

Human Trafficking: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the topic of human trafficking (HT) to outline the definition and typology of HT, stages of HT, research themes, and future research directions in HT studies. This study used a systematic literature method to analyze 229 articles from the social sciences category from the Scopus database. This study found that the definition of HT is complex. Thus, to define HT, scholars need to be specific about the context, characteristics, and typology of trafficking. There are many internal and external factors in mobilizing the victim's choice of victim's immigration into this crime's vortex. Hence, policymakers need to know the critical issues of victim preference in the HT stage. Ultimately, there are three primary themes in the HT topic. They are: (1) developing models and strategies for dealing with more effective ways to combat HT around the world, (2) exploring and further comprehending the social and cultural factors underlying HT in different regions, and (3) capacity-building countries and implementation of more effective policies to protect and assist trafficking victims. Our integrative literature review may be the most recent study to provide detailed information about each research stream of HT literature in the social sciences discipline. The results of our review are limited to HT publications in the social sciences field, which stemmed from Scopus.

Keywords: *systematic literature review, human trafficking, social science, research themes*

INTRODUCTION

The growth of human trafficking (HT) studies is significant in the social sciences literature. However, very little attention is paid to examining the development of HT's body of knowledge. Thus, this study aims to fill the research gaps in the human trafficking (HT) literature using the systematic literature method to analyze 229 articles in the social sciences (SS) disciplines from the Scopus database to outline the definition and typology of HT, stages of HT, research themes, and future research directions in HT studies.

Human trafficking (HT) is the crime of human rights (Davidson, 2016). The United Nations (UN) defines HT as the exploitation of men, women, and children through violence, deception, or coercion, known as the Palermo Protocol, established in 2000 (Zhang, 2022). The Palermo Protocol seeks to prevent and suppress HT matters, particularly those involving women and children as victims, and aims to punish HT perpetrators. This is critical because HT can cause health and financial losses for victims, their families, and the broader community (Okech et al., 2018; Yea, 2020). In addition, HT can politically undermine democracy, supremacy, and government accountability of a state (Shelley, 2010, p. 82).

The study of HT pioneered by Salt and Stein (1997) explored systematic organizations working in the internal migration business. Post Salt and Stein's (1997) research, HT has become an increasingly popular research topic among academics globally (Raby & Chazal, 2022; Sibley & Van Der Meulen, 2022). The popularity of HT can be seen in the significant development of HT's publications from year to year and its diffusion to multiple disciplines of knowledge, both empirically and theoretically, as presented in Figure 1.

The increasing popularity of the HT topic has prompted scholars to study it using a systematic literature review (SLR) method (e.g., Dimas et al., 2022; McAlpine et al., 2016; Okech et al., 2018; Szablewska & Kubacki, 2018). However, these studies have some limitations. Szablewska and Kubacki's (2018) study is limited to analyzing the factors that influence the effectiveness of anti-

trafficking campaigns and does not address the solutions and impacts of HT. The study by McAlpine et al. (2016) is limited to the issue of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation as one of the specific issues in HT in areas of armed conflict in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Furthermore, Okech et al. (2018) only studied the issue of social workers as victims of HT by analyzing journals published in the SAGE journal and Taylor & Francis; thus, they failed to capture the reality of the broader HT study. Finally, a literature study conducted by Dimas et al. (2022) on 142 is limited to studying the typology of crime in the context of sex trafficking and labor trafficking. In addition, the study was limited to examining the final stages of HT, namely when the victims were exploited. By contrast, the recruitment and transportation stages were not the focus of the issues they studied.

Thus, referring to previous SLR studies related to HT, there has been a shortage of comprehensive studies on HT in the last five years, which include issues of definition and typology, stages, and types of HT (sex, labor, and organs) using databases that have a broader scope, such as Scopus. The significance of an SLR study every five years lies in the explanation of Pradana et al. (2022) and Apriliyanti and Alon (2017) that numerous noteworthy recent studies published in five years have contributed to changing trends in a topic. However, they cannot be captured by the existing SLR studies.

This research aims to fill the gap in SLR studies on HT by examining HT literature published on the Scopus database and social science subjects from 2002-2022 on definitional issues, typologies, and stages of human trafficking, as well as trends in research themes. Therefore, this study presents several research questions that contribute to the maturation of the HT body of knowledge.

1. What are the definitions, typologies, and stages of HT?
2. What research themes have developed in HT?
3. Which research themes of HT have gained the most attention from scholars globally?
4. What are the future studies on HT?

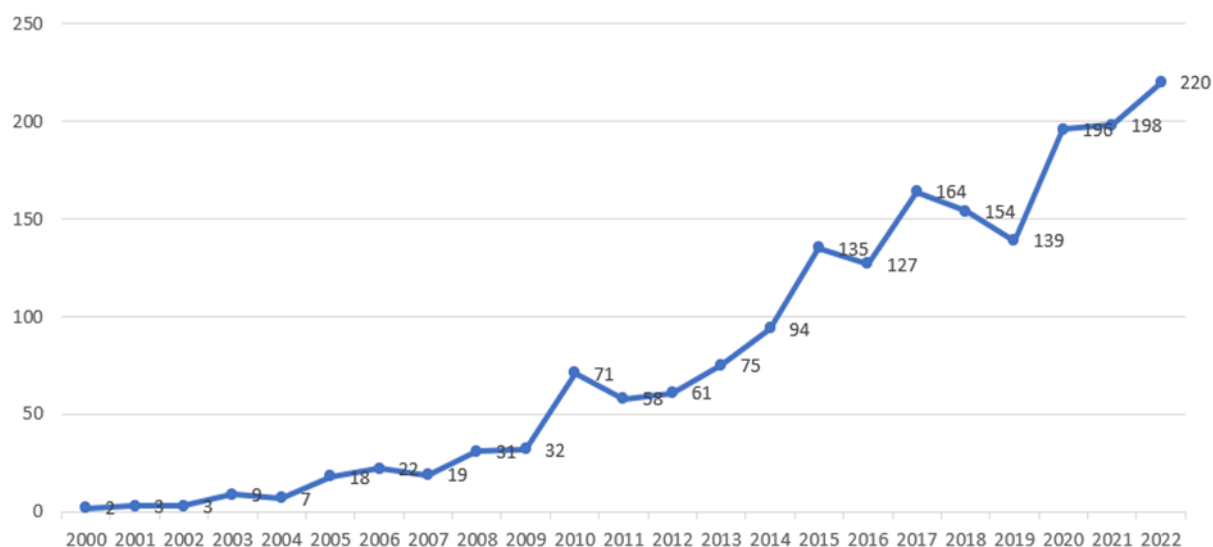


Figure 1. The amount of human trafficking literature from the Scopus database in the context of social science

Source: scopus database from 2000-2022

This study makes three main contributions to the literature. First, it pinpoints the context of HT research conducted by social science scholars over the past twenty years. This element is vital for HT researchers because it provides a content analysis of the latest HT studies. Second, it offers new insights into the research themes developing on HT. This research theme is an essential feature of SLR studies because it represents a research area or focus of study in a particular research topic (Pradana et al., 2022). Third, this study synthesized 229 HT articles over the past 20 years (2002-2022) in social science disciplines to provide an evidence-based overview of the research streams of most concern and recommendations for future research to develop HT research.

