

6-2017

## WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT PREVENT SOCIAL WORKERS FROM IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC MINOR SEXUAL TRAFFIC VICTIMS

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WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT PREVENT SOCIAL WORKERS FROM  
IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC MINOR SEXUAL TRAFFIC VICTIMS

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work  
in  
June 2017

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by  
Ada Eunice Dimas

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June 2017

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore methods of how to better identify victims of Domestic Minor Sexual Traffic (DMST). Human trafficking still exists in modern society, due to the volume of underground sexual solicitation; it has become more difficult to identify victims of sexual exploitation in vulnerable youth population. The research study conducted obtained different perspectives of social workers within various human services agencies. The research study also collected data with a via-email survey. The measures that were utilized were knowledge of sexual trafficking victim's characteristics, perceptions, beliefs, and competence. Data was analyzed by using the SPSS software to analyze data, provide a descriptive statistic by utilizing level of comfort chart. Table 1 (see appendix D), identified 21% of females, and 14% of males. The results showed that social workers had an understanding and the knowledge of sexual trafficked victims, but their comfort level had a significant difference where it was reported that they felt the need to have further training in regard to DMST victims. The literature was consistent with the findings, workers are in need to further obtain training regarding DMST victims. Due to the lack of research in DMST victims, it was inconsistent whether social workers prevent from identifying DMST victims due to their own perceptions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle.”

–Napoleon Hill.

I also wanted to take the time to acknowledge my Title IV liaison Jennine Meza. I wanted to take the time to thank you for always believing in me, you gave me the opportunity to not only proof myself that I can be courageous and advocate for myself when it came to my personal professional growth you were there to tell everyone my capability as a professional.

I also want to acknowledge my dear friend and coworker, who has always believed in me, who said “do not give up” when there were hard times, this is your dream and you can do it. Thank, Shonta Lewis for always taking the time to hear me out, support me and being such a good friend to me.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Onorio Dimas and my children Leah Bella Dimas and Aidan Onorio Dimas.

Onorio you are the greatest thing that could have happened in my life. I am a completely a different person because of you. I have accomplished all my dreams with the support you provided me and your encouragement to not give up. Without your support and the unconditionally love I would of not made it this far. I will forever love you.

Leah and Aidan I wanted to take the time to acknowledge the time mommy missed games, practices, life events in which I was not present. I wanted to take the time to let you know that mommy loves you dearly and without your love and support my life would not be the same without you in my life. I am sorry Mommy had to miss many of those important events. All my hard work was to provide you with a better life, and overall an example. Mommy will forever love you and will always be the best sample mother I can be. I love you my princess and prince.

Tambien quiero dedicarle este tesis a mis suegros Miguel Dimas y Silvia Madrigal, porque desde un principio nunca me dejaron sola, siempre estuvieron a mi lado dandome la ayuda cuando mas los necesitaba. Me dieron la oportunidad de ser parte de su family y su Corazon.

Ultimamente, tambien les quiero dedicar mi tesis a mi mama y mi papa, porque desde un principio me enculcaron la importancia de la educacion, me

enseñaron que respetar, ser honorable, ser humilde y más importante ser independiente fue la mayor educación que me hubieran inculcado. Mami, me enseñaste que fuera una mujer independiente, luchadora, trabajadora y educada y te lo agradezco. Dad, you showed me the value of not giving up, that I can always get up and start all over again. That in life there are many obstacles that we can overcome, but that at the end of the day there is still light in the tunnel. Daddy you have made an impact in my life the importance of helping others, and your one big reason why I became a social worker, the life that you lived, the experiences and the sacrifices you made have made me into a strong, and a dedicated woman.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| ABSTRACT .....        | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iv  |
| LIST OF TABLES .....  | vii |

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF DOMESTIC MINOR SEXUAL TRAFFICKED VICTIMS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Introduction .....  | 1 |
| Problem Statement .....                                       | 1 |
| Purpose of the Study.....                                     | 3 |
| Significance of the Practice of Social Workers Practice ..... | 4 |

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....  | 6  |
| Risk Factors for<br>Domestic Minor Sexual Traffic Victims ..... | 6  |
| Criminization to Victimization .....                            | 7  |
| Theories Guiding Conceptualization .....                        | 8  |
| Summary .....   | 11 |

