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Individual and Contextual Vulnerability Factors Involved in the Human Trafficking Process of Minors and Adults Serviced by Hope Risen: A Case Study.

by

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A mini dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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Dedication

To my dearest father, I dedicate this mini dissertation entirely to you. You were my biggest supporter, and you were always there along the side lines as I took on this journey. You constantly encouraged me and guided me. You passionately supported my dreams and goals and you never ceased to remind me of how capable I was. Although you were not able to see me make it to the very end, your love and endless words of encouragement stayed with me throughout. Thank you for all you did until the very end. I hope that I have made you proud. I love you always.

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Abstract

Trafficking in persons (TIP) is a global crime known for its complexity and the trafficker's ability to understand and exploit an individual's specific individual and contextual characteristics. Considering the reported growth of TIP globally, it is becoming increasingly important to understand what influences an individual's vulnerability to be trafficked. This is imperative within the context of South Africa's history of inequality, which contributes to a unique social, political, and economic context that is expertly manipulated by traffickers. There exists a multitude of research on TIP vulnerability, which approach vulnerability through an isolated framework. Within these studies, the isolated understanding of vulnerability has neglected to view TIP vulnerability as a complex and systemic experience. Therefore, the aim of the study was to explore and describe the individual and contextual factors that influenced TIP vulnerability for trafficked individuals serviced by Hope Risen (HR). By doing so, existing understandings of TIP vulnerabilities could be updated to reflect a more systemic and holistic approach. This was achieved by employing a descriptive case study design that relied on both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative sample consisted of 15 case files from which collected data was transformed into quantitative data through a process of quantitising. Results were presented according to descriptive statistics which indicated that the highest individual factors that influenced TIP vulnerability was Being a Female. Similarly, the highest contextual factor was Unemployment. Simultaneously, qualitative data was collected from a sample of three interview participants. A thematic analysis was conducted which resulted in the development of three main themes which were Personal History; Trauma consequences; and Broader Contextual Factors. A converged and integrated discussion of the findings of the two data sets facilitated a richly described case study of TIP vulnerability.

Key words: Case Study, Exploitation, Hope Risen, Human Trafficking, Quantitative, Qualitative, Trafficking in Persons, Vulnerability Factors.

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CSAM: Child Sexual Abuse Material....24
DHA: Department of Home Affairs....109
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DOJ: Department of Justice....1
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Trafficking in persons (TIP) is a global phenomenon that undermines the basic rights of the trafficked individual, irrespective of their socio-economic status or their country's historical and political structure (Chong & Clark, 2014, p. 123). The crime is facilitated globally by exploiting vulnerable populations to gain a profit (Usman, 2014, p. 282). The trafficked individual's vulnerability is typically rooted in social, economic, or political vulnerabilities (Usman, 2014, p. 282). The study therefore aimed to research the TIP vulnerabilities leading to being trafficked, to aid in the understanding of the complex nature of the crime and how vulnerability factors play a complex role in being trafficked. This chapter will focus on examining the need for the current study within the context of South Africa and will provide an overview of how the study was carried out. Key terms used throughout the study will be outlined and discussed to provide context and clarity to the reader. Lasty, the chapter will end with an overview of the remaining chapters.

Need for the Current Study

TIP has developed into a global industry that recruits millions of people and generates an estimated turnover of $150 billion (USD) (ZAR 1,987 trillion) a year; $99 billion (USD) (ZAR 1,311 trillion) from forced sexual exploitation and a further $51 billion (USD) (ZAR 675 billion) from forced labour exploitation (Asia/Pacific Group [APG], 2018, p. 13; Swart, 2012, p. 62). At present there are numerous international and national legal instruments that have been adopted such as the Palermo Protocol (The Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2000) and the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 (PACOTIP) (Department of Justice [DOJ], 2013). These instruments and subsequent initiatives work according to a "4P" framework where policy and action is aimed towards prevention of TIP, protection of vulnerable individuals, prosecution of perpetrators, and partnerships with counter-TIP stakeholders (DOJ, 2019, p. 30).

Prevention is a key component of combating TIP and is specifically aimed at reducing vulnerability factors which create ideal conditions that can allow for and further increase TIP (DOJ, 2019, p. 38). The prevention element of the "4P" framework consists of several activities such as research into the root causes of the crime; awareness raising activities focused on educating the public; and lastly the reduction of vulnerability. (DOJ, 2019, p. 38). An important aspect of the prevention facet of the 4P framework is that activities need to be positioned

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towards the populations and communities most vulnerable to the effects of TIP (DOJ, 2019, p. 38). However, according to the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) the South African government had a poor understanding of the nature of trafficking, which hindered their attempts to prevent TIP (United States Department of State, 2020a, p. 453). Additionally, the report highlighted South Africa's necessity for increased resources to identify vulnerable populations by screening for TIP indicators (United States Department of State, 2020a, p. 453). The most recent 2021 TIP report suggested that, although the South African government was increasing efforts to combat the crime, it could not be considered as substantial enough to eradicate TIP, especially as prevention and combating efforts were still minimal (United States Department of State, 2021, p. 508).

To combat trafficking, it is necessary for governments to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups (Adepoju, 2005, p. 90). This is seen as imperative in the context of South Africa, which continues to be identified as a source, transit, and destination country for TIP (United States Department of State, 2018, p. 390). Research is therefore needed into what the individual and broader contextual factors are that make an individual more vulnerable to be trafficked within South Africa, as research (Adepoju, 2005, p. 84; Delport et al., 2007, p. 18; United States Department of State, 2019, p. 9) into the contexts in which trafficking occurs is limited and mostly outdated. In addition, although notable research, conducted by Bello (2018), Delport et al. (2007) and Lutya (2012), has identified a wide spectrum of root causes, these are investigated and reported as individual and discreet factors that contribute to TIP vulnerabilities. Within these studies the interconnections between these factors and their contributions to the evolving nature of the crime were not addressed. This has resulted in a narrowed and fragmented view and understanding of TIP (Mollema, 2014, p. 262). This highlights why it is necessary to continually contribute to existing research as TIP is an ever changing and elusive phenomenon, adapting to fit to specific contexts (Bello, 2018, p. 479; Tyldum, 2010, p. 4). Failure to understand TIP vulnerability, and specifically how vulnerability can be unique to the individual results in the lessening in the understanding of how TIP functions as a context specific crime. This is an important understanding as it highlights how the crime is shaped within South Africa and additionally how it shapes and affects vulnerable South Africans. This therefore has potential impact on counter-TIP efforts within South Africa.

There are numerous governmental and civil entities, involved in counter-TIP within South Africa. Governmental entities typically consist of the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Department of Social Development (DSD) who are responsible for designating and certifying the victim status of a potential TIP case, and for authorising the provision of

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post-trafficking services (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 426). A significant portion of entities additionally consist of faith based or community-based organisations, as well as various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The role of certain NGOs in combating TIP and addressing its impact has grown and become a necessity in the efforts to eradicate the crime (Limoncelli, 2016, p. 317). One such NGO is Hope Risen (HR), which are actively involved with referral, removal, intervention, and restoration and reintegration programmes of potential and/or confirmed victims (HR, 2018). HR has become one of the key players in Gauteng in establishing a wider understanding of TIP, by contributing towards the systems that are in place to combat and prevent the crime. As a prominent NGO involved in counter-TIP, the various case files held by HR on trafficked individuals had the potential to contain rich and context-specific information which could inform a rich case study on TIP vulnerability. As such, the generated findings of this case study can contribute to the overall understanding of TIP and its core elements in South Africa; potentially impact how policy makers perceive and combat TIP (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 2); and assist NGOs, such as HR, to develop interventions based on the protection framework, that are appropriately tailored to service and respond to the needs of vulnerable populations (Sprang & Cole, 2018, p. 190). Additional stakeholders such as SAPS and DSD benefit as an understanding of vulnerability and the manipulation thereof, will be contextually appropriate. It is therefore necessary to identify and address vulnerability factors, as identification of root causes is fundamental to addressing the crime (Bello, 2018, p. 487), as factor identification can enhance policies and prevention activities aimed at decreasing the vulnerability of South Africans. The research question and aim of the study will be expanded on in the next section.

Research Question and Aim

The research question of the study was: Which individual and contextual vulnerability factors were involved in the human trafficking process of identified minor and adult trafficked individuals, who were serviced by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Hope Risen (HR)? Consequently, the broad aim of the study was to explore and describe the individual and contextual factors that influenced the vulnerability of identified trafficked minors and adults who were serviced by HR. It was necessary to differentiate between what constitutes a minor and an adult, as legislation such as the PACOTIP Act (2013) certifies TIP victim status according to age. Additionally, being a child is a vulnerability factor that can be abused by virtue of the child being under the age of 18 years (PACOTIP, 2013, p. 8).

The specific objectives of the study were:

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1. To explore and describe the individual vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
2. To explore and describe the contextual vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
3. To explore and describe unusual and/or previously unreported vulnerability factors in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals, serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
4. To explore and describe the combinations of individual and contextual vulnerability factors of trafficked identified minor and adult trafficked individuals serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
5. To explore and describe HR employees' and volunteers' perceptions on which individual and contextual factors influence the vulnerability of minors and adults to be trafficked.

The conceptual framework and methodology that underpinned the study will be briefly described to provide an anchoring frame of reference.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

The current study employed Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979, 1994) and a descriptive case study design. Ecological systems theory focuses on understanding the influence that various environmental systems have on an individual (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 239). In the context of TIP, it is suggested that such an approach is applicable as it offers a perspective into understanding the multilevel and complex interactions that take place between various risk factors (Barner et al., 2017, p. 4). Therefore, by investigating and understanding TIP vulnerabilities within South Africa through a systemic lens, greater value can be given to approaching TIP vulnerability more holistically.

The study additionally employed a descriptive case study design that relied on both quantitative and qualitative data which allowed for the reliance on the strength of both data sets (Moseholm & Fetters, 2017, p. 1). Quantitative data was collected through the quantitising of qualitative information collected from selected case files. The qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews with employees and volunteers of HR. The rationale behind the use of two data sets ensured that access to the combined knowledge and insights of a converged data set was possible. This was most fitting for the use of a case study which required

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multiple forms of data that could provide unique insights into the same phenomenon. A unique phenomenon such as TIP results in the use of specific terminology which is discussed next.

Definition of Key Concepts

Research in the social sciences often contain terminology that is relevant to the various disciplines, which contains its own meanings and interpretations (Grix, 2002, p. 175). This suggests that it is important to understand the terminology and terms used within a specific study as it may enhance the understanding of the research process (Grix, 2002, p. 175). This is especially as the language that is used is not always applicable to daily contexts and thus requires clarification. From the collected data there are certain terms which were revealed and subsequently referenced throughout the discussion. These terms form part of the complexity of the TIP sphere and of vulnerability factors. The terminology of johns or clients" are discussed next.

Johns or Clients

A "John" is a term typically used to refer to a client or customer who is purchasing or receiving the sexual services of a sex trafficked individual (Gregorio, 2015, p. 628). Through creating the demand for the services of trafficked persons, Johns are often viewed as the ones who complete the process of sexual exploitation (Gregorio, 2015, p. 636). One participant used the word John quite frequently and this term is used to represent her views. In instances where participants were not specific, the term "those serviced by trafficked individuals" will be used. In instances where specific terms are stated in literature, such terms will then be used.

Patriarchy versus Toxic Patriarchy

Traditionally, the term patriarchy referred to the system that denoted the overall rule of the father within a family or clan (Ademiluka, 2018, p. 339; Osezua & Agholor, 2019, p. 417). Within such a form, patriarchy did not inherently rest on inequality and oppression (Donahue, 2007, p. 46). Rather, in its earliest form, patriarchy referred to specific roles that men, as husbands and fathers, had within the social system of a family, rather than as an oppressive and violent system (Ademiluka, 2018, p. 340). However, with the progression of society, and its resultant shift in attitudes and beliefs, this system began to provide men with advantages that enabled them to place role constraints on the women (Donahue, 2007, p. 47). It is from this development that patriarchy began to evolve into the concept and social system that is understood in modern times.

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More recently, scholars have used the term toxic patriarchy to illustrate this social system in which men demonstrate a male authority over women in a manner that is oppressive (Osezua & Agholor, 2019, p. 411). The modern concept of toxic patriarchy is underpinned by attitudes, beliefs, and biases that create social and economic obstacles within society which result in the insubordination of women (Osezua & Agholor, 2019, p. 417). Ademiluka (2018, p. 354) highlighted that many believe that when considering the reasons for the oppression and exploitation of women, toxic patriarchy can often be found at the core. As such, when referencing the contributing role that social systems and beliefs have on TIP vulnerability, the term toxic patriarchy will be used when referencing patriarchal systems as this most accurately refers to the modern, oppressive system that underpins social and economic inequality which relates to vulnerability to be trafficked (Gacinya, 2020, p. 76; Sikweyiya et al., 2020, p. 682).

Rescue versus Removal

According to Owens-Bullard (2014, para. 2) the term "rescue" is commonly used within the counter-TIP sphere when considering assistance and support for trafficked individuals. All three participants favoured the word "rescue" and "rescued" when referring to the process of trafficked individuals leaving or being assisted to leave the trafficking context. Despite the widespread use of "rescue", it has been argued that this term is harmful and highlights the blurred line between empowerment and disempowerment (Connelly, 2015, p. 154). Additionally, it has been argued that the adoption of the term "rescue" contributes to what is known as the passive victim (Connelly, 2015, p. 154). Owens-Bullard (2014, para. 7) argued that the term simplifies the nuanced nature of trafficking and coercion, especially in instances where trafficked individuals would choose to stay within the trafficked situation for various reasons. The use of the term rescue could also unintentionally contribute to an uneven power dynamic between the "rescuer" and the "rescued".

This criticism of the term posed a significant challenge to the researcher as the discourse of "rescuer" and the "rescued" often intersects heavily with the white saviour complex, which is common within humanitarian domains. This white saviour complex rests on a perceived act of altruism that is geared towards "helping the other" (Walsh, 2020, p. 5). The concern with such a narrative is that it ultimately rests on a sense of superiority in comparison with an "inverted other" (Walsh, 2020, p. 4), which once more perpetuates an uneven power dynamic. To negate this concern, the term "rescue" was only used in instances where participants' views were expressed. In other instances, the term "removal" was instead used, which prevents contributing to the uneven power dynamic.

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Restoration and Reintegration versus Rehabilitation

Within the counter-TIP sphere, a critical aspect of ensuring that trafficked individuals are safe is to provide rehabilitative support (Ramaj, 2021, p. 3). Rehabilitation is the terminology favoured by the Palermo Protocol and the PACOTIP Act (DOJ, 2013, p. 37) to refer to the post-trafficking support offered by accredited organisations. Rehabilitation involves strengthening the trafficked individual's psycho-emotional and physical state due to the experience of a host of post-trafficking difficulties (Ramaj, 2021, p. 9). Within the counter-TIP sphere however there is a rejection of the word rehabilitation which suggests that the individual, who is a root cause of their vulnerabilities, needs a transformation, rather than the structural systems that they are embedded within (Diya, 2018, p. 142). Instead, a more commonly favoured term is "restoration" and "reintegration" which advocates, beyond provision of basic needs, for transformation of structural and gender inequalities which are at the root of vulnerabilities (Diya, 2018, p. 142). Reintegration additionally provides supportive services for psychological and emotional challenges following the traumatic experiences of TIP (Ramaj, 2021, p. 3). By ensuring the trafficked individuals are supported, it is argued that the likelihood of being re-trafficked is significantly reduced (Idemudia et al., 2021, p. 45).

In the context of HR, a two-fold process occurs, where restoration is first provided to trafficked individuals in their service before being supported through reintegration. It is believed that this process of restoration is necessary to bring about healing and hope which are crucial for supporting the process of reintegration (Hope Risen, 2018). Restoration includes a range of activities such as dance classes, group therapy and crafts (Hope Risen, 2018). Additionally, the trafficked individual is provided with the opportunity to further develop business, economic, and life skills with the assistance of trained professionals (Hope Risen, 2018). Following this process, and when believed to be ready, trafficked individuals are supported in the process of reintegration where they can practically apply what they have learnt and gained during the restoration process (Hope Risen, 2018). Where participants referred to the process of support provided by HR, the term restoration has been used. Where the participants referred to post-restoration support, the term reintegration has been used.

Sex Trafficking and the Commercial Sex Trade

Frequently referred to within TIP literature, although not synonymous, is "sex trafficking" and "sex work" or "prostitution". There are numerous ideologies, opinions and studies that concern the nature of sex work and ultimately sex trafficking. One such ideology

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operates on the stance of sex-positivism and states that sex work is a legitimate form of income generation that should be legalised (Albright & D'Adamo, 2017, p. 121). This ideology therefore calls for the decriminalisation and legitimacy of sex work to increase the protection of the health and human rights of sex workers.

On the other hand, the call for decriminalisation is believed by some as a metaphorical granting of permission for exploitation to take place and that ultimately there is no voluntary nature to sex work (Albright & D'Adamo, 2017, p. 122). As such this ideological stance views sex work as inherently exploitative and that the legitimacy of the work will further enhance vulnerabilities and structural inequalities. This abolitionist ideology has additionally been criticised by opposing ideologies, which argued that it is the criminalisation of sex work that ultimately increases the vulnerability of sex workers to be exploited (Albright & D'Adamo, 2017, p. 122). A significant consequence of this exploitation is sex trafficking.

Sex trafficking is derived from the human trafficking of individuals for sexual exploitation, wherein an individual is forced to perform a sexual act through force, fraud, or coercion (Gerassi, 2015b, p. 591; Reap, 2019, p. 184). It is important to note that although sex work is not considered as sex trafficking, overlaps in instances of exploitation and coercion are common (Gerassi, 2015b, p. 591). Often the involvement within the trade of sex operates on a spectrum in which personal agency, choice, circumstances, and manipulation can influence being trafficked (Albright & D'Adamo, 2017, p. 123). This was the view shared by the participants, who believed that sex trafficking often would originate from prostitution and voluntary work in brothels. When referencing the views and beliefs expressed by the participants, terms used by each were favoured. In instances where specific terminology is used in literature, such terms will be used. The term sex work will be used in instances where participants are not specific and where literature does not clearly state commercialisation of sex.

Traffickers and Pimps

Traffickers are defined as those who are involved in the trafficking process, taking on the roles of the recruiter, the seller, the harbourer, and the one who delivers victims of the crime to other persons in the chain of perpetrators (DOJ, 2013, p. 14). Pimps are described as individuals who typically scout vulnerable women and then manage and profit from these women by encouraging them to sell sexual services (Cedeno, 2012, p. 160). Interview participants at times referenced the words traffickers and “pimps” when describing the individuals who had entrapped and/or exploited the trafficked individuals. One participant only

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chose the word trafficker(s) when referring to those who were involved throughout the entire trafficking process. Two participants favoured the term pimp and at times used it synonymously with trafficker. Both participants referred to pimps as those individuals who entrap the women and who, most frequently are involved in the sex industry and sex trafficking sphere.

In this current study, the term trafficker will be used when referring to any individual who engages in the act of trafficking – this is in accordance with the definition outlined by the PACOTIP Act (DOJ, 2013, p. 1). The term pimp will only be referenced in instances where the interview participant elected to use the term in their interview responses or when the term is delineated by literature. This was done to maintain the consistency of terminology and to ensure that the operations of a pimp were recognised as exploitative. This was additionally done to highlight the nexus that often exists between sex work and sex trafficking.

Victims versus Survivors

The use of the terms victim and survivor is a common debate within the counter-TIP sphere and can be understood as the victim-survivor-paradox (Balgamwalla, 2016, p. 15; Papendick & Bohner, 2017, p. 4). The victim narrative portrays the individual as passive and devoid of any form of control over what criminal acts, they have experienced and who therefore requires rescuing (Balgamwalla, 2016, p. 15). Very often this paints a shameful picture where the individual is viewed as weak (Papendick & Bohner, 2017, p. 3; Swart, 2014, para. 21). A survivor on the other hand is often viewed from a position of strength whereby the individual contains the driving force within them that leads to their empowerment and recovery (Papendick & Bohner, 2017, p. 2; Swart, 2014, para. 18). Women are initially portrayed as victims but become survivors due to the outcome of their process, within the context of sexual violence and abuse, (Papendick & Bohner, 2017, p. 4).

Throughout the study, participants varied in their references to the trafficked individuals. The terms victims and survivors were most often used, often interchangeably. For the study, the terms used by interview participants were selected. As a researcher, it was difficult to align to one term and the choice to reject the use of either was made. In instances where reference to those who had been trafficked was required, the term “trafficked individual” was favoured. Although no engagement took place with these individuals whose files were analysed, it was felt it would be best to be unassuming of their own stance and personal view of their experience. The term “trafficked individual” remains unbiased, which prevents any erasure of their experience. An overview of the current study is provided next.

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Overview of the Current Study

Chapter Two focuses on defining TIP according to international and national legislation. A discussion on existing literature on the topic of human trafficking and counter-TIP initiatives is provided next. This enables the understanding and conceptualisation of how TIP exists within local contexts. This leads into a discussion on vulnerability as a concept and then into both individual and contextual vulnerability factors. These factors are discussed in depth to facilitate the understanding of how there exist a multitude of factors which can increase the vulnerability to be trafficked within South Africa.

Chapter Three consists of a discussion on the theoretical framework for the study. This is geared towards discussing and understanding the need for a systemic approach to understanding TIP vulnerabilities. This is achieved by expanding on the ecology of TIP and why it necessitates an ecological approach to conceptualising the crime, followed by defining systems theory, general systems theory, and then ecological systems theory which acts as the theoretical framework on which the study rests and operates.

Chapter Four focuses on the specific methodology used in the present study to answer the research question and achieve the study's aims. This is followed by a discussion as to why this is an appropriate approach for the study and then moves onto the exact sampling, collection, and analysis techniques used throughout. The chapter ends with a discussion on research quality and ethical considerations of the current study.

Chapter Five comprises of the presentation of findings from both data sets. The quantitative findings are presented first and are illustrated with the use of descriptive statistics that showcases the various frequencies of vulnerability factors. Following this the qualitative findings are presented according to key themes which are introduced with the use of a thematic map.

Chapter Six provides an integrated discussion with the theoretical framework in mind. The discussion will specifically focus on incorporating key systems terminology and highlights relevant literature in comparison to the current findings.

Chapter Seven, the final chapter of the study, provides a discussion on the conclusions and the limitations and recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Trafficking in persons (TIP), is a heinous crime which is happening daily and affecting countries around the world (CdeBaca & Sigmon, 2014, p. 261). TIP is an increasingly recognised global crisis and human rights violation that undermines the basic rights of the trafficked individual (Brown & Barron, 2018, p. 102; Chong & Clark, 2014, p. 123). However, the associated stigma and the clandestine nature of TIP makes it challenging to determine the exact number of persons involved in trafficking (Botha & Warria, 2020, p. 3). The low risk and highly lucrative nature of the crime has resulted in it becoming an exceedingly attractive industry, for both local and international perpetrators. As such, the nature of the crime has allowed for TIP for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation in mines, factories and other industries and other exploitations such as organ trafficking and domestic servitude. As a result, more people are now being exploited in forms such as modern slavery and TIP than during any other period of human history (Frankel, 2016, p. 1). The costs of TIP for the trafficked individuals are serious and devastating, resulting in both profound short and long-term implications (Botha & Warria, 2020, p. 4). This highlights the sheer magnitude of the crime and the need to combat its influence and reach. This chapter will define TIP according to current international legal tools and national legislation, so that an understanding of the crime and its complexities can be fostered. This will be followed by a further discussion of TIP within both the international and South African contexts. Thereafter, a discussion on vulnerability and TIP vulnerability factors will be provided, wherein both individual and contextual vulnerability factors will be conceptualised.

Defining Trafficking in Persons (TIP)

The first agreed upon legal definition of human trafficking was provided by the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, also known as the Palermo Protocol (OHCHR, 2000). The Palermo Protocol was adopted in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly, which led to the development of established international minimum standards to combat and effectively prosecute those charged with the crime (Kruger, 2016, p. 53). The Palermo Protocol, Article 3a, universally defines human trafficking according to three essential parts, namely (a) the act, (b) the method or means and (c) the purpose of the trafficking. This definition describes trafficking in terms of the *act* through recruitment and transportation, followed by the *means,* which the traffickers employ

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to enable the recruitment, which is usually through threats, abduction, force, or coercion. The final part describes the *purpose* of the trafficking, which is often for sexual or labour exploitation, for an intended profit (Kruger & Oosthuizen, 2011, p. 46; Mangu & Mbata, 2016, p. 15).

The protocol can be understood as a global treaty that has bound countries that have ratified the protocol to criminalise TIP and adopt domestic legislation and other measures to prevent and punish the crime and its participants who incite trafficking (Mangu & Mbata, 2016, p. 15). South Africa is one of many countries to have ratified the Palermo Protocol, committing themselves to criminalising trafficking and developing the necessary legislation to effectively deal with the industry (Pharoah, 2006, p. 1). South Africa signed the Palermo Protocol in December 2000 and ratified it in February of 2004, which required that government pass domestic legislation to meet these international obligations set forth by the protocol (Allais, 2013, p. 284). On the 28th of July 2013, the South African president assented to the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 (PACOTIP), which was operationalised on 9 August 2015 to address all forms of TIP (Department of Justice [DOJ] 2013, p. 1; Van der Watt, 2020, p. 60). The PACOTIP Act aimed to give effect to South Africa's commitment to international agreements concerning TIP in a manner that was mindful of the Palermo Protocol (DOJ, 2013, p. 2). Underlying the decision to push for the ratification of such legislation, was the assumption that TIP is a unique crime that cannot be effectively dealt with through current laws (Pharoah, 2006, p. 1). As such, the PACOTIP Act enabled the protection of trafficked individuals and the provision of necessary assistance whilst further enabling prosecutions and related punishment of identified perpetrators (Van der Watt, 2020, p. 60).

The identification and prosecution of perpetrators became much more attainable with the PACOTIP Act, as it provided a trafficking definition that moved beyond truncated descriptions (Van der Watt, 2018c, p. 3). Accordingly, Section 4 in chapter 2 of the PACOTIP Act defines trafficking in persons according to two components, firstly (1), the *act* which refers to any individual who either, within the borders of the Republic or across, transports another person by either selling, leasing, delivering, or recruiting, for the *purpose* of exploitation of any form or manner (DOJ, 2013, p. 14: 4(1)). The second component (2) of defining TIP also includes the *act* and the *purpose* aspects of the trafficking definition. It states that the adoption of a child through legal or illegal means or the concluding of a forced marriage with another, all for the purpose of exploitation is a TIP crime (DOJ, 2013, p. 14: 4(2)). The PACOTIP Act furthermore defines *means* to include methods such as deception, threat of harm, kidnapping, or abuse of vulnerability. The method of abusing vulnerability is elaborated to refer to the use

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of any abuse that would cause a person to believe that they have no choice but to submit to exploitation. This includes but is not limited to taking advantage of vulnerabilities of that person, be it disabilities, pregnancy, dependency on substances, social or economic circumstances and being a child, (DOJ, 2013, p. 8).

Children are particularly vulnerable to be exploited and trafficked, which coupled with the poor bureaucratic system response, results in continuous and growing abuse (Emser & Van der Watt, 2019, p. 93). Although the PACOTIP Act does not specifically reference "child trafficking" or "trafficking in children" it does account for the crime (Van der Watt, 2020, p. 60). A child is defined according to Article 3 (d) of the Palermo Protocol (OHCHR, 2000) and the PACOTIP Act (DOJ, 2013, p. 8) as any person who is under the age of 18 years. According to Article 3 (c) of the Palermo Protocol, trafficking of a child need only meet the act and purpose components of the definition (OHCHR, 2000). Similarly, although the PACOTIP Act does not specifically reference the act of trafficking children in Section 4(1), it does reference 'being a child' as a vulnerability which can be abused as a means of TIP by traffickers and other individuals (Van der Watt, 2020, p. 60).

Abuse of vulnerability is significant to the inner workings of TIP, as it is nuanced and specific to the individual that is exploited, thus requiring a specific understanding of how it works (George & Stanley, 2019, p. 396). Therefore, by understanding the vulnerabilities that an individual is embedded in, traffickers are often able to use a bait system that lures and /or deceives the individual for exploitation (Bello, 2015, p. 110; DiRienzo, 2018, p. 529). Despite the increasing efforts to combat TIP on a local scale, minimal prosecutions and convictions have been processed within countries like South Africa (Kruger, 2016, p. 53). On an international scale, TIP continues to remain an elusive phenomenon despite the increasing attention, understanding, and efforts placed on counter-TIP initiatives (Emser & Francis, 2017, p. 190). The following section will describe and discuss the extent of TIP within the international context.

TIP in the International Context

TIP is a global threat that extends to all corners of the world, infringing on the most basic human rights of those who have been trafficked (Chong & Clark, 2014, p. 123; Danailova-Trainor & Laczko, 2010, p. 38). TIP can continuously operate due to the development in perpetrators' innate understanding of a community's political, social, economic, and cultural landscape (Chong & Clark, 2014, p. 123). As such, TIP has developed into a global industry that recruits millions of people and generates an estimated turnover of

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$150 billion (USD) (ZAR 1,987 trillion) a year (APG, 2018, p. 9; Swart, 2012, p. 62); $99 billion (USD) (ZAR 1,311 trillion) from forced sexual exploitation and a further $51 billion (USD) (ZAR 675 billion) from forced labour exploitation (APG, 2018, p. 9). The clandestine nature of the crime makes it a difficult task to determine the exact numbers of those who have been trafficked (Chong & Clark, 2014, p. 124). Chong and Clark (2014, p. 124) highlighted conservative estimates of at least 2.5 million women, men, and children who were lured and attracted to opportunities and situations that result in their exploitation. According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (2017, p. 11), 3.8 million adults and 1 million children were forced into sexual exploitation in 2016 alone, where most trafficked individuals were women and girls. The ILO (2017, p. 9) further estimated that 16 million individuals were in forced labour for the private economy where the vast majority were men and boys.

Trafficked individuals can be exploited in many ways, including domestic servitude, forced labour, child labour, soldering, and organ trafficking (Reid, 2012, p. 258; Smit, 2011, p. 184). A significant focus of TIP is associated with the exploitation of women and minors in the sex industry for forced sexual services (Kruger & Oosthuizen, 2011, p. 50; Smit, 2011, p. 184). Sexual exploitation and sex trafficking usually take place in spaces removed from the public eye such as brothels, massage parlours and private residences catering to clients (MacInnis, 2013, p. 4). The trafficking of individuals for the purpose of labour exploitation is a lesser discussed, yet still widespread occurrence, where trafficked individuals, through multiple forms of coercion are supplied for a wide range of markets, often comprising of domestic, agricultural, mining, and fishing domains (Kruger & Oosthuizen, 2011, p. 50). Within these domains, however, low-wage labourers are vulnerable to and at a high risk of practices that exploit their basic human rights of safe working conditions and fair hiring practices (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 26), often placing them under debt bondage (DOJ, 2013, p. 8). Organ trafficking undertakes many forms, where typically the true nature of the commodity is disguised (Shelley, 2010, p. 15). The selling of one's organs for an intended profit is prohibited and as such the procedures of organ trafficking fall under the domain of the crime (Shelley, 2010, p. 15). Typically, an individual, unbeknownst to them, will be sourced for an affluent buyer of the organs which are then harvested in loosely regulated hospitals (Shelley, 2010, p. 16).

Exploitation is a key element of TIP (Chong & Clark, 2014, p. 125; Kruger & Oosthuizen, 2011, p. 49), as exploitation of trafficked individuals, through force, fraud or coercion, results in the desired profits (Reid, 2012, p. 258). Kruger and Oosthuizen (2011, p.

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49) explained that although exploitation occurs predominantly at the place of destination, it can also occur within the initial stages to being trafficked. This suggests that those who been trafficked, face an extensive and drawn-out process of destruction that can result in severe trauma (Curran et al., 2017, p. 82; Reid, 2012, p. 258). These individuals suffer extensive victimisation and torture, often resulting in severe psychological and medical issues (Shelley, 2010, p. 62). Should they resist, these individuals are threatened with further torture, increased debt bondage – the involuntary status that arises from a pledge by a person of their services – harm to their families or death (DOJ, 2013, p. 8; Shelley, 2010, p. 62). Research into TIP has revealed that the crime is multifaceted, complex, and often intersects with other organised crimes such as drug trafficking (Emser & Francis, 2017, p. 190). This makes it difficult to identify the crime as traffickers use a variety of schemes that can be overlooked if the crime is not truly grasped (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 2). The following section will describe and discuss in more detail the nature of TIP within the South African context and the nature of counter-TIP initiatives.

