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## MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS AS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION

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MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS AS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION

by

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## Abstract

Thousands of people are having their human rights violated as victims of sex and labor trafficking throughout the United States. Human trafficking prevention is a significant factor in combatting modern day slavery; however, there is a substantial lack of existing literature on the topic. As a result of previous research determining mentorship programs as a strategy to reduce juvenile delinquency, this study explores mentor programs as a preventative strategy for combatting human trafficking. This mixed-methods, exploratory study investigated what mentorship programs across the United States are doing to prevent children from becoming victims of human trafficking, and what still needs to be done within those programs to reduce human trafficking. The results of the online survey sent out to mentorship program staff and directors presented that most mentor program participants (83.3%) are not currently providing information about trafficking to mentees. Qualitative analysis of the study results demonstrate that mentorship programs need more education, more mentors, and an increased focus on human trafficking to prevent mentees from trafficking. The results of this study implicate that mentorship program staff should consider including trafficking awareness training for staff and mentors, as well as including an anti-trafficking curriculum in their program targeted toward mentees.

**KEY WORDS:** Prevention, Education, Awareness, Human Trafficking, Mentorship Programs

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## Introduction

Human trafficking is a global issue that was largely ignored among society until about a decade ago. People are living in conditions of modern-day slavery, and it is occurring in our neighborhoods and communities. Many people may assume trafficking is a global issue, but unfortunately, it is present throughout our country. Men, women, and children are being sold into slavery and used as free labor at an even higher rate than they were a decade ago. Today, there are many anti-trafficking efforts in place to provide safety and rehabilitation to victims of trafficking. Our government and police forces are working to implement policies and practices that will help to protect victims of trafficking and charge their traffickers. Few researchers have studied human trafficking prevention practices, and the purpose of this study is to address the gap and provide valuable information on how to prevent human trafficking among youth through mentorship programs.

This introduction chapter will discuss the main problem that this research addresses and seeks to solve. Further, this chapter will mention the three research questions that guided the exploration of the topic. Finally, the introduction will explain the significance of this research paper.

### *The Problem*

The main problem that I seek to solve is what can be done to prevent children from becoming victims of human trafficking. While human trafficking affects people of all ages and all genders, 52% of all the detected victims of trafficking in the North and Central America and the Caribbean regions in 2018 were children (UNODC, 2021). There has been little effective research on preventing human trafficking and preventing human trafficking among youth. Previous research focused on trafficking prevention among homeless youth demonstrates that

providing supportive relationships to youth and teenagers can significantly reduce the likelihood of trafficking (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018). Research on trafficking survivors' conceptualizations on prevention establishes that awareness, education, and relationships can effectively prevent one from being trafficked (Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020). A significant source of education and supportive relationships for youth in the United States is mentorship programs. Mentorship programs in the United States currently serve around 4.5 million children. These mentorship programs seek to provide supportive relationships with a goal of reducing risks and improving positive outcomes among vulnerable youth. This study will explore whether mentorships programs include trafficking awareness and education in their program and what methods of prevention they currently utilize. This study will also explore what still needs to be done within mentor programs to reduce the risk of trafficking among youth. This thesis is guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are mentorship programs in the United States currently doing to prevent human trafficking among vulnerable youth?
2. Is more awareness of human trafficking needed within youth mentorship programs across the country to prevent trafficking among at-risk youth?
3. What still needs to be done within youth mentor programs to prevent human trafficking of youth within youth mentor programs?

### *Significance*

Prevention of human trafficking among youth through mentorship programs is a current area within our country that needs to be researched further. This research will benefit several populations, including the mentorship programs being surveyed and those who aim to reduce risks for vulnerable children. This research will provide them with ways and information on anti-

trafficking education and encourage them to do more to prevent children from the dangers of traffickers. If utilized, this research will benefit at-risk children involved in mentorship programs because they will become more informed and aware of human trafficking through their program. By discovering what current mentor programs are doing to prevent human trafficking, suggestions and conclusions can be made about what future steps mentor program should take to address the problem of child trafficking.

### *Summary*

In summary, human trafficking of children is a critical, current issue that requires more research and attention. Vulnerable children are often the target of traffickers; therefore, research on how society can prevent children from being trafficked is imperative to protect children and adults and potentially save lives. This study will identify what current mentorship programs across the country are doing to address human trafficking, and it will discover whether they are focused on preventing human trafficking. This research will aim to determine whether more education and awareness is needed within mentor programs to prevent human trafficking among youth and teenagers. This study can potentially benefit mentorship programs across the country by providing them with insight into how programs spread human trafficking awareness. Finally, the significance of this study is that it can potentially impact the lives of children, teenagers, and adults enrolled in mentorship programs with the goal of reducing human trafficking.

## **Review of Literature**

It is essential to analyze and research ways to prevent vulnerable people from being trafficked to end human trafficking for good. This literature review will begin by defining what constitutes human trafficking according to the United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act (U.S. Department of State, 2020). There is a misconception that human trafficking only consists of women experiencing sexual exploitation, but another common component of trafficking is exploitation for labor services. Sex trafficking and labor trafficking are the two significant types of human trafficking described in the TVPRA, and they are both detailed in the first section of the review. Another commonly held misconception is that trafficking is a foreign issue and that it is not relevant within the United States (Bonilla et al., 2019). The first sub-section titled "Prevalence" will use various sources to discuss this misconception and the prevalence of human trafficking within the United States.

By studying different mentorship programs around the country, this research will demonstrate whether mentor programs are currently providing youth and adult mentees with enough information and awareness of trafficking to prevent mentees from becoming involved in human trafficking. Presently, there is a gap in theoretical and empirical research on mentoring programs as a method of trafficking prevention. To determine where to implement mentoring programs, identifying risk factors is crucial. The second section of the literature review will focus on vulnerable populations and the vulnerabilities described by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Administration for Children & Families. This review additionally includes a third section which discusses two studies focused on human trafficking prevention, including a study that surveyed trafficking survivors (Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020). The other study focused on the homeless youth population and investigated whether having a supportive

adult would prevent homeless youth from being trafficked (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018). These two articles were essential in the research process because of the emphasis on prevention efforts. Both studies also highlighted the importance of adult support in the lives of vulnerable children. The prevention section also discusses literature focused on policies within certain states regarding anti-trafficking education and awareness in schools. The final relevant approach to preventing youth from getting involved in or being trafficked is mentorship programs. The “Mentorship” section of this review will describe what formal youth mentoring programs are and their proven benefits for children who participate.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED

The TVPRA of 2013 defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, slavery or forced commercial sex acts” (TVPRA, 2013). It is necessary to discuss the meanings of force, fraud, and coercion because one of these things must be proven to convict a trafficker of the crime.

According to Stotts et al. (2002) traffickers utilize force to make them less resistant and easier to control. Similarly, Burt (2019) writes that traffickers use force tactics to destroy a person’s sense of worth and self-esteem, which would make it easier for the traffickers to control their victims. Once the trafficker has manipulated the victim into believing they are worthless, the victims start to think they are to blame for their treatment and situation (Burt, 2019).

Examples of force include physical abuse, kidnapping, and physical restraint (Busch-Armendariz

et al., 2018). Inhumane tactics include daily beatings, rape, and holding victims in prison-like situations (Burt, 2019).

Fraud is a common tactic that traffickers use, especially in labor trafficking. Traffickers commit fraud through deception as a way for them to trap their victims into slavery situations, according to Busch-Armendariz et al. (2018) and Burt (2019). Fraud generally includes traffickers offering the promise of employment within the United States but then entrapping them through debt or false pretenses (Burt 2019; Stotts & Ramey, 2009). Examples of fraud include illegitimate contracts, false promises, fake businesses, and fake visa documents (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2018).

Finally, it is common for traffickers to coerce their victims through threats and intimidation. Traffickers might threaten death or harm to the victims or the victim's family. Additionally, the trafficker might keep the victim's travel documents from them or subject them to debt to keep them bound to their trafficker until the debt is paid off (Stotts & Ramey, 2009). These are powerful psychological manipulation tactics that traffickers use to isolate and bind victims to their situation so they feel they cannot confide in family or tell law enforcement.

