

A Comprehensive Analysis of Substantiated Human Trafficking Cases within Butler
County Children Services

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Research 2

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Abstract

Human trafficking is one of the largest criminal enterprises in the world. Research has shown that millions of people become victims of human trafficking every year. It is critical that more research be done to identify factors that put people at risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of human trafficking. This study provided a comprehensive analysis of substantiated cases of human trafficking within Butler County Children Services in order to create a descriptive profile of the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking. This study examined factors such as the race, age, gender, and relationship status of victims and perpetrators to create this descriptive profile. The findings of this study suggest that demographic risk factors such as age and gender may influence the likelihood of a person becoming a victim of human trafficking. The findings of this study also suggest that demographic risk factors such as gender may influence the likelihood of a person becoming a perpetrator of human trafficking.

Keywords: human trafficking, children services, butler county, victims, perpetrator

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the problem.....	5
Scope of the problem.....	5
People affected by the problem.....	6
Justification of the study.....	6
Background of the problem.....	7
Significance of the study.....	7
Underlying Assumptions.....	7
Purpose of the research.....	8
Identify qualitative or quantitative.....	8
Definition of terms.....	8

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Ecological Theory.....	9
Traits of Victims.....	10
Traits of Offenders.....	11
Relationship between Victims and Traffickers.....	12
Gaps in the Literature.....	13

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design.....	14
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Type of Study.....	14
Research Questions.....	14
Hypothesis.....	15
Variables of interest.....	15
Measurement Instruments.....	15
The Setting.....	16
Sampling Method.....	16
The Sample.....	17
Protection of Human Subjects.....	17
Data Collection Procedures.....	18
Data Collection Schedule.....	18
Data Analysis Plan.....	18
Limitations of the Study.....	19
Chapter 4: Findings	
Findings.....	19
Chapter 5: Discussion	
Discussion.....	22
Bibliography	26

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Human trafficking is considered to be “the world’s second largest criminal enterprise” (Chohaney, 2016). Millions of people around the world, and thousands of people in the United States fall victim to human trafficking every year. Human trafficking has been documented in all 50 states (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016). It is critical that more research be done to investigate who is committing these crimes and who is falling victim to these crimes.

Scope of the Problem

Human trafficking is a major problem facing the United States right now. It is incredibly difficult to find information regarding the scope of human trafficking because of the secrecy that comes with the underground world of criminal activities. It is estimated that 12.3 million people are victims of human trafficking worldwide (Chohaney, 2016). In the United States, it is estimated that 100,000 to 300,000 children are lured in to domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) each year (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016). In

the state of Ohio, it is estimated that "1,000 female and disproportionately minority Ohio girls (aged 12-17) are trafficked into the sex trade each year" (Chohaney, 2016).

People Affected by the Problem

There are many people who are impacted by human trafficking. The population groups who are at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking include women, and children. It is also know that, among children, teenage girls and youth in foster care are particularly vulnerable population groups to traffickers. It is estimated that women make up 50% to 80% of the worldwide victims of human trafficking and about 70% of sex trafficking victims (Chohaney, 2016). It has been reported that around 2 million children are being trafficked every year worldwide (Chohaney, 2016). In the United States alone, it is estimated that 300,000-400,000 minors are trafficked every year (Chohaney, 2016). In Ohio, it is estimated that 3,016 girls are at risk of being trafficked (Chohaney, 2016).

Justification of the Study

Child welfare social work is guided by the idea that "children have the right to a safe, permanent, stable home, which provides basic levels of nurturance and care, and is free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation" (Rycus & Hughes, 1998). Children who are being exploited for commercial sex acts are being denied the rights defined by the most fundamental principle of child welfare social work. It is relevant to child welfare social work understand human trafficking, especially as it pertains to children. It is critical that research be done to provide social workers in this field with an idea of who is trafficking

people and who is vulnerable to traffickers so that they can protect these vulnerable populations, as demanded by their job. Social workers who know these things can actively work to prevent human trafficking by recognizing it in their cases and educating vulnerable populations before it is too late.

Background of the Problem

The research is clear in defining human trafficking as a problem. As previously stated in this paper, millions of people worldwide are being trafficked, and hundreds of thousands of people in the United States alone are victims. Ohio is known to have an extensive human trafficking problem, "due in large part to its strategic location as an interstate transportation node (Chohaney, 2016).