METHOD

This study is a systematic literature review that seeks to analyze and synthesize empirical investigations to study the growth of the body of knowledge of a research topic (Snyder, 2019). This review used a systematic, transparent, and reproducible approach (Davis et al., 2014; Vrontis & Christofi, 2021) to answer the research questions in this analysis. Starting from four RQs, the authors followed the PRISMA guidelines

(Page et al., 2021) as follows: (a) identification, (b) screening, (c) eligibility, (d) inclusion and exclusion, qualitative analysis, and interpretation of results (see Figure 2).

In line with this, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) is the method utilized in this study to conduct the process of selecting articles to be included in the final review to study the development of the topic of human trafficking (HT) in the social science discipline, as explained by the scholar that PRISMA SLR is a robust method for studying topic development (Page et al., 2021) (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). Thus, PRISMA is regarded a suitable method for examining the growth of HT topics in the context of social science (Moher et al., 2009).

This study used quantitative and qualitative methods for 229 HT articles in social science disciplines using Microsoft Excel's analysis base, which includes title, know, author, purpose, method, unit of analysis, location and sample, results, weaknesses, and future research. Quantitatively, this study calculates the frequency of growth in the number of HT articles and the type of HT typology from 2002 to 2022. Qualitatively, this study uses content analysis to identify and classify them or research

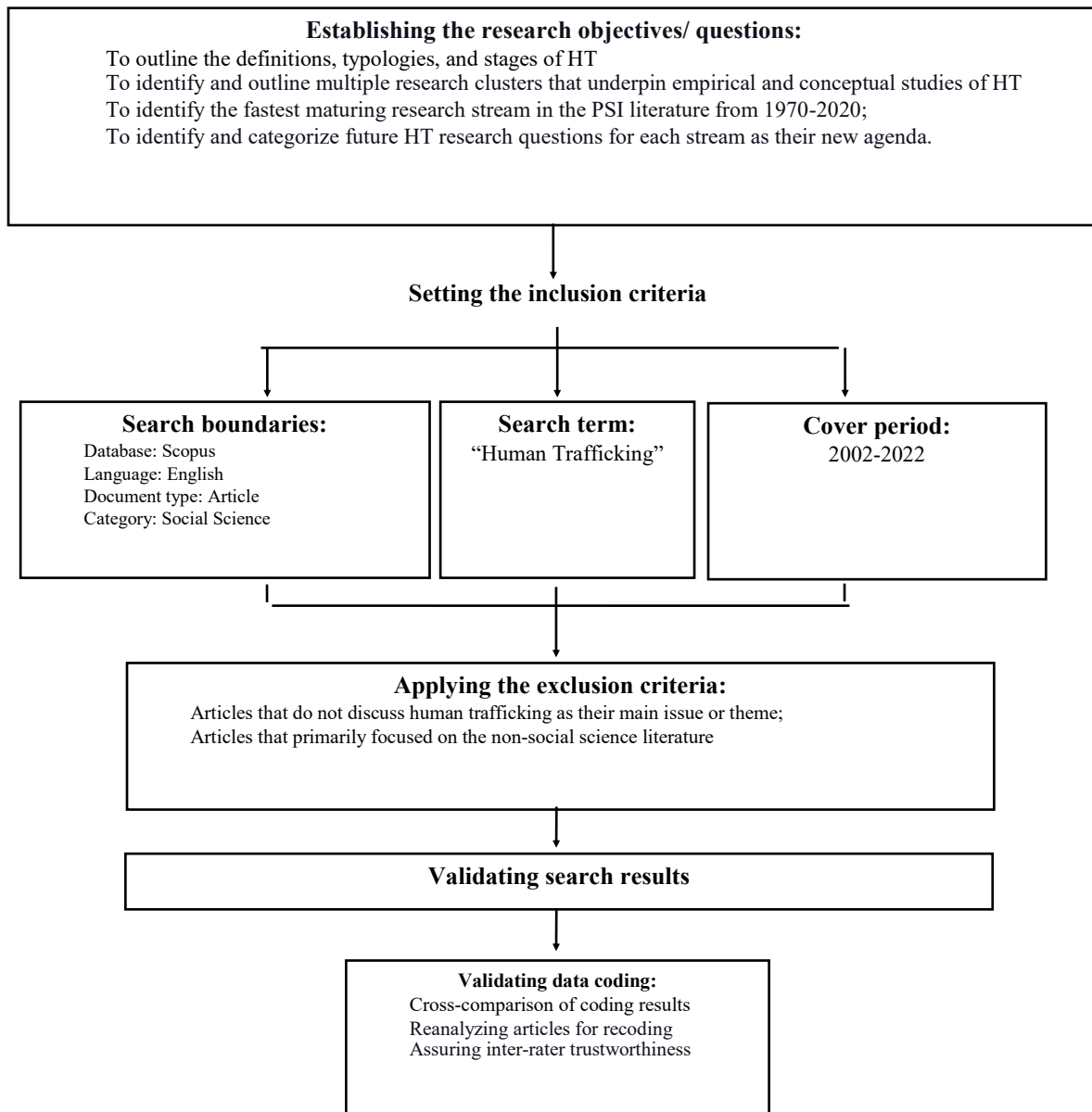


Figure 2. Summary of the SLR process
Source: Modified from Nolan & Garavan (2016)

streams. Our primary unit of analysis is journal articles because of their critical role in distributing scientific knowledge, measuring the reputation of scholars, and recognizing intellectual property (Chandra & Walker, 2019; Pradana et al., 2022).

We conducted a literature search as a first step to identify eligible studies. The data source for the articles in this study was obtained from the Scopus database, with HT articles from 2002 to 2022 in the social science category. We chose 2002 as the initial search for journals because 2002 saw the

popularity of HT studies rise (e.g., Icduygu & Toktas, 2002; Raymond, 2002). This study performed an electronic search of the Scopus database to ensure we included a wide range of scientific outputs. The keyword employed for the article search is "human trafficking" because it allows us to find specific articles published with the title human trafficking or containing the word human trafficking in the abstract or keywords. This search yielded more than 4,331 studies and was last conducted in December 2022. Scopus was selected because it contains numerous publications in various cate-