### *Prevalence*

Human Trafficking is a human rights and public health issue that exists today as modern-day slavery. Trafficking is a global crisis, and in the past decade, there have been increasingly more efforts to identify victims throughout the world. The most recent estimations by the Global Slavery Index in 2016 assert that approximately 45.8 million people are trafficked globally (2018).

There is a common misconception among the general public and counselors in the United States that human trafficking is a foreign issue and that not a relevant issue within our country. According to a study completed about the public opinion of trafficking as a result of media and anti-trafficking efforts, society emphasizes human trafficking as a foreign problem instead of an immediate, local issue that we have the responsibility to face (Bonilla et al., 2019). With the implementation of the TVPA in 2000, the United States passed its first federal law created to protect victims, prevent trafficking, and prosecute traffickers. This law led to the identification and protection of thousands of victims of human trafficking in America. In 2008, for example, 30,961 people were identified as victims of trafficking. In 2018, one decade later, after policies such as the TVPA had been put in place globally and domestically, the number of victims identified increased to 85,613 (U.S. Department of State, 2020). The most recent data claims that in 2020, there were 109,216 people identified as victims of trafficking around the world (U.S. Department of State, 2021). About 80% of the victims of trafficking around the world are female. Children and teenagers can also be victims of human trafficking. Although there have recently been an increased number of victims identified, the identified victims are a small fraction of the number of people being trafficked around the world today. There is a considerable gap between the number of estimated and identified victims of trafficking because of several difficulties. The cunning nature of the crime makes identification difficult. Further, victims often do not seek help immediately for reasons such as distrust of the police, coercion by their traffickers, or because they blame themselves for their situation (Burt, 2019). While there has been an increased effort to identify victims, further research is necessary to protect victims and prosecute traffickers.

### *Sex Trafficking*

Sex trafficking involves the use of fraud, force, or coercion in commercial sex (TVPRA, 2013). For all people under 18 years old, sex trafficking is defined as any type of exchange for sex, no matter whether there was force, fraud, or coercion involved. (TVPRA, 2013). According to the TVPRA, sex trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained eighteen years of age” (TVPRA, 2013). Sex trafficking can occur in various situations, such as brothels, homes, and street prostitution. Further, sex trafficking also occurs in several places such as massage parlors, strip clubs, motels, spas, and cars (Stotts & Ramey., 2009).

The sex trafficking recruitment process is imperative to understand to identify victims and educate at-risk youth and their families. The recruitment process often involves the use of grooming tactics by traffickers. Victims can be found and groomed through social media websites. Further, traffickers will often advertise victims through online websites (Wells, 2012). Other places where traffickers might recruit young people include malls, parties, and clubs.

Understanding the tactics of traffickers includes knowing how traffickers may appear. For example, a child sex trafficker often is an adult male, who may be viewed as a “pimp.” (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2009). These pimps are portrayed in three separate ways, as a “Gorilla pimp,” who controls victims with violence or coercion, as a “Finesse/Romeo pimp,” who manipulates victims with romance and affection, and finally, as the “Business/CEO pimp,” who promise the victims money or careers. In addition to these types of traffickers, peer exploiters may recruit people who they already have a relationship with (Anderson et al., 2014). Although adult males are usually sex traffickers, recent research proves that female traffickers are

becoming increasingly common. Some female sex traffickers recruit for their traffickers, and some exploit their children (Anderson et al., 2014; Sprang & Cole, 2018).

One type of sex trafficking that has been minimally researched is trafficking that occurs within families. Scholarly studies that discuss the dangers and statistics of familial sex trafficking include those written by Reid et al. (2019) and Cole and Anderson (2013). Youth are often trafficked through someone related to them, including their parents or guardians. Illicit drugs have been the most common currency in the cases of parents trafficking their children (Sprang & Cole, 2018). Sex trafficking within families deserves increased attention because of the greater risk these victims have of being trapped in their trafficker-victim relationship due to isolation and family bonds. Cole and Anderson (2013) studied the most commonly mentioned relationship by professionals and found that familial relationships were the most common reported situation. The professionals who serve high-risk youth and victims of crime in Kentucky stated that trafficking within families was reported 61.9% of the time (Cole & Anderson, 2013). In correlation with Cole and Anderson (2013), Reid et al. (2019) concluded that when children are sexually exploited by their family, it generally begins when they are younger than if their trafficker was a non-family member. In the review of the types of relationships in the study done by Reid et al. (2019), the most reported relationship for familial juvenile sex trafficking was mother daughter. In another study of familial sex trafficking relationships, the mother was the trafficker 64.5% of the time and the father was the trafficker 32.3% of the time (Sprang & Cole, 2018). Further, Reid et al. (2019) comment that though there were many cases in which the mother was not the trafficker, in familial trafficking relationships, the mother is often aware that their daughter is being trafficked. Familial sex trafficking heightens the importance of youth having a trusting, supportive adult outside of the family to confide in.

### *Labor Trafficking*

Labor trafficking is another type of trafficking that occurs when people are used for work through force, fraud, or coercion. Studies have shown that people are labor trafficked through various means. According to the TVPRA, labor trafficking is “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” (TVPRA, 2013). Labor trafficking often occurs in public places, where people would least expect it. Trafficking exists in places like factories and sweatshops where people work in brutal conditions, or in agricultural work where they must gather their crops while they are abused (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2018). Another situation where someone might be labor trafficked is in domestic servitude. People have been trafficked in various industries such as construction, restaurants and food service, peddling and begging, hospitality and tourism, nail salons, entertainment, carnivals, gas stations, and cleaning services (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2018). According to Busch-Armendariz et al. (2018) and Burt (2019), labor trafficking often occurs in places where U.S. consumers support businesses oblivious of the mistreatment of the workers. In comparison to sex trafficking, in which U.S. citizens are generally aware of the crime, people are unaware that they utilize services provided through labor trafficking.

According to Stotts and Ramey (2009), one of the most common victims of labor trafficking are people who have illegally immigrated into the United States, desperate for employment opportunities. Traffickers often psychologically manipulate and threaten their victims by telling them they will report them to the police for being illegal residents. Further, traffickers might deceive undocumented immigrants by promising them a work opportunity and then trapping them through threats or significantly low wages (Stotts & Ramey, 2009).

As reported by the CTDC, false promises were the most common means of control experienced by labor trafficking survivors. Labor trafficking survivors experienced false promises 39.2% of the time (CTDC, 2020). The other common forms of control reported in the study used by traffickers were excessive work hours, taking the earnings of the workers, psychological abuse, withholding important documents, threats, physical abuse, and restricting medical care (CTDC, 2020). Through any of these means of control, victims often feel like they have no choice but to continue to work for the business or their trafficker.

Although labor trafficking is not a mainstream issue, it can be as harmful and traumatic as sex trafficking. Victims of labor trafficking may experience psychological and physical effects due to harsh working conditions. Some physical impacts of trafficking include chronic back pain, respiratory problems, and malnourishment (Stotts & Ramey, 2009). More awareness of this type of human trafficking is necessary within our communities and professional practices.

## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The risk of being trafficked is much higher among vulnerable populations. Because of this, it is crucial to identify who the vulnerable people within our country are. Once professionals and counselors become aware of who tends to be the most at risk of being trafficked, they can better understand where and how to implement prevention techniques and methods. Some risk factors include gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, and family relationship (Armstrong & Greenbaum, 2019).

Vulnerable people often experience difficult family situations, such as abuse, neglect, or other adverse childhood experiences (Armstrong & Greenbaum, 2019). The discussion of child welfare and human trafficking by Lim et al. (2020) identified children involved in child welfare

to be more susceptible to becoming victims of trafficking due to instability in their lives and trauma. Similarly, Reid et al. (2019) reported that childhood maltreatment was a highly likely risk factor in three out of the six profiles in the study of juvenile human trafficking victims' risk factors. This study proved that being poorly treated as a child might lead youth to be at a greater risk of being exploited in the future (Reid et al., 2019). One study that focused on the specific adverse childhood experiences that might led to an increased risk of human trafficking discovered that childhood sexual abuse to be the most common risk factor in both boys and girls (Pate et al., 2021).