TIP in the South African Context

TIP is an actuality that is currently facing South Africa at a significantly growing rate, as it has been identified as a source, transit, and destination country (Deane, 2017, p. 43; Kruger, 2016, p. 54; United States Department of State, 2018, p. 390). Similarly, to the rest of the world, South Africa continues to grapple with the increasing growth and complexities of TIP (Emser & Francis, 2017, p. 190). This growth results from the perception that South Africa is the economic hub of Africa and, therefore, a highly profitable market for traffickers (Deane, 2017, p. 47). Despite this perception, and the multitude of research that strongly supports that TIP is an irrefutable and systemic phenomenon, reliable statistics are lacking (Kruger, 2016, p. 54; Van der Watt, 2020, p. 58). Unreliable statistics reinforce the lack of clarity that exists around TIP, especially regarding the magnitude and severity of its reach (Van der Watt, 2015, para. 5). Gallagher (2016, p. 2) supported this statement by arguing that weak TIP information, particularly as a starting point, is part of the problem of ineffective counter-TIP approaches. This has a significant impact on legal measures designed for prosecution of perpetrators, which may lack the much-needed comprehensiveness for effectively intervening in and prosecuting TIP (Kruger, 2016, p. 55). The status of counter-TIP within South Africa will be discussed next.

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Status of Counter-TIP in South Africa

The Walk Free Foundation (2018) produced the Global Slavery Index (GSI) which estimated that in South Africa alone, 155,000 trafficked individuals were subjected to forced exploitation. Gallagher (2014, p. 1) argued, however, that the statistics provided by the GSI require critical engagement as there have been inconsistent methodologies and application flaws used to gather the data. This brings into question the reliability of South African TIP data and statistics. Inaccurate or fabricated statistics has catastrophic implications for research rigour which, in turn undercounts the extent of TIP (Van der Watt, 2020, p. 59). This ultimately has an impact on the development and implementation of counter-TIP legislation and efforts (Van der Watt, 2020, p. 59). South Africa's ineffective counter-TIP approach is highlighted in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report (2021 TIP Report) which downgraded South Africa to a Tier 2 Watch List rating. This rating is used specifically for countries that do not fully meet the standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) but are making significant efforts to comply with the requirements set forth by the TVPA (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 52). In the case of South Africa, the downgrade was due to decreased efforts in counter-TIP initiatives, training, and prosecution of perpetrators (United States Department of State, 2021, p. 67). To fully achieve the TVPA requirements and those set forth by the PACOTIP Act, significant expenditure and other forms of support are to be supplied by the government and its relevant institutions towards combating TIP (Gallagher, 2016, p. 1; Bello, 2019, p. 2). However, despite allocated resources and counter-TIP initiatives, South Africa has not yet seen the desired reduction in cases of TIP (Bello, 2019, p. 2). This is further supported by the 2021 TIP Report rating, which suggests that the number of trafficked individuals has increased significantly within South Africa and that the government has failed to provide evidence of counter-TIP efforts as compared with the previous year (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 36).

Ineffective counter-TIP initiatives raise concerns about South Africa's efforts and capacity to combat TIP within the country (Bello, 2019, p. 2). These concerns illuminate factors such as corruption, which have been cited as significant in the hindrance of combating TIP, as it is often present throughout the entire trafficking process (DiRienzo, 2018, p. 527). Corruption is a facilitator to the crime as it lessens counter-TIP legislation and initiative compliance as legal and bureaucratic officials often receive bribes that ultimately compromise prosecution (DiRienzo, 2018, p. 529). Compromised prosecution advertently results in inaccurate and misleading data regarding the current state of TIP within South Africa (Gallagher, 2016, p. 1).

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As such, increased training and repercussions are still needed for the South African Police Services (SAPS) as there still exists significant concerns regarding the complicity of officials in TIP crimes (United States Department of State, 2020a, p. 446). The unlawful involvement of law officials in TIP results in the hesitation of trafficked individuals in revealing their identity and providing cooperation, and evidence against their perpetrators, as very often their rights are disregarded (Gallagher, 2016, p. 2). Cooperation on the part of the trafficked individual is seen as vital to the process of combating TIP as they contain the bulk of evidence needed to prosecute the perpetrators (Dandurand, 2017, p. 4). However, very often the fear of retaliation and identification persuades many of those who have been trafficked to remain silent (Hamid, 2019, p. 7), thus contributing to the perplexing and complex nature of TIP. The status of TIP within South Africa will be discussed next.

Status of TIP in South Africa

There exist four major trafficking flows in South Africa: Trafficking to South Africa from outside of Africa; trafficking to South Africa from within the borders of Africa; trafficking within the borders of South Africa, and lastly the use of South Africa as a transit point to other destinations (Allias et al., 2010, p. xiii; Deane, 2017, p. 48). Based on profitable conditions, trafficked individuals are lured with the promises of lucrative jobs, education, or even marriage, only to be trafficked and exploited (Deane, 2017, p. 47). The TIP market within South Africa has lured multi-national perpetrators and syndicates. This typically includes Nigerian and Somalian syndicates that also control various drug smuggling operations that typically overlap with many TIP operations (Van der Watt, 2018b, p. 8). These perpetrators traffic both domestic and foreign nationals from various neighbouring countries such as Mozambique, Nigeria, and Malawi, as well as countries from Eastern Europe and Asia (Deane, 2017, p. 47; United States Department of State, 2019, p. 426). Frankel (2016, p. 8) highlighted that trafficked individuals are very often influenced by the desire to escape from violent and conflictual neighbouring communities and are further driven by the pursuit of financial opportunities. These desires, however, are often met with physical abuse, sexual violence, and exploitation (Frankel, 2016, p. 8). Traffickers typically also lure and recruit these individuals from low socio-economic rural areas within South Arica to urban areas such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Bloemfontein (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 428), where they are forced into sex and labour trafficking, and domestic servitude.

Sex trafficking is typically facilitated by Nigerian syndicates that dominate several South African provinces (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 428; Van der Watt &

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Kruger, 2017, p. 71). It has been found that these traffickers typically made use of forced substance abuse and the Nigerian spiritual practice of Juju to coerce and control trafficked individuals through instilling fear (Van der Watt & Kruger, 2017, p. 71). Despite the prominence of sex trafficking within South Africa, labour trafficking, although under-represented, has increased in severity and prominence (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 428; Van der Watt, 2018b, p. 7). Within South Africa, traffickers often exploit young migrant workers from neighbouring countries for labour trafficking on farms, fishing vessels, mining, and for construction (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 428; Van der Watt, 2018b, p. 7). The rate of injury and accidents among trafficked labourers is exceedingly high due to the dangerous working conditions they are forced into and secondary exhaustion (Shelley, 2010. P. 75).

The costs of TIP are not only experienced on an individual level but also on the community and global level (Shelley, 2010, p. 59). As such, not only does TIP significantly affect trafficked individuals and result in likely physical and psychological alterations, but it also has ramifications for the political and social structures on which a society functions (Shelley, 2010, p. 60). As a result, over the past two decades, governments, NGOS, academics, international organisations and trafficked individuals spanning the globe have dedicated time and effort into creating a more accurate picture of TIP, opting to reject narrow understandings, and focusing on the complexities of the crime, that encompasses the full range of exploitation and vulnerability (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 2). Vulnerability factors are discussed and expanded on in the following section.

Vulnerability Factors

According to Lutya (2012, p. 9), vulnerability can be understood as the factors that occur in and around an individual's life that can result in their victimisation through abuse and exploitation. Notably, the PACOTIP Act acknowledges that abuse of vulnerabilities takes place and forms part of a variety of trafficking means (DOJ, 2013, p. 8). Understanding this element of the PACOTIP Act's definition is crucial if the nature of TIP and how it manifests is to be understood realistically (Van der Watt, 2018b, p. 11). This is important as a poor understanding of the role of vulnerabilities is detrimental to the promoting of an effective response to the crime (Van der Watt, 2018b, p. 11). Rocha-Jimenez et al. (2018, p. 12) echoed this by stating that the individual and contextual factors that make one vulnerable, intertwine to create and facilitate a complex situation where TIP can flourish, and traffickers can evade prosecution. By understanding these elements as both individual and contextual factors, it can be showcased

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that many of these factors are not discreet and that the systemic interactions that take place between all the factors create a complex context (Van der Watt & Van der Westhuizen, 2017, p. 218). These interactions are interlinked in a manner that suggests that one cannot view each factor in isolation, but rather as a part of a multi-levelled system, highlighting the need to understand trafficking from all levels, generating a more holistic response to the crime (van der Westhuizen, 2015, p. 352). A holistic view of a phenomenon such as TIP enables the pursuit of evidence-based and well-informed responses to TIP that can be continually fostered (Van der Watt, 2018b, p. 11). The following section is a discussion of the individual and contextual factors that influence an individual's vulnerability to be trafficked.

Individual Vulnerability Factors

Individual vulnerability factors are those personal factors which make an individual more susceptible to exploitation as viewed by traffickers (Hartmann, 2018, para.4; Jimenez et al., 2015, p. 81). These opportunistic factors are very often identified by traffickers as they are well equipped to recognise these factors as an element of vulnerability for certain individuals The following will be a discussion of the various vulnerability factors that occur at an individual level, which traffickers use to exploit within local communities (Litam et al., 2021, p. 104).

Personal Lifestyle. Many South African women and young girls spend their time in establishments such as bars, nightclubs and shebeens where the abuse of substances, risky sexual behaviours and criminal activities dominate the scene (Lutya, 2012, p. 9). Often these women and young girls are vulnerable, facing personal struggles and deprivation (Lutya, 2012, p. 11). These personal lifestyle choices coupled with a lack of maturity and the absence of a guardian figure very often place these individuals within proximity of traffickers and make them easier targets for recruitment (Lutya, 2012, p. 9). In many instances, the trafficker may be someone that the vulnerable individual trusts and thus the shared relationship between the two allows them to seek personal and economic incentives (Lutya, 2012, p. 11). This shared relationship between the vulnerable individual and trafficker enables them to communicate, interact, and associate regularly. By virtue, these relationships cannot always be deemed as inappropriate as very often a level of trust or familiarity has been previously established. As such, whether actively or passively, trafficked individuals contribute to the formulation of the relationship (Lutya, 2012, p. 10).

This is often the case in instances of the "blesser and blessee" phenomenon whereby older, wealthier men entice women with monetary and gift exchanges for sexual favours

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(Mampane, 2018, p. 1). Although this can be viewed as transactional sex, which is further explored under the commercial sex section, it is often maintained by some that this is not the case (Mampane, 2018, p. 2). Rather, many of these young women maintain that this is a lifestyle which they have consensually sought out, pursued, and carried forth within a romantic context rather than a client-based one (Mampane, 2018, p. 2). As such, many of these young women operate based on trust and connection with these men. However, many traffickers pose as "blessers" and use the relationship built up as their means to lure these young women into the trafficking sphere, and then trapping them with drugs and debt bondage (Harrisberg, 2017, para. 7).

Migration. Many trafficked individuals are, in fact, international migrants whose desire to migrate was often influenced by a lack of education, vocational and employment opportunities, as well as by a desire to alleviate poverty (Litam et al., 2021, p. 105). Migration is further sought out in instances where individuals are fleeing from political instability and strife, abuse, and even war (David et al., 2019, p. 10; Walker & Galvin, 2018, p. 3). Within South Africa, migrants consist mostly of refugees, those seeking asylum, and labour seeking migrants who enter South Africa from neighbouring countries (Vanyoro, 2019, p. 124). South Africa in particular, is often sought after due to the perceived improvement of lifestyle and well-being that rests on South Africa having the second largest economy in Africa (Kanayo et., 2019, p. 219). When viewed in comparison to the rest of Southern Africa, South Africa presents with good social services and strong economic development (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015, p. 30; Kanayo et al., 2019, p. 229). However, despite the opportunistic lure of South Africa, migrants and refugees are often among the most vulnerable of the population often experiencing a disruption of their rights and encountering lengthy and costly bureaucratic processes necessary for acquiring legal documentation (Kanayo et al., 2019, p. 231). Many of these individuals go through illegitimate channels of movement and employment that are often unmonitored and unregulated, which unknowingly exposes them to traffickers who view their vulnerability status as an opportunity for exploitation (David et al., 2019, p. 10).

Furthermore, migration can also pose a risk as some individuals may not speak the language of their destination country or have limited literacy skills that would have enabled them to understand their rights and obtain the support they seek (Schwarz et al., 2019, p. 125). These vulnerable migrants very often face the risk of hostility from locals that could potentially escalate into violent xenophobic attacks (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015, p. 30). Xenophobia in the context of TIP is a deadly combination, as very often migrants who have become trafficked are arrested, detained, and very often returned to their home countries rather than protected and

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assisted (OHCHR, 2021, para. 2). These individuals frequently have their credibility scrutinised, which ensures that the cycle of trafficking and re-trafficking continues as they're often not taken seriously (OHCHR, 2021, para. 5). This process gives light to the connection that exists between migration and TIP, which was seen by Vanyoro (2019, p. 124) as a sensitive reality for many South African migrants.

Disability. It has been argued by researchers such as Reid (2018, p. 3) that when considering the most vulnerable of the population, emphasis should be placed on those with disabilities, and, on children and adolescents with disabilities. Disability, as defined according to the online version of the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), can be considered as an umbrella term that encompasses any "illness, injury or condition that makes it difficult to do anything". When considering the role of disabilities, it should be noted that individuals have an elevated risk for exploitation and should be considered extremely vulnerable to multiple forms of crime and exploitation (Reid, 2018, p. 3). This vulnerability stems from the circumstances that many disabled persons find themselves in, such as dependency on a caregiver, exposure to social stigma and isolation, and reliance on assistive communication technology (Combrinck, 2017, p. 59; Shoup, 2020, para. 9). Reid (2018, p. 5) echoed this argument by stating that intellectual disabilities frequently impair the individuals in the conceptual, social, and practical domain which can result in functional limitations. Reid (2018, p. 5) expanded on limitations to include reduced capacity for self-care, receptive and expressive communication, and economic abilities. Within South Africa particularly, it is argued that women with disabilities tend to experience greater rates of violence and exploitation (Combrinck, 2017, p. 60) for many of the same reasons. This was seen in the conviction of two women in 2017 for among many things, the trafficking of two mentally challenged women who were abducted and trafficked for sexual exploitation (SANews, 2018, para. 7; van der Watt, 2020, p. 71).

Prior History of Abuse. Living in an environment with family dysfunction that is characterised by interpersonal violence and conflict is believed to place the individual at an increased risk of exploitation (Hornor, 2015, p. 89). In the case of a child, abuse and mistreatment not only increases risk for exploitation but also increases the development for a low self-esteem and yearning for affection which can result in poor development of boundaries (Hornor, 2015, p. 90). These boundaries are often seen as permeable by traffickers and thus increases the risk for interactions with such traffickers who can then recruit these individuals (Bayer, 2021, para. 2; Hornor, 2015, p. 90; Lloyd, 2015, p. 1). Franchino-Olsen (2021, p. 106) and Jimenez et al. (2015, p. 81) argued that the presence of maltreatment and especially neglect is a common risk factor in the increasing of vulnerabilities as it often co-occurs with substance

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abuse and high-risk relationships. The authors (Franchino-Olsen, 2021, p. 106; Jimenez et al., 2015, p. 81) further argued that underlying these behaviours is a reduced ability to employ coping strategies which then increases susceptibility for involvement with traffickers. This susceptibility is heightened by the knowledge that traffickers appear to have about the concept of abuse, and in particular childhood abuse, whereby it is believed that the previous abuser has already done the significant part of the work for traffickers (Bayer, 2021, para. 2). The desire for an escape from these current situations of abuse and a longing for acceptance and affection very often results in, through the process of exploitation, a continuation of the abuse cycle through aggression, threats and even violence towards the trafficked individual and their family members (Hornor, 2015, p. 90). Fedina et al. (2016, p. 5) further highlighted that running away from home to escape the abusive situation increases the likelihood of vulnerable youth to be recruited. Van der Watt (2018a, p. 100) referred to this as a voluntary incident of missing, whereby a child runs away from home. This form of missing which relates to the runaway vulnerability, is typically associated with high rates of human trafficking and sexual and labour exploitation (van der Watt, 2018a, p. 100).

Traffickers can recruit those in search of affection and acceptance through methods that constitute as acts of conditioning to the trafficking life which creates intensive contact with the trafficker. Hornor (2015, p. 90) argued that this creates what is known as a trauma bond, which creates a psychological restraint whereby the trafficked individual is afraid of their trafficker but, at the same time, grateful to them for giving them a chance to live and escape their previous circumstances. Raghavan & Doychak (2015, p. 584) further argued that this can be considered as a traumatic entrapment and that this is born out of complex interactions of power imbalances, abuse, and violence. As is common with personal trauma, Raghavan and Doychak (2015, p. 584) argued that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms are common for the trafficked individuals who may experience flashbacks of the abuse, and intrusive and distressing memories. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for trafficked individuals to experience the phenomenon of Stockholm Syndrome towards their trafficker wherein they begin to relate to the individual and even defend them (Litam, 2017, p. 45).

The experience of abuse and maltreatment as a precursor for vulnerability to be trafficked is not only common in children during their childhood, but also for those in relationships that experience intimate partner abuse and domestic violence. Rocha-Jimenez et al. (2018, p. 2) and Malangone and Crank (2015, p 1) argued that woman who have been exposed to vulnerabilities such as gender-based violence are more at risk to be sexually exploited, as very often they are still romantically involved with their abuser turned trafficker.

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It is such violence and abuse that is used as a tool that can force and coerce the partner for exploitative purposes (Rocha-Jimenez et al., 2018, p. 8).

Pregnancy. According to Ross Counselling (2018, para. 9), a recent phenomenon exists where traffickers are increasingly targeting pregnant women to gain access to their infants for exploitation. This phenomenon of infant commodification has become increasingly common in African countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa (Alabi, 2018, p. 2; Makinde, 2016, p. 434; Nwaka & Odoemene, 2019, p. 1). Despite its prevalence, there appears to be limited information on the origin of the crime as it holds no legal definition yet (Alichie, 2015, p. 37). According to Spruce (2017), pregnant women are typically lured with the promise of a substantial payment should they give up their unborn child or are held captive until the birth of their newborn who is forcefully removed from their care ('Baby Factories' in Nigeria, para. 1). This phenomenon even extends to the nonconsenting fertilisation of young women and adolescent girls to farm and harvest babies for profit (Alabi, 2018, p. 1; Makinde, 2016, p. 434). Typically, the unborn child, who is considered as an extremely vulnerable person, is traded from the moment of conception, and exploited for a financial gain from their first few days after birth (Alichie, 2015, p. 29). Newborns, obtained through this process are typically sold for the purpose of adoption to desperate parents, trafficked for eventual sexual or labour purposes, or for ritual or organ harvesting practices (Nwaka & Odoemene, 2019, p. 1).

Being a Child. Within almost all the discussed individual vulnerability factors, being a child has been referenced throughout as a factor that increases vulnerability. This brings to attention the concern regarding the vulnerability of children with regards to TIP, whereby they are often the most silent of trafficked individuals and most excluded, despite numerous protection laws (Emser & Van der Watt, 2019, p. 89). This silence is argued to be pervasive and is clearly seen in the undocumented and underreported instances of child abuse and exploitation (Emser & Van der Watt, 2019, p. 89). The issue with this as argued by Emser and Van der Watt (2019, p. 91), is that children, who make up a large portion of vulnerable individuals in South Africa, rely almost exclusively on others for their nurturance and protective needs, as well as for access to their human rights. In the case of TIP, Warria (2016, p. 83) echoed those children who were trafficked, formed part of the already vulnerable population of those children who rely almost exclusively on others. According to Warria (2016, p. 83), child trafficking has significant impacts on the well-being of children as it infringes on the fundamental rights of the child. Invariably, due to the silence and stigma that circulates around the exploitation of children, Wood (2020, p. 2) argued that accurate statistics pertaining

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to child trafficking is scant and often misrepresented. Wood (2020, p. 2) further expressed their concern that this has a consequential impact on help-seeking behaviours which distances children from any recognition and support, and instead closer to exploitation.

According to Warria (2020, p. 47) and Wood (2020, p. 1), children are exploited for a variety of purposes that are often informed by their gender, developmental age or according to specifications set by the client. The purposes set forth for trafficked children is often for sexual, labour, and domestic services (Mabaso & Maluleke, 2017, p. 74; Warria, 2020, p. 47). In countries such as the United States of America, many of the trafficked children are exploited for the purposes of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) which is the commercialisation of child sexual abuse through bought, sold, or traded sexual services (Hornor, 2015, p. 88). DMST as elaborated by Hornor (2015, p. 88) further extends to the use of children for prostitution, escort services for influential clients, and pornography and other sexual material. Pornography and sexual material that is sold, is more aptly termed Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) which exists as a form of exploitation of children (Broadhurst, 2019, p. 313). This type of exploitation produces material made up of the sexual grooming, solicitation, abuse, and extortion of children to be distributed via the internet and to an online environment where it is then consumed and made possession of (Broadhurst, 2019, p 313). Wood (2020, p. 1) defined the exploitation of children through child trafficking in the United Kingdom as a form of modern slavery. These children who are trafficked for sexual purposes may be recognised as victims of child sexual exploitation (Wood, 2020, p. 1). Van der Watt (2020, p. 58) even goes as far as to state that statistics do not exist due to the lack of rigorous data; however, despite this, the argument remained that children are trafficked and exploited to a significant degree, for a variety of purposes. Much of the exploitation appears to happen unbeknownst to the child who is trafficked within the shadows of society and often far removed from any intervention (Franchino-Olsen, 2021, p. 100). This is often due to the process of grooming, where the perpetrator attempts to create a dynamic that centres around secrecy, isolation and ultimately complicity on the part of the child and in a manner that mimics a typical child-adult relationship (Bennett & O'Donohue, 2020, p. 133). The development of this child-adult relationship of trust and connection then allows for successful grooming, from where abuse or exploitation can take place without other adults noticing or intervening (Bennett & O'Donohue, 2020, p. 134).

As such, within South Africa, TIP appears to challenge and undermine The Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005) which undertakes the criminalisation of trafficking children (Mabaso & Maluleke, 2017, p. 76). However, despite the implementation of numerous and sweeping child legislation and protective laws such as the Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005), Emser and Van der

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Watt (2019, p. 91) argued that the extent of such is felt minimally. Additionally, children still experience exploitation and violence on a disproportionate level that is inadequately addressed (Emser and Van der Watt, 2019, p. 91). Warria (2018, p. 82) further argued that the Children's Act (2005) in particular, fails to prioritise the identification of trafficked children which puts trafficked children and children at a greater risk for any form of exploitation. This is argued to be possible as failure to correctly identify a trafficked case is the failure to identify the unique context of which the child was trafficked in, making it difficult to intervene at any support level.

Re-Trafficking of Trafficked Individual(s). The phenomenon of re-trafficking of a previously trafficked individual is another vulnerability factor. This means that there are numerous reasons that contribute to the occurrence of re-trafficking with many of them being the same as that which contributes to being trafficked initially. As such for prevention strategies to be effective, to reduce the risk of re-trafficking, empowerment and long-term support of trafficked individuals is necessary (Sereni & Baker, 2018, p. 13). Once leaving places of safety or shelters, if trafficked individuals do not receive the support that is needed, they very often can regress and find themselves once more in the same position of vulnerability that was previously exploited (Ramaj, 2021, p. 17). Many women who have been in sex trafficking have been known to present with Stockholm Syndrome which makes it difficult for them to testify against their traffickers and ultimately keeps them bonded to these perpetrators (Karan & Hansen, 2018, p. 1). In these instances, the women often find their way back into situations with the traffickers.

Substance Abuse. A substance can be understood as any psychoactive compound that alters a person's state of being, whether it be their mood or their cognitive functioning and has the potential to cause harm (McLellan, 2017, p. 113). The potential for harm very often manifests in incidences where the substance is consumed at a higher dose or during inappropriate situations which is seen as substance misuse (McLellan, 2017, p. 114). However, when these substances are consumed for a prolonged period, often repeatedly, at a higher dose, it develops into an addiction or into the lesser used term, substance use disorder (McLellan, 2017, p. 114). The terms addiction and substance use disorder refer to the condition wherein an individual's body and brain are now chemically dependent on the substance of choice (United States Department of State, 2020b, para. 2). Research into substance abuse and trafficking suggests a complex relationship wherein substances can exacerbate an individual's vulnerability (Stoklosa et al., 2017, p. 25). Substance abuse and addiction is thus fast becoming a tool in which traffickers can recruit, exploit, and control trafficked individuals, through the

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promise of more or unlimited supply to substances (Eastwood-Paticchio, n.d, para. 5). According to Stoklosa et al. (2017, p. 26) traffickers even go as far as to recruit individuals from substance use disorder treatment facilities. The Recovery Village (2019) further adds that once recruited, it often becomes more bearable for trafficked individuals to remain under the influence of substances to endure the suffering that comes with TIP. By doing so, trafficked individuals can continue numbing their emotional and physical pain which, in turn, creates a continuous cycle of addiction and dependence (Stoklosa et al., 2017, p. 26).

It is evident from the above discussion that the presence of individual vulnerability factors significantly increases the susceptibility to be trafficked. An individual's vulnerability is further influenced by the presence of contextual factors that are specific to the individual's circumstances. This significantly complicates the process as contextual factors very often rest on a specific historical, geographical, and cultural context and can be understood by traffickers who are able to use the individual's unique local context to tailor their exploitation (Gleason et al., 2016, p. 4).

Contextual Vulnerability Factors

According to the PACOTIP Act, social and economic circumstances are considered factors that can increase the vulnerabilities of an individual to be trafficked (DOJ, 2013, p. 8). Factors such as socio-economic struggles, globalisation, and supply and demand factors as contextual factors that increase susceptibility to be recruited and exploited (Delport et al., 2007). Research conducted by Jimenez et al. (2015, p. 81) suggested that factors such as poverty and unemployment additionally contribute to the trafficking process of women and children, who are thus vulnerable and susceptible to being recruited and exploited. These factors are argued by Weatherburn et al. (2015, p. 7) to be complex factors that are rooted in the local conditions of a specific country or community. Schwarz et al. (2019, p. 119) furthered this argument by adding that the interaction that takes place between all these complex factors is important in understanding the context of exploitation. The following will, therefore, be a discussion on the various vulnerability factors that occur at a contextual level.

Socio-Economic Status. TIP is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is influenced significantly by the socio-economic status of communities, whereby the socio-economic challenges a person faces can increase their vulnerability (Bermudez, 2008, p. 12). Within a country like South Africa, there are significant challenges when it comes to economic disparities (Bermudez, 2008, p. 12). This is especially in the case of economics which Bermudez (2008, p. 12) argued as essential to the process of trafficking. Those who are of a

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lower socio-economic status are often in a desperate search for employment opportunities that will afford them enough financial security to support themselves and their families. By doing so, however, they run the risk of overlooking the potential dangers of a suspicious offer (Bermudez, 2008, p. 12). As Lutya (2009, p. 69) explained, the context of socio-economic vulnerabilities can then be used to lure potential persons deceitfully and sometimes forcibly into an exploitative industry. Lutya (2009, p. 73) elaborated on socio-economic challenges as those of poverty and unemployment.

Poverty is a multi-faceted concept that is inclusive of not only economic indicators but also political, social, and cultural indicators (Sebake (2017, p. 1; Weatherburn et al., 2015, p. 25). Moreover, these are indicators that pertain to the ill-being of a particular community, that furthermore can provide a sense of context to an individual's life (Weatherburn et al., 2015, p. 25). Sebake (2017, p. 1) furthermore argued that poverty exists beyond the simplistic monetary conceptualisation that is typically used when discussing poverty. They (Sebake, 2017, p. 1) instead stated that it is important to understand and explore poverty from the angle of both the material elements and the non-material elements. Weatherburn et al. (2015, p. 25) elaborated on the indicators of poverty to be defined as the absence of, due to the undermining of the basic right to work for an income, having access to basic health necessities and having the freedom of expression and association.

In many situations, the consideration of poverty is used to contextualise why parents are lured to sell their children to traffickers, as they cannot provide for the basic needs of their families and are coerced into the act to escape debt and poverty (Deane, 2017, p. 47; Rao & Presenti, 2012, p. 238). It is not uncommon for families who are impacted by poverty to have members migrate in search of work and economic prosperity. Van Reisen et al. (2019, p. 67) further argued that the link that co-exists between poverty and migration is extensive and runs deep within many African countries such as South Africa. Lutya (2009, p. 68) highlighted that many women and young girls growing up in homes with limited employment opportunities find themselves at risk of being easy targets for traffickers. Schwarz et al. (2019, p. 119) highlighted that not every individual who is impacted by poverty will be trafficked, but that rather, poverty indicators amplify systemic vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the link between poverty and trafficking should be investigated as the potential for exacerbation of risk exists, especially when interacting with other vulnerability factors (Schwarz et al., 2019, p. 122). As such, to explore and understand poverty in South Africa is to recognise the role of cultural influences, power dynamics and social and economic forces that contribute to the context of poverty. This is important as these are factors that exist beyond the influence of the individual,

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which additionally supports the idea that individuals can become more vulnerable due to the contexts they live within (Weatherburn et al., 2015, p. 25).

Inequality. Barner et al. (2014, p. 148) suggested that the concept of equality and therefore inequality have always been significant elements within society and their communities. Blazek et al. (2019, p. 64) argued that attention should be shifted to viewing TIP from a relational point of inequality as typically the role of inequalities is downplayed or even overlooked. Often used interchangeably, although not synonymous with inequality is the concept of inequity. Global Health Europe (2009, para.1) referred to inequity as the avoidable difference in the allocation of resources and services to a specific group, which is deemed as unfair. This distribution or allocation of resources is often because of ineffective governance, corruption, or cultural and religious exclusion. Inequality is viewed as the unfair distribution of resources due to factors such as the lack of actual resources (Global Health Europe, 2009, para. 1). Both concepts have existed within human civilisation for a very long time and are aspects of society that TIP continues to exist on (Barner et al., 2014, p. 148). Inequality can have an impact on various systemic levels within a community (Jakobsson, 2018, p. 5). On an individual level, inequality can lead to the individual becoming more vulnerable to mental and physical illness, violence, and homelessness (Jakobson, 2018, p. 5). These individuals are often confronted by socio-economic equality challenges such as unemployment and poverty (Lutya, 2012, p. 10). This, coupled with inequalities in education, can make it significantly more difficult for an individual to enter the labour field (Jakobsson, 2018, p. 5). Faced with such challenges, individuals are often more vulnerable to be trafficked, as they may accept falsified employment opportunities of higher wages and better working conditions that could release them from their current context (Deane, 2017, p. 47).

Gender inequality is an additional factor that is significant and relevant within the context of TIP (Weatherburn et al., 2015, p. 29) gender. It is argued that women become particularly vulnerable to TIP due to entrenched positions of power held by men (Weatherburn et al., 2015, p. 29). These entrenched positions of power often stem from dominant, socially classified statuses of men and women that often results in a hierarchical relationship between the two. In South Africa, many cultures often promote toxic patriarchy which submits women (Akala, 2018, p. 231). This can be observed in ownership and control of monetary resources, in political and cultural participation and employment opportunities (Gacinya, 2020, p. 71). Weatherburn (2019, p. 30) argued that many of these women subjected to gender inequalities are vulnerable to be trafficked as they are attracted to or lured into the promise of economic prosperity and guided by the desire for personal freedom to escape violent or patriarchal

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settings. Similarly, transgender women are vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to violence within their personal circles that results in significant exclusion and isolation, as well as the lack of structural and legal protection that can stem from discrimination (Martinez & Kelle, 2013, p. 1; Zweynert, 2017, para. 1). It has been argued by Allais (2013, p. 44) that young boys and men can be seen as the "profile less considered" as research predominately focuses on sexual exploitation of young girls and women. They (Allais, 2013, p. 44) explained that sexual exploitation tends to be more visible and thus more reported whereas the exploitative nature of labour trafficking for men is underreported. As such, little is known about the trafficking of men for labour in the construction and agriculture sectors within South Africa is underreported (Allais, 2013, p. 45).

Commercial Sex Trade. In South Africa, sex work and the trade of sex is criminalised under the Sexual Offences Act 23 of 1957, extending to all activities pertaining to the selling and buying of sex, including the use of brothels and pimping (Walker & Oliveira, 2015, p. 129). The Act further defines sex work as the act of monetary exchange for sexual acts for food, accommodation, child rearing and other lifestyle costs (Walker & Oliveira, 2015, p. 138. The "blesser and blessee" phenomenon has become more prominent within the sex trade sphere, where controversies exist around whether there exists a transactional element to the practice (Moodley& Ebrahim, 2019, p. 22). Researchers such as Mampane (2018, p. 2) argued that the blesser and blessee phenomenon is not synonymous with sex work or the trade of sex, as very often the young women would view the older men as their boyfriends and that their relationship exists as a romantic one. However, it is acknowledged that very often, in instances where these women maintain the act of engaging in such a phenomenon to sustain their livelihoods, the chances of transitioning to sex work are a lot stronger (Mampane, 2018, p. 2).