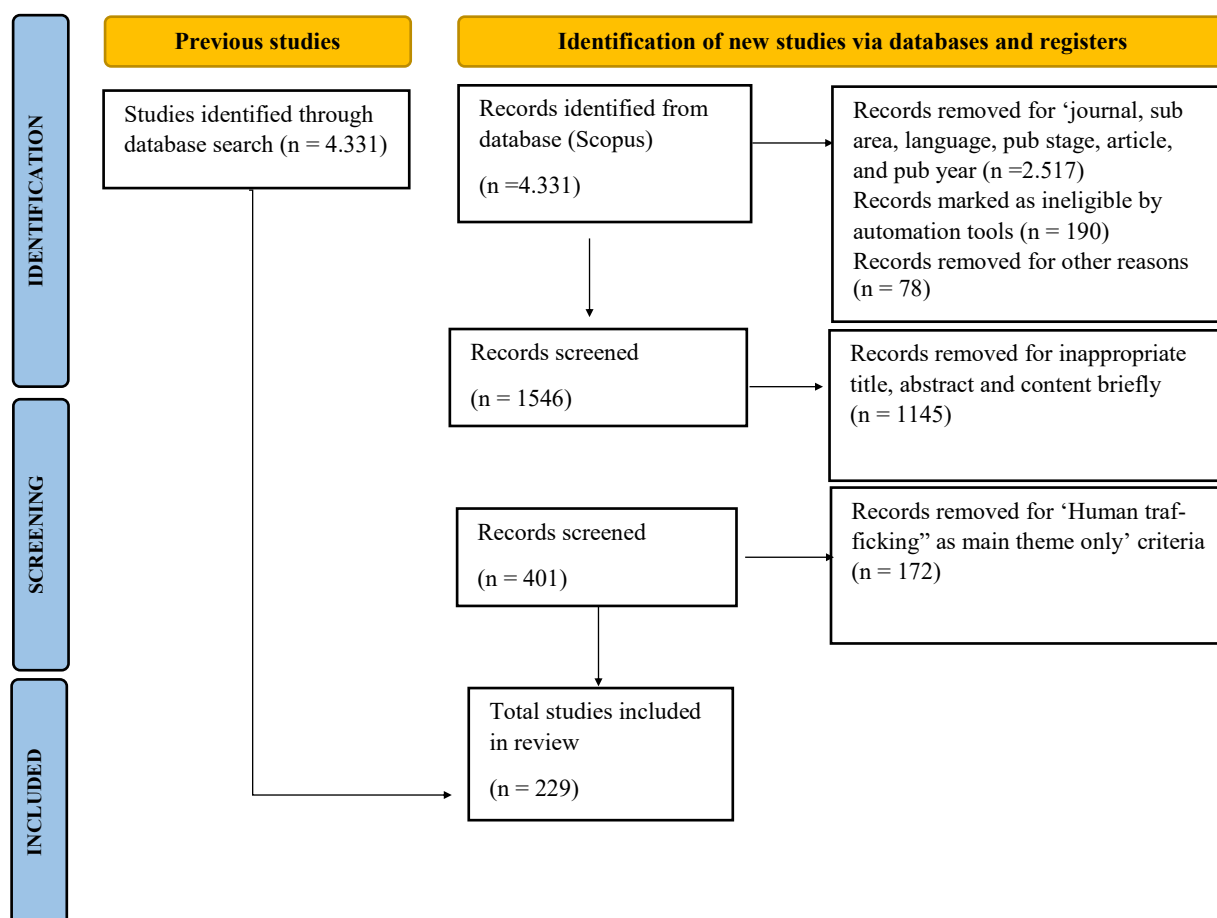


Figure 3. PRISMA flow chart

Source: filtering and selection process using the PRISMA flow stream , (Page et al., 2021)

gories. Thus, previous SLR studies have preferred to examine the development of a research topic using the Scopus database (Ejaz et al., 2022; Leydesdorff et al., 2010). Figure 2 shows a summary of the PRISMA process used in this study.

In setting the eligibility criteria, this study adheres to the PRISMA item where the studies that are the main database in this study must meet the inclusion criteria, covering the following six aspects:

1. Studies must deal with HT in journals categorized as social science.
2. Studies must contain the word “human trafficking” in the title and abstract to prevent confusion with related concepts.
3. Only empirical studies are eligible because we are interested in empirical evidence about HT. All research designs are allowed (e.g., questionnaire, case study,

experiment), but purely illustrative case studies are excluded. We also excluded systematic reviews to avoid double research (e.g., Szablewska & Kubacki, 2018).

4. Studies must be published from January 2002 to December 2022.
5. Only studies written in English were considered.
6. Only international peer-reviewed journal articles and books from leading publishers in the field of social sciences are included.

In this process, this study resulted in 1546 articles in the Scopus database.

This study applies exclusion criteria as a way to select articles that have been obtained based on eligibility or inclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria or article selection strategy was performed in two stages. First,

Table 1. Definition of Human Trafficking

No	Years	Definition	Institution	Element	Debate/ Criticism
1	2000	Trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, protection, or receipt of persons through the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over others, for exploitation. Exploitation must include, at minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, or the removal of organs.	United Nation Protocol Palermo	Recruitment, transportation, Exploitation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criticism of the amalgamation of the three types of trafficking into one uniform recipe creates variations in anti-trafficking attitudes and actions because it does not distinguish between gender, type of labor, and organs. (Gallagher, 2011:34-42; L. Shelley, 2010: 11) 2. Variation in the legal and social status of the perpetrators because each type of crime has a variety of perpetrators who have a certain visibility. Euphrates 2016.
2	2003	The United Nations Slavery Convention 1926 defined slavery as "the status or condition of a person exercising any or all of the powers inherent in property rights." (Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery, Article 1.1). The main difference between the two definitions is that forced labor is seen as a practice by the government and slavery by individuals in the private sector. In the 1980s, the ILO expanded its powers to include private actors as forced labor facilitators.	Abolition of slave trade Act 1807	Modern slavery	<p>Every company can exploit/isolate, maintain/form a slavery situation in its supply chains.</p> <p>The main difference between the two definitions is that forced labor is seen as a practice by the government and slavery by individuals in the private sector (Cranes, 2013; Stringer & Michailova, 2018).</p>
3	2003	"Trafficking in persons" (or "trafficking in persons") is defined as the acquisition or income of a person through the use of force, deception, coercion, or the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes prostitution, forced labor, slavery or practices similar to slavery, harvesting organs, or other forms of exploitation that are detrimental to the victim."	TVPA (Trafficking Victim Purpose Act)	Act mean Purpose	<p>The concept of human security is still an "underdeveloped approach to understanding contemporary security politics." The focus is from the state to the individual, military threats to political, economic, environmental, and gender threats (Blanton et al., 2020; Kreidenweis & Hudson, 2015).</p>