Individuals who experience homelessness are often at elevated risk of being trafficked because they do not have a safe place to live and might become desperate for money or shelter. Further, being part of multiple vulnerable groups would increase the risk of human trafficking. For example, youth in the child welfare system often run away due to difficult living conditions, which leads them to be at a higher risk of being trafficked. LGBTQ+ youth can also have a higher risk, especially those kicked out of their homes due to their sexuality and consequently become homeless or socially isolated (Armstrong & Greenbaum, 2019). According to the U.S. Human Trafficking Hotline Data Report, runaway homeless youth are the second most likely population of society to become victims of sexual trafficking (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2019).

Other risk indicators for human trafficking include mental, emotional, or physical disabilities. Specifically, female juveniles with intellectual disabilities have a disproportionately higher risk of exploitation due to several reasons (Reid, 2018). Previous researchers have also identified lack of family support, limited education, and substance abuse as risk factors associated with commercial sexual exploitation of children (Reid et al., 2017).

## PREVENTION

Human trafficking prevention methods are essential in ending modern-day slavery, yet there has been little research done on human trafficking prevention as a whole. Recently, there has been a call for awareness and anti-trafficking education as prevention methods. This study will be researching youth mentorship programs as a method of trafficking prevention by analyzing mentor programs that provide vulnerable youth with supportive adult relationships.

Primary prevention is any intervention that occurs before there are any forms of trafficking identified. Lack of awareness surrounding human trafficking limits prevention efforts and treatment options for at-risk populations. Studies performed by Donohue-Dioh et al. (2020) and Chisolm-Straker et al. (2018) evaluate the significance of having a supportive adult to prevent a child from becoming a victim of trafficking. Donohue-Dioh et al. (2020) created a framework based solely on the voices of human trafficking survivors and their responses to what they believe would be the most effective way to prevent human trafficking. Comparatively, Chisolm-Straker et al. (2018) specifically addressed homeless youth and whether having a supportive adult in their life would protect them from being trafficked. Both studies concluded that having a person that is safe to confide in and trust is a beneficial preventative measure (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018; Donohue-Dioh, 2020). Some of the most common themes mentioned by human trafficking survivors to prevent human trafficking are human rights and the need to feel loved and valued. Another countermeasure recommended by survivors is education and awareness of what human trafficking is and what grooming looks like (Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020). The voices of survivors are significant regarding prevention because survivors have lived experience. Furthermore, they can provide beneficial information on preventing youth from involvement in human trafficking.

### *Education*

One of the most important aspects of preventing human trafficking is educating vulnerable populations, such as children in the child welfare system. Though education for all people is significant and beneficial, a critical first step to educating society about trafficking is spreading awareness to our teachers and students across the country within school districts. Currently, eight states have implemented anti-trafficking policies that supply education to school districts. Through research and discussion on the Texas curriculum mandated by the Trafficking Prevention Task Force, it has been found that this curriculum is targeted towards frontline roles such as teachers, counselors, and administrators, which have direct influence on the lives of youth. Texas is one of the only states that mandates education for teachers; and California, Florida, Missouri, Idaho, and Massachusetts are the only states with policies recommending or making publicly available human trafficking education for students (Lemke, 2019). The study by Salas and Didier (2020) on California's prevention training for students further develops the research done by Lemke (2019) on trafficking education policies for students.

Through education of what human trafficking is and how traffickers lure their victims into slavery, middle and high schoolers will be more likely to stray away from situations that might lead to trafficking. Additionally, teachers will be more likely to have the capacity to identify potential victims and prevent students from further abuse if they receive anti-trafficking training in the workplace. Part of California's education policy consists of a list of signs and indicators that a student or child might be a victim of human trafficking, including but not limited to school absences, being constantly fatigued or inattentive, and signs of physical or psychological trauma. According to Salas and Didier (2020), the fact sheet given to educators is necessary to identify students that might be involved in abuse or trafficking. In 2017, California

was the first state in the country to implement mandated human trafficking prevention education to students in 7th through 12th grade, which consisted of the topics of sexual abuse, assault, harassment, and sex trafficking (Salas & Didier, 2020). Education consisting of awareness and information is becoming a key factor in combatting modern-day slavery across the world.

### *Mentorship programs*

Mentor programs have proven to be effective at providing trusting relationships in the lives of children and teenagers. Because of the high number of children trafficked by family members, children need supportive relationships outside of the guardian-child relationship. Previously mentioned research suggested that people who have survived trafficking have noted that one of the most important things that would have helped them the most was having a trusted adult in their life (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018; Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020). This literature review does not include data on the effectiveness of mentor programs in preventing trafficking because research on the topic does not yet exist. However, formal youth mentoring programs' effectiveness has been researched extensively in a meta-analysis of all programs (Raposa et al., 2019; Dubois et al., 2011).

Mentorships build relationships between two people and allow youth to have a relationship with someone caring, consistent, and trusting. Moreover, mentors can be a haven for children who do not have an adult they can feel safe with (Keller et al., 2020). Dubois et al.' meta-analysis of youth mentoring programs demonstrated mentoring programs to be an effective intervention strategy for improving youth development (Dubois et al., 2011). Comparably, Raposa et al. indicates that youth mentoring programs have produced moderate positive outcomes within the lives of young people, with a mean effect of mentoring on youth outcomes

evaluated to be .21. Further, organizations have recently begun to implement evidence-based practices for mentoring, and there has been an improvement in mentorship effectiveness due to this change (Raposa et al., 2019).

In the past two decades, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children and teenagers participating in mentor programs. In 1999, there were 300,000 children in these programs, and by 2014 there were 4.5 million youth engaged in a formal program. Keller et al. (2020) discuss the role of mentoring in reducing both youth and adult social isolation and recommend programs to reframe their focus to building stronger intergenerational relationships. Though Keller et al. (2020) author a convincing scholarly article, this research does not include an empirical study. Keller et al. (2020) provide a theoretical review of previous literature, while Raposa et al. (2019) provide significant evidence-based research on mentorship programs.

In the final analysis, human trafficking prevention takes a holistic approach. Because human trafficking is a complex, human rights and public health issue that can take many forms, prevention efforts must be thoroughly researched to have the greatest impact. The few existing studies that focus on empirical human trafficking prevention highlight trafficking education, awareness, and supportive relationships to be methods of countering human trafficking (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018; Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020).

Several states have started to implement human trafficking education curriculums in school districts. Lemke (2019) details the steps states have taken to implement anti-trafficking curriculum for students, but Salas and Didier (2020) recommend that the rest of the country implement similar curriculum policies to address child trafficking.

Finally, research concentrated on mentorship programs is limited, but the major studies have proven mentorship programs to be an effective way to promote positive growth within the

lives of adolescents. Dubois et al. (2011) and Raposa et al. (2019) both provide an empirical analysis of several mentorship programs in the United States, supporting the implementation of mentoring programs as a strategy to develop the social and academic well-being of both younger children and adolescents.

## Methodology

The goal of this study is to uncover whether youth mentorship programs across the country should be doing more to prevent at-risk children from being involved in human trafficking. The study addresses whether human trafficking can be reduced through mentorship programs that provide trafficking education and a supportive adult to youth. The survey consists of an assessment of youth mentorship program staff members to discover how mentor programs are currently addressing human trafficking. One aim of this study is to discover whether mentor programs are providing trafficking awareness to mentors. Another aim of the study is to find out if mentors are providing anti-trafficking education to youth participating in the mentor program. The study additionally aims to evaluate the needs for future prevention efforts in these programs.

This research study is non-experimental. The data was analyzed through quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey results. The qualitative analysis of the survey was completed through a thorough analysis of the short response answers. The responses were compared and then grouped into similar themes for analysis.

