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Texas Foster Care Service Providers' Awareness and Perceptions of Human Trafficking and Related Risk Factors Among Child Welfare Involved Youth

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore foster care service providers' levels of awareness of human trafficking, exploitation, and related risk factors as experienced by foster youth, and to explore what factors influence those levels of awareness. The study entailed distributing a digital survey to foster care service providers in a snowballing method and encouraging them to send the survey to others. The survey found a statistically significant relationship between awareness/identification of risk factors and identification of exploitation, and the respondent's previous human trafficking training. This supports the literature which indicates trafficking specific training is necessary to identify trafficking and provide adequate services to survivors of trafficking. Further recommendations, limitations, and discussion are included.

Texas Foster Care Service Providers' Awareness and Perceptions of Human Trafficking

and Related Risk Factors Among Child Welfare Involved Youth

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By

Kennedy Morrison

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This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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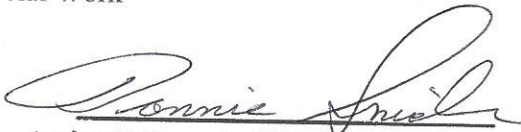_Ronnie Snider_

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To my family: I love you so much, and I couldn't have done this without your tireless encouragement and support! I definitely would not have discovered my passion for serving foster youth without your ultimate example of love and your servant hearts. There is no way I could have ever done this without you. I am forever thankful for you and your love.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many people assume American slavery died at the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. However, this is not the case: modern day slavery is real, thriving, and continuing to grow (Able-Peterson, & Meuleners, 2009; Dank et al., 2015; Hepburn & Simon, 2010; Hopper, 2004). Human trafficking is defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 as "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 subjecting that person to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery" (2018). Human trafficking comes in many forms but can be broken down into two primary categories: sex trafficking and labor trafficking. In plain language, labor trafficking is exploiting someone for their labor—either because they are not paid enough to survive, or because the working conditions were not as previously described (Hanscom & Jia, 2016; "Labor trafficking", n.d.; Weiss, 2015). Sex trafficking is defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 as "…a commercial sex act…induced by force, fraud, or coercion or in which the person induced to perform such an act is under 18" (2018).

Estimates vary, but worldwide, the International Labor Organization conservatively puts the number of people being trafficked at around 20.9 million (2012). According to Polaris, an international anti-human trafficking nonprofit organization, a

reasonable approximation of the number of people trafficked in the United States today is at least several hundred thousand ("The Facts", 2017). In Texas, the number of people being trafficked was estimated at over 300,000; of those, an estimated 79,000 are youth being trafficked for sex (Busch-Armendariz et. al, 2016)

Human trafficking is certainly recognized to be a problem. However, the general public perception of trafficking in the United States is sensationalized and lacks nuance; it emphasizes the suffering of survivors to the point of further dehumanizing them (Burke, 2015; Houston-Kolnik, Soibatian, & Shattell, 2017). It often boils down to one of two scenarios. The first is the trafficking of people who are not United States citizens; usually the narrative is that they are smuggled here and sold for sex (Rafferty, 2016). The second is when United States citizens– usually young, white, well-off, and female– are kidnapped off the street or from a public place by traffickers, then sold for sex. They are often viewed as the "perfect victim": an innocent, unwilling participant, at low risk for violence or trauma otherwise, who is victimized as a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time (Able-Peterson & Meuleners, 2009; Balgamwalla, 2016; Butler, 2015; Dank et al., 2015; Houston-Kolnik et al., 2017).

While both of these scenarios do occur, they do not make up the majority of human trafficking survivors who will be encountered by social service providers, medical professionals, and the community at large in the United States (Able-Peterson & Meuleners, 2009; Butler, 2015; Dank et al., 2015). There are many people at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking who do not fit into these narratives (Able-Peterson & Meuleners, 2009; Butler, 2015; Dank et al., 2015). It is true that everyone who experiences one or even multiple of the risk factors for human trafficking will not be

trafficked, and even if someone does not experience any risk factors they could still be trafficked. However, experiencing one or more risk factors rapidly increases the likelihood of being trafficked. It is vitally important that service providers recognize the signs and red flags of trafficking exposure to help prevent, identify, and protect potential victims.

One identified vulnerable population is youth involved in the foster care system (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; O'Brien, Rizo, & White, 2017; Speckman, 2016). They (more than their peers not involved in the system) experience an overlap with many risk factors for human trafficking, and in particular sex trafficking. The following literature review will attempt to aggregate the various risks of trafficking and how they overlap with experiences and identities of child welfare involved youth. It will also attempt to illustrate the available research about foster care service providers' level of awareness of the problem of human trafficking, and of the gaps that exist in current research.

Definitions of Terms

For the purposes of this study (involving trafficking of youth), the broadest term used will be "Human Trafficking" or "Sex Trafficking", in accordance with the definition of sex trafficking from the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 (2018), provided previously. There are several terms that fall under this broader category which will be used in this study. One such term is sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation of children is considered a form of child abuse, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The term sexual abuse includes, per CAPTA:

…the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any

child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit

conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual

depiction of such conduct; or . . . the rape . . . statutory rape, molestation,

prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with

children. (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. § 5106g,

2010)

A more specific term which will be used in this study is "Commercial Sexual

Exploitation of Children (CSEC)", which is defined by the federal Office of Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention as:

…a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a

child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value

(including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any

person…CSEC also includes situations where a child, whether or not at the

direction of any other person, engages in sexual activity in exchange for anything

of value, which includes non-monetary things such as food, shelter, drugs, or

protection from any person. Depending on the specific circumstances, CSEC may

also occur in the context of internet based marriage brokering, early marriage, and

children performing in sexual venues. (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of

Children, n.d.)

This study is considered a needs assessment because foster care service providers'

level of awareness of human trafficking in Texas has yet to be specifically evaluated. The

potential implications of this research could indicate that either foster care providers need

more specific training and education on the issue, or they are valuable allies whose experience and understanding of the issues benefit the community and increase protective factors against trafficking. If there is a high level of knowledge about human trafficking and the risks posed to foster youth in the population surveyed, then there is less need for increased education or training. If there is a low level of knowledge about the risks of human trafficking, then there is a high need for further training and education about the issue. In addition, the research could demonstrate which factors are effective in improving awareness for one of the most at-risk communities for trafficking and those who interact with them most frequently.

What Has Been Done to Address the Problem?

There have been various interventions at the local, state, federal, and global levels to address the problem of human trafficking. Various policy, practice, and prevention interventions have been developed to tackle both the overall problem and specific facets of it. However, to date, most interventions and research have not observed or addressed foster care service providers' awareness of risk factors and exploitation among foster youth. There are various reasons for this. The primary problem in the United States is that each state is responsible for regulating its own individual child welfare system. This means there is not centralized federal data collection about child welfare programs and their outcomes to compare (Child Welfare/Foster Care Statistics, n.d.).

What Does Previous Literature Suggest About this Topic?

Previous literature indicates that children previously involved in the foster care/child welfare system experience a higher than average level of risk of being trafficked (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Ijadi-Maghsoodi, Cook, Barnert, Gaboian, &

Bath, 2016). In addition, they experience a unique overlap of risk factors for involvement in the child welfare system and for sex trafficking.

The Research Gap

Previous literature does not provide enough information to address the problem of overlap between foster youth and human trafficking. This is most likely due to the difficulty of collecting data from such a protected and transient population. Further research is needed to elaborate more specifically on the convergence of the prevalent risk factors for human trafficking among child welfare involved youth, their experiences with human trafficking, the awareness of trafficking risks for this population among the people working with them, and how to bridge the gap between their needs which put them at risk and the services available to them. Previous research also suggests that there may be a discrepancy between service provider awareness of human trafficking as a general problem and human trafficking as a problem specifically for at-risk youth (Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017). For example, a service provider working with youth who are vulnerable to trafficking may be aware that human trafficking happens in the United States. However, they may not have an awareness of the serious and sometimes imminent threat that trafficking poses to the youth they work with in their community. This study attempts to bridge the gap by assessing the levels of awareness and training among foster care service providers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Search Strategies

Sources were obtained via the ACU and EBSCO OneSearch and Google Scholar.

Criteria excluded any sources not from scholarly, peer reviewed journals or government

reports. The following search terms were used to find appropriate and relevant

references: human trafficking, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, statistics, foster care,

child welfare, risk factors, vulnerabilit*, service providers, awareness, perception,

screening, indicat*, identif*, barriers to identif*, foster youth, at-risk youth, coalition,

social work, case manager, case worker, push factors, pull factors, United States,

recidivism, protective factors, effective intervention, and recidivism reduction.

Findings

Vulnerabilities to Trafficking

There are many factors which impact a person's exposure and susceptibility to

trafficking. These risk factors often overlap with the vulnerabilities faced by foster youth.

Youth are already one of the most at risk populations in the United States for being

trafficked (Abu-Ali & Al-Bahar, 2011; Kotrla, 2010; United States Office of the

Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, 2017). It is well

documented that most women engaged in sex work actually started performing

commercial sex acts while they were still minors (Hartinger-Saunders, Trouteaud, &

Matos-Johnson, 2017; Kotrla, 2010). The average age of entry into "prostitution" (known

to be commercial sexual exploitation of children) is 12-14 years old (Boxill &

Richardson, 2007; Garcia, Gupta, Greeson, Thompson, & DeNard, 2017; Hartinger-

Saunders, Trouteaud, & Matos-Johnson, 2017). It has been observed that sex-trafficked

minors are often already involved in the juvenile justice process or in the child welfare

system before being trafficked (Barnert, Abrams, Azzi, Ryan, Brook, & Chung, 2016;

Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Gibbs, Hardison Walters, Lutnick, Miller, & Kluckman,

2015; Kotrla, 2010; Rafferty, 2016). Foster youth experience an intersection of numerous

well researched risk factors (listed below) that when combined, increase the likelihood of

trafficking immensely (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016).

History of trauma/abuse. One of the most well-documented, predictive risk

factors for human trafficking is a previous history of trauma, abuse, or neglect

(Hartinger-Saunders, Trouteaud, & Matos Johnson, 2017; Hopper, 2017; Miccio-

Fonseca, 2017; O'Brien, Li, Givens, & Leibowitz, 2017; Perkins & Ruiz, 2017; Varma,

Gillespie, McCracken, & Greenbaum, 2015). Foster children have been removed from

their homes because of one (or many) of these problems, and thus are already at risk for

trafficking due to this factor alone. Removal from the home is a common source of

traumatization (or re-traumatization) for foster youth and can contribute to further trauma

and vulnerability (Ko et al., 2008). Whether they experienced sexual abuse or assault,

neglect, emotional abuse, or physical abuse, foster youth experience an increased

likelihood of future trauma and risk of trafficking.

Sexual abuse in particular makes a child more at risk for human trafficking. One

study found that among incarcerated youth with a history of sexual abuse, girls were 2.5

times as likely to be trafficked than their peers who did not have a history of sexual abuse, and boys were 8.2 times as likely to be trafficked if they had a history of sexual abuse, compared to their peers who did not have the same history (Reid, Baglivio, Piquero, Greenwald, & Epps, 2017).

Adverse Childhood Experiences. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) are demonstrated by the literature to be connected to future traumatic experiences and negative health effects later in life (Felitti et al., 1998). Higher ACE scores have associations with human trafficking risks for youth as well (Reid et al., 2017; Tribal Insights Brief, 2016). It has been found that youth who were arrested for prostitution-related charges had a history of more ACEs than their peers who were arrested for other crimes (Naramore, Bright, Epps, & Hardt, 2017). In addition, one study discovered that *all* the youth in the sample who were arrested for trafficking-related offenses had at least one ACE in their history, the most common of which was parental separation or divorce (Naramore et al., 2017). Finally, youth arrested for trafficking-related offenses (such as trading sex) were more likely to report experiencing almost all the ACE indicators than their peers arrested for non-trafficking related crimes (Naramore et al., 2017).

Because abuse and neglect (one category of ACE indicators) are reasons that a child may be placed into the foster care system, and communities with higher ACE indicators have a higher risk of human trafficking, this issue directly impacts foster youth. The reasons that they are being placed into care may also be increasing their risk for further abuse and victimization later in life, if left unaddressed (Reid et al., 2017; Tribal Insights Brief, 2016).

Homelessness. Homelessness is a serious issue with regards to the foster care system. The connection is not causal, but there is a clear association. As described by Zlotnick in 2009:

> Although there is no causal evidence that family homelessness leads to child placement into foster care or that a child's or youth's entry into the foster care system leads to homelessness, there is a consistent and strong connection throughout the life span demonstrated by the following: (a) Many formerly homeless children are living in foster care homes; (b) disproportionately large numbers of homeless youth have histories of living in foster care or group homes; and (c) large numbers of homeless adults have histories of childhood foster care.