Lutya (2009, p. 63) argued for the importance of drawing a distinction between voluntary sex work and sex trafficking, for example when a young woman voluntarily engages in sex work but has a boyfriend who manages and controls her earnings, she has been exploited (Lutya, 2009, p. 63). This distinction is often blurred and increases the risk for conflation of sex work and TIP (Walker & Oliveira, 2015, p. 129). Van der Watt (2020, p. 61) argued, however, that sex work and TIP cannot be conflated as the legal definitions differ, however neither element purely exists on its own and that they interact and inform each other. Thus, it is still important to explore the vulnerabilities that exist around sex work, rather than negate such as it is so often linked and interacting within the broader sphere of TIP.

Many women engage in voluntary sex work to create their own financial freedom and prosperity and believe it to be a viable option (Yingwana et al., 2019, p. 77). Despite this, the

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act of sex work is often criminalised which may increase vulnerabilities to be trafficked due to the intersection of multiple other vulnerabilities such as inaccessibility of healthcare and police brutality (Walker & Oliveira, 2015, p. 130). These conditions exacerbate the vulnerability to be recruited or coerced by traffickers (Yingwana et al., 2019, p. 89). This occurs within South Africa whereby traffickers will go into brothels to recruit and exploit sex workers (Rondganger, 2021, para. 5). Walker and Oliveira (2015, p. 130) argued that migrant women who sell their sexual services within the borders of South Africa are at an increased risk for exploitation and abuse. The key element of sex work is that those selling their services maintain their voluntary status; however, there is a significant concern regarding the commercialisation of child sex. Van der Watt (2020, p. 61) mentioned that the Sexual Offences Act 32 of 2007 stipulates that a child can consent to sexual acts in some cases; however, when there is a transaction or monetary exchange, as is in sex work, the child is seen as being exploited.

Traditional and Cultural Practices. In South Africa, traditional practices and beliefs are often valued and adhered to (Delport et al., 2007, p. 37). Often the origins of such beliefs are rooted in the need to survive, yet this in its own may be quite damaging and harmful as they can create a climate in which TIP can thrive (Deane, 2017, p. 47). The misconception and abuse of many of these beliefs can result in exploitation and abuse that often go uncharged, as authorities lack the knowledge that these practices relate to TIP (Msuya, 2017, p. 1). This specifically relates to instances of early marriage, which often takes place in instances where adolescent girls are seen as an economic burden in a family with a lower socio-economic status. The adolescent girl is often offered to an older man for marriage as a survival strategy (Delport et al., 2007, p. 37). The practice is also commonly accompanied by the more traditional custom of exchanging a dowry or bridal price. This is a key incentive for some families and thus creates a space for marrying off adolescent girls to older men (Msuya, 2017, p. 18). Traffickers, often posing under the guise of potential husbands, use this exchange practice as a financial advantage for these desperate parents (Msuya, 2017, p. 18). In instances where it is difficult to find adolescent girls for traditional marriage older men may turn to more drastic methods of obtaining a bride (Msuya, 2017, p. 18). Thus, there may be an increased risk of a link developing between trafficking and early marriages, as families are often not aware of the exploitation that awaits their daughters (Msuya, 2017, p. 18).

This is like the traditional amaXhosa custom of ukuthwala where adolescent girls are voluntarily “abducted” with the intention of forcing their family into a customary marriage negotiation (Smit, 2017, p. 56). It is important to note that seduction of the adolescent girl is against traditional custom, and she is instead placed into the care of other women (Mwambene

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& Sloth-Nielsen, 2011, p. 6). However, according to Mwambene and Sloth-Nielsen (2011, p. 5) ukuthwala in its current form has taken on new dimensions whereby the practice takes place without the adolescent girl's consent and results in the adolescent girl being forcibly married to older men, being kidnapped to be the wife of male relatives and the abductions not being reported to authorities (Mwambene & Sloth-Nielsen, 2011, p. 5). Ukuthwala, practiced in the non-traditional way has been brought to debate under the South Africa law where it reportedly violates legislative instruments such as the Constitution and the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (Mwambene & Kruuse, 2017, p. 26; Msuya, 2017, p. 1). This is seen in the case of Jezile vs the State, where a 28-year-old man, who was convicted of the rape, human trafficking, and assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm of an adolescent girl, referred to his acts of coercion as an integral part of ukuthwala (Mwambene & Kruuse, 2017, p. 27). However, it is argued that in such a form, this act of ukuthwala shifts from the traditional form to a distorted form that rests on abuse and human rights violation. In its most abusive form, the practice sees the adolescent girl raped and often psychologically and physically abused (Kheswa & Hoho, 2014, p. 2809).

Religious Practices. Traditional faith and healing practices are also among some of the practices that may be distorted in a manner which results in the abuse and exploitation of vulnerable individuals (Msuya, 2017, p. 14). This includes the West African practice of juju, most typically used by Nigerian traffickers in South Africa as a method of exerting and maintaining control over trafficked individuals (Van der Watt & Kruger, 2017, p. 72). Juju is ingrained in the long-held belief in the supernatural that can be connected to, through acts and practices of voodoo, witchcraft (Van der Watt & Kruger, 2017, p. 72). Juju is an oath-swearing ritual that traffickers use to coerce the trafficked individual by enslaving them to the spirit world, which allows for psychological control (Msuya, 2017, p. 17). Such control rests on a debt-bondage mechanism that breeds compliance as trafficked individuals fear for both theirs and/or their family's safety should they disobey (Baarda, 2016, p. 269).

The ritual typically centres around acts of calling upon a spirit and guiding the spirit into the individual's body where it is believed that one cannot escape the spirit. This is followed by collecting various samples of human tissue to use as a "small package" that is placed in a shrine with the trafficked individual's underwear (Van der Watt & Kruger, 2017, p. 73). Following this, the oath-taking practice takes place where the trafficked individual swears to pay back the incurred debt while also keeping the trafficker's identity a secret. The abuse of the juju ritual and belief system proves effective as many traffickers hold the knowledge that many Nigerian communities are influenced by strong beliefs in the supernatural. As such, these

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traffickers can deceitfully use this belief system to best exploit the vulnerability of followers (Baarda, 2016, p. 269; Van der Watt & Kruger, 2017, p. 76). Due to the entrenched fear of spiritual retribution and harm, trafficked individuals will more than likely withhold any information pertaining to their traffickers from any law enforcements, which ensures that the crime continues (Dunkerley, 2018, p. 83). For many traffickers, the use of juju allows them to exercise complete control over the trafficked individuals as they do not need to be physically restraint or supervised (Dunkerley, 2018, p. 86; Ikeora, 2016, p. 7). This points towards a strong element of dominance that highlights the power dynamic that exists between traffickers and those they have trafficked (Van der Watt & Kruger, 2017, p. 74).

Pandemics. Infectious diseases are argued to play integral yet ingenuous roles in the vulnerability of trafficked individuals, as they have a direct influence on the economic and social conditions of an individual's local context (Rosenthal, 2019, para. 3). Such diseases, whether on a large or small scale often demand the resources and attention that might previously have been directed towards counter-TIP initiatives (Rosenthal, 2019, para 5). Such diseases include but are not limited to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and more recently, diseases such as the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Research has highlighted that a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS within a family can escalate the vulnerability factors that are already present in an individual's life. Maqoko and Dreyer (2008, p. 717) highlighted that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has especially left many South African children orphaned and heads of their households, as their primary caregivers are either deceased or too ill to care for them. Many of these young children find themselves having to drop out of school to be able to care for themselves and their siblings, which leaves them susceptible to many forms of abuse and exploitation (Maqoko & Dreyer, 2008, p. 717). Tasked with the responsibility of having to provide for those left behind, these young children are often forced into exploitative and dangerous work in exchange for provision of their needs (Lutya 2012, p. 15; Maqoko & Dreyer, 2008, p. 719). These conditions further increase their vulnerabilities and with the lack of parental or guardian care they often find themselves being recruited and coerced. Additionally, many of these orphaned children find themselves in the care of community or family members that act as the unconscious facilitators to these exploitative practices of unsuspecting children (Frankel, 2016, p. 6).

Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented, yet significant financial constraints and pressures on the world. The pandemic has furthermore increased or heightened the vulnerabilities due to the interruptions of counter-TIP initiatives (United States Department of State, 2021, p. 2) This is especially the case for those who have either lost the breadwinner

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of their household or who have experienced job losses due to the limitations on the job market (UNODC, 2020, para. 5). This has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and has resulted in further economic and educational consequences (Todres & Diaz, 2020, p. 1) As such, not only have many South Africans had to adjust and sustain themselves in the "new normal" but traffickers have also adjusted their business models to fit with the local context. Traffickers have swiftly used the virus and the increased demand for alternative work and connections through technological means as an access point to vulnerable individuals (Todres & Diaz, 2020, p. 1) This is especially seen in young children who are reported to be spending more time online because of school closures and restricted social movement (Todres & Diaz, 2020, p. 1). The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted on the identification of trafficked individuals and on delivering services and resources to TIP campaigns and initiatives (Todres & Diaz, 2020, p. 2).

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the definition of TIP and how it can be understood both in the international and South African contexts according to various literature and legal instruments. The discussion highlighted that there exists a multitude of factors that can increase the vulnerability to be trafficked. In South Africa, TIP is still a lucrative and large-scale operation that continues to exist despite numerous legislation and policies attempting to combat the crime. Literature revealed that TIP continues to exist as traffickers understand the numerous specific and nuanced vulnerabilities of South Africans. This understanding allows traffickers to intercept vulnerable individuals through various means and acts for a multitude of exploitative purposes. The chapter then moved into further discussing the individual and contextual factors that play a significant role in increasing the risk of children and adults in South Africa to be trafficked. It was highlighted that traffickers employ creative means to identify the specific vulnerabilities of individuals. Traffickers can exploit such vulnerabilities and lure potential trafficked individual into a life of trafficking, debt bondage and violence and abuse, which often leaves trafficked individuals with a lifetime of psychological, physical, and emotional damage. The chapter, furthermore, briefly discussed how these vulnerabilities can be explored and understood from an interconnected systemic viewpoint. As it is rather the complex interactions and connections that take place between all the factors discussed that enable and maintain the exploitation experienced. The following chapter will further elaborate on the briefly discussed theoretical assumptions of systems theory, which will be used to understand and contextualise vulnerabilities in relation to TIP.

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CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will provide a basis for exploration and analysis of the interaction between the identified vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked individuals, serviced by Hope Risen (HR). The framework outlines the requirement for a systemic approach to social phenomena by discussing the ecology of trafficking in persons (TIP) and vulnerabilities to be trafficked. Following this, the utilised systemic approach of Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1994) ecological systems theory will be discussed briefly. The development of Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1994) ecological systems theory will then be further discussed in this chapter by specifically referencing the initial development of systems theory and systems theory characteristics.

The Ecology of TIP

TIP is poorly, if not completely, misunderstood which often impacts on the ability to theorise and study the phenomenon (Emser, 2013, p. 92). Research conducted by Emser (2013, p. 200) and van der Watt (2018a, p. 2) argued TIP to be a complex, multidimensional crime that is constantly evolving and requires a thorough understanding of its inner workings to understand its nature. This is necessary as TIP is more diverse and complex than previously conceptualised. TIP vulnerabilities are also argued to be born from many systemic interactions that occur among societal, structural, economic, political, and economic levels within an individual's environment (Emser, 2013, p. 379).

Therefore, an ecological understanding used to guide a conceptual framework to explore and understand the risk factors of trafficking is useful, as it identifies and acknowledges the relationship that exists between individuals and their environments (Rafferty, 2008, p. 4). TIP vulnerability consists of a multitude of components that are related in many ways, such as individuals who are complicit in or affected by the crime; organisations and their stakeholders; governmental departments; and various other systems that directly or indirectly interact and intersect with TIP in South Africa (Van der Watt, 2018a, p. 381). Complex dynamics take place between each of these systems which are often nuanced and may go unnoticed if not viewed holistically. Existing data around the interactions of trafficking have often been interpreted as disconnected components, focusing on the extent and nature of the crime (van der Westhuizen, 2015, p. 6). Attempts to deconstruct these interactions to understand singular elements of the crime is not possible when the phenomenon is as complex as TIP (van der Watt, 2018a, p. 380).

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As such, a systemic approach to understanding the trafficking system, as used by van der Westhuizen (2015, p. 553), provides a better understanding as the interconnections between all the trafficking elements are conceptualised. Similarly, Emser (2013, p. 378) found that TIP cannot be conceptualised according to a singular perspective or reduced part of a whole. Rather, a systemic and holistic approach within South Africa is necessary to address the factors that perpetuate vulnerability to be trafficked.

One such way to holistically understand TIP and to evaluate associated risk factors is through Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979, 1994) – the theory has since been revised under the adapted name of bioecological systems theory (2005) (Barner et al., 2017, p. 4; Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019, p. 81). Examining TIP vulnerabilities from such a perspective requires a basic and foundational understanding of systems theory. A systems approach allows for interactions that take place between components to be examined by focusing on emerging patterns (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 2). Such an approach is necessary, as it has increasingly been found that more traditional approaches have been ineffective in attempting to understand and explain complex social phenomena and problems (Turner & Baker, 2019, p. 2). Friedman and Allen (2014, p. 3) argued for the need to consider the individual in relation to their larger context, which is possible with the use of systemic assumptions. By taking such an approach to understand a social phenomenon, the influence of the physical, social, and environmental systems can be acknowledged and explored (Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019, p. 77). This can be used to explore the interconnections that took place between each vulnerability factor that was present in a trafficked individual's life and their context.

A reductionistic approach, as is typical with the scientific method, to understanding TIP would result in an isolated examination of vulnerability factors that then misrepresents the nature of the crime (Rafferty, 2008, p 13). Emser (2013, p. 92) echoed that reductionist methodologies limit the ability to study the phenomenon. The concept of reductionism will later be discussed. The use of such a theory outlines how trafficking lends itself to a multitude of micro, meso, exo, and macro factors that significantly influence its operations (Barner et al., 2017, p. 2). By approaching vulnerability factors to TIP in South Africa from an ecological systems perspective, it is acknowledged that a more holistic approach to this complex and multifaceted phenomenon is suitable. The next section discusses the development of general systems theory and the characteristics that comprise a system.

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General Systems Theory

The formulation and development of general systems theory was credited to Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) who, while emersed in the biological and scientific world, became dissatisfied with the cause-and-effect theories used to account for change in organisms (Friedman & Allen, 2014, p. 3). Many of these more reductionist, cause-and-effect theories were born out of the Newtonian style of viewing and accounting for phenomena based on mechanistic theories and linear and causal relationships (Braithwaite et al., 2018, p. 3). As such, von Bertalanffy (1968, p. 415) acquired the stance of wholeness and holism from which the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of systems could be entirely observed and understood (Turner & Baker, 2019, p. 3).

This alternative approach to understanding and interpreting complex phenomena is known as "systems thinking". Verhoeff et al. (2018, p. 2) argued this to be an important manner of approaching phenomena in social fields of study. Von Bertalanffy regarded general systems theory as a holistic method through which interactions and the information provided could be organised rather than just observed (Friedman & Allen, 2014, p. 4). This favours general systems theory to be adaptable for many scientific fields on which specific theories can rest on the assumptions of general systems theory (Friedman & Allen, 2014, p. 4; Hammond, 2019, p. 303). This adaptation aligns with von Bertalanffy's attempt to foster and expand general systems theory into a more humanistic science which would address the needs of humanity rather than just for the accumulation of facts. The belief was that this alternative paradigm would pave the way to considering and accepting alternative perspectives and points of view regarding the social world (Hammond, 2019, p. 305).

To understand systems theory, it is necessary to first understand what constitutes a system. A system comprises different subsystems or components that interact to create complex and unique relationships with their own patterns (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 2). The construct of a system applies to all biological, physical, and social systems. In social systems, human behaviour and interactions can be explored and understood in detail (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 2). According to Lai and Lin (2017, p. 2), the system components interact in a manner that results in a unique system, suggesting that no two systems are alike. The authors (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 3) further highlighted that systems theory orders the components according to a hierarchical ordering in which each component is interdependent on another. The characteristics of a system will be discussed in the following section to further illustrate the inner workings of a system. The first characteristic that will be discussed is that of reductionism versus holism, which

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became a prominent debate when reviewing the stance of traditional Newtonian sciences versus systems theory.

Reductionism versus Holism

Over the last half century, systems theory provided an alternative viewpoint from which to discuss the world, distancing itself from previously used approaches such as empiricism (Anderson, 2016, p. 593; Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 1). This theory attempted to account for these complex social phenomena as it became increasingly evident that the scientific method was inadequate (Walker, 2012, p. 3). The term holism can be traced back to Jan Smuts (1929) who used the term in a biological context. It has since developed into an approach and viewpoint that argues viewing systems as a whole, rather than as separate entities (Hantula, 2018, p. 1).

Reductionism, however, focused its attention and analysis towards the individualised and alienated components of the same system (Hammond, 2019, p. 302). A reductionist approach proved unable to analyse and understand "real world problems" as it is geared towards the scientifically defined laboratory problems (Miller, n.d., par. 5; Von Bertalanffy, 1972, p. 408; Walker, 2012, p. 3). Typically, laboratory-based research could be reduced to smaller components, which are individually studied to understand their inner workings (Turner & Baker, 2019, p. 2). This contributed towards the growing divide between the holistic view that necessitates the viewing of a system as a whole and the reductionist view that a system can be understood by simplifying it to its individual parts (Hantula, 2018, p. 325). The problem with this, according to von Bertalanffy (1968, p. 19), is that this phenomenon requires weak or non-existent interactions, or relationships that are linear. He further argued that these two conditions could not be found in systems as the interactions are complex and thus a new approach is required. The causality characteristic will be discussed next.

Nonlinear Causality

Understanding a system requires understanding the concept of nonlinear causality which occurs within systems and subsystems (Hammond, 2019, 302). This opposes the unilateral linear causality approach espoused by the classical scientific method (Hammond, 2019, 302). Whereas linear causality assumes that cause A would be followed by effect B, a systems approach assumes that in complex systems, nonlinear causality exists (Lai and Lin (2017, p. 7). This means that circular, causal relationships can exist, or small causes can have big effects, or vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 69; Drack & Pouvreau, 2015, p. 551). Therefore, in a complex systems, change can take place, even at a minuscule scale, as systems

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interact with one another in an interconnected web of feedback loops (Anderson, 1999, p. 217). Feedback loops, a central characteristic of systems, are discussed next.

Feedback Loops

Feedback loops are generated from feedback that results from the connections within a system (Arnold & Wade, 2015, p. 676). Feedback is a process that regulates the exchange of information between subsystems, and the system and its environment (Drack and Pouvreau, 2015, p. 527; Friedman and Allen, 2014, p. 8). This process operates as a loop, where an input is received from the either the external environment, or within the environment and an output is generated from the interactions between the system and its subsystems. This output is then distributed to the environment (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 4). This is viewed as an alternate way by which systems could potentially influence their environments. Systems often adjust the levels of all inputs and outputs which can potentially regulate or deregulate a system (Friedman & Allen, 2014, p. 9).

Two types of feedback loops occur, namely (a) negative feedback and (b) positive feedback (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 4). A negative feedback loop occurs when systemic output is fed back into the system to correct the current function, decelerating change in the system. Positive feedback loops occur when feedback reinforces the action of the system, accelerating change in the system. Feedback reinforces the tendency for complexity as the system's environment becomes more complex with each loop (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 4). Resting on the broad paradigm of systems theory, other theoretical perspectives sharing similar assumptions developed and advanced, such as the ecological systems model of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994). This system model focused on examining and understanding the complex processes and interactions that occur between and within systems. Rafferty (2008) and Barner et al. (2017) advocated for the use of the ecological perspective to understand the interaction that takes place between risk factors associated with TIP. As such, this theory will be expanded on in the next section as a theoretical framework for the study.

Ecological Systems Theory

In psychology, many theories proposed that the development of a human being occurs because of the interaction between the systems within the individual and the environmental contexts of the individual (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 239). One such theory is the ecological systems theory, developed by American psychologist, Urie Bronfenbrenner(1979, 1994). This theory was developed as a method to explain how human development is influenced by the

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various systems found within the individual's environment (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 239). According to Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 37), this can be understood by reviewing the ecological system of an individual to gain an in-depth understanding of their development or environment. This concept of an ecological environment rests on the belief that human development cannot be approached in an isolated and fragmented manner. Instead, it is necessary to view an individual and their development within the context of their environment (Friedman & Allen, 2014, p. 9).

Based on this assumption, it can be argued that such an approach equally considers the individual and contextual environmental systems, allowing for their interactions to be thoroughly reviewed (Eriksson et al., 2018). Ecological systems theory suggests that each environment and the resulting system will be unique to an individual (Friedman & Allen, 2014, p. 9). This is critical in the context of TIP as it suggests that individuals are engaged in multiple environments. This results in a unique set of interactions and complexities which need to be examined and understood within the context of the environment (Barner et al., 2017, p. 4). These multiple environments that individuals are often involved in include but are not limited to their immediate environment; their cultural environment; and then, more broadly, their global societal environment (Barner et al., 2017, p. 4).

Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 3) subdivided these interrelating environments into five distinct interacting levels which were termed as a set of nested structures. These levels range in their setup from smaller proximal settings to larger yet indirect settings (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 239). Barner et al. (2017, p. 4) further argued that this understanding develops with the reviewing of, and the understanding of the risk factors that exist at each level. Figure 1 illustrates the nested structures and the interactions between each systems level as depicted by arrows. The arrows additionally highlight the causal flow that exists between the various levels. The nested structures are subdivided into the (a) microsystem, (b) mesosystem, (c) exosystem, (d) macrosystem, and (e) chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The following section will focus on discussing the concept of the microsystem.

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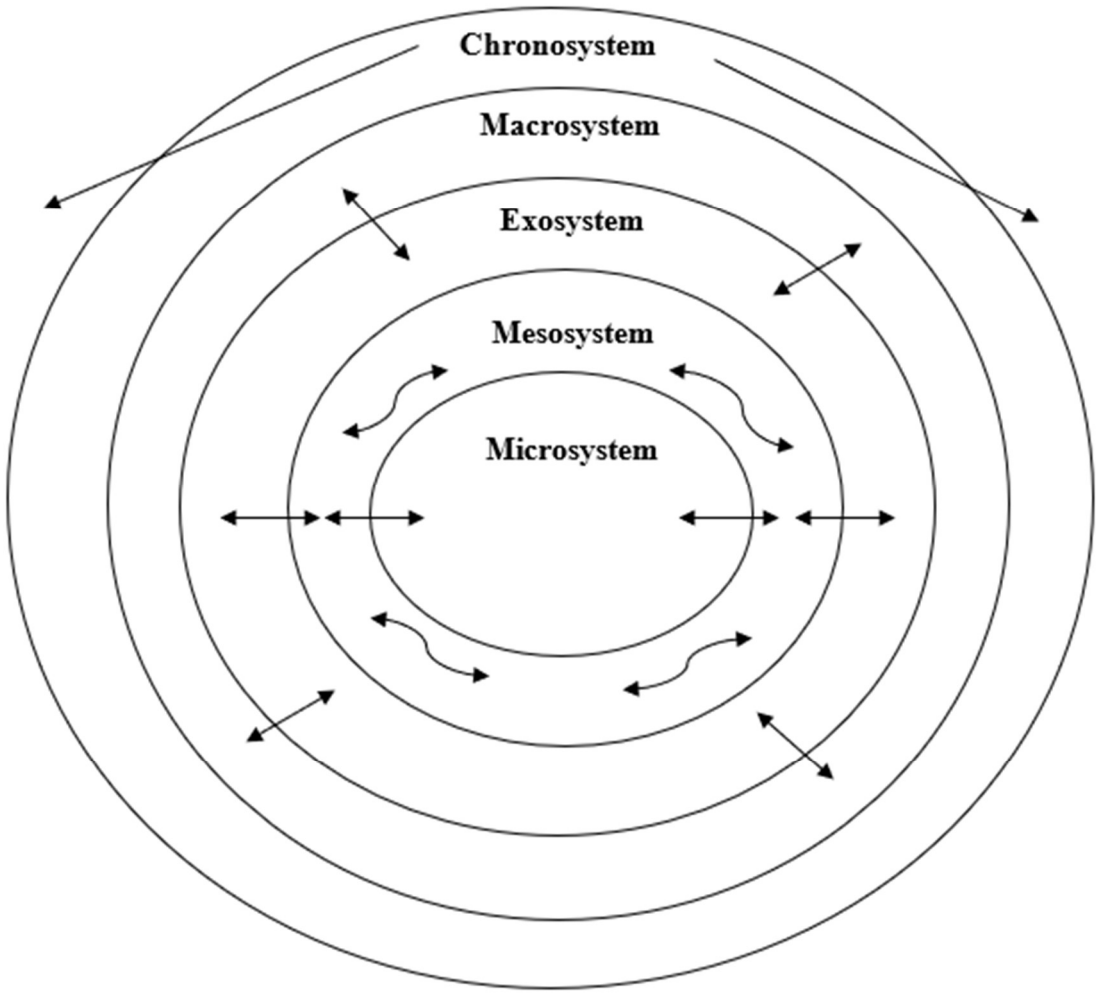
Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as Adapted From "Ecological Systems Theory". By Ettekal, A. V., & Mahoney, J. L. (2017). In K. Peppier, The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Out-of-School.



Microsystem

The first level, also known as the microsystem, is the most closely related system in which direct interaction takes place (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 239). Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 3) referred to this level as the innermost level, which consists of the person in their environmental context. This level provides insight into patterns of direct and complex interaction between the individual and their immediate environments such as their home, place

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of work, or peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). The patterns relate to the individual's activities, societal roles, and their own interpersonal relationships with others which are viewed as reciprocal (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). There are a multitude of microsystems that can occur within an individual's environment, many of these microsystems may affect development depending on the nature of their interactions with the individual (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 241). Bronfenbrenner (1977, p. 514) furthered that within a microsystem, an individual conducts themselves according to roles and engages in activities informed by these roles. Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 39) argued that it is within the microsystem that proximal processes significantly influence development and then subsequently carries forth the same development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 39). However, Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 39) further argued that this is dependent on the power and structural aspects of the microsystem which will determine the extent of the impact on the individual. Bronfenbrenner (1979) used the example of a developing child to illustrate the impact that environments, such as the home, have on development. This example illustrates that the ability to invite, permit, or inhibit development is dependent on the enduring and persistent nature of the relationships and interactions that take place between the child and family (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39).

Mesosystem

The mesosystem level involves all the actual interactions that take place between the individual's multiple microsystems (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 241). As such, this system can be viewed as consisting of the actual linkages that exist between the multitude of microsystems that contain the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 25) argued that the mesosystem is a system of many microsystems. The mesosystem develops whenever the developing child interacts with a new setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). These interactions are viewed as influential and thus bi-directional due to the influence that occurs on significant elements such as personal values or beliefs (Musgrave & Woodward, 2016, p. 372). According to Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 3), it is within this system that the developing individual is seen as an active participant as they too contribute to the bi-directional influence. Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 515) used the example of the developing child, whose mesosystem would comprise the interactions that take place, bi-directionally, among family and schoolteachers regarding the child's schooling. It is important to note that the mesosystem displays complex interactions, as it shows how an event in one microsystem can affect an event in another (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 242).

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Exosystem

The exosystem contains all the linkages that connect two or more settings, where one of them does not necessarily involve the individual in question (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). These types of systems are typically the larger social environments or situations that the individual has no control over. Social situations can be understood in this context as events, policies, and decisions that are determined by others. This suggests that although the individual is not immersed in a particular system, the systemic influence, as determined by others, is still experienced, albeit through another individual (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 242). Additionally, the interactions that take place within the exosystem can be viewed as unidirectional. Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 40) illustrated the example by referencing the interactions that take place at home with their parents, resulting from the interactions that the parents engage in at the workplace. As such, the child has no control over the microsystem of their parents that contains the workplace, and thus cannot control the impact that it would have on their parents and secondarily on them.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem consists of an overreaching cultural pattern of all the significant characteristics of each of the four levels of a given environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). These patterns emerge from the economic, social, educational, and legal systems from which the four systems manifest (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). This level has a particular reference towards the individual's beliefs and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Within this system, influence on an individual's development takes place within and among other systems. Furthermore, this system acts as a lens through which the developing individual can interpret their current and future experience (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 243). This may account for the reason Bronfenbrenner refers to this system as the societal blueprint for a particular culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Additionally, this highlights that the macrosystem, as the exosystem, is unidirectional as the individual is embedded in a larger political, cultural, social, and economic climate outside of their influence, within their environment (Johnson, 2008, p. 3). In the case of the developing child, the cultural position of the larger environment on child rearing will determine the treatment afforded to the child and even the parents (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515).

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Chronosystem

Bronfenbrenner created and expanded on a fifth and final system level that he proposed. This level would extend the environment into the third dimension (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Bronfenbrenner focused on the factor of time within the individual and the larger system as a manner of reviewing developments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Noor et al. (2017, p. 528) argued that this system involves not only the individual, but also the environment in which they have found themselves. Thus, both elements go through a life course with its own time-based changes and developments. In the case of the developing child, familial structure changes, like the death of a parent, could impact the ability to interact and attend to everyday life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the theoretical framework, from which the study will be informed, to conceptualise TIP. The use of a systems-oriented theoretical framework emphasises the need to work from a point of view that is not reductionist in nature but focuses on the holistic understanding of the complexities of TIP. The ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) provides an alternative to understand the trafficked individual, within their own environment. This will assist in exploring and understanding the interplay between the factors that made the individual vulnerable to be trafficked. As such, the ecological perspective highlights the importance of approaching social topics and research topics from a more holistic and more integrated manner that will foster an in-depth understanding of the social, physical, and psychological elements of the phenomenon. This perspective is necessary to understand and interpret complex phenomena such as TIP which, when viewed and interpreted from an ecological perspective, can provide a framework from which to understand vulnerability factors. The next chapter will describe and discuss the methodological approach of the study.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

This chapter will describe the methods applied during the study. The aim and the objectives of the study are outlined. Following this, is a discussion on the use of a descriptive case study design, and how through this design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and used is provided. Further, a detailed discussion is presented regarding the specific research methods used for case file and participant sampling, data collection, and data analyses. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on research quality, a reflexivity statement, and the ethical considerations that were applied throughout the study.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study was to explore and describe the individual and contextual factors that increased the vulnerability of identified trafficked minors and adults who were serviced by the non-governmental organisation (NGO), Hope Risen (HR). The objectives of the research study were:

1. To explore and describe the individual vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
2. To explore and describe the contextual vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
3. To explore and describe unusual and/or previously unreported vulnerability factors in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals, serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
4. To explore and describe the combinations of individual and contextual vulnerability factors of trafficked identified minor and adult trafficked individuals serviced by HR, during the period of 2017 to 2020.
5. To explore and describe HR employees' and volunteers' perceptions on which individual and contextual factors influence the vulnerability of minors and adults to be trafficked.

The research approach employed to operationalise the study's aim and objectives will be discussed next.

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Research Design

The study utilised a descriptive case study design, which included both quantitative and qualitative data sets.

Descriptive Case Study

The use of case study design in social sciences has increased in popularity and is often selected for generating and contributing to knowledge about social and political phenomena (Smith, 2018, p. 1043; Yin, 2014, p. 4). Case studies are an in-depth exploration of an occurrence made possible by use of diverse data collection and analysis methods (Willig (2013, p. 74). In terms of the present study, a descriptive case study design was used. Yin (2012, p. 49) asserted that this design reveals rich and insightful information about a particular phenomenon, especially if that phenomenon is not typically accessible or contains extreme conditions. This design enabled the provision of detailed descriptions of TIP vulnerabilities within its very own context (Yin, 2009, p. 18) in a manner that was mindful of the sensitivity of information inherent in the TIP phenomenon. The use of a case study design further allowed for attention to be given to contextual data, which showcases the ability of this design to provide a holistic picture of the case and its interaction with its environment (Willig, 2013, pp. 74-75).

The aim of case study research is to achieve analytical generalisation, where the received results can be generalised to a much broader theory or population (Mills et al., 2010, p. 3). Therefore, what is selected for the case, is done to achieve a reflection of the reality of that phenomenon in question, so that it can be further generalised to the broader environment or theory in which the phenomenon occurs (Mills et al., 2010, p. 3). An additional factor that is important in terms of case study research is to choose a case that is unique (Mills et al., 2010, p. 3). In this case, the unique phenomenon is TIP and associated vulnerabilities, whose nature is still experienced as elusive and often difficult to capture (Mills et al., 2010, p. 3). By selecting a unique phenomenon, researcher can use purposive sampling to deliberately obtain and include characteristics of the case under study (Mills et al., 2010, p. 3). The phenomenon that was investigated for the study was TIP vulnerabilities and the real-life context encompassed the operations of HR. The process of executing the research design with the use of both quantitative and qualitative data is outlined below in Figure 2.