The methodology for this thesis consisted of surveying mentorship programs across the United States that support at-risk youth. Mentorship programs that were selected for the study included peer mentoring, group mentoring, and one-to-one mentoring. The mentorship programs that were chosen for the study serve youth in diverse ways; some provide supportive relationships to youth and teens, and some equip youth with skills necessary to be successful in the future. Online databases were utilized to find eligible participants, including United Way of Palm Beach County's list of local mentor programs. Another resource used to find participant contacts was the mentorship programs listed on the "Iowa Mentor Partnership's online database." Additionally, the online "Dream Center Network" was utilized to find Dream Centers

across the country that run mentor programs in their agency. Another online database used to find eligible mentorship programs was “Connecticut’s Governor’s Prevention Partnership” program listing. Lastly, the “Mass Mentoring Partnership” was used to find participants within Massachusetts. Each participant was recruited through their organization email address or director’s email address. The study’s participants were directors of a mentorship program or staff members that hold positions within the mentorship program.

Participants were recruited for the study through an email which included the purpose of the study. The email provided a summary of the study and reasons to participate. Each participant was required to fill out an online consent form at the beginning of the survey. The participants completed the survey through the platform Google Forms. Each participant was required to provide their email address on the form, but this information was not part of the study and will not be included in the study results to protect the anonymity of the participants.

The survey design consisted of five demographic questions, followed by thirteen main survey questions. The participants were not required to answer every question. The survey asked participants closed-ended questions, Likert scaled questions, and open-ended questions. The survey questions were created based on the research explained in the literature review chapter. The specific research that led to the formation of the survey included the populations most vulnerable to trafficking, the tactics that traffickers use, and effective methods of preventing children and teenagers from being trafficked. To ensure the use of accurate terms, the questions were reviewed by a professional who has worked in the human trafficking field. The survey should have taken respondents an estimated five to ten minutes to complete. It was emailed to 103 different youth mentorship programs throughout the United States. Of the 103 mentorship

programs that were asked to participate, 24 mentor programs responded. The survey had a 23% response rate.

This chapter described the methods utilized in the study of how mentorship programs across the country prevent human trafficking among at-risk youth. The next chapter will describe the results of the study.

## **Analysis of Data**

As previously stated in Chapter 1, this study serves to discover what mentorship programs are doing to prevent human trafficking among at-risk youth in the United States. This study also aims to determine whether more needs to be done within mentor programs to prevent trafficking among youth.

This chapter is organized in terms of the three research questions presented in Chapter 1. This chapter will first present the demographics of the mentor programs that answered the survey with various tables and graphs. Second, the study will discover what mentorship programs throughout the United States are currently doing to prevent human trafficking among vulnerable youth. Then, the study will demonstrate if more awareness of human trafficking is needed within youth mentorship programs as a whole to prevent trafficking among at-risk youth. Finally, the study will explore what still needs to be done within youth mentor programs to prevent the human trafficking of children within youth mentor programs.

## **Survey Results**

### **Demographic Results**

The first five survey questions asked participants basic demographic information. The first demographic question asked participants to choose what state their mentor program is located in. Florida mentor programs had the most representation in this study, followed by Iowa. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the wide range of states included in this study.

State	% Of programs located in each state
Florida	20.8
Iowa	16.7
Massachusetts	8.3
District of Columbia	8.3
New York	8.3
North Carolina	4.2
Oregon	4.2
Pennsylvania	4.2
Virginia	4.2
Vermont	4.2
Wisconsin	4.2
Washington	4.2
Texas	4.2
Missouri	4.2

Figure 1.1

The second demographic question aimed to discover what gender the participating mentor programs serve. According to the results, 83.3% of participants stated that they serve all genders. Two (8.3%) of the mentor program participants provide mentoring for females only. Similarly, two (8.3%) of the mentor programs surveyed focus on mentoring males only.

The third demographic question asked mentor programs to specify what type of mentoring they specifically provide, as seen in Figure 1.2. The results display that a third of the programs that participated provide one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, and peer mentoring in their program. Further, the graph depicts that one mentor program stated that they have both one-to-one and group mentoring in their program.

What type of mentoring does your program provide?  
24 responses

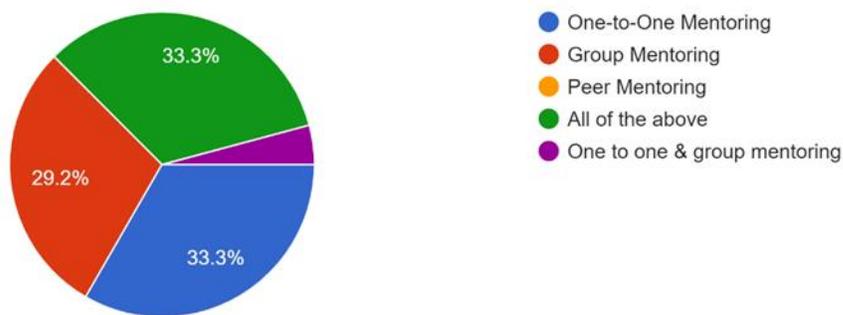


Figure 1.2

The fourth demographic question asked participants to choose which age group that the program mentors. Per Figure 1.3 below, participants chose the options that applied to their program. The results show that several programs serve more than one specific age group. It is worth noting that each program varied in which age group and how many age groups they mentor in their program. For example, eleven participants stated that their mentor program

serves elementary, middle school, and high school students. Three programs stated that they serve every age group, including adults. Two of the mentor programs exclusively serve students in elementary school or younger. Every mentoring program that participated in the survey serves students in either high school, middle school, or elementary school.

What age group does your mentor program serve? Check all that apply.

24 responses

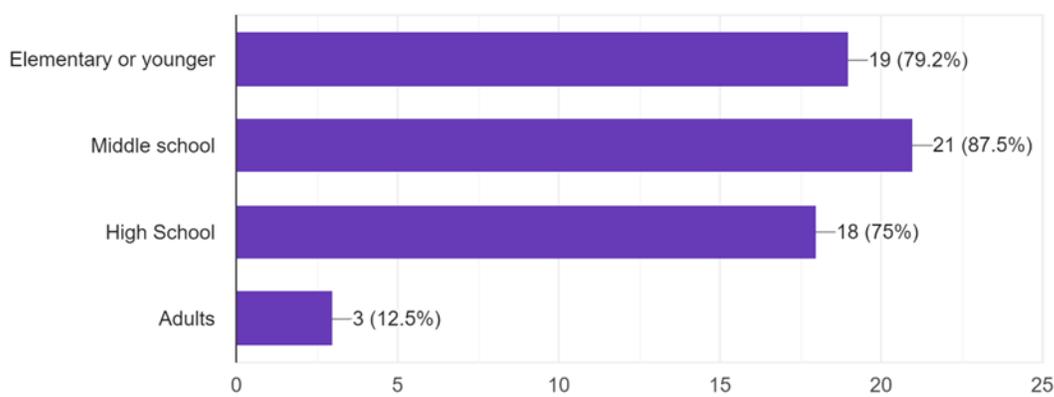


Figure 1.3

The final demographic question aimed to determine what type of agency the participating mentor programs affiliate with. The options are listed in Figure 1.4 below. As shown in the pie chart below (Figure 1.4), the majority (70.8%) of the mentor programs that participated in the survey are non-profit organizations. 8.3% of the mentor programs answered that they are part of a government agency. None of the participants associate with for-profit organizations or higher education institutions.

What type of agency is your mentor program affiliated with?

24 responses

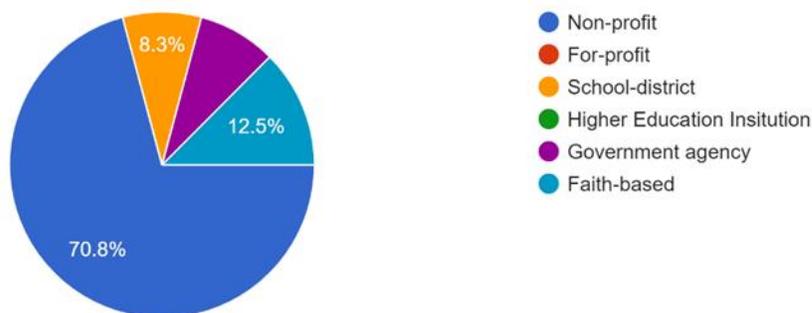


Figure 1.4

## Exploratory Survey Results

*Research Question 1* The next section of this chapter is guided by the following research question, “What are mentorship programs in United States currently doing to prevent human trafficking among vulnerable youth?”