> To further elaborate, some youth are homeless, and that is the reason they are placed into care, because their parents or guardians are unable to provide them the safety that they need. A specific subset of foster youth are homeless *as a result* of being in foster care. These youths may be runaways because they are placed into care and subsequently run away from their foster homes for various reasons (Hopper, 2017). They may be homeless as a result of aging out of care and having nowhere to go (Pecora et al., 2006).

> For whatever reason a person may be homeless, the homeless population in general is at a higher risk of being trafficked (Able-Peterson & Meuleners, 2009; Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Gibbs et al., 2015; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016; Kotrla, 2010; Miccio-Fonseca, 2017). According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), one in three homeless youth will be approached by a trafficker within 48 hours of becoming homeless ("Child Sex Trafficking", 2017). The longer they

are homeless, the more likely they are to encounter a trafficker or recruiter. The estimated

victimization rate of sex trafficking among homeless youth in Texas is as high as 25%

(Busch-Armendariz et al., 2016). This Texas estimate is much higher than the national

average of 10–15% (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010). The length of time that a youth

experiences homelessness impacts their likelihood of experiencing sex trafficking. The

longer a youth is homeless, the more likely they are to experience commercial sexual

exploitation (Able-Peterson & Meuleners, 2009).

One important aspect of human trafficking which is often overlooked is survival

sex (Able-Peterson & Meuleners, 2009; Edinburgh, Pape-Blabolil, Harpin, & Saewyc,

2015; Gibbs et al., 2015). Survival sex is a form of commercial sexual exploitation of

children involving trading sexual activities for goods the youth needs to survive, which

may include food, shelter, potentially money, or anything else of value (Perkins & Ruiz,

2017). This is considered a form of trafficking wherein the buyer is considered the

trafficker. Even though there is no third-party seller or "pimp," the person receiving the

sexual services is exploiting the child and is considered the trafficker for the purposes of

prosecution (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 2018). Survival sex is a

common experience for homeless youth who need to meet their needs and have minimal

alternatives, or for youth who are addicted to drugs (Dank et al., 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015;

Perkins & Ruiz, 2017).

Runaways and "throwaways." A youth is considered a runaway if he or she

"…leaves home without permission and stays away overnight, or is away with

permission, but chooses not to come home and stays away" (Office of Juvenile Justice

and Delinquency Prevention, 2011). Youth often run away from home if they are

experiencing abuse, and foster youth are a high-risk group for running away (Ainslie, 2015; Giardino & Sanborn, 2011; Hopper, 2017). Of the runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in 2017, 88% were in the care of child welfare services when they ran away ("Child Sex Trafficking," 2017). Runaways are a subset of homeless youth who are at particularly high risk for exploitation. According to NCMEC, approximately one out of every seven runaway youth were likely sex trafficked while they were on the run ("Child Sex Trafficking," 2017). It is clear that youth involved in the foster care system are more at-risk for running away, and those youth who runaway are more likely to be exploited.

"Throwaway youth" are youth who an ". . . adult household member tells to leave or prevents from returning home . . . does not arrange for adequate alternative care and the child is gone overnight" (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2011, p. 2). As opposed to runaways, throwaway youth are kicked out of their homes by their caregivers without an alternative arrangement (Gibbs et al., 2015; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2011). This is most commonly due to sexual orientation or gender identity (Dank et. al, 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015). The level of risk for exploitation for these youth is comparable to the level of risk for runaway youth (Kotrla, 2010).

Overlap with other vulnerable populations. LGBTQ+, gender nonconforming, and non-white youth are overrepresented in both the foster care and criminal justice system (Dank et al., 2017; Kahn & Hansen, 2017; Wilson, Jordan, Meyer, Flores, Stemple, & Herman, 2017; Wilson & Kastanis, 2015). Youth in either system are much

more likely to be trafficked (further details are provided below in the section

"Involvement with the justice system") (Speckman, 2016).

When a child identifies as LGBTQ+ and has unsupportive parents, they are often

kicked out of the home as a result (Dank et al. 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015; Office of

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2011). Almost 40% of homeless youth

identify as LGBTQ+ and thus are vastly overrepresented on the streets (Durso & Gates,

2012). As discussed previously, homelessness and/or status as a runaway greatly

increases the risk of being trafficked. Foster youth are more likely to identify as

LGBTQ+ than their peers not involved in the child welfare system, and this combination

creates a dangerous level of risk for an already vulnerable population (Wilson &

Kastanis, 2015).

Non-white youth are at higher risks for violence in general (and human trafficking

specifically) than their white peers (Balgamwalla, 2016). This is especially true for

Native American/First Nations youth, who are disproportionately targeted by traffickers

(Deer, 2010; Johnson, 2012; Petillo, 2016; Sweet, 2017; Tribal Insights Brief, 2016).

Non-white youth are over-represented in the child welfare system, are more likely to

experience poverty, and experience a higher level of risk for violence; because of these

factors, they experience a higher intersection of trafficking risks than white youth and

youth who are not in the system (Butler, 2015; Crofoot & Harris, 2012). They are also

overrepresented in the criminal justice system and more specifically the population of

youth arrested for trafficking related offenses (Naramore et al., 2017).

Poverty. One broad factor which puts a person at risk of trafficking is

experiencing poverty or other economic instability (Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017;

Hopper, 2017; Klatt, Cavner, & Egan, 2014; Rafferty, 2016; Speckman, 2016). One study found that a full third of youth aging out of foster care were living in poverty (Pecora et al., 2006). This is also an issue for foster youth currently in the system because those living in poverty are more likely to be involved in the child welfare system, and child abuse and neglect are measured to occur at higher rates among those living in poverty (McGuinness & Schneider, 2007). Traffickers can manipulate desperation, desire to make money, and desire for stability to lure potential victims into trafficking (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). Those with less to lose are more vulnerable to promises that are too good to be true than those who are economically stable, and this makes them more vulnerable to traffickers (Logan et al., 2009; Naramore et al., 2017).

Lack of control over circumstances. The purpose of foster care is to remove children from unsafe situations, which are, by nature, unstable. Whether due to trauma, abuse, or the fact that they have been removed from their home, foster youth are (by nature of involvement in foster care) faced with more unstable home lives than their peers who are not in foster care. When foster youth are in the system, they rarely have control over their circumstances. They are often removed from their family—which while abusive, is familiar and normal to them—without their consent. Traffickers take advantage of this and present trafficking as an opportunity for greater control in a life where they feel they have none. This may lead them to run straight to a trafficker, even if it is risky (Gorbett, 2017; Sapiro, Johnson, Postmus, & Simmel, 2016).

Lack of independence and control is a strong motivator that pushes foster youth toward traffickers. When a foster youth is trying to support themselves or escape from an abusive or controlling situation, they are more vulnerable to the attempts of traffickers to

lure them away from safety with promises of protection, a romantic relationship, a good paying job, or sometimes even a glamourous lifestyle (Gorbett, 2017; Perkins & Ruiz, 2017; Sapiro et al., 2016).

The desire for acceptance/love/affirmation. The motivation for love, acceptance, and affirmation is a fundamental human influence. This motivation is strong, and when the desire is not fulfilled, it contributes to vulnerability to traffickers (Hopper, 2017; Landers, McGrath, Johnson, Armstrong, & Dollard, 2017; Naramore et al., 2017). The Human Trafficking and Child Welfare Guide for Caseworkers (released by the US Department of Health and Human Services, 2017) describes them as "unmet intangible needs." While they are difficult to quantify, these emotional needs play an important role in trafficking risk.

Foster youth, just like anyone else, need love and affirmation. Traffickers are master manipulators and predators who exploit this need to take advantage of foster youth searching for love and acceptance they might not find from abusive or neglectful caregivers (Miccio-Fonseca, 2017; Rafferty, 2016). According to Gorbett (2017), the grooming process may start as a "relationship." In this relationship, the trafficker often poses as their significant other and makes them feel wanted. This may lead to a series of gradually escalating demands which start small and as "favors" to the trafficker, and slowly erode the boundaries of the victim until they are trapped in an abusive relationship and eventually are being trafficked (Gorbett, 2017; Rafferty, 2016). Often, the victim will not even realize or acknowledge that they are being trafficked, because they love the trafficker. Sometimes they will perceive it to be consensual. Just like a victim of intimate partner violence, victims of human trafficking who are trapped in this perceived

relationship may blame themselves, be unprepared to leave, not know where to go, or even actively protect the trafficker from scrutiny or punishment (Perkins & Ruiz, 2017; Rafferty, 2016). This is a form of coercion, one of the three defining characteristics of trafficking (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 2018). Some people in a coerced relationship with a trafficker view the trafficking as better than their alternative, because at least in the trafficking, they believe their trafficker loves them and looks after them. This may be in opposition to an abusive home life, which sees the same abuse (oftentimes sexual) but none of the perceived benefits or glamour of the lifestyle or happiness of the perceived relationship (Gorbett, 2017; Hopper 2017).

Lack of support systems. One risk factor for human trafficking is a lack of support systems (Butler, 2015; Hopper, 2017). When youth are placed into non-kinship foster care (that is, in a placement with strangers), their access to their support system is often limited as a result of being removed from their home. Some youth may be reluctant to make new connections to potential sources of support for fear of being separated, traumatized, or hurt again. This makes them vulnerable to traffickers who, just like abusers, look for potential victims who will be easy to isolate and manipulate. A lack of support systems makes this process of grooming and control much easier (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016). Conversely, strong support systems and feelings of connection serve as a protective factor against trafficking (Hickle, 2017).

Technology use. One modern, emerging factor which puts individuals at risk for human trafficking is oversharing information on social media (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016). This is one way traffickers identify, target, groom, and seduce potential new victims. Because isolation is so essential to trafficking someone, traffickers can use social

media to identify people online who are vulnerable and looking for affirmation, love, acceptance, or support. This isolation and vulnerability makes it easier for a trafficker to fill that need by sending affirming messages (Gorbett, 2017; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016). Online communication and grooming may be one way of building a relationship and increasing the trust between the potential victim and the trafficker. Or, in another scenario, these messages may build into a series of gradually escalating requests, such as sexting and asking for nude photos. This kind of child porn may be the extent of contact between a trafficker and their victim, or they may use the images to blackmail the youth who sends nude photos into meeting the trafficker in person (Gorbett, 2017).

High-risk behaviors. There are several high-risk behaviors which make youth more vulnerable to being exploited in the future by traffickers. These behaviors can serve as indicators of vulnerability, or create situations which make the youth easier to control by the traffickers.

Substance abuse. Substance abuse is a risk factor for foster youth specifically because foster youth have been found to have higher rates of substance use disorders than their peers not in foster care (Vaughn, Ollie, McMillen, Scott, & Munson, 2007). Substance abuse by either the youth or their family both contribute to human trafficking risk (Perkins & Ruiz, 2016; Tribal Insights Brief, 2016). Substance abuse may involve alcohol and/or illicit drug use. People with substance abuse problems are much more likely to be trafficked, partly because it makes controlling them easier for the traffickers (Roberson, 2017; Varma et al., 2015). This could be because when addicted to a substance, their judgment is impaired, and they might find themselves in an unsafe situation or taking risks they would not otherwise take (Varma et al., 2015). In some

cases, traffickers will supply a victim with a drug until they are addicted and subsequently use the supply of the drug as their means of control over the victim; this may be their gateway into trafficking (Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008; Roberson, 2017). However, if a potential victim is already addicted to a substance before being trafficked, a trafficker's promise of access to that substance and a steady provision of the substance in exchange for sex acts is an easy way to manipulate an addict into trafficking (Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008; Gorbett, 2017). A youth who is being exploited may turn to drugs to cope with the trauma of their situation (Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008). Survival sex also often involves exchanging a sex act for drugs or money to buy drugs (Choi, 2015).

High-risk sexual activity. One issue that is both a risk factor for and a potential red flag to indicate human trafficking is high-risk sexual activity (Klatt et al., 2014; Speckman, 2016). Foster youth have a high likelihood of engaging in high-risk sexual behavior and are highly likely to have negative sexual health outcomes (Ramseyer Winter, Brandon-Friedman, & Ely, 2016). This may include (but is not limited to): starting sexual activity at an early age, any sexual behavior that puts someone at risk for unplanned pregnancy or contracting STIs, unprotected sex, anal sex, having sex with multiple partners, not getting tested for STIs, not using any forms of birth control, having sex with someone who uses drugs intravenously, having sex with a significantly older partner, having sex with strangers, or having sex with anyone who has/had partners who exhibited any of these behaviors (Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1999; Klatt et al., 2014; Ramseyer Winter et al., 2016).