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Introduction ..... | 13 |
| Study Design ..... | 13 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Sampling .....  | 14 |
| Data Collection Instruments .....                                     | 15 |
| Procedures .....  | 16 |
| Protection of Human Subjects.....                                     | 17 |
| Data Analysis .....   | 17 |
| Summary .....   | 18 |
| <br>  |    |
| CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS   |    |
| Introduction .....  | 19 |
| Presentation of Finding .....   | 19 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION  |    |
| Introduction .....  | 26 |
| Discussion.....   | 26 |
| Limitations.....  | 27 |
| Recommendation for Social Work Practice,<br>Policy and Research ..... | 28 |
| Conclusion .....  | 29 |
| <br>  |    |
| APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT .....                                    | 31 |
| APPENDIX B: DEBRIFING STATEMENT .....                                 | 33 |
| <br>  |    |
| APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS .....                         | 35 |
| <br>  |    |
| REFERENCES.....   | 38 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Demographics I.....               | 20 |
| Table 2. Basic Trafficking Knowledge ..... | 22 |
| Table 3. Levels of Comfort .....           | 24 |

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION OF DOMESTIC MINOR SEXUAL TRAFFICKED VICTIMS

#### Introduction

This chapter introduces the problems encountered in the United States with sexual exploitation of minors. This chapter will provide evidence of the reason why overcoming barriers to better identify sexual exploitation minors is critical to prevent and create a unique model of care for trauma induced from sexual exploitation.

#### Problem Statement

According to the Statistics of the United States Department of State (2010), 12.3 million humans were sexually trafficked throughout the world. Of these, only 4% received care or some type of assistance. Human trafficking is considered a form of modern-slavery, where millions of men and women have been forced to work for survival in exchange of labor, and commercial sex purposes. The victims were given false promises of better living conditions and even a hope of a loving relationship. Domestic minor sexual traffic victims shared many identifying factors such as homelessness, abusive homes victims, problems with substance abuse, foster youth, and runaway minors. Minors with such risk factors had a higher chance to become victims of sexual exploitation in United States (Countryman-Roswurm, 2014). According to Countryman-Roswurm (2014), runaways had 48 hours to become victims of sexual

exploitation; this factor alone makes it higher risk of becoming victims of such underground industry (Countryman-Roswurm, 2014).

The Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation was founded and established five years ago in the County of San Bernardino, working alongside with the Public Defender, Probation Department, Children Family Services, and Behavioral Health. The Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE) was established to determine programs necessary to help minors or adults who were victims of sexual exploitation. CASE oversees the program facilitation, education, and outreach. CASE collaborates with all social services agencies to find and obtain better ways to reach out to Domestic Minor Sexual Trafficking (DMST) victims. They also help identify minors, provide services, training, and prevention strategies that can be distributed among all social services departments. Many of the vulnerable minor population are likely to be victims of sexual exploitation.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2012), there are 200,000 children that become victimized in the United States yearly. There were three major cities in nation that are a major contribution to exploitation to minors: Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. These cities had the largest revenue from minor sexual exploitation. California had one of the largest sexual exploitations industries, due to having the largest number of immigrants, ports of entry, and its multicultural populations. This alone is a major issue in our state. Up until resent human trafficked victims were considered

criminals for many years, until the Protection Act of 2000, which protected anybody with risk of sexual exploitation or current accusations. Due to the incrimination of DMST victims in prior years, victims were afraid to come forward and request help and be on the road of recovery.

Sexual exploitation has always been a problem in society, especially in the United States where it is more likely to become a victim of sexual exploitation if the youth is a foster child and have higher risks of being runaway foster children. Due to the lack of assessments, it is a harder to identify minors who are victims or will become victims of sexual exploitation. Victims such as sexually abused children, foster children, and children with mental illness are more likely to become victims of sexual exploitation. Even though these facts are known, they are not considered and therefore children fall through the cracks and still become victims of sexual exploitation.

#### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and explore factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims and those who are at risk. In a recent study (Manio, 2015) it was found that there is a gap of miscommunication between agencies and services that are provided to minors who are at risk of sexual exploitation and or are current victims. Human trafficking still exists in modern society, due to the volume of underground sexual solicitation: it has made it more difficult to identify victims of sexual exploitation. The study seeks to overcome the barriers and obtain the perspectives of social workers within

different human services agencies and provide an insight of the training and resources they had available to provide to DMST victims. The study will use a quantitative study to provide insight on how well social workers are trained to deal with DMST victims and seek if treatment has been available. The study will allow the anonymous agencies to find more effective strategies to identify DMST victims, prevent foster minors from becoming victims and create a better recovery care model for DMST victims to overcome and prevent going back to being victimized. Overcoming barriers to better identify victims of sexual exploitation, would be key to overcome such barriers, identify better care models and create prevention programs where minors and parents can be educated in an earlier stage of their lives.

#### Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

Public assistance agencies had a difficult time identifying DMST victims. To obtain funding and being able to allocate funding, agencies must resolve the problem by looking for better ways to identify DMST victims. To be an effective asset to clients with DMST trauma and physical abuse, agencies need a better assessment tool to help identify DMST victims and being able to better understand their needs. Being able to identify victims in a higher volume will promote better research data to test from and find better client approaches to be able to promote better recovery models, where DMST can be successfully recovered. Issues have been seen where DMST victims leave the program and gone back to what they knew best, due to the lack of grant allocations,

identifications and recovery programs. Creating this research study where social workers can identify victims of sexual exploitation will allow social workers to be trained in a targeted approach to prevent children or foster youth from being victimized once again. Social workers are more likely to deal with victims of sexual exploitation. Due to the secrecy of sexual exploitation, there is a lack of research, prevention, training and education. Being able to identify DMST victims and creating different programs where all social workers can be trained and create preventative education program. Social workers having hands will create prevention, educate and promote recovery to DMST victims. What are the factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims?



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Chapter two, will illustrate and provide the review of different studies done to assist DMST victims and what interventions can help social workers. Second-level Heading

#### Risk Factors for Domestic Minor Sexual Traffic Victims

Countryman-Roswurm (2014) conducted a research study where many risk factors played a role to minor sexual trafficking victims. According to Countryman-Roswurm (2014) 95% of minors are becoming sexually trafficked when they are abused as children, runaways, foster youth, homeless or children living in a domestic violence home or drug abuse environment. History has proven that any youth who does not have a stable home or family is more vulnerable to become DMST victims in less than 48 hours from running away from home or being homeless (Countryman-Roswurm, 2014). The study done by Countryman-Roswurm (2014) was delivering 10 psychosocial educational sessions to 23 home runaways, homeless and street minors. Their primary goal was to create awareness of healthy relationships boundaries, the desire and expectations to mental, physical and mental respect (Countryman-Roswurm, 2014). Their study resulted in educating eight percent of the adolescents who were homeless, street minors and runaways to identify signs of healthy relationships, making a prevention program by educating minors on how to

identify risk factors of becoming DMST. Creating a prevention plan for minors at an early education curriculum would prevent children from becoming victims of sexual exploitation. Social workers can also pre-educate many of the minors who are living in foster homes, group homes, or even shelter, pre-educating what happens when minors are hooked into the sex industry. This will create prevention from minors becoming DMST victims.

### Criminalization to Victimization

Sexual Trafficking has not been recognized as an issue until maybe in the last 10 years. According to Hughes (2007) victims were not recognized as victims but as criminals. Policy makers developed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) in 2000, which only protected individuals who sought out help. This did not mean that anyone who was arrested for prostitution was protected: minors are booked in juvenile hall and placed in recovery camps by the Juvenile Justice Department. This procedure made it more difficult for minors or anyone with a history of prostitution to seek help. Agencies such as Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE) in San Bernardino County are working together with other agencies to create awareness, prevention, education, and outreach to the victims who need help and to create identification tools to determine programs that are in need by the DMST population. This allows many of the San Bernardino County Agencies seeking assistance when they need decision making along with networking of what services can be offered when a DMST victim is identified. But due to history, DMST victims are afraid to be

criminals and not victims. Victims are afraid of seeking help due to the threats many victims receive or the overall social criticism (Jenkins, 2015).

According to Manio (2015) there are many risk factors that DMST victims are exposed to that make it higher possibility to become a victim of sexual exploitation. One major factor that creates higher chance for a minor to become victim as a DMST is being homeless, or facing instability psychologically, physically and the absence of parental supervision.

### Theories Guiding Conceptualization

According to the research study done by Manio (2014) agencies have a lack of communication creates and training when it comes to victims of sexual exploitation. Although, there is research done on victims of sexual exploitation there are few existing articles regarding theories of how to better identify DMST victims. Therefore, identifying factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims would be an ideal approach to begin to research better ways to treat DMST victims. Furthermore, Manio's (2015) findings were that Child Welfare workers had a lack of communication or training regarding DMST victims. If it is found that social workers have a lack of education and training one approach that can be utilize would be Treatment or Therapeutic Foster Care. Foster Family-based Treatment Association (2014) has created specific evidence based approach called Treatment or Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) this approach is primarily how to deal with children who have been sexually exploited. This treatment is specified for victim survivors and used by agency providers.

TFC is one of the preferred treatment plans for DMST and young adults who were victims of sexual exploitation. Their level of treatment is believed to be the best served through level of care preparations, intervention that is provided by TFC clinicians and foster parents to address their trauma and start a recovery plan by a path of wellbeing and a successful recovery. According to the Foster Family Based Treatment Association (2014) this approach has four key areas that are addressed with several recommendations of resources for victims of DMST. Such keys are 1. Screening and assessment, 2. Specialized training for TFC staff and foster parents, 3. Cross-agency collaboration and safety, and 4. the need for outcome measures unique for the DMS/CSEC population (Foster Family Based Association, 2014). More importantly they use the Evidence-Based Options for minor that show signs of PTSD and related problems with DMST.

