trafficking victims, specifically male and transgender, and have a better understanding in their plight.

Conclusion

Human trafficking victims experience horrific experiences no matter the trafficking situation they are in. Human trafficking violates many human rights that are afforded to all individuals (Ortega et al., 2022). Trafficking situations involve manipulation, torture, substance abuse, physical or sexual abuse, and strip the individual of their basic humanity (Ortega et al., 2022). Much of the research surrounding human trafficking victims is recent within the last 15 years and primarily focuses on female or child victims, leaving those who do not fit those categories without support or basic identification of their lived experience (Barron & Frost, 2018; Boswell et al., 2019; Menaker & Franklin, 2015; Ortega et al., 2022; Schwarz & Britton, 2015).

The research aimed to identify the impact of gender and victim blame on the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims. Efforts to combat human trafficking are improving, as there has been an increase on public awareness and criminalization for human trafficking; however, there is still much to understand surrounding the intricacies of human trafficking and victimology (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016; Digidek & Baka, 2020; Hebert, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2015). The study results indicated that gender and the trafficking situation affects the victim blame attributed to male and transgender human trafficking victims. The results also indicated that gender affects the identification of male and transgender human trafficking victims. The study may have an impact upon the awareness and education that is provided to the public surrounding human trafficking victims and the factors that create bias toward the victims. This literature could be a catalyst for future research and awareness for all trafficking victims. This catalyst is needed to ensure the inclusion of all victims of human trafficking to be provided the same resources and to be able to safely exit their trafficking situations regardless of how they identify or the other social constructs that can create biases. As there is little research available specifically for male and transgender victims, this research helps to begin the conversation to include all victims within the human trafficking victimology.

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Appendix A: Permission Approval

Re: Permission to use and modify the victim blaming measure

Prooijen, J.W. van <j.w.van.prooijen@vu.nl>
Fri 7/30/2021 6:00 AM
To: Rudee Hanna

Sure Rudee, that's fine.

Best, Jan-Willem

Van: Rudee Hanna <rudee.hanna@waldenu.edu>
Datum: donderdag 29 juli 2021 om 18:32
Aan: "j.w.van.prooijen@vu.nl" <j.w.van.prooijen@vu.nl>
Onderwerp: Permission to use and modify the victim blaming measure

Good Afternoon,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University completing a dissertation in Forensic Psychology. I am writing to ask for written permission to use the Victim Blaming Measure in my research study. My research is focusing on the effects of gender and victim blame in identifying human trafficking victims. My research is being supervised by Dr. Linda Talley.

I plan is to use the entire instrument in my research and modify the instrument to align with the gender and victim blame aspects in my study. I will be using 9 vignettes and will be adding additional questions to determine if the participants can identify if the situation was sex trafficking, labor trafficking, or not a trafficking situation and if they felt the scenario was believable. I plan to use the instrument through a survey to send to participants to gain the needed data for my study.

I would appreciate receiving any supplemental material such as the test questionnaire, the standard instructions for administering the test, and the scoring procedures.

In addition to using the instrument and modifying it, I also ask your permission to reproduce it in my dissertation appendix. The dissertation will be deposited in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database.

I would like to use and reproduce the Victim Blaming Measure under the following terms.

- I will use the Victim Blaming Measure only for my research study and will not sell it or use it for any other purposes.
- I will include a statement of attribution and copyright on all copies of the instrument. If you have a specific statement of attribution that you would like for me to include, please provide it in your response.
- At your request, I will provide a hyperlink to the final manuscript.

If you do not control the copyright for these materials, I would appreciate any information you can provide concerning the proper person or organization I should contact.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by replying to me through email at rudee.hanna@waldenu.edu

Sincerely,

Rudee Hanna

Appendix B: Pilot Study Survey Follow-Up Questions

1. On a scale of 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), how clear were the vignettes to read and understand?

2. On a scale of 1-7, (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) how clear were the questions as they applied to the vignettes?

3. What feedback do you have regarding the pilot study (questions asked, vignettes, ease of use)?

Appendix C: Original Victim Blaming Measure

Victim Blaming Measure

Test Format: To measure victim-blaming after sexual assault, responded to questions on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). To measure victim-blaming after mugging, participants responded to some questions on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), and responded to others on a different 7-point scale (1 = certainly not, 7 = certainly.

High just-world threat condition

Jolanda is at a party where she meets a boy. Jolanda and the boy start flirting passionately. They have a lot of fun together and drink several glasses of wine. When the party comes to an end, the boy offers to bring Jolanda home. However, instead of driving her straight home, the boy stops the car when they are driving through a park. Despite the fact that Jolanda tries to resist him, the boy tries to have sex with Jolanda. Eventually, the attempt of the boy to have sex with Jolanda fails, but Jolanda has experienced this incident as a sexual assault. After this incident, the boy brings Jolanda home.

Low just-world threat condition

The vignette was the same as above, but the final sentence was extended with the following information:

After this incident, the boy brings Jolanda home, where she is being taken care of by her roommates. They help Jolanda, and consequently, Jolanda suffers less because of this incident and, eventually, recovers reasonably well soon after the incident.