Involvement with the justice system. One well documented issue that is both a risk factor for and potential indicator of trafficking is involvement with the juvenile justice system (Miccio-Fonseca, 2017; Naramore et al., 2017; O'Brien et al., 2017; Reid et al., 2017). Involvement in the criminal justice system can be an indicator of future trafficking risk. One study found that of the youth who experienced sexual exploitation, 48% of them had previous involvement in both the foster care system and the criminal or juvenile justice system (Gragg, Petta, Bernstein, Eisen, & Quinn, 2007). Traffickers may target youth involved in the criminal justice system for various reasons. They may be easy to access while both the youth and other victims of traffickers who have been sent out to recruit new potential victims for their pimps are incarcerated or detained. Institutionalized settings such as shelters or detainment centers are rife for recruiting by traffickers (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016; Miccio-Fonseca, 2017; Speckman, 2016).

Trafficking may also lead to a victim becoming involved with the criminal justice system. When minors are arrested for "prostitution," they are often the victims of human trafficking (Reid et al., 2017). The legal standard for consent to sexual activity is that a person must be an adult. Children cannot legally consent to sexual activity, and whether they are induced to sell sexual acts through force, fraud, or coercion, or none of these, they are classified as victims (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 2018). However, the criminal justice system often arrests and convicts minors for prostitution or substance use related offenses, which only serves to further revictimize them (Reid et al., 2017). This will be discussed more in depth in the section "criminalization" below.

Active recruitment of foster youth. Many human traffickers will send victims they already have to recruit new victims (Hopper, 2017; Miccio-Fonseca, 2017). These

trafficked victims may have an easier time gaining the trust of potential victims because they are closer in age or they are the same gender, as opposed to a pimp who may be older or have less in common with the potential victims. One example of this kind of trafficking recruitment is when traffickers send foster youth who have been trafficked back into foster care. When foster youth who have been trafficked are placed in group homes or placements with access to other foster youth, they may serve as recruiters in target rich environments (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016; Miccio-Fonseca, 2017; Speckman, 2016). Because kids in the system are better able to recruit other kids from the system, youth in foster care are a valuable investment for traffickers. To summarize, foster youth may be recruited out of convenience, because they are in the right place to be recruited by other victims (Hopper, 2017; Miccio-Fonseca, 2017). They may also be recruited because the foster care related vulnerabilities they experience make them an ideal victim in the eyes of traffickers—easier to manipulate, coerce, or deceive, more likely to be enticed to run away, and/or less likely to be missed or believed. So, in addition to the risk factors that are more likely to be experienced by foster youth, being in a foster care placement places a youth at a higher risk because of the specific recruiting of youth from foster care placements.

Systemic issues. Many of the previously listed risk factors are facets of an individual child's identity, location, or circumstance, and can be recognized by an outside observer. However, there are many risk factors entirely out of the control of an individual. These factors have more to do with how the youth is pursued by others than by their innate characteristics.

Lack of awareness of trafficking and risks. It has been observed that service providers and mandated reporters of child abuse who work with youth often lack a basic awareness of the risks of human trafficking (Cole & Sprang, 2014; Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017; Rafferty, 2016). They also lack a general awareness of the warning signs of trafficking. In addition, many service providers are unaware of the true scope of problem, and the policies and laws in place to protect trafficking victims (Cole & Sprang, 2014; Hounmenou, 2012; Rafferty, 2016). One mitigating factor which improves the identification of trafficking victims is receiving specific human trafficking training (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Macy & Graham, 2012).

However, the child welfare system is unprepared to assess, evaluate, or identify trafficking red flags, trafficked victims, or a previous history of trafficking because there is no required, standardized assessment or screening tool for human trafficking. Texas only implemented mandatory, universal, and formal human trafficking training tools for state employees working with foster youth in January 2018 (State of Texas Office of the Attorney General, 2018). No such mandate currently exists for other professionals, parents, or volunteers who work with foster youth.

Because providers of foster care services are unaware of the risks and signs of trafficking, this is also true of the youth they are tasked to protect. Youth who are in foster care often lack the awareness of the problem and how high-risk they are for being trafficked (Kramer-Feldman, 2017). They may lack the education, skills, and/or knowledge to protect themselves from the traffickers who target them. Some effective trafficking prevention programs involve educating youth about the tactics traffickers use

to target youth and providing them strategies to counteract those tactics if they are approached by a trafficker (Gorbett, 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017).

One relevant factor to consider is the fact that youth cannot receive trafficking specific services until they have been identified as a trafficking survivor (Speckman, 2016). Because of this, frontline staff and service providers for vulnerable populations need to be able to recognize and identify potential survivors in order to send them to services. However, there are many additional barriers, even when the training is provided.

Victim credibility. Traffickers are experts at choosing victims who are difficult to identify, believe, or respect by the systems of which they are a part (Gorbett, 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017). Traffickers actively benefit from exploiting youth who are not viewed as credible witnesses of their own experiences. This may include youth addicted to an illicit substance, youth who have a history of lying, dressing or behaving provocatively, youth with a history of arrests or juvenile delinquency, disruptive behaviors, disrupted foster care placements, mental illness(es) (Gorbett, 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017). Youth may be targeted due to any combination of these factors because it is a way to discredit the victim if they ever disclose or come forward (Gorbett, 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017).

Breakdown of communication between agencies. Foster youth interact with a number of different agencies during their time in the system. This may include (but is not limited to) the juvenile justice system, the juvenile parole system, emergency youth shelters, and the public-school system (Sapiro et al., 2016). Often, each agency is treated as a silo (Harvey, Hornsby, & Sattar, 2015). In a traditional model of service provision, there is a severe lack of cooperation between the different systems. In addition, the

breakdown of communication and screening within agencies such as the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), may lead to a child not being identified as a victim, their case falling through the cracks, or investigations not being completed. High turnover rates among caseworkers at DFPS leads to a difficulty maintaining continuity of care, which can mean vulnerable kids are not screened, identified, or provided necessary services (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010).

  Government not taking responsibility for the issue. Every year, the federal government releases a report about human trafficking and relevant issues via the State Department (United States Office of the Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, 2017). The Texas state government has assumed some responsibility for the problem of human trafficking as well. Governor Greg Abbott created a team and several positions within the state to combat human trafficking, and Attorney General Ken Paxton has done the same (State of Texas Office of the Attorney General, 2018). It is undeniably true that the state has acknowledged the scope of human trafficking in Texas and the need for action to combat the problem. Despite this, the state legislature has failed to approve funding for anti-trafficking efforts on the scale needed to truly be effective, as recommended by trafficking experts (Satija, Walters, & Smith, 2017). Additionally, the trainings provided to state employees (such as DFPS employees and law enforcement) completely leave out any mention of some of the most vulnerable sub-groups for trafficking— specifically, LGBTQ+ youth and Native American youth (Novak, 2016; State of Texas Office of the Attorney General, 2018). The state leaves a large gap in its formal trainings which will only further harm and marginalize many of the youth the training is intended to protect.

A survey of treatment facilities across the U.S. found that there were a total of 438 beds available in 37 residential treatment facilities specifically for commercially sexually exploited youth (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013). With at least 79,000 youth commercially exploited for sex every year in Texas alone, 438 beds nationally are not enough to meet the needs of the number of identified victims annually (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2016). Without recognition of the lack of funding and support for the development of further facilities, the issue will continue to grow (Rafferty, 2016).

Hostile system. The unfortunate truth is that many professionals working with at-risk populations such as foster youth are not trained in trauma informed care (Hopper, 2017; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016). A lack of trauma-informed response by the system increases the hostility experienced by foster youth (Gorbett, 2017; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016).

Systemic hostility and provider burnout can lead to distrust and lack of disclosure by victims to the authorities who could help. If someone has a history of involvement in systems such as the criminal justice or foster care system (as most trafficked youth do), and those systems did not help them (or even actively harmed them) previously, they may not trust those systems or their representatives to help them later. If a trafficked youth has been found by a system but their trafficking status is not yet discovered and they have a negative history with that system, they are less likely to disclose their victimization status. Even if they believe themselves to be a victim, and if the person they are directly interacting with is not someone with whom they are already familiar, it is unlikely that the trafficked youth will trust them enough to ask for help if that person is a representative of a system with which they have a negative history. They may also fear

the system will tear them from their family or loved ones—even if that "family" is made up of the trafficker and other people victimizing them (Gorbett, 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017).

Criminalization. Many studies of trafficked youth involved surveying and interviewing youth incarcerated for prostitution-related offenses, such as trading sex (Miccio-Fonseca, 2017; Naramore et al., 2017; O'Brien et al., 2017; Perkins & Ruiz, 2017; Reid et al., 2017). The law clearly states that youth who are trading sex are not legally able to consent and should not be held liable for their actions because they are considered trafficking victims (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 2018). However, in practice, these adolescents are often arrested and convicted for crimes as if they were adults (Barnert et al., 2016). This mislabeling and criminalization makes it much more difficult for trafficked youth to be identified and to receive services. This is especially true for non-white youth who are overrepresented in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, oversexualized, and more likely to be criminalized than their white peers (Butler, 2015; Phillips, 2015).

Many youths who are sold or traded for sex are perceived to be complicit in their victimization, but even if they engage in survival sex, the law is clear: they are not legally able to consent, and they are being trafficked (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 2018). Youth who have been trafficked are often punished for exhibiting help-seeking behaviors (Rafferty, 2016). One specific issue is that even when identified, because of the dearth of residential treatment facilities for youth who have been sex trafficked, there is often nowhere to house them (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013). Because of this lack of trafficking specific treatment facilities, the need for intensive services, and

the high likelihood of running away from care, many providers view the best option as involuntarily institutionalizing trafficked youth in the criminal justice system or mental health institutions (known as "carceral protectionism") which are ill-equipped to handle these issues (Barnert et al., 2016; Sapiro et al., 2016).

Barriers to Identification of Victims

Youth involved in the foster care system experience a high number of risk factors as a direct result of their exposure to the system. In addition to their elevated level of risk, they also experience a significant number of barriers to being identified when they are victimized, and these make their ability to escape trafficking much harder.

Lack of awareness. As previously discussed, if a service provider is unaware of the problem of human trafficking and related risk factors, it contributes to the risk that the youth they serve will become involved in trafficking. This contributes to a systemic level of risk. However, it is also a barrier to victim identification, which decreases the likelihood that a victim will be able to escape, even if they are sitting in the office of the service provider (Cole & Sprang, 2015; Hounmenou, 2012).

Trauma. As discussed previously, having a history of trauma or ACEs is a risk factor for human trafficking, and also one which all foster youth will have in common. This trauma is not only a risk factor, it also makes it harder to identify victims of human trafficking. The symptoms of human trafficking are often masked by symptoms of complex trauma, which may be misidentified as bad behavior or intentional (Hopper, 2017; Sapiro et al., 2016). They may not be able to coherently tell the story of what happened to them because the trauma has impaired their functioning so severely (Hopper, 2017). Service providers may interact with a trafficked youth and believe that they are

choosing to act out or behave poorly, and this may earn them a "bad kid" label, when in reality, they are suffering from trauma-related symptoms and behaviors (Hopper, 2017; Sapiro et al., 2016). Being labeled as a troublemaker or a "bad kid" is a particular problem for youth involved in the foster care system or criminal justice system, where most practices and policies are not trauma informed (Hopper, 2017). Because trauma behaviors being mislabeled as bad behavior is an identified problem in both the foster care and criminal justice systems, it indicates a need for trauma informed care in any agency where staff will encounter traumatized and potentially trafficked youth. The mislabeling of traumatized youth also contributes to the need for proper training of professionals to recognize these signs for the signs they actually are, instead of treating them as teenage rebellion.

Victim's lack of identification as a victim. As discussed in the section about the desire for acceptance, love, and affection, a survivor of trafficking may believe they are in a relationship with their trafficker (Edinburgh et al., 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015; Gorbett, 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017; Perkins & Ruiz, 2017). They may not identify as a victim and may believe that they are a consenting participant or partially responsible in their circumstances (Gorbett, 2017). This may be considered a "trauma bond," "Stockholm syndrome," or simply a classic example of an abusive relationship. In any case, if a survivor of trafficking does not perceive what happened to them as wrong, they may not self-disclose to authorities who could help them escape (Cole & Sprang, 2015; Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017). In the same vein, if they believe that the trafficking is not as bad as their alternative (living in an abusive household, being neglected, etc.) they may wish to

remain concealed to protect their trafficker. Thus, they may purposefully withhold information which if disclosed could rescue them from the trafficking situation.