Significance of the Study

It is almost impossible to get a clear estimate of the severity of human trafficking in the world, in this country, and in this state. This is simply due to the fact that human trafficking is a criminal operation. As expected, criminal operations are often conducted underground with secrecy and caution, making it difficult to study. There is little to no information studying human trafficking in Ohio, and specifically in Butler County.

Underlying Assumptions

- This study will find that a majority of traffickers are classified as male.
- This study will find that the majority of victims are classified as female.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to provide a quantitative analysis of substantiated cases of human trafficking within Butler County Children Services. This study seeks to find trends among the victims and traffickers to aid in future research that aims at identifying potential victims and traffickers.

Identify Qualitative or Quantitative

This study will take a quantitative approach to exploring the problem of human trafficking within Butler County Children Services. Quantitative methods are best suited to this study because this study seeks to measure the race, gender, relationship status and age of the perpetrators and victims of substantiated cases of human trafficking investigated by Butler County Children Services. This study will count the amount of perpetrators and victims in each category and look for trends within those numbers that give a better understanding of who the traffickers and victims in Butler County are.

Definition of Terms

- Commercial Sex Act: "The giving or receiving of anything of value (i.e. money, drugs, shelter, clothing, food, etc.) to any person in exchange for a sex act" (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016).
- Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST): "The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act where the person is a citizen of the U.S. and under age 18 years" (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016).

- John: "The person who "causes" a child to engage in a commercial sex act when she or he buys sex from a child" (O'Brien, White, & Rizo, 2017).
- Trafficker: "Those who profit from commercial sex acts performed by persons under their control by means of force, manipulation, or coercion, traditionally known as pimps" (Chohaney, 2016).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Ecological Theory

Ecological theory provides an understanding of how the growth and development of children is influenced by their environment (Finigan-Carr, Johnson, Pullmann, Stewart, & Fromknecht, 2018). This theory can be applied to the victims of human trafficking, specifically child sex trafficking, to explain the way potential victims are shaped by their surroundings. At a community level, there are many factors that encourage or discourage the human trafficking of children. For example, Poverty has been determined to be one of the community level factors that affect a child's risk of victimization. Neighborhoods with low socioeconomic status that have high crime rates and criminal activity encourage the existence of human trafficking, thus making it more likely for a child to become a victim (Finigan-Carr et al., 2018). Ecological theory is

important to the design of this study, and the researchers will be examining traits such as socioeconomic status of the victims and traffickers to look for ecological trends.

Traits of Victims

There are many traits that have been identified as contributing to a child's risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. One study determined that children who have higher ACE scores are more likely to become the victim of human trafficking (Reid, Baglivio, Piquero, Greenwald, & Epps, 2017). This study also noted that sexual abuse is the strongest ACE predictor of human trafficking victimization (Reid et al., 2017). Girls who experienced sexual abuse were 2.52 times more at risk of experiencing human trafficking and boys who experienced sexual abuse were 8.21 times more at risk (Reid et al., 2017). The reason for boys having a higher risk than girls is not currently known.

It has also been determined that having a history of involvement with the child welfare system or running away from home contributes to a child's risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. Research has found that there is a positive relationship between out-of-home foster care placements and domestic minor sex trafficking (O'Brien et al., 2017). One study found that 33% of 400 research study participants who had been sexually exploited had a history with the child welfare system (O'Brien et al., 2017). It is also known that approximately 20 percent to 30 percent of runaway youth who are living on the street have fled a foster home (O'Brien et al., 2017). Youth who are runaways are more likely to encounter traffickers at bus stops, parks, and malls, where

traffickers frequently recruit their victims (O'Brien et al., 2017). Youth who have run away from home are also more likely to engage in survival sex, which puts them at a greater risk of being trafficked (Chohaney. 2016).

Traits of Offenders

Researchers have frequently found that offenders of child sex trafficking have varying races, economic statuses, and social domains (Carpinteri, Bang, Klimley, Black, & Van Hasslet, 2017). Characteristics of offenders who participate in the human trafficking of children have traits that vary by offense. For example, research has found that producers of child trafficking are typically males who are 19 to 45 years of age, with lower levels of education (Carpinteri et al., 2017). The same study found that people who buy sex are typically males who are 20 to 60 years of age with higher levels of education (Carpinteri et al., 2017). The same study also found that offenders who travel to facilitate sexual activities with minors are typically younger, unemployed and single (Carpinteri et al., 2017).