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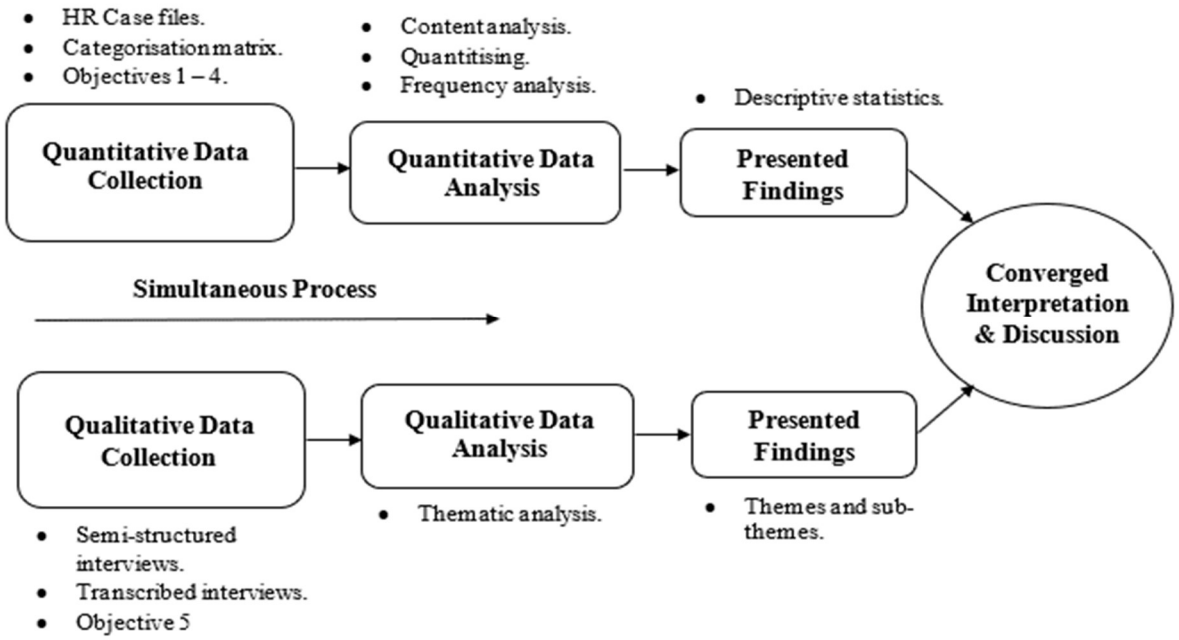
Figure 2

Case Study Design Process of Using Quantitative and Qualitative Data



In the present study, as illustrated in Figure 2, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously as case study evidence. During the initial stages, the case files contained qualitative data, in the form of textual information, on trafficked children and adults serviced by HR which was extracted and transformed into quantitative data. Extraction was possible through a process of known as quantitising, which is described in more detail in the data analysis section. This method allowed for the extraction of useable and meaningful content that may have been missed by other measuring instruments (Sandelowski et al., 2009, p. 3). Through the process of quantitising, textual information was converted into useable, quantitative data where a frequency analysis could be applied. The inclusion of interviews with HR staff and volunteers was additionally used as case study evidence in the form of qualitative data from which themes and sub-themes could be extracted.

The intention behind the use of two data sets, was to diversify data collection methods, enriching the data set to draw conclusions and inferences from both data sets (Moseholm & Fetters, 2017, p. 1). For cohesion, both datasets were independently analysed, and data were converged during the interpretative and discussion phases (see Figure 2). By achieving cohesion within the study, it was possible to analyse quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a more detailed understanding and corroboration of all the data on TIP (Almalki, 2016, p. 291).

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Hafsa (2019, p. 47) argued that although the use of both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses can be convincing, it is not without its criticisms. Hafsa (2019, p. 47) particularly cited the concern that at its core, both quantitative and qualitative research are different approaches, where quantitative research sets out to develop generalisable findings from an objective position. Within the current study, the objective position was not achieved within the true sense, as interpretation was utilised to capture the vulnerability factors in each case file. However, the presentation of a frequency analysis achieves a more reductionist approach to a complex phenomenon such as TIP, which then aligns more closely to the positivistic philosophy of quantitative research.

Qualitative research tends to operate from a subjective perspective that aims to develop an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. Therefore, contradictions could arise in the data due to the different types of data collected (Roomaney & Coetzee, 2018, p. 15). In instances where contradictions may arise, Roomaney and Coetzee (2018, p. 15) stated that this can be beneficial as it provides new insights into the research and suggestions for further research. The methods and procedures for sampling used in the study will be discussed next.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The study utilised purposive sampling for both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Purposive sampling was used for the identification of relevant files and the interview participants (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 2). Sampling of case files and interview participants took place as two independent but simultaneous processes. The sampling procedures for both datasets were also guided by a set of inclusion criteria, which is discussed next.

Case Files

Each case file contained details of the initial reporting process, removal, rehabilitation, and reintegration of an individual HR provided services to. The sampling of case files was driven by several inclusion and exclusion criteria during two phases: the identification phase and the screening phase (Figure 3). Inactive files (n = 57), for the period of 2017 to 2020, were provided by HR. Inactive files did not require immediate or urgent access by HR – hence, HR deemed them suitable for collection. For active cases (n = 2), where HR required immediate and repeated access to the case files, HR decided to withhold access until the files became inactive. However, HR later decided to exclude these case files from the current study as they were still active at the end of the data collection period. Hence, HR revised the available case files from fifty-nine (n = 59) to fifty-seven (n = 57) files.

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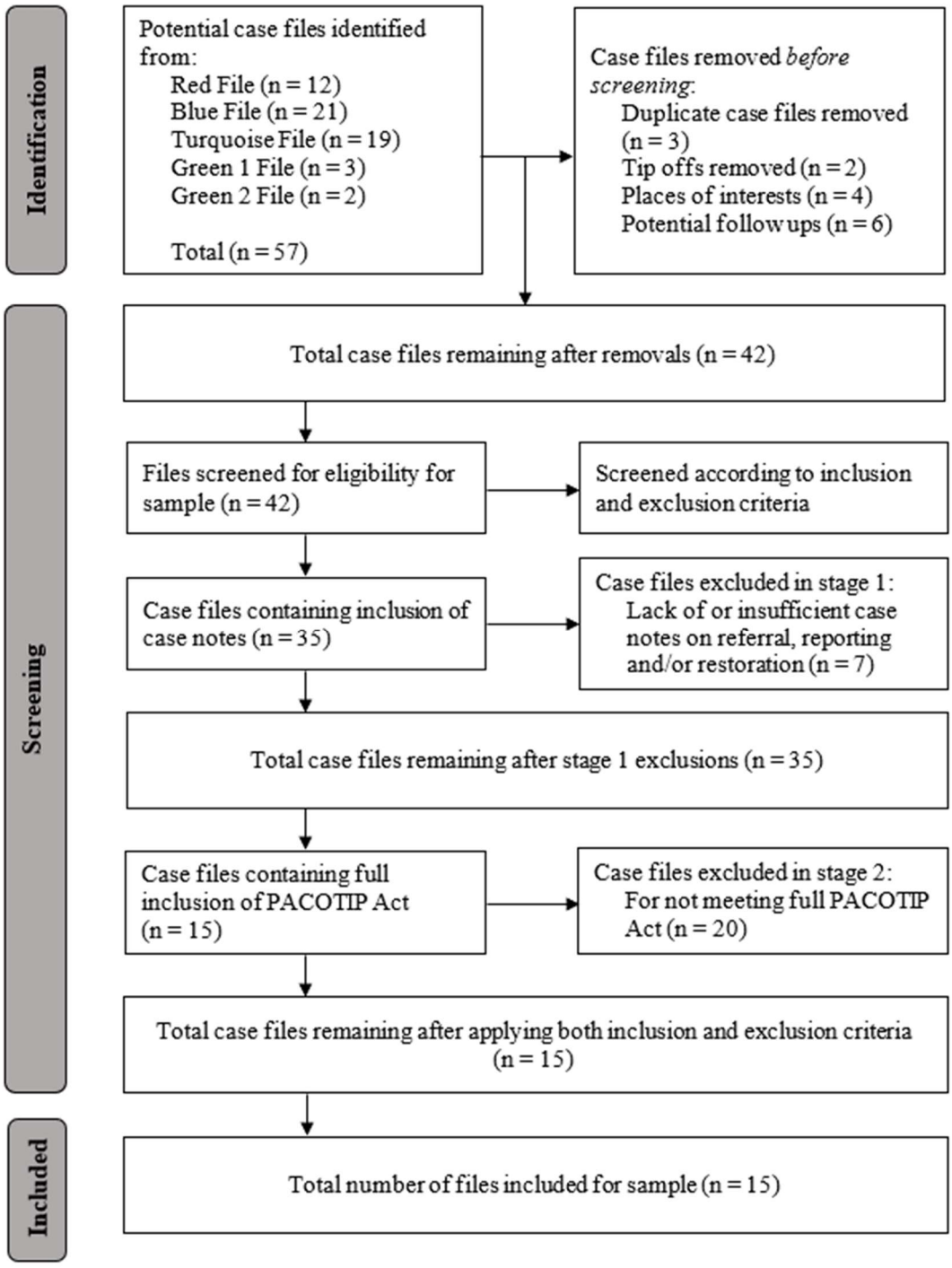
Figure 3

PRISMA Diagram Depicting the Sampling Process of Case Files



Over the course of the identification phase, HR handed over five larger files containing individual case notes. These five files were each a separate colour pertaining to a period, spanning from 2017 to 2020. The red file, blue file, and turquoise file contained cases and notes for the period 2017 to 2018. Green file 1 and green file 2 contained cases and notes for the

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period of late 2018 to the beginning of 2020. During the initial stages of the sampling process, before screening, case files (n = 57) spread over the five larger files were reviewed and the identification process was conducted. During this stage, all duplicated cases, documents pertaining to places of interest, tip offs and potential follow-ups were removed.

The screening phase was conducted on the remaining files (n = 42) and was guided by the following inclusion and exclusion criteria across two stages. In the first stage of the screening phase, files were screened to ensure that there were sufficient case notes providing information on the referral, reporting, and restoration of the individual. Case files had to contain information on the individual's age, gender, and description of their background and current situation (n=35). In the second stage of the screening phase, cases were screened to determine whether they could be regarded as TIP cases according to the legal framework of the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 (PACOTIP). This was achieved by creating a summary of each case and linking aspects of the case with specific PACOTIP Act definitions. The final sample (n=15) individual case files proceeded to the data collection and analysis phases. All excluded files were removed from the data sample and returned to HR.

Interview Participants

All HR employees and volunteers were potential participants for the study. Employees and volunteers of HR are typically involved in counter-TIP interventions that focus primarily on (1) awareness and prevention; (2) removal and intervention; and (3) restoration and reintegration (Hope Risen, 2018). Inclusion criteria required participants to be 18 years or older and proficient in English to provide rich detailing of their perspectives of vulnerability factors of TIP. Furthermore, participants had to be involved in the process of either the initial reporting, investigation, rehabilitation, or reintegration process of those who have been trafficked and serviced by HR.

The study utilised a sample size of three participants, which is small enough to avoid repetition but large enough to capture most of the significant perceptions of the participants (Mason, 2010, p. 2). Two participants were previously employed by HR, but all participants were volunteering at HR at the time of data collection. Telephonic calls were set up with each potential participant to determine inclusion in the study. Questions focussed on obtaining information about the participants and their involvement with HR. The participants had experience with female adults who were trafficked for sexual exploitation, some of whom were trafficked as children. The participants also had experience in the field of substance abuse and addiction. One participant was also involved in a removal process, where a trafficked individual

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was removed from the trafficking situation. The sample comprised three female participants who were interviewed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics and Counter-TIP Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Years in counter-TIP	Years in Hope Risen	Hope Risen Role	Areas of Experience
Jenny	32	10	2	Social Worker	• Substance abuse and addiction. • Services to sexually exploited women.
Susan	54	7	6	Trauma Counsellor	• Substance abuse and addiction. • Intelligence collection for removal purposes.
Claire	74	6	6	Pastoral Counsellor	• Substance abuse and addiction.

Data Collection

Data collection from both the case files and semi-structured interviews was conducted simultaneously between April to August 2021. The collection process from the case files will be discussed next.

Case Files

Following full ethical clearance, the director of HR was contacted to discuss the sampling and collection process. Due to the Covid-19 regulations and preference for remote working, the initial plan to identify and screen case files on HR's premises had to be altered. As such, case files deemed suitable were handed over personally by HR's director at a private residence. Covid-19 social restrictions will be discussed in more detail under the ethical considerations section. Once files were screened and included for collection, an unique identifying code was given to each included file to ensure anonymisation and that all identifying details were hidden.

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Information pertaining to each unique identifying code was captured in a password protected document to begin the data preparation phase. This resulted in a raw data table that held information pertaining to age, gender, nationality, education level and elements that suggested it was a TIP case. This provided an overview of the raw data of each file which would be used for analysis. Data collection from semi-structured interviews is discussed next.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insight into the perceptions that participants held on which individual and contextual factors increased TIP vulnerability. The interview process was guided by an interview guide (See Appendix I) which was used to ensure that planned topics and questions were addressed and adhered to, thus preventing the interview from venturing too far off topic (Adams, 2015, p. 496). Following ethical clearance, HR was requested to forward an invitation letter (See Appendix II) to all their employees and volunteers. Interested participants reached out to the researcher via email, and a telephonic conversation was arranged to introduce the study and to determine whether participants met the inclusion criteria. Thereafter an informed consent form (See Appendix III) was emailed to each participant. This was necessary as all face-to-face contact was limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent social distancing regulations. Once a suitable date, time and venue was agreed upon, an interview was scheduled. As a result of Covid-19 social distancing regulations, two participants opted for secure Zoom interviews (Zoom Video Communications Inc, 2021). The third participant opted for a face-to-face interview following a discussion on Covid-19 safety protocols.

The interviews were approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration. In the case of the two Zoom interviews, the sessions were digitally recorded via the Zoom video recorder following participant's consent. In terms of the final in-person interview, the session was digitally recorded via a cellphone audio recorder following consent, and then stored with the two Zoom recordings to a password protected Google drive. For all three interviews, a research journal was utilised to document any additional verbal and non-verbal communications that were of interest. Data analysis conducted in the present study is discussion next.

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Data Analysis

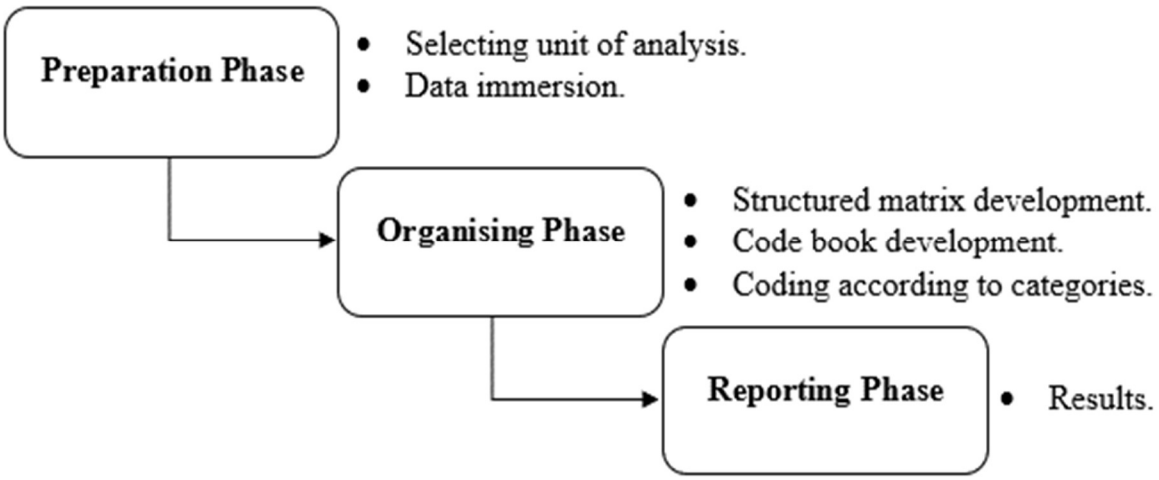
Case Files

Textual information in the case files were transformed into quantitative data through a summative qualitative content analysis method. This is an approach of describing and then interpreting textual information by engaging in a process of coding to identify categories (Assarroudi et al., 2018, p. 43; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109). Summative qualitative content analysis aims to conduct data interpretation through the counting of keywords or content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1277). For the study, frequency analysis was therefore applied by engaging with content to identify vulnerability factors and counting the frequency with which certain vulnerability factors were noted in case files.

As a deductive content analysis approach was followed, categories were pre-determined by existing theory or findings (Armat et al., 2018, p. 220). Therefore, delving into the latent meaning of the categories was not necessary and the analysis was maintained at the summative level to explore and describe the occurrence and frequency of categories (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1284). Examples of the process will be showcased in three analysis phases (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109) via Figure 4, Table 2 and Table 3, in the next section. Showcasing the analysis process was deemed a necessary addition, as it provides a distinctive process of analysis and enhances the trustworthiness of the study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 112).

Figure 4

Three Phases of the Content Analysis Process Followed in the Study



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Preparation Phase. The unit of analysis were all the case files (n = 15) identified and selected through the screening phase of the sampling process. Following this, data immersion was achieved by thoroughly reading and re-reading each case file to become familiar with the trafficking process described in each case file. Any initial thoughts or impressions of the files at this point were noted down to act as a point of reference. Once a sense of familiarity was achieved with each case file, the analysis process could progress to the organising phase.

Organising Phase. ***Structured Categorisation Matrix Development.*** For this phase, a categorisation matrix, which contained all categories accounted for in the literature review, in which data would be coded into was created (Table 2, Appendix IV). The matrix consisted of multiple rows which accounted for each identified case file and its corresponding unique identifying code (e.g., 001, 002, and 003).

Category columns were created which accounted for all vulnerability factors revealed in the literature and used in the code book, organised within individual and contextual vulnerability categories. These categories defined the factors of the data that were being analysed (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016, p. 375).

Further columns were additionally created for any unusual vulnerability factors that emerged during this data extraction phase. These factors were viewed as unusual factors as they have not been accounted for aptly within South African literature, although the findings suggested their relevance. Case files on child trafficked persons exploited as children did not contain enough data to extract contextual factors.

Additionally, the use of a categorisation matrix allowed for and guided the creation of statistics. The next step in the organisation phase was to create the code book which will be discussed next.

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Table 2

Example of the Categorisation Matrix Used to Charter Each Case File

	Individual Vulnerability Factors									Contextual Vulnerability Factors								Unusual Vulnerability Factors						
Unique Identifying Code	All Types of Abuse	Being a Child	Being Female	Disability	History of Substance Abuse	Migration	Personal Lifestyle	Pregnancy	Previously Trafficked	Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade	Cultural Practices	Inequality	Lower Education Level	Unemployment	HIV & AIDS Pandemic	No Socio-Economic Status	Religious Practices	Lack of documentation	Transgender	Divorce Visitations	Chronic Illness	Gambling Addiction	Temporal Lobe Epilepsy	**Total**
001	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
002	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
003	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

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Code Book Development. The development of the code book (See Table 3, Appendix V) was created which acted as a guide for organising the unstructured data into categories within the matrix. The code book creation process was theory driven and its creation relied on existing theory that guided the research (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011, p. 141). It provided a point of reference to understand what was being said in each of the identified files and to notice relevant keywords. Once relevant keywords or aspects of the data were noted, that element of data could be extracted and chartered into the categorisation matrix, which had been created in an Excel spreadsheet. Table 3 illustrates an excerpt of the code book that was created and guided the analysis. The final step in the organisation phase is discussed next.

Table 3

Excerpt from the Code Book Used to Guide the Content Analysis of the Study

Theory Driven Codes	Description	Example
Individual Factors		
History of Abuse	The PACOTIP Act explores the role of abuse in TIP as any form of abuse inflicted on a person that leaves them no choice but to submit to the force and exploitation. Additionally, the Children's Act 38 of 2005 refers to forms of abuse as the presentation of physical, sexual, and emotional ill-treatment and harm, as well as neglect and bullying. Abuse can also be seen as interpersonal dysfunction especially within the family environment that is often characterised by violence and conflict. Many young children and adolescents experience a form of abuse through the once-off or repeated exposure to pornography. Abuse can, furthermore, be seen in instances of TIP where abuse is used to enforce control and ensure harm.	"Presence of maltreatment and especially neglect is a common risk factor in increasing of vulnerabilities as it often co-occurs with substance and alcohol abuse and high-risk relationships" (Franchino-Olsen, 2021, p. 106; (Jimenez et al., 2015, p. 81).
Being a Child	Any individual who is under the age of 18, which increases their vulnerability to any form of exploitation.	"Children, who make up a large portion of vulnerable individuals in South Africa, rely almost exclusively on others for their nurturance and protective needs, as well as for access to their human rights" (Emser & Van der Watt, 2019, p. 91).

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Coding. The final step in the organising phase is to code data from the individual case files that were related to categories. For example, the term abuse was included in the code book (See Table 3) and was defined according to the PACOTIP Act legislation as seen in Table 3. When analysing files for organisation, each file was read and in instances where abuse was clearly stipulated by the word "abuse" captured under history, the information was extracted. However, in some instances the word "abuse" was not clearly stated but rather a description of the abuse was provided. For example, where descriptions of physical harm inflicted by spouses were described it was extracted as content pertaining to abuse. Data that did not clearly fit into any of the previously designated categories in the code book but that was deemed relevant to vulnerability to be trafficked were chartered into the "unusual" category. The final phase in the analysis phase (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109) is discussed next.

Reporting Phase. ***Results.*** Following the organisation of the categories, the content was reviewed and described using descriptive statistics, which is displayed in chapter five. The data analysis process used for the semi-structured interview will be described in the next section.

Semi-Structured Interviews

All interview recordings were manually transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data analysis and enhancing transparency and coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 15). Accurately transcribed interviews aided identification of emerging themes in the raw data. Each transcript was edited to ensure pseudonymisation was applied to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Transcribed interviews were analysed through using Braun and Clarke's (2006) inductive thematic analysis. The analysis process was therefore data driven and coding was conducted without trying to fit the data into pre-determined codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 12). The analysis process was achieved using the six phases of analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 15).

Phase 1: Familiarising Oneself with the Data. The initial phase of the analysis process began with data immersion for content familiarisation. This was achieved by repeatedly reading all three transcripts aloud. This was done in conjunction with reviewing all notes made during the actual interviews in the research journal. During this process, interesting phrases were noted and underlined in red throughout to start creating a foundation from which codes could emerge. From the underlined phrases or words, notes were made on the transcript of each interview within a Word document in a separate column on the right-hand side of each page.

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An example from the interview with Jenny (J) can be seen in Table 4, where noted phrases of interest are displayed.

Table 4

Step 1: Familiarisation of Interesting Phrases from Jenny's Interview Transcript

J: Ja, so, I think my involvement probably started when we would sort of help reach out to trafficked victims. Not as a social worker per se but more as a volunteer.	Jenny's involvement initially started as a point of volunteering. Would reach out to TIP.
And we would go into the brothels and strip clubs, and many of the places in and around Joburg	Trafficked persons were often found in brothels and strip clubs and that's where the volunteering took place.
and then those who were trafficked and those who were in situations they didn't want to be in would reach out and they would say something, we gave care packs, and we were able to connect with them and give them some kind of appreciation and conversation.	Would interact with trafficked persons and those who were potentially trafficked /or maybe even being groomed to become trafficked. Connected with these individuals- sounds like they were looking for the connection.
And sometimes they would be vulnerable and real enough to share what was going on.	If connected would share their stories.
And I think at that point it opened my eyes to see what danger women really are in.	Those stories revealed a sense of the danger the women and other women are in.
And that they are so helpless in the situation;	The women appeared as trapped?
a lot of the time could not speak English,	Language barrier was present.
or they were not there out of their own free will.	Held against will/debt bondage?
S: Ja, absolutely.	
J: Uhm and so just being exposed to that	During volunteering; it's eye opening.
and seeing how many different teams would be roped into you know, executing interventions, to get them out to safety,	Interventions were needed by multiple resource points.
that was something that I think blew my mind	Previously unaware of it all.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes. Once data immersion was achieved and initial phrases noted, initial codes were produced. This was conducted by systematically working through each line of each interview and extracting as many codes as possible from each line and typing them onto the left-hand side of the page. These initial codes were colour coded and grouped into broad categories. For example, as is seen in Table 5, the colour pink was used for all initial codes that broadly referenced sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. This was done across the full dataset and the initial codes are shown in Table 5.

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Table 5

Step 2: Generating Multiple Initial Codes from Jenny's Interview Transcript

Personal Motivation	**J:** Ja, so, I think my involvement probably started when we would sort of help reach out to trafficked victims. Not as a social worker per se but more as a volunteer.	Jenny's involvement initially started as a point of volunteering. Would reach out to TIP
TIP places for sex trafficking	And we would go into the brothels and strip clubs, and many of the places in and around Joburg	Trafficked persons were often found in brothels and strip clubs and that's where the volunteering took place.
Those who were trafficked were often first in situations they didn't want to be in	and then those who were trafficked and those who were in situations they didn't want to be in would reach out and they would say something, we gave care packs, and we were able to connect with them and give them some kind of appreciation and conversation.	Would interact with trafficked persons and those who were potentially trafficked /or maybe even being groomed to become trafficked. Connected with these individuals- sounds like they were looking for the connection.
Saw women who had desire to be helped	And sometimes they would be vulnerable and real enough to share what was going on.	If connected would share their stories.
Women at risk for dangerous circumstances	And I think at that point it opened my eyes to see what danger women really are in.	Those stories revealed a sense of the danger the women and other women are in.

Subsequently, each extracted code was organised into a list. These initial codes referred to basic elements of the data which were used to interpret the raw data. Each initial code was regarded as important and thus equally considered as it was suspected that overlapping and repeated codes would be created which could assist in the searching of themes. Throughout this phase of collating the initial codes, the initial text had to be revisited to ensure that the initial code was effectively conveying meaning. This was necessary as often in isolation the code did not carry enough weight in meaning and thus did not make sense.

During this stage, initial codes that would not be relevant for the theme creation were identified. This was achieved by repeatedly referring to the research question and objectives which were written and kept alongside each transcript. Irrelevant codes included those that referenced the participants' personal motivation for working in counter-TIP. As can further be seen in Table 6, categories were informed by all codes of the same colour coding. This assisted in organising the codes. The collated code list can be seen in Table 6.

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Table 6

List of Collated Codes Which Were Obtained from Each Transcript's Initial Code List

Getting Involved in TIP sphere	**The criminality of TIP Instances of re-trafficking**	**Forced Nature**	**The reliance on addictive substances and activities**	**Essence of the trafficked persons**	**Covid-related difficulties**	**Nature of the interventions**
(J:18) Personal Motivation (J:29) Personal Motivation (J:30) Personal Motivation (J:53) Personal Motivation (J:76) Personal Journey	(J:19) TIP places for sex trafficking (J:59) Evident vulnerability coming from TIP (J:64) TIP is a heinous and elusive crime (J:70) Sex trafficking (J:72) Vulnerability to sex trafficking often starts in the sex work industry	(J:20) Those who were trafficked were often first in situations they didn't want to be in (J:23) The trafficked women needed help to get out (J:25) Were often held against their free will	(J:43) Worked with addiction in the form of substance use (J:48) Men often needed interventions for their addiction to pornographic use (J:77) Worked with addiction in the form of substance use (J:78) Those with history of trauma were often heavily addicted to a substance	(J:21) Saw women who had desire to be helped (J:113) Survivors often had the ability to move forward (J:118) Ability to grow and make something for oneself (J:119) Engaged in repairing work in their interventions	(C:11) Covid impact on support (C:52) TIP experience is physically and mentally traumatic **(C:79) Covid impact on contact sessions**	(J:28) Interventions required multiple teams (J:31) Restoration was needed for those ladies who had been trafficked (J:38) Intervention and prevention are big needs in TIP sphere (J:58) Interventions are important after being trafficked

Phase 3: Searching for Themes. Once all codes had been extracted and collated, potential themes could be focussed on. A thematic table was developed by sorting through the list of initial codes and sectioning them off into potential, broader themes. This was particularly guided by using colour coding, which allowed for the grouping of all codes of the same colour under a broader theme of the same colour. Once this was done, the sorted codes, under specific themes, were further collated as there was noticeable overlap between codes. Once potential themes were sorted, they were analysed to form main themes. Potential themes such as "nature of intervention" and "prevention and restorative elements" were disregarded as per the suggestion of Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 27) for instances where it does not address the research question.

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A thematic table was created as a visual tool to show the emerging relationships and hierarchies between codes. This was done in table form to easily organise the quantity of data. The thematic table can be seen in Table 7 below. While working through this stage of the data analysis, attention was also given to the individual and contextual vulnerability factors discussed in chapter two of the study. It is crucial to note that, although the analysis was of an inductive nature, the analysis was focused and aligned towards the understanding of TIP vulnerabilities and the factors of interest. This is not untypical of an inductive thematic analysis, as often the researcher cannot truly free themselves from their theoretical commitments (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 12).

Table 7

Step 3: Initial Thematic Table

Potential, broader themes	**Potential main themes**
Living circumstances and conditions Covid-19-related impacts **Force of financial needs**	Socio-economic status
Reliance on addictive substances Pre-TIP To cope with TIP And in process	Role of addiction
Trauma linkages Pre-TIP Due to TIP	Pre-existing trauma
Risk profile of children Essence of trafficked individuals	Desire for connection
Restoration Unsuccessful No upskilling to make ends meet	Risk of return
Larger influential powers Cultural customs and traditions	Broader contextual elements
Low self-esteem Desire for emotional security Self-blame	Psychological and mental state

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes. At the start of this phase, a set of emergent themes had been identified that could be considered as candidate themes. This was followed by a two-level process in which all candidate themes were reviewed one by one. During this review process, coded elements that were collated under a theme were reviewed to determine if there existed a coherent pattern between them. Once a coherent pattern was determined, the second level could

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begin. The second level consisted of reviewing the coherently defined themes in relation to the entire data set. As such, the initial thematic table was reviewed and updated into a thematic map. This phase was deemed crucial as the thematic map needed to reflect the data and showcase the systemic interactions between the themes.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes. To identify the essence of what each theme contained, relevant aspects of the theme were identified and defined. This required revisiting the initial codes and reviewing the entire process from raw data and initial codes to the final theme to ensure the coherence of the process. Once this was conducted, each theme was analysed while referring to the research question. This was an important step as it created the foundation that the discussion phase would rest on in chapter six. To furthermore ensure that each theme was thoroughly understood, the scope and content of each theme were described within the research audit. This assisted with the decision phase to decide on cohesive theme names and required peer checking with the research supervisor. Feedback gained from the peer checking process meant that theme names were adjusted and more accurately worded. The final thematic map can be seen in Figure 16, in Chapter five. After achieving this phase on the three interview transcripts, data saturation was reached, and the interview process was deemed to be complete.

Phase 6: Producing the Report. By this phase of the process, all themes and sub-themes were finalised and accurately named and could be incorporated into presentation of both quantitative and qualitative data findings.

Research Quality

To ensure the quality of the study, the following attributes as proposed by Elliott et al. (1999) were considered and upheld throughout. These concepts, namely, transparency and coherence, validity, reliability and lastly owning one's perspective through reflexivity will be discussed in the following section. Furthermore, the role of rigour will also be discussed, followed by an additional discussion on the use of a research audit as these were deemed important elements of ensuring the quality of the research.

Transparency and Coherence.

Transparency is understood as the obligation that is faced by researchers to ensure that their research and findings are presented in a manner that is clear and distinctive, which allows others to be able to evaluate them (Moravcsik, 2014, p. 48). This was maintained by clearly detailing each step of the research process with particular care given to the analysis phase of

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each data set. Each step of the analysis was clearly and concisely described to showcase how it was carried out and to ensure that no confusion about the process is caused. Coherence is seen in the way the researcher portrays the data so that it still maintains its authenticity and nuances (Willig, 2013, p. 151). This was achieved by using original quotes by the participants in the findings chapter so that detailed descriptions could be given. By using original quotes, the nuances and the authenticity of what participants said was ensured.