From a different perspective, a person who has been trafficked often experiences feelings of shame, distress, and responsibility for what happened to them. The feelings of shame and stigma may prevent them from disclosing because of fear that they may be judged or punished for what happened to them (Cole & Sprang, 2015; Rafferty, 2016). And those fears may be well-founded. As discussed in the section above about criminalization, many foster youths who survive trafficking are classified within the criminal justice system as prostitutes, even though minors cannot legally consent to sexual activity (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, 2018). That may lead to their misidentification or prevent them from coming forward in the first place.

Because there is currently no universal training or preparation for those working with vulnerable groups to identify human trafficking among their clients, the burden of identification is on the victim to come forward. But due to all the previously discussed factors, it is clear that this approach is not enough. The responsibility needs to shift to practitioners to effectively identify and intervene with those who are being exploited, and the screening needs to rule out bias as much as possible (Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017; Kramer-Feldman, 2017).

Stereotypes and bias. As discussed in the introduction, there are many sensationalized depictions of human trafficking in the media (Hepburn, & Simon, 2010; Gulati, 2011; Logan et al., 2009; United States Office of the Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, 2017). Trafficking is not the same thing as human smuggling (although smuggling may lead to a person being trafficked), and legal

citizens can be trafficked too (Rafferty, 2016; Gorbett, 2017). Because people tend to expect trafficking to look a particular way, they may not know when they come into contact with a real trafficking survivor. Trafficking survivors can present with different trauma-related symptoms and behavior problems or, as discussed previously, may purposefully conceal their identity as someone being trafficked to protect their trafficker/partner (Gorbett, 2017; Logan et al., 2009). Because of this, people often dismiss real trafficking victims as "troubled kids," drug and alcohol addicts, sex workers, or prostitutes, among other things (Hopper, 2017).

There are cultural reasons why people may not be identified as a trafficking victim. One of those reasons is that American culture almost always expects trafficking victims to be female. Trafficking victims can be male, too (Butler, 2015; Dank et al., 2015; Edinburgh et al., 2015; Novak, 2016; Rafferty, 2016). Global estimates indicate that half of all human trafficking victims are male (United States Office of the Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, 2017). However, male victims of human trafficking are severely under-identified.

A common cultural perspective in the United States is that men are in a state of perpetual consent, so they always want sex and cannot be raped. That narrative means that even young boys can't be raped, and it leads to the idea that they inherently cannot be victims of a sexual crime such as sexual exploitation (Kramer-Feldman, 2017). Because of this narrative, if a person is screening for victims of exploitation, they may not be consciously searching for boys and men who have been victimized. So a male victim of trafficking may be receiving services from a provider and not be recognized as

a victim of exploitation, solely because of his gender and the cultural expectations that accompany him.

Because membership in the LGBTQ+ community makes someone more likely to be trafficked, it is common to find survivors of trafficking are LGBTQ+. However, cultural stigma surrounding LGBTQ+ identities leads to a lack of identifying them as a victim (Dank et al., 2015; Edinburgh et al., 2015; Kramer-Feldman, 2017). They may be blamed for their poor circumstances due to their "lifestyle choices." The trauma and pain they suffer as a result of being trafficking may be misconstrued as consequences of their identity, because it is seen by some as perverted or "against God". This bias against LGBTQ+ and gender-nonconforming people may lead to their not being identified as trafficking survivors (Dank et al., 2015; Edinburgh et al., 2015; Kramer-Feldman, 2017).

Purposeful disorientation of victims. Traffickers use many methods to disorient their victims so that they cannot make an outcry or seek help. This may be through moving them from place to place and not telling them where they are, so they can't tell where they are and where they have been (Hopper, 2004; United States Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). The trafficker may also purposefully disorient their victims (for instance, with drugs) so they do not know the time, date, or other important information which could allow them to escape (Logan et al., 2009; United States Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Often the trafficker will not give them a way to communicate, thereby isolating them from support systems and making them dependent on the trafficker (Hopper, 2004; Logan et al., 2009). If the victim does not speak the native language, the trafficker may limit their language learning ability (Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu, & Cook Heffron, 2011; Hopper, 2004).

Resources for human trafficking are primarily for adults. The majority of

research and resources dedicated to fighting human trafficking addresses adults (Fong &

Berger Cardoso, 2010). This may be because children are a vulnerable class and are

protected during the research process, which makes researching children inherently more

difficult. One of the natural consequences of having less research about youth trafficking

is that less resources are allocated to address the problem. This means there are fewer

validated screening tools, measures, interventions, and programs for youth than there are

for adults. This could be an additional reason why a child who is being trafficked is not

identified. However, child trafficking in the United States is known to be a problem

because of the emerging research which is studying the issue and bringing it to light.

Service providers are identifying exploited youth accidentally and sporadically in their

regular practice. Law enforcement are identifying minors posted on advertisements for

sexual services on websites such as backpage.com. The problem of child trafficking is

emerging in our national consciousness, and it is important to begin the problem of

identifying these exploited youth, providing them appropriate services, and preventing

future exploitation from occurring.

<div align="center">

Summary of the Literature

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Human trafficking of children is a serious problem in Texas. As demonstrated by

the literature review, foster youth are at an elevated risk. There are several contributing

factors which make the risks for foster youth even higher. These can be individual or

systemic, and they can often also serve as indicators of trafficking as well. However, the

service providers working with them are not necessarily aware of this risk and are often

intentionally blinded from these signs by traffickers. This combination of lack of

awareness and intentional misguiding makes these youth harder to identify and harder to provide interventions to.

An important note is that these risk factors do not guarantee that a person will be trafficked. If someone only experiences one, two, or even many of these risk factors, they may live a normal and happy life undisturbed by exploitation. And it is possible for someone to become involved in trafficking without exhibiting any of these risk factors or indicators. However, it is the repeated pattern of multiple risk factors, or a sudden change/escalation in one or a few categories, that should raise the awareness of a person interacting with a vulnerable youth that something more sinister may be occurring. The responsibility should not be on vulnerable youth to disclose their exploitation, because the nature of exploitation makes them feel as though they are responsible or to blame. The responsibility for identifying youth who are being trafficked often lies with the people who work with them every day: the professionals who are trained and equipped to provide them with services to meet their needs. If it is their responsibility to identify these youth, are they rising to the challenge? Are they recognizing the problem?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to answer the research questions: "How aware are foster care service providers in Texas of the problem and risks of human trafficking to the population they serve? What factors affect the level of awareness?" These questions were answered by assessing the level of awareness of the problem of human trafficking and related risk factors among the people working with one of the most at-risk populations for being trafficked: foster youth.

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey design with a descriptive quantitative approach. It was descriptive because (as discussed previously) there is a strong body of research to indicate risk factors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation for foster youth (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016; O'Brien et al., 2017; Garcia et al., 2017; Speckman, 2016). There have also been a few studies conducted to assess providers' levels of awareness of the risks vulnerable youth, including foster youth, experience (Hounmenou, 2012). This study continued to build on a foundation which was laid by previous researchers to further describe the level of awareness and understanding of the problem of human trafficking. The descriptive approach utilized has several limitations. The primary is that because no variables are being manipulated, a causational

relationship between variables cannot be proven (Yegidis, Weinbach, & Myers, 2012). In addition, the survey was self-administered, which may contribute to bias or inaccuracies due to issues such as misunderstandings of the survey instruments or an overall lower response rate than other data collection methods (Yegidis et al., 2012).

The sample was cross-sectional, meaning it only assessed a point in time, rather than a pre/posttest or longitudinal design. Due to the inherent limitations of the cross-sectional method, it is not possible to attribute causation related to any findings. The relationships between measured variables that were found are only attributable to association or correlation, not causation (Yegidis et al., 2012).

Sample

The study population was anyone who works with foster youth in Texas in any capacity (including state employees, staff of agencies that occasionally serve foster youth, contracted foster care service providers, volunteers, and foster parents). Texas was selected for two main reasons. The first is that regulation of policies and procedures of the child welfare system and of the fight against human trafficking occur at the state level. To venture outside the state of Texas would require separate analysis of factors related to different state legislation and policies. This would be unfeasible with the relevant time and resource constraints. Secondly, if the study focused on only the local area (Taylor County), the sample size would be too small to reveal any consequential or statistically significant data.

The sampling frame was constrained by the email addresses to which the researcher had access. It included the employees of foster care agencies, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and foster care support groups with publicly available email

addresses. It also included anyone reached by the 211 A Call for Help network email list. The email addresses were obtained from the National Foster Care & Adoption Directory Search on the federal Children's Bureau, a part of the US Department of Health and Human Services (National foster care & adoption directory search, n.d.). The researcher distributed the survey to all persons included in the compiled email list.

Data Collection Procedure

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) exempt review application was submitted and approved. The approval letter is included in Appendix A. After receiving IRB approval, the survey link was distributed to the compiled email list of people working directly with foster youth. The recruitment email full text is included in Appendix B. The data collection was limited by time constraints based on IRB acceptance and thesis defense. Due to these limitations, the survey window was open for ten days in April 2018.

The email list was compiled from the Texas child welfare website by selecting Texas from the list of states, and then selecting the search terms "State Kinship Care Contacts and Programs," "State Foster Care Program Managers," "Private Domestic Foster Care and Adoption Agencies," "Foster Care and Adoption Education and Training Organizations," "Foster Care and Adoption Contact Numbers and Websites," "Kinship, Foster Care and Adoption Support Groups," and "Foster Youth Services and Supports" (National foster care & adoption directory search, n.d.). After those search terms were selected, the directory displayed all relevant agencies from the database and the point of contact information for each. If an email was provided, it was collected and added to the list.

The survey was completely voluntary and digital. Each potential participant needed to agree to the informed consent before they could progress to the survey. The survey offered the opportunity for participants to enter their email upon completion for the chance to be entered in a drawing for a $50 gift card. The text of the informed consent is included in Appendix C.

Data to Collect

The survey contained questions measuring (1) the awareness of and attitudes toward human trafficking as a general problem, (2) the awareness of human trafficking as a specific problem for foster youth, (3) the awareness of specific risk factors for human trafficking experienced by foster youth, (4) previous human trafficking related training, (5) the desire for further training, education, or resources on how to serve survivors of human trafficking, and (6) demographic information. The complete list of survey questions can be found in Appendix D.

The survey questions were adapted from two main sources. The first is the Baseline Survey of Human Trafficking in Wisconsin (Silver, 2008). Questions adapted from this survey included questions about their perception of different situations and whether they qualified as human trafficking, their opinion about whether human trafficking is a problem, how many youth they encountered who experienced risk factors or red flags for trafficking within the past 10 years, if their agency provides services to trafficking victims, if they have participated or have interest in human trafficking trainings, and perceptions of the problem as experienced by the youth with whom the respondents work. These questions were adapted because it had a variety of questions which could be easily specified to apply to foster youth, and the instrument was reviewed

and pilot tested by the state of Wisconsin before being implemented. Questions were left out about immigrants, barriers to human trafficking victims seeking services within their agency and in the broader state, and directly asking if they have encountered human trafficking. These questions were left out for two main reasons. The first was because they did not relate to the research question, and the second was due to time constraints for reviewing and analyzing the data. Specific questions related to the agency the respondents worked for and how they advertise or work with trafficking victims were also left off because they were irrelevant to the research question.

The questions specifically regarding previous training related to human trafficking from the Baseline Survey of Human Trafficking in Wisconsin were updated (Silver, 2008). In the original survey, these questions asked "Since 2000 . . ." and the study was published in 2008. For this study, the date was changed to "Since 2010. . ." because of the similar time interval of eight years.

Several questions (specifically related to the perception of how serious the problem of human trafficking is) were adapted by deleting content that was irrelevant and clarifying, without changing the meaning of the original question. These questions were adapted into a Likert scale format to simplify the data analysis at the conclusion of the study. The questions were rephrased (but not significantly altered) to suit the Likert scale format.

The second measurement that was adapted included selected questions from a study conducted by Hartinger-Saunders et al. (2017). This measurement reviewed the perceptions of and experiences with commercial sexual exploitation of teenage girls in the United States among mandated child abuse reporters. The questions were intended to

measure if mandated reporters came into contact with trafficking victims, to measure

their attitudes toward trafficking, and to assess their understanding of the requirement of

mandated reporting. Questions adapted from this survey included questions about

attitudes and beliefs about trafficking, how often the respondents encountered or

suspected trafficking red flags among the youth they worked with, and the types of abuse

they observed or encountered. This measurement was adapted because some of the

questions were not in an appropriate format, so the responses were adjusted to a five-

point Likert scale. In addition, questions about mandated reporting, their likeliness to

report, and how their perceptions of reporting effectiveness impact their likelihood to

report were left out of the adapted survey, because they did not relate to the research

question. Finally, this study specifically used the term "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking"

(DMST), but for the purposes of this research project, the updated term used was

"Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children" (CSEC). In order to minimize confusion,

the adapted version of the survey referred only to "human trafficking." The questions

were altered to reflect this.