The first survey question asked participants to identify which populations they worked with. Each population represents a group of people particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. According to the results, the mentor programs involved in the study mentor at least one of the populations listed in Figure 2.1. As shown in Figure 2.1, almost all (91.7%) of the mentor programs mentor economically vulnerable children. It is worth mentioning that the survey options do not include all populations at a higher risk of human trafficking.

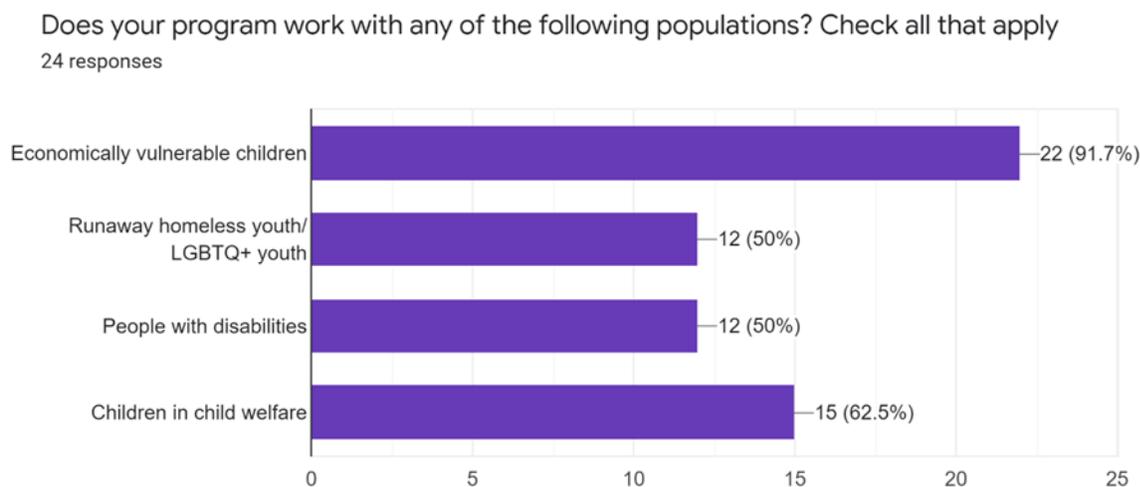


Figure 2.1

The second survey question asked mentor programs to choose all the ways they address human trafficking within their program. The options shown in Figure 2.2 include human trafficking prevention methods commonly suggested by professionals and trafficking survivors. The results indicate that over half of the respondents address human trafficking by providing a supportive relationship to mentees. Further, the second most highly reported approach to focusing on human trafficking in mentor programs is educating mentees about social media. According to the data, nine mentor programs only chose the response, “By providing a supportive relationship to mentees.” Six participants stated that they both educate mentees about social media and provide a supportive relationship to mentees.

The two lowest recorded methods to address human trafficking within mentor programs were trafficking awareness training for mentors and an anti-trafficking curriculum. As shown in Figure 2.2, 20.8% of participants do not address human trafficking in the ways included as answer choices in the survey and checked the “N/A” option.

In what ways does your program address human trafficking? Check all that apply

24 responses

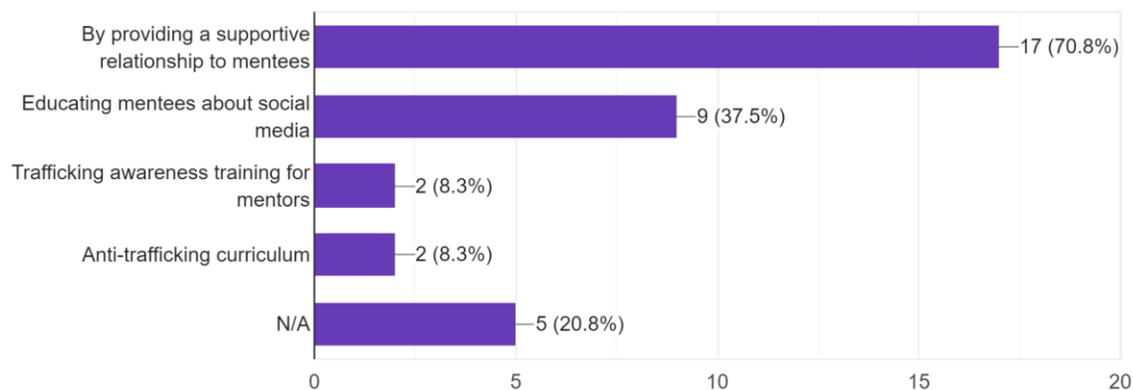


Figure 2.2

Figure 2.3 represents the data from a five-point Likert scale question asking programs to assess whether they agree or disagree with the statement displayed below. Eight participants agreed or strongly agreed that preventing at-risk children from trafficking is a main goal of their program. Comparatively, ten participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

One main goal of the mentor program is to prevent at-risk children from being involved in trafficking

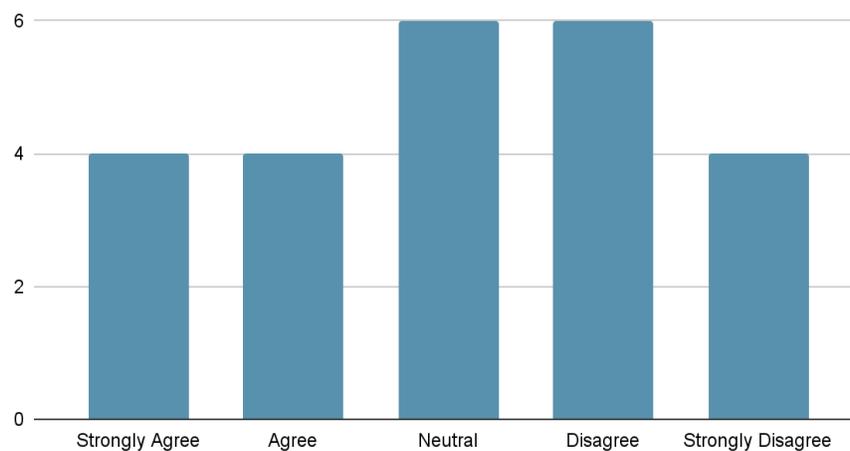


Figure 2.3

The next question in the survey asked respondents to choose the most appropriate response to the statement presented in the pie chart (Figure 2.4) below. Figure 2.4 demonstrates the responses to the statement. All the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One study participant chose not to respond to the question.

Your program provides an adult mentor to promote positive growth through a nurturing relationship with mentees.

23 responses

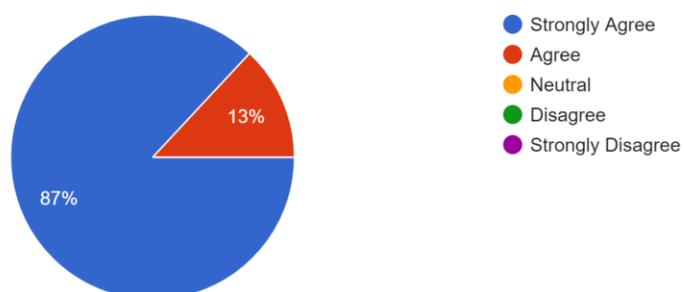


Figure 2.4

The following survey question presented a Likert scale with five answer choices. The below Figure 2.5 displays responses to the statement, “mentors at your program focus on building the self-esteem of their mentees.” Every participant either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Mentors at your program focus on building the self-esteem of their mentees.