Validity

Validity is understood to be that which the study is attempting to measure or understand and how well it is executed (Mohajan, 2017, p. 1). Validity was upheld by ensuring that what was intended to be understood in terms of TIP was gathered and reported in a manner that could be deemed as ethical and true (Ward, 2010, p.12). This was done using a generated code book that was based on applicable legislation like the PACOTIP Act, and existing research as highlighted in the literature review. This code book acted as a point of reference for the researcher and independent co-interpreter to determine the clarity of the vulnerability categories. This was done to ensure the validity of the analysis process and to ensure that deviations from what was being attempted, were limited (Boettger & Palmer, 2010, p. 348).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which outcomes of the research is consistent and stable (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 33). To ensure reliability throughout the study, an expert in the field of TIP, who is familiar with systems theory, acted as an independent co-interpreter. This was done to ensure that coded material was coded and interpreted in the same manner to prevent any misrepresentation of the data (Carcary, 2009, p. 14; Ward, 2010, p.12). In instances where there were differing opinions on code interpretations and file information, consensus was achieved by engaging in suggestions made by the co-interpreter, which allowed for the broadening of initial interpretations. These interpretations were further evaluated and debated until consensus was reached. By doing so, credibility checks (Elliot et al., 1999, p. 222) were conducted throughout the entire process.

Research Rigour

Rigour as defined by Cypress (2017, p. 254) refers to the quality of being both accurate and thorough in the research process. Research rigour was essential to uphold as case study design is often criticised for being a design that lacks in rigour and objectivity (Idowu, 2016,

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p. 184). This was upheld firstly by ensuring that the inclusion criteria were adhered to in all instances of data collection. This ensured that an accurate sample was obtained for both data sets. Thoroughness was further obtained by working slowly through case file extractions and interview transcripts analysis. While doing so, care was taken to repeat the process more than once to ensure no important details were missed and that findings were consistent. Throughout the process, constant and thorough assistance of an external and independent co-interpreter was employed thus ensuring that the study attended to what it set out to do. Although researcher bias cannot be prevented, it was minimised by ensuring that any predispositions were acknowledged and outlined throughout, by using a research audit that was used to create a chain of evidence, and an additional reflexivity statement which is discussed in more detail next.

Research Audit

The research quality was further upheld using a research audit trail as proposed by Carcary (2009, p. 15) to ensure the continuous auditing of events, influences, and actions. A physical log, in the form of a ring binder, of the research process was compiled and regularly updated to develop a detailed trail that could be constantly reviewed. The audit process was further informed by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) audit process which suggested the following six categories for documentation: (a) raw data, b) data reduction and analysis, (c) data reconstruction and synthesis, (d) process notes, (e) materials related to intentions and dispositions, and lastly (f) preliminary development of information. This research audit constitutes a comprehensive and detailed account of what was conducted throughout the entire process, which enhances the trustworthiness of the process (Willig, 2013, p. 150). Certain categories of the research audit will be discussed further to highlight how it was conducted.

Raw Data. Raw data can be understood as the information that is directly gathered for the study before any analysis or data transformation has taken place. Carcary (2020, p. 167) refers to this as the information in its natural form, any field notes and modest documentation. For the current study, this aspect of the audit was achieved in two parts. Firstly, a password protected document was created in which all raw data pertaining to case files was captured. This included demographic details of the trafficked individuals and information about their case that stood out and could possibly be of interest later. The second part of the audit related to the raw data of interviews. This was the stored audio and video recordings and all observation notes taken during each interview.

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Data Reduction and Analysis. For the process of data reduction and analysis, Carcary (2020, p. 167) referred to the use of any summaries and theoretical notes pertaining to the research process. Extensive pages pertaining to the reduction, coding and analysis of both data sets were created. For the quantitative data, an Excel document with multiple pages was created with summarised versions of identifiers that was used to the create charts and tables. For the qualitative data, this summary was done in a retrievable document that showcased the entire data process in an organised manner. In viewing this document, the process taken to gather, reduce the data from the interviews, and to analyse the data can clearly be seen.

Preliminary Development of Information. Carcary (2020, p. 167) referred to this as any pilot work and interview guides. The development of an interview guide was necessary to use for the semi-structured interviews and was revised throughout the research process where necessary. Such instances were experienced during the development stage where it was deemed necessary to make questions more specific and more directed at vulnerability factors and the understanding of them rather than just general TIP-related experiences. Further development of work was also seen in the development of the code book that was revised on multiple occasions to ensure that it most accurately reflected literature and legislation.

Reflexivity

The role that the researcher contributes to any research study is an important aspect of the study's developments (Willig, 2013, p. 150). This is seen in the way the researcher can attempt to recognise and, therefore, document how their own values, beliefs and interests have contributed to their ability to understand the phenomenon they are interacting with (Elliot et al., 1999, p. 221). This was upheld by including a reflexivity statement. Reflexivity refers to the recognition of the role that the research has played during the qualitative process, particularly regarding the participants and the data (Palaganas et al., 2017, p. 427). Since the study worked with quantitative data and qualitative data, it would be careless to not acknowledge my own stances and beliefs in relation to what I observed and experienced.

Reflexivity Statement

This reflexivity statement captures my own awareness of how my own beliefs and motivations have contributed to the shaping of the research process. As a white woman born in 1995, into the newly democratic South Africa, I found myself growing up during a very interesting and challenging time. Born to a conservative Afrikaans father already in his early 50s and a much younger, slightly more progressive English mother, I experienced some cultural

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and racial dilemmas. These dilemmas often resulted in many debates and arguments between my father and I, where we challenged each other's beliefs and opinions. As frustrating as these moments were, I believe that it began to teach me to think beyond what I was seeing and being taught, and to rather question and challenge wherever I could. These instances and my father's instilled value of finding a joy in learning began to give me a voice for social justice issues.

With the development of this voice, and my own personal privilege, I became extremely focused on debating the realities of social justice rather than connecting to those affected by injustices. The issue with this was that it created a context of trying to be helpful under the guise of being some form of hero, which I would later come to learn connects strongly with the concept of white saviourism. The concern with this is that it resulted in me minimising the experiences of those I was "helping "and "fighting for" rather than moving aside for the platform to be taken. I came to realise later that when minimisation of experiences occurs, it makes it difficult to truly connect with and to understand that person's own personal journey.

I was only able to begin bridging this disconnect when I began my honours in Psychology at the University of Pretoria. It was there during one of my community psychology classes that I began to feel challenged on my prior beliefs and privileges, and at times personally called out for them, especially in the context of "being a hero". This was a challenging time as I felt my personal values and intentions being pulled apart and it was uncomfortable. A particular area where my uncomfortableness became apparent was that I had developed a keen interest in community work and, researching the nature of sex work and the dynamics of agency within sex work. I had to, however, come to understand where my interest in such a context had developed from and whether my intentions were self-serving or rather directed towards those of the given community.

As a result of community practicals and self-reflection prompted by the community psychology class discussions, I began to truly learn the value of creating space by listening and connecting first to that person and their personal experiences. This developed even further during my master's in counselling psychology training and especially felt and internalised during my internship training at a therapy and assessment centre located at a child and youth care centre in 2020. Working in such a context meant that I would often work with clients and families from socio-economic contexts very different to my own. However, despite these differences, I realised that we are all just looking for a space to shine light onto our hardships and to be able to tell our story in a safe space. Similarly, within the current study there was a need to create space where the story of those who had been trafficked could be told, without

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making it a space where my voice had ultimately influenced it. This would have been reminiscent of the past struggles mentioned when it came to social justice issues.

For the current study, I found that reading the trafficked person's case files in private and alone with my own thoughts increased the potential of falling into the trap of judging their story rather than connecting with their story, as it was at times distressing to read some of the contents. The desire to be emotionally distant was a strong desire and, as such, it was something I had to actively work on as I realised that if I had to distance myself, this would have jeopardised the reading of each file from an empathetic but analytical point of view. This meant that I had to prepare myself before the reading of each file, which was beneficial as it allowed me to create a clearer headspace so that I could give each trafficked person the attention and space they had deserved.

Contents of each case file were often of a distressing nature as it detailed instances of abuse, rape, and acts of torture. These were difficult details to digest, and it was important to ensure that the distress did not result in any form of bias. This was mitigated by ensuring that the code book was always adhered to so that consistency could be reached. Additionally, I needed to become aware of and acknowledge that each participant's perspectives were from that of three white women and that their experiences may have come with its own bias and subjectivities. As such, I had to engage and be mindful of their perspectives and that I would not assimilate my own perspective with theirs. This was important as, as a researcher I hold a sense of power in relaying information, and it is my duty to accurately relay what they had shared and in a manner that was not tainted by my own experiences and thoughts. By doing so, I was able to fully engage in each case file without any instances of participants' opinions coming to mind. What this ultimately allowed for, was for the telling of a complex phenomenon in a manner that was truly reflective of the reality and with minimal overshadowing of the experiences of those in the case files. Ethical considerations of the study will be discussed next.

Ethical Considerations

This section covers the specific ethical principles which were considered and maintained throughout the entire research process. Ethical principles such as (a) sensitivity of data (b) informed consent, (c) confidentiality and (d) the protection of interview participants, were constantly observed and adhered to. Before the collection of data, institutional approval was obtained from the Faculty of Humanities', Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria. Once this approval was obtained, along with the subsequent permission granted from HR (Appendix VI), sampling and data collection could begin. Since existing data was

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used from HR case files, collection of data was initially planned to be conducted on the HR premises to ensure the protection and privacy of the information. However, due to Covid-19 regulations announced by the South African government, HR worked remotely during the entire research process. As such, HR provided their files under certain agreed-upon restrictions to ensure the protection of each file. File collection and returns were conducted with the director of the organisation only and agreed-upon timelines were strictly adhered to as to how long each file will be kept for processing. Files were handed over in groups of three to ensure that the researcher never had more than three files at a time in her possession.

Numerous measures were taken to protect the confidentiality of the file contents. This was achieved by locking all files away in a personal cupboard. Collection and analysis of case files were documented in a password-protected Excel spreadsheet that was saved on a password-protected Google Drive. Each case file that was analysed was further kept confidential through use of a unique identifying number to for anonymisation. The researcher, furthermore, did not interact with any of the trafficked persons whose files were used and only accessed the necessary information needed from their files. Files were not of a therapeutic or criminal nature and only contained screening forms and tip-off information. By ensuring that no involvement with the trafficked persons took place, any potential distress or harm was negated.

When it came to the process of conducting interviews, each participant's right to autonomy was upheld using an information letter and an informed consent form. Consent forms were provided to each participant before the start of the interview by HR. Those who met the inclusion criteria and who agreed to participate were requested to email the signed consent form before interviews could commence. Once the researcher had gone through the information letter with participants, that they had received from HR, any additional questions and concerns were addressed. Even though no foreseeable risks and discomfort were expected, it was emphasised that participants could withdraw at any point during the study without any negative consequences. Audio and video recordings of interviews were immediately transferred from the mobile phone to a secure storage folder on Google Drive. Access to the drive and folder was password protected. Furthermore, any potential issues of confidentiality were accounted for by use of pseudonyms for all the participants. In instances where interviews were conducted via Zoom, private emails were sent with a specially created password to access the Zoom meeting. Once the participant had entered the meeting, the Zoom room was locked to ensure that privacy was upheld.

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To adhere to Covid-19 safety protocols, procedures such as physical distancing, wearing of a cloth face mask and hand sanitisation were adhered to in instances where face-to-face interviews could not be avoided. In such instances participants were consulted with before interviewing started to ascertain and address concerns they had regarding meeting face to face. To account for the ethical principle of beneficence, participants were offered psychological debriefing and counselling by a counselling psychologist, Ms. Webster, at no cost should they experience any distress during or after the interview process. Ms. Webster confirmed the use of her services in this regard (Appendix VII). None of the participants expressed the need for debriefing following their interviews. It was ensured that the collected and analysed data from the transcribed interviews and case file notes did not contain any information that could be used to identify interview participants and trafficked persons in any way. This data will be stored in a secure location at the Department of Psychology, University of Pretoria, for re-use and will be archived for a minimum period of 15 years.

Conclusion

This chapter described the use of a descriptive case study design to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. These two aspects were carefully outlined and detailed to provide insight into the methodological approach of the study. Furthermore, the sampling procedure of the two data sets, case files and semi-structured interviews, were also discussed. Following this, the collection and analysis procedure of the data sets were also outlined. The process of creating and employing the use of a code book for the case file collection and analysis was also provided. A discussion followed regarding the research quality of the study and how it was maintained throughout the entire research process, with specific reference to a research audit and reflexivity statement. The chapter concluded with a detailed discussion on ethical considerations employed within the study. Chapter five contains the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Research Findings

The aim of the study was to, through the analysis of case files and participant interviews, explore and describe the individual and contextual vulnerability factors which were involved in the human trafficking process of identified minors and adult trafficked individuals who were serviced by Hope Risen (HR). The findings developed from the content analysis in terms of vulnerability factors present for the trafficked individuals, will be presented according to the objectives of the current study. The findings for individual vulnerability factors will be presented first, followed by the findings for contextual vulnerability factors and then the findings for unusual vulnerability factors. Following this, the specific combinations of vulnerability factors are presented which will be enhanced with displays of factor prevalence. Similarly, after an introduction to each interview participant, the findings developed from the thematic analysis will be presented and discussed according to the thematic map which showcases the themes and sub-themes that have developed. As such, for the study, the quantitative and qualitative findings are initially presented separately. The quantitative findings based on the first four objectives are presented next.

Quantitative Data Findings

During the data analysis process, an unique identifying code (identifier) was used for each trafficked individual. In this chapter, included case files will be referred to by both "identifier" and "trafficked individual", depending on the type of description used to present findings. When referring to specific cases and vulnerability profiles, the relevant identifier will be used.

Characteristics of Trafficked Individuals

As shown in the previous chapter (see Figure 3), fifteen case files on trafficked individuals as provided by HR, were included in the study for the final data analysis. These files comprised of individuals from diverse contexts in terms of gender, age, nationality, and education level. The demographic characteristics of the trafficked individuals are summarised and presented below in Table 8.

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Table 8

Demographic Characteristics of the Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 15)

Identifier	Age [a]	Age at TIP [b]	Nationality	Gender	Education
001	21	Child	South African	Female	Grade 12
002	36	Adult	ND [c]	Female	ND
003	29	Adult	South African	Female	Tertiary Education
004	24	Adult	Tanzanian	Male	ND
005	21	Adult	South African	Female	ND
006	31	Adult	South African	Female	ND
007	16	Child	ND	Female	ND
008	25	Adult	Zimbabwean	Female	ND
009	31	Adult	ND	Female	ND

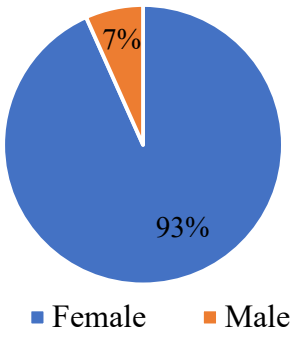
[a] Age at TIP refers to the age at the time that the identifier was trafficked. The terms child and adult are used, as ages in years were not consistently documented in the case files.

[b] Age refers to the age at which the TIP case was documented with Hope Risen.

[c] ND = Not documented. ND refers to instances where insufficient information was provided in case files to determine the characteristic.

Figure 5

Gender of Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 15)



Most trafficked individuals were female (93%) (see Figure 5) and over the age of 18 (73%) at the time HR assisted them (see Figure 6). A large portion of the trafficked individuals serviced by HR at the time of documentation, were adults (73%) with child trafficked

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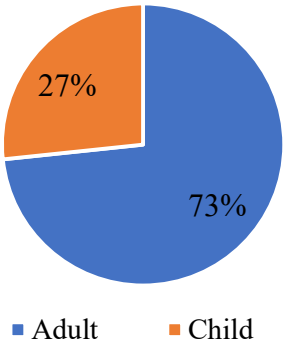
individuals being in the minority (27%). A specific distribution of age was not possible due to the inconsistent documentation of age in years in all case files.

Figure 6

Age of Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 15)



The findings of the trafficked individuals' vulnerability factors in terms of individual, contextual, and unusual vulnerability factors are shown next.

Individual Vulnerability Factors.

Objective 1 aimed to explore and describe the individual vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals serviced by HR. In the following section, findings developed from the content analysis that relate to objective 1 are presented. These factors will be shown separately, first for adult trafficked individuals, and then for child trafficked individuals. Findings for individual vulnerability factors for adult trafficked individuals is discussed next.

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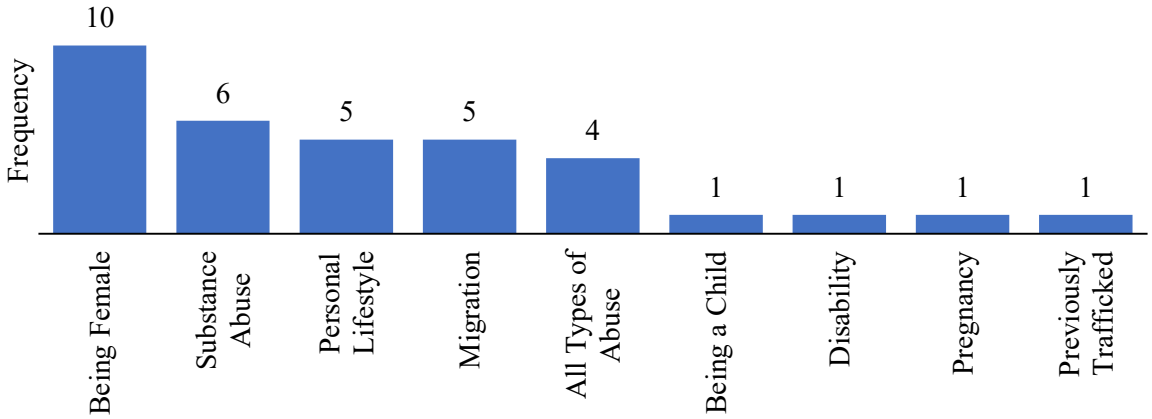
Figure 7

Individual Vulnerability Factors for Adult Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 11)



The extent to which the individual vulnerability factors appeared for all the adult trafficked individuals is displayed in Figure 7. The vulnerability factor of Being Female was noted to be the most prevalent individual vulnerability factor amongst the adult trafficked individuals (n = 10) with Substance Abuse as the second most frequent vulnerability factor amongst the adult trafficked individuals (n = 6). The vulnerability factor Being a Child (n = 1) referred to a case in which the trafficked individual was groomed as a child by the perpetrator but trafficked as an adult. Findings for individual vulnerability factors for minor trafficked individuals is presented next.

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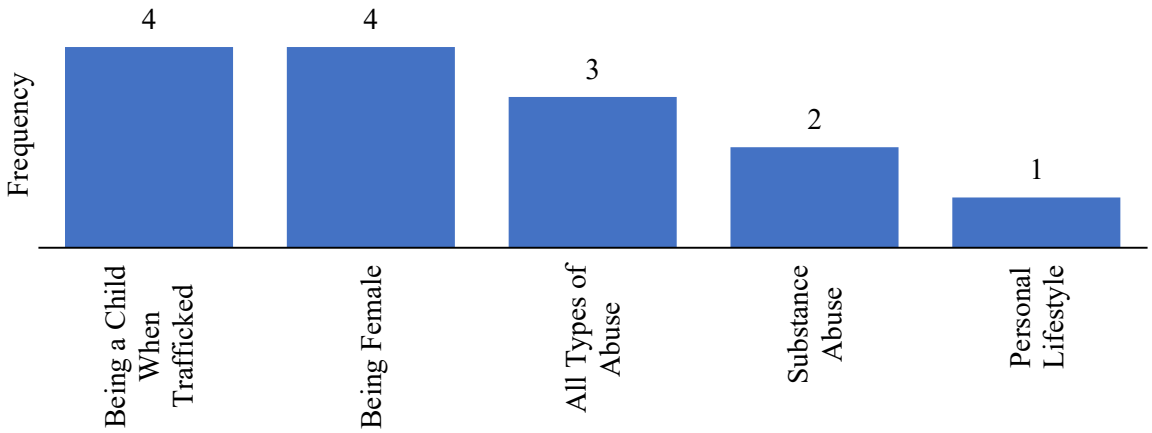
Figure 8

Individual Vulnerability Factors for Child Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 4)



The extent to which individual vulnerability factors appeared for child trafficked individuals in the study is displayed in Figure 8. This shows that Being a Child When Trafficked (n = 4) and Being Female (n = 4) were the most prevalent, followed by All Types of Abuse (n = 3). Findings for contextual vulnerability factors of adult trafficked individuals are displayed next.

Contextual Vulnerability Factors.

Objective 2 aimed to explore and describe the contextual vulnerability factors involved in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals serviced by HR. The content analysis of adult trafficked individuals revealed the presence of various contextual factors that influenced the vulnerability of each adult trafficked individual. These findings are discussed next.

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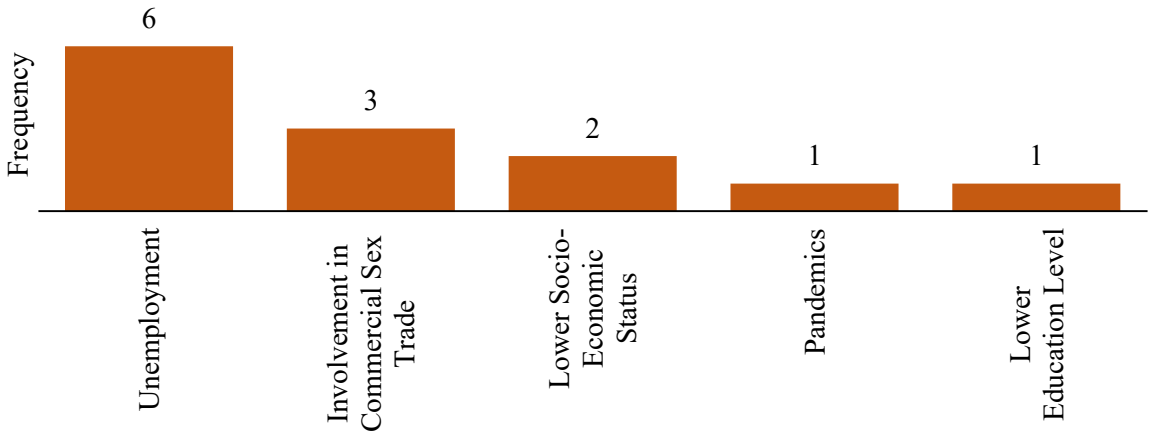
Figure 9

Contextual Vulnerability Factors for Adult Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 11)



The extent to which the contextual vulnerability factors appeared for all the adult trafficked individuals serviced by HR is displayed in Figure 9. The vulnerability factor of Unemployment (n = 6) was noted to be the most prevalent contextual vulnerability factor, followed by Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade (n = 3).

No contextual vulnerability factors for child trafficked individuals were documented by HR and therefore could not be extracted from the case files. Unusual vulnerability factors for both child and adult trafficked individuals are described next.

Unusual Vulnerability Factors.

Objective 3 aimed to explore and describe any unusual and/or previously unreported vulnerability factors in the trafficking process of trafficked minor and adult individuals, serviced by HR. Vulnerability factors that were not accounted for according to the literature review and therefore unstated in the created code book are displayed next. These factors will be displayed next for adult trafficked individuals and then for child trafficked individuals.

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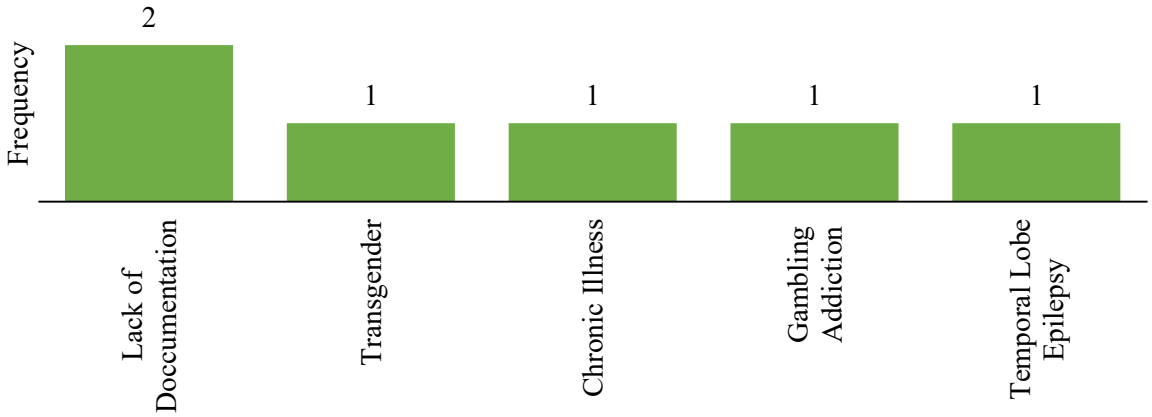
Figure 10

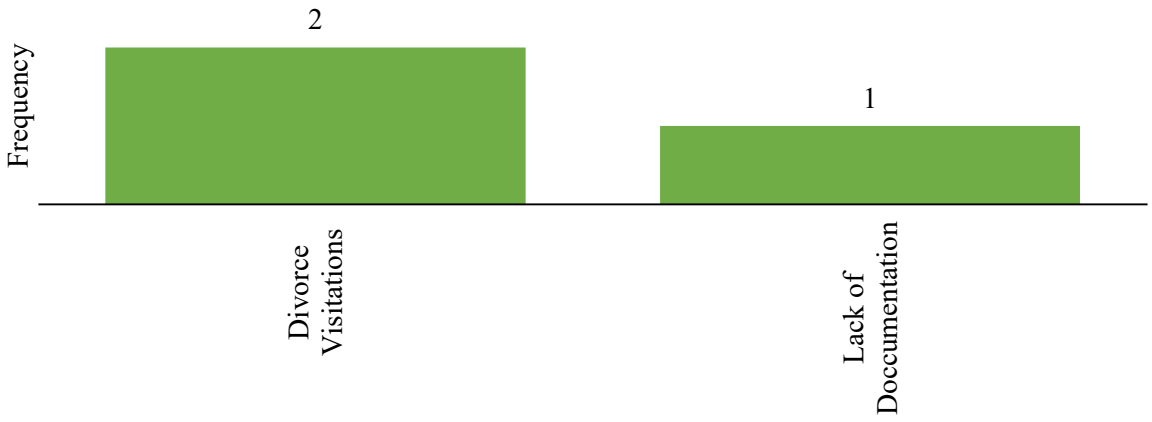
Unusual Vulnerability Factors for Adult Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 6)



Unusual vulnerability factors for adult trafficked individuals are displayed in Figure 10. The most frequently appearing unusual factor was Lack of Documentation (n = 2). Documentation in this instance pertains to the lack of South African identification documents for two South African citizens. Findings for unusual vulnerability factors for minor trafficked individuals is presented next.

Figure 11

Unusual Vulnerability Factors for Child Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 3)



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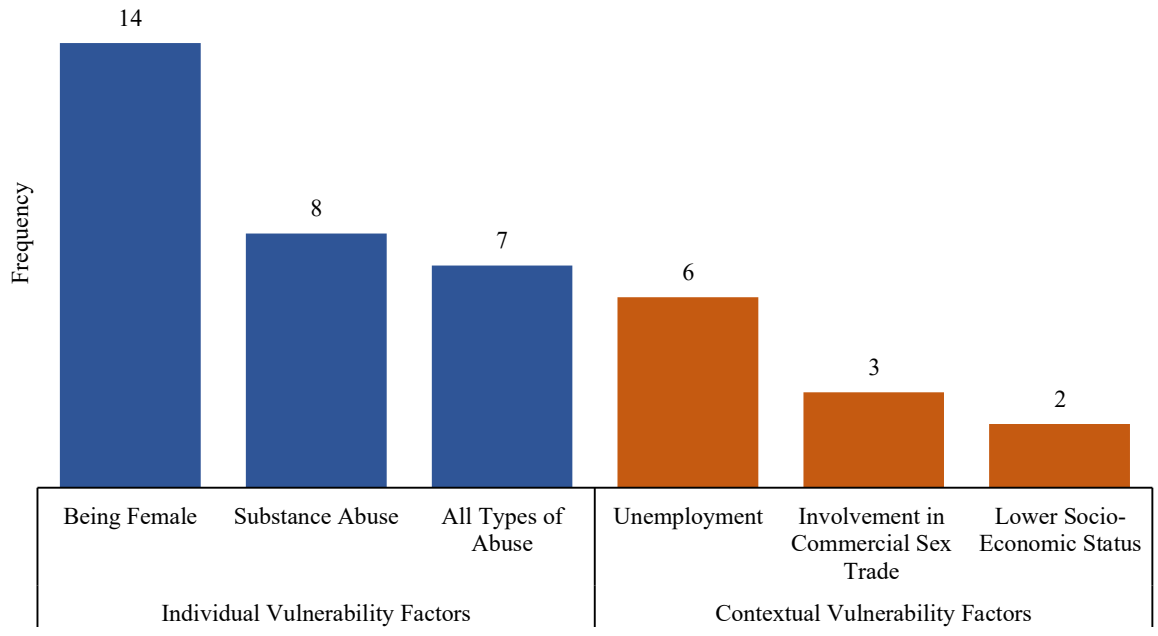
Unusual vulnerability factors for child trafficked individuals are displayed in Figure 11. The most frequent appearing factor was Divorce Visitations (n = 2). In this instance the two children were siblings who were trafficked during divorce visitations with one specific parent. Divorce visitations were set up as overnight and weekend stays, which created the opportunity for exploitation. The findings of the combination of vulnerability factors for both child and adult trafficking individuals will be discussed in the next section.

Combination of Individual, Contextual, and Unusual Vulnerability Factors.

Objective 4 aimed explore and describe the combinations of individual and contextual vulnerability factors of trafficked identified minor and adult trafficked individuals serviced by HR. The findings of the content analysis revealed trafficked individuals (n=5) who had the highest frequency of individual and contextual factors involved in their TIP process. This included vulnerable adults (n=3) and vulnerable minors (n=2). Data for all fifteen trafficked individuals are shown in Appendix VII which gives an overall view at factors present in each trafficked individuals' trafficking process Each trafficked individual had more than one factor present in their process, spread across the three vulnerability categories (See Appendix VII).

Figure 12

Most Prevalent Individual and Contextual Vulnerability Factors of Both Child and Adult Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 15)



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The overall prevalence of both the individual and contextual vulnerability factors across trafficked individuals is displayed in Figure 12. Being Female (n = 14), Substance Abuse (n = 8) and All Types of Abuse (n = 7) are the three most prevalent individual vulnerability factors. Unemployment (n = 6), Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade (n = 3), and Lower socio-economic Status (n = 2) are the three most prevalent contextual vulnerability factors.

Specific combinations of individual, contextual, and unusual vulnerability factors for both adult (See Table 9) and child trafficked individuals (See Table 10), in descending order of frequency is shown below. When considering Table 9, despite the presence of three trafficked individuals with the same factor frequency (n = 7), a slightly different vulnerability factor profile can be seen for each. Identifier 008, has a higher frequency of individual factors (n = 5), compared with trafficked individuals 002 and 014.

Similarly, an identical vulnerability combination profile can be seen for the most vulnerable child trafficked individuals (See Table 10). When considering the holistic picture for child trafficked individuals in this sample, identifiers 010 and 011 contained the same number of factors (n = 5), which can be attributed to the fact that both these identifiers were trafficked together.

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Table 9

Combinations of Vulnerability Factors of Adult Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 11)

	Individual Vulnerability Factors										Contextual Vulnerability Factors									Unusual Vulnerability Factors									
Identifier	All Types of Abuse	Being a Child	Being Female	Disability	History of Substance Abuse	Migration	Personal Lifestyle	Pregnancy	Previously Trafficked	**TOTAL**	Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade	Cultural Practices	Inequality	Lower Education Level	Unemployment	Pandemics	Lower Socio-Economic Status	Religious Practices	**TOTAL**	Lack of documentation	Transgender	Divorce Visitations	Chronic Illness	Gambling Addiction	Temporal Lobe Epilepsy	**TOTAL**	**GRAND TOTAL**
002	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**3**	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	**3**	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**	**7**
008	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	**5**	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**7**
014	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	**3**	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	**3**	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**7**
006	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	**4**	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**6**
015	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**3**	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**	**6**
005	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	**3**	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**5**
003	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	**4**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**4**
009	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**2**	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**3**
012	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	**3**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**3**
013	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	**3**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**3**
004	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**3**

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Table 10

Combinations of Vulnerability Factors of Child Trafficked Individuals Serviced by Hope Risen (n = 4)

	Individual Vulnerability Factors										Contextual Vulnerability Factors									Unusual Vulnerability Factors							
Identifiers	All Types of Abuse	Being a Child When Trafficked	Being Female	Disability	History of Substance Abuse	Migration	Personal Lifestyle	Pregnancy	Previously Trafficked	**TOTAL**	Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade	Cultural Practices	Inequality	Lower Education Level	Unemployment	Pandemics	Lower Socio-Economic Status	Religious Practices	**TOTAL**	Lack of documentation	Transgender	Divorce Visitations	Chronic Illness	Gambling Addiction	Temporal Lobe Epilepsy	**TOTAL**	**GRAND TOTAL**
010	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**4**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	**5**
011	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**4**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	**5**
001	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**4**
007	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	**3**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**3**

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Qualitative Data Findings

This section will provide a descriptive introduction of the three interview participants, using pseudonyms. This introduction focuses on describing each participant and their journey into the counter-TIP sphere to provide context into each participant's volunteering role. Following this, the findings of the thematic analysis will be provided according to themes and sub-themes that address the fifth and final objective of the study. Each theme is presented by including verbatim extracts from each participant's interview.