No	Years	Definition	Institution	Element	Debate/ Criticism
4	2005	All work or services requested from anyone under the threat of a fine and for which the person has never offered it voluntarily.	ILO	Forced labor	This definition does not consider the cultural peculiarities that vary in each region, especially in Asian and African countries where children must help The primary source of profit in smuggling is providing ways to cross international borders illegally (e.g., fake migration documents). In contrast, in human trafficking, the main profit is generated through human exploitation, such as forced labor and the like, but in some cases, this is obscured (Chibba, 2013; Yousaf, 2018).
5	2005	Human Trafficking as part of Migration flows (forced or voluntary)	IOM	Part of forced or voluntary migration flows	
6	2011	Trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, deception, fraud, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of persons who have control over others, for exploitation. Exploitation shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	Actions, Means and Goals	Transnational Marriage (H. Lee, 2014; Tyldum, 2013), relationship between victim and perpetrator (Weitzer 2014)

the articles were briefly filtered, including titles, abstracts, and keywords. We removed 1145 articles with inappropriate topics or keywords using this filtering process. Consequently, 401 articles were retained in our database. Second, we carefully filtered and analyzed the abstracts and contents of articles that followed the HT theme in the social sciences. Articles not discussing HT as the main issue were removed from our database. Therefore, based on the exclusion criteria, 172 articles were eliminated, leaving 229 articles eligible for articles following the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Selected articles that met the requirements were analyzed independently using qualitative methods

based on Excel data by four authors based on pre-agreed theme codes. In the final stage, we discuss the coding results, their differences, and the approach used, following previous scholars conducting SLR studies (e.g., Alon et al., 2020; Pradana et al., 2022). The PRISMA flow chart is presented in Figure 3.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Human Trafficking

The results of 229 articles related to human trafficking (HT) found that the definition of HT is complex because there are no clear conceptual boundaries, and there is confu-

Table 2. Types of Human Trafficking

Typology of Human Trafficking	Focus	References
Sex trafficking	Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.	(U.S. Congress, 2000 – sec 103, 8.
Organ trafficking	Organ trafficking is global injustice, entails the recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, of a position of vulnerability, of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation by the removal of organs, tissues or cells for transplantation	Budiani-Saberi & Delmonico (2008)
Forced labor trafficking	Forced labor is a non-voluntary nature of work, and the use of penalties in exacting the labor, whereas the situations where a person cannot quit working were not included in the definition.	Ollus (2015)

sion in comprehending the HT phenomenon. Although complex, this study found that the conceptual definition of HT developed slowly, beginning with Salt and Stein (1997), which resulted in the notion that HT is an international migration business, as we presented in Table 1.

The UN later adopted Salt and Stein's (1997) definition under the name Palermo Protocol 2000, which was the first attempt by the international community to combat modern slavery and ensure the protection of victims. The Palermo Protocol entered into force in several countries on December 25, 2003. Interestingly, although adopting the ideas of Salt and Stein (1997), this protocol continues to be developed and includes several elements (Winterdyk & Reichel, 2010). The first element is 'action,' where HT has several actions: recruitment, transportation, transfer, and harboring people. The second element is 'means,' where HT includes coercion, deception, or abuse of power. Moreover, the third element is the 'purpose' in the

form of exploitation, such as the exploitation of prostitution to other people or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or slavery services, or practices similar to slavery and the sale of organs. However, the Palermo Protocol for HT has attracted criticism.

The first is criticism of variations in legal status. Scholars claim that the uniformity of human trafficking in one general definition is absurd because it obscures the differences between gender, type of labor, and organ trafficking (Gallagher, 2011; Shelley, 2010). As a result, these anti-HT policy measures are insensitive to distinctions between sex, labor, and organ trafficking, which have different recruitment patterns (Efrat, 2016).

Second, it criticizes the element of exploitation. Scholars explained that the Palermo Protocol did not mention the criteria used to classify various practices leading to exploitation; in other words, it does not yet have clear parameters for the exploitation elements (Jovanovic, 2020). This results in

Table 3. Typology of Human Trafficking

Typology	Victim Frequency	Number of studies	
		Count	Percentage
Sex trafficking	General	25	8,36 %
	Children	10	3,34 %
	Man	1	0,33 %
	Transgender	1	0,33 %
	Women	7	2,341 %
	Women and Children	35	11,7 %
	Total	58	19,39 %
Organ trafficking	General	3	1 %
	Total	3	1 %
Forced labor trafficking	General	146	48,83 %
	Children	9	3,01 %
	Man	2	0,67 %
	Transgender	0	0 %
	Women	1	0,33 %
	Women and Children	10	3,34 %
	Total	168	56,18 %
Total		229	100 %

difficulty in some HT cases to distinguish the elements of exploitation between sexual exploitation or sexual harassment (McAlpine et al., 2016), sexual work or sex trafficking (Worthen, 2011), and HT or labor trafficking work. Therefore, handling HT cases is challenging.

Third, criticism relates to culture and people's views. As in the Palermo Protocol, a uniform definition may facilitate understanding and coordination in handling HT cases. However, this definition needs to consider the context in which the incident occurs in recruitment, transit, and exploitation. For example, several studies have elucidated how cultural factors related to the belief system in society, such as the obligation of children to serve their parents, social structure, and strata/classes and stereotypes towards particular genders, are some of the obstacles to HT awareness campaigns, but this is not captured in the Palermo protocol (e.g., Bogdan, 2020; Montgomery, 2011).

Despite criticism, this study found that the Palermo Protocol is the most widely acknowledged definition of HT internationally and has been adopted by various countries. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the

analysis of 229 articles showed that there are still three debates regarding the concept of HT.

The first is labor versus Economic Migration. This debate has focused on the non-coercive aspects of economic migration. For example, Andrees and Belser (2009) describe the practice of forced labor in Brazil, debt bondage in Latin America, forced labor in Pakistan, slavery in Niger, and forced labor in Europe. Based on this study, scholars have differing views on whether this form of forced labor can be HT (Winkler, 2021).

The second is Migrant Trafficking versus smuggling/migration. The second debate refers to the agreement on whether HT is identical to smuggling. Several studies assume that any form of illegal migration seeking work or anyone facilitating movement for sexual activity, forced labor, or organ harvesting is a trafficker (Petrunov, 2014). However, Bilger et al. (2006) argued that these concepts differ. They explained that people smuggling means assisting in illegal border crossings, and illegal entry is not necessarily the case for HT. Exploitation is the primary determining element. In the absence of exploitation, smuggled migrants

