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Perspectives of Human Service Providers for Sex Trafficked Women about Policy Changes in the Prosecution of Prostitution

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Abstract

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by

Sakinah Salley

MA, Walden University 2023

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Human and Social Services: Disaster, Crisis & Trauma

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Abstract

Human trafficking is a global crime that has affected every state within the United States, leaving many victims impacted with various forms of trauma and abuse without long-term support. The US federal government and state legislators have passed laws to combat human trafficking, however the effectiveness of these efforts is still a challenge. Often, service providers working with sex trafficked victims are left with the arduous task of working around abrupt changes in policy or in state laws, making their job of advocating for victims' rights difficult to do. This qualitative, multiple case study explored the perspectives of a criterion based, selected group of human services providers responding to the needs of sex trafficked women after the 2018 policy changes in a midwestern state that reduced prosecution for prostitution. Data were collected from interviews conducted virtually along with artifacts related to the participants' organizations, including published pamphlets and annual reports. A cross-case content analysis was used to analyze the data. Three themes emerged from the analysis: (a) systemic social violence continues to impact victims of sex trafficking, (b) collaboration with law enforcement and all services is needed for comprehensive responses, and (c) continuity of care for securing long term responses for victims of sex trafficking. The findings contribute to social change and the social determinants of health by expanding knowledge of societal change as it relates to sex trafficking while at the same time providing added information to human services' providers working amid policy changes.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter Cerenity who has been my motivation to finish

what I started. Cerenity you are the light that I needed in my life and show me daily the

true definition of unconditional love. Thank you for choosing me to be your mama I am

forever grateful for this beautiful opportunity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been research about forced prostitution in the United States (Brooks, 2021). The terms sex work and sex trafficking are more known when referring to the responses of law enforcement officials, and their decision making (Duncan & DeHart, 2019). Although some researchers differ, Kappler and Richie-Zavaleta (2020) believed the way to address issues of prostitution and sex work requires attention in the law to improve the legal protection of victims of sex trafficking. Currently, research suggests law enforcements' job of addressing sex trafficking victims works best when they collaborate with social service providers and make provisions for sex workers (Anasti, 2020). This current study explores the task of human services providers meeting the needs of sex trafficked women during the period since the 2018 changes to law enforcement policy in a midwestern state about limiting prosecution of prostitution through a qualitative investigation of the perspectives of human services workers who are the front line in supporting survivors and victims of sex trafficking. In this chapter, I provide the background to the study, a brief review of the framework for the investigation, and an outline of the nature of the study. I include the scope and limitations of the planned research. Finally, I summarize the information in this chapter before moving on to the review of the recent literature in Chapter 2.

Background of Study

Existing research on pathways in and out of being trafficked has provided a wide array of findings, depending on conceptualization (Duncan & DeHart, 2019). To date, the

legislation directing the conceptualization of sex trafficking implies it is a crime against humanity (Ballucci & Stathakis, 2022). This includes the acts of recruiting, transporting, harboring, or receiving service or value from an individual through the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit them (United Nations Office of Drug & Crime, 2023). The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 was the first federal law that addressed the trafficking of persons. It aimed to combat trafficking in the United States through prevention efforts, such as bringing public awareness to this issue, offering protection for victims through support, and ultimately, the prosecution of traffickers by establishing trafficking as a federal crime with severe consequences (National Center for Homeless Education, 2023). The law has a multidimensional approach that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution all of which are supposed to help combat sex trafficking (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2023). Most often, according to Miller et al. (2020):

> the preventive measures are created, only intending to train law enforcement on how to recognize those engaging in sex work as survivors and not prostitutes, rather than teaching them to be first responders who are supposed to connect victims with immediate social services.

Research is limited on how law enforcement's contacts with women who have been sex trafficked shape their perceptions of how law enforcement works. In agreement with Boggiani (2016), as stated in the annual Department of State Trafficking in Person 2014 report human trafficking may involve but does not require any movement (2016); meaning victims are experiencing abuse at the hands of traffickers within the city they

live in without ever going anywhere else. Many women have unknowingly participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked. The goal of traffickers is to exploit their victims using deceptive and coercive tactics to keep them trapped (Wyer, 2017).

This qualitative study explores the task of human services providers meeting the needs of sex trafficked women during the period since the 2018 changes to law enforcement policy in a midwestern state about limiting prosecution of prostitution through a qualitative investigation of the perspectives of human services workers who are the front line in supporting survivors and victims of sex trafficking.

Past research has recommended that law enforcement should be addressing these issues (Farrell & Cronin, 2015). Alternatively, there appears to be a rationale of focusing on the justification of prostitutes consenting to their jobs (Sparks et al., 2020). Furthermore, policing legalized prostitution is expected to change this; however, there remains a need to focus more on identifying who are the sex trafficking victims and the offenses they face when working. Regarding this, authors suggest the driving forces of research ought to be drawn from the ongoing lack of useful data from police arrests; that could have been used to help determine urban crime problems (Farrell & Cronin, 2015). Sparks et al. (2020) hypothesized that there is low priority given to enforcement of illegal sex markets relative to other crime, and this reduced priority also reduces the likelihood of arrests, or at least the perception of risk of arrest. This indicates additional research about forced prostitution, which includes sex trafficking, would be desirable in understanding relationships between the law, policy, law enforcement, and prostitution. There is a debate about this direction of decriminalizing prostitution in policy and

practice; Duncan and Dehart (2019) emphasized that the criminalization of women's behaviors may be attempts to help manage the broader picture of what is happening in their lives, and decriminalization may not be the best approach.

Anasti (2020) found that law enforcement and social service collaborations can open the conversation for alternative methods to work with individuals in the sex trade. This research is important in relation to my study as it helps support why services are needed when assisting victims of sex trafficking. Consequently, service providers who assist victims of sex trafficking have a different perspective regarding their experience and the support they need, due to their daily interactions with victims.

Human services providers are in roles that help protect female sex trafficking survivors. Sukach et al. (2018) found that female survivors' lived experiences differ and based on this, their perspectives and outcome vary as well. Each of these perspectives is vital information for my study; however, my research centers around the human services providers of services to sex trafficked women. One change in law enforcement policy that was initiated by the District Attorney of a midwestern state in 2018 removed prosecution of sex solicitation from law enforcement procedures, as was documented in public through the government and public websites (Cipriano, 2018). Under the new policy, cases of prostitution identified by law enforcement for the most part would be diverted to programs such as community service, restitution, or taking an educational course as alternatives to normal sentencing; allowing the alleged offenders to avoid charges and a criminal record (Cipriano, 2018). The policy of diversion and decriminalization of sex work may result in social and health risks to sex trafficked women and the sex industry

promoting sex trafficking, as less attention from law enforcement is placed on solicitation overall (Srsic et al., 2021). Researchers have already shown potential economic consequences of decriminalizing payment for sex that can increase illegal street prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, such as stripping, bondage, discipline centers, peep shows, and pornography (Sullivan & Jeffreys, 2001). While this change is still in policy form, a permanent change from policy to law would result in service providers being unable to protect sex trafficked women and work with them to find a sense of security and autonomy (Van Dyke, 2021)).

Problem Statement

Long standing debates continue across the United States about whether prostitution should or should not be legalized. The general social problem is that the decriminalization of prostitution alters the opportunities for human service providers to offer intervention support to sex trafficked women (Van Dyke, 2021). Moreover, decriminalization destigmatizes sex work and helps resist political, social, and cultural marginalization and vulnerability of sex workers (Albright & D'Adamo, 2017). In return, decriminalization may increase violence among victims, making them easy targets for abuse and exploitation, including sex trafficking. Furthermore, decriminalization undermines the trust victims would have in support systems, such as health care and human service provider professionals. Moreover, it may increase vulnerability in terms of an individual's health outcomes related to trafficking and other forms of exploitation because it is less in the social spotlight. Ultimately, decriminalization reduces risks but reinforces stigma, which makes victims more prone to homicide, exposed to physical and

sexual violence, more likely to face incarceration for other offenses and harassment from law enforcement, and discrimination in accessing health care and other sources of support (Albright & D'Adamo, 2017).

The research problem was that human service providers in a midwestern state are having to adapt their practices to accommodate the 2018 change in policy, reducing law enforcement's prosecution for prostitution, thereby reducing the protection of sex trafficked women in law (Philadelphia DAO, 2018). Trying to build a rapport with sex trafficked women may be limited, due to their distrust in the helping professional, based on their perception of how they view the decriminalization of prostitution. It may leave them feeling unprotected and unsure of who genuinely wants to help; no matter what their choices are for engaging in the sex industry (Cofrancisco, 2018). The specific research problem is based on my limited knowledge about the perspectives of human service providers, when they were trying to provide services to sex trafficked women within the context of change in decriminalization of prostitution. Although the aforementioned research regarding responses to sex trafficking illuminates important findings, I have found limited research that has explored how service providers perceive the 2018 changes in policy in a midwestern state that affects sex trafficked women.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perspectives of human service practitioners in a midwestern state in providing services to sex trafficking women within the context of changes to policy resulting in decriminalizing prostitution to understand how they have adapted their practices with the policy changes. My goal is to

conduct a qualitative case study following a design proposed by Yin (2017) to address this gap in the perspectives of human service professionals who are providing a service to sex trafficked women, and their role within the context of 2018 changes to policy about the prosecution of prostitution (Philadelphia DAO, 2018). For this study, the data sources are the perceptions of the study participants along with archival information. This material included organizational annual reports for 4–5 years from when the 2018 changes to policy about the prosecution of prostitution laws decriminalizing prostitution first occurred in each organization's location.

Research Questions

In line with the purpose of this study, the following research question is:

RQ 1: What are the perspectives of human service professionals in changes to them providing service to sex trafficked women within the context of the 2018 changes to the policy in the prosecution of prostitution?

Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study centered on Lewin's change management model (LCMM, 1947)**.** The model developed in the 1940's by Lewin, a physicist, still holds true today. It emphasizes the process of understanding organizational change. The model is known as Unfreeze, Change, Refreeze, which refers to the three stage process of change. In LCMM, the importance of management in an organization is as crucial to the change process, especially in radical transformations (Rosca, 2020), and elevates the notion that leadership must involve employees during organizational change (Rosca, 2020). LCMM framed my study and influenced how I interpreted what service providers are saying

about the changes in their work that have resulted from the 2018 changes to policy about the prosecution of prostitution. In view of this, I looked for the three step process of Unfreezing, Changing, and Refreezing in their actions, while also attending to the roles that management and employees play in the incorporation of this policy change.

Moreover, it is anticipated that further research may help service organizations in understanding how the perspectives of service providers have shaped their worldviews as human service professionals. Furthermore, LCMM may help community organizations see the direction to take on ways to understand how frontline providers see a woman's perspective. Organizations that are willing to work, modify and enhance the services they provide will greatly improve their outcome.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this qualitative study serves two purposes: (a) explore perspectives of human service professionals in changes to them providing service to sex trafficked women within the context of the 2018 changes to the policy in the prosecution of prostitution, (b) understand the gap in the perspectives of human service professionals who are providing a service to sex trafficked women, and their role within the context of 2018 changes to policy about the prosecution of prostitution (Philadelphia DAO, 2018).

This research makes use of qualitative methods in order to reach the research objectives. Data was collected from interviews conducted virtually along with artifacts related to the participants' organizations, such as pamphlets or annual reports. A cross-case content analysis comparison was used to analyze, interpret data and answer research questions. As a result, I gained a greater insight as the LCMM model helped me

understand the change that service providers experienced in adapting to the new policy. Further, the study provided valuable information and a greater understanding into perspectives of human service professionals who are providing a service to sex trafficked women, and their role within the context of 2018 changes to policy about the prosecution of prostitution (Philadelphia DAO, 2018).

My research design consisted of me conducting structured interviews, which included an interview protocol based on the review of literature and the LCMM (1947). I interviewed human service professionals working in agencies; including case managers, and outreach team members, and asked them to share their perspectives about their ability to provide services to sex trafficked women within the context of the policy changes from 2018. I approached agencies such as the Salvation Army, The Covenant House, and other agencies servicing or interacting with sex trafficked women in the midwestern state. I was able to find additional data in annual reports for 4-5 years from when the policy changes first occurred. Further, to support clarity in unpacking words and phrases defined in terms of their usage for this study a short glossary of terms has been added.

Definitions

Law Enforcement: Agency and agents that are responsible for enforcing laws such as investigation, apprehension, and detention of individuals suspected of criminal offenses (Anasti, T. (2020).

2018 Policy Changes in 2018: The District Attorney of Philadelphia PA directed policy change to law enforcement, diverting prostitution arrests to alternative strategies.

Service providers: Service providers are those who evaluate the needs of an individual and create plans of action to help them solve any problems they may be experiencing (O'Brien et al., 2019).

Sex trafficking: Sex trafficking is understanding the action or practice of illegally soliciting, moving, and or transporting a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act Minichiello et al., (2018).