Introducing the Participants

Introducing Jenny. Jenny is a warm and empathetic woman in her early thirties who is qualified as a social worker. Jenny has worked with many individuals dealing with trauma, drug and alcohol dependency and human trafficking. With regards to human trafficking, Jenny has spent the better part of 10 years being involved in the counter-TIP sphere in both a volunteering and professional capacity. Through her work as a social worker, she has provided extensive short-term and long-term therapeutic support to those who had been affected by TIP. It was from there that she formed a partnership with HR and began to work within the organisation's restoration programme. Jenny spoke with kindness and affection for the women she supported and expressed her distress once she heard their experiences in therapy. This distress was visibly evident throughout the interview whenever Jenny mentioned specific survivors. Jenny quite strongly advocated for the use of the term "survivor" when referencing her cases. When looking at the cases she had been involved in, Jenny spoke often of the role that she believed abuse had on increasing the vulnerabilities of the trafficked individuals she had worked with. She furthermore highlighted familial dysfunction and use of addictive substances as being other factors that increased TIP vulnerabilities. As such, Jenny is suggesting that there exists a nexus between the experiences of developmental and relational trauma and the misuse of substances.

Introducing Susan. Susan is an outspoken and approachable woman in her early fifties who strongly advocates for social justice. This had led to her active and extensive work within a church ministry that is largely focused on providing support and advocating for justice on behalf of individuals affected by various inequalities. Within her capacity there, she also provides trauma and spiritual counselling which she feels quite passionately about. Susan's journey within the counter-TIP sphere began in 2014 where she volunteered before she became employed full-time at HR to work on intelligence collection and within the restoration

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programs. Since 2019, Susan has gone back to working as a volunteer at HR where she now aids in case assessments and acts as an occasional advisor for case support. Susan spoke candidly about how important it is within her work to be able to provide support services to trafficked individuals, as she believed that many didn't get the quality of services that they deserved. Thus, the view that Susan holds strongly points to the role that structural factors play in contributing to TIP vulnerability. Within the context of TIP vulnerability this is pertinent to the consideration of how structural factors such as organisational support, affect the role of vulnerability development or continuation.

Introducing Claire. Claire is a nurturing and conversational woman in her early seventies who prides herself on her spirituality. It is on this foundation of spirituality and pastoral work that Claire came to be involved with HR, and subsequently the counter-TIP sphere. From there Claire has spent close to six years providing Christian based spiritual guidance and counselling to trafficked individuals receiving restoration services from HR. Initially for Claire, she hadn't experienced anything in relation to TIP and was instead more involved in the field of drug and alcohol addiction. However, through her work and personal life, Claire connected with members of HR who subsequently introduced her to the work of counter-TIP, which was where her eyes were opened to the reality of the crime. Claire expressed proudly that when dealing with those who had been trafficked, it was found that through spiritual counselling, they were able to confront their experiences and begin to cope more effectively with the trauma of what they had endured. Claire particularly felt that when it came to being vulnerable to being trafficked, that addictions played a complex role in increasing both the vulnerability to be trafficked and re-trafficked. She furthermore expressed that, children are often the most vulnerable of the population, due to living in environments that are characterised by abuse and divorce. The findings of the thematic analysis of the study are presented next.

Findings of Thematic Analysis

The TIP sphere has repeatedly been referenced as one that is complex and obscure, and this was evident from the data collected from each participant. As such the qualitative data and its findings have been presented according to three themes and 10 sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes can be seen in the thematic map (Figure 13) which also provides an indication of the interconnections between all the themes and sub-themes.

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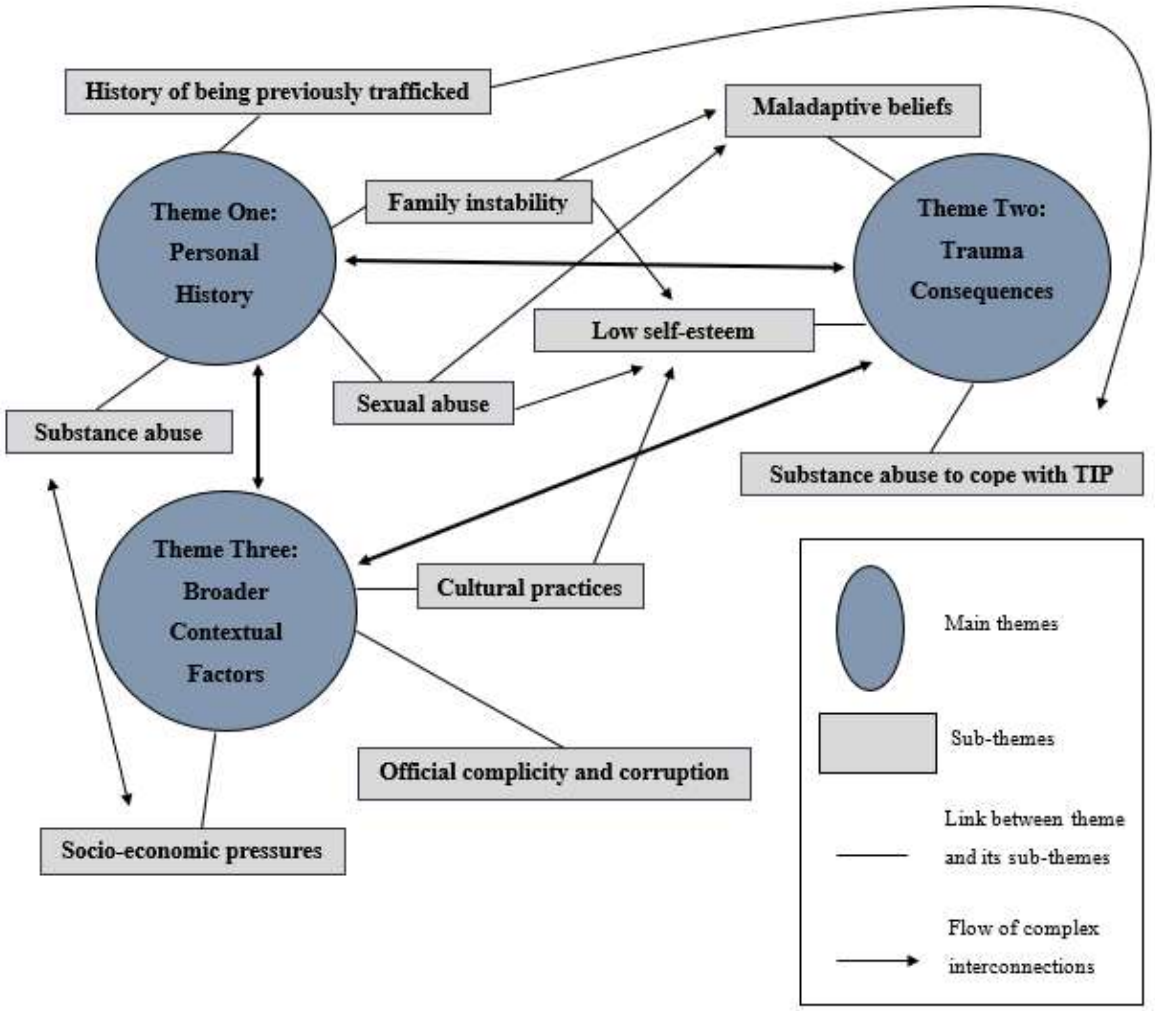
Figure 13

A Thematic Map of the Themes and Sub-Themes Highlighting TIP Vulnerability Factors and Their Complex Interactions.



Theme One: Personal History. A consistent theme that emerged throughout and which was deemed as significant and disheartening by all participants, was the role of the trafficked individual's personal history. All three participants had taken notice of the strong prevalence of trauma in each trafficked individual's life, which had originated from a multitude of personal experiences. Participants strongly believed that these traumatic experiences had played an influential role in the TIP vulnerability of the trafficked individuals. Four sub-themes emerged under this theme and were namely (a) Sexual abuse (b) Family instability (c) Substance abuse and (d) History of being previously trafficked. Each sub-theme is discussed below.

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Sexual Abuse. As suggested by the participants, each of the trafficked individuals they had provided services to, contained unprocessed emotions when it came to dealing with their trafficking experiences. It was always unearthed through the counselling process that they had additional, repressed trauma from their childhoods. Therefore, as Jenny had come to realise, the trafficked individual's trauma experiences "weren't really just from trafficking. It was many times that they were exposed to abuse. A lot of times sexually" (Lines. 146-148). Claire similarly indicated that her understanding of the trafficked individual's vulnerability was that "a lot of them have been through previous situations that they should never have been in" (line. 283). She referenced specific cases where previously "a lot of them have been raped, three, six, five times" (line. 141). Susan strongly believed, it came down to considering "the history, you know what has led them up to that kind of thing [being trafficked]" (line. 404) when wanting to understand the trafficked individual's vulnerability. It was then in considering such, that Susan explained you would see how "a huge majority have a history of sexual abuse as a child" (line. 185).

Susan spoke quite candidly and at length about the role that childhood sexual abuse played in increasing the vulnerabilities of the trafficked individuals she had worked with. She expressed that she found in her work with the trafficked individuals, that these prior experiences of abuse were largely kept secret. This sense of secrecy played out in the manner where some of the individuals "never spoke about it [the abuse] with the family" (line. 186). She further explained that in other cases where disclosure had taken place, "the parents don't believe the little girl, it's your fault" (line. 187). In both instances however, Susan stated that in terms of the abuse, "it's never dealt with" (line. 189) and this lack of disclosure and support significantly concerned Susan. Susan additionally felt that had the abused individual "been helped early, it's a lot more successful" (line. 191) and the risk to be trafficked would have been minimised, if not eliminated.

Susan believed that disclosure was often withheld due to the continual presence of the perpetrator which often enhanced a power dynamic between the perpetrator and the individual. Susan elaborated that this presence reinforced any coercive and fear tactics used, especially:

> if it was an uncle or a brother or a father or even a mother, the blame, they would always convince the person that, you, you made me so cross, and I couldn't now help myself, it's because you dress like that you turned me on and you didn't stop me doing it. So eventually they would start believing it, that they were at

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> fault, and then you know the classic thing who do you think they're going to believe? Do you think they're going to believe you? Will your mother believe me, or do you think she's going to believe you? (Lines. 206-209).

As such when considering TIP vulnerability, participants had highlighted that vulnerability is often borne from a history of sexual abuse. Furthermore, participants believed that this abuse would inevitably leave lasting impacts on the individual that could be seen throughout their life. Participants had equally highlighted the role that emotional abuse and neglect had had on the trafficked individuals and felt that these experiences were borne from a dysfunctional familial environment. This leads into the second sub-theme, family instability.

Family Instability. Alongside the experiences of sexual abuse, participants such as Jenny felt that the complex history that trafficked individuals presented with, would often include instances of familial dysfunction. She expressed that in working with the trafficked individuals, ultimately what would be unearthed was "baggage, and family dysfunction, it is situational trauma" (Line. 171). She further elaborated that familial dysfunction often meant that the individual was lacking in familial resources and that without such a resource "they fall prey to opportunistic crime, they fall prey to deliberate crime" (Line. 178) making them ideal and vulnerable targets for traffickers. Jenny stated that this was due to the breaking down of the family system, and that this break down would negatively affect the trafficked individual's "sense of survival, that sense of accomplishment, that sense of I can do this, and I have what it takes" (Line. 220). When considering what had influenced the vulnerability of those who been trafficked, Susan equally recounted that all the individuals had come from "broken families" (Line. 253). Similar sentiments were shared by Claire who stated that what she had noted with the trafficked individuals she had worked with, was that "a lot of these kids come out of the most dysfunctional homes" (Line. 141). Claire highlighted how this dysfunctionality was most noted in instances of a hostile or volatile divorce between the parents, which played an influential role in the child's vulnerability. Claire referenced such instances with a particular case involving a child:

> I mean one child in, he was, I think he was 10 or 11, his father and mother got divorced, sister went to live with the mother, father used to go off every weekend partying. He's left this little 10-year-old at home all by himself. So, he would go off and bring his friends and they'd have parties in the house and then

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> all his friends arrived with drugs and that's how he got involved. by the age of 11, 12 he was a complete drug addict. (Lines. 143-144).

What Claire felt was important to highlight was the impact that a familial environment characterised by such, would have on a child. She expressed that for many children living with familial instability, the continuous impact would decrease their ability to cope with their environments. Claire believed that this inability to cope would then enhance the child's vulnerabilities to making harmful decisions. She elaborated that in her time within restoration work, she eventually saw that what was at the root of the difficulties in coping, was purely "how hurt they are and how they've been treated" (line. 155). This was a concern according to Claire who expressed that she thinks "very often it's children who run away from home because of terrible situations in the home, where they're badly treated, you know" (Line. 162). Her concern was that for many of these children, their vulnerability to be taken advantage of and exploited was further enhanced once they were homeless and away from the little familial protection they may have had. This was seen as the perfect conditions for traffickers to interact with and groom vulnerable children. For the children who remained in these environments, Claire highlighted how often there is no presence of a father figure, and this was a concern for her as a "father figure is very, very important" (Line. 164). Claire additionally stated that many of the trafficked individuals had grown up "seeing their parents on drugs and alcohol, on all this (Line. 165). As such, Claire highlighted the modelling that some children experienced in terms of coping strategies. What Claire additionally touched on was the role that a history of substance use and abuse had in the lives of many of the trafficked individuals which is presented in the next sub-theme.

Substance Abuse. All three participants appeared to share the belief that a pre-existing substance use disorder was a cause for concern as substance use disorders were a strong contributor to an individual's vulnerability to be trafficked. Once working in the counter-TIP sphere and with those who had been trafficked, Jenny had begun to see a pattern emerging between substance use disorders and trauma, whereby she expressed that "trauma is something closely related to addiction" (line. 79). With the trafficked individuals that Jenny specifically worked with, she observed that their dependency on substances had become the "coping mechanisms that they had taken on to survive" (line. 286). This pattern therefore that Jenny had begun to see forming, was the prominence of self-medicating to cope with previous traumatic experiences and consequences thereof.

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The issue that Jenny expressed with this self-medicating style of coping, is that a reliance on substances to cope meant that the current difficulties in coping, due to previous traumas, became even more complex. Jenny elaborated that this complexity was that the trafficked individual is now attempting to cope with a twofold concern of trauma and substance use disorders. She particularly saw this in how the trafficked individuals are now "dealing with a mind-altering escape, the way that you can just let go and forget about your problems, but they were just getting bigger and bigger and bigger" (lines. 249-253).

Jenny further felt that this new way of coping and medicating was what had in fact lead the individuals to being less likely to making healthy decisions (line. 244) which had contributed to them being trafficked. She believed that this form of coping mechanism was driven by their desire to find "something outside of themselves to manage and to cope" (line. 243). The issues as illustrated by Jenny, was that traffickers, who possess the skills to recognise the link between trauma and self-medicating, were able to use these dependencies to their advantage. Susan shared a similar opinion whereby she expressed that for those who had been trafficked, initially their substance use disorders needed to be feed, which meant that they would often place themselves in precarious situations to support their substance cravings which influenced their vulnerability to be trafficked. She particularly spoke of how many of the trafficked individuals she encountered had initially:

> got involved in prostitution because of their addiction. To be able to support their addiction. Then it just gets from you know, goes from bad to worse, where um they would start off with alcohol, then they would be introduced to um you know other substances and ja then it's sort of once you get addicted to that (lines. 113-114).

Claire had developed a different theory on why trafficked individuals were vulnerable to substance abuse. Through her own work in the field of substance use disorders and subsequently TIP restoration, Claire expressed that many of the individuals used substances "to kind of drown themselves in" (line. 45) as "they are so shame based" (line. 45). She believed that instead of working through these feelings of shame and guilt that "they would go to the bottle, or they'd go to the drugs" (line. 128). Claire furthermore expressed that the use of substances had for some of the trafficked individuals become the primary means to to cope with unemployment and life stressors. "A lot of people have lost their jobs; a lot of people are

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in desperation. So, they take to the drink, they take to the drugs, they take to whatever" (lines. 194 -195). This act of turning to substances to cope was seen by the participants as being pivotal in increasing the risk to be trafficked. As such the role that substance use disorders plays in the trafficking process can be understood here as one that begins long before vulnerability to recruitment or even grooming, and one that would often continue long after restoration had taken place.

What had become equally apparent to the participants was that substance use disorders continued to feature for the trafficked individuals, even after leaving the TIP environments. Claire expressed alongside this, that because of the lasting trauma of the TIP experience and the feeling of being unable to cope with the memories, many of those she worked with were "triggered back into what they're used to- that's their coping mechanism, that's how they used to cope and the ja they go back to the same haunts, where their drug lords were" (Lines. 130-131). Jenny equally stated that "I think that was a lot of the time a big cause or factor to return to destructive and dangerous situations and people" (Line. 290).

This tendency to return was further enhanced by the difficulty in successfully completing drug rehabilitation and refraining from using the desired substances. This is due to the strong link between substance use disorders and substance dependency and the control the traffickers can exhibit through such substances. Very often as part of restoration, the trafficked person would require rehabilitation for their substance dependency which is typically present because of the TIP process. Claire viewed substance rehabilitation as necessary for creating a holistic restoration process, by supporting the individual through their trauma and through their detoxification to prevent a relapse. Unfortunately, what Susan had come to observe was that the pull of substance dependency was often far too strong, even for those who had been in restoration long-term. This was concerning as very often it would lead the person to recidivate back to the TIP environment to obtain their previous substance of choice. Susan referenced how a "child can't even draw you away from that" (Line. 121) which suggests that the pull of addiction and the desire to escape is so strong in some, even after they have left the TIP environment. This was particularly seen in one of her cases, which appeared to have left a lasting impact on Susan, who stated:

> I think when she was in rehab this last time, while she was still with us, um, was the longest period she's been without drugs and that was a two month, uh a two-year stint. But even just before her time was up there, she got kicked out because

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> she was already trying to contact ex-dealers, you know. So um, ja, I do not know enough about addiction to sort of say what can, after being two years clean, you know with the job offer and everything, to already have that need to go and get ja, before you're out of the rehab to already be trying to deal, ja, get people to get you drugs (Lines. 422-424).

Claire recounted a similar case where she expressed that "Ja. And even sometimes we've had, in my innings, we've had people that have been set free for seven years, suddenly, boom, and they can totally land up, oooof, back on drugs and things" (Line. 114). The reality that the participants highlighted was that addiction struggles in those who had been trafficked are extensive and very often results in a life-long struggle that continues to leave the individual vulnerable to being trafficked and re-trafficked. As touched on by the participants, trafficked individuals continued to be vulnerable once leaving TIP, which is further presented in the next sub-theme.

History of Being Previously Trafficked. All three participants stated that the vulnerabilities of those who had been trafficked, did not cease to exist once they had left the TIP environment. A significant challenge that faced all the trafficked individuals was the pull back to the TIP environment, whether by personally choosing to return or by being recruited once more by traffickers. Jenny expressed that through the process of restoration, she "realised how uhm, complex and multi-faceted the problems were" (Line. 143). These problems that Jenny referred to, were the factors such as trauma and unemployment that existed for each trafficked individual that influenced their vulnerability to be trafficked. The complexities that Jenny referenced was that those factors did not cease to exist once removed from the TIP environment. She felt it was important to understand that by virtue of having been trafficked, trafficked individuals were still exceptionally vulnerable to be re-trafficked if not adequately supported. All three participants expressed the need for and importance of receiving restorative support and interventions after being trafficked due to the host of post-trafficking difficulties and traumas. Very often, due to the post-trafficking difficulties, those who were in the restoration process were unable to successfully complete their restoration. Jenny expressed that "often survivors would say I don't want to face this. I don't want to talk about this. I don't want to go there" (Line. 158). This significantly enhanced their vulnerabilities to re-enter TIP as underlying coping mechanism, beliefs about the self and structural difficulties which enhanced vulnerabilities initially, could not be dealt with.

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Claire similarly expressed that the trafficking environment allowed for making ends meet and "at least they've got a roof over their head and kind of a bed" (Line. 221). Once trafficked individuals leave those environments, Claire highlighted that very often they are confronted by the possibility that "they would be on the street" (Line. 226). This suggests that many of the socio-economic and personal difficulties faced prior to being trafficked, remain, and continue to pose challenges to the trafficked individual. As such, as participants were highlighting it appeared that the trafficked individual's very vulnerabilities that were initially exploited, continue to be exploited after leaving TIP. The participants each equally expressed the need for the hands-on nature and long-term process of restoration. From her role and experience within the process, Jenny expressed that restoration typically "wouldn't go less than three months. Mostly it would go on for longer" (Line. 125). The need for a longer process was tied into the fact that those who had trafficked "had a lot of topics and a lot of themes that were relevant to them" (Line. 128) and these "things would come up as we went along" (Line. 127). However, Jenny found that very often for those she attempted to work with "either the impact was too strong, and they weren't there, or the level of interest was not there to commit to the length of the process" (Line. 129). Susan similarly recounted that during the recommended two-year programme, "some didn't complete it, it's just they weren't ready you know um to actually be able to commit to that" (Line. 96). Susan elaborated that the requirements of the restoration programme stipulated that trafficked person refrain from engaging in any romantic relationships. She explained that this was since:

> Just purely, we're dealing with a lot of emotions, so to have someone else you know um in your life, you know from a romantic point of view, um it just wasn't conducive to you being able to move on. You know, rediscovering your identity, so, we asked them to stay out of any kind of serious relationships and they had to commit you know to coming to the actual um sessions. So, a lot of its um the commitment that, they just didn't, they couldn't commit to it (Lines. 101-103).

As such as was stated by the participants, it often appeared that the sacrifices required of the trafficked individuals for restoration to be effective, was very often too much for some of the individuals. It additionally appeared that this was enhanced by the trafficked individual not wanting to process past traumatic experiences, which had left lasting impacts on the individual. This ties in significantly with the second theme which is presented next.

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Theme Two: Trauma Consequences. Following the consideration of how a trafficked individual's personal history influences TIP vulnerabilities, participants emphasised the devastating and lasting impacts of these, often traumatic experiences. Participants elaborated that the psychological and emotional impacts of the trauma manifested in decision makings, cognitions and coping strategies that ultimately enhanced the trafficked individual's vulnerabilities and made them prime targets for traffickers. As such this theme captures the aftermath of trauma and how the consequences of trauma have affected the individual. Three sub-themes emerged under this theme and were namely (a) Maladaptive beliefs (b) Low self-esteem and (c) Substance abuse to cope with TIP. Each sub-theme is discussed below.

Maladaptive Beliefs. When considering the aftermath of trauma and how the trafficked individual had been affected, the participants noted defense mechanisms, coping strategies and specific beliefs held by many. Participants furthered that many of these mechanisms and strategies were not always effective and were often maladaptive. Jenny recounted how her work with those who had been trafficked revealed the nature of their trauma, and that the nature was "dramatic, it was never basic. It was all a pattern of one experience being linked to another previous one" (Lines. 133-134). As such, Jenny explained that many of the trafficked individuals she worked with "were very much filled with defeat" (line. 141). Alongside the feelings of defeat, Jenny expressed that she noted the prominence of defence and coping mechanisms that each trafficked individual had acquired as a consequence of the trauma they had been exposed. Jenny noted how these coping mechanism and cognitions that might have been warped. However, as she noted, despite the maladaptive nature of these defenses "that's just how people survived" (Line. 135).

Jenny noted that the defense mechanism would become prominent during instances where trafficked individuals had been faced with difficulties in regulating their emotions, and she saw how "the survivors often went back to old ways of thinking" (Line. 151). The old ways of thinking, according to Jenny, included the lies that the trafficked individual told themselves, which had developed from the "the processes that were taking place for that period of, of being victim to what they were [prior traumas]" (Line. 154). Jenny expressed the concern that it was those processes which "so easily can sometimes become coping mechanisms and can overtake, can overtake the lifestyle and wellbeing of the person" (Line. 155).

Jenny believed that the beliefs that many of the trafficked individuals held was that they would never be able to cope and that what they had come to experience was all that they could ever know and experience. As such the trafficked individual felt defeated by this realisation and would respond by remaining in abusive situations or engaging in high-risk behaviours

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which may lead to increased vulnerabilities. Jenny stated that this response would often result in the individual feeling compelled to the point where they:

> went back to the old, what seemed to work, the old lifestyle of things that were known, things that were familiar. Uh and I think that was a lot of the time a big cause or factor to return to destructive and dangerous situations and people. (Lines. 288-290).

What Jenny highlighted was that it was in these dangerous situations that the trafficked individual would be exposed to and eventually cross paths with traffickers who would groom and exploit the individual. Susan similarly stated that many of the trafficked individuals held very specific beliefs about themselves, considering their past traumas. In the instances where they had experienced childhood abuse, there was significant self-blame for what had happened to them. Susan noted that many of the trafficked individuals had come to "accept responsibility and you no longer sort of blame the perpetrator anymore, but you blame yourself ja ja, so that sort of um, you know, almost all of them, the cases, involved ja the point where they were actually made to feel guilty" (Lines. 203-204). Susan highlighted that often what occurred is that those who had experienced childhood abuse would respond to their own trauma by becoming involved in commercial sex which "gave them a little bit of power which they didn't have against their abusers growing up" (Line. 277). Susan additionally stated that this was often joined with cognitions and beliefs that one was deserving of the abuse they may endure while in the commercial sex trade, and as such for the trafficked individuals "you feel you know people keep doing it to you so why not allow them to do it to me and get paid for it, you know, so ja" (Line. 190).

This trauma response was a concern to Susan as the involvement in the sex trade would ultimately situate the trafficked individual closer to traffickers, which is often what transpired. These experiences of abuse and the manipulation experienced by the trafficked individuals would often result in psychological responses that Jenny attributed to post-traumatic stress. Jenny stipulated that the vulnerability of trafficked individuals was enhanced in the manner that "what made them vulnerable was again the post-traumatic stress" (Line. 278). She furthered that the aftermath of trauma resulted in an inability to cope and difficulty in experiencing life to its fullest resulted in instances where:

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> there was such inability to cope with life on life's terms, uhm, just to get up in the morning and that would cause any person to put their hand up and say, pick me, because you are so unhappy and so incapable of experiencing life at its fullness or even getting a sense of it that any solution or any presented option becomes enticing. (Lines. 282-283).

Jenny believed that in those instances, the traffickers would present themselves up as the solution to the trafficked individual, who in their state of need to find emotional reprieve, would fall into the trap, and become trafficked. Lastly, as stated by Claire, she believed that many of the trafficked individuals had presented with a victim mentality that needed to be worked with so "that they can actually be set free from all this stuff and lead a normal life" (Line. 62). However, Claire additionally believed that this would only be possible if the trafficked individual worked extensively with their self-esteem which is further presented in the next sub-theme.

Low Self-Esteem. Something that became quite apparent to the participants when they worked with the trafficked individuals was the sense of self-worth that each held about themselves. Additionally, it was noted how the experience of previous traumas negatively shaped how trafficked individuals viewed themselves. Claire stated strongly that she had found that those who she worked with "often did not have a very good self-image and are usually carrying a lot of shame and a lot of guilt. They usually think they're not good enough so they may as well just go back to where they came from." (Line. 136). What Claire had felt important to highlight was that after leaving the TIP environments, the trafficked individuals felt that they were not worthy of healing and thought it would be easier to just return and live through the TIP experience or in denial of the experience. She additionally believed that this lack of belief in the self was borne from the result of "so much emotional baggage" (line. 142) that had resulted from previous traumas and even from the TIP experience which had evidently reinforced those negative self-beliefs.

Claire additionally expressed that she had sadly witnessed that for many of the trafficked individuals, their self-esteem had been so damaged "that they think they deserve to be treated like that because there must be something wrong with them that they've been beaten or raped or treated so badly their whole lives" (Lines. 230-231). Jenny supported that the concern that she held was that if guidance and support is not provided after these experiences,

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then the impact on the individuals' sense of self is paramount. She additionally stated that then what happens for the trafficked individual is that, ultimately, they are targeted:

> then the stronger personalities, those of the traffickers, and just from ground level all the way up they are very much charmed by and enticed by because there's a massive void and a hole and I think that that is the biggest criteria for being enticed (Lines. 182 -183).

According to Jenny, what was also prevalent for many of these individuals was a life characterised by isolation borne out of low self-worth. She expressed that:

> for the traffickers they are going to exploit that which they can get the most out of. And uhm you know, if, for example a woman, this woman is gonna be used repeatedly. It's not like a drug that can just be used once, and so if that woman is isolated then she can be used a lot more than that which (pause) uh one which is connected to community and connected to other beings" (Lines. 258-260).

The concern that Jenny wanted to highlight with isolation is that if the trafficked individual is isolated and lacking in social and community support, then they are at an increased risk to be trafficked. She specifically believed that having a system to which to draw strength from would enhance the ability to remove oneself from dangerous circumstances. Jenny stated that for the trafficked individuals, most did "find themselves isolated and I think a lot of the survivors then didn't have much to draw from or to give to and those systems are so crucial" (Lines 271-272).

What the participants felt crucial to understand was that in these instances, traffickers possess the expertise of how to capitalise on this isolation, as they are aware of how strong the desire for connection and affection from others is for the trafficked individuals. This emotional vulnerability as termed by Susan, was borne out of "the lack of parenting, the lack of love growing up, the lack of acknowledgement (Line. 405). Traffickers can recruit those in search of affection and acceptance as there appeared to be the lack of protective resources in the form of safe relationships. As such for many of those who desire love and affection, when it is offered up to them, by anyone, they will accept it. Claire saw this regularly with the trafficked children whereby they yearn for connection and are thus vulnerable to pressure to become

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involved in gangs and drug dealings which then further heightens their vulnerability. She additionally expressed that despite the consequences of gang involvements, the child often gains the desired sense of belonging and connection and that it's from there that.

> they get their identity because they're actually looking for identity, they're looking for somebody to actually just love them and care for them. That's what they want. They just want to be loved. So, if you get into a gang now, at least you're a part of something and you're regarded as important because now you're part of this gang and the fact that then they learn to shoot and kill and all the rest of it and take drugs and everything else that goes with it, is very, very sad." (line. 183).

Claire additionally recounted that for many of the trafficked women she encountered, they were vulnerable due to a history of a childhood that was characterized by a lack of affection from, and connection to an important paternal figure. She elaborated that for many of these women, they were at an increased risk for grooming, as they had therefore never experienced.

> Real love because, especially the girls, when they haven't had a daddy figure, then they're desperately looking for love and, they'll go with any guy who gives them the least bit of attention. And these swines are so good at grooming and convincing, that they're just so gorgeous and so wonderful and all the lies that go with it and then these poor girls fall for it (Lines. 210-213).

Claire expressed however the very quickly these women realise that something is wrong, and "they are treated like death there, they're treated so badly by these pimps" (Line. 227). Claire confirms that from her experience with those undergoing the restoration process "there's the Stockholm Syndrome, where they'd rather be beaten up and stay where they are than get out in the real world and try and cope on their own because most of the time their self-image has been so damaged" (Line. 228).

Susan similarly observed that many of those she worked with, because of the abuse and dysfunction, had a deep desire for affection and connection which had ultimately been manipulated. She, like Claire had noted that many of the trafficked individuals were "growing

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up with an absent father, so there was the vulnerability where maybe they started getting involved in relationships because of the support they got, only to discover that they get trafficked from there" (Line. 261). This false pretense of a relationship is enhanced with grooming acts of flattery, affection, and financial security to a large degree than what the individual is used to. Eventually, the true intentions of the trafficker are revealed. However, the problem as Claire expressed is that "a lot of them think that they're not good enough to expect any better" (line. 230).

This lack of personal belief in the self, additionally meant that many, were unable to successfully complete the restoration process. Jenny witnessed often that the "interest might have been there but that the impact of the trauma was too strong, and they weren't there" (Line. 129). Susan similarly observed that "some didn't complete it, it's just they weren't ready you know" (line. 96). Claire however came to understand that the sense of readiness was strongly impacted by their self-image:

> some people don't want to go through the whole process. They want to retract; they want to go back to where they came from for various reasons because very often, they don't have a very good self-image and they're usually carrying a lot of shame and a lot of guilt. They usually think they're not good enough so they may as well just go back into what they did before. So, there's a kind of a giving up before they've even got anywhere. (Lines. 136-137).