      Questions related to the frequency with which the female youth they worked with

experienced different types of exploitation or abuse or the kinds of risk factors they

displayed were adapted from the study conducted by Hartinger-Saunders et al. (2017).

The questions were all changed to be gender neutral, because although females are more

at risk for sex trafficking than males, both can be trafficked (Butler, 2015; Edinburgh et

al., 2015; Novak, 2016). One question, "Please rate the frequency with which you have

suspected or known adolescents that you worked with (age 10–17) were at-risk for

various problems" was adapted from the previously mentioned study by adding several

risk factors for human trafficking identified during the literature review. The questions about mandated reporting were removed because the intent of this study was not to review understanding of mandated reporting requirements, but to review the respondents' understanding of human trafficking.

Some questions from the study were left out of the adapted survey because they did not relate to the research question. Several questions from both surveys were left out because they asked specifically about the number of cases encountered. To ask questions about numbers of cases specific to human trafficking would be unlikely to reveal enough significant data to justify asking the question, and the self-reporting nature of the survey would make this data unreliable. In addition, the purpose of this study was not to gather data about number of confirmed or suspected human trafficking cases, but to understand the awareness and perceptions of trafficking among foster care service providers.

Level of Awareness

This section of questions was intended to establish if there is a discrepancy between awareness of human trafficking as a general issue, human trafficking as a specific issue for foster youth, and the risk factors for human trafficking experienced by foster youth, as identified by the service providers. It included questions such as "Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: Human trafficking is a serious problem for foster youth" and "Please rate the frequency with which you have known or suspected that adolescents that you worked with or provided care to (age 10–17) were at-risk for different kinds of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse".

Previous Training

Previous training was measured by questions such as "Since 2010, I have participated (either attended or presented) in: Training on Human Trafficking, Conference/Symposium on Human Trafficking, Outreach event focused on Human Trafficking, or Other." These questions measured the case worker's previous job experience and training, as well as their previous work with potential victims who were either at risk or had experienced human trafficking.

Desire for Further Training and Information

Question 12 measured the desire of respondents to receive further training on the issue of human trafficking. Responses to this question could be used to develop specifically cultivated trainings which meet the expressed needs of a group of professionals working with foster youth, one of the most at-risk groups for human trafficking. The findings from this specific question could inform future practice and research opportunities for social workers, as well as for local coalitions working to end human trafficking.

Demographic Information

Demographic data (such as age, gender, race, and education level), data regarding how long they have been in their position (or any position working to provide services to foster youth), and their role in working with foster youth was also collected. This information was gathered at the conclusion of the survey.

<div align="center">Analysis Plan</div>

Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine sample characteristics and describe the awareness level, previous training, and desire for future training among the

sample. Independent samples t-tests, Chi-square analyses, and regressions were carried

out to see if the awareness varied depending on different factors (e.g., gender, race, age,

job position, previous training).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Characteristics of the Sample

The respondents of this study were service providers and volunteers who provided some type of service to or interacted with foster youth ($n=81$). Of the approximately 250 people who received the solicitation email (approximate because it was forwarded by several supervisors to their employees), 81 responded to the survey. As shown in Table 1, the majority (86.2%) of respondents who chose to disclose their gender were female ($n=56$). 13.8% of respondents who chose to disclose their gender were male ($n=9$). Sixteen survey respondents did not disclose their gender.

Three survey respondents (3.7%) identified as Hispanic or Latinx, a gender-neutral alternative to Latino/Latina (*Oxford Living Dictionaries*, n.d.). The majority of respondents who disclosed their race identified as white ($n=58$, 71.6%). 1.2% of respondents identified their race as African American ($n=1$). Additionally, 1.2% of respondents were identified as Native American, and 1.2% of respondents were identified as Asian ($n=1$). Twenty one percent of respondents ($n=17$) identified their ethnicity as Non-Hispanic and their race as "Other."

The respondents ranged in age from 22 years old to 72 years old ($M=44.39$, $SD=12.32$). The mean total number of years involved with foster care among respondents

was 6.35 years (*SD*=6.10). Respondents' education levels ranged from high school (*n*=6, 9.4%) to doctoral degree (*n*=1, 1.6%). The most common level of education attained by respondents was a four-year degree (*n*=27, 42.2%), followed by a graduate degree (*n*=23, 35.9%).

One demographic factor taken into account was the respondent's relation to foster youth. This included several categories. The highest represented group among respondents was the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) (*n*=28, 42.4%). The next highest group was Foster Care/Child Placement Agency Caseworkers or Employees (*n*=16, 24.2%), followed by Foster Parents (*n*=11, 16.7%), and Non-Foster Care Direct Service Providers (*n*=6, 9.1%).

Data Manipulation

Upon initial data collection, 11 respondents chose "Other" as their relation to foster youth. In the comments, 10 of these 11 respondents clarified that they met two of these roles (i.e., Educator *and* Foster Parent, or Direct Service Provider and CASA). In those cases, they were re-classified into one category based on which role provided them the most direct access to foster youth. For example, if a respondent indicated that they are both an educator and foster parent, they were reclassified as a foster parent, because in that role they only serve foster youth, while as an educator they serve a much broader population.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Sample (N =81)

Categorical	Category	*N*	*%*
Continuous	Range	*M*	*SD*
Age	22~72	44.39	12.32
Involve (yrs.)	0~23	6.35	6.10
Gender	Male	9	13.8
	Female	56	86.2
Race	White	58	71.6
	African American	1	1.2
	Native American	1	1.2
	Asian	1	1.2
	Other	17	21.0
Ethnicity	Hispanic (Any)	3	3.7
Education	High school	6	9.4
	Some college	5	7.8
	2-year degree	2	3.1
	4-year degree	27	42.2
	Graduate degree	23	35.9
	Doctoral degree	1	1.6
Relation	Foster Care/Child Placement Agency Caseworker or Employee	16	24.2
	Foster Parent	11	16.7
	Educator/Educational Administrator	3	4.5
	Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)	28	42.4
	Juvenile Probation Officer/Criminal Justice Employee	1	1.5
	Direct Service Provider (not foster care)	6	9.1
	Other	1	1.5

Note. Involve (yrs.) refers to the number of years the respondent has been in any position working to provide services to foster youth. If less than a year, respondents were asked to respond with 0.

Descriptive Analysis of Major Variables

This section presents descriptive statistics of major variables in this study. None

of the respondents answered the questions under the heading "General Human

Trafficking Awareness;" therefore, information related to these variables cannot be provided. Respondents perceived human trafficking as "a serious problem for foster youth" (*M*=4.28, *SD*=1.14).

Training

Respondents were asked about their previous experiences with general human trafficking trainings, child sex trafficking trainings, and other related trainings. The summary of these statistics can be found in Table 2. The responses were coded in a Likert scale format as Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Occasionally = 3, Frequently = 4, and Very Frequently = 5. The mean experience of all of these categories was 2.71 (between Rarely and Occasionally) with a standard deviation of 0.97. The most frequently reported type of training was "General training on related issues" (*M*=3.44, *SD*=1.01).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Training (N=67)

	Min	Max	M	SD
Training Mean	**1**	**5**	**2.71**	**0.97**
Training on child sex trafficking or child "prostitution"	1	5	3.02	1.12
General training on related issues	1	5	3.44	1.01
Training on how to identify sex trafficking/child "prostitution"	1	5	2.83	1.10
Training on how to respond to child sex trafficking	1	5	2.74	1.10
Training on Human Trafficking	1	5	2.67	1.14
Conference/Symposium on Human Trafficking	1	5	2.12	1.25
Outreach event focused on Human Trafficking	1	5	2.14	1.20

Frequency of Identification of Exploitation

The frequency with which the respondents identified commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking among the foster youth they worked with was assessed using nine items depicting sex trafficking, and one item (rape or molestation) that served

as a comparison data point. These statistics are summarized in Table 3. Respondents

indicated whether the youth they worked with experienced these types of abuse never (1),

rarely (2), occasionally (3), frequently (4), or very frequently (5). The mean frequency of

identification of sexual exploitation among foster youth was 2.43 (between rarely and

occasionally), with a standard deviation of 0.84, as shown in Table 3. The most likely to

be identified form of exploitation or trafficking was being commercially sexually

exploited by a parent or family member, with a mean of 3.03 and a standard deviation of

1.08. The least likely type of exploitation to be identified was working at a strip club

(M=1.80, SD=1.05). The comparison data point (being raped or molested) was more

likely to be identified among foster youth the respondents worked with than any of the

forms of trafficking, with a Mean of 3.45 (SD=1.28).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Frequency of Identification of Exploitation (N=64)

	Min	Max	M	SD
Frequency Mean	**1**	**5**	**2.43**	**0.84**
Being commercially sexually exploited by a parent/family member	1	5	3.03	1.08
Being pressured by a peer to exchange sex for money/other goods	1	5	2.77	1.21
Being in pornographic images	1	5	2.57	1.09
Being involved in prostitution	1	5	2.26	0.99
Working at a strip club	1	5	1.80	1.05
Exchanging sex for money, shelter, or food	1	5	2.58	1.22
Being advertised online for sexual activity	1	5	1.83	0.97
Being taken to other cities/states to provide sexual services	1	4	1.90	1.01
Being sexually exploited by a parent/family member	1	5	3.00	1.15
Being raped or molested	1	5	3.45	1.28

Risk Factor Identification

Respondents were asked to report how often they identified various risk factors

for human trafficking (shown in Table 4) among the foster youth they worked with. They

were asked to respond using a five-point Likert scale with the choices never (1), rarely

(2), occasionally (3), frequently (4), or very frequently (5). The overall mean of identified

risk factors was 3.55 (*SD*=1.01). The risk factor most likely to be identified was a history

of trauma or abuse (*M*=4.46, *SD*=0.76). The risk factor least likely to be identified by

respondents was homelessness (*M*=3.13, *SD*=1.29).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Risk Factors (N=64)

	Min	Max	M	SD
Risk Factor Mean	**1**	**5**	**3.55**	**1.01**
Delinquency/involvement in juvenile justice system	1	5	3.56	1.32
Teen pregnancy	1	5	3.28	1.30
Dropping out of school/truancy	1	5	3.42	1.32
Substance abuse	1	5	3.55	1.28
History of running away from care	1	5	3.58	1.32
Homelessness	1	5	3.13	1.29
Suicide attempts	1	5	3.25	1.23
Rape/molestation	1	5	3.39	1.27
History of trauma/abuse	1	5	4.46	0.76
High-risk sexual activity	1	5	3.91	1.27

Service Provision

To assess the amount of services provided to address human trafficking which

providers offered to foster youth at the time of the survey, they were asked: "If you are an

employee of an agency that serves foster youth, does your department currently provide

services for victims of human trafficking or participate in anti-human trafficking

activities/initiatives?" Respondents were asked to check all that applied, and the majority

of respondents selected only one answer. The breakdown of the responses is shown in

Table 5. 22.2% (*n*=18) of respondents reported that their agency does provide services to

trafficking survivors, and 21% (*n*=17) reported that their agencies actively screen for

trafficking victims. Over nineteen percent (19.8%, *n=16*) indicated that their agency

participates in anti-human trafficking initiatives. Nine respondents (11%) indicated that

the agencies they worked for did not provide services to human trafficking victims.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Service Provision (N=81)

	N	%
Yes - provide services	18	22.2
Yes- participate in anti-human trafficking activities/initiatives	16	19.8
Yes - screen for potential trafficking victims	17	21.0
No - but we're planning to provide services in the future	4	4.9
No - but we're planning to engage in anti-human trafficking activities in the future	1	1.2
No - we have no plans in this area	4	4.9
I don't know	8	9.9
I don't work at an agency that provides services to foster youth (i.e., I am a foster parent)	17	21.0
Other (please specify)	6	7.4

Note. Participants were asked to check all that apply

Interest in Further Information

To assess if the participants wished to receive more information, training, or

resources related to human trafficking, they were asked "Are you interested in the

following? (please check all that apply)." They were provided a list of options to choose

from, as well as an "Other," fill-in-the-blank option, to explore how current service

providers feel about receiving more information. The summary of responses is shown

below in Table 6. 56 respondents (69.1%) wished to receive information about upcoming

trainings, and 51 respondents (63%) wanted to receive training on how to screen for,

identify, and assist human trafficking victims.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Interest in further information (N=81)

	N	%
To receive training/training materials in screening, identifying, and assisting Human Trafficking victims	51	63.0
To be informed of upcoming workshops, lectures, symposia and/or conferences on Human Trafficking	56	69.1
To be part of a service provider/law enforcement working group	28	34.6
To be involved in a coalition to combat human trafficking	32	39.5

Note. Participants were asked to check all that apply

Comparisons of Variables

Table 7 shows the means of identification of risk factors, frequency of identified exploitation, and training compared between the different job roles, to illuminate the differences based on the respondent's relationship to the foster youth they worked with. The overall mean for risk factors identified was 3.55. The group with the highest identified risk factors mean was the respondent who selected "Other" ($M=5$). The second highest identified risk factor mean in a single job was the juvenile probation officer ($n=1$, $M=4.91$). The group with the lowest overall mean of risk factors identified was the foster parents ($n=11$, $M=2.86$).