Assumptions

Data collection and analysis strategies for the study were carried out following three assumptions. The first assumption was that the service providers' willingness to volunteer in this research study, and that the data collected from in-depth interviews provided honest, accurate, reliable, and well-articulated information. This helped to identify specific knowledge gaps among service providers and sex trafficked victims. The second assumption was that exploration and description of the service providers' perspectives will provide relevant data regarding in-depth knowledge about the study's central topic (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

The third assumption of this study was that using a multiple-case study design would contribute new knowledge to the conceptual framework of the study and its underlying theories. Yin (2017) indicated that the multiple-case study design in qualitative research and the use of the cross-case synthesis technique for analyzing qualitative data are preferred methods for strengthening the validity and robustness of qualitative research.

Scope and Delimitations

This multiple-case study is limited to service providers with the following additional boundaries: female adults located in the area served by the 2018 policy within a selected midwestern state; and possessing in-depth knowledge of the study topic (Patton, 2014). This criterion-based sampling helped provide a heterogeneous group of participants to support maximum variation sampling (Benoot et al., 2016). Maximum variation sampling in qualitative research relies on the researcher's judgment to select participants with diverse characteristics to ensure the presence of maximum variability within the primary data, which in this multiple-case study were the responses to the protocol of the interview (Palinkas et al., 2015).policy. In qualitative research, sampling is primarily utilized to delve into cases, events, or actions that can enrich understanding about the phenomenon being investigated, to add to existing research and new knowledge regarding a particular issue of interest (Ishak & Bakar, 2014). All interviews were conducted on Zoom. Offering the option of a Zoom interview gave participants a degree of control over how they participated in the study and promoted a more equal relationship between the researcher and the participant (Hanna, 2012).

Limitations

Limitations, a characteristic of every research study, are those elements of the study that are out of the researcher's control and can impact the trustworthiness of the study results (Golafshani, 2003; Sinkovics et al., 2008). The first limitation is as a researcher, being a woman, and contributing to gender bias. Motivation and influences based on a personal gendered lens could create ethnocentrism and judge research

participants and their responses solely by the values and standards of one's own gender (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2011). To minimize female gender bias, a male skilled in qualitative methods, who is a member of the committee has been invited to review the analysis and the results to compare with the researcher's own, discussing discrepancies and reaching consensus (Anney, 2014).

The second limitation of the study was that the case study method received scholarly criticism for not offering statistical generalization, which prevented the transferability of data results or the general population from which the sample originated (Yin, 2017). Stake (2013) suggested the multiple-case study method is not used for this purpose, but rather to augment other measures of external validity and to advance theory extension, which does not target representativeness as a relationship of sample and population (Ridder, 2017). The initial primary data collection process was limited to five participants.

Participants' willingness to answer the interview questions straightforwardly and honestly was a potential third research limitation, although it is assumed that participant responses to interview questions were truthful and transparent (Sinkovics et al., 2008). Patton (2014) noted that political atmosphere, anxiety, and personal bias could place limitations on the interview process and could result in distortion of participants' responses.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

The significance of a study must address the importance of filling a knowledge

gap (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The significance of this study lay in the opportunity to address policy changes that affect human services support for sex trafficked women. This research was needed to gain a deeper understanding of the direction toward decriminalization of prostitution or solicitation. Human service providers did not have to adapt their practices to accommodate the policy changes that influenced the physical and mental health and wellbeing of women in the population.

Significance to Theory

The lack of exploratory research on the process of change in the area of decriminalization of prostitution is a critical knowledge gap that may be resulting in decreasing the opportunities for human service interventions to support sex trafficked women. Scholars concur on an existing research gap about change. Through empirical investigation into policy changes regarding decriminalization and the gap in knowledge in the theoretical foundations of the conceptual framework, this study contributed original, qualitative data to change theory (Lewin, 1958) that is useful in future related research.

Significance to Social Change

Policy changes and decriminalization of prostitution have to be addressed at the micro level as its impact affects victims and service providers who work to support them. As such, this study bared social change implications in understanding that establishing permanent support such as a different policy change and holistic services for victims to work through any trauma they experienced. This study provided a foundation for future research in highlighting present gaps within anti-trafficking legislation, and then make

recommendations for the legal protection of victims and betterment of services needed for their reintegration and healing. The plan to see an upgrade in the assessment and evaluation of current efforts; only to protect and address human trafficking at the state and local levels.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study using an exploratory, multiple-case research design was to gain greater insight into how service providers for sex trafficked women perceive the changes in criminal justice policy in providing their services. In this chapter, I outlined the plan to address this gap about the implications of decriminalization consistent with the qualitative paradigm using a multiple-case study method. This study has social change implications in understanding the perspectives of human service professionals in providing services to sex trafficked women in the context of 2018 changes to policy about prosecution of prostitution laws decriminalizing prostitution.

Chapter 2 presents a critical review of the literature on factors affecting service providers who assist women experiencing sex trafficking. Topics that are examined include commercial sexual exploitation, challenges service providers face, existing legislation, and decriminalization of prostitution, overall. The third chapter describes the research design and specific procedures used in conducting the study, including research sample, overview of information needed to answer research question, research design, methods of data collection, methods for data analysis and synthesis, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents and highlights research findings. The last chapter will present analysis, interpretation, and

synthesis of findings, along with implication of findings, recommendations for further

research, and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As policy response to sex work has changed, moving toward decriminalization, victims of sex trafficking have been impacted in their access to support services. The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of service providers who work to support sex trafficked women through providing social services during a period of policy changes to law enforcement of prostitution. I conducted a multiple-case study to meet the study objectives (Yin, 2017). In this chapter, the most recent literature on the topic of the study is explained. I used the analysis of Lewin's (1951) theory and model of change, and its connection to the changes in policy. I then reviewed the literature on the issue of sex work and sex trafficking of women and analyzed the access to victim services and service providers, and how these issues connected to policy changes. I finalized the review of literature with a summary of key points.

Literature Search Strategy

I explored the extant literature through Walden's online library access and looked at the following databases*:* EBSCO: academic search complete, PsycINFO, SocINDEX google scholar. I used the following search terms in my review: Sex trafficking, sex work, prostitution, decriminalization of prostitution, legislation on prostitution, law enforcement, service providers, victims of sex trafficking, survivors of sex trafficking, and services for sex trafficked women.

Lewin's Change Management Model

Kurt Lewin (1951) created a model of change to understand the complexity of human behavior as it relates to change within an organization and how members of an organization view change or the need for change. LCMM illustrates how individuals find it difficult to adapt to change both for an organization as well as within different sectors within an organization (Kotter, 2012). Managing change in organizations varies depending on the individuals involved, the kind of change being pursued, and includes the impact the change will have on the organization (Riches et al., 2017). The value of LCMM resides in the idea that an organization's environment influences change behavior; there is a need for stakeholders to accept and adjust to change, which can include the encouragement of abandoning old behaviors and developing new ones (Malek & Yazdanifard, 2012).

LCMM includes three steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The first step, Unfreezing, must occur before any change can happen and is core to the eventual success of a change process. Unfreezing is the undoing of old habits or routines that are embedded in an organization but no longer serve the organization's mission. The step of Unfreezing includes determining what needs to change, ensuring support will be given during the transition, and lastly, showing the need for Change. As such, displaying why the existing way of doing things cannot continue is the most effective way to move forward.

Once the process of Unfreezing has taken place, the second step of LCMM is implementing the desired Change. This second step entails empowering all parties to

partake in the Change occurring. Tactics such as repairing misunderstanding around planning for change, the benefits of change, and who the change will affect can uphold trust among those involved and lead to a sense of empowerment that engages individuals in the change process. According to Lewin (1947), this can help organizational leaders manage the moving phase more easily. During the moving step, individuals need to understand both the reasons for change as well as how it will personally benefit them to eventually accept the change and make it successful.

The final step of Lewin's Change Management Model is Refreezing. Refreezing sustains the change that was identified in step one (Unfreezing) and enacted in step two. The goal during the Refreezing process is for individuals to consider the new state of the organization and not resist the changes that were made in step two. Without attention to a Refreezing process—which effectively embeds the changes established during the previous step—old approaches once used in the organization may return. Refreezing can require changes to an organization's culture, norms, policies, and practices (Cummings et al., 2016). Thus, Refreezing helps stabilize an organization. Successes made thus far can be celebrated during this step, as the recognition helps to galvanize the people and cement the established changes in the long term.

Lewin's Change Management Model in Previous Studies

Studies have shown that Lewin's theory (1947) encourages lasting change. The three-step model has been shown to align with a variety of both personal and organizational behavior changes, from the inclusion of women in male-dominated workplaces to a reduction in the consumption of red meat and sugar to the rationing of

gasoline (Elrod & Tippett, 2002). Lewin developed the change model to display how people react when facing changes in their lives. For instance, adding women to majority male workplaces shows how a change of any sort can be challenging. Change can challenge those involved to accept it and act accordingly. By gradually creating momentum and morale amongst those involved, organizational changes can be long-term and eventually represent the standard way of operating. Applying Lewin's theory of change to organizations helps explain how individuals accept, embrace, and perform while experiencing change within organizations (Samuel, 2023).

LCMM helps to address the uncertainty and resistance that individuals have to change. Riches et al. (2017) found that change varies as it is managed in organizations depending on the type of individuals involved, the kind of change being pursued, and the activities of the organization. For example, Michie and Johnston (2012) found that Lewin's theory of change offered leaders and employees of an organization guidelines that were very useful to navigate through the uncertainties of change. Additionally, Piderit (2000) found that change was strengthened by incentives and rewards, which could be tangible or psychological. By attending to the context of the organization undergoing change, including leadership and employee perceptions of the change, and the degree of uncertainty, lasting change is possible and can be highly effective if an organization is attentive to the three-step process. On the other hand, organizations that do not navigate well through change tend to struggle in their existence (Kotter, 2012).

For Use in My Study

The three steps of LCMM (a) helped me assess how change is dealt with in

organizations, (b) identified the stage of change in which an organization was in, and (c) understand how organizations make or do not revise their services to support necessary change to be successful. Furthermore, Lewin's change model addresses the importance of management in an organization as crucial to the change process, especially in radical transformations (Rosca, 2020), and elevates the notion that leadership must involve employees during organizational change (Rosca, 2020). As I wrote my interview questions and analyzed my interview data, Lewin's change model informed me of how to frame my study and how to interpret what service providers are doing to assist sex trafficked women in lieu of the policy changes in 2018; regarding the prosecution of prostitution that resulted in the partial decriminalization of prostitution in Philadelphia. I sought to understand how service providers continued and or struggled to provide support to their clients via their practices and procedures, and looked for the steps of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing in their actions.

Conceptualizing Sex Trafficking

To better understand the issues of individuals who are sex trafficked, I differentiate between sex trafficking and commercial sex. The term *commercial sex* means to exchange anything of value that is given or received by any individual in exchange for a sexual service (Trafficking Victims Protection Act [TVPA], 2000). When using the term commercial sex, the underlying implication is the choice to engage in the sexual service is solely made by the individuals participating and there is mutual consent. In using a term like commercial sex rather than sex trafficking, sex workers present themselves or are presented by others as willing individuals, even professionals, who

work to provide themselves with their everyday needs as part of a service industry (Ruebottom & Toubiana, 2021). Conversely, the term *sex trafficking* is defined as a form of modern-day slavery in which individuals engage in commercial sex acts but do not do so willingly. Rather, they are recruited by other individuals via tactics of force, fraud, or coercion (TVPA, 2022). In using a term like sex trafficking, the underlying implication is that the individual providing the sexual service does not consent to the act and is victimized by others into providing the service. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the term sex trafficking to indicate my focus on organizations that help individuals engaged in sexual servitude unwillingly with elements of force, fraud, or coercion in the transaction. Another reason that I use the term sex trafficking is that the United States federal policy was developed to combat and prevent human trafficking but with a primary focus on sex trafficking. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000) defines sex trafficking as follows: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act; induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. Minichiello et al. (2018) assert that the term sex trafficking demonstrates a belief that individuals are being abused and includes victims dealing with fear, guilt, shame, and vulnerability stemming from their experiences of forced sexual servitude. To date, there is a wide range of explanations for sex trafficking, all of which vary based on the circumstance of the victim (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014). For example, individuals who are vulnerable to being sex trafficked may suffer from some sort of insecurity, this includes physical insecurity in the form of poverty or mental insecurity in the form of depression

or anxiety. These insecurities, then, are vulnerabilities that can result in being sex trafficked (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014).

The presence of commercial sex work and the presence of sex trafficking must both be acknowledged. George et al. (2010) believed an evidence-based model was ideal to address the different facets of sex trafficking and sex work. This model includes empirical research to help address the nuance of debates surrounding the ongoing polarity in the two terms, not just from a policy perspective but also from the lived experiences of both sex workers and trafficking victims who make up the sex industry. By not acknowledging the complexity of agency and/or victimization, some scholars have made it difficult to provide answers to practical questions regarding both commercial sex work and the experience of sex trafficking. However, for this dissertation, my scope will be delimited to the phenomenon of sex trafficking.