24 responses

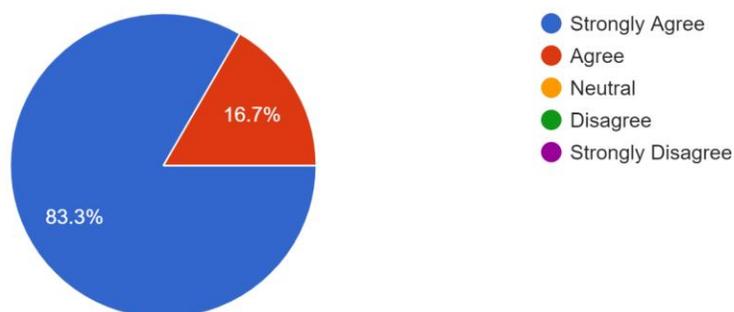


Figure 2.5

The next Likert scale question asked participants to choose the best response to the following statement, “mentors at your program discuss the dangers of social media with mentees.” Figure 2.6 illustrates the results of this survey question. About half of the participants agreed with the statement, and 29.2% strongly agreed. Four (16.7%) mentor programs chose the “neutral” response. As displayed below, none of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Mentors at your program discuss the dangers of social media with mentees

24 responses

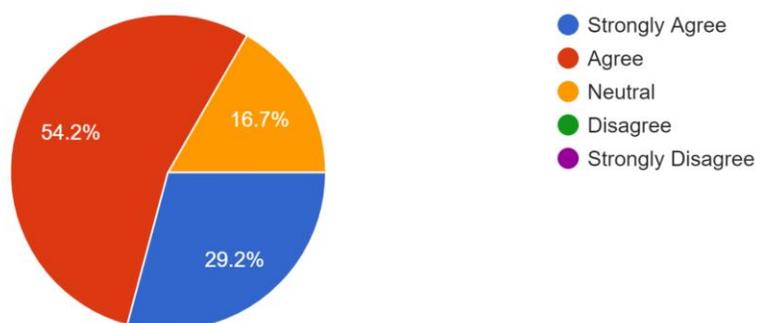


Figure 2.6

The last question analyzed in the second section of this chapter is described in Figure 2.7. Participants responded to the statement shown in Figure 2.7 on a five-point Likert scale. Only one participant strongly agreed, and four participants agreed with the statement. However, 45.9% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that mentors discuss the recruitment tactics of traffickers with mentees.

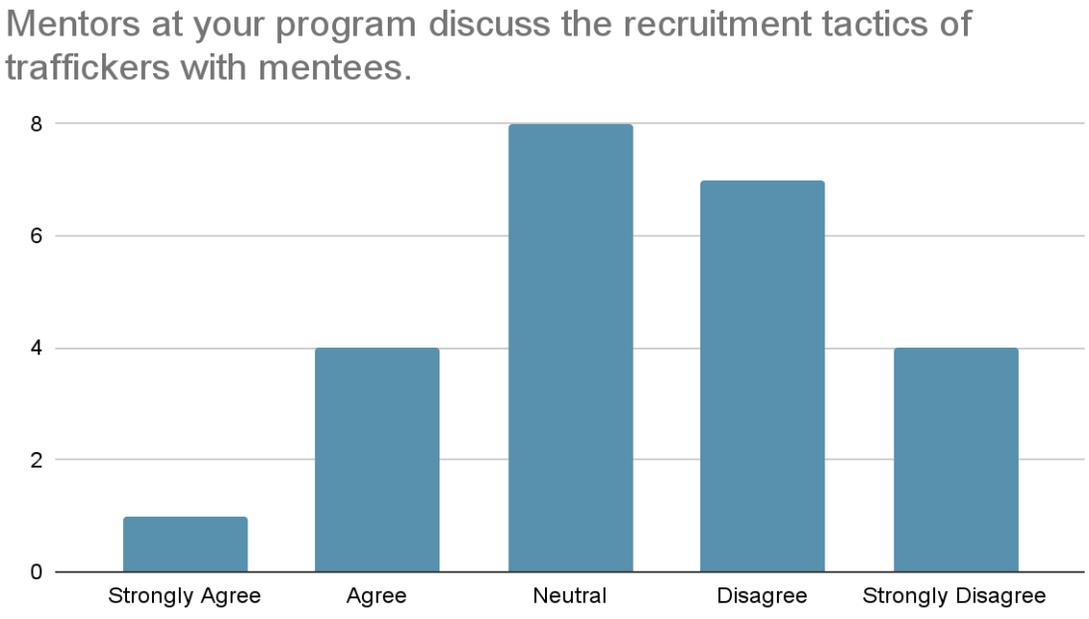


Figure 2.7

*Research Question 2* The next section of this chapter will analyze data guided by the research question, “Is more awareness of human trafficking needed within youth mentorship programs across the country to prevent trafficking among at-risk youth?”

As shown below in Figure 3.1, over half of the participants concluded that their mentors are not receiving human trafficking awareness training. Further, 29.2% stated that they are unsure whether or not mentors are receiving training. The pie chart (Figure 3.1) indicates mentors are receiving trafficking awareness training in one program.

Mentors are receiving human trafficking awareness training through your agency or another provider.

24 responses

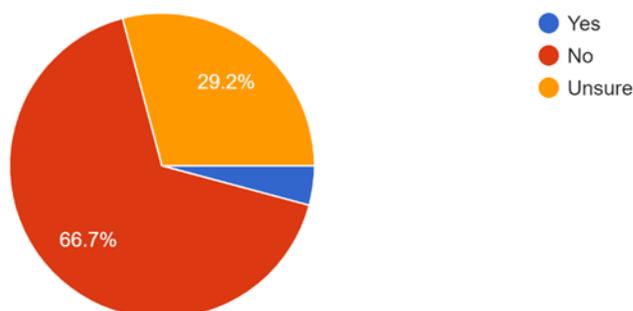


Figure 3.1

The next survey question aimed to find out whether mentor programs are providing mentees information or awareness on human trafficking through a multiple-choice question. Figure 3.2 represents Question #11 in the survey form. Fourteen participants stated that they are

not providing information or awareness on human trafficking. As shown in the pie chart, a quarter of respondents responded that they are unsure. Finally, according to the data, 16.7% of programs that were surveyed currently provide information or awareness of human trafficking to mentees.

Does your program provide mentees information or awareness on human trafficking?  
24 responses

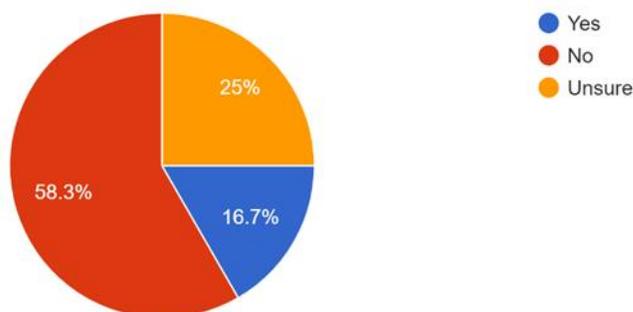


Figure 3.2

The consecutive Question #12 was a follow-up to the previous survey question. It asked participants that provide trafficking awareness and information to mentees what age they start to provide this information. Participants could choose from the following multiple-choice options: 7-10, 11-13, 14-15, 16-18. Because the question was optional, only seventeen mentor programs answered the question, and thirteen of the respondents chose “N/A.”

Four participants answered “yes” to the previous Question #11, does your program provide mentees information or awareness on human trafficking?” Their responses to the question are further analyzed. According to the survey results, two mentor programs first provide information about trafficking at ages 11-13. One mentor program first provides this information to mentees ages 14-15. Finally, the last participant stated that they begin to teach mentees trafficking information at ages 16-18.

The next question displayed in Figure 3.3 was Question #13 in the survey form and is also a follow-up question to the previous Question #11 in Figure 3.2. There were twenty-one responses to this question. The data demonstrates that the four participants that chose “Yes,” to the previous Question #11, chose, “N/A.”

Twenty participants answered, “Unsure” or “No,” to the previous survey Question #11. Of these participants, seven (35%) participants chose “Yes,” demonstrating that they do see a need for more trafficking awareness in their program. Moreover, eight (40%) of these participants chose “Unsure.” Three (15%) of these participants answered, “N/A.” Finally, two (10%) participants that answered “Unsure” or “No” to the previous survey Question #11 did not respond to Survey Question #13.

The graph below (Figure 3.3) exhibits that 42.9% of programs that responded to Question #13 answered “Yes.” Two programs that had answered “Yes” to the previous survey Question #11, also answered Question #13 with “Yes.”