The mean frequency of identified exploitation and trafficking across all groups was 2.43. The single job with the highest level of identified exploitation was the juvenile probation officer ($M=3.86$, $n=1$). The group with the lowest level of identified exploitation or trafficking was the educators ($n=3$, $M=1.48$), followed by the foster parents ($n=11$, $M=1.83$).

When it came to training, the overall mean was 2.71. Among different groups, the respondent classified as "Other" had the highest mean overall ($M=5$, $n=1$). The next highest level of reported training was the Foster Care or Child Placement agency

employees (*n=16*), with a mean of 3.38. The lowest overall level of training among one

group was that of the educators, who reported a mean of 1.57 total (*n=3*).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics – Groups (N=66)

	N	Risk	Fre	Train
.00 Other (please specify)	1	5.00	3.56	5.00
1.00 Foster Care/Child Placement Agency Employee	16	3.94	2.91	3.38
2.00 Foster Parent	11	2.86	1.83	2.45
4.00 Educator/Educational Administrator	3	3.21	1.48	1.57
5.00 Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)	28	3.48	2.35	2.51
8.00 Juvenile Probation Officer/Criminal Justice Employee	1	4.91	3.86	2.71
9.00 Direct Service Provider (not foster care)	6	3.62	2.43	2.48
Total	66	**3.55**	**2.43**	**2.71**

Note: "Risk" denotes the mean of the identified risk factors among foster youth with whom the respondents work. "Fre" denotes the mean of different types of identified exploitation and trafficking among the foster youth with whom the respondents work. "Train" indicates the mean level of human trafficking related training which the respondents reported receiving within the last 10 years.

Descriptive Regression

In order to examine what impacts the major dependent variables (Risk Factor

Mean and Frequency Mean), regression analyses were performed. Unlike a bivariate

analysis (i.e., t-test or Chi-square test) that examines the relationship between one

independent variable and one dependent variable, a *multivariate regression* model adjusts

for potential confounding effects, and takes into account the relationship between the

factors included in the model. Unlike a regression analysis to test a set of hypotheses, this

analysis was used for descriptive purpose. It is sometimes called descriptive regression or

''Level I'' regression analysis (Berk, 2010). This kind of regression analysis is

considered appropriate for observational data "when a regression analysis could be useful

and [does] not depend on any of the assumptions required for statistical inference or

causal inference" (Berk, 2010, p. 484). Therefore, the results from these analyses do not suggest that a significant independent variable causes the dependent variable.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to explore factors that influence two major variables of interest (Risk Factors Mean and Frequency Mean). In each regression model, several variables in which the researcher was interested regarding the difference in those dependent variables were included: Gender, Education, Work Years, and Training Mean. A new dichotomous variable (Professional) was created by using the Job categories and then included in the regression model. The "Professional" variable separated professional paid positions working with foster youth (including foster care or child placement agency employees, direct service providers, juvenile criminal justice employees, and educators) from non-professional positions working with foster youth (including foster parents and Court Appointed Special Advocates or CASAs).

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to identify a best model that makes sense conceptually. Work Years and Professional had been significant factors for some of the regression models until Training Mean was included. Table 8 is the final model that includes Training Mean. For general awareness (i.e., Human trafficking is a serious problem for youth in foster care), none of the factors were significant. The mean of Training was a significant factor both for Frequency of Identification of Exploitation Mean ($t = 3.732$, $p < 0.001$) and Identification of Risk Factors Mean ($t = 2.316$, $p = 0.024$). Work Years and role as a Professional/Non-professional were not significant factors for any of the dependent variables when Training Mean was taken into account.

Table 8

Factors influencing Awareness and Identification of Risk Factors and Exploitation (*N*= 63)

	Awareness		Frequency Mean		RiskFactor Mean	
Factor	*b*	*T*	*b*	*t*	*b*	*t*
Male	-.296	-.731	-.184	-.618	-.582	-1.586
Education	-.076	-.614	.020	.227	.033	.304
WorkYears	.008	.352	.019	1.179	.026	1.269
Professional	.270	.827	.265	1.151	.331	1.167
TrainingMean	-.065	-.405	.358	3.136**	.293	2.081*

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

As demonstrated in the literature review, human trafficking is a serious problem

for foster youth (Ijadi-Maghsoodi, et al., 2016; Speckman, 2016). However, this risk

relies on service providers realizing that the problem exists, and knowing not only how to

recognize it, but also how to intervene effectively (Isaac, Solak, & Giardion, 2011; Mian

& Collin-Vézina, 2017). The literature shows that there are gaps in service providers'

understanding of trafficking (Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017; United States Department

of Health and Human Services, n.d.; Rafferty, 2016). The literature also indicates that

specific human trafficking related training can improve providers' recognition of

trafficking (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Isaac et al., 2011; Logan et al., 2009; Macy &

Graham, 2012). This study attempted to explore what factors impact service providers'

level of awareness of foster youth experiencing trafficking and the related risk factors.

Discussion of Major Findings

The mean training of the various training categories was 2.71 (between Rarely

and Occasionally). This indicates that most respondents infrequently received any

trafficking related training. Additionally, the most frequently reported type of training

was "General training on related issues" (M=3.44, SD=1.01). The training which

respondents indicated they received was not human trafficking specific, which indicates

that there could be a serious training gap for the respondents of the study.

The mean frequency of identification of sexual exploitation among foster youth was 2.43, which falls between rarely and occasionally. This was expected to be lower than the identified risk factors mean (M=3.55), because simply experiencing risk factors does not guarantee that a youth will be trafficked. Additionally, simply identifying the risk factors or red flag behaviors does not guarantee that a youth will be identified as a trafficking survivor, even if that is the case (Hounmenou, 2012; Logan et al., 2009).

The most likely to be identified form of exploitation or trafficking was being commercially sexually exploited by a parent or family member. This finding is surprising because "commercial sexual exploitation by a parent or family member" was ranked as more frequent than sexual exploitation by a family member. While these categories sound the same, there is a distinct difference, and this question could have benefitted from a clarification of terminology. For the purposes of this study, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is defined as selling or trading a child's sex acts to someone else for something of value by a third party. In the context of this question, the third party is a parent or family member. The family member would be the one selling or trading the child, and the one receiving the thing of value in return. Essentially, the parent or family member is acting as the trafficker. On the other hand, sexual exploitation could stay within the family and might involve the parent, guardian, or family member directly extorting the youth for sex acts in exchange for shelter, food, clothes, or other necessities. If this survey was to be used again, this question would probably need to be edited for clarity.

In response to the question about how frequently the respondent identified forms of exploitation, the choice "Being taken to other cities/states to provide sexual services"

was the only form of exploitation for which no respondents selected "very frequently."

However, the mean was not the lowest overall—so a higher number of respondents likely

worked with youth who experienced it at least rarely (M=1.90).

The overall mean of identified risk factors was 3.55, falling between occasionally

and frequently. The risk factor least likely to be identified by all respondents was

homelessness, despite still being identified between occasionally and frequently overall

(M=3.13). All the means for the separate risk factors were identified higher than

"occasionally" (meaning they were higher than three). The risk factor most likely to be

identified was a history of trauma or abuse (M=4.46, SD=0.76). This makes sense

because all foster youth have a history of abuse or trauma, as that is why they are

involved with the system in the first place.

Nine respondents (11%) indicated that the agencies they worked for did not

provide services to human trafficking victims. Only 5 (6.1%) of those indicated their

agencies have plans to do so in the future. Eight respondents (9.9%) did not know what

their agencies do for human trafficking victims. This means that at least 14.8% of

respondents (n=12) do not have clear agency protocols for how to identify or address

trafficking survivors. This is concerning because if there are no agency protocols for

identifying potential victims, then the likelihood of victims falling through the cracks is

much higher (Clawson, Small, Go, & Myles, 2003; Hounmenou, 2012).

The number of respondents with an interest in receiving more information,

training, or resources for trafficking prevention is encouraging. Even if they do not know

much about the problem, at least 69.1% (n=56) are interested in learning more. This

indicates that there is not only a need but also a desire for further training and widely available opportunities for service providers to learn.

Relationship to foster youth had an interesting effect on the measured risk factors, identified exploitation, and training. The group with the highest identified risk factors mean was the respondent who selected "Other" ($M=5$). The second highest identified risk factor mean in a single job was the juvenile probation officer ($n=1$, $M=4.91$). The group with the lowest overall mean of risk factors identified was the foster parents ($n=11$, -$M=2.86$).

Foster parents had very low scores overall for each of the three measured means when compared with the other groups (seen on Table 7), and considering training is the most significant factor in identifying trafficking, they likely need further specific training. While foster parents may be less likely to encounter a trafficked youth than a professional simply because they work with a lower overall number of youth (potentially one or two at a time, compared to a caseload of thirty or more for foster care caseworkers and other service providers), they still have the potential to receive a youth who has been exploited into their home.

CASAs have a relatively low training mean overall, falling between "rarely" and "occasionally" ($M=2.51$). Because a CASA volunteer may be working with only one youth or one sibling group at a time, similar to foster parents, they may also have a low chance overall of encountering a youth who has been trafficked (when compared to other professionals working with higher overall numbers of foster youth). However, they still need the same level of training and preparation on how to identify and respond to trafficking, because all youth (and in particular foster youth) are vulnerable.

Educators identified risk factors with relatively high frequency (*M*=3.21). They did not identify exploitation nearly as high (*M*=1.57) and had a very low training mean (*M*=1.57). Because educators serve all children and not only foster youth, the quantity of foster youth they will serve over time is likely much lower than several of the other groups of identified professionals, based solely on raw numbers. However, educators should still receive training on child trafficking, because children are a vulnerable group, and educators might be the first adult to interact with an exploited child outside of the exploitative situation (Rafferty, 2016).

Because of the link between the juvenile justice system and human trafficking, it is reasonable and consistent to expect that employees of the juvenile justice system who interact with foster youth will see higher rates than average of human trafficking and related risk factors (Barnert, Abrams, Azzi, Ryan, Brook, & Chunga, 2016; Varma et al., 2015). Only one respondent was employed by the juvenile criminal justice system, but they did report higher rates than the mean for both risk factors (*M*=4.91) and identified exploitation (*M*=3.86).

In an earlier version of the descriptive regression, training was treated as an outcome. In the final version, it was changed to a factor, and this led to a change in several variables becoming statistically insignificant. In the final version of the regression, there were five factors and three outcomes. The factors were Gender, Education, Years worked with foster youth, Professional vs. Non-professional, and Training. The outcomes were Awareness, Frequency of Identification of Risk Factors, and Frequency of Identification of Exploitation.

When measuring general awareness (i.e., "Human trafficking is a serious problem for youth in foster care"), none of the variables compared were significant (*M*=4.28, *SD*=1.14). The mean indicates that the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This could be because the respondents agree that human trafficking of foster youth is a serious problem regardless of these external factors.

Training was the only statistically significant factor for both frequency of identification of exploitation, and for identification of risk factors. Treating Training as a factor instead of an outcome may have made the other factors non-significant because those who have been working with foster youth for a longer period of time are more likely to have received more trainings over time. Additionally, those who work in a professional setting may have more opportunities for training than those in a non-professional setting (such as foster parents or CASAs). To rephrase, professionals may be more likely to identify risk factors and exploitation frequency because they have had more training. When training is included as a factor, the significance of professional vs nonprofessional or years worked with foster youth disappears.

<div align="center">**Implications of Findings**</div>

Implications for Practice

There are several important implications for practice in human trafficking prevention work and intervention with human trafficking survivors. These can be broken down into several subcategories.

Trauma informed care. As indicated in the literature review, the most broad and overarching implication for work with human trafficking survivors (and within the systems they are most frequently identified in, such as foster care and criminal justice) is

the need for comprehensive trauma informed care. Because youth involved in these systems, and the most frequently trafficked youth, have extensive trauma histories, they are likely to suffer at the hands of a hostile system, and to face revictimization while seeking treatment or services. Because these youth often feel like they have no control over their lives, an important part of trauma informed care is empowering them with choices and more control when possible. This kind of care requires system overhaul, intensive training for staff, and ongoing fidelity checks to ensure it is continually implemented appropriately.