The Scope of Sex Trafficking and Risk Factors

The growth of the sex industry is global, and a portion of the industry relies on the victimization of trafficked people to gain substantial profit (Edwards & Mika, 2017). For example, the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2022) estimates there are 24.9 million people worldwide who are victims of sex trafficking. Furthermore, the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2022) estimates the global commercial sex industry profits about $150.2 billion each year.

The sex industry includes exploiters and buyers as agents of victimization. Casassa et al. (2022) note that the profit being generated from this industry is benefiting exploiters and buyers' lives while the protection and rights of individuals who are

providing sexual services remain uncertain. Typically, men are the buyers of commercial sex acts, using what they receive for entertainment, sexual gratification, or to commit acts of violence (Casassa et al., 2022). Exploiters operate the business of sexual servitude and make a profit from the sale of sex by others as a commodity (Casassa et al., 2022). Operating a business and making a profit highlight how the sex industry contributes to the trafficking of victims worldwide.

In addition to understanding the roles of exploiters and buyers, sex trafficking victims must also be considered. Anyone can become a victim of sexual exploitation, as the manipulation and coercion methods of traffickers can deceive all genders, ages, and sexualities (O'Brien & Li, 2020). That said, there are certain populations of people who are considered more susceptible to becoming victims of sex trafficking because they are members of a vulnerable and/or marginalized group. Women, children (both boys and girls), and LGBTQIA individuals are considered especially vulnerable, and factors such as age, homelessness, and family of origin can increase the likelihood of being sex trafficked as well. The average age of entry into sex trafficking for girls is 12 to 14 years old; for boys, the average age of entry is 11 years old (National Center of Missing and Exploited Children, 2022). The intersection of being a minor and homeless exacerbates vulnerability. One in six runaways are victims of child sex trafficking, and 90% of all victims of child sex trafficking are runaway youth. Of those, 83% were in the care of social services or foster care prior to being trafficked (National Center of Missing and Exploited Children, 2022).

While vulnerabilities themselves can enhance an individual's risk of being sex

trafficked, certain personal characteristics—called push factors—that are common among vulnerable populations can also increase an individual's risk of being sex trafficked (Gezinski et al., 2022). Individual-level push factors include lack of self-control; behaviors of self-sabotage; and suffering from self-blame, hopelessness, dependency, insecurities, low self-esteem, rejection, and abandonment. Other factors that increase one's risk include involvement in gang activity, a history of childhood abuse, trauma, and addiction (Marburger & Pickover, 2020).

From Vulnerable to Victim

Exploiters look for the victims online; in shopping malls, schools, parks, restaurants; and any other place where vulnerable individuals often gather. Exploiters invest time and effort into forming a bond with their victims and use gifts, housing, and affection to create an illusion of safety (Kulig& Butler 2019). This process is called grooming. Grooming is used as a tactic for the exploiter to gather information about the victim and gain their trust while also filling a need in their life (Kulig & Butler 2019). Once trust is established, perpetrators use manipulation to keep their victims dependent and compliant. Furthermore, data has shown that there are other underlying risk factors such as economic insecurity, housing insecurity, education gaps, and migration all of which make victims vulnerable but also susceptible to extreme exploitation (Schwartz et al., 2019).

Poverty can restrict an individual's life and control their outcome, as such the link between poverty and vulnerability is more common for those who have experienced hardships or challenges in life (Schwartz et al., 2019). Financial instability can increase

the chances of a vulnerable individual turning to exploitative practices to survive and make it day by day. While some may "consent" to their decision to engage in these situations, this is still no excuse for violence or exploitation. Economic abuse is designed to reinforce or create economic instability; as such it limits an individual's choices and ability to access economic resources (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2022).

Housing instability has been identified as another risk factor amongst many victims as homelessness is the result of individuals living in poverty. Homelessness affects victims' sense of stability and causes them to have to rely on others to support them. In addition to not having permanent housing, victims are not able to cultivate supportive or consistent relationships that may offer support due to constantly moving around. As such, when lacking material resources research indicates that individuals may turn toward trading sex for food or shelter (Lutnick, 2016). Often these relationships could have coercive tendencies, especially if the individual doing the exploiting has control over another's access to stable housing and basic needs.

Low education attainment or negative educational experiences such as isolation from peers, mentors are the quickest way to enhance vulnerability and contribute to exploitation (Schwartz et al., 2019). Heil& Nichols (2015) conducted research that found a connection between truancy and drop-out status, both of which increased the potential for exposure to traffickers. A lack of education exposes a victim's day to day challenges, as such not having access to proper economic and educational outcomes results in long-term educational disruptions. Any history of maltreatment (i.e., abuse, neglect, or trauma) is a predictor of poor educational and employment outcomes; this includes emotional,

behavioral, and academic problems for victims (Jaffee et al., 2018). The long-term effects of educational disruptions for victims are associated with lower earnings, higher crime rates, poorer health and mortality outcomes, and reduced participation in societal norms (Pinto & Bailey-Jones, 2020). Exploring the causes of educational inequalities helps shine the light on the vulnerabilities that contribute to exploitation. Vulnerability is one of the main reasons victims fall subject to coercive tactics at the hand of a perpetrator. Often victims are poor, isolated, and weak due to disempowerment, social exclusion, and economic vulnerability, which then increases their chances of being trafficked. Its impact is long lasting and leaves many victims crippled for the rest of their lives.

From Victim to Survivor

Marburger and Pickover (2020) asserted that understanding potential risks and the complex layer of prolonged trauma is key to helping victims of sex trafficking. These complex layers include understanding how trafficking happens; and what genders, ages, sexual orientations, life circumstances, and racial/ethnic groups are most at risk. The lasting impacts of trafficking on human development, mental health, and family relationships must also be analyzed. Sex trafficking victims also face ridicule from their own families, communities, and mental health providers. According to Marburger and Pickover (2020), individuals who need support after being sex trafficked must work through short- and long-term crises with trauma-informed human service providers. The services must include the complex layers of sex trafficking assistance, including assessment, treatment, case management, support, and advocacy. Overall, each of these support elements is intended to facilitate long-term recovery.

The complexity of human trafficking and using multi-disciplinary collaborative approaches to care for and support victims and survivors is an opportunity for healing and restoration. To effectively bridge the gap between individuals who have been trafficked, the healthcare system and social service providers is to develop collaborative models. Intersections of medicine, public health, law, and human rights discipline must address pressing issues such as human trafficking locally and nationally (Powell et al., 2018). As such, those who interact with victims and or survivors must be trained so they can identify these individuals and build provider-victim/survivor trust and rapport (Ravi et al., 2017). The needs and perspectives of victims and survivors must be at the center of all interventions and approaches to care; the collaborative model can be a life-changing opportunity for victims and survivors to receive needed support.

Local-level collaborative models are becoming more common due to many states seeing an increase in homicides, extreme violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect among victims at the hands of their abusers (Gavin & Thomson, 2017). For instance, the city of Boston, Massachusetts witnessed a tragic case of a human trafficking victim losing her life, which resulted in various social service providers and agencies forming a working group called SEEN Coalition: Support to End Exploitation Now (Gavin & Thomson, 2017). This collaboration helped more human trafficking victims and survivors receive services, but it also helped SEEN Coalition to collect data on victims/survivors more consistently to show the importance of this movement. Other cities have adopted similar systems of collaboration such as several Community Health Centers (CHCs) such as San Diego and New York have implemented public health strategies to engage in

primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies, and interventions suitable for human trafficking victims and or survivors who seek medical care at these Community Health Centers (Chang & Hayashi, 2017). The collaborative model encourages the collaboration and coordination of resources and strategies that will provide more opportunities for further collaboration.

Furthermore, collaborative models that involve partnerships between public and private sectors that are key stakeholders willing to invest financial resources into creating sustainable interventions are instrumental to ensuring the wellbeing of human trafficking victims and survivors. Mandating financial support through government appropriation of funding for medical health clinics and other evidence-based models to provide comprehensive care for this vulnerable population. In this case, the optimal collaborative model can help state legislators include victims and survivors in the creation of laws that protect and support them in all stages of the process of healing and reintegration (Kappler & Richie-Zavelata, 2020). As such, including victims and survivors in the creation of the incorporating laws that protect and appropriately respond to their needs is necessary. The main objective is to support victims in their process from victimization to survivorship and reintegration into society. Lastly, identifying and addressing state-level policy is key to addressing the current gaps that still exist and leaving human trafficking victims vulnerable at the hands of traffickers (Kappler& Richie-Zavelata, 2020). Collaborative approaches provide care and a space for healing for not only the victim/survivors but the service providers and medical professionals as well.

The Debate about Sex Trafficked Persons as Victims

Boyce et al., (2018) and Sinha et al., (2019) agreed that the proper word to use when describing individuals who have been trafficked is "victim". The perceptions of human service providers and the public about whether an individual is at fault for being sex trafficked (i.e., someone who will not be perceived as a "legitimate" victim of trafficking) or was *forced* or *coerced* into sex work (i.e., someone who will be perceived as a "legitimate" trafficking victim) is based on the knowledge one has about victimization. By framing sex trafficking as an experience where individuals must be innocent, moral beings who hold no fault in being trafficked, individuals are deemed as victims—or people worthy of receiving support by human services providers and the general public. For example, Boyce et al. (2018) found that victim framing in public discourse on sex trafficking made a difference in the services and treatment that victims receive. Sinha et al., (2019) later agreed and suggested that while some scholars may shy away from using the term "victim" to describe individuals who are sex trafficked, acknowledging victimization and the fallacies in how victimization is often framed are key to addressing sex trafficking holistically.

In most cases, Pinto (2019), Honeyman et al., (2016), and Duncaet al., 2019) all agreed that the age of the victim has the greatest impact on affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses to human trafficking. This has important implications for understanding how sex trafficking is presented as a social problem to the American public. Challenging the public to be educated on sex trafficking can change how society examines and then responds to the cognitive and behavioral factors that relate to victim

framing. For example, many sex trafficking factors are influenced by actions that help to combat sex trafficking (Honeyman et al., 2016). Duncan et al. (2019) concluded that these factors; the perceptions of trafficking, perceptions of the victims of trafficking, and an understanding of emotional reactions, must be considered.

Service Providers' Response to Sex Trafficking

Koegler et al. (2022) and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO; 2007) both found that social workers, counselors, law enforcement, and medical professionals reported that the most needed services for victims include case management, crisis services, counseling, shelter, and medical assistance. However, few of these are provided in-house by most agencies. This means many times the impact that service providers can have in the lives of sex trafficked victims is limited and constricted by time and resources, making every engagement especially important. Using a trauma-informed, person-centered approach, service providers may be able to identify and then respond to individuals who have been sex trafficked. Still, gaps remain in understanding the services needed and the best approaches to improve outcomes (Koegler et al., 2022). The response that service providers have to sex trafficking is usually based on the interactions they have with sex trafficked individuals when they come to their agency or organization. Anti-human trafficking service provisions have been supported by the U.S. government since the earliest days of the TVPA, yet very few evaluations of supportive services exist in the literature. Both GAO (2007) and Koegler et al. (2022) found that most U.S. Government Accountability Office funded projects did not include functions to evaluate how funded activities achieved goals or examined long-term impacts of the

projects. The need for improved outreach services to trafficked victims and the public about trafficked victims can help bring awareness of the indicators of trafficking. Improving collaborative partnerships and working with other agencies can help with providing more support. Often service providers are ill-equipped to meet all the needs of a victim. Graham et al. (2019) and Koegler et al. (2021) both believe that the need for guidance in the appropriate ways for providers to support trafficked individuals is critical given the gaps in knowledge regarding available services. Rigorous evaluations have concluded that service providers should collaborate with other agencies to share information, provide training, receive training, share resources, and share staff. The lack of service availability then creates a barrier as to what providers can truly do; this includes the limited resources, funding, and training which make it difficult for service providers to do their job. Focused efforts to develop more resources for service providers will help them to respond to trafficked victims' needs more effectively.

Changes to Law, Policy, and Prosecution

In history there have always been two considerations for laws related to sex trafficking: law enforcement and then the law itself. Although sex trafficking statutes are routinely enforced, the laws themselves have not changed much over time—and the laws often served to punish trafficking victims versus protect them (Dorman, 2022). Consequently, the law has caused difficulties for those who are sex trafficked. Often sex work and human trafficking are linked; but some believe there is no line between them, while others find the distinction particularly important (Dorman, 2022). For over a decade, all US states except Nevada have had a blanket ban on the commercialization of

sex (Dorman, 2022). In 2000, Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which aimed to prevent human trafficking by protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers through important partnerships between law enforcement and outreach charities. On the other hand, there is also legislation that promotes complete criminalization and punishment for prostitution. This type of legislation espouses the Morality View Approach (Dorman, 2022). The biggest issue with the Morality View approach and completely criminalizing prostitution is that it does not seem to influence actual occurrences of prostitution (Tripp, 2019). Therefore, those in favor of the Morality View Approach must then consider if reducing sex trafficking is worth the cost of increasing consensual sex work. These are two reasons why both the Morality View and Liberty View Approach (banning criminalization) will need to be considered to advance legislation regarding trafficking. Perhaps the happy medium is to create laws that target sex traffickers who exploit victims for financial gain off of anyone who identifies as a sex worker. Both Brooks (2021) and Dorman (2022) believe this method should be accompanied by full decriminalization, which would likely reduce sex trafficking and make it difficult for perpetrators to make a profit in this space.