On the other hand, social workers need to re-educate themselves when dealing with sexual abuse victims. Pack (2011) suggested that discovering an integrated frame for practice where quantitative investigations of theory's done by social workers working with sexual abuse victims should be a primary priority. Pack (2011) describes how social worker theorists have reframed the movement from psychoanalytically thinking with an emphasis on the client's process toward the relationship built with the therapist. In simpler words the therapist or the social worker should acknowledge the abuse and trauma to be able to understand and articulate in the so called by Pack (2011) "liminal space" where client and social worker can have refocused in the therapeutic relationship and

how the engagement can affect the client and the social worker and the clinical process; by doing this social worker should be able to better identify DMST victims.

Foster Family Based Association has provided many promising methods of intervention that have been effective to DMST victims in their caseload by utilizing the Evidence based approach from TFC. In this research, it was not necessary using a theory to treat a client, but rather identifying factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims. If clients were the target, Attachment Theory will be utilizing to determine its role in intervention and recovery of the trauma and physical abuse a DSMT victim has endured. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Theory approach will deal with the distorted beliefs and attributions related to the abuse where DMST victims are provided with supportive environments where they can talk about their traumatic experiences and seek the goal of a healthy recovery (Foster-Family Based Association, 2014).

Due to the low existing literature on DMST victims and intervention theories regarding treatment; DMST victims are more likely to suffer from PTSD. Attachment Theory literature provides better outcomes for intervention for minors who suffer from PTSD and sexual abuse (Bolon, 2012). According to Bolon (2002) attachment theory can be successfully used or misused by professionals. Bolon (2002) argues that attachment theory can be an effective theory for children with physical abuse by benefiting areas such as the relationship bond

between perpetrator and the victim, the dynamics of the abuse maintenance, coping with abuse, risk of abuse and the type of intensity of the effects of the abuse, the effect of the removal of children from their homes. On the other hand, the misuse is the fact that attachment theory may be at risk for being a burden to social cultural values. However, attachment theory provides a deep theoretical frame social workers can utilize to treat victims with trauma and PTSD.

Attachment theory can be utilized by counseling, group sessions where the trauma can be addressed and can also be an effective intervention to prevent any future DMST victimization, and help better identify DMST victims.

### Summary

Although in modern society, Domestic Minor Sexual Trafficking is a huge issue where thousands of children are victimized by the second. Little literature is available regarding DMST issues and methods for intervention. Any social service agency should be prepared and trained to identify the high-risk factors minors that have a risk factor present, providing pre-education services for intervention, but overall more importantly being able to identify a potential DMST victim. Secondly, providing the services once the assessment is completed, involving appropriate services of intervention, such as shelter, education services, medical care, screening, life skills, case management, career training programs and if possible family reunification. These services will create a bridge to recovery or prevention to sexual exploitation. The purpose of this study to

identify the factors that prevents social workers from identifying DMST victims and those who are at risk and identify the essential assessment tools, that a clinical model of care requires to be able to treat emotional and trauma related to sexual exploitation industry by utilizing Attachment Theory and Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Theory.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter, provides the overview of the study's research design. The chapter will cover the study designed, the participant involved, the methods for collecting data, study designed, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures and an overview for protecting the participants and the information collected.

#### Study Designed

DMST victims are in high demand in the sex trafficking industry. This underground industry has been victimizing children for decades. Victims not only fear the public from being prosecuted but also the retaliations from their pimps (Hughes, 2007). Therefore, the purpose of the study was to explore if there are any factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims. A quantitative research design was utilized, using several different agencies social workers who deal with high risk children. All participants were from different backgrounds, and level of services. The quantitative research designed was chosen to determine if social worker's perceptions of DMST victims had in affect in the area. Being able to identify factors that prevent social workers from identifying victims would be a beneficial to all agencies dealing with children who are at risk of becoming victims or are current victims. The quantitative research



designed provided detailed information in regard to training and dealing with children who have risk factors of becoming sexual trafficked victims and how much further training is needed. The goal of the research was to find better ways to identify DMST victims by identifying factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims. The quantitative research method was utilizing to describe and explore the perceptions of several different agencies of social workers who have contact children who are at risk of sexual exploitation and who come across Child Welfare.

### Sampling

The study data was collected by using a convenience sampling method, data was collected by attending several agency collaborations and meeting where social worker's voluntary completed the quantitative research survey. Several non-profit social service collaboration and meetings were attended to obtain willing participants. The survey contained questions of comfort levels dealing with and completing assessment for possible sexual exploited children. This allow the study to identify factors that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims or possible victims. The survey provided questions regarding their current approaches due to social worker high caseload and time management. Social workers were at free of will and volunteer to participate in research survey. Participants who participated in survey completed a participation card, where email was requested during the meeting. The consent was provided during

request of participation and also was part of survey email. The email introduced the research and the school, consent to participate, and the research project. The survey contained questions that address social workers and their opinions regarding DMST victims. The research provided different themes and results that can contribute with the prevention of identifying DMST victims. A letter of support was sent out to several agencies thanking them for their participation.