Screening. Screening of youth who experience multiple risk factors and are vulnerable to being trafficked is essential to both prevention and identification of exploitation and trafficking. Screening, when implemented appropriately, can help identify youth who are high risk for becoming trafficked in the near future, or who have already been exploited. In settings with youth who experience risk factors at a high frequency (such as foster care and the criminal justice system), universal, mandatory screening during intake which does not rely on the youth self-reporting their exploitation serves several purposes. It identifies the most at-risk youth for being trafficked and allows for prioritization of service provision. The earlier intervention can occur, the better a youth's outcomes will be. In addition, screening helps to create data which can guide decision making related to trafficking prevention and service provision. Additionally, because youth who have been exploited don't always self-identify as trafficking victims, the screening will be more reliable if it does not rely on self-reporting.

Universal screening is vital in order to combat bias. If service providers only screen for human trafficking when they suspect that a youth is being trafficked, it is

highly likely that they will miss victims who do not meet their expectations of what trafficking looks like. This often includes male victims and LGBTQ victims.

Finally, because foster youth are actively recruited by traffickers and their other victims, when the youth are screened is very important. They should be screened during the intake process, but also after returning from any period of absence from care, because their trafficking risk or experience could have changed while they were away (Kramer-Feldman, 2017).

An example of a screening tool for youth which meets these criteria is the Child Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT), developed and tested by the WestCoast Children's Clinic in California. This tool has been validated and determined to be reliable. More information about the tool can be found at http://www.westcoastcc.org/cse-it/ (Commercial sexual exploitation-identification tool, n.d.).

Trafficking awareness education. An important piece of trafficking prevention is trafficking awareness education. This education is not just for service providers and those working with at-risk groups—this is particularly important for the at-risk youth themselves. They can be used to combat the lack of awareness of human trafficking and how traffickers operate. These trainings may include internet safety for broader populations of youth and can be provided through school programs or partnerships. This kind of education can also include specific trafficking prevention education directed to the youth in identified at-risk populations, such as foster care and the juvenile justice system. These youth need direct education about the tactics traffickers use and what they can do to stay safe. These types of trainings can be provided through programs for youth

aging out of foster care, juvenile probation programs, and other service provision junctions where at-risk youth can be found. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provides similar trainings to youth across the nation, and more information can be found on their website: https://www.netsmartz.org/Home (NetSmarts, n.d.).

Residential treatment facilities for trafficked youth. Because traffickers often specifically recruit youth from foster care, and those youth are more likely to recruit other foster youth, they need to be kept in separate specialized residential treatment facilities that are equipped to provide comprehensive trafficking intervention services. These kinds of facilities can more effectively serve the youth who have been exploited, and also prevent them from recruiting other youth they meet in the shelter. This is also an alternative to "carceral protection" where youth are incarcerated and given a criminal record as a way to prevent them from running away. These kinds of shelters provide an alternative to criminalizing trafficked youth. One important requirement for having these kinds of shelters is that screening tools need to be regularly implemented to assess every time a youth returns to care, to ensure a trafficked youth is directed to the appropriate place; if they ran away, returned to care, and was screened and found to be exploited while they were away, they should be redirected to a residential treatment facility instead of a standard foster care placement or group home.

High-risk behavior interventions. Because high-risk sexual and substance use behaviors are a risk factor for and a potential indicator of human trafficking, these issues among foster youth demand specific intervention. An important part of reducing risk is providing comprehensive sex education, including conversations about consent and how

to use birth control effectively, to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, reduce the likelihood of pregnancy, and empower youth with information that protects them from exploitation. If they have the knowledge they need to make informed decisions, they have more tools to combat trafficking tactics, and can potentially reduce the harm they may experience if they are exploited (e.g., by using birth control).

Another high-risk behavior which puts youth at risk and may be an indicator of trafficking is drug abuse. Youth aging out of care are in the highest risk period of their lifetime for developing substance use disorders, due to the combination of development from an adolescent to an adult, and the lack of support systems in place. This increased inclination to become addicted to drugs or alcohol can be reduced by extending the time period in which they receive supervision and services from DFPS, and providing opportunities for mentorship (Narendorf & McMillen, 2010). Mentorship is also an intervention which can address the lack of support systems that make many foster youths vulnerable. Drug-related trafficking outcomes can also be improved by several policy interventions, which are discussed below.

Training. These results inform human trafficking prevention educators, practitioners, and educators by contributing to the existing literature which justifies and encourages more specific human trafficking prevention, awareness, identification, and intervention trainings. This kind of training can be provided through university curriculum, job training, continuing education units, community coalitions and workforces, webinars, and other opportunities appropriate for various professional settings.

An important aspect of this training which needs to be disseminated (particularly to officials involved in the juvenile justice system) is the distinction between sex trafficking and prostitution. Primarily, it is important to train service providers to recognize that legally in the United States, a child cannot be a prostitute because they legally cannot consent to sexual activity. They need specific training that if they identify a youth as a prostitute, that youth is actually the victim of sexual exploitation and often sex trafficking, and they need a different approach to address their needs than an adult prostitute would. Moreover, all service providers, but particularly agents of the criminal justice system (such as law enforcement, judges, probation officers, attorneys, other service providers, etc.) would benefit from increased training to better understand why traffickers target particular groups. Because they often target youth who are more likely to be discredited or disbelieved, or who are easier to intimidate or control, it is important that those involved in the criminal justice system know how to approach investigating and prosecuting traffickers. If possible, it is useful to build a case that does not solely rely on the testimony of the trafficked youth, but that is easier to do with proper training and preparation.

One issue of vital importance is to ensure that the trainings correspond with appropriate, evidence-based agency policy and protocol changes. If policies and protocols are not evidence-based, while identification of victims may increase, the services may not be appropriate for identified trafficking survivors, and this can contribute to revictimization (Clawson et al., 2003; Hounmenou, 2012).

While training would be beneficial to anyone in regular contact with foster youth, there are specific groups that would benefit most immediately from training

opportunities. Those groups may include (but are not limited to) educators, volunteers (such as CASAs), juvenile criminal justice employees, and foster parents. These trainings are also useful for the staff of shelters that serve homeless youth, because they have an important role in preventing the trafficking of at-risk youth they work with every day.

Because of the overlap of human trafficking among vulnerable groups (including LBGTQ+ youth, immigrants, youth with mental health problems, and non-white youth), one strong implication is providing comprehensive and appropriate sensitivity training regarding these populations for staff of DFPS and other relevant agencies. This is especially important for providers who will be working with large numbers of youth, such as direct service providers, foster care service providers, and educators. When youth are identified by service providers who fall into multiple of these categories, they also need to be flagged as at-risk for exploitation, and targeted with appropriate interventions and prevention education to reduce their risk. It may even be beneficial to prioritize the youth who experience multiple trafficking vulnerabilities (including marginalized group identification) to be prioritized for relevant services and placements. Likewise, the state needs to edit its mandated trafficking prevention trainings for state employees to include information about demographics that the training currently overlooks, particularly LGBTQ youth.

Increased communication within and between agencies. One of the most important interventions for fighting the systemic vulnerabilities to human trafficking is to increase the communication between various agencies that serve vulnerable youth. One potential practice which can be implemented quickly is to include an option on intake forms to document that a client has experienced trafficking or is high risk for

experiencing it in the future. This is especially necessary if an agency has implemented a standard screening process for trafficking. Once they have a screening tool in place, they need a way to document the findings of the tool on the files of the clients they are screening. If this kind of documentation is standardized, even if a caseworker leaves in the midst of an investigation or case, the next employee who fills their role will be able to know from reviewing their paperwork that the client either has a history of victimization or is at high risk for future victimization. This awareness allows for essential continuity of care. Another potential outcome of this implication is to coordinate communication between agencies in a standardized manner so that youth vulnerable to exploitation do not fall through the cracks. This may look like the standardization of communication between law enforcement and DFPS when youth runaway, or the communication between the juvenile justice/probation employees and service providers, to ensure that once a youth is screened that they are receiving appropriate services. It might necessitate emergency youth shelters partnering with other service providers to make comprehensive care (whether prevention or intervention) accessible. This will vary from agency to agency, but is a necessary part of building the resources and networks to protect vulnerable youth from trafficking.

Implications for Policy

The many implications of this study include several policy recommendations. These implications relate more to the overall functioning of an agency and its policies, the state and what programs it funds, legislation and policy-making decisions, and other macro-level issues.

Training regulation. One important policy implication based on the findings of this study could be to regulate human trafficking training for positions that work with foster youth. This training could potentially be mandated or incentivized by the state for educators, licensed service providers, and criminal justice and child welfare employees. Such trainings could also potentially be incentivized for non-profit child placement agencies, third party contractors, and volunteer management organizations like CASA. If the legislature can assist non-profit and non-governmental agencies with the burden of paying for these trainings, they can also be distributed to more people, and with higher frequency.

Funding prevention and intervention. A major way to combat trafficking which aligns with these findings would be for the state legislature to effectively fund prevention and intervention efforts. Without funding, there will be no possibility of expanding the necessary resources to support increased identification of trafficking survivors. Some examples of prevention efforts which could use more funding include homeless shelters for youth, and particularly LGBTQ youth, so they are not living on the streets or resorting to survival sex to meet their needs. Another such effort would be state funding for effective screening tools. These tools require funding to pay for the training, materials, and system-wide implementation. While the costs may appear prohibitive to legislators, if screening can assist with both prevention of trafficking among high-risk groups and intervention among youth known to be trafficked, then it is well worth the investment.

A policy that would benefit trafficked youth is to increase funding for residential treatment centers for trafficked youth. As discussed previously, these centers can provide comprehensive treatment and services to reduce recidivism to trafficking and improve

youth outcomes. There are not currently enough beds in shelters and similar facilities across the United States for trafficked youth to meet the identified need for Texas, still less the country (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2016; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013). There is a need for development and funding of more of these beds across the state to meet the rising demand as implementation of screening tools identify more youth in need of trafficking specific interventions.

Criminal justice reform. The significant overlap in foster youth and youth who have been incarcerated means that criminal justice reform is an important part of the intervention for human trafficking of foster youth. One aspect of this is the mandated implementation of trauma-informed care and comprehensive screening, through training and staffing, within all criminal justice facilities. The system at the very least needs trauma informed treatment options for youth who have committed a crime and have also been exploited. The state needs to provide adequate funding to ensure that these screening tools are available and that staff can be trained to use them, as well as increasing access to resources for incarcerated youth.

Because drug use is both a risk factor and potential indicator of human trafficking, a longer-term policy implication for human trafficking prevention and intervention is the decriminalization of non-violent drug use. There are several reasons this kind of policy change could benefit youth at risk for being trafficked. The first major implication is trafficking prevention. If a youth is caught using drugs, and instead of being criminalized and going to juvenile probation or being incarcerated, is sent to a treatment program, they are not exposed to the criminal justice system (another significant risk factor for human trafficking). They are less likely to be exposed to the traffickers and their victims who are

embedded in the criminal justice system, waiting to recruit unsuspecting youths. Another major implication is trafficking recognition. If a youth is being trafficked and is using drugs as a result, they are likely to be criminalized for their drug use and overlooked as a trafficking victim (because they are unlikely to self-identify). However, if they bypass the criminal justice system and are redirected to trauma-informed addiction treatment instead, there are several positive potential outcomes. If the treatment program is screening for trafficking, or if the exploitation comes out over the course of the treatment, then they will be able to receive trafficking related interventions in addition to the addiction treatment.

Implications for Research

Based on the findings of this study and previous literature, specific human trafficking training has a statistically significant relationship with the identification of trafficking and exploitation, as well as the related risk factors (Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017; Macy & Graham, 2012). Further research could be conducted about what kinds of training are most effective and evidence based, or how frequently trainings need to be conducted to ensure trafficking survivors are identified and receive needed services.

Additionally, any further research on the trafficking of youth could help close the gap between what is known about adult victims of trafficking and youth victims of trafficking. The research could include the various forms trafficking of youth takes, the tactics traffickers use, the frequency among different youth populations, and the most effective interventions to reduce recidivism and address related trauma. The dissemination of relevant research among direct practitioners is of utmost importance.

Limitations of Study

There are several limitations to this study. The primary issue is the small sample size. While 81 respondents are a reasonable amount given the time and financial constraints on this study, it is not representative of the overall population of service providers working with foster youth in Texas. This lack of representative data means the findings are not automatically generalizable to the broader population.