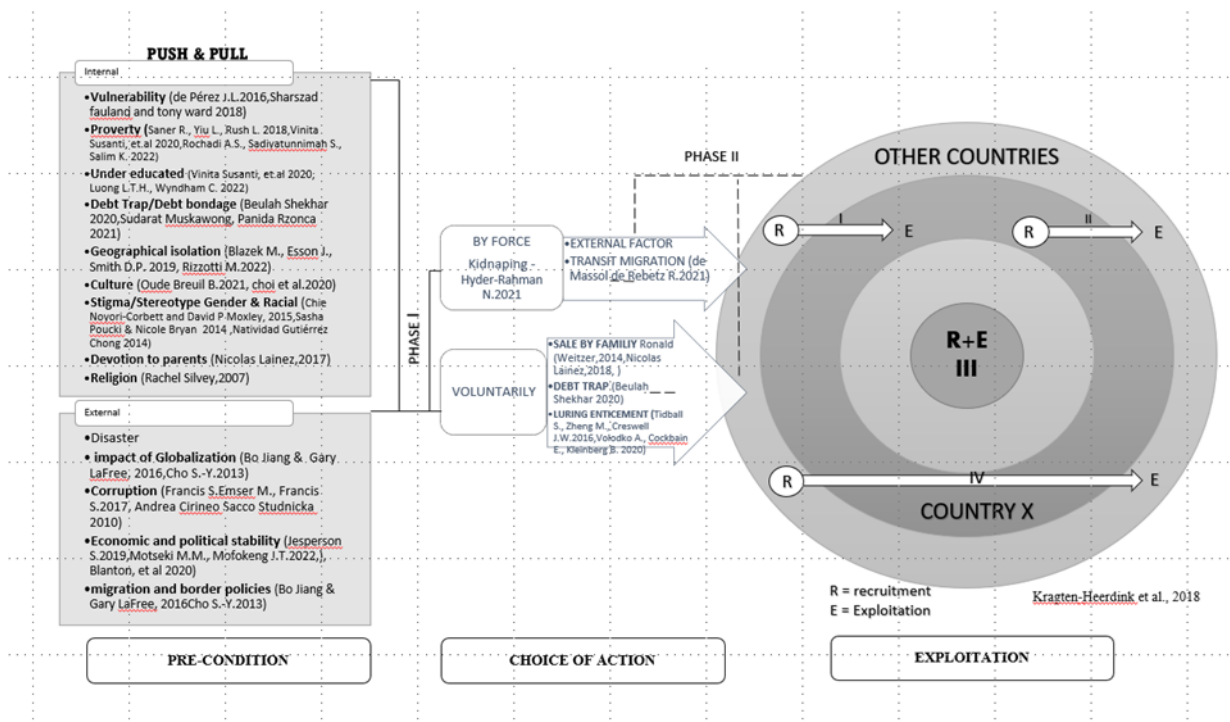


Figure 4. Stages of Human Trafficking

are not in the exact situation as victims of HT. As such, this distinction underscores the significance of the 'exploit' element in defining HT.

The third is Sex Trafficking versus Sex Work. This debate refers to the concepts of sex trafficking and work. McCarthy (2014) argues that prostitution carried out voluntarily without exploitative elements or in an equivalent transactional manner cannot be referred to as HT. Ultimately, our literature analysis shows that it is not always possible to draw a clear line between sex trafficking and consensual sex work. Voluntary sex workers may be at higher risk of being exploited. Nevertheless, this does not mean we must include it early in the HT context.

Thus, referring to the above description, defining HT is difficult because of the complexity, actions, and actors involved. However, the most essential element when conceptualizing HT lies in two crucial elements: coercion and exploitation.

Typology of Human Trafficking

Because the definition of human trafficking (HT) is often quite broad, it is neces-

sary to differentiate the HT typology because each phenomenon has different characteristics. Based on a literature review of 229 HT publications, this study classified HT into three types, as shown in Table 2. The HT typologies was identified through a literature review based on an Excel analysis, where each identified HT phenomenon was allocated to one of the categories according to different HT cases.

Although this study has identified three primary categories of HT, we recognize that, in practice, these types often intertwine, creating hybrid forms. Nevertheless, this distinction is a useful analytical tool for focusing on the different forms of HT. The emergence of various identified HT categories is summarized in Table 2. Overall, the results of the analysis of 229 HT publications indicate that the dominant focus in the body of empirical knowledge on the topic of HT research is trade and labor exploitation in the first place. This is followed by sex trafficking in second place, followed by organ trafficking.

Furthermore, based on a manual qualitative literature review of 229 articles in our database, we present Table 3, which shows