Questions

I believe that what happened to Jolanda was caused by her own behavior.

I believe that Jolanda is responsible for what happened to her.

I think Jolanda deserved what happened to her.

I think Jolanda has been very careless.

Jolanda recovered well soon after this incident.

Note. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Appendix D: Modified Victim Blaming Measure

Vignettes

Labor Trafficking Vignettes

1. John responded to a newspaper ad that promised work as a handyman/construction. John began working but noticed that he was given less money than promised and was verbally abused when he spoke up to his employer about the missing money. John was threatened with deportation and with his pay being withheld if he said anything to anyone when he was outside the home.

2. Clara came to the U.S. in response to a newspaper ad that promised work as a nanny. Clara began working but noticed that she was given less money than promised and was verbally abused when she spoke up to her employer about the missing money. Clara did not want to work for her employer anymore but was forced to by her employer. Clara was threatened with deportation and her pay being withheld if she said anything to anyone when she was outside the home.

3. Ken was born female but identifies as a male. He ran away from his home when he was 18 to escape from his father who physically abused Ken for being transgender. While on his own, Ken found work with a family who would also help him with housing. Ken enjoyed working for the family but quickly noticed that he was not paid what he had been promised. When Ken mentioned this, the family threatened to put him on the street without any food, clothing, or money. Ken decided to stay quiet and continue working for the family.

Sex Trafficking Vignettes

1. Daniel was physically abused by both his mother and father after he came out and identified as a male. Daniel was born a female but identifies as a male. As a result, Daniel was thrown out of his parent's house at 18 and did not have a safe place to stay. Daniel was approached by a woman who promised to give him a place to stay and would accept him. Daniel soon began to have sex with the woman in exchange for the shelter, money, and food. The woman threatened to starve Daniel and kick him out of the house if he did not have sex with her and her friends. Daniel was soon forced to perform sexual acts with the woman's male and female friends. Daniel did not want to continue with her friends but did not have a home or a means to support himself.

2. Haley was a young woman with a bleak future. Haley's family was poor and struggling. Haley accepted a part-time job to help her family out. She met a nice man while at the bar she worked at. He came to the bar almost every night that she worked. The two of them became close and started a relationship. He helped her with her family's financial situation and even helped Haley get a car. Their relationship grew and Haley began having sex with the man. One evening, he brought his friends back to his apartment where Haley was. They started watching a football game and one of her boyfriend's friends became physical and started fondling her. Haley told her the friend no and he became angry and started to shout. Haley's boyfriend came into the room and became upset when he heard what happened. Her boyfriend said that if his friends wanted to have sex with her, they could. Haley left the room and her boyfriend followed her to their bedroom.

Her boyfriend threatened to take away her car and to stop helping with her parent's financial issues unless she had sex with his friends. Haley did not want to have sex with his friends but was forced to help her family continue to improve their financial situation.

3. Nick always wanted a relationship like his parents had before they were killed. Nick grew up watching them be kind and supportive of each other. When Nick graduated college, he decided that he wanted to settle down and find someone to spend his life with. Nick met an older woman on a dating website that lived near him. They spoke online for a while and decided to take their relationship further. Nick began performing sexual acts online for his girlfriend at their mutual agreement. Initially, Nick took nude photos for her, but it soon escalated. His girlfriend began requesting videos and soon put the videos and pictures on a pornographic website. Nick was embarrassed and confronted his girlfriend about it. She told him that if he ended the relationship with him, she would tell everyone and ruin his professional career. Nick did not want to lose his dream job and agreed to continue to perform for her as long as she didn't tell his employers.

Non-Trafficking Vignettes

1. Sarah and her husband have been happily married for 3 years. During the recent pandemic, Sarah's husband lost his job. To make additional money, he created a page on a pornographic website to showcase his wife and he together sexually. Sarah and her husband made a lot of the content together and posted it online for others to pay to view. When work resumed, Sarah was unable to devote as much

time to making the nude content and she told her husband she didn't want to make any more content together. They both agreed and decided to stop making content to post.

2. Timothy works each summer for a local farmer to help with different jobs around the farm. He is employed by the farmer and is paid every 2 weeks. Timothy is only required to work during the summer months and feels comfortable telling his employer when he is unable to work or when something is wrong with his paycheck. Timothy did not show up for work for several days and was fired from his summer position.

3. Alex is 22, enjoys meeting new people, and frequents many of his town's local restaurants and bars. He identifies as a male but was born a female. Alex has recently started dating and feels comfortable expressing his sexuality with his partner. One evening, Alex was assaulted by his partner who made sexual advances toward Alex and derogatory comments about him. Alex felt uncomfortable about the situation and told his partner he did not want to have further contact with them and blocked their number and social media.

Questions

1. I believe that what happened to (insert name) was caused by his/her/their own behavior.

2. I believe that (insert name) is responsible for what happened to him/her/them.

3. I think (insert name) deserved what happened to them.

4. I think (insert name) has been very careless.

5. Do you think that the individual in the vignette is in a human trafficking situation?

6. Do you think that this situation could happen in real life?

Note. (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).