There is a lot of documented traits of offenders who are involved in producing and viewing images of child sexual abuse. These offenders typically live more stable intellectual, social, and educational lives (Carpinteri et al., 2017). The producers of these images are also mostly males who are older and employed (Carpinteri et al., 2017). The study found that female offenders worked with a male offender in about 45 percent of the cases studied and were typically involved in offenses against family members

(Carpinteri et al., 2017). Individuals who were arrested for possessing child sexual abuse images are typically younger males who are 18 to 25 years of age and are unemployed (Carpinteri et al., 2017). It is also known that there is a relationship between contact offenses and possessing child sexual abuse images. Research shows that an offender who does both most likely lives with children (Carpinteri et al., 2017).

Relationship Between Victims and Traffickers

Traffickers and their victims share complex relationships. Typically the assumption is that a "pimp" is selling victims on the street for money, but the true story is far more intricate and complicated. One study found that "the relationship between market-involved adolescents and those who benefit from their sexual labor are far more diverse and complex than the current policy enacted under the TVPAs logic indicates" (Marcus, Riggs, Horning, Rivera, & Curtis, 2012). This study found that 86 percent of the adolescents participating in the study had no pimp (Marcus et al., 2012). However, this same study found that 40 percent of the study participants "had someone who helped them find customers" (Marcus et al., 2012). This is a common theme within the literature on human trafficking. One study found that the participants in the study did not view themselves as victims of human trafficking. The participants in the study either lacked awareness of human trafficking or insisted that they had chosen to sell sex on their own to get things that they wanted (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016).

There are many ways that traffickers form relationships with their victims to lure them in to sex trafficking. One study found that in rural areas it is common for youth to be trafficked by their own family members (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016). This same study found that in urban areas the victims were typically lured into trafficking by female friends or a boyfriend (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016). This study made a point to mention that a common theme throughout their interviews with the juvenile female research study participants was that the girls wanted to feel loved (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016). This is significant in that it shows that the girls might have been willing to trade sex for things that they wanted as a way to feel loved, or they might have been more likely to participate in human trafficking for a boyfriend or friend as a means of getting love. Another study found a similar theme, stating that victims often form trauma bonds with their traffickers, who often pose as a boyfriend before trafficking their victims (Nichols & Heil, 2014).

Gaps in the Literature

The current literature on research studies that focused on identifying the traits of victims and offenders of human trafficking are far and few between. There is not enough research on this topic. It is already difficult to find literature on human trafficking, and even harder to find research that categorizes victims and perpetrators and looks for trends within the categories. This current study is useful in this area, in that it will be categorizing victims and offenders by race, gender, age, and relationship status. This

current study will also be seeking to find trends within the data to help in identifying people who are at risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of human trafficking.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design

The purpose of this research study is to provide a quantitative analysis of substantiated human trafficking cases within Butler County Children Services. This study seeks to find trends among the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking to aid in future research studies that aim to identify potential victims and perpetrators. This study will categorize victims and perpetrators separately by age, race, gender, and relationship status and quantify the number of people in each category. The data collected from this will be used to create a description of the most prevalent identities of the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking.

Type of Study

This is a descriptive study. This study will focus on gathering facts about the victims and perpetrators and will try to define who the victims and perpetrators are.

Research Questions

- What is the mean age of perpetrators and victims?
- What is the race of victims and perpetrators?

- What is the gender of victims and perpetrators?
- What is the relationship status of victims to perpetrators?

Hypothesis

Is there a relationship between demographic variables and being a perpetrator of human trafficking? Is there a relationship between demographic variables and being a victim of human trafficking?

Variables of interest

The dependent variable for this study is that the subjects of this study have been identified as either a perpetrator or victim of human trafficking. The independent variables for this study include age, race, gender, and relationship status.

Measurement Instruments

No measurement tools will be needed for this study. All data will be collected through a secondary analysis of case reports submitted by caseworkers within Butler County Children Services. The dependent variables for this study (age, race, gender, and relationship status) will be taken directly from the case reports and compiled into a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel. The data will then be counted to answer the research questions. There is no need to assess the validity and reliability because no measurement tools will be used. This study seeks to prove or disprove the hypothesis, that there is a relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variable.