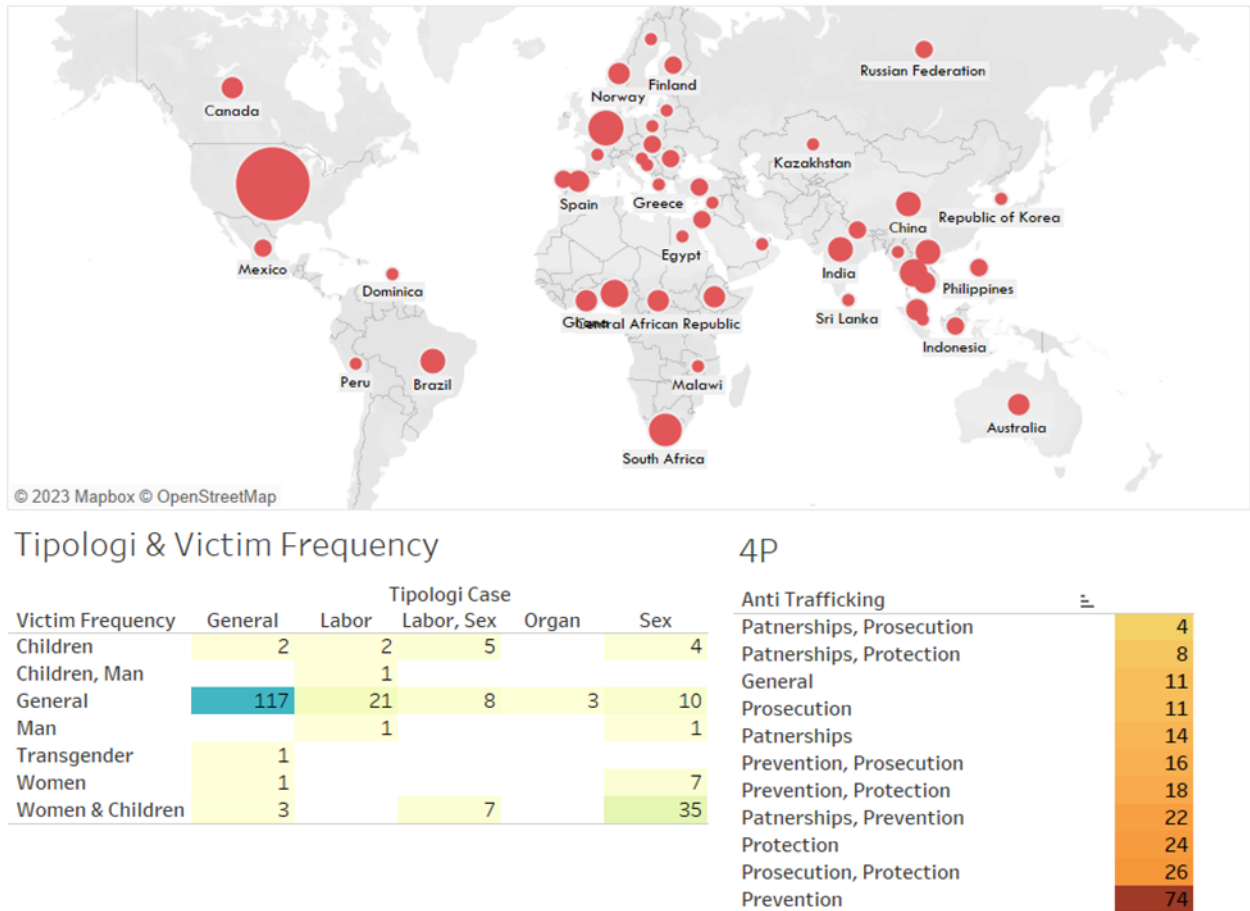


Figure 5. Distribution of human trafficking research

that among the typologies of sex trafficking, studies examining women and child victims are the most common (35/11.7%). In contrast, transgender and male victims are rare, with only one article each (0.33%). In addition, in the typology of organ trafficking, existing studies still look at general victims without differentiating categorization into three articles (1%). Thus, the theme of this study is exciting and meaningful for future HT studies. Finally, forced labor trafficking was the most studied type of HT, with 168 articles (56.18%). However, among these types, most studies, or as many as 146 articles (48.83%), do not differentiate victims according to a specific category. Among the typologies of forced labor trafficking, studies exploring women, children, and transgender people occupy a minor position. Thus, future studies can be directed to study HT typologies with specific victim categori-

zations, particularly women, children, and transgender people.

Stages and Antecedents of Human Trafficking

This section explains the stages or processes of human trafficking and the antecedents that shape each phase of human trafficking. Several previous studies have modeled the stages of human trafficking (e.g., Kragten-Heerdink et al., 2018; Salt & Stein, 1997; Stringer & Michailova, 2018). Salt and Stein (1997) revealed that the HT stages include the recruitment and exploitation stages. Stringer and Michailova (2018) modeled a forced framework on empirical cases that occurred in the fishing industry in New Zealand. Finally, the study by Kragten-Heerdink et al. (2018) in the context of HT in the Netherlands describes a model of the position of a country that can be a supplier,

Table 4. Future research of Human Trafficking Studies

No	Research Stream	Future Research
1	Antecedent of human trafficking	<p>In the activities of brokers/partners in cross-border migration in Asia, there is an urgent need for the first illegal marriage syndicate network. Future research can measure how multicultural legal and policy frameworks can protect and respect illegal migrant women who are victims of forced marriages. Second, the extent of agreements and international legal frameworks for male customers/their partners, for women who have been bought so that they can have the same rights and opportunities as wives, and thirdly the effectiveness of laws and regulations that can punish illegal intermediaries/brokers to eliminate marriages syndicate (Said et al., 2022).</p> <p>Much human trafficking starts from the internet; thus, stakeholders and authorized officials must use technologically advanced devices so that future studies can see how stakeholders' awareness and main strategies are for overcoming human trafficking (Motseki & Mofokeng, 2022).</p> <p>The idea that men carry out traffickers is a myth that must be broken, so there is a particular need for future research to highlight and understand the profile of female perpetrators to dispel the stereotype of only male perpetrators (Raby & Chazal, 2022).</p>
2	Process of human trafficking	<p>Future research could also focus on using different technologies and policy tools to initiate and improve data collection methods concerning transport and trafficking.</p> <p>Another important related topic is the analysis of relevant transport-related information for understanding current reporting mechanisms, such as the use of warning systems on different modes of transport to report human trafficking and related crimes (Yagci Sokat, 2022). Given this rich and detailed ethnographic picture of the informal networks that facilitate the migration and employment of Vietnamese sex workers to Singapore, further research can focus on informal networks' social and economic dynamics in other contexts.</p> <p>This study highlights the importance of understanding the experiences and views of migrant sex workers so that future research can be developed with an emphasis on the mix of migration, gender, and labor/labor in Southeast Asia (Lainez, 2019).</p>
3	Impact of human trafficking	<p>This study provides an overview of service providers for victims of trafficking so that future research can pay attention to how practical guidelines and protocols are against trafficking in principle 2 of victim welfare. Future efforts may help to shed light on how practitioners can balance competing ethical and practical challenges when operationalizing response protocols that address the well-being and self-determination of persons experiencing trafficking (Macy et al., 2021).</p> <p>The victim's credibility is a barrier to the successful prosecution of trafficking cases, so future research can examine how effective the mechanisms of human trafficking trials are (Murphy, 2022).</p> <p>Further research, mainly qualitative approaches, can help document how women deal with migration and develop more responsive assistance methods directed at groups of women who experience considerable exploitation, abuse, and neglect, both in countries of origin and in countries of destination (Noyori-Corbett & Moxley, 2016).</p>

recipient, or transit area in a cycle of human trafficking.

The models above demonstrate that HT has complications at every stage because it involves many interconnected actors; the above models are still separate. Some models focus more on the recruitment process, whereas others concentrate more on the transit and exploitation stages. Hence, based on the literature review in this article, we

combined these models, as presented in Figure 4, to make it easier to provide descriptive information about the stages of HT. The HT stages consist of three phases: the precondition, choice of action, and exploitation phases.

First phase: Preconditioning

The precondition phase describes a condition that prompts a person to enter HT

circumstances without realizing it. Various internal and external factors cause the formation of the precondition stage. These factors tend to form strong relationships, creating coercive relationships between victims and perpetrators (Luong & Wyndham, 2022).

Regarding internal factors, the results of the analysis reveal that vulnerability is the primary factor for victims falling into the HT vortex. Vulnerable conditions in the literature are triggered more by poverty (Rochadi et al., 2022; Saner et al., 2018) and limited education (Luong & Wyndham, 2022; Susanti et al., 2020). In addition, this culture recreates a crucial position in shaping situations of vulnerability, which generally occur in the tradition of how children serve their parents (Oude Breuil, 2021). Youth are then forced to migrate outside the victim's area of origin to obtain money to fulfill family needs as a form of success (Choi et al., 2020).

Furthermore, stigma against a particular sex is also a problem in shaping the preconditions of HT circumstances. Stigma is a significant element of the ongoing marginalization of a specific gender and can even be comprehended as a socially imposed form of condemnation and disgrace (Yea, 2020). For example, in several cases of HT, stigma against certain genders is the leading motivation for victims to migrate (e.g., Chong, 2014; Poucki & Bryan, 2014). Correspondingly, the religious doctrine regarding gender righteousness in a particular area is used as a mode of recruitment by traffickers. Due to the victims' lack of understanding, this mode of piety becomes the primary motivation for victims to migrate (Silvey, 2007).

Another practice in HT operations is debt traps for vulnerable victims, individuals (brokers), and companies. Loans with high interest are always given to the potential victim/victim's family before leaving the destination. The victim usually repays the debt after earning income from the job. This financing includes the debt and costs incurred from recruitment to departure from the destination (Karlan et al., 2019; Musikawong & Rzonca, 2021). Ironically, new debt traps can occur if the victim is already working at the terminus (Lainez, 2018; Shekhar, 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the geographical context of social mobility patterns. These studies explained that the average victim left their area of origin because they were driven by imagination to work to increase their income and social status (Rizzotti, 2022). Mobility and immobility have a complex relationship, but on the other hand, these two items can make a person more susceptible to HT. Even worse, mobility and immobility can cause a person to be trapped in being a victim of HT before and after exploitation. For example, migrant workers trapped in unfair employment contracts may have limited mobility because the contracts restrict their movement. However, they can also be forced to move or become trapped in dangerous immobility situations (Smith, 2018).