If the answer to question 11 is no, do you see a need for more trafficking awareness in your program?  
21 responses

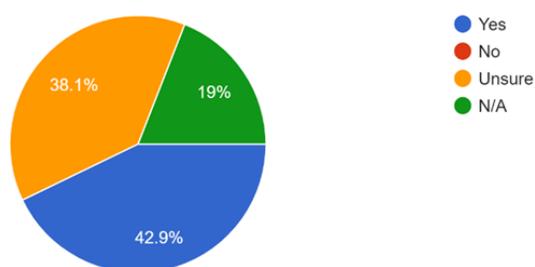


Figure 3.3

*Research Question 3* The following qualitative analysis of the results is guided by the study's third research question, "What still needs to be done within youth mentor programs to prevent human trafficking of youth within mentor programs?"

**Question 18: Please comment on the future needs of your program to prevent human trafficking.**

Question 18 presented an optional, open-ended response question. The question asked mentorship programs to comment on the future needs of their program to prevent human trafficking. The question received ten responses. By closely analyzing each response, three recurring themes were identified. As an overview of the data, the mentor programs stated that they need more education, more mentors, and more focus on human trafficking to prevent trafficking among mentees within their program. The following discussion will describe the three themes in greater detail.

The first common theme found in this question is the need for more human trafficking education within the mentor program. For instance, one mentor program from Washington D.C stated that they "would like to learn more about human trafficking and integrate HT into our program." While this participant mentioned that they need to educate themselves on the topic, some voiced the need for more trafficking awareness training. For example, one program said, "more training for mentors and mentees." Additionally, one participant said, "Our staff receives training, but making sure mentors and parents/guardians are more knowledgeable would be helpful." This response focuses on the need for the adults involved in mentor programs to receive education on human trafficking. In another instance, a respondent suggested the need for both

students and adults to get human trafficking education, “We should educate our students and adults on this matter.”

The second common theme to this survey question was more mentors. This theme highlights the importance of adding mentors to programs to better prevent youth from being trafficked. This idea is evidenced in the following statement, “More mentors and also getting youth motivated to attend our groups, which has been especially challenging during Covid.” This participants’ response brings an additional need to attention by mentioning that youth attendance has been low due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The final recurring theme in the responses to Question #18 is an increased focus on human trafficking within the program. This theme is evidenced by the following response, “Cooperation and collaborating with other agencies specifically working on human trafficking education and prevention.” Furthermore, three participants specified that they need to do more to focus on human trafficking. This is exemplified in the following response, “This is an area of growth for us! We need to do more in this area!” In correspondence, one respondent stated, “We do touch on the subject, but I would love to make it more of a priority.” This theme was also demonstrated in the response, “To be more intentional of having these conversations with teens and children.”

## Conclusion

As previously stated, this study was conducted to explore mentorship programs as a method of preventing human trafficking, specifically among at-risk youth. The closing chapter of this research paper will restate the research questions and methods used for the study. The major sections of this chapter will discuss the findings, the implications for practice, and areas of future research.

As explained in Chapter 2, the research was an exploratory study of youth mentorship programs across the country to discover whether mentorship programs could prevent vulnerable populations from being trafficked. This research study relied on an online survey sent out to about one hundred mentoring programs that provide a supportive, trusting adult relationship to youth. The cross-sectional research was analyzed using quantitative analysis for the closed-ended questions and qualitative analysis for the open-ended responses.

### *Current Steps to Preventing Human Trafficking in Mentoring Programs*

The first research question that guided the exploration of this topic is, “what are mentorship programs in the United States currently doing to prevent human trafficking among vulnerable youth?” The results demonstrated that mentorship programs apply various methods to prevent their mentees from human trafficking. For instance, the results illustrate that youth mentoring programs across the country aim to prevent human trafficking by providing youth with an adult supportive, trusting relationship. Further, the results of this study demonstrated that mentor programs are preventing human trafficking by promoting positive growth through a nurturing relationship with mentees. The study also found that participants are focused on building self-esteem among mentees. Previous studies have demonstrated that mentoring

programs are utilized as a way to promote self-efficacy and self-esteem. The results of this study parallel previous research suggesting the significance of boosting self-esteem among youth. Finally, these results correlate to previous studies suggesting that providing a supportive relationship to children and teenagers can prevent human trafficking (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2018; Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020).

Another conclusion from this study is that participating mentoring programs are preventing human trafficking through education about social media. This study demonstrates that most (83.4%) participating mentoring programs discuss the dangers of social media with mentees. Further, of the twenty-four participants, nine individuals stated that they address human trafficking by educating mentees about social media. Social media education for adolescents is crucial, and previous research demonstrates that due to the prevalence of social media recruitment strategies among traffickers, some school districts have begun implementing anti-trafficking curriculum for students that include social media education. California is currently one of the only states mandating education for middle and high schoolers about the dangers of social media sites and how it can relate to human trafficking. (Salas & Didier, 2019). Further, these results correspond to survivor conceptualizations that informing youth about social media and online grooming can help to prevent human trafficking (Donohue-Dioh et al., 2020).

### *Human Trafficking Awareness within Youth Mentoring Programs*

The next research question that this study addressed is, “Is more awareness of human trafficking needed within youth mentorship programs across the country to prevent trafficking among at-risk youth?” This study aimed to answer this question through quantitative analysis of mentoring programs’ closed-ended survey responses.

While it is impossible to generalize the results based on the small sample of participants, one conclusion contrived from this data is that most youth mentor programs do not currently include trafficking awareness in their programs. The data suggests that staff, mentors, and mentees involved in mentoring programs are not receiving sufficient anti-trafficking education or awareness. Some youth mentoring programs surveyed believe more trafficking awareness is necessary within their program to prevent human trafficking among their mentees. One result from the study that led to this conclusion was that only 16.7% of mentor programs said that they provide human trafficking awareness to mentees. Furthermore, the study results presented that a low percentage, 4.2%, of participating mentoring programs provide anti-trafficking training to their mentors. The data also demonstrates that most mentees are not being informed of the tactics of traffickers. Finally, the results indicate that two out of the twenty-four mentor program participants provide an anti-trafficking curriculum for mentees.

While this research suggests that most youth mentoring programs are not providing human trafficking awareness within their program, it is worth noting that some mentoring programs see a need for more trafficking awareness. The study outcome that supports this finding is that 35% of participants that do not presently provide mentees with trafficking awareness said they see a need for more trafficking awareness within their program as a whole. This finding suggests that in the future mentorship programs may consider increasing trafficking awareness for staff, mentors, or mentees.

In summary, this study suggests that although mentor programs aim to reduce the likelihood of trafficking, many are not implementing anti-trafficking education or awareness programs targeted towards their mentors or mentees. Awareness for both mentors and program staff members is essential to identify the risks and signs of human trafficking in the lives of

vulnerable youth. Further training is needed to provide mentees with sufficient information about human trafficking.

#### *What is Still Needed within Mentor Programs to Prevent Human Trafficking*

The mentor programs' open-ended responses to the survey question, "Please comment on the future needs of your program to prevent human trafficking" were qualitatively analyzed in the data results section. The research suggests that mentor programs need to increase their focus on human trafficking within their programs to prevent human trafficking. For instance, one program staff member stated, "We do touch on the subject, but I would love to make it more of a priority." This response and a few others demonstrate that mentor programs would like to be more intentional about human trafficking prevention and implement prevention strategies in the future.

Moreover, this research suggests that mentoring programs across the country need additional trafficking education within their programs as a whole to prevent trafficking. The following survey responses that support this conclusion are, "Our staff receives training, but making sure mentors and parents/guardians are more knowledgeable would be helpful," and "We should educate our students and adults on this matter." As previously mentioned, these results should lead mentor programs to consider providing more anti-trafficking training for mentors as well as implementing an anti-trafficking curriculum for mentees.

**Strengths**

This study is the first of its kind to approach mentorship programs as a method of preventing youth and teenagers from trafficking. Further, the research addresses the lack of empirical human trafficking prevention research. This study included mentorship programs with various affiliations such as faith-based institutions, non-profit organizations, school-districts, and government-agencies. The diverse types of agencies that participated in the study permitted a wide array of beliefs and opinions on the topic. A final strength of this study is that it includes mentor programs from every region of the United States. By surveying staff members from programs in fourteen states, this survey aimed to address mentoring programs throughout the country.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to the study which made it difficult to make all-encompassing conclusions. One major limitation was the small sample size, which could be due to several reasons such as the subject, time restraint, and lack of incentive. The survey had a low sample size of twenty-four participants. The survey was sent out to 103 mentorship programs and had a response rate of 23%, which is relatively low. There were several components to the lack of participants. The time restraint for the study made it difficult to reach out to all the mentor program participants individually to request their participation. Another limitation that led to a low response rate was the lack of incentive to participate in the study. There were no direct benefits to the mentorship program participants that chose to fill out the survey.