What participants had felt was necessary to understand when it came to considering self-esteem is that a lower self-esteem and sense of worth can influence the risk to be trafficked. This is because, as they saw with the trafficked individuals, there is a strong desire to be worthy and of value to someone else and that this is typically used by traffickers to groom and ultimately exploit the individual. The following sub-theme will present how substances used to cope with TIP, influences TIP vulnerability.

Substance Abuse to Cope with TIP. When discussing the role of substances once individuals were within the trafficking process, Susan expressed that very often, the trafficked individuals were introduced to much stronger substances such as CAT (methcathinone) and crystal meth (methamphetamine). The role of substances however did not end at the initial stages of trafficking. As Susan explained, substances very quickly became a prominent feature of the daily lives of many of these trafficked individuals:

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> What often happens, they get woken up in the morning, this is when they're living in a, in a brothel. So, they will get woken up um and then they have their drugs of choice, they kind of like get offered and so they can choose what they want for the morning um for the day. So, they wake up with drugs um at lunch time they get given their fixes (Lines. 124-125).

Even trafficked individuals who did not have a prior substance use disorder or addiction, very often would begin to excessively engage in substance use once they had been trafficked. Susan highlighted how the use of substances was a complex factor, as trafficked persons were ultimately "forced into addiction" and not active users by choice (line. 126). As Claire expressed, "they are put onto drugs immediately, so that they will do it, because nobody in their right mind would, especially when you haven't chosen to, you know, you're forced into it" (lines. 40-41).

All three participants expressed that the desire to escape from the current trafficking process was achieved by the trafficked individual by depending on these substances to create a mental and psychological escape. The use of substances therefore developed from a method of coercion used by traffickers to an ingrained coping mechanism used by the trafficked individuals. Jenny supported that the substances often became a "coping mechanism that they [trafficked individuals] had taken on to survive" (line. 286). Jenny highlighted that substance abuse could be a trauma response as it enables the individual to cope with the physical and psychological trauma of being in a trafficking situation. The concern as expressed by Susan, is that reliance on substances to escape ensures that the individual is constantly in a state of debt bondage, because "they've got to pay it back [the drugs received]" (Line. 125). This creates a situation where the trafficked individual is continuously vulnerable to the traffickers who use substances as a method of control to force the individual to remain in the trafficking sphere. The third and final theme is discussed next.

Theme Three: Broader Contextual Factors. The third and final theme, which participants believed to extensively influence the vulnerability of those who had been trafficked, was the specific contextual situations and circumstances faced by the individual. Additionally, participants expressed that institutional forces and organisations further contributed to the increasing of vulnerabilities in a manner that was not always obvious. As such, three sub-themes emerged under this theme and were namely (a) Socio-economic

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pressures (b) Official complicity and corruption and lastly, (c) Cultural practices. Each sub-theme is discussed below.

Socio-Economic Pressures. Jenny expressed that when considering the socio-economic status of those who had been trafficked, she was always faced with the reality that for most "on an emotional level as well as a financial level, it's just survival" (Line. 227). Prior to being trafficked, those that Jenny worked with were almost always inevitably faced with the pressures of financially supporting their families. As such, the force or drive to find financial independence and generate an income to support oneself and family was viewed as a significant vulnerability factor for most of the trafficked individuals. This was confirmed by all three participants who explained that many of the trafficked individuals initially found themselves in a desperate situation where they would do whatever was necessary to obtain financial reprieve. This became a need that ultimately made the individuals more vulnerable and prime targets for traffickers. Jenny supports this by stating that for many of those she worked with, they had been vulnerable "because there wasn't uhm a lot of opportunity. There was a lot of financial strain, distress" (Line. 213-214). And it's because of that financial strain that "a lot of the time that's really what pushes individuals into the hands of those then, ja, ja….so I think that there's so many things, but those are probably the biggest" (Line. 217).

The complexity that exists here is that very often financial or employment opportunities would be accepted that might already be viewed as disturbing, due to the suspicious conditions of which the opportunity exists in. However, the desperation would ultimately overpower many of the trafficked individuals. Instances such as Claire expressed where "You get these girls who are prostitutes in their own right. They've chosen to be prostitutes because they can't make money any other way, and some of them are married with children and they are standing on the corner of the streets and they are selling themselves just to make ends meet, to pay the school fees and to pay the food, and they also are very vulnerable" (Line. 366-368). Those who sell sex are at an increased risk to be trafficked as the interaction of vulnerabilities such as the unregulated nature of sex work and the interaction with specific clientele creates ideal conditions for coercion and exploitation. Susan in particular spoke of a case whereby one of the trafficked women, who was held captive, had reached out for help to customers of the brothel, but was rejected because many lacked the knowledge that "prostitution can more than likely be involved in trafficking at the same time" (Line. 140). Susan stated that the use of harmful, sexist language was prevalent for this woman where "it's calling a woman a prostitute, a whore" (Line. 136). This case was referenced by Susan to caution against the assumption that

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all instances of sex work is an entirely voluntary employment choice and that the individuals always have the means to walk away, without any sense of repercussion.

The desperation to obtain a sense of financial independence was furthermore seen in instances involving children. Susan recounted a few cases that involved instances of the "blesser" phenomenon where "some of them [trafficked individuals] were from a vulnerable area you know where there's just not money for food. So, it starts off with the blessers, you know, so the parents will send the daughters to someone who wants to help them with groceries but then they've got to swap a favour for the groceries (Lines. 195-198). The danger is that the blesser-blessee phenomenon has been normalised in some communities in South Africa. By posing as a blesser, traffickers are able to lure unsuspecting individuals who are under the belief that they are receiving financial incentives in return.

Susan additionally felt it pertinent to highlight that the living circumstances of children, where overpopulation is prevalent and house shares are the norm, increases the vulnerability to be exposed to and accessible to potential abusers and traffickers. She expressed that this was possible as often children and their families shared their living spaces with others to combat the housing shortage, and that this often resulted in "adults sharing beds with little ones" (Line. 232). She referenced that when considering instances of bed sharing, children were directly accessible to potential perpetrators and so it was important to consider the reality that:

> very often they [the children] are sexually abused right under their own roofs and it ja, it just becomes the norm, you know, if a man wants to sleep with a child, then ja, it becomes a normal thing, and that's because of them having to have so many families living in one shack of different ages (Lines. 232-237).

Conditions such as these often results into what Claire observed as "very often it's children who run away from home because of terrible situations in the home, where they're badly treated, you know" (Line. 162). Claire further stated that the consequential living on the streets, was dangerous for these street children, "because there they're being attacked, they're being sodomised, they're being raped, you know so these children are very vulnerable on the streets" (Line. 177). Therefore, the role of the trafficked individual's socio-economic status is undeniable as it often governed the vulnerable individual's financial and living conditions . When asked whether economic factors and unemployment are a contributing factor to vulnerability, Claire responded with "Ja, ja. I think so, you know, and I think money, security

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is probably one of the main reasons that they are trafficked because they are desperate for a job, very often" (Line. 309). Traffickers may lure young girls and women into supposedly decent employment opportunities that often involves a domestic nature. This form of labour trafficking typically involves the individual working in a private residence where they are often isolated and removed from any social support and labour regulation. This strongly correlates with a specific case recalled by Claire:

> I was thinking of one woman, um, where they're employed but under very extreme circumstances. And it seems it starts off not too badly and then after a while they are – they can't go out and their hours are lengthened, and the job extends to more and more and more and the one that we dealt with, she was working like from six in the morning till 10 o'clock every night, no time off, hardly any food, she wasn't allowed out, she was locked in and um, I think her telephone – her phone was taken away from her, she had no communication with the outside world. (Lines. 355-357).

The apparent lack of employment and economic challenges faced by the trafficked individuals appeared to have been further exacerbated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Claire similarly stated "and I think it's this whole socio-economic situation that we're dealing with, I think Covid hasn't helped. A lot of people have lost their jobs, a lot of people are in desperation" (Line. 194). Susan additionally highlighted the effect of socio-economic pressures that "absolutely, the unemployment which leads to people not having homes and the lack of houses, the lack of running water" (Line. 239). This furthermore highlights how the contextual situation of the trafficked individual is significantly influential. Participants believed that the contextual situation of trafficked individuals were further enhanced by instances of official complicity and corruption, which is presented in the next sub-theme.

Official Complicity and Corruption. Participants additionally highlighted the influence that entities typically outside of the control of the trafficked individuals had on their TIP vulnerabilities. Focus was particularly brought to the role that influential organisation such as the South African Police Service (SAPS) and legal and government entities play within the human trafficking sphere. Both Susan and Claire felt it crucial to mention the well-established role that the SAPS and the political sphere have on increasing vulnerabilities to be trafficked.

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This appeared to frustrate both Susan and Claire as the very sectors responsible for the safety of vulnerable populations, were often complicit in TIP and in contributing to TIP vulnerabilities. According to Susan, SAPS was complicit through the "corruption side where there's police being paid to protect the very traffickers" (Line. 76). Susan highlighted how this complicity was precisely the challenge she had encountered when supporting trafficked individuals through the legal and justice journey of the TIP process. She recounted that "so, um they'll [traffickers] get arrested and the next day they are out again" (Line. 76). In its corrupt form, law enforcements such as SAPS officials can facilitate the trafficking process in terms of TIP. This applied in fact to what Susan recalled with some of the cases whereby:

> Ja, and the sad thing is a lot of them [traffickers] have connections in the police. So, they will know who, which girls belong to which guys. So, they [trafficked individual] will go and open a case or ask for help and they [SAPS] will call their pimp to come and fetch them. Others are paid to look after brothels. So, they [SAPS] drive down and make sure they're [who] not getting harassed by anybody but then they get paid by the security guards for the brothels. So, corruption also is a huge, ja, police involvement (Lines. 304-308).

Claire believed that the noted complicity within the law enforcement could be attributed to corruption, where there exists "the greasing of palms" (Line. 239) through bribery. According to Susan crime facilitation on the behalf of SAPS ultimately involves "when these guys, and I'm not saying all police are bad, we work with some wonderful people, but when they have these big parties, these swinging parties and that sort of thing, they're involved in it, you know. Someone is protecting these places, and someone is keeping them [traffickers] out of jail, and someone is making dockets disappear" (Lines. 310-313).

Susan conveyed that through her role of providing advocacy services, she came to realise that most of the trafficked individuals that she supported "don't get the quality of service when they go open a case" (Line. 60). She referenced here a two-fold issue within the SAPS whereby corruption dominates the operations of the institution, as well as that there is a significant lacking in official protocol and TIP policy. Susan recounted a case involving a teenaged girl of 16, "you know she was just drugged on the taxi, wrong place wrong time. But then she was released by the traffickers after a while. There again out of fear of protection, lack of protection from law enforcement the parents wouldn't open a case" (Line. 257-259). Susan

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recounted a case of a prostitute who was at risk of the intent to be trafficked and "if a prostitute goes to a police station to ask for help, they persuade her to actually change their mind and rather go back. So, there's definitely that's a huge thing" (Line. 314) where the police work in conjunction with the traffickers. The final sub-theme is discussed next.

Cultural Practices. Participants additionally believed that TIP vulnerability was affected by the role of certain cultural and traditional customs in many trafficked individuals' lives. Either these customs increased vulnerability according to how they traditionally manifested or when they were manipulated and used deviously by traffickers. When it comes to the role that certain cultural practices have played in increasing the vulnerabilities of those serviced by HR, Susan highlighted the significance of the role of gender within cultural practices. She further expressed that "I think just about every population group is involved in the ladies I've written down here" (Line. 280). What Susan suggested was that the role of gender inequalities was prevalent and deeply embedded in society for it manifest across many of the population groups. Susan went on to highlight that from her experience, a large portion of the cases she had worked with involved "ladies from the black culture" (Line. 154). Susan additionally believed that within such cases, there existed strong cultural dynamics where:

> the cultural issue in that the ladies from the black culture's um very, find it very difficult to share their personal problems because in their culture you don't talk about your problem, you suck it up and get on with it (Line. 154).

As such in instances where there had been childhood abuse and trauma, Susan found that the difficulty in disclosing originated in this dynamic. She observed how "you know it was it [the abuse] happened and let's leave it there, you know" (Line. 186). This idea of a norm of silence that was instilled and reinforced from a young age tied in quite significantly with something else that had become apparent to Susan, which was the role of unequal power dynamics. Susan observed that in a toxic patriarchal system, males have a lot of sexual power where: "he can choose how many women he wants to sleep with, he can choose the ages, underage marriage" (Line. 242). Susan expressed that "you know, the patriarchal systems, is very rife still, you know, in the modern time as well (Line. 241). This was seen by Susan where she recounts how toxic patriarchy and abuse were significantly present in the romantic relationships of some of the trafficked individuals. She views the presence of toxic patriarchy

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as a factor that was influential in increasing vulnerability and expressed that for those cases, it involved:

> There was physical abuse in a relationship, So, the women would then leave that relationship to go find greener grass, you know and that happened with a few of them and that's where they got trafficked from. Um, the one lady left an abusive relationship, and she was picked up at a garage when she was trying to get a lift and a trafficker picked her up to help her, you know. Ja, the others there was a job, they were involved in illegal casinos, you know, gambling and that's where it started from there, from being a croupier she then went into prostitution, um and ja, so there was abuse was for some of them, getting away from physical abuse, only to land up in a different kind of abuse (Lines. 281-288).

Susan additionally emphasised the relevance of cultural practice such Ukuthwala when considering vulnerabilities of trafficked individuals. Ukuthwala as a cultural practice can be manipulated by traffickers due to the unequal power dynamics underlying the practice. Susan recalled that "I did an assignment on Ukuthwala and there's a lot of the, uh Black ladies I spoke to who didn't actually know what it was" (Line. 248). She further expressed that it appears to be that "in the urban areas it's not as common as what it still is in the rural areas." (Line. 250). Susan felt it necessary to mention Ukuthwala as it exists as a cultural practice for some cultures.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on presenting the findings of the two data sets. The findings developed from the quantitative data addressed objectives 1 to 4 in the current study. These findings were presented with a variety of statistics which highlighted factor frequencies for all trafficked individuals, across all three vulnerability categories. The findings developed from the qualitative data addressed the fifth and final objective of the current study. These were presented after a brief introduction to each participant. Thereafter the themes and sub-themes were presented. Following onto Chapter 6, the findings of both data sets will be converged and then discussed considering Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979, 1994). This will be done to provide a holistic understanding of the theoretically integrated trafficking process. The discussion will additionally be considered alongside relevant literature.

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CHAPTER 6

Discussion

The following section provides a discussion on the converged findings provided by both the content analysis and thematic analysis presented in the previous chapter. Theoretical concepts from Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979, 1994) are used to conceptualise the vulnerabilities to being trafficked. First, a discussion of the individual and contextual factors that influenced the vulnerability of identified trafficked minors and adults who were serviced by HR, as viewed through a systemic lens are presented. Following this, an overall discussion on the findings of combinations of vulnerability profiles is discussed with reference to feedback loops, and nonlinear causality. A discussion on individual vulnerability factors is presented next.

Individual Vulnerability Factors

The findings of the study highlighted the prominence of individual vulnerability factors such as gender, a personal history of abuse, and the role of substance use disorders. The findings of such vulnerability factors simultaneously address objectives 1 and 5 of the current study. Findings relating to gender will be discussed first.

Gender. Findings from the study revealed that most cases encountered by HR were female, suggesting that being a female is a specific vulnerability factor. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Cameron et al. (2021, p. 391) who stated that women and young girls are vulnerable to a disproportionate degree when it comes to human rights crises such as human trafficking for sexual exploitation. This vulnerability factor is often further intensified by structural inequalities such as toxic patriarchy (Cameron et al., 2021, p. 391; Roy, 2018, p. 58) which operates from the larger macrolevels and trickles down into the microlevel of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). As a result, in many cultures, women have been marginalised to such an extent that they are at extreme risk to be trafficked (Msuya ,2017, p. 4).

This marginalisation stems from the devaluation of women and the economic, social, and domestic roles that they contribute towards society (Gacinya, 2020, p. 71). As such, many women within their own microsystems, are dependent on their male counterparts for support (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 5) and the removal of that support, whether by death of the spouse or the leaving of the relationship, often renders the woman vulnerable (Gacinya, 2020, p. 71).

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The devaluation of women within society because of gender inequality has significantly influenced the vulnerability to be trafficked compared to men (Gezie et al., 2021, p. 3). However, research by Hume and Sidun (2017, p. 7) found that although women are particularly vulnerable when it comes to sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, men are typically more vulnerable when it comes to labour trafficking. Labour trafficking was not prominent within the study and was only alluded to by participants.

Personal History of Trauma. Findings from the study revealed that the role of all types of previous abuse and consequences of the trauma, influenced the vulnerability to be trafficked. These experiences of abuse left a lasting impact on the psychological functioning and self-esteem of the trafficked individuals. Similarly, literature consistently highlighted that one of the most significant risk factors to be exploited and trafficked is a history of childhood abuse (Franchino-Olsen, 2019, p. 4; Laird et al., 2020, p. 10). Additionally, findings generated by Cancedda et al. (2015, p. 11) found that individuals who had been trafficked were often victims of previous familial abuse and neglect, suggesting the existence of an interacting link. Research by Choi (2015, p 72) supported that a history of trauma is widely associated with risk for trafficking, however it was argued that trauma types such as child sexual abuse had a stronger influence on trafficking vulnerabilities.

The current study additionally noted that for the trafficked individuals, disclosure pertaining to childhood abuse was often withheld when the trafficked individual was a child. A lack of disclosure typically stems from the fear that the child holds due to threats maintained by the perpetrator who often remains within contact with the child (Allnock & Miller, 2013, p. 6). This suggests that there exists a microlevel influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) from the perpetrator onto the child. When viewing this influence and its role towards fear of disclosure, it is pertinent to acknowledge the microlevel power dynamic that this rests on. Middleton et al. (2017, p. 249) argued that beneath this dynamic is the relationship between an adult and child and that this comes with its own power dynamic. More so that there often exists a relationship beyond the abuse and that disentangling the two can be very difficult (Middleton et al., 2017, p. 250). For many, the abusers live among those they abuse, managing to hide behind the established relationship and thus never identified (Middleton et al., 2017, p. 251). This appears to be possible due to the existence of powerful, already established relationship dynamics between men and women, and adult and child (Middleton et al., 2017, p. 251).

These dynamics are often influenced by microlevel institutions such as churches that are governed by macrolevel rules of religion and society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 258). The macrolevel rule advocates that a child should always listen to their elders and obey their rules

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constantly (Middleton et al., 2017, p. 255). The danger is that in instances where the elder is the perpetrator, a sense of silence is enforced, whereby the child is told that they cannot tell anyone what happened (Alaggia et al., 2019, p. 279). Furthermore, the power that many elders hold based on the perception of being stronger and more powerful than a child, can assist the perpetrator in threatening the child into silence (Allnock & Miller, 2013, p. 6). This lack of disclosure about prior abuse, especially sexual abuse seen by the participants is supported by research conducted by Emser and Van der Watt (2019, p. 89) who argued that children are often among the most silent of victims as seen by the underreporting of instances of child abuse and child exploitation.

The prevalence of child sexual abuse in South Africa is comparatively high compared to other types of abuse (Artz et al., 2018, p. 791). Statistically, violence against, and trauma of women and children is a common occurrence (Weber & Bowers-du Toit, 2018, p. 1). Childhood adversities that take place on the individual and microlevels, such as sexual abuse and trafficking, especially trafficking of children, are therefore linked (Reid et al., 2017, p. 309). The author (Reid et al., 2017, p. 309) furthered that sexual abuse creates susceptibility to grooming and exploitation and is thus often termed as a 'gateway' abuse to other forms of victimisation such as TIP.

This susceptibility is used by traffickers who operate with the knowledge that children with a history of abuse are more vulnerable and easier to entice (Bayer, 2021, para. 2). Enticement is achieved through grooming, where grooming is the act of gaining trust from the abused child. This manifests in the trafficker applying excessive behaviours such as praise; affection; gifts; and protection from other abusers; which meet the child's unmet needs (Wood, 2020, p. 4). Once the dangers of the situation are realised, it is often too late as the fear and power control tactics used by previous abusers have been applied, and silence once more ensues. The findings of Choi (2015) further suggested that trauma type and the severity of the trauma are significant factors when considering the risk for being trafficked. However, the study did not further investigate the severity of trauma in the influence of vulnerabilities.

Substance Use Disorders. Findings from the current study revealed that substance abuse and dependency was a prominent vulnerability factor in the TIP process. Substance abuse were prevalent throughout all stages of the TIP process and had lasting impacts on the trafficked individual's vulnerability both prior to and after being trafficked. Other research conducted revealed similar findings. Cook et al. (2018, p. 8) highlighted that traffickers used existing substance use disorders to trap and control those into exploitation. Mathew et al. (2021, p. 1048) found that traffickers very often engage in substance use coercion as a control tactic.

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This tactic involves incapacitating the individual and weakening their judgement to facilitate the process of exploitation (Mathew et al., 2021, p. 1048). Further, the current study found that there often exists a complex and influential link between trauma and substance use disorders, which links to research findings from Cook et al. (2018, p. 8). For example, a major risk factor for the development of a substance dependency is a personal history of abuse or a family history of conflict (McLellan, 2017, p. 119; Teixeira et al., 2017, p. 2).

This bidirectional relationship between substance use disorders and trauma is seen in that substances use disorders develop through self-medicating for trauma. Additionally due to a substance use disorder, individuals may engage in risky behaviours which results in a greater risk of exposure to a traumatic event (Borges et al., 2021, p. 7). Mandavia et al. (2016, p. 426) asserted that such coping mechanisms through substance abuse are developed to alleviate the negative effects caused by trauma. The concern, as found in the current study, was that substance use disorders can be used by traffickers to bait potential victims and recruit them (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017, para. 11). This highlights how an individual's vulnerability increases as their dependency on substances continue to develop. It is not uncommon for traffickers to lurk outside of addiction facilities and rehabilitation centres to access vulnerable individuals in recovery (The Recovery Village (2020, para. 4; The United States Department of State, 2020b, para. 2). Once vulnerable persons have been recruited, the additional substances offered by traffickers are used to trap the individual into trafficking, as the substances are used as an incentivising tool (Stoklosa et al., 2017, p. 25).

This suggests an element of coercion used by traffickers to gain control over the trafficked individual (United States Department of State, 2020b, para. 2). This coercive tactic allows the traffickers to introduce passivity and a state of entrapment (Meshelemiah et al., 2018, p. 2). By giving into the power of the substances, trafficked individual can find a means to mentally escape the physical and psychological traumas of being trafficked (Stoklosa et al., 2017, p. 26). The concern with this is that reliance on substances to escape ensures that the individual is constantly in a state of debt bondage as they want more substances which the trafficker can exploit. The debt bondage is employed by constantly offering substances that the individual desires which forces them to acquire repeated debt that they are required to pay but are typically unable to (United States Department of State, 2021, p. 25). This is a continuous positive feedback loop (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 57) that the individual finds themselves in, this makes them further vulnerable to continuous coercive control by traffickers by virtue of their own continuous engagement with substances. The following section will be focused on discussing the findings for contextual vulnerability factors.

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Contextual Vulnerability Factors

The findings of the study revealed the prominence of contextual vulnerability factors such as unemployment; being involved in the commercial sex trade; and the role of various governmental and non-governmental institutions. The findings of such vulnerability factors address objectives 2 and 5 of the current study. Findings relating to unemployment will be discussed first.

Unemployment. Findings from the study revealed that unemployment and the desire for financial independence is a prominent factor when considering vulnerabilities to be trafficked. Schwarz et al. (2019, p. 122) conducted a study which found that economic insecurity was one of the significant factors that increases risk for trafficking. The desire for financial security means that trafficked individuals are often recruited into false employment opportunities that initially appear lucrative (Chohaney, 2016, p. 122). John (2019, p. 166) additionally stated that unemployment is a significant contributor to an individual's vulnerabilities as individuals feel they have no choice but to accept the employment opportunities provided to them to survive. The desire to alleviate financial distress, for one and one's family, results in greater risk taking.

The desire to alleviate financial distress is often manipulated and used by traffickers to provide a solution that is profitable to the traffickers. Often traffickers will profit off families who feel compelled by their circumstances to offer up their children for monetary exchange (John, 2019, p. 169). In similar circumstances, parents pretend that they are unaware that their child is selling sex for money or engaging with a "sugar daddy" (Lutya, 2009, p. 68). These young children are often at an increased risk, as traffickers use these circumstances as an opportunity to lure the child, who is then sold off into domestic or sexual exploitation (Lutya, 2009, p. 68).

Additionally, the present study found that for certain trafficked individuals, certain employment opportunities were accepted despite the individual being aware of the conditions not being safe and legitimate, such as working within brothels in the sex trade. The complexity here is that for many of the trafficked individuals, being subjected to abuse and atrocities while trafficked meant that they were afforded a certain lifestyle and could generate the desired income. This was significant as individuals could potentially provide for themselves and their families, at the cost of the abuse and trauma they experienced. This creates a positive feedback loop within the system, as the individual continues to experience an increase in the action of earning an income by remaining within the TIP situation. However, this results in an increase

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in the complexity of the system of experiencing repeated abuse (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 4). However, for many of the trafficked individuals, that was personal sacrifice that they were prepared to make for financial security.

Involvement in the Commercial Sex Trade. The current study found that among some trafficked adults, vulnerabilities to be trafficked were often influenced by their involvement in the commercial sex trade. Different views regarding the role of the trade of sex in TIP vulnerability have been offered. Vanwesenbeeck (2019, p. 1965) argued that, sex work is a form of violence against women and that by virtue of that, is a form of trafficking for sexual exploitation. In contrast, Albright and D'Adamo (2017, p. 124) held that the decriminalisation of sex work and the regulation of the industry would result in a decrease in human trafficking risks. It can be argued that for many of the women who engage in the commercialisation of sex, their vulnerability is increased due to the criminalisation and invalidation of the work (Walker & Oliveira, 2015, p. 130).

The legitimacy of sex work and the trade of sex is a concept that is debated as one that is an empowered and an autonomous choice of work that is not rooted in the desperation to seek financial security (Gerassi, 2015a, p. 79). However, it is argued that consent in sex work cannot be understood in isolation from economic challenges and sexual abuse (Gerassi, 2015a, p. 83). Rather, it is within this intersection of complex factors such as economic challenges, abuse, and stigma that the vulnerability to be trafficked is produced (Gerassi, 2015a, p. 83).

Within the current study, the vulnerability factor of being involved in the commercial sex trade was strongly connected to substance use disorders and a need for financial security, where the trade of sex was a means to gain the desired substance or income (Franchino-Olsen, 2018, p. 8). Vulnerability can be attributed to the interaction of several factors as opposed to a single factor operating individually. From a systemic perspective, this means that instead of a linear causal conceptualisation of vulnerability, it can be understood to result from circular causality (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 57). Therefore, vulnerability is caused and maintained by the interaction of multiple factors, which offers a more complex perspective of vulnerability. The non-linear causal conceptualisation of the individual's vulnerability due to the involvement within the sex trade is that their desire for a substance of choice was manipulated by traffickers, who exploit the individual from within the sex trade into sex trafficking (Barner et al., 2018, p. 4).

The interaction of complex factors can be viewed from an intersectional lens, which takes the view of women's experiences within the sex trade industry, as one that is based on her race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation (Gerassi, 2015a, p. 83). These microlevel

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factors interact with macrolevel factors such as socio-economic status in manner that is unique to individuals (Chong, 2014, p. 200). This suggests that the interrelationship of risk factors within and between multiple systemic levels contribute to the overall risk and vulnerability for each individual (Roy, 2018, p. 2). Within the context of sex work, there are rarely instances where such factors are not present and therefore, cannot be negated when considering vulnerabilities to be trafficked, as both sex work and TIP often operate on the same basis of race, socio-economic, and gender inequalities (Chong, 2014, p. 202). It was not part of the current study's aim to investigate the impact of criminalisation on sex work and its impact on TIP. It did however find that the involvement within sex work, for a multitude of reasons, noticeably influenced the vulnerability to be trafficked, and often the trafficked women would experience instances of re-trafficking through their re-involvement in sex work.

The Role of Institutions. Additionally, the current study found that the role of the South African governmental and non-governmental institutions is important to consider when understanding TIP vulnerabilities. Findings of the study highlighted that in certain cases, the role of law enforcement corruption and complicity influenced the TIP vulnerability of trafficked individuals at both the exo- and macrosystem levels.

In agreement with the findings of the current study, the 2021 Trafficking in Persons report reported that within South Africa there has been continued, uncurbed official complicity within the counter-TIP sphere among institutions such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Home Affairs (DHA), and the Department of Social Development (DSD) (United States Department of State, 2021, p. 509). These governmental entities exist and operate at the exosystemic level and were central to the influencing of many of the trafficked individuals TIP vulnerabilities. Although the exosystem often does not directly contain the trafficked individual, the inclusion of the formal institutions such as SAPS ensures a unilateral influence on the public at a concrete and local level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). In the current study, this unilateral influence was noted in instances of police corruption through the interaction between SAPS officials and various traffickers.

The nexus between corruption and the trafficking process within South Africa cannot be viewed in isolation from the role of the criminal justice system (Bello, 2018, p. 480). Although the extent of corruption within the SAPS cannot be accurately portrayed, it is known that public trust in law enforcement has diminished over the years due to reported corruption (Bello, 2018, p. 480). Additional research conducted by Motseki et al. (2020, p. 10) within South Africa, concluded that a "weak link" exists in protection and enforcement divisions where many of those who work within the counter-trafficking sphere, are deeply involved in

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the very trafficking of the victims. Motseki et al. (2020, p. 11) reported that the rights of TIP victims are being compromised by those who serve to protect them. Police corruption and complicity often provides traffickers with the opportunity to transport and exploit their victims with ease (Wheaton et al., 2010, p. 117). The involvement of a bribe typically facilitates the process of "turning a blind eye" to the transportation of a trafficked individual to, and from the country (Bello, 2018, p. 480). This highlights how these exosystemic interaction with the trafficker subsystem has the potential to play an important role in increasing the vulnerability of trafficked individuals.

Additionally, the present study found that alongside corruption, the inadequate training of SAPS to identify TIP cases and the poor implementation of TIP protocol developed from legislation, had implications for TIP vulnerabilities. The macrolevel influence of legislation as determined by political systems is pertinent as it provides the "blueprint" from which law enforcement operate (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). The blueprint dictated operations of law enforcement often results in a unidirectional influence on the trafficked individual who may often experience secondary victimisation whilst seeking out appropriate and adequate legal protection and representation (Motseki et al., 2020, p. 11). For example, when attempting to open a case with law enforcement, many trafficked persons are misidentified due to stereotypical narratives of the typical TIP victim as passive and in need of rescuing (Farrell & Reichert, 2017, p. 41). Another challenge is when law enforcement struggles to distinguish between TIP and prostitution, and often lack the knowledge of how the two may intersect (Farrell & Reichert, 2017, p. 41). This influences the individual's vulnerability as their ability to seek out assistance is minimised and they develop a lack trust in the legal system (Motseki et al., 2020, p. 11). This is similar to a case reported in South Africa, where two police officials were arrested for forcing a trafficked individual to open a fake police docket to direct the investigation away from the known perpetrator (McCain, 2021, para. 8).

The current study also found that the complexity of the TIP experience can be influenced by the role of NGOs. Complexity ensues in the manner whereby organisations aim to conduct themselves as being "a voice for the voiceless" in a manner that is considered as advocatory yet is often unintentionally traded for disempowerment. The construct of being "the voice for the voiceless" is thus one that is often up for debate. It is often an act of good intent, but often criticised for directly contributing to the very silencing it aims to prevent. The idea "to have a voice" is to have power and that without such, an individual is powerless and invisible (Lawy, 2017, p. 196). Therefore, by acting under the role of the "voice of the voiceless" many NGOs may instead contribute to the victim narrative that those who have been

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trafficked, are powerless individuals who cannot obtain any sense of justice, without the voice of another (Registre, 2017, para. 11). The concern is that further experiences of marginalisation affect the help seeking behaviour of trafficked individuals who may feel additional feelings of shame, mistrust, and incompetence at accessing available resources and services (Sambo & Spies, 2020, p. 82).

Thus, the role of organisations questions the underlying power dynamics that exist between the NGO and the individual's they assist (Diya, 2018, p. 140). Diya (2018, p. 141) furthered that the approach to the anti-TIP sphere is one that is extensive and underpinned by a variety of ethical, religious, and theoretical stances that stem from the macrolevel ideology of the trafficked individual's societal context. The reality is that there often exist tensions between the trafficked individual and the organisation assisting them as there are discrepancies between what the organisation considers empowering and what the individual ultimately connects with (Diya, 2018, p. 142). This is a concern as discrepancies affect the restoration process, and therefore impacts the trafficked individual's ability to deal with their previous vulnerabilities and traumas. The following section will focus on discussing the findings for unusual vulnerability factors.