In terms of external factors, globalization can facilitate HT through human mobility in finding jobs, which can increase the risk for vulnerable people. LaFree (2016) states that a country's trade openness has a causal relationship with HT. By contrast, countries with weak social control have a high risk of developing HT.

In addition, empirical studies on women's rights conducted by Cho (2012) revealed that globalization could improve the conditions for fulfilling women's rights. Nevertheless, on the other hand, globalization can also increase women's risk of HT through high mobility due to economic and social inequality. Natural disasters are also one of the factors that can affect the risk of HT, particularly for victims affected by disasters, where perpetrators tend to provide protection and fake jobs for victims who are vulnerable to disasters and invite them to migrate without realizing that they are trapped in an HT situation (Stoklosa et al., 2021).

In addition to globalization and disasters, factors of economic and political stability of a country also contribute to the formation of HT preconditions; for example, armed conflict that can force human migration by producing displaced refugees will increase the demand for cheap labor (Jespersion, 2019). Another factor is the corruption committed by stakeholders, who are claimed to be HT's main contributors and

catalysts. Corrupt stakeholders tend to facilitate illegal activities by collaborating with HT actors (Moses, 2022). In this regard, corruption can operate within an HT in several ways, including creating fake identity documents, illegal cross-border crossings, and influencing the legal process when an HT case occurs (Clemente, 2022; Studnicka, 2010).

Furthermore, the migration and border policy factors are decisive in the HT cycle. The findings of the study by DiRienzo and Das (2017) explained that the lack of control and supervision, limited human resources and infrastructure, and cooperation and coordination between authorities in various countries are the biggest obstacles to identifying and tracking HT victims and perpetrators who cross borders because perpetrators tend to look for alternative routes that require coordination between cross-border government organizations (Avdan, 2012).

Second phase: Choice of action

Structuralism and institutionalism rely on the premise that individuals control their actions. Bourdieu explains that only external factors can limit individual action choices (Grenfell, 2010). In the HT case, the primary rationale for the choice of action for the victim/victim's family is internal and external preconditions. Forced/voluntary migration, whether legal or illegal, continues the pre-existing conditions. The choice of actions to migrate by force comes more from external factors such as armed conflicts, wars, natural disasters, and economic and political instability (see Figure 4).

Meanwhile, the choice of voluntary action comes from internal factors, usually due to being bound by debt from the victim or the victim's family (Bhukuth, 2005; Musikawong & Rzonca, 2021), and then recruited by several intermediaries who are generally friends, relatives, or closest associates. Such an approach is more straightforward than violence or deception (Weitzer, 2014). Furthermore, in some cases, this was also due to the internal and external conditions of the victims migrating, guided by advertisements on social media (Kleinberg, 2020; Musto, 2014).

Action choices can occur in two stages of HT. The first sub-phase occurs when the new victim falls into the HT, and the second sub-phase occurs when the victim is bound by an unfair contract and trapped in a dangerous situation of immobility (Smith, 2018). Victims tend to fall into debt traps set up by recruiters in exploitative work situations (Lebaron, 2014; Shekhar, 2021). In several transit/migration destination areas, victims were trapped and vulnerable to being re-trafficked because they worked without employment credentials or used fake identities or passports (de Massol de Rebetz, 2021; Ssenyonjo, 2021). These cases can be a reference for future research, particularly exploring the dynamics in the second phase, when the victim has undergone an exploitative employment contract period and is in danger of immobility.

Third phase: Exploitation

The exploitation phase is the last in human trafficking (HT) circumstances, where the victim has arrived at a particular location, which in this context depends on the conditions a country finds itself in, whether as a supplier of victims or beneficiaries of HT, or both situations occur in one area. In the model presented by Kragten-Heerdink et al. (2018) regarding the stages of HT, four trade routes are covered (see Figure 4). "Country X" is a country that determines trade traffic routes. The "other countries" in the model are all countries other than country X. In the "Results" section, this model is an abstract version of the model that any country in the world can adopt (country X can be any country).

There are four possible trade routes from Country X's perspective. The first is cross-border trade routes. With this route, Country X is involved as an exploitative country. The second is the point of departure for cross-border trade, where country X is involved as a recruiting country on this trade route. Third, domestic trade, namely country X, is involved in recruitment and exploitation. In this model, these trade routes represent circles instead of arrows to emphasize that they require no internal movement. Therefore, victims recruited at location A in country X, exploited at Location B in coun-

try X, and victims recruited and exploited at a location in country X were both victims of domestic trafficking. The fourth is cross-border trade. With this trade route, country X is a transit country.

The model suggests that country X may engage in HT as an exploitation country, recruiting country, transit country, or combining two or more roles. This shows that any country can be involved in HT as a supplier to victims and beneficiaries, even within one region. Thus, to stop HT, prevention efforts must begin with the precondition phase in supplying countries and victims' choices of action in countries of origin, transit, and destination; thus, victims can be protected through effective and comprehensive policies and strategies.

The summary of the literature review conducted by the author in Figure 4 shows three focuses in the study of human trafficking. First are the conditions allowing human trafficking to occur in the internal conditions of the victim, such as vulnerability (de Pérez, 2016; Fouladvand & Ward, 2019), poverty (Rochadi et al., 2022; Saner et al., 2018), under-educated (Luong & Wyndham, 2022; Susanti et al., 2020), debt trap/debt bondage (Lainez, 2018; Musikawong & Rzonca, 2021; Shekhar, 2021), geographic isolation (Blazek et al., 2019; Rizzotti, 2022; Smith, 2018), culture (Choi et al., 2020; Oude Breuil, 2021), stigma, racial & gender stereotypes (Chong, 2014; Noyori-Corbett & Moxley, 2016; Oude Breuil, 2021; Poucki & Bryan, 2014), devotion to parent (Lainez, 2019), religion (Silvey, 2007).

Second are external conditions from outside the victim, such as a disaster (Stoklosa et al., 2021), the impact of globalization (Cho, 2012; LaFree, 2016), corruption (Emser & Francis, 2017; Studnicka, 2010), economic and political stability (Blanton et al., 2020; Jespersen, 2019; Motseki & Mofokeng, 2022), migration and border policies (Avdan, 2012; DiRienzo & Das, 2017). From the internal and external factors that previous studies have stated, the situation is favorable for recruiters to prey on victims. In the choice of action, there are two possibilities for victims to enter into human trafficking. First is voluntarily, namely: due to persuasion from their own family or sold

(Lainez, 2019; Weitzer, 2014), a debt trap created by recruiters (Shekhar, 2021) through persuasion and seduction of an ideal picture of life (Cockbain et al., 2018; Kleinberg, 2020; Tidball et al., 2016) through the real and virtual worlds, this is what motivates victims to enter into forced human trafficking more due to kidnapping (Hacker et al., 2015; Hyder-Rahman, 2021; Kuschminder & Triandafyllidou, 2020). Second, the socio-political situation was not conducive (Mandić, 2017).