### Data Collection and Instruments

The dependent variables utilized in this research study was the Knowledge and level of comfort levels of social workers. The level of measurement was ordinal for each question of the survey (e.g., extremely comfortable, moderately comfortable, slightly comfortable, moderately uncomfortable, extremely uncomfortable). The research was measured with variable utilizing the comfort level of social workers, and comparing with frequencies and the percentage results

However, the research also required other personal questions that we needed to figure the higher risk factors of becoming DMST victims and what other preventative measures can agencies take to prevent victims from being victimized. The level of independent variable utilized included questions regarding level of measurements that are listed as follows: demographic questions, age, sex orientation, education level master's degree or bachelors, health, ethnicity, family environment, level of education. Sample questions included the following: How old are you? which is at the measurement level of

interval, what is your sex orientation which is the nominal measurement level, and finally what is the level of education were the level of measurement would be ordinal.

The survey utilize all data regarding social workers and their current assessments, this will allow us to identify common themes of level of education when dealing with DMST victims, identification topics when interviewing clients, assessment of risk for possible DMST victims, prevention completed by CFS workers to risk youth, awareness of risk factors that play a role in DMST victims, and if the level of education from a social worker prevents from identifying DMST victims. The collection of the data had its limitation on anonymity and biases. Both address in the survey, therefore it was necessary to utilize an online survey to gather honest participants with the use of the Qualtrics survey system.

### Procedures

The study was completed by having all social worker from different interagency committees participate in voluntary status. The questionnaire was distributed to all volunteer social workers via email and responses were forward to the research via email survey link. Informed consent was provided to each participant. All participant was informed that their participation was voluntary and no incentives were provided. There were no foreseeable risks to the participants in this study. Participants' identities will remain anonymous as no identifying information was requested. Also, social workers were not asked any identifying information about their former or current clients. The questionnaires were

destroyed once the conclusion was identified. The results were provided to the Department of Human Services. The survey only consisted of a 20-minute time frame, which will include true and false questions, scale of comfort questions and knowledge based question.

### Protections of Human Subjects

There was no foreseeable risk to the participation of this study, but for safe measures an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University, San Bernardino has been completed. The research was received all letters of approval from the IRB and human services agencies data collection were completed and process. All participants were free of will to participate in the research study; therefore, the link to the email sent out was completed at their employment workplace. All participants were provided and were required to read the consent form and indicate their agreement to participate to complete the survey.

### Data Analysis

The research survey provided several true and false questions, to measure the level of comfort when making DMST assessments. However, this research would also require other open ended questions that would need to figure the higher risk factors of becoming DMST victims and what other preventative measures can agencies take to prevent victims from being victimized along with their personal opinions. Utilizing a Likert measuring scale, will provide a more cleared level of comfort of social workers when interviewing

risk youth for sexual exploitation. The level of independent variable would be utilizing questions regarding 1 level of measurements, such as demographics questions for example age, sex, orientation, education level master's degree or bachelors, health, ethnicity, family environment, level of education. The questions utilize in the study are as follows How old are you? Which is the measurement level of interval, what is the sex orientation which is the nominal measurement level, and finally what is the level of education were the level of measurement would be ordinal. The main question regarding the study completed is based on the level of comfort when asked questions such as: are you comfortable asking questions to clients if they must ask permission to eat, sleep, or use the restroom?

### Summary

This chapter described the research designed, sampling data, collection instruments, procedures and data analysis collection. The volunteered participants were collected by attending several collaboration meetings and sending survey via email with Qualtrics survey.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The sole purpose of this chapter is to outline the results and the statistical analysis of the research conducted. The chapter will contain the detailed report of the samples, data collections and descriptive statistics of the data collected. The chapter will summarize the results of the survey themes such as gender, race, highest level of education, how long have they been working as a social worker, and basic biases questions that demonstrate their own perception of what are domestic minor sexual trafficked victims. This section will include the mean, range of scores and the number of respondents for the inclusion, standard deviation,

#### Presentation of Finding

Participants for this study were gathered from Qualtrics Survey. The sample was comprised of more females (21%) than males (14.3%). Most participants fell into the age range from 35 to 44 (38.1%) and most of the participants had completed some graduate school (42.9%). The years of experience reported by participants ranged from 0 months to 6 years of experience working as a social worker. Nine percent of the sample reported working for at least 2 years as a social worker and nine percent reported working for three years. The rest of the sample reported variations of years of experience from 0 months to six years (See Table

1).