Furthermore, The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, an amendment to the TVPA, concludes that human trafficking is "modern-day slavery. This shift in awareness helps construct a legal framework that could lead to the end of this horrific crime (Forbes, 2018). When TVPA was first passed, there were no state-level anti-trafficking laws; instead, there were federal tools developed "to assist states in enacting anti-trafficking laws" (Forbes, 2018). Nevertheless, researchers have discovered

that more comprehensive state laws will lead to more arrests and prosecutions rather than criminal penalties for victims. The push for more comprehensive laws, such as safe harbor laws, could provide immunity to victims. The Polaris Project unveiled research showing a positive correlation between more comprehensive laws and the chances of perpetrators being arrested and potentially prosecuted (Forbes, 2018). Additionally, inconsistencies in human trafficking legislation among the states add another layer of legal complexity. The definition of what constitutes human trafficking varies from state-to-state, and these variations have contributed to different levels of legislative commitment to address the issue. To harmonize and bring change to these laws, a guide on how to develop and mature this legislation would be ideal. The primary focus should be to correct criminal provisions and elements of human trafficking rather than leaving victims feeling blamed or overlooked (Forbes, 2018).

The 2018 policy initiative of the District Attorney of Philadelphia Pennsylvania is an example of a transition in the thinking of law enforcement and justice toward decriminalization of sex work and highlights concerns about identifying and protecting sex trafficked women (Van Dyke, 2021). The risks of prostitution falling out of the domain of law enforcement means there may be no civil protection, nor easy way for those who provide services to identify women victims.

Service Provision

While there have been many changes around service provision for sex trafficking victims and survivors, the demand for more support remained an issue. The remains of a significant lack of research specific to dual services, including mental health and drug

and alcohol treatment—necessities for many victims. Few studies attempted to understand the importance of mental health and recovery-based provisions for service delivery improvement (Powell et al., 2018). As such, barriers to mental health services not only exist but issues with receiving trafficking provisions are compounded by the difficulty of the mental health system itself. Research has shown that many NGOs that support victims have been in operation for as little as six months up to 25 years (Powell et al., 2018). These organizations have provided mental health or recovery-based services while navigating a very complex service system (Powell et al., 2018). NGOs reported that services were often short-term, involved multiple providers, and patients were given premature mental health diagnoses (Powell et al., 2018). Consequently, victims were often obstructed in their journey to reach or maintain sobriety because they were never given the proper amount of time and resources needed for an accurate diagnosis (Powell et al.,2018). Furthermore, some NGOs mentioned that victims had trouble reintegrating into society, such as not being able to find or maintain employment and provide for themselves, after being trafficked. This affected their mental health and their ability to maintain their sobriety (Powell et al., 2018). Additionally, the lack of support for victims beyond the scope of NGO programs has left victims struggling to transition to the next stage of care successfully (Powell et al., 2018). This finding was consistent across NGOs working with victims, and many times resources that were supposed to be available simply were not. As such, NGOs, and their ability to facilitate services is highly dependent on external funding. Without substantive resources such as financial support from civic or faith-based organizations, many NGOs cannot sustain themselves.

Further, the type of service the victim initially received is likely to be the system in which they will continue to receive services (Gezinski et. al, 2022). For example, if a victim's first encounter is with law enforcement, the victim's needs are unlikely to be met outside of the realm of criminal justice (such as through healthcare or employment assistance). Additionally, ongoing challenges for many service providers are victim identification, human trafficking myths, and service provision—each of these areas provides direction for future research (Gezinski et. al, 2022). To make genuine progress in prevention, more robust evidence should be conducted to define what victims look like, what are some of the barriers and myths surrounding their experience, and lastly what are some supports that can be put into place to help them heal.

Creating evidence-based solutions that help with identifying, implementing, and evaluating effective responses regarding human trafficking should define the various forms of exploitation (under the umbrella terms of "human trafficking" and modern slavery"), have different population distributions, and each of these phenomena is likely to affect subgroups differently (Kiss & Zimmerman, 2019). Additionally, human trafficking-related acts are diverse, ranging from those related to forced sex work to abuse occurring in other sectors using forced and exploited labor, during which severe occupational hazards may occur (Kiss & Zimmerman, 2019). As such, there is very limited evidence on the health consequences for human trafficking victims. Studies that investigate the prevalence and risk of violence whether it be physical, mental, or sexual, need to be addressed (Oram et al., 2016). To date, these health consequences and public health implications of human trafficking have received very little attention, partially

because not much is known about this area. In this case, researchers searched published

literature for suitable studies and found that women and girls who had been trafficked for

sexual exploitation were consistently reported to have experienced high levels of

physical, mental, and sexual health problems (Oram et al., 2016). Additionally, many of

them reported having headaches, back pains, stomach pains, and memory problems

which were commonly reported physical health symptoms. Screening tools were also

used to identify mental distress such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress

disorder; all of which examined the associations between human trafficking and health

problems. Concluding that longer durations of human trafficking are linked to higher

levels of mental distress. These findings, although limited, show that these disparities do

exist and evidence on effective interventions needs to be determined.

Human trafficking screening tools have been rigorously evaluated, the common

types of screening questions and prompts include work conditions, living conditions,

physical health, travel, immigration/movement, appearance and presentation, mental

health, trauma and substance abuse, associations and possessions and arrest and prior

involvement with law enforcement (Macy et al., 2023). Practice-based and research-

based evidence revealed that guidance concerning how screening and identification of

human trafficking may be administered. Due to advocacy from anti-trafficking

practitioners and researchers, there is now an increased number and variety of screening

tools for human trafficking. Prior reviews were conducted, which recommended

identification and response without attention to specific tools (Bespalova et., 2016). To

provide the most current and comprehensive guidance on screening and responding to

human trafficking a broad scope review was conducted. A scoping approach that was widely viewed as a useful starting point for synthesizing, overviewing, and summarizing was done. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (McGowan et., al 2018; Tricco et al., 2018), which included database searches, website searches, hand searches, reference harvesting, and forward citation chaining. Specific anti-trafficking organizations such as the Polaris Project and others who conduct anti-trafficking work (e.g., Vera Institute of Justice) to retrieve screening protocols and response protocols developed by these organizations (Macy et al., 2023). Overall, among these screening tools, the number of questions and/or prompts varied; while The PEARR Tool (Dignity Health, 2019) provided a series of steps to aid (i.e., Provide Privacy, Educate, Ask, Respect, and Respond) but did not provide specific questions. Several of the screening tools were geared especially toward domestic minor sex trafficking, and others had at least one question about children and youth. While others asked about the person's involvement with the juvenile justice system, law enforcement, or the police and whether the person feared that they would be reported to the police. The research findings concluded that while recommendations varied by setting, there were several consistent themes. Specifically, recommendations suggested that screeners should (a) listen without judgment; (b) spend time establishing rapport with the individual being screened before asking any screening questions, particularly sensitive questions (e.g., questions regarding immigration status, sexual activities, and drug use); and (c) use a relaxed and approachable tone (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2019; Covenant House, 2013; Greenbaum et al., 2018; Simich et al., 2014). Simich et al.

(2014). Future efforts for trafficking screening and identification are essential. Overall, offering valuable evidence to service providers to help them identify and then respond to individuals experiencing human trafficking, will ensure that they won't go without being identified and offered support.

Research surrounding service provisions continues to be understudied. The need for strong partnerships between survivors, healthcare professionals, and other service professionals can facilitate healthcare access and receipt of services, particularly in terms of ensuring confidential care and promoting positive provider experiences (Genzinski et. al, 2022).

Summary

An overview of social service providers' contributions to research and application to issues of ways they provide assistance for victims of sex trafficking support the theoretical framework that guided the study. Lewin's Change Model (1951) suggested human service providers adjust their practices within the policy changes surrounding reduced prosecution of prostitution. There are numerous factors to be considered, but there are strong indicators suggesting that the examination of service provisions are worthy of further study. Moreover, a review of literature provides deep insights into the current status of this vulnerable population.

The next chapter will describe the research design and specific procedures used in conducting the study including research sample, overview of information needed to answer research question, research design, methods of data collection, methods for data

analysis and synthesis, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of human service professionals in providing services to sex trafficked women in the context of changes to policy on prosecuting prostitution. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology used to conduct this study, including research design and tradition, research question, the researcher's role, along with study population, and sampling procedures. Further discussion will include the interview protocol, data collection, coding, and analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question in the proposed study is, what are the perspectives and experiences of human service professionals in providing service to sex trafficked women following policy changes that decriminalized prostitution?

I used qualitative methodology—specifically, multiple case study—to conduct the proposed study. The multiple case study methodology allowed in-depth study of holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2017). Case studies also rely on multiple sources of evidence where a case study database is created. This investigation aimed to understand service providers' perspectives and experiences on service provision for sex trafficked women throughout policy changes. To address this question, the choice was to apply case study methodology. Multiple case studies are recommended over single case studies when the goals are to make original contributions to a theoretical or conceptual framework and provide rich, powerful pictures of human interactions (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Multiple case study methodology allows for probing

questions and using a variety of data sources (Yin, 2017).

For the proposed study, the data sources were the study participants. I also reviewed archival information. This information included organizational annual reports for 4–5 years from when the changes to policy prosecuting prostitution first occurred in organizations such as Salvation Army, The Covenant House, WOAR locations. Other sources consisted of records and various documents and artifacts such as reports/summaries of services offered, etc. that study participants wished to contribute. This part of the inquiry provided an external context for the lived experiences of the study participants. Additionally, it maintained a chain of evidence for the study that increased reliability and created consistency with the protocol of the study. All the evidence in the study addressed the most significant components of the case study. A case was identified for each study participant. The study participants were human services professionals who provide services to sex trafficked women in non-profit and service organizational settings.

Role of the Researcher

My role in the proposed study was an interviewer and observer who was the sole data collection instrument. I did not know any of the participants as I recruited them via posting the research study in their agencies and sending it via email. Using this resource helped to provide variability in the study sample for comparison between cases, to ensure effective replication (see Yin, 2017), and to strengthen the transferability of the data to other similar populations (see Stake, 2006).

As the founder of an organization that provides services to sex trafficking victims,

I have significant experience in this field. As such, I had to limit researcher bias by creating an audit trail, keeping a reflexive journal, using triangulation with the committee, and member checking along the way during the interviews. My goal was to understand the thoughts and feelings of the study participants. This included asking participants to talk about things that were very personal to them. All were approaches for attaining confirmability in qualitative research (Guion et al., 2011). Reflexivity offsets researchers' preconceived notions, while audit trails provide the details necessary for ensuring the quality and transparency of theoretical, methodological, and analytical processes in qualitative inquiry (Billups, 2014). In my research, I looked to highlight the challenges experienced by service providers as they support sex trafficked women through policy changes. Incorporating service providers' perceptions, as told from their perspectives, which spotlighted what was missing from research regarding this issue. Additionally, I explored and compared the different perceptions that each person in their participating organization encountered when supporting sex trafficked women, all while the policy may be changing daily. As such, the useful strategy of audit trail development helped display the trustworthiness and transparency of qualitative research; ensuring that specific emphasis is placed on the theoretical, methodological, and analytical framework in research (Carcary, 2020). Triangulation in the form of obtaining data from multiple sources helped to reduce bias and added to the study reliability and validity (Yin, 2017).

Methodology

I followed methodology outlined by Yin (2017); the multiple-case study approach, as used in this study with a sample of service providers, in attempts to

replicate the same findings across multiple cases by exploring the difference and similarities between and within cases, and evidence created this way is considered robust and reliable (Yin, 2017). The next detail key elements in the study methodology, included the participants and how they were selected, how I collected data, and the procedures I used to analyze the data. The procedure was as followed; determining the unit of analysis to identify what policy changes needed to be implemented to better support service providers and trafficked women. Additionally, choosing the most appropriate organizations and service providers to review what helped with deciding what policies needed to be further reviewed to support victims. Lastly, conducting a standardized analysis across cases for compatibility helped draw a general overview of laws and policies on human trafficking.

Participant Selection Logic

The study's population included executive director, two program coordinators, human service case managers, outreach team leader and a lawyer, who encounter and interact with women who have been sex trafficked. Study participants were female adults in this population. The selection criteria were based on a minimum of 2 years of experience supporting women who have been sex trafficked. The reason for these criteria is that it is proposed that people working in these roles for a minimum of two years have sufficient experience to be able to provide data that helps to answer the research question, because of their active roles in their agencies or practices. As noted in Yin (2019) and Stake (2006), using criteria like these helps to ensure that the study participants have in-depth knowledge of and experience with the study topic. The proposed sample size for

this study is four to five participants. According to Yin (2017), there is no single rule for the minimum number of cases in a multiple case study. Important themes and practical applications can be identified through using four to five participants as a larger sample size can become an obstacle for an in-depth investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Schram, 2006). Eisenhardt (2007) recommended limiting the number of cases to the point where the incremental contribution of extra cases is only marginal (e.g., four to 10 cases).