Another limitation that might have impacted the results of the study was that several potential participants received the email and wrote back replying that the study was irrelevant to their program because they do not work in anti-trafficking. Other mentor programs could have

received the participation request email and did not wish to participate in the study because they did not believe it was relevant to their mentor program. This possibility may have led to skewed results.

The next limitation that must be considered is the methods of finding mentorship programs to participate in the study. Random mentor program selection was difficult due to several challenges in finding and contacting mentorship programs across the country. Due to this challenge, some states were represented more than others. For example, several mentorship programs based in Iowa were contacted to participate from the Iowa Mentoring Partnership online database.

The final limitation to the study is the sensitive subject of the study. The subject of human trafficking may have deterred individuals from participating in the study.

### **Future Studies**

This study could be expanded by including a larger sample size and more mentorship programs from across the country. In the future, it would be beneficial to study the impacts of including an anti-trafficking curriculum in mentorship programs that focus on providing mentors with a supportive, adult relationship. This could be accomplished through an empirical study of youth outcomes related to human trafficking risks and awareness. Additional research on the age appropriateness for human trafficking information is also needed.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to focus research on the benefits and impacts of providing anti-trafficking training for mentors and staff members within youth mentorship programs.

## **Implications for Practice**

This study is helpful for professionals working in mentorship programs because it provides valuable insight into how mentorship programs are working to prevent human trafficking. This research study demonstrates that while most youth mentorship programs are not taking steps toward human trafficking awareness, professionals working with youth mentoring programs should promote awareness and anti-trafficking education amongst staff, mentors, and mentees. This study recognizes that millions of mentors around the country can help to reduce human trafficking. As a result, this study explores how mentorship programs are currently preventing human trafficking and recommends future preventative strategies.

One suggestion for professionals working in the mentoring field is to promote and provide staff and mentors with trafficking awareness training. Another suggestion is to educate youth and teenagers involved in the mentorship about what human trafficking is and the dangers they should be aware of. According to the results of this study, the majority of mentorship programs are currently not informing mentees about the recruitment tactics of traffickers. Because education about trafficking has been proven in previous research to be a powerful preventative tool, mentor programs should consider adding an anti-trafficking curriculum to their program for middle and high schoolers. Due to the subject, mentor programs should consider discussing the topic differently based on age appropriateness. For example, the curriculum for high schoolers should include trafficker information, misconceptions, and recruitment strategies, but the curriculum for middle schoolers might be oriented toward self-worth and social media. Mentoring programs should also consider talking to older adolescents about the demands of the sex industry. As social media becomes increasingly popular among younger people, mentoring programs should continue to discuss social media safety. Mentoring programs might consider

implementing a prevention curriculum that has already been created by survivors and professionals who have worked with survivors.

Prioritizing human trafficking prevention within youth mentoring programs could save many lives. Professionals should consider this research study and focus on implementing the prevention methods previously discussed.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, this human trafficking prevention study reveals that mentorship programs attempt to diminish human trafficking by providing a supportive relationship and educating mentees about social media. Mentor programs should include more trafficking awareness within their programs for both mentors and mentees to reduce the likelihood of child trafficking. Mentor programs that directly serve vulnerable youth throughout the United States should consider this research and aim to make human trafficking prevention a primary focus.

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## Appendix A

### Recruitment Email

Hi,

My name is Aspen Dagostino, and I am conducting research for my honors thesis at Southeastern University. I would love your help by participating in my survey!

The focus of my research is identifying the effectiveness of mentorship programs in **human trafficking prevention**. The problem I want to solve is what our society can do to prevent human trafficking through supportive relationships. **Because of the high number of vulnerable children and teenagers that are being trafficked in America, I want to study mentorship programs across the country to find out what successes or challenges they are facing when implementing education to end modern day slavery.** The goal of this research is to better understand whether human trafficking can be prevented through mentorship programs. Through this research, I will identify what is working well and what is still needed within existing mentor programs to effectively prevent vulnerable children from becoming victims of trafficking.

By participating in this survey, you will be contributing to research that will provide valuable information on how modern society can prevent our most vulnerable children from being trafficked.

If you are interested in participating in the survey, please click this link:

Please be sure to read the consent form before you start the survey. Please note that all your information will be kept confidential, and your participation is voluntary.

If you have any questions about the study please feel free to contact me at  
amdagostino@seu.edu, or my advisor Prof. Scott Gaffney, at  
swgaffney@seu.edu

Thank you so much for your help,

Aspen Dagostino

## **Appendix B**

### Voluntary Participation Consent Form

Title of research proposal: Mentorship Programs as an Effective Method of Human Trafficking Prevention

Principal Investigator: Professor Scott Gaffney, Southeastern University

Co-investigator: Professor Erika Cuffy, Southeastern University

The purpose of this study is to determine whether mentorship programs can effectively prevent youth and teenagers from being involved in human trafficking and sexual exploitation. This study will assess what current mentorship programs are providing and what is still needed to prevent vulnerable youth from being trafficked.

This study is administered through an online survey and consists of two questionnaires with a total of twenty questions. The first questionnaire will ask demographic questions. The second questionnaire will ask more specific questions related to preventing human trafficking. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

The benefit to participating in this study is that you will be contributing to research that will provide valuable information on how modern society can prevent our most vulnerable children from being trafficked.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this research at any time. The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed five years after the study has been completed.

You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study.

Please contact my thesis advisor Professor Scott Gaffney at [swgaffney@seu.edu](mailto:swgaffney@seu.edu) or my secondary thesis advisor Professor Erika Cuffy at [emcuffy@seu.edu](mailto:emcuffy@seu.edu).

Please click Next if you choose to participate. By clicking NEXT, you are indicating that you freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this study, and you also acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age. By completing this survey, you are consenting to participating in this study.

## Appendix C

### Survey Questions

1. What state is your program located in?

2. What is the gender of your mentees?

Males Only

Females Only

All Genders

Other or not otherwise specified

3. What type of mentoring does your program provide?

One-to-One Mentoring

Group Mentoring

Peer Mentoring

All of the above

Other:

4. What age group does your mentor program serve? Check all that apply.

Elementary or younger

Middle school

High School

Adults

5. What type of agency is your mentor program affiliated with?

Non-profit

For-profit

School-district

Higher Education Institution

Government agency

Faith-based

Other:

6. Does your program work specifically with human trafficking survivors?

Yes  No

7. Does your program work with any of the following populations? Check all that apply

Economically vulnerable children

Runaway homeless youth/LGBTQ+ youth

People with disabilities

Children in child welfare

Other:

8. In what ways does your program address human trafficking? Check all that apply

By providing a supportive relationship to mentees

- Educating mentees about social media
- Trafficking awareness training for mentors
- Anti-trafficking curriculum
- N/A

9. Mentors are receiving human trafficking awareness training through your agency or another provider.

Yes  No  Unsure

10. Does your program provide mentees information or awareness on human trafficking?

Yes  No  Unsure

11. If yes to question 11, at what age do your mentors first provide information about trafficking?

7-10  11-13  14-15  16-18  N/A

12. If the answer to question 11 is no, do you see a need for more trafficking awareness in your program?

Yes  No  Unsure  N/A

13. Your program provides an adult mentor to promote positive growth through a nurturing relationship with mentees.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

14. One main goal of the mentor program is to prevent at-risk children from being involved in trafficking.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

15. Mentors at your program discuss the dangers of social media with mentees

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

16. Mentors at your program discuss the recruitment tactics of traffickers with mentees.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

17. Mentors at your program focus on building the self-esteem of their mentees.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

18. Please comment on the future needs of your program to prevent human trafficking.