Table 1 Demographics

| <b>Variable</b>                   | <b>Frequency<br/>N</b> | <b>Percentage<br/>%</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                     |                        |                         |
| Male                              | 3                      | 14.3                    |
| Female                            | 17                     | 21.0                    |
| <b>Age</b>                        |                        |                         |
| 18 to 24                          | 5                      | 23.8                    |
| 25 to 34                          | 5                      | 23.8                    |
| 35 to 44                          | 8                      | 38.1                    |
| 45 to 54                          | 1                      | 4.8                     |
| 65 to 74                          | 1                      | 4.8                     |
| 75 or older                       | 0                      | 0                       |
| <b>Highest Level of Education</b> |                        |                         |
| Graduated from College            | 5                      | 23.8                    |
| Some Graduate School              | 9                      | 42.9                    |
| Completed Graduate School         | 6                      | 28.6                    |

The next set of questions covered basic knowledge regarding Human Trafficking. Most of the participants (95.2%) did not agree with the statement that victims of sexual exploitation are always female. A majority (90.5%) of participants agree with the statement that sometimes, prostitutes are victims of human trafficking. Almost all the participants (95.2%) disagreed with the statement that Immigrant workers are only in the United States because they chose to come work here. Most participants (81.0%) disagreed with the statement that if someone is being trafficked they would tell. Seventy-six percent

of participants agreed that it is important to complete a full assessment to determine if someone is a victim of human trafficking. Over ninety-five percent of participants agreed that it is important to ask clients about their relationships with their families or significant others is important. Just over ninety percent of participants agreed that sexually exploited individuals are always victims and do not agree that sexually exploited individuals are criminals. Most participants (81%) of participants agree that victims of sexual exploitation are hard to get engaged. Just over three quarters (76%) of participants feel comfortable speaking about sexual exploitation with young clients as professionals. (See Table 2).



Table 2. *Basic Trafficking Knowledge*

| Variable  | Frequency<br>N | Percent<br>% |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Victims of sexual exploitation are always female</b>   |                |              |
| False   | 20             | 95.2         |
| True  | 0              | 0            |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>Sometimes prostitutes are victims of human trafficking</b>   |                |              |
| False   | 1              | 4.8          |
| True  | 19             | 90.5         |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>Immigrant workers are only in the United States because they chose to come work here</b>                   |                |              |
| False   | 20             | 95.2         |
| True  | 0              | 0            |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>If someone is being trafficked will they tell you?</b>   |                |              |
| False   | 17             | 81.0         |
| True  | 0              | 0            |
| Missing   | 4              | 19.0         |
| <b>It is important to complete a full assessment to determine if someone is a victim of human trafficking</b> |                |              |
| False   | 4              | 19.0         |
| True  | 16             | 76.2         |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>Can you help a victim of sexual exploitation?</b>  |                |              |
| False   | 1              | 4.8          |
| True  | 18             | 85.7         |
| Missing   | 2              | 9.5          |
| <b>Asking my client how their relationships with family or significant other is important?</b>                |                |              |
| False   | 0              | 0            |
| True  | 20             | 95.2         |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>Sexual exploited individuals are always victims</b>  |                |              |
| False   | 1              | 4.8          |
| True  | 19             | 90.5         |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>Do you consider sexual exploited individuals criminals?</b>  |                |              |
| False   | 19             | 90.5         |
| True  | 1              | 4.8          |
| Missing   | 1              | 4.8          |
| <b>Victims of sexual exploitation are hard to get engaged?</b>  |                |              |
| False   | 3              | 14.3         |

|   |    |      |
|---|----|------|
| True  | 17 | 81.0 |
| Missing   | 1  | 4.8  |
| <b>As a professional, are you comfortable speaking about sexual exploitation with your youth clients?</b> |    |      |
| False   | 4  | 19.0 |
| True  | 16 | 76.2 |
| Missing   | 1  | 4.8  |

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The next set of questions explores participants' level of comfort in working with sexually exploited victims. Just under half (47%) of participants stated that they feel extremely comfortable discussing current decision making, including making decisions about their own bodies. Approximately two-thirds (66%) of participants stated that they are extremely comfortable asking questions of their clients including if they must ask permission to eat, sleep, or use the restroom. Fifty-seven percent of participants stated that they are extremely comfortable asking clients if they are forced to anything that they have not wanted to do or perform. Approximately two-thirds (66%) of participants stated that they are comfortable asking clients if anybody in the family has received threats regarding forcing clients to do something they don't want to do. A majority of participants (81%) stated that they believe they should have more extensive training dealing with Human Trafficking victims and most participants (71%) stated that they are comfortable working with Human Trafficking victims. (See Table 3).