Instrumentation

As the sole researcher, I was also the sole study instrument for collecting data from the interview participants and from archival materials. To facilitate the interviews, I created an interview protocol based on the overarching research question for the proposed study. I used findings from the literature reviewed for this study and the LCM model to inform the protocol. The semi structured interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions to best capture the participants' backgrounds, ideas, thoughts, opinions, values, and behaviors, as recommended by Stake (2006) and Yin (2017). For the proposed study, the questions focused on the perspectives and experiences of human service professionals in providing service to sex trafficked women within the context of the change of decriminalizing prostitution. They will include such questions as "What made you decide to work with this particular population," "How do you feel about the changes, if any, concerning policy around human trafficking," and "What do you think about the current response being taken to handle human trafficking?"

The interview protocol (APPENDIX B) also reflected input from a pilot test and will not be part of the study participant group. In this way, I will be able to determine if

the questions I will ask of the study participants are clean and answerable. If necessary, I

will add more questions or revise the questions based on pilot study participant feedback

and if needed during the interview process.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I recruited participants for the proposed study via asking agencies to post my flier

and sending it in email. The recruitment announcement was placed on bulletin boards

throughout participating agencies, which included contact information.

Potential participants for this study were identified and selected from agencies in

the state where policy has changed that unknowingly allows prostitution currently to

include sex trafficked women. I requested for participants on bulletin boards in the

agencies they belong to with the permission of the agency administrators. The recruiting

flyer included contact information (phone and email). I responded to all the applicants by

asking simple criteria questions about their work that address each of the elements of the

inclusion criteria. Following this, I provided consent letters via email to everyone who

meets the study criteria and continues to express interest in the study to confirm they

understand and want to be part of the study. I thanked those who contacted me but did not

qualify and advised them that they can also receive a copy of the study results if they

choose. I used a snowball sampling method with participants I was successful in

recruiting.

For those who met the study criteria, I sent them the informed consent form,

which included an explanation of what the study entailed of and provided details on the

following: the option to withdraw, the procedure, the possibility of risk or discomfort

associated with participation, time limit, statement of voluntary participation and no consequences for refusal, and their confidentiality rights. After the consent forms were returned, I contacted the participants to arrange times for their Zoom interviews.

Interviews were until all are completed. Each interview lasted an estimated 45 to 60 minutes. The interview guide included open- ended questions and captured the study participants' backgrounds and ideas, thoughts, opinions, values, and behaviors regarding the research question Yin, 2017). I recorded the interviews on ZOOM via audio recording and written transcript.

I thanked the participants at the conclusion of their interviews. I informed them that I may contact them if I need clarification on any information gathered and for member checking. I also reassured them that their personal information and any other materials related to this study would remain confidential.

For document review, I will use the collected data to review existing documents such as organization pamphlets for outreach or other documents in the public domain from the participants to help answer the research question for the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed the participant responses using WORD or copy the transcript from ZOOM into WORD (Saldana, 2016). The specific data analysis approach was narrative content analysis, in which I answered the proposed study's research question. To facilitate this analysis, I examined the data gathered from the interviews and the archival documents and identified recurring themes. In this study, codes that shared common meanings were then classified into categories and themes

(Saldana, 2016). Since service providers cannot generate codes, I was responsible for identifying the codes, then grouping them into categories and themes for analytical reflection (Saldana, 2016). I manually performed first- and second-cycle coding (Saldana, 2016) to make sure the codes that were identified could be streamlined before starting the process of grouping them into categories and then themes. I adopted the descriptive coding strategy (Saldana, 2016) for the analysis of raw data collected in this study, to assign meanings to the raw data (Saldana, 2016). Through this coding process, I used emerging words and phrases for categorization and thematic analysis. The raw data (transcripts) collected from each interview with insights from each participant's response to the study's research question. The data I collected from the interview questions provided detailed information for an in-depth contextual understanding of how service providers for sex trafficked women perceive the changes in policy when providing services. In qualitative, exploratory studies, coding drives the organization of the collected data for analysis (Miles, et al., 2014).

<div align="center">**Issues of Trustworthiness**</div>

Issues of trustworthiness in qualitative studies reflect efforts to establish and ensure the following: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Anney, 2014). To determine credibility, I showed that the findings represent believable and trustful information based on correct interpretations of the participants' views drawn from the original data (Anney, 2014). I established credibility by prolonged engagement with each study participant, using a pilot-tested interview protocol.

Qualitative data are transferable when there is evidence that the study's findings

could be applicable in other settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Many qualitative studies are challenged by this process as their findings are often limited to specific settings and individuals (Shenton, 2004). Transferability in the proposed study was established by the degree in which the results of an inquiry was confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Anney, 2014). I ensured confirmability and limited researcher bias by creating an audit trail, keeping a reflexive journal, and using triangulation (see Guion et al., 2011).

The stability of findings over time was referred to as dependability (Miles et al., 2014). I established and used an audit trail to document all study steps, as recommended. Precisely detailing how data was collected, recorded, and analyzed helped me establish dependability.

The use of triangulation and member check procedures was used to ensure the participants had an opportunity to review the data collected and the interpretation I made about the interview data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To assist in uncovering taken-for-granted biases or assumptions to prevent a form of reflexivity, triangulation, and the member check process is used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The multiple case study approach of this study replicated the same findings across multiple cases by exploring the differences and similarities between and within cases, creating robust and reliable evidence (Yin, 2017), and this multiple case study's replication logic supports the transferability of findings from study past the participant sample (Stake, 2013). The research questions and the paradigm underlying the study dictated how I used unstructured observation. Unstructured observation in the form of

reflective field notes also served as a source of data collection as the study was grounded

in the interpretivist paradigms (Katz, 2014). I used journaling to help me as the researcher

to connect with participants face to face; but also reach participants in distant locations

(Janghorban et al., 2014). I used reflective field notes to record my own observations in

relation to my online interviewer experiences (Katz, 2014). The process of reflective field

notes is inductive and emergent, and it may be useful to take notes on many varieties of

interesting online social experiences such as social groups, events, or sites that may arise

out of the qualitative data collection (Yin, 2017). Reflexivity offsets preconceived

notions about the research by the researcher, while audit trails support the participants'

perspectives (Billups, 2014).

The trustworthiness of the research supported by best practices recommended by

qualitative researchers was my responsibility in this study. There are seven capabilities of

a researcher according to Stake (2013): listening, focusing on behaviors, asking relevant

questions, understanding the research topic, paying good attention to the data, respecting

participants, and using multitasking and ethical procedures. I did not have any

relationship with the participants in this study, therefore I was able to avoid bias,

awkwardness, or the uneasiness that can be created towards the participants' responses.

Ethical Procedures

I followed all procedures for ethical research in the proposed study, beginning

with obtaining approval to conduct the study from Walden University's institutional

review board (IRB). I followed all procedures for ethical research involving human

participants, including obtaining informed consent, reducing undue burden on

participants, minimizing harm, and maintaining privacy and confidentiality (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data collection did not take place until approval was received from Walden University's IRB. Interviews did not commence prior to obtaining informed consent from each participant. Prior to each interview, I reminded the participants of their rights in this study, including that they can withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty or risk. I also reassured them that their responses were confidential and that their privacy would be protected. All identifying information in the data collected would be redacted. Participants would only be referred to by numbers or pseudonyms. All data collected would be securely stored in a private and secure place in order to protect participant privacy and confidentiality. I was the only person who had access to the data. All data is being securely stored for 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

Summary

In summation, Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the study's methodology utilized to conduct this study, including the research design and tradition, the research question, the researcher's role, the study population, and sampling procedures. A multiple case study approach was used to explore the perspectives of human service professionals in providing services to sex trafficked women in the context of changes to policy around prostitution.

Through rich, thick descriptions via interviews, a review of related documentation from service agencies and reflections, and many hours of careful research, I was able to glean participants' experiences as service providers who work to support sex trafficked

women through providing social services during a period of policy changes to law enforcement of prostitution. Potential biases associated with me being a service provider were addressed up front. Issues of credibility and trustworthiness were addressed through peer the use of debriefing, along with data triangulation. Issues of credibility and trustworthiness were addressed through the use of peer debriefing, along with data triangulation. Ultimately, through analysis and interpretation, major themes emerged that will be discussed in great detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of human service practitioners in a midwestern state providing services to victims of sex trafficking within the context of changes to a policy in 2018. The change to policy was a mandate to law enforcement to divert prostitution arrests to alternative strategies. In practice the policy change resulted in deterred prosecution for prostitution, effectively decriminalizing prostitution. For this study I set out to understand how service providers have adapted and changed their practices to the current policy. At the onset of the study, I believed a greater understanding was needed in how service providers adapt to a change in policy while providing effective service to victims of sex trafficking. Additionally, with the current policy change involving responses to sex trafficking being relatively new, I was concerned there would be some disparity in the literature on the topic of support services for victims of sex trafficking.

I conducted a qualitative case study following a design proposed by Yin, (2017), to address this gap in the literature following the policy change. (Philadelphia DAO, 2018). Data sources included narrative data collected in interviews with human service professionals from service organizations that regularly provide services to sex trafficked people and written and published archival data from local social service agencies' organizational annual reports for 4–5 years from three well-known social services agencies from after the 2018, when changes to policy about the prosecution of prostitution laws decriminalizing prostitution first occurred. In this chapter I will review

the culmination of experiences and perspectives of human service professionals in providing service to sex trafficked women following the 2018 change to the policy ending prosecution of prostitution. Moreover, analysis of the data from participants' perceptions sets the foundation for themes that emerged and shared here.

The research question was: What are the perspectives of human service professionals of changes to their providing services to sex trafficked women within the context of the 2018 change to the policy ending prosecution of prostitution?

In conducting the analysis, I combed transcribed interview transcripts searching for, patterns, and bits of text that independently convey meaning leading to themes (Yin, 2017), finally, compiling a culminating list of emergent themes, which is evidenced by Table 2. Dominant themes from the list of emergent themes were further reduced, which translated into three major findings. Each of the findings will be discussed in detail. I will describe the setting of my research, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, findings, and results of the data analysis for the identified research question. This chapter will conclude with a brief summary.

Setting

I conducted interviews via Zoom with participants who volunteered and who met the criteria of the research study. Primary data was collected from narrative oral responses given by volunteer participants who are human service providers working with sex trafficked women to questions that they were asked in the interview. Participants were able to select the setting of their choice from their computer, and all were in a quiet

and private space. Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes via Zoom, audio recorded and then was transferred to text using the WORD transcription option.

Demographics of the Participants

I interviewed six participants who met the criteria for the study as cases. Participants had to be a service provider who worked at agencies for sex trafficked women as a founder, director, staff person or volunteer; with a minimum of 2 years of experience. Participants in the case study included; an executive director of a social service agency providing services to sex trafficked women, two program coordinators, a human service case manager, an outreach team leader and a lawyer. Their experience ranged from two to 25 years, and the number of sex trafficked women they worked with ranged from one to hundreds. Additional individual information is not included to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Each participant was treated as a case with respect to their experience in the field.

Participant One (P1)

Participant 1 was the director of a local anti-trafficking program and provides leadership and clinical oversight to the program. The program provides trauma informed, holistic, and victim centered services to sex trafficked women and survivors. They have been working with victims of domestic violence and human trafficking for over seventeen years.

Participant Two (P2)

Participant 2 was the case management program manager at a local anti-trafficking program and provides sustainable care to those fleeing the life of human

trafficking. Along with immediate needs including shelter, transportation, clothing and food, their organization answers victims' physical and psychological trauma with a portfolio of services including: victim advocacy, crisis intervention, safety planning, employment assistance and legal aid. They have been working with sex trafficked women for five years.

Participant Three (P3)

Participant 3 was the associate program director at a local nonprofit serving homeless women who are also being trafficked. Under their leadership service providers take actions to mitigate crises by offering them food, shelter and access to health care resources. They have been working with sex trafficked women for 15 years.

Participant Four (P4)

Participant 4 was a victim advocate in the mobile case management program at a local anti-trafficking program for sex trafficked women over the age of eighteen and provides crisis intervention, safety planning, employment assistance and legal aid. They have worked in this field for four years.

Participant Five (P5)

Participant 5 was the cofounder/executive director and lawyer of a law institute that addresses commercial sexual exploitation. They have dedicated their career to working with and on behalf of victims and survivors; combating violence against women, protecting the rights of those who are oppressed or exploited. They are a national expert on laws related to sex trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution policy. The institute serves as the data and information clearinghouse for Pennsylvania

stakeholders. They have been working to support victims for twenty seven years.

Participant Six (P6)

Participant 6 was the program manager for the anti-trafficking unit at a local

sexual assault agency. At this agency they support anyone who has experienced any sort

of sexual assault, sexual violence that also includes sex trafficking. The agency provides

comprehensive therapy (individual and group) to women in need of support, training in

the community and prevention services for at-risk youth. P6 has been working in this

field for seven years. The table below shows the information of the participants' years of

experience in the field.

Table 1

Participants' Expérience in the Field

Participant/Case	Years of Experience
P1	17
P2	5
P3	15
P4	4
P5	27
P6	7

Data Collection

I interviewed six human service professionals. I recruited participants by posting

my flyer which included my contact information to permitted social media sites. I

engaged with people who responded and were interested in participating in the study. I

sent them the informed consent to review procedures via email. I asked participants to

send an email stating, "I consent." After receiving the consent, I worked with each

participant online or on the phone if they provided a contact number to determine a time

and day for an interview. Interviews that took place via Zoom were completed while I

was in a secure, private setting in my home. I collected data over a four-week period,

where each participant was interviewed one time. The duration of the interviews lasted

between 45 and 60 minutes. I began each interview by discussing the informed consent,

inclusion criteria, and asking if the participant had any questions.

Participants answered eight questions that I created based on the services they

continually provide sex trafficking women in lieu of the 2018 policy change. I also added

additional follow up questions to obtain rich data from the participants. I ended each

interview by asking if the participant had anything else to add to the interview to ensure

data saturation from each participant. I also asked each participant if I could contact them

again for potential follow-up questions.

I audio-recorded each interview via Zoom. Then I transcribed the recording into a

Word document and hand coded my data; while also listening to all the interviews, I

made corrections to the transcription as needed. At the same time, I was reviewing and

transcribing the interview, I paused the recording and restarted to ensure I obtained all

dialogue. I engaged in reflexive journaling, which is where the researcher keeps a journal

of their thoughts, emotions, and biases during the data collection and analysis process

(Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

After each interview, I reviewed the notes I took from each participant and considered the responses and impact of the interview. I wrote down this information, and all of the interview recordings, transcriptions, informed consents and stored them in a password protected computer. To protect participant confidentiality, I removed any data that could personally or professionally identify the participants or directly link them to an organization.

I destroyed the audio file after transcribing the oral data by physically destroying the external thumb drive after five years.

I also included in the data a collection of all the archival annual reports of three human services organizations that were available online in the public domain. I collected any details of any programs or program changes relating to servicing sex trafficked women. The annual report summary for each organization represented can be found and reviewed in the appendix section of this study.

Data Analysis

I used a cross-case content analysis comparison method (Cousins & Bourgeois, 2014) to analyze the data, in which I answered the study's research question. To facilitate this analysis, I examined the data gathered from the interviews and the archival documents in each case and identified recurring themes as suggested by Saldana (2016). For this thematic analysis, I walked through the coding process for the data gathered from the interviews and the archival documents in detail). In analyzing the narrative data, for the first step, I read each of the interviews slowly and thoroughly to become familiar with the dataset and to fully understand the interviewees' experiences supporting sex

trafficked women, which provided much needed insight on how they perceive the changes in policy when providing services. In step two, I began to code the data highlighting sections of the text – usually phrases or sentences – and coming up with shorthand labels or "codes" to describe their content. I used emerging and repeating words and phrases for codes. (See table 2). I highlighted various phrases in different colors corresponding to different codes. Each code described the idea or feeling expressed in that part of the text. At this stage, I wanted to be thorough: I went through the transcript of every interview and highlighted everything that jumped out as relevant, potentially interesting or kept repeating itself. As such words like challenges, decriminalization, changes, future. As well as highlighting all the phrases and sentences that match these codes, and then I separated them via similarities and difference based on interviewee responses. For instance, I was also aware that I could possibly be adding new codes as I went throughout the text more. After going through the text, I collated together all the data into groups identified by codes based on any similarities they had, such as lack of resources, housing, safe places, social problem, need for assistance were grouped with the code word: challenges. Codes like support from Police Assisted Diversion Program, less arrest, supporting decriminalization, more referrals due to PAD program existence were grouped. To help establish this code looking at participants statements such as " I think it's important that people aren't being arrested for prostitution. For many reasons I think this, but I do think that on the flip side, like, people who are buying people to have sex with or traffickers or whoever should ". One participant even stated, " the charges, that is not a law enforcement decision that is a prosecutorial decision". These

codes allowed me to gain a condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that recurred throughout the data. I did the same coding and analysis of the documented written annual reports from the organization related to the case. I then proceeded to collect codes from across the individual cases, where there were related terms and ideas and conducted a categorization, grouping the data that contained the same codes together. I then examined the data again in each category, further narrowing the information to determine where there were themes in the content.

During step three, I manually performed first-and second-cycle coding (Saldana, 2016) to make sure that the identified codes could be streamlined before starting the process of grouping them into categories and then themes. I noted the most significant codes and labeled them as possible themes (Miles et al., 2014). I looked over the codes I created, identified patterns and categories among them and started to see themes of meaning within the categories. The themes were generally broader than the codes; so, I combined several categories into a single theme. I began to see that some of the codes were vague or not relevant enough, so I discarded them and kept grouping, leaving other codes to become categories based on how frequently they kept showing up in my data.

Table 2

Coding Themes

Codes	Categories to Themes
*Lack of Resources *Systemic Issues *Housing *Safe Places	Challenges
* Support from PAD *Less Arrest Supporting Decriminalization *More Referrals *	Compliance
*PAD Program is a huge help in supporting victims' *Initiated relationship with law enforcement *Less Arrests *Housing * More Resources *Training *Prevention Services	Collaboration

In the fourth step, I reflected upon these categories in the light of my research questions and started to organize themes into a map, checking to see where the themes appeared across the cases. The overall goal was to make sure the themes that were left were truly present in the data. I had to make sure the themes identified were usual and accurate representations of the data.

In the fifth and final step, I defined and named the themes because they captured patterns in the data and related directly to answering the research question and appeared in multiple cases. For instance, it was stated many times by participant "I've seen, you know, the providers really pulling together, really trying to support folks who are, you know, extremely vulnerable, really trying to This included me formulating exactly what I meant by each theme and figuring out how it helped me understand the data. Naming each theme involved me producing an understandable name for each theme.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To determine credibility, I established it by engaging with each study participant, via conducting interviews. Credibility was determined by asking each participant open-ended questions that encourage long and detailed responses and highlighted their credibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Each participant was allowed to give their own version of events in detail they thought was relevant for the sake of the study. All which gave me a better idea of their experience; open-ended questions were the most appropriate way to establish the credibility of each participant. Additionally, during the data collection and analysis process, I engaged in triangulation. Triangulation is where the researcher finds different sources or methods to challenge or confirm the interpretations of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this case, I was able to bring together individuals from the same discipline, but have different perspectives based on their experience. To triangulate the information, I reviewed the policy change with each participant during their interview to see what their interpretation of it was. As a result, each participant interpreted the information the same way, which helped validity to be established.

Throughout the interviews, I took my time and did not rush through my questions and allowed them the opportunity to respond thoroughly. I journaled on the experience of the interviews and any reflections or observations that occurred.

Transferability

Qualitative data are transferable when there is evidence that the study's findings could be applicable in other settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Many qualitative studies are challenged by this process as their findings are often limited to specific settings and individuals (Shenton, 2004). Transferability in the proposed study was established by the degree in which the results of an inquiry was confirmed or corroborated by other researchers(Anney, 2014). To ensure transferability, I detailed the methodology and interview questions in my research to allow future researchers to use the information in further research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). While this study may not be readily transferable to other populations, human service providers and law enforcement may find the results helpful when considering training recommendations for all those who aspire to work with sex trafficked women.

Dependability

The stability of findings over time was referred to as dependability (Miles et al., 2014). I established and used an audit trail to document all study steps, as recommended. Precisely detailing how data was collected, recorded, and analyzed helped me establish dependability. The participants were from a large eastern city. All participants had experience working with sex trafficked women, which influenced their perception of the support they believed sex trafficked women needed. I made sure that I provided all information given to me from the participants, even contrary findings. I made sure that I used the same measures and processes for all participants. I used Zoom and Microsoft

Word to aid in the transcription and coding process; thus, increasing the reliability and dependability of my data.

Conformability

Confirmability is where the researcher attempts to remain as objective as possible and works at putting biases aside (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used several strategies to enhance the confirmability of the research. Throughout the interview, I worked on recognizing my bias and how my biases influenced the data (Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2013). A bias I had to work through is the notion that the founder of an organization that provides services to sex trafficking victims. As such, I had to limit researcher bias by creating an audit trail, keeping a reflexive journal, using triangulation with the committee, and member checking along the way during the interviews(see Guion et al., 2011). I journaled on the interviews and data analysis, discussed biases with my dissertation committee. In order for me to ensure confirmability, I made sure my methods and procedures were laid out and followed in sequence, I displayed all data, I checked all the findings, I continued with consistent check-ins of myself and committee members to maintain acute self-awareness, and I retained all data to be available for other researchers (Miles et al., 2013).

<div align="center">

Results

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The research question I used to guide this study was: What are the perspectives of human service professionals in changes to them providing service to sex trafficked women within the context of the 2018 changes to the policy in the prosecution of prostitution? After I completed interviewing and analyzing data from the six participants

who have worked with sex trafficked women and analysis of the documents and reports from the organizations three themes emerged that highlighted their common experience of working with sex trafficked women after the policy changed, as well as future implications for change. In this section, I will review the themes and the findings associated with them.

The Theme of Systemic Social Violence

The first theme: systemic social violence derived from the analysis of the interview data from human service professionals' experience and their identification of many continuing systemic problems such as racism, sexism, monopolization, violence, etc. all which are connected and related to their efforts to support sex trafficked women. Trying to fix one problem without dealing with the others just makes the societal problem a deeper issue. The policy changes to prosecuting sex trade workers has the unintended consequences of creating bigger challenges for those being abused, as they continue to be targeted. The need for social equality and treating everyone fairly needs to be considered; a lack thereof will lead to increased violence, human rights violations, and hate crimes. This theme derived from participant statements such as, "The lack of resources for sure; so many women out here, they need assistance, and on various levels and the availability for resources such as housing, therapy access, and medication. Another participant stated, "Like more resources in neighborhoods that don't have them, working on like gun violence, working on poverty as Philadelphia has the lowest or if not one of the lowest hourly [pay rate]. It's like we're setting people up for failure, basically."

The Theme of Collaboration

The theme of emerged from the interview was the need for collaboration between human services professionals and other supportive services and joining forces: having one agenda and the same intentions. Participants stated that having one common goal which is to support victims' by identifying the needed resources that will contribute to their success (outcome). This theme derived from participants' statement and beliefs, "I think that starting from like the ground up. Almost like figuring out why are people vulnerable to begin with and trying to fix more of those systems so that trafficking doesn't happen at all. But that would mean we have to work together". Another stated, "To really address the trauma that a trafficking victim or survivor has experienced. It's in our work of working together to support the population we're dealing with".

The Theme of Continuity of Care

The final theme that emerged from the analysis was the need for continuity of services. Participants agreed that without stability and consistency of services being offered to victims by service providers over an extended period of time there is no way out for victims of sex trafficking. One participant stated " connecting with these ladies on a more consistent basis. So, when they are arrested, released and then the divergent program reaches out they need continual care". While another believed "to help combat this issue that's going on and show these women that people are here that do care about you means we have to be consistent and can provide them with better options". Figure 1 outlines these three themes, the categories of codes that were found in the themes, and an expanded summary of the theme's foci.

Figure 1

Identified Themes, Categories of Codes and Expanded Foci
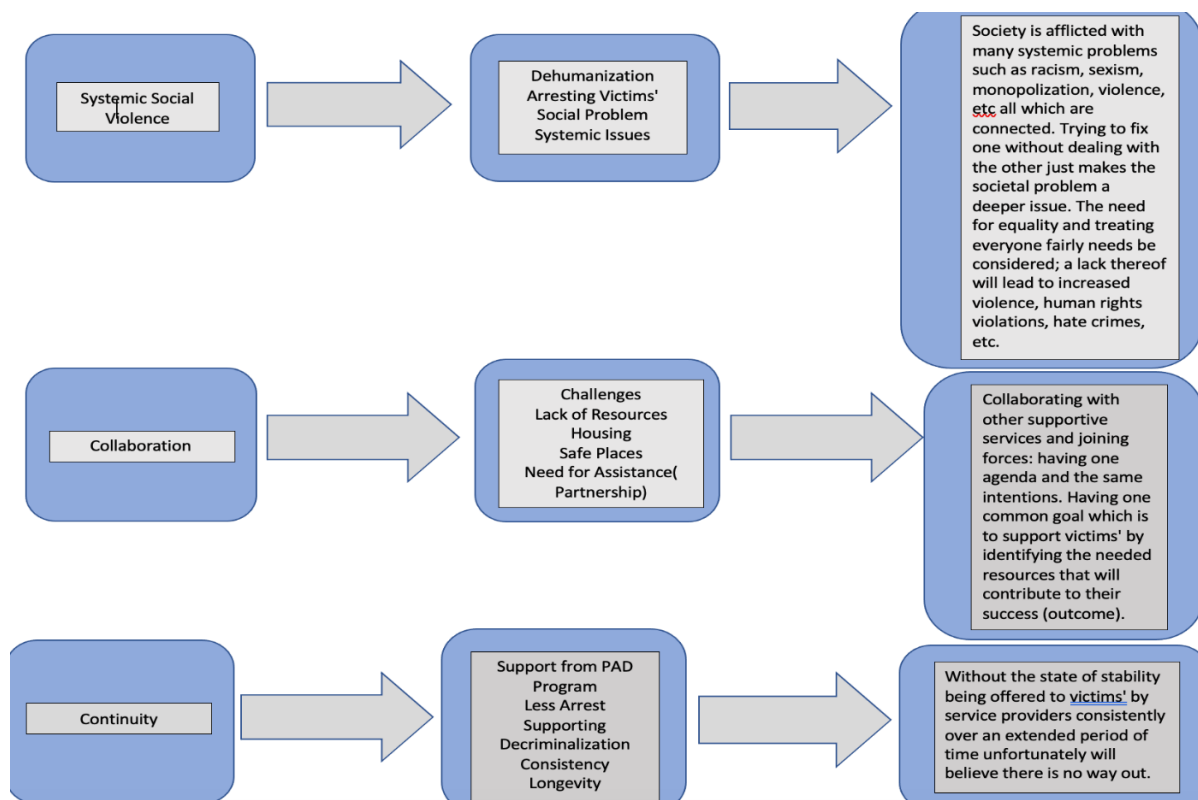
One significant suggestion that was common amongst all participants interviewed was the desire to provide additional knowledge and training to law enforcement providers, to enhance their understanding of what human services professionals face daily to support sex trafficked women.

There was some discussion among the participants about the concept of policy change. Five out of the six participants representing five of the cases agreed with the terminology framing "a change in law enforcement policy initiated by the District Attorney that removed prosecution of sex solicitation (other offenses)" that derived from

one of the interview questions. The five participants agreed it was a policy change in no longer enforcing the law prohibiting prostitution. One participant disagreed with the terminology and framing, and instead referenced it as "not a change in law enforcement policies, there was a change in the DA's office policy. That is not a law enforcement decision, that is a prosecutorial decision". This had a subtle significance because the participant was specific in detailing the source of the change to an individual's directive that may have impacted the social system with unintended consequences to victims of sex trafficking related to prostitution. This meaning was not seen in other interviews; thus, it was not coded as either a meaning or theme. This is further discussed in chapter 5.

Summary

I investigated the perspectives of human service professionals in changes in their providing services to sex trafficked women within the context of the 2018 changes to the prosecution of prostitution and I outlined a detailed description of the process. My objective for this study was to explore the perspectives of human service practitioners in a midwestern state in providing services to sex trafficking women within the context of changes to policy resulting in decriminalizing prostitution, to understand how they have adapted and changed their practices. I discussed the demographics of the participants, my data collection and data analysis methods, evidence of trustworthiness, and the research results. I outlined important themes of experience from six participants' cases who have worked with sex trafficked women. Every participant is unique in their perspective, and through this research, three distinct themes emerged. In Chapter 5, I discuss the

interpretation of my research findings, limitations of the study, recommendations,

implications, and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Human trafficking is a global crime that has affected every state within the United States, leaving victims suffering from various forms of trauma and abuse without any long-term support (International Labor Organization, 2022). The federal government and state legislators have passed laws to combat human trafficking, however the effectiveness of these efforts is still a challenge. Often, service providers are left to work around abrupt changes in policy or in law making their job of advocating for victims' rights difficult to do. Limited research has explored how service providers are perceiving the 2018 changes in policy in a midwestern state; withdrawing law enforcement from prosecution of those in the sex trade, which may be interfering when responding to sex trafficked survivors' needs (Philadelphia DAO, 2018). To address this gap, I used a qualitative multiple case study that explored the perspectives of experienced human services providers responding to the needs of sex trafficked women.

The significance of this study is that it brings to the forefront a set of complex social problems relating to victims of sex trafficking in conjunction with policy changes that service providers meet in their work to bring aid to victims of sex crimes. This study documented how service providers perceived the 2018 changes in policy in a midwestern state that affected sex trafficked women as participants shared their experiences and point of view. Moreover, this study contributes to the understanding of myriad social issues associated with complex challenges of sex trafficking. Most importantly, this study will

contribute to social change by bringing added information to human service providers working with the policy changes while aiding and supporting victims of sex trafficking.

The purpose of this study was to explore the task of human service providers meeting the needs of sex trafficked women during the period since the 2018 changes to law enforcement policy in a midwestern state that limited prosecution of prostitution. This goal was conducted through a qualitative investigation of perspectives of human service workers who are on the front-line supporting survivors and victims of sex trafficking. Moreover, this study was anchored within the theoretical framework of Lewin's Change Management Model (LCMM, 1947). As a result, I gained a deeper understanding of how the LCMM helped the change that service providers experienced in adapting to the new policy.

Chapter 5, I will present analysis, interpretation of my research findings, limitations of the study, along with implications for future research, for practice and for the social determinants of health.

Interpretations of Findings

I interpreted the findings and compared the analysis of the themes and information obtained from participants in the study to the current research literature on sex trafficking. I was able to identify three prominent themes that emerged in my study by organizing the main points presented by study participants and going through them one by one. In this section, in addition to presenting themes that emerged from this study, I will compare and contrast my findings with earlier research findings from prominent theorists on the serious global issue of sex trafficking.

Systemic Social Violence

The theme of systemic social violence is not only supported by current literature, but through earlier works of literature that reinforces concerns around law enforcement and social services collaborative efforts (Anasti 2020). Moreover, most of the research has a focus on services for victims of sex trafficking. Consequently, in my research similar concerns were shared by all six study participants. Each highlighted the importance of victim support and why immediate services are needed when aiding victims of sex trafficking such as shelter, primary care, mental health, including help with drug and substance abuse. Fundamentally, service providers who help victims of sex trafficking have a distinct perspective about their experiences because of their daily interactions with victims. They are front-line workers who see and hear firsthand trauma experienced by victims. As a result, each participant envisioned the communities they aid victims in to achieve lasting change that allows every citizen the chance to thrive-economically, in education and even health. However, to do so means systemic injustices must be addressed in education and basic human rights. Additionally, it means acknowledging inequalities that make a certain population more vulnerable to sex trafficking and victimization. Furthermore, change in policy has reframed sex trafficking. Thus, making social issues surrounding sex trafficking more complex. Notwithstanding serious obstacles faced by service providers, it is important to explore collaborative efforts. Law enforcement, service providers and even individuals in the sex trade can come together to find workable solutions to aid victims.

Anasti (2020) conducted interviews with frontline service providers who collaborated with individuals in the sex trade to understand the service providers' beliefs of their work with this population. As a result, frontline service providers' assumption that individual trauma and drug use are present in the sex trade was shown. This study supports that these assumptions have legitimated paternalistic service responses provided in collaboration with law enforcement. Based on experiences with their clients, service providers working with sex trafficking victims can name several systemic issues that they believe are trafficking risk factors. For example, partnerships between criminal justice and social services are problematic, as can be viewed in recent research by Dewey and St. Germain (2016) and Musto (2013, 2016). The study highlighted and displayed data showing that the organizations fail people who enter the sex trade regardless of how they got there. Consistent with Musto (2013), the close cooperation between law enforcement and social service agencies have resulted in a detention-to-protection pipeline. This pipeline is characterized using gendered and softened versions of criminal justice, such as victim advocates and gender-specific diversion programs, to conceal the close cooperation with law enforcement, which may increase trauma and foster mistrust among victims of sex trafficking. Furthermore, nonprofit United Way (2023), expresses a belief that sex trafficking is a public health issues; that stems from systemic injustices like racism, sexism, and economic inequality, which in return leads vulnerable individuals to face more risk of sex trafficking than others. In fact, United Way (2023) considers it a multi-dimensional problem that disproportionately affects marginalized communities around the world. In this case, taking a public-health approach can help communities

address the root causes of this systemic issue and find better support and long-term healing and success for victims (United Way, 2023). Also, employing a public health approach to combating sex trafficking will help address complex systemic injustices that stem from this one problem. More so, the National Survivor Network (2022), explained that the advantages of taking a public health approach can provide the most benefits for service care providers using a multi-disciplinary lens. Study participants from my research agreed - through collaborative efforts this framework will allow service providers and community leaders to understand risk factors of human trafficking as environmental or systemic (United Way, 2023), which widens the scope for organizations like the ones that each participant from the study is employed with.

(a) Collaboration

The second theme that was named from interviews with study participants is the critical importance of collaboration between law enforcement and human services providers. Each participant shared their view on building a trusting relationship and rapport with sex trafficked women but at the same time noted how trust may be limited if law enforcement does not work to understand the needs of sex trafficked women. Moreover, sex trafficked women's distrust of helping professionals along with feeling unprotected and unsure of who genuinely wants to help has caused ongoing issues for human service professionals who are simply trying to work within the constraints of policy changes. Findings from the United Way (2023) study confirmed the complexity of human trafficking and using multi-disciplinary collaborative approaches to care for, and support victims and survivors is an opportunity for healing and restoration. Research

findings prior to this neither focused on collaborative efforts nor explored a way for law enforcement to understand sex trafficked women. Furthermore, participants acknowledged the importance of collaboration as an effective way to bridge the gap between individuals who have been trafficked, law enforcement, the healthcare system, social service providers and develop collaborative models. In this case, connecting the needs and perspectives of victims and survivors with the experiences of human service professionals could be a life-changing opportunity for sex trafficked women to receive needed support. It is no coincidence that the Philadelphia DAO (2018) policy change was simply created as an effort to reduce mass incarceration and bring balance back to sentencing; all policies are presumptive, not mandatory requirements.

Powell et al., (2018), conducted a mixed-method study wherein the overall findings revealed the need for standardization of human trafficking training content, trauma informed training content to assure correct information, trauma informed, and patient centered care, and consistent messaging for healthcare professionals. Essentially, considering the intersection of medicine, public health, and human rights' discipline to address pressing issues of human trafficking locally and nationally (Powell et al., 2018). Additionally, the study showed how training can improve the knowledge of law enforcement as well as awareness of their attitudes on sex trafficking. The goal of this study was to assess the gaps and strengths in sex trafficking education; in which the outcome was that more effective training would develop their insight on how to interact and manage challenges sex trafficked victims face. Furthermore, several organizations and companies meet a specific need or problem in an effort to improve collaborations

(Shaw EK, Chase SM, Howard J, et al, 2012). In addition, quality improvement (QI) initiative appears to be the most effective in collaboration efforts for improving the knowledge of individuals who are interacting with vulnerable populations (Arceneaux, 2023). Consequently, sex trafficking education and training has resulted in the improved knowledge of participants' perception and their confidence about working with sex trafficked victims (Arceneaux, 2023). Moreover, the research conducted with the help of my study participants and Powell et al. (2018), confirm that with more collaborative efforts bridging the gap between law enforcement and sex trafficked women is very possible.

(b) Continuity of Care

The third and final theme is continuity of care. Not only does this theme show the need for equality, but it emphasizes that treating everyone fairly needs to be considered; a lack thereof will lead to increased violence, human rights violations, hate crimes, and so forth. Interview participants all having an awareness of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office decision to decriminalize prostitution believe the best approach to truly seeing essential change and uninterrupted care for victims is for all supportive services to become more familiar with the work service providers do daily to support victims. Being well informed about the role of front-line workers will make it easier for all to comply with identified supports by way of human service providers' observations. In the absence of consistent supports stability for victims would continually put them at risk and feel as if there is no way out of a harmful lifestyle.

Study participants confirmed the need for continuity of services and support as being critically important for the overall wellbeing of victims. In addition, human service professionals such as mental health clinicians play a critical role in providing victims with trauma-informed care, which gives them a sense of safety and empowerment (Iqbal et al., 2021). Ultimately, it has been difficult to provide continuity of care for victims, but this can be resolved with more collaborative empowerment (Iqbal et al., 2021).

When exploring differences and similarities of prominent theorists and my own current research into the topic of sex trafficking data shows that we all have more in common than not. We all agree that human sex trafficking in the United States and across the globe is illegal, dangerous and exploitive. The data is consistent - victims need efficient support systems that are continuous and delivered in a collaborative effort from an array of service providers where trust and hope are paramount. Specifically, Van Dyke (2021) outlined the effectiveness of decriminalization via a systematic review of prostitution on rates of sex trafficking. The researcher believes that decriminalization has created unintended consequences in the criminal justice field and found research that supported a victim centered approach; helping versus jail time is more ideal (Farrell & Cronin, 2015). Further, Van Dyke (2021) concluded that the goal of decriminalizing prostitution is to improve not only the impacts on voluntary sex workers who often suffer abuse, disease, and arrest, but to also allow for the stricter regulation of sex work and the stamping out of illegal trafficking (Weitzer, 2017).

Limitations of the Study

This study contains limiting conditions that are inherent to qualitative research. limitations of this research centered around my own biases and participant demographics. I am a human service professional who has a nonprofit agency that fights human trafficking. My opinion on human trafficking and the way other human service professionals work with sex trafficked women could show up in my interpretations of the findings. To address this concern, I used journaling as a tactic to help me process, be aware of my personal thoughts, judgements and perspectives that could have an impact on the research.

Another limitation within my research surrounded the participant demographics. While all participants offered rich, thick data that supplied saturation for this study, there was not enough diversity in the location of participants. For Instance, three of the six participants came from the same agency. The study would have benefited from having more diverse participants from other local agencies. There were many email inquiries that went out about the study, but very few individuals responded and agreed to participate.

Recommendations

There are significant opportunities for future research regarding the experiences of human service providers who support sex trafficked women. This study provided a foundation for future research in highlighting present gaps within anti-trafficking legislation, and then make recommendations for the legal protection of victims and betterment of services needed for their reintegration and healing. The plan to see an upgrade in the assessment and evaluation of current efforts; only to protect and

address human trafficking at the state and local levels. Changing the encounter that sex trafficked women have when they interact with law enforcement to a more victim-centered approach will improve their experience; in which they will want to continue to receive more support and services (Gezinski et. al, 2022).

The participants in my study desire to see an array of support services and collaborative efforts, such as creating evidence-based solutions that help with identifying, implementing, and evaluating effective responses regarding human trafficking (Kiss & Zimmerman, 2019). To do so allows human service professionals to provide both prevention and intervention training to law enforcement so they know how to handle many of the challenges they face on a daily basis. Also, more resources for many of the neighborhoods sex trafficking reside in such as affordable housing, employment, healthcare insurance money for long-term trauma-informed and drug treatment programs as many sex trafficked women do not have financial means. Due to their lack of resources, coming out of a victimized lifestyle and staying out is very slim as they do not have enough resources to support themselves.

Lastly, more local agencies and community drop-in spaces that are safe for sex trafficked women to go to in the interim when they need immediate support. This research also concluded that having safe places to go to can be an assurance that there is hope and whenever they are truly ready, they have somewhere to go. Therefore, there is a need for more research regarding consistent and effort support for human service professionals in lieu of them working to support sex trafficking victims. Helping them to keep their momentum will bring society one step closer to ending this horrific crime. Sex

trafficked women will continue to need support, making this area one for continued research.

Themes of Change

Themes that developed from the research I conducted were the result of relationship forming with the findings of analysis. In this case, each theme addresses a concern that human service providers are dealing with currently while trying to support sex trafficked women. The stance of human service providers is resilient, and they will not stop doing the work because it is making a difference. However, they recognize their unintended consequences that have a negative impact on sex trafficked women. Service provers have learned to adapt, but their need for more moral support is necessary.

Unintended consequences are the result of an action that differs from the expected outcome (Coyne, 2014). In fact, the reason unintended consequences exist is because most often when a simple system tries to regulate complex systemic bigger issues arise. In this case, the issues that human service professionals face while trying to support sex trafficked women is part of a more complex problem that really is out of their control.

The risk of unintended consequences are outcomes of an action that are not foreseen (Albert, 2021); in this case this study confirms that challenges surrounding systemic social violence, collaboration and continuity are all the result, in which a problem has been created that is apart from the problem that needs to be solved. Albert (2021) posits, "research on criminal behavior indicates that individuals engaging in criminal activity operate from subjective norms developed through interactions with peers"; meaning typically, individuals make determinations of what is "socially

acceptable behavior" through observations and interactions with those they interact daily. Therefore, social influence and how one engages in criminal behavior depends on the level of which they perceive the severity of their actions.

The findings from this study support that systemic social violence is one of many interconnected norms that strongly determine behaviors and individual outcomes (Albert, 2021). Trying to fix one without dealing with the other just makes the societal problem an issue that never gets resolved. However, the outcomes can be changed by changing the norms. In this instance, collaborative efforts between human service providers and law enforcement will help support sex trafficked women in finding alternative ways to improve their quality of living. Lastly, continuity of care being an option for them will give them the choice to get help and become stable.

Implications

Positive Social Change

This study highlights social change implications and has illuminated how policy change reducing prosecution of prostitution can help provide services for sex trafficked victims. It also contributes to understanding that reducing incarceration for prostitution has unintended consequences for sex trafficked women. This study contributes to social change because if human services professionals feel more supported and understood by other individuals who are interacting with sex trafficking women, then in return they can continue to create safe places for them to heal. This research also highlights the need for collaboration amongst all local organizations who support trafficked women to provide adequate prevention and intervention training to law enforcement. This effort must be

collaborative as working together will increase their impact and bring about more positive change. In turn, this may result in more opportunities to serve sex trafficked women for a longer period based on the needs of the individual. Furthermore, if human service professionals feel more supported, they will continue to serve without feeling overlooked or undermined.

The field of human services is broadly defined, and it is a profession that promotes improved service delivery systems by addressing not only the quality of direct services, but also by seeking to improve accessibility, accountability and coordination among professionals and agencies in service delivery (National Organization for Human Services, 2023). The job of a human service professional is to serve and not be served; the work that they do daily is simply an act of duty that they perform as their responsibility to the profession (NOHA, 2023). The primary purpose of human service professionals is to assist individuals within their communities to function as productive citizens. As such, implications for service providers in the field that support sex trafficked women include but are not limited to them being more vocal about the things they see and experience while helping sex trafficked women. This brings more awareness to the reality of what supporting this vulnerable population truly looks like. Often those who are not interacting with sex trafficked women would not know about the stories of childhood trauma, drug addiction and homelessness that prevents them from being self-sustainable. Helping individuals who feel hopeless, ashamed, abandoned, and rejected find value in themselves is what makes the work professionals do worthwhile. It connects

human service professionals to those they are supporting and allows them to work side by side to find feasible and tangible solutions to their needs.

Social Determinants: Public Health Response to Sex Trafficking

By understanding how diverse social and economic determinants of health correlates to populations at higher risks, it can decrease an individual's vulnerability to being sex trafficked. Sex trafficking, along with domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, impacts the health of the entire community (National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2023). Using social determinants to inform approach is the best way to intervene and bring a specific solution to this growing problem. A public health approach to addressing sex trafficking would include finding preventive measures that reduce vulnerabilities to sex trafficking and minimize long-term impacts of trauma (National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2023). Sprang et al., (2022) believes that "public health research, if conducted rigorously and grounded in equity, has the power to change the systems and structures that allow human trafficking to persist and propagate". There is a need to reflect on the limitations of prior research, the lived experiences of those who were sex trafficked, to help shape the future of public health antitrafficking research (Sprang et al., 2022). More so, addressing ongoing trauma, interpersonal violence and social determinants of health would need to include victim identification, service provision, health care, behavioral health treatment and criminal investigations would significantly decrease the number of individuals who experience sex trafficking (Center for Disease Control and Prevention).

Conclusion

Sex trafficking is defined as a form of modern-day slavery in which individuals engage in commercial sex acts but do not do so willingly. Rather, they are recruited by other individuals via tactics of force, fraud, or coercion (TVPA, 2022). Human service professionals need to be prepared to work with sex trafficking and support from everyone involved in their lives plays a major part. Participants in this research study discussed that over time with more collaboration, compliance, and continuity of services a gradual development of change will form causing this extraordinarily complex issue to become very simple.

To address sex trafficking in this Midwest city establishing a task force such as the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force that was created in 2010 by the Office for Victims of Crime and the Bureau of Justice Assistance would be ideal. This collaborative effort forced: collaboration among stakeholders; survivor engagement and service provision; and task force training, focus, and activities (Enhanced Collaborative Model, 2010). This multidisciplinary approach brought together law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim service providers in communities to work together on a coordinated response to address all forms of sex trafficking (Enhanced Collaborative Model, 2010). Constructing a task force that represents the diverse knowledge and skills of like-minded individuals who share an understanding of the approach to combating sex trafficking is key. Moreover, the need for collaboration and consultation is critical to creating a strong community who supports sex trafficked women.

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Appendix A: Letter of Introduction and Recruitment

Good day, I am a doctoral student at Walden University inviting you to participate in my research about the perspectives and experiences of service providers regarding changes in the criminal policy for sex trafficked women. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges service providers face when supporting sex trafficked women; this includes having to adapt to practices to accommodate the change in policy. I believe that your experience would be a great contribution to the study. Therefore, I am reaching out to discern if you might have interest in participating in the research.

I am conducting this study for my Walden University dissertation; the study is important as the findings may provide future service providers with helpful ways to address their perspectives and experiences while providing services to sex trafficked women. Additionally, identifying what policy changes need to be implemented such as better support for service providers and trafficked women to be effective. Finally, the social change impact of this study may serve as a catalyst for social change by challenging the status quo in existing formal work structures and promoting more diversity in policy changes.

If you would be interested in being a part of this study, please review and return the signed consent form which is attached to this email. If you would like to request additional information, you may reply to this email. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sakinah Salley

Appendix B: Interview

Type of Agency_____
Years of Experience _____

1. Please describe your own history or practice experience with women who are sex trafficked?
2. How would you describe the main challenges you have faced as a service provider in your agency who supports sex trafficked women?
3. How would you describe policy change from 2018 regarding no longer prosecuting prostitution?
4. What do you see has changed in how you provide services since the change in policy?
5. How did you go about making the decision to make any changes to your practice when policy changed?
6. Please share any reflections on what you feel is needed to improve the policies or practices used to provide services to sex trafficked women now?
7. How do you see the future for providing services to sex trafficked women in your community?

Appendix C: Flyer and Consent Form

Volunteers Needed for a Research Study on State Policy Changes about Prostitution

Are you a service provider or volunteer who has worked directly with sex trafficked women? You may be eligible for a study about how the changes in policy reflect in your work.

You May Qualify If You:

Have a minimum 2 years of experience supporting sex-trafficked women.
- Have worked at agencies for sex trafficked women as a founder, director, staff person or volunteer?

. **Participation Involves**

- Participating in a confidential and private interview on ZOOM, or face to face with the researcher for about 60 minutes.
- **Location:** In-person and virtual options are available upon participants' request

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Sakinah Salley 215-253-9775, email sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu **or**

Policy Changes Study Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu	**Policy Changes Study** Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu	**Policy Changes Study** Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu	**Policy Changes Study** Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu	**Policy Changes Study** Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu	**Policy Changes Study** Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu	**Policy Changes Study** Sakinah 215-253-9975 Sakinah.salley@waldenu.edu

Appendix D: Annual Reports

Salvation Army

Human trafficking continues to plaque Philadelphia neighborhoods, even while prostitution cases continue to plummet – down to four cases in 2021 – due to a variety of factors, primarily the pandemic. Victims are at a greater risk than ever when it comes to receiving the necessary resources to find a way out. Prosecutors are recommending now more than ever that those impacted by trafficking seek help from nonprofits and social service organizations to help lead them on a path to light. Thankfully, since 2010, The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia's New Day to Stop Trafficking has been a leader in providing a safe space and a second chance for survivors of human trafficking. In 2021, the program served nearly 1,170 individuals through a wide range of services – including food, clothing, and hygiene at its New Day Drop-In Center in Kensington; transitional housing for safe reintegration into communities; mobile case management; trauma-informed care in juvenile court; and police-assisted diversion. In comparison to this study, this program continues to make strides in supporting sex trafficked women through collaborative efforts and finding continual ways to tend to the needs of their clients.

Covenant House

Covenant House has taken pride in helping individuals build on their strengths to overcome their experiences of homelessness and human trafficking. The data that this program has collected is to help them better understand the population they serve and their lived experiences, this way they can identify best practices and update their

programs and services to better serve. In 2022, 7,700 young adults were served in residential programs, 1,600,00 meals were served, 730,000 nights of housing provided, 29,000 on-site medical visits were conducted, 2,400 young people moved to stable housing. Overall, their programs have reached more than 43,00 young people across six countries. Their mission to serve relentlessly shows their dedication to the work and the cause. In comparison to this study, their program has displayed unique ways to serve vulnerable populations. Providing continual care and ongoing services tells the story of this organization and what's still to come.

WOAR

In 2021, WOAR has supported 3,048 new clients of which 240 victim/survivors were helped by crisis advocates and treated, as well 485 survivors and their families, during preliminary hearings and trials. Lastly WOAR staff and volunteers answered 2,307 hotline calls. Unfortunately, there wasn't much data beyond 2021 to support ongoing efforts this program may have done. Moreso, the work and support this program provides to victims' isn't displayed legibly on their website, which made it hard to understand what is currently taking place within the organization currently. In contrast to this study, their program failed to provide updated data to show what they have done to support victims' of sex trafficking. Having more insight on any changes to their program mission or additional services to support the work they were already doing would've helped my data further.

Villanova Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Since the inception of the Justice for Victims Fellowship, 108 clients have been served as a result of the Fellows' collective efforts. The Fellows' priority is to provide criminal record clearing options for victims and survivors of sex trafficking primarily through vacatur and expungement. Of the 52 clients seeking vacatur of their criminal records, the fellows have successfully achieved vacatur of 171 cases with over 258 charges being erased from their criminal records. These survivors had anywhere from 1 to almost 40 vacatur-eligible charges removed from their criminal histories. This program has done a tremendous job at supporting and serving victims' of sex trafficking. Their efforts have closed the gap between policy work and human service providers and in its place created a bridge for future efforts. In comparison to this study, their program has contributed to addressing systemic social violence, working to collaborate and provide continual care to victims'.