Unusual Factors

The findings of the current study revealed that certain unusual factors, not previously addressed in literature or reported were present in the TIP process of trafficked individuals. The findings of such vulnerability factors addressed objective 3 of the current study and included among others, a lack of documentation, being transgender, and divorce visitations. Literature consistently highlighted the role of lack of legal registration or recognition within a foreign country for migrants who have been trafficked (David et al., 2019, p. 10; Kanayo et al., 2019, p. 231). However, there is scant research into the role of lack of documentation for an individual residing in their country of birth. Within the current study, it was found that for certain trafficked individuals, a lack of a South African birth certificate or an identity document (ID) was present in the trafficking process. The state of being an undocumented national often occurs due to the parent's failure to register a child's birth which is often the case for foreign nationals; due to incompetent officials at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) who misplace applications for ID documents; stolen identities, and various other reasons (Venter, 2018, para. 5). An undocumented individual faces significant challenges such as attending schooling, obtaining employment, and accessing other basic human rights such as health care (Rulashe, 2020, para. 7). When considering the process of becoming undocumented there is

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evidence of systemic interaction between the micro- and exosystem levels. In instances where failure to register the child at birth occurred, there is a systemic interaction between the parents' and the DHA. This interaction occurs within the child's exosystem where there is unidirectional effect on the child who obtains no documentation due to poor service delivery. This further impacts the child in obtaining an ID and completing their matric examinations.

When considering the most vulnerable populations within society, much attention is given to women and children. More recently, attention has shifted to the vulnerabilities of the LGBTQIA+ community when it comes to human trafficking. The current study found that in one instance, the transgender experience was present in the TIP process of the trafficked individual. Despite the growing attention given to the role of structural and interpersonal TIP vulnerabilities of the LGBTQIA+ community, representation of transgenderism is still lacking (Fehrenbacher et al., 2020, p. 182). It is believed that this is enhanced by the representation of the typical TIP victim in the Palermo Protocol as a cisgender women, which ultimately erases the recognition of transwomen as women (Fehrenbacher et al., 2020, p. 182). This finding illustrates the macrolevel influence on the individual who is impacted by societal norms and beliefs, which filter into policy creation that is exclusionary (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 258).

Considering that children are among the most vulnerable populations within society, extensive research exists on child trafficking and the vulnerabilities of children. The current study found that in two instances, the vulnerability of being a child was exacerbated by stipulated visitations after divorce with one specific parent from where trafficking took place. Despite the extensive availability of research on child trafficking, there is little on the role of divorce visitations in enhancing TIP vulnerabilities. What is illustrated in such cases is the mesolevel influence of divorce dynamics between parents, which often contains the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). Additionally, the exosystem influence of a parent conspiring with a trafficker to sell and exploit their children highlights the unidirectional impact of the decision on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). The following section focus on discussing the findings for combinations of vulnerability factors from a systemic view.

Systemic View of Combinations of Vulnerability Factors

The findings of the present study, in terms of combinations of vulnerability factors, are discussed by referring to specific identifiers to illustrate the interaction of various systemic levels, provide evidence of non-linear causality, and highlight instances of feedback loops. These findings address objective 4 of the current study.

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When considering the overall interplay between the various vulnerability factors within an individual's life, literature has typically focused on a liner cause-and-effect view of vulnerability. This view on TIP vulnerability is commonly applied in instances where a lower socio-economic status is typically noted as an overall precursor to TIP vulnerability. When considering the impact of a lower socio-economic status, attention is usually given to the cause-and-effect process of lacking basic needs and thus being susceptible to the recruitment of traffickers (John, 2019, 190). This traditional understanding implies that poverty is the sole cause of victimisation of the individual (Barner et al., 2017, p. 5). This stance is often refuted by the argument that an individual is vulnerable to be trafficked irrespective of their socio-economic status and that there is the presence of additional vulnerability factors that are interacting and creating a complex vulnerability profile (Barner et al., 2017, p. 5).

The current study found that there was no singular factor that could be stated as the sole cause of TIP vulnerability. Additionally, the study found that no single vulnerability factor enhances vulnerability more than another. Although there were instances of certain identifiers such as identifier 008 (n = 7) and identifier 010 (n = 5), containing a higher prevalence of vulnerability factors compared to other identifiers, it cannot be stated that it made either more vulnerable. This stance is acceptable as identifiers with the lowest factor prevalence (n = 3) were also trafficked and subjected to the same manner of TIP atrocities. Hence, the findings suggested that the combinations of vulnerability factors of trafficked individuals, although specific to the individual, were influential and complex. An ecological approach suggests that traditional understandings of human trafficking neglect the complex understanding of factor interactions and tends to favour consideration of a singular cause (Barner et al., 2018, p. 4).

Further complexity of vulnerability can be seen when the profile of various identifiers, with the same number of factors is considered. Despite having the same number of factors, each profile was significantly different in terms of which vulnerability factors were involved in their TIP process. This further suggests that TIP vulnerability cannot be understood as an isolated and linear concept but rather that vulnerability requires an understanding that is holistic and integrated.

The findings of the current study caution against the tendency to understand TIP vulnerabilities from a linear causality framework. The findings further suggest that the traditional "one size fits all" approach to restoration is not applicable as the complex and multifaceted nature of each identifier's vulnerability profile suggests that an intervention be tailored specifically to their own micro-, exo-, and macrolevel needs (Barner et al., 2018, p. 4). As such, this necessitates that governmental organisations such SAPS and DSD, as well as non-

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governmental organisations such as HR, consider the social, economic, and historical context of each trafficked individual holistically when considering their interactions with the trafficked individual. By doing so, especially within the context of organisations such as HR, attention should be given to conceptualising the trafficked individual by considering the systemic influence of the restoration process to each systemic level (Barner et al., 2018, p. 6).

Findings for vulnerability combinations highlight the distribution of vulnerability factors across the various systemic levels for all identifiers. It was found that within vulnerability categories, the top three vulnerability factors were all individual factors. This implies that more individual factors were extracted and captured from the files when compared to other vulnerability categories. This suggests a strong prominence of microlevel interactions that enhance vulnerability. Sanchez and Pacquiao (2018, p. 99) supported that on a microlevel, the individual's personal history strongly increases the risk for trafficking as their history is characterised by instances of abuse and trauma. Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 38) asserted that this is due to the microlevel being the most significant level where the individual experiences proximal processes within their environment, which operate to produce or sustain development.

Additionally, the findings generated from the various vulnerability profiles suggest that there exist multi-layered personal and structural inequalities and injustices within the trafficked individual's life. Similarly, Botha and Warria (2020, p. 5) argued that these inequalities are extreme human rights violations which are both the causes and outcomes of TIP. This is imperative to understand as this enables more effective identification of vulnerabilities which can directly bolster policy development and prevention activities. Edwards and Mike (2017, p. 703) stated that this identification of multi-layered vulnerabilities is central to attempting to mitigate TIP, as it brings awareness to policy makers, law enforcement, and NGOs as to which underlying areas of concern need intervention first.

Additionally, when considering the findings of the various vulnerability profiles, the systemic concept of feedback loops provides a valuable lens through which to conceptualise the profiles. Figure 14 illustrates the process of a positive feedback loop as noted for Identifier 002. This feedback loop is portrayed in the interactions of Substance Abuse and all other vulnerability factors.

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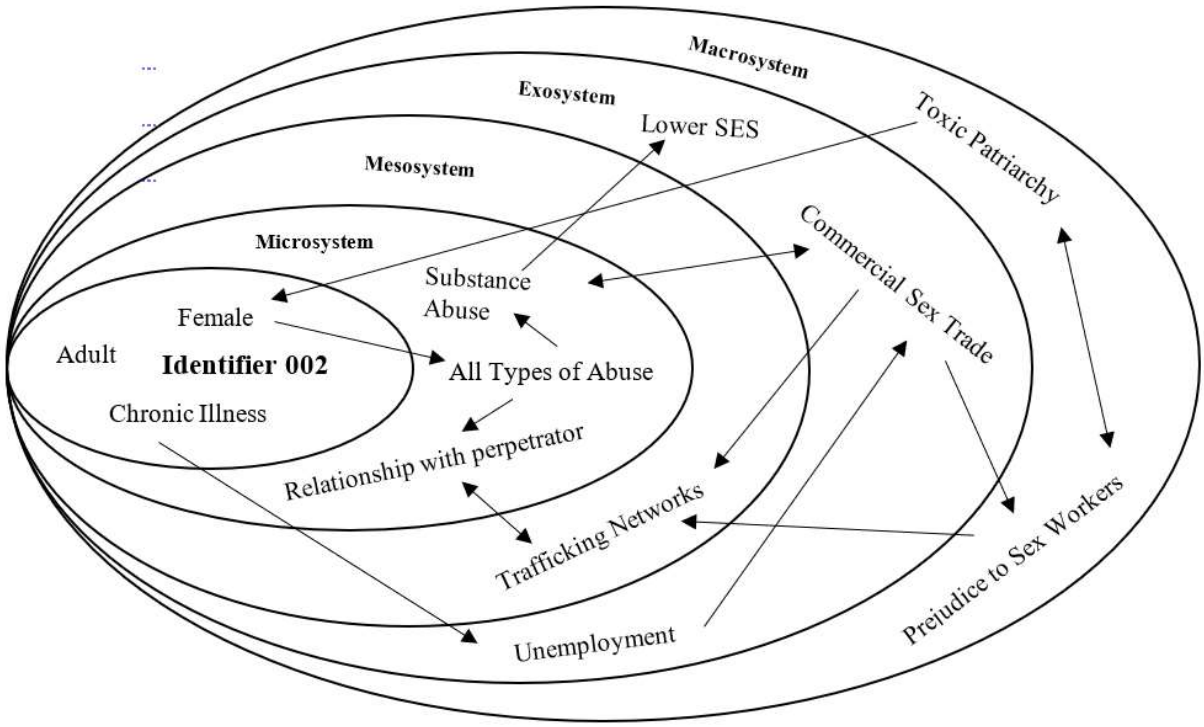
Figure 14

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Applied to Identifier 002 to highlight the Complex Interaction between all Vulnerability Factors



Identifier 002 was found to be one of the top three adult trafficked individuals included in the current study, with a vulnerability profile that included various factors from all three vulnerability categories. An ecological understanding of the presence of all three categories is that the individual is emmeshed in multiple environments and multiple systemic levels, these levels interact uni- and bidirectionally with the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38). The Identifier 002 had a personal history of abuse which was experienced in the microsystem of the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). A variety of contributing factors such as being a women, influenced by macrosystem societal beliefs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) such as toxic patriarchy, likely impacted on her vulnerability. The experience of oppression as a women directly influences access to critical resources such as financial aid, employment, and education (Finigan-Carr et al., 2019, p. 53). Resulting from an input of abuse, the identifier experienced an output of trauma, where substance abuse became the method of self-medicating to cope with the consequences of the abuse. This meant that the identifier became addicted to substances, ensuring that they were focused on obtaining the substances they desired. However, the

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addiction, although providing the identifier with a means to cope, additionally aided in the identifier seeking out individuals and environments where they could obtain the substances of their choice. This placed the individual in proximity to the perpetrator who used the identifier's previous experiences of abuse to manipulate and groom them. When considering the interplay between the trafficked individual, the patterns of abuse, and the relationship with the trafficker, there is evidence of revictimisation in a new microsystem (Finigan-Carr et al., 2019, p. 54).

This relationship with the perpetrator provided positive feedback into the identifier's system as substance use was encouraged and the identifier became further dependent, introducing further change in the system. This influenced the identifier to become involved in the commercial sex trade to obtain an income, to finance their addiction – this provided additional positive feedback. The decision to remain in the commercial sex trade was further exacerbated by the vulnerability factor of being unemployed. Finigan-Carr et al. (2019, p. 51) argued that the involvement in sex work is often systemically understood as the only means for women to meet their basic economic needs, who are pressured by a society that promotes independence and self-sufficiency. They (Finigan-Carr et al., 2019, p. 51) further elaborated that the personal choice to become involved in the commercialisation of sex, which is often viewed as a form of deviancy, is systemically influenced by the individual's micro-, exo-, and macro-environments. This process of input and output, experienced by the identifier, reinforced the complexity of the system as each interaction with substance abuse created an additional link with other vulnerability factors (Lai & Lin, 2017, p. 4). As a result of the repeated interaction of all factors, with substance abuse being a core link, the system was destabilised with the trafficking of the identifier. This is possible as a small addition to the system, of relying on substances to cope with trauma, resulted in the destabilising of the equilibrium that the system once had. The non-linear interaction between the various factors of the system, with the addition of substance use, resulted in the destabilisation of the equilibrium of the system (Walby, 2007, p. 464).

Conclusion

This chapter focused on presenting a discussion where both sets of findings were converged and discussed according to relevant literature and theory. This was done to align the findings with relevant theory and to provide context to the findings according to a systemic framework, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of TIP and vulnerability factors. Chapter seven will conclude the study by concluding key findings in the study, noting important limitations, and providing recommendations for future research.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations of the Study

In this chapter, the study and its findings will be concluded. Further, a brief discussion pertaining to the limitations of the present study and subsequent recommendations will be presented.

Conclusions of the Study

The current study aimed to explore and describe which vulnerability factors had been present in the human trafficking process of identified minors and adults serviced by Hope Risen (HR). This was achieved by creating a case study using two data sets. The created case study relied on the theoretical framework of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979, 1994) to understand the interconnections of the various vulnerability factors. By doing so, the current study demonstrated the value of using a systemic lens to view trafficking in persons (TIP) vulnerability rather than using a singular and linear causal factor lens. Research indicated that previous studies conducted by researchers such as Bello (2018), Delport et al. (2007) and Lutya (2012) were limited to understanding TIP vulnerability from a linear point of view rather than from a circular and bi-directional point of view. These studies do not focus on the interconnections between both individual and contextual factors and how this influences the vulnerability to being trafficked. This is a challenge for counter-TIP activities as a complex crime such as TIP requires an understanding of how multiple factors interact to create increased vulnerability. By gaining such an understanding, counter-TIP activities can be co-ordinated and tailored to the trafficked individuals own unique circumstances, resulting in a more effective long-term approach (Barner, et al., 2017, p. 6).

The current study highlighted that there exists an interplay between various individual, contextual, and unusual factors across the ecosystemic levels of the trafficked individual that influences their risk to be trafficked. Of the case files that were analysed, the study revealed that all three broad vulnerability categories were present across the entire data set of trafficked individuals. Within the category of individual vulnerability factors, it was noted that factors such as abuse, gender, and substance abuse were present for many of the trafficked individuals. Additionally, these factors interacted within, and occurred beyond, the trafficked individual's microsystem and mesosystem, particularly in instances where abuse was repeatedly experienced across the life span of the trafficked individual. For example, trafficked women who had experienced abuse as a young child, experienced intimate partner violence as adults.

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Often, the partners in these relationships were in fact traffickers who had groomed the individual to be trafficked.

Within the category of contextual vulnerability factors, it was found that factors such as a lower socio-economic status, unemployment, and being involved in the commercial sex trade were present for many of the trafficked individuals. Furthermore, these factors contained links to perpetrators and conditions, within the individual's mesosystem and exosystem, that exacerbated existing vulnerability factors.

Within the category of unusual vulnerability factors, the study found that although each factor was not aptly discussed in relevant literature, each factor was present in the TIP process of certain trafficked individuals. This suggests that each unusual vulnerability factor is actually a vulnerability factor. These usual factors were linked to each trafficked individuals' vulnerability across the various ecosystemic levels. This includes interactions between a divorced parent and traffickers in the mesosystem, and governmental organisations such as the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Social Development (DSD) in the macrosystem.

Furthermore, it was found that the vulnerability profiles of each trafficked individual, especially of those with the highest factor prevalence, were all distinctly unique profiles. This reinforced that TIP vulnerability is not a "one size fits all" but rather a unique mosaic of factors that is influenced by that trafficked individual's own unique circumstances. However, it was found that at the time of documentation, the most prevalent factor was that of Being a Women, suggesting that there are factors which are likely to be more prevalent and highly influential at the microlevel. Additionally, when viewing the vulnerability profile of all the trafficked individuals, it had been found that those with the lowest factor prevalence were trafficked and exposed to the same exploitative process as those with the highest factor prevalence. This suggests that vulnerability is a conglomerate of non-linear relationships between vulnerability factors, and should not be viewed in a reductionist, linear manner.

The current study revealed themes and sub-themes that illustrated which factors participants believed were present in the TIP process of the trafficked individuals. The first main theme was "Personal History" and contained four sub-themes. These sub-themes were closely related to the role that participants believed that the trafficked individuals own personal history played in influencing their TIP vulnerability. The microsystem of the trafficked individual was deemed important, especially in instances where there were familial connections to the perpetrator of previous childhood abuse. Moreover, it was found that this

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occurred alongside power dynamics enforced by macrolevel institutions that were influential within the microsystem.

The second main theme was “Trauma Consequences”, which comprised of three sub-themes. The essence of these sub-themes related to the role that the aftermath of trauma played in influencing TIP vulnerability. Lastly, the final main theme was “Broader Contextual Factors” which consisted of three sub-themes. These sub-themes illustrated the role of the trafficked individual’s greater, personal context and how this influenced their vulnerability to be trafficked. Thus, participants perspectives on the trafficked individuals revealed that the vulnerability to be trafficked had been greatly affected by individual’s personal microsystem and the broader exos- and macrosystems. This specifically related to the infliction of abuse and trauma from microlevel members onto the individual, resulting in the individuals turning to substances to cope with trauma. As a result of the experienced traumas, the trafficked individual developed trauma responses and beliefs that had affected their own self-belief and views, increasing their susceptibility to grooming and exploitation.

In conclusion, the current study revealed that there were numerous vulnerability factors present for each trafficked individual. The application of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979, 1994) to multiple vulnerability factors, illustrated that the vulnerability that an individual experiences to be trafficked is never isolated or singular but rather a complex and multi-factored phenomenon. This highlighted the necessity to view TIP and vulnerability as an interacting and bi-directional process which requires understanding and intervention on each systemic level of the person. This is necessary as the factors all interacted in a cyclic manner, illustrating that all counter-TIP approaches should address all factors holistically rather than in isolation from one another. By understanding the holistic nature of TIP vulnerabilities, legislation such as the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 (PACOTIP) (DOJ, 2013) can be updated to define and describe TIP vulnerabilities within the South African context more accurately. This is imperative as despite the extensiveness of the PACOTIP, it is still perceived to be inadequate when addressing all facets of TIP due to the complex interactions of the vulnerability factors (Bello & Olutola, 2022, p. 7). As such, by contributing to the reconditioning of the PACOTIP, such legislation can be updated to better equip relevant organisations for more effective prosecutions, through knowledge enhancement.

Limitations of the Study

During the current study, there were a few limitations experienced. Firstly, a there was a limited availability of research studies conducted on TIP vulnerability within South Africa.

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Moreover, existing local literature on the role of vulnerability factors in increasing the risk for TIP, focused on isolated "root causes", suggesting that vulnerability is the result of single, linear causes. As such, very few comparative findings from studies that followed an ecological systems approach could be included in the discussion of the current study.

It is important to note that the study only focused on one non-governmental organisation (NGO) HR. This meant that the interview participants' understanding of TIP was limited to the organisation's conceptualisation of the crime and approach to counter-TIP activities. As such, participant's perceptions on TIP vulnerability were generated by the personal experiences that each participant held with trafficked individuals, resulting in a specific view on TIP vulnerability. However, the final objective of the study was to explore the perceptions of the participants, which when converged with complimentary data gathered from the case files, provided findings that were reflective of the objectives.

Additionally, due to the nature and scope of the study, interaction with trafficked individuals was not possible. As such, only access to case files was granted, of which HR only had a limited number. This was due to the nature of the organisation as they operate through tip-offs and alongside other NGOs and governmental organisations. This means that HR is not an organisation that deals with TIP cases first-hand, but rather assist with TIP cases. Hence, HR is only in contact with a few cases. This limitation further extended to the organisation's policy with minor TIP cases. HR typically refers cases that pertain to minors to the Department of Social Development (DSD), therefore they have a limited number of case files on minors. To mitigate this limitation, extraction of textual information from case files on the trafficked individuals was conducted.

An additional limitation of working with a single organisation is that the availability of case files is limited to the number of files held by the organisation. This had a direct influence on the sample size for the quantitative data. The sample size consisted of 15 selected case files. The sample size limited the study during the analysis phase as a statistical analysis could not be conducted. This affected the ability to generalise the study, influencing the goal or purpose of case study research. To mitigate this limitation, a frequency analysis was conducted to convey the vulnerability factors of identifiers more accurately. Additionally, the nature of TIP vulnerability is unique and specific, and by converging the quantitative findings with complimentary qualitative findings, the results of this study are strengthened and reflective of the trafficked individual's unique process.

An additional limitation incurred from the study was the lack of pilot testing. This was due to the expected difficulty in obtaining participants for the research study. To mitigate the

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impact of the above review of and revision of interview questions were conducted with a National Freedom Network (NFN) research coordinator via numerous emails until it was deemed that interview questions were sufficient and appropriately designed (A. van der Westhuizen, personal communication, June 29, 2022).

An additional limitation that was incurred was that the current study did not include race as a vulnerability factor. This is an important factor to consider as there exists racial privilege within South Africa. This racial privilege cannot be neglected when understanding socio-economic circumstances and societal status. As such, with the knowledge of the role that socio-economic status and inequality play in TIP vulnerabilities, racial privilege should equally be considered. In the current study, when reviewing case files, this limitation was apparent in the lack of documented information pertaining to race. Additionally, demographic considerations were not given to religion due the lack of documented information pertaining to religious affiliations. This may be imperative to the understanding of vulnerability in connection to religious practices manipulated by traffickers.

The final limitation experienced was that the case files pertaining to minors had no information on contextual factors, this could be indicative of how case files have been compiled by HR, as they may favour more individualised case information over contextual case information. This negatively impacted the findings presented on child trafficked individuals, resulting in an incomplete vulnerability profile.

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the findings generated from the study, the following recommendations are made:

Within the current study it was illustrated that a systemic lens is necessary to understand and approach TIP vulnerability. By viewing TIP with a systemic lens, the interconnections between all vulnerability factors were highlighted, suggesting that TIP vulnerabilities are complex. As such, it is recommended that any additional research into TIP vulnerabilities be conducted using the theoretical framework of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). By doing so, comparative studies can be conducted which will further enhance knowledge on TIP vulnerabilities and address present gaps in research literature. The value of this is that the current PACOTIP definition of vulnerability can be expanded on to better reflect the reality of vulnerabilities within the South African context.

Additional research, with multiple counter-TIP organisations, which deal with trafficked individuals is recommended. By conducting more interviews with employees and

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volunteers of counter-TIP organisations, additional perspectives and knowledge on TIP vulnerabilities will be gathered, contributing to the overall understandings of vulnerabilities. By obtaining access to more TIP case notes, a richer, more in-depth understanding of TIP vulnerability within South Africa can be generated. It is recommended that within this, greater attention be given to obtaining information that highlights race and religion which was previously noted as difficult to obtain in the current study. Conducting such studies with counter-TIP organisations will assist in further understanding the role of vulnerability factors in increasing the risk to be trafficked. By doing so, further knowledge regarding overall TIP vulnerability can be generated. This is recommended as this can inform the actions of counter-TIP organisations regarding prevention, through public awareness and policy formation.

It is further recommended that future studies working with case files obtain a greater sample size. This allows for a better and more accurate generalisation of the TIP population, increasing reliability.

The current study revealed findings pertaining to unusual vulnerability factors. There is a limited amount of literature on each of these factors. However, unusual vulnerability factors in the TIP process were present. Therefore, it is recommended that these factors be explored in greater detail to understand the contribution of each factor in enhancing TIP vulnerability.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions

1. Tell me about your involvement in counter trafficking activities
    a. Probe: How long have you been involved in the counter trafficking sphere?
    b. Probe: What was your motivation to get involved in the counter trafficking industry?
    c. Probe: Have you worked in any other counter trafficking organisations before joining Hope Risen (HR)?
2. How did you come to be involved HR?
3. Describe to me what your role within Hope Risen entails?
    a. Probe: Tell me about your interactions with victims of trafficking in Hope Risen.
    b. Probe: How long do you typically interact with the victims of trafficking
    c. Probe: Where does this interaction take place?
4. Considering your experience with HR, tell me about the various factors that make minors vulnerable to be trafficked?
    a. Probe: Tell me more about any factors about the individual themselves that make them vulnerable to be trafficked.
    b. Probe: What role does contextual factors such as family, friends, community, country have in the trafficking process?
5. Considering your experiences with HR, what are the various factors that make adults vulnerable to be trafficked?
    a. Probe: Tell me more about any factors about the individual themselves that make them vulnerable to be trafficked.
    b. Probe: What role does contextual factors such as family, friends, community, country have in the trafficking process?

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6. From your experience at HR when during the trafficking process (from pre-recruitment, recruitment, transit, exploitation) are which vulnerability factors more likely to be more prominent?
7. From your experience at HR, are there any vulnerability factors that develop or increase during the trafficking process?
8. What do you think are the vulnerability factors that traffickers are more likely to consider during the whole trafficking process (from pre-recruitment to exploitation)?
9. From your experience at HR, are there specific vulnerability factors more associated with labour?
10. Which vulnerability factors enhance the possibility for re-trafficking or returning to the trafficking situation?

Thank you kindly for you time and assistance in this study.

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APPENDIX II: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF THE STUDY: Individual and contextual vulnerability factors involved in the human trafficking process of minors and adults serviced by Hope Risen: A case study.

Hello, my name is Stephanie Oosthuizen, I am currently a Master student at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. You are being invited to take part in my research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully, which will explain the details of this research project. Please feel free to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

- The purpose of this study is to use existing data on trafficking in persons who have been serviced by Hope Risen as well as data gathered from individual interviews to understand the individual and contextual vulnerability factors involved in the human trafficking process of minors and adults.
- Very few studies have been done on individual and contextual vulnerability factors involved in the human trafficking process of minors and adults in South Africa. I have decided to conduct this study with the hope that the research results will be used to contribute to existing prevention and protection approaches and strategies.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

- You have been invited to participate in the current study due to your personal experience of providing services to those who have been trafficked..
- You have been invited as you are a current volunteer or employee of Hope Risen.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

- You will be expected to participate in a semi-structured interview once you have given informed consent. This once off interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes.
- You will be asked to answer a number of questions regarding your perspective on what the individual and contextual vulnerability factors are involved in the human trafficking process of minors and adults who were serviced by Hope Risen.
- Interviews will be digitally recorded during the interview and then transcribed afterwards.

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Kgoro ya Saekolotši

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CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, if you decide not to take part in the study without negative consequences or being penalised

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

- Confidentiality will be ensured by assigning pseudonyms to each participant, that will be used in all research notes and documents. Reporting of findings will be anonymous, only the researchers of this study will have access to the raw data. Findings from this data will be disseminated through conferences and publications.
- Please note participant information will be kept confidential, except in cases where the researcher is legally obliged to report incidents such as abuse.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

- Direct benefits for you as a participant will be to use the results gained from this study to assist Hope Risen in their role in the restoration and reintegration of trafficked persons.
- The indirect benefits will be to contribute to the advancement of knowledge that can aid in the combating of human trafficking.

WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED RISKS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

- There are no risks involved in the current study.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT SOME FORM OF DISCOMFORT OCCUR AS A RESULT OF TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

- There are no risks involved in the current study. However, should you experience any form of distress, confidential and free counselling will be arranged for you. You can call the researcher on 083 397 0342 and you will be referred for counselling with Ms. Fran Webster, who is a registered counselling psychologist.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

- Electronic information will be stored for period of 15 years at the University of Pretoria. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.
- Participant information in hard copies of raw data be will locked in the cabinet and electronic data will be kept in a file that is password protected in the Department of Psychology

WILL I BE PAID TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

- No, you will not be paid to take part in this study, but refreshments will be provided.
- The interview will take place at a time determined by yourself that suits your working hours at the Hope Risen premises. As such any travel costs will be compensated. This means there will be no costs involved to you if you take part in this study.

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HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

- This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. Ethical approval number is……..
- A copy of the approval letter can be provided to you on request.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

- The findings of the research study will be shared with you by the researcher after the completion of the study.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE CONCERN, COMPLAINT OR ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE STUDY?

If you have questions about this study or you have experienced adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researchers whose contact information are provided below. If you have questions regarding the rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the researchers, please contact the researcher's supervisor, Dr Amanda van der Westhuizen on Amanda.vanderwesthuizen@up.ac.za .

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and in advance for participating in this study.

Researcher
Name: Stephanie Oosthuizen
Contact number: 083 397 0342
Email address: Stephy190295@gmail.com

Supervisor
Name: Dr Amanda van der Westhuizen
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APPENDIX III: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

Individual and contextual vulnerability factors involved in the human trafficking process of minors and adults serviced by Hope Risen: A case study.

{HUM036/0620}

WRITTEN CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (**participant name**), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

STATEMENT	AGRREE	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any consequences or penalties.			
I understand that information collected during the study will not be linked to my identity and I give permission to the researchers			

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of this study to access the information.			
I understand that this study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance from Research Ethics Committee Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pretoria.			
I understand who will have access to personal information and how the information will be stored with a clear understanding that I will not be linked to the information in any way.			
I understand how this study will be written up and published.			
I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.			
I consent to being audio recorded.			

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I consent to have my audio recordings used in research outputs such as publication of articles, thesis, and conferences if my identity is protected.			
I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publication whilst remaining anonymous.			
I have sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I agree to take part in the above study.			

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant Date Signature

_____ _____ _____

Name of person taking consent Date Signature

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APPENDIX IV: CATEGORIZATION MATRIX

	Individual Vulnerability Factors									Contextual Vulnerability Factors								Unusual Vulnerability Factors					
Identifier	All Types of Abuse	Being a Child	Being Female	Disability	History of Substance Abuse	Migration	Personal Lifestyle	Pregnancy	Previously Trafficked	Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade	Cultural Practices	Inequality	Lower Education Level	Unemployment	Pandemics	Lower Socio-Economic Status	Religious Practices	Lack of documentation	Transgender	Divorce Visitations	Chronic Illness	Gambling Addiction	Temporal Lobe Epilepsy
001	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
002	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
003	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
004	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
005	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
006	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
007	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
008	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
009	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
010	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
011	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
012	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
013	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
014	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
015	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

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APPENDIX V: CODE BOOK

Theory Driven Codes	Description	Example
Individual Factors		
Abuse	The PACOTIP explores the role of abuse in TIP as any form of abuse inflicted on a person that leaves them no choice but to submit to the force and exploitation. Additionally, the child Act 38 of 2005 refers to forms of abuse as the presentation of physical, sexual, neglect, bullying, and emotional ill-treatment and harm. Abuse can also be seen as interpersonal dysfunction especially within the family environment that is often characterised by violence and conflict. Many young children and adolescence experience a form of abuse through the once off or repeated exposure to pornography. Abuse can furthermore be seen in instances of TIP where abuse is used to enforce control and ensure harm.	"Presence of maltreatment and especially neglect is a common risk factor in the increasing of vulnerabilities as it often co-occurs with substance and alcohol abuse and high-risk relationships."
Being a Child	Any individual who is under the age of 18 which increases their vulnerability to any form of exploitation.	"Children, who make up a large portion of vulnerable individuals in South Africa, rely almost exclusively on others for their nurturance and protective needs, as well as for access to their human rights."
Being Female	Entrenched positions of power between men and women which often stems from dominant socially classified statuses that causes a hierarchical relationship between the two. This hierarchical relationship results in women being placed in less desirable roles within society.	"Hierarchical difference seen in ownership and control of monetary resources, in political and cultural participation and employment opportunities. Many of these women are vulnerable to be trafficked as they are attracted to or lured into the promise of economic prosperity and towards opportunities to escape any form of oppression."

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Disability	Disability, as defined according to the Cambridge Dictionary, can be considered as an umbrella term that encompasses any "illness, injury or condition that makes it difficult to do anything." Disability within the context that can present itself in both the physical and cognitive domains.	"Vulnerability is borne out of the circumstances that many disabled persons find themselves in, such as dependency on a caregiver, exposure to social stigma and isolation, and reliance on assistive communication technology."
History of or known Substance Abuse	Reliance on any form of addictive substance.	"Substance abuse and addiction is thus fast becoming a tool in which traffickers can recruit, exploit, and control trafficked individuals, through the promise of more or unlimited supply to substances"
Migration	Individuals who seek employment, educational or asylum in South Africa, often from neighbouring countries. Migration that can be driven by economic factors such as unemployment, low wages, or the desire to further one