Table 3 *Levels of Comfort*

| Variable   | Frequency<br>N | Percentage<br>% |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Are you comfortable discussing current decision making, such as making decisions about their body on their own?</b>                                   |                |                 |
| Extremely comfortable  | 10             | 47.6            |
| Moderately comfortable   | 3              | 14.3            |
| Slightly comfortable   | 5              | 23.8            |
| Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable  | 0              | 0               |
| Slightly uncomfortable   | 1              | 4.8             |
| Moderately uncomfortable   | 1              | 4.8             |
| Extremely uncomfortable  | 0              | 0               |
| Missing  | 1              | 4.8             |
| <b>Are you comfortable asking questions to your clients as if they have to ask permission to eat, sleep, or use the restroom?</b>                        |                |                 |
| Extremely comfortable  | 14             | 66.7            |
| Moderately comfortable   | 2              | 9.5             |
| Slightly comfortable   | 1              | 4.8             |
| Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable  | 0              | 0               |
| Slightly uncomfortable   | 1              | 4.8             |
| Moderately uncomfortable   | 1              | 4.8             |
| Extremely uncomfortable  | 0              | 0               |
| Missing  | 3              | 14.3            |
| <b>Are you comfortable asking the client if they are forced to do anything that they have not wanted to do or perform?</b>                               |                |                 |
| Extremely comfortable  | 12             | 57.1            |
| Moderately comfortable   | 5              | 23.8            |
| Slightly comfortable   | 2              | 9.5             |
| Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable  | 0              | 0               |
| Slightly uncomfortable   | 0              | 0               |
| Moderately uncomfortable   | 0              | 0               |
| Extremely uncomfortable  | 1              | 4.8             |
| Missing  | 1              | 4.8             |
| <b>Are you comfortable asking your client if anybody in the family has received threats in regards forcing you to do something you don't want to do?</b> |                |                 |
| Definitely yes   | 14             | 66.7            |
| Probably Yes   | 5              | 23.8            |
| Might or might not   | 1              | 4.8             |
| Missing  | 1              | 4.8             |
| Definitely yes   | 14             | 66.7            |

**Do you believe that you should have more extensive training dealing with Human Trafficking Victims**

|         |    |      |
|---------|----|------|
| Yes     | 17 | 81.0 |
| No      | 3  | 14.3 |
| Missing | 1  | 4.8  |

**Are you comfortable working with Human Trafficking Victims**

|         |    |      |
|---------|----|------|
| Yes     | 15 | 71.4 |
| No      | 5  | 23.8 |
| Missing | 1  | 4.8  |

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the proceeding finding of the present study. Limitations of the study will be provided in this chapter, also recommendations for current extensive education and training, policy and probable future research. The chapter will also conclude with final implications of benefits to social workers and training all agencies with sexual trafficked victims.

#### Discussion

The overall purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of social workers dealing with domestic minor sexual trafficked victims, and how those perceptions affected their level of comfort, knowledge, and training dealing with victims of such traumatic events. The results indicated that social workers have an extensive knowledge the importance of asking questions regarding their client's relationship, completing a full assessment and overall the knowledge that not always females are victims, foreign individuals do not come to this country by choice, and social workers are aware that prostitutes are more likely to had been victims of sexual exploitation. The findings also provided 19 % percent of the participants felt uncomfortable dealing with victims of sexual trafficking. Another founded result was that 70 % of the participants had attended human trafficking training, and 75% of the participants believed that they needed more of an extensive training to deal and have the overall knowledge to deal with victims of

sexual exploitation. Another positive relationship that was founded in the research study was the fact that 85 % of the participants felt that they needed more than extended training to identify and deal with DMST victims. When participants were asked about their beliefs of DMST victims their response was: 'where victims and need help and support, they should be helped, it's not talked about enough, they are always victims and should never be seen as criminals, I believe further research is needed, simple victims of a messed up society, people assumed most choose to be prostitutes, they are taken advantage of and don't have resourced needed to seek help, they need our advocacy, in general terms I see them as victims who end up having a strong bond with the person controlling them, then bond id difficult to break, DOJ laws need to be amended to reflect victimization instead of labeling minors as criminals, also, the entire social justice filed showed be aware that DMST youth are also MALE and studies should also srat reflecting those stats'.

### Limitations

The limitations of the research had several characteristics that impacted the research. Such as the lacked prior research dealing with DMST victims. Another limitation of this study was the size. The sample size was small, many of the participants from various organizations did not want to risk and participate to avoid any controversial publishing or comments in regard to if social workers have anything to do with the lack of prevention or any perception that can be significantly a reason why minors are not identifying early or during victimization

period. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2012), there are 200,000 children who are victimized in the United States yearly, this number is a significant number to the number of children who are sexually trafficked and victimized in the United States. The research was forced to gather survey data with the condition that data was collected as an anonymous participant, therefore asking identifying information, such as race, organization name and any other social identifying information was disregarded in this study. If the survey was not anonymous, the sample size could have been larger, and a larger data collection could have had a better approach if all social workers have any factors that prevent social workers from identifying domestic minor sexual traffic victims.