The sample had several limitations. This sampling frame was non-representative because there was not a way to reach all the relevant stakeholders in Texas within the time period of the study, and there is no central database of all individuals in the state who work with foster youth. Also, this study was not conducted through the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), so the only DFPS caseworkers involved were those who had publicly available email addresses or who received the survey from a third party, such as the 211 Call for Help network. Because DFPS caseworkers make up a significant number of foster care caseworkers in the state, the data collected was incomplete. However, this study was only meant to be a first look at the current perceptions and assumptions of those working with foster youth, and not a comprehensive overview.

Additionally, this study is exploratory, not experimental. Because of this, even though the variables are correlated, correlation does not necessarily indicate causation. This study can support previous research, but the findings from this study alone are not sufficient to make the claim that training will improve identification of trafficking and related risk factors.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of reliability and validity of the measurements used. Because of the constraints of the study, the adapted survey was not tested for reliability or validity and thus may not measure what they are intended to measure as accurately as possible.

One particular barrier to the findings of the study is the lack of definitions for Likert scale choices. "Frequently", "Very Frequently", "Occasionally", and "Rarely" are all subjective. What one person may believe to be rare another person might rank as occasional. This lack of numbers or objective criteria means the answers lack specificity.

A major limitation to this study is that it relies on self-reporting. The self-reports are specifically about frequency of identification of risk factors and exploitation over a period of the past eight years. This does not rely on records or data, simply the respondent's recall and memory, which can be very inaccurate.

Finally, in order to minimize the coercive nature of participating in the survey with a chance of winning a reward, several questions were left optional to allow respondents the choice to reply. These questions are missing a significant amount of data because they were not required to answer. This data leaves some large gaps in the findings from this study.

Recommendation for Further Studies

One study which would be intensely beneficial would be a collaboration with DFPS to evaluate child welfare employees' awareness of and training on human trafficking and related risk factors among the youth they work with. Because of time limitations, this study did not include DFPS caseworkers or employees. However, DFPS service providers often serve as the first point of contact for foster youth with the system,

and their ability to identify exploitation could make the difference in a child saved from exploitation or continuing to suffer.

Additional research could analyze service providers' confidence in their ability to recognize trafficked youth and to provide services to them. It would also be useful to assess their understanding of their agency policies regarding human trafficking, as well as the local, state, and federal policies impacting trafficked youth. Research could also consider the specifics of what service providers have been trained to do, and their knowledge of effective interventions and ability to implement them appropriately. Specifically, all of these aspects among juvenile justice employees specifically could further increase understanding of the problem. In all of these potential studies, or replications of the current study, findings could be strengthened by surveying a more diverse sample by gender, geography, & race.

Conclusion

This study set out to answer the questions "How aware are foster care service providers in Texas of the problem and risks of human trafficking to the population they serve? What factors affect the level of awareness?" A survey was distributed to assess these variables among those working with foster youth. The findings of this study indicate that while awareness and identification may vary by profession, level of training, relationship with foster youth, gender, and other factors, the only statistically significant relationship was between previous training and identification of trafficking and related risk factors. This could mean that the more training a professional has, the more likely they are to recognize a potential victim of human trafficking, and the more likely they are to notice the red flags indicating potential trafficking situations. This finding is supported

by previous research and should be taken with discretion to encourage further research,

continued training, and improved funding to better understand, identify, and create

solutions for the problem of human trafficking for foster youth.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

March 9, 2018

Kennedy Morrison

School of Social Work

ACU Box 27866

Dear Kennedy,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled
Awareness of Human Trafficking Risks to Foster Youth

(IRB# 18-025   )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Our Promise: ACU is a vibrant, innovative, Christ-centered community that engages students in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, equipping them to make a real difference in the world.

87

APPENDIX B

Participant Solicitation Email

Subject: If you work with foster youth, you have a chance to win a $50 Visa gift card!

Text: Hello,

My name is Kennedy Morrison. I am the Coalition Coordinator for the Big Country Human Trafficking Coalition, and a graduate student at Abilene Christian University. I am studying the impact of human trafficking on foster youth, and the general level of awareness of their risk.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this research- **if you work with foster youth in any capacity at all, please take the survey** at the following link and forward it to anyone you know who works with foster youth in Texas.

The survey only takes about **15 minutes to complete**, and upon completion, you have the chance to **enter to win a $50 Visa gift card**!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TNSN7VK

Thank you very much for your time, and your concern for the well-being of foster youth! The more people who take this survey, the better understanding we will have of the problem. Please feel free to email me with questions or concerns!

Sincerely,

Kennedy Morrison

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent to Participate in Study

You may be eligible to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you, the potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions that you may have regarding the survey, your involvement, and any risks or benefits you may experience.

Also, please note that your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without any penalty.

Please contact the Principal Investigator if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study or if at any time you wish to withdraw. This contact information may be found at the end of this form.

Purpose of the Research: This study is intended to assess the level of awareness of human trafficking, related risk factors, and how they relate to foster youth among anyone who works directly with youth in foster care. It is also intended to assess the level of desire for further resources, as well as previous training related to human trafficking.

The study is a survey, which should take no more than approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Once you consent to participation in the study, you will be asked to complete a survey.

The survey is comprised of five sections: (1) awareness of human trafficking as a general problem; (2) awareness of human trafficking as a problem for foster youth; (3) awareness of specific risk factors for human trafficking experienced by foster youth; (4) desire for further resources/support; and (5) basic, non-identifiable demographic information.

Risks of Participation: The description of human trafficking scenarios and related risk factors may trigger stress responses in those who have experience (firsthand or secondhand) with human trafficking and similar traumas. The risks are minimal but do include psychological or emotional discomfort and distress. The risk of these responses is less likely, and not very serious. The researchers have taken steps to minimize the risks associated with this study. However, if you experience any problems, you may contact Kennedy Morrison at kennedy@regionalvictimcrisiscenter.org.

The researchers and ACU do not have any plan to pay for any injuries or problems you may experience as a result of your participation in this research.

The primary risk with this study is breach of confidentiality. However, we have taken steps to minimize this risk. We will not be collecting any personal identification data during the survey. However, Survey Monkey may collect information from your computer. You may read their privacy statements here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/privacy-policy/

If you choose to disclose your email address to enter to win the gift card, your email address will not be linked to your individual survey response and will be stored separately from the data.

You may not experience any personal benefits from participating in this study. However, the researchers hope that the information learned from this study will help increase the

availability of needed resources and training to foster care service providers, which by extension could benefit at-risk foster youth in the future.

Information collected about you will be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with the law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the ACU Institutional Review Board. Aside from these required disclosures, your confidentiality will be protected by only collecting nonidentifiable information.

Participants who complete the survey will be eligible to enter their email address at the end, which enlists them in a drawing for a $50 Amazon gift card. The likelihood of winning this gift card is determined by the number of people who complete the survey. The winner will be c

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you may contact the Principal Investigator of this study. The Principal Investigator is **Kennedy Morrison**, BSW, MSW Candidate, and the Coalition Coordinator for the Big Country Human Trafficking Coalition. **She may be contacted at**

214-608-8044

kennedy@regionalvictimcrisiscenter.org

If you are unable to reach the Principal Investigator or wish to speak to someone other than the Principal Investigator, you may contact Dr. Kyeonghee Jang, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, at khj15a@acu.edu.

If you have concerns about this study or general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Director

of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be

reached at

(325) 674-2885

megan.roth@acu.edu

320 Hardin Administration Bldg, ACU Box 29103 Abilene, TX 79699

APPENDIX D

Survey Questions

<u>Screening Questions</u>

Do you work with foster youth in any capacity? (Can include: 1. as a service provider

who serves other populations in addition to foster youth, 2. a foster parent, 3. in a part-

time job, or 4. as a volunteer).

- Yes

- No

Are you age 18 or older?

- Yes

- No

<u>General Human Trafficking Awareness</u>

In your opinion, are the following individuals victims of human trafficking? Please rate

your level of agreement:

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Disagree nor Agree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
An under-aged girl forced into prostitution					
A factory worker laboring in unsafe conditions					
An agricultural worker earning slave wages					
A prostitute working off her debt to her pimp					

A domestic helper forced to work 14-hour days				
A foreign worker smuggled into the country				
An individual traded by a family member for goods or services				

Please rate your level of agreement with these statements:

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Disagree nor Agree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
child sex trafficking does not happen in my community					
sexual exploitation of a child refers to very young children, not teenagers					
a 17-year-old engaging in prostitution is the victim of a crime					
some adolescents make the choice to prostitute themselves					
most child prostitutes come into the U.S. from international borders					
arresting 'johns' or men who buy sex should be a priority for law enforcement					
child sex trafficking in the United States has been blown out of proportion					
prostitution should be legalized					
a 'john'/buyer of sex knows when he is buying sex from a minor.					

Awareness of Human Trafficking of Foster Youth and Related Risk Factors

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:

Question	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Disagree nor Agree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
Human trafficking is a serious problem for foster youth.					

Please rate the frequency with which you have known or suspected that adolescents that you worked with (age 10–17) were at-risk for different kinds of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently	Not Applicable
being commercially sexually exploited by a parent/family member						
being pressured by a peer to exchange sex for money/other goods						
being in pornographic images						
being involved in prostitution						
Working at a strip club						
Exchanging sex for money, shelter, or food						
being advertised online for sexual activity						

Being taken to other cities/states to provide sexual services						
Being sexually exploited by a parent/family member						
Being raped or molested						

Please rate the frequency with which you have suspected or known adolescents that you

worked with (age 10–17) were at-risk for various problems.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently	Not Applicable
Delinquency/involvement in juvenile justice system						
teen pregnancy						
dropping out of school/truancy						
substance abuse						
History of running away from care						
homelessness						
Suicide attempts						
rape/molestation						
History of trauma/abuse						
High risk sexual activity						

Human Trafficking Training and Experience

Since 2010, I have received:

	1. Never	2. Rarely	3. Occasionally	4. Frequently	5. Very Frequently
Training on child sex trafficking or child prostitution					
General training on related issues					
Training on how to identify sex					

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Disagree nor Agree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
trafficking/child prostitution					
Training on how to respond to child sex trafficking					

Other, please specify:

Since 2010, I have participated (either attended or presented) in:

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Disagree nor Agree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
Training on Human Trafficking					
Conference/Symposium on Human Trafficking					
Outreach event focused on Human Trafficking					

Anything else related to Human Trafficking (please describe):

If you are an employee of an agency that provides services to foster youth, does your department currently provide services for victims of human trafficking or participate in anti-human trafficking activities/initiatives?

- Yes - provide services

- Yes- participate in anti-human trafficking activities/initiatives

- Yes - screen for potential trafficking victims

- No - but we're planning to provide services in the future

- No - but we're planning to engage in anti-human trafficking activities in the future

- No - we have no plans in this area

- I don't work at an agency that provides services to foster youth (i.e. I am a foster

  parent)

- Other (please specify)

<u>Desire for Further Resources and Support</u>

Are you interested in the following? (please check all that apply)

- To receive training/training materials in screening, identifying, and assisting

  Human Trafficking victims

- To be informed of upcoming workshops, lectures, symposia and/or conferences

  on Human Trafficking

- To be part of a service provider/law enforcement working group

- To be involved in a coalition to combat human trafficking

- Something else related to human trafficking (fill in the blank)

I would like to receive an email from the primary investigator with information, links,

and resources about human trafficking.

- Yes

- No

Email address: (fill in the blank)

<u>Demographic Information</u>

Are you of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin?

- Yes

- No

Race: (please check all that apply)

- Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native

- Black or African American

- Asian

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

- White

- Mixed race

- Don't wish to disclose my race

- Other (fill in the blank)

Age (Fill in the blank)

Education level

- Less than a high school diploma

- High school

- Some college

- 2-year degree

- 4-year degree

- Graduate degree

- Doctoral degree

Gender

- Male

- Female

- I don't wish to disclose my gender

- Other (fill in the blank)

<u>Job Related Information</u>

Zip Code (fill in the blank)

What is your job?

- Foster Care/Child Placement Agency Caseworker or Employee

- Foster Parent

- CPS/DFPS Caseworker or Employee

- Educator/Educational Administrator

- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

- Lawyer

- Law Enforcement Officer

- Juvenile Probation Officer/Criminal Justice Employee

- Direct Service Provider (not foster care)

- Other (please specify)

Job Title/Role (fill in the blank)

How many years have you been in any position working to provide services to foster

youth? (If less than a year, put 0) (fill in the blank)

Are you involved in a local anti-trafficking coalition?

- Yes

- No

If yes, which coalition? (fill in the blank)