In our literature review, there are interesting findings on the dynamics of voluntary migration; in the explanation above, it occurs before victims are exploited, but in some cases, victims are sometimes repeated victims of exploitation, usually because they are bound by unfair contracts and trapped in dangerous situations of immobility (Smith, 2018), victims tend to fall into debt traps made by recruiters in these exploitative work situations (Lebaron, 2014; Shekhar, 2021). In several findings in the literature, especially in transit/other destination areas, victims are trapped and vulnerable to being re-trafficked because victims work without work permits or use fake identities or passports. This condition is called dangerous immobility (de Massol de Rebetz, 2021; Ssenyonjo, 2021).

The dominant research themes

Using geographical mapping as presented in Figure 5, studies on human trafficking in social science disciplines globally are primarily conducted on several themes, namely the definition and terminology of HT (Limoncelli, 2017; Weitzer, 2014; Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017) and the themes and strategies of HT (Blanton et al., 2020; Haynes, 2014; Wooditch, 2012). In the European, American, and African contexts, HT studies focus more on the theme of state and fiscal capacity in implementing HT policies (Gardner, 2018); themes of trends, types, and patterns of migration (Noyori-Corbett & Moxley, 2016; Sweileh, 2018); and the theme of protection and management of survivors of trafficking (Vanderhurst, 2017). Finally, in Asia and Australia, existing studies discuss the structure and network of HT (Hewamanne, 2020), the causative factors of

sociocultural issues related to gender, norms, and values in society (D'Souza & Martí, 2022; Yea, 2020), and awareness of the implementation of human trafficking policies (Irwin, 2017; Konrad, 2019).

Based on these results, we conclude that the three main areas are the topics of discussion. The first is the development of more effective treatment models and strategies to combat HT worldwide. The second is the further exploration and understanding of the social and cultural factors underlying HT in various regions. The third is increasing state capacity and implementing more effective policies to protect and assist victims.

Regarding the discussion of themes in articles, most previous studies focused on the theme of HT prevention, with the main focus being on anti-HT campaign issues (Brien, 2018), legal issues (LeBaron & Rühmkorf, 2017), victim protection (Schönhöfer, 2017), protection and prosecution (Ward, 2018), and cooperation in prevention (Lucio et al., 2020) (Lucio et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2022). However, among the different research themes, few studies have discussed how partnerships can be performed specifically in certain categories, such as in prosecuting HT perpetrators or partnerships in victim protection. This suggests that further research and action are needed to develop partnerships to combat HT, focusing on more targeted and effective actions.

Future Research

Significant progress has been made in developing human trafficking (HT) studies using multiple theoretical lenses, models, and variables. However, some research themes need to be explored to understand the complex nature and dynamics of HT, as well as trends and information on preventing and protecting victims; this study suggests future research.

Most previous studies have focused on sex trafficking. However, few studies have examined boys and men who are victims of forced labor. Thus, future studies can explore this in terms of influencing factors, characteristics of trafficking, and perceptions of society and institutions while still concentrating on cultural peculiarities, mainly in the

Asian and African regions, which have the attributes of devotion to parents/family.

Correspondingly, transgender victims must be on the agenda for future research on the experiences of transgender victims, the factors that influence the occurrence of HT in transgender victims, the impact on physical health, and the protection and recovery of victims medically and psychologically. Furthermore, there are few empirical studies on organ sales concerning HT; thus, organ sales should be a high priority in future research.

Regarding anti-HT policies, three suggestions are made for future research. First, future studies should evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-HT policies. Second, future studies should compare anti-HT policies implemented in various countries, starting from prosecution, protection, and prevention. Lastly, future studies should consider HT research regarding partnerships between countries, particularly partnerships between countries in prosecuting HT perpetrators and protecting victims.

We also present several future research for human trafficking studies, categorized based on three main themes: antecedents, processes, and impacts of human trafficking, as shown in Table 4.

CONCLUSION

Human trafficking (HT) studies have experienced significant progress, where previous SLR studies have explained the development of HT (e.g., Dimas et al., 2022; McAlpine et al., 2016; Okech et al., 2018; Szablewska & Kubacki, 2018). Even so, there is a gap in prior SLR studies that comprehensively examine HT publications in top social science journals to demonstrate the definition, typology, stages, and research themes of HT. This study aims to fill the gaps and successfully answer all research questions.

First, the definition of HT is complex. Thus, it is important to consider HT issues from various perspectives and consider economic, political, and cultural contextual factors. Definitions that are general and too broad tend to cover only a few aspects of HT. Specific definitions are required accord-

ing to the context and characteristics of HT in that area. As for HT typology, a literature review found that few studies have discussed organ sales. More studies have focused on sex trafficking and labor, in which the victims were mostly women and children.

Second, HT is a domestic and an international business. In the stages of the HT process, the supply side and demand side/push and pull occur in preconditions, both internal and external factors. These two factors tend to have a very close relationship in facilitating the occurrence of the first and second phases, namely, the victim's first choice of action (both forced and voluntary) to enter an exploitative situation (third phase). In phase II of the HT stage, the victim's position has completed the first contract. Still, the victim faced a dangerous immobility situation, making it very difficult to choose to return to the area of origin. Typically, the victim is caught in a debt trap while laboring, has no job permit, and uses a false identity. Preconditions to the exploitation stage involve many interrelated actors and centralized management overseeing the entire process, from mobilizing victims to the exploitation stage. Policy actors must understand the critical points of the victim's choice of action.

The practical implication of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the definition and typology of HT. This study also clarifies and classifies the causal factors of HT in terms of preconditions and choices of action by modeling the stages of HT, including how perpetrators recruit, transport, lodge, and exploit victims. The aim is to assist policymakers in understanding and addressing this issue better. Finally, the contribution of this article is to map the growth of HT studies in the field of social sciences at a global level to serve as a reference for future research on this topic.

This study has several limitations. First, the literature search was limited to the keyword "human trafficking," which resulted in missing articles relevant to this topic. Thus, future research can add other keywords such as human traffic*, sex traffic*, labor traffic*, organ traffic*, child traffic*, domestic servitude, forced labor, " human trafficking," " sex trafficking," "labor traf-

ficking," "child trafficking," and organ trafficking." Second, this study employed only English-based journals in the Scopus database. Thus, this analysis might not present other journals using different languages relevant to social sciences studies. For this reason, future studies need to broaden their scope to databases such as Web of Science, Ebsco, Copernicus, and non-English language journals with high citations to capture the contextual significance of HT situations.

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