#### Recommendation for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

The results indicated that many of the social workers are comfortable working with DMST victims. In the other hand, 85% of the participants felt as they needed further training in regard to identifying, and dealing with DMST victims. The results also illustrated an important relationship with knowledge and comfort level of dealing with DMST victims.

This study can help various organization determine the necessity why DMST training is important in the field of all different social services agencies. Victims can be touched in the many paths that social workers work in, and therefore agencies should consider administrating extensive DMST trainings to all social service providers. The research is in hope that schools or various social

service agencies provide an understanding and an importance why extensive training is needed to deal with DMST victims, and social worker perceptions in regards to DMST victims should be continued to be studied, due to the limitations it had, and the size sample.

In future terms, this study should be conducted extensively with a larger sample size, to test if there are any attitudes that prevent social workers from identifying DMST victims. The next study should test the relationship of how social workers feel they can help victims, and test the casual relationships between received training and overall attitude towards DMST victims. The study would need to be more diversely represented and use graduate students, faculty, active social workers in child welfare, public defender, mental and other social service agencies.

DMST trainings could be developed as part of the curriculum for graduate students of social worker, and be a part of the workplace development training to have a broad area of expertise and have the training and knowledge of how to investigate, identify, and interview a DMST victims.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, social workers who participated in this anonymous study believed that they needed more training to deal with DMST victims. Many felt comfortable dealing with victims, and had reasonable knowledge of the common identifying factors of DMST victims. The findings from this research clearly validate that there are no factors that prevent social workers from identifying



DMST victims, but rather that there are still a highly need to obtain further education and training to dealing with DMST victims. Identifying victims has been a problem due to the history of prosecution and the overall results from victims speaking up against their pimp. Being able to identify that social workers feel that more training should be part of their curriculum or job training would be able to create a bridge to find the factors that from identifying DMST victims.

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT



California State University, San Bernardino  
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee  
APPROVED 8/17/2016 VOID AFTER 7/31/2017  
IRB# SW1648 CHAIR [Signature]

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
School of Social Work

**INFORMED CONSENT**

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine if there are any factors that prevent social workers from identifying domestic minor sexual trafficked victims. The study is being Conducted by Ada Dimas, a graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary McCaslin Research Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-committee at CSUSB.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study is to identify factors that prevent social workers from identifying Domestic Minor Sexual Trafficked victims

**DESCRIPTION:** Participants will be asked a few questions on the current status of educations, training in regards to sexual trafficked minors, program and resources awareness, and overall beliefs about domestic minor sexual trafficked victims.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY:** Your responses will remain anonymous and data will be reported in group form only.

**DURATION:** It will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey.

**RISKS:** There are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

**BENEFITS:** There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

**CONTACT:** If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. McCaslin at (909) 537-5507.

**RESULTS:** Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2017.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

Place an X mark here Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

## Debriefing Statement

The study you just participated aimed to identify if there were any factors that prevent social workers from identifying victims. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Ada Dimas or Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 537-5507. If you would like to obtain a copy of the results of this study, please contact Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at the above-mentioned phone number. Results will be made available at the end of the Spring Quarter of 2017. Thank you for your time and participation in this study

APPENDIX C  
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

## Data Collection Instruments

T/F Victims of sexual exploitation are always females

T/F Sometimes prostitutes are victims of human trafficking

T/F Immigrants workers are only in the United States because they choose to come to work here

T/F If someone is being trafficked will they tell you

T/F Is it important to complete a thorough assessment in order to determine if someone is a

victim of human Trafficking

T/F Do you believe you can help a victim of sexual exploitation

T/F Asking my client how their relationship with family or significant other is important

T/F Do you believe sexual exploited victims are victims or criminals

T/F Do victims of sexual exploitation are hard to get engaged

T/C Aare you comfortable speaking about sexual explitation with your clients

1Not Comfortable at all and 5 = Extremely Comfortable

1. Are you comfortable discussing clients current decision making, such as making decisions

about their body on their own.

2. Are you comfortable asking questions to your clients as if they have to ask permission to eat,

sleep or use the restroom.

3. Are you comfortable asking the client if they are forced to do anything that they have not wanted to do or perform.

4. Are you comfortable asking your client if anybody in the family has received threats in regards forcing you to do something you don't want to do.

5. Are you comfortable asking your client if they have ever been deprived of any needs because they refused to complete any sexual acts

6. Have you Attended any Human Trafficking Training? Y/N

7. Do you believe that you should have more extensive training dealing with Human Trafficked Victims?

8. Are you comfortable working with Human Trafficking Victims

9. What are your beliefs about Human Trafficking Victims?

Instrument created by: Ada Eunice Dimas



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