The Setting

The subjects of this study will be identified from the substantiated human trafficking cases within Butler County Children Services. Butler County Children Services is a public child welfare agency that serves the Butler County area of Ohio. This organization is in charge of investigating allegations of abuse and neglect against children, including reports of the suspected human trafficking of children. A case that has been investigated by Butler County Children Services and has been determined to involve an act of human trafficking of children is considered substantiated. This case information will be made available through the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

Sampling Method

The population of interest is all perpetrators and victims of human trafficking. The sampling frame is the list of cases involving perpetrators and victims of human trafficking within Butler County Children Services. This study will use non-probability sampling because every case that has been deemed to be a substantiated case of human trafficking will be used in the study.

The Sample

The sample size for this study will be approximately 10-20 cases, depending on how many cases can be found in the SACWIS system. It is currently known that 10 cases have been found for this year alone. This study will be using secondhand analysis of

data and the researcher will not be working directly with any subjects. The people identified in the cases that will be studied are perpetrators and victims of human trafficking. There is currently no descriptive profile of these people, and this study will be seeking to create such a descriptive profile.

Protection of Human Subjects

Value and Ethics

The researcher is the only person who will have access to the data. The data will only be used for this research project. This study will keep the names of all people involved in the cases confidential. The personal data, such as age, race, gender, and relationship status will be discussed in such a way that no person could connect the information back to the case it was gathered from.

Human Diversity Issues

This study will not be working directly with human subjects, so there is no need to conceptualize topics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or disability. This study will be looking at race and gender from the data that has already been reported in the case reports.

Data Collection Procedures

This study will use secondary analysis to collect data. I will be analyzing data that has already been completed and documented through the investigations of cases.

Data Collection Schedule

This study will begin on January 11th of 2021 and will conclude on April 27th of 2021. Butler County Children Services began inputting cases with a human trafficking label approximately one to two years ago. This study will collect data from that start date to January 11th of 2021.

Data Analysis Plan

This study will answer each question by compiling data for each of the independent variables, such as age, race, gender, and relationship status, into an Excel spreadsheet. For example, this study will have a collection of people who have been identified as each age, and will then look at the number of people in each age range to find the most common age for a perpetrator and victim of human trafficking. This study will then compare these results to the overall population in Butler County to discover if there are any outliers. For example, if Butler County is made up of a majority of people identified as white, but the study finds that it has a high number of victims who are identified as a racial minority, then the study can conclude that being of a minority race is a risk factor for being a victim of human trafficking.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in that Butler County Children Services did not begin inputting cases into SACWIS with a human trafficking label until approximately one to two years ago. There is a small number of human trafficking cases due to this time restriction. This

study will by no means be able to provide an entirely comprehensive examination of human trafficking cases because so many have not been labelled. This study is also limited in that it must be conducted within a short timeframe, having only one semester to complete the project. This study is also limited in that only one researcher is available to compile the data.

Chapter 4

Findings

Table 1: Demographics of Victims and Perpetrators

Demographics	Victim	Perpetrator
Age		
0-10	1	0
11-20	4	0
21-30	0	0
31-40	0	0
41-50	0	2
51-60	0	0
Unknown	0	2
Gender		
Male	1	3

Female	4	1
Unknown	0	0
Race		
White	5	2
African American	0	0
American Indian	0	0
Asian	0	0
Hispanic or Latino	0	0
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
Two or More Races	0	0
Unknown	0	2
Relationship Status (Perpetrator to Victim)		
Parent	3	2
Extended Family Member	0	0
Family Friend or Acquaintance	0	0
"Johns"	2	2
Unknown	0	0

The sample for this study consisted of 5 cases of substantiated human trafficking within Butler County Children Services. The study sample included 5 children identified as victims of human trafficking. These children ranged in age from 3 years old to 16 years old. All of the children had a race that was identified as white. This study looked at 4 female children and 1 male child. The study sample included 4 adults identified as perpetrators of human trafficking. These adults ranged in age from 43 to 50 with 2 adults listed as having an unknown age. The study examined 2 adults who had a race listed as white and 2 adults having a race listed as unknown. This study looked at 3 adult males and 1 adult female.

The primary results of this study addressed the hypothesis designed by the researcher. The majority of data collected for this study shows that there may be a relationship between certain demographic variables and being a perpetrator of human trafficking. The strongest amount of data points to gender as a demographic variable with a relationship to being a perpetrator of human trafficking. This study found that, of the 4 adults examined in this study, 3 of those adults were male. The evidence for this demographic variable is the strongest because it was the only demographic variable that was listed for every perpetrator examined for this study. The majority of data collected for this study also shows that there may be a relationship between certain demographic variables and being a victim of human trafficking. The strongest amount of data points to gender and age as demographic variables with a relationship to being a

victim of human trafficking. This study found that, of the 5 children examined in this study, 4 had a gender that was identified as female. This study also found that, of the 5 children examined for this study, 4 had an age of 11-20 years old.

This study was able to begin to answer every research question designed by the researcher. The mean age of perpetrators of human trafficking was 46 years old. The mean age of victims of human trafficking was 12 years old. The race of all victims and perpetrators who had an identified race was white. The majority of victims of human trafficking had a gender that was identified as female. The majority of perpetrators of human trafficking had a gender identified as male. The majority of perpetrators were connected to their victims with a relationship status of parent or "john."

Chapter 4

Discussion

The primary results of this study show that there may be a relationship between gender and becoming a perpetrator of human trafficking. The primary results of this study also show that there may be a relationship between gender and age to becoming a victim of human trafficking. The findings suggest that victims of human trafficking are likely to be females and perpetrators are likely to be males. These results are consistent with previous literature on this topic. The findings suggest that perpetrators of human trafficking are likely to be between the ages of 41 and 50, which is consistent with

previous literature. The findings suggest that victims of human trafficking are likely to be between the ages of 11-20, which is an interesting discovery that was not mentioned in the previous literature reviewed for this study. The findings suggest that victims and perpetrators of human trafficking are likely to be white. This is inconsistent with previous literature on perpetrators, which suggests that perpetrators are from diverse backgrounds. This inconsistency could be due to the fact that this study was based on data from Butler County, Ohio, which is mostly made up of people who are white. The findings suggest that it is likely that perpetrators are either the parents of the victims or johns who are purchasing sex from the victims, which is consistent with previous literature. These results add to the current understanding of social problem. There is a way to identify certain traits that contribute to a person's vulnerability of becoming a victim or perpetrator of human trafficking. These results further prove that certain demographic variables may be able to be considered as risk factors for involvement in human trafficking.

There are many implications when applying these results to child welfare social work. These results may suggest that certain changes should be made when practicing child welfare social work with children, specifically females who are 11 years old to 20 years old. As previously discussed, youth who have a history of being involved in the child welfare system are at high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. These results suggest that it may be beneficial for child welfare social workers to take

preventative measures when working with this population. These results may also suggest that policies may need to be implemented to provide funding for new programs that teach this demographic of children how to recognize and avoid potential human trafficking situations. Future research studies may be needed to examine a larger sample size to identify more demographic risk factors of becoming victims and perpetrators of human trafficking. Research examining every case of human trafficking within child welfare agencies in Ohio may be a good way to do this. Future research should also be done on the effectiveness of prevention programs for youth that identify with the demographic risk factors discussed in this paper.

This study was strong due to the examination of all substantiated cases of human trafficking within Butler County Children Services. The small number of cases allowed the researcher to examine every case individually, rather than having to select only a few of many cases. This study was weak due to the limited information provided about the perpetrators involved in each case. This limited amount of information makes it difficult to draw conclusions about demographic risk factors for perpetrators of human trafficking. This researcher is also concerned about drawing conclusions surrounding using race as a demographic risk factor due to factors that may skew the results. For example, the population of Butler County, Ohio is reported as being 84 percent white (United States Census Bureau, 2019). This makes the racial data uncovered in this study

difficult to use when making generalizations about all victims and perpetrators in Ohio or in the United States.

Overall, this study was important for furthering the understanding of demographic risk factors associated with becoming victims and perpetrators of human trafficking. As previously discussed, the literature surrounding these risk factors is far and few between. This study shows that these demographic risk factors can be identified, and more research should be done to further examine and identify them. The understanding of risk factors associated with a person's involvement in human trafficking is critical to the downfall of this criminal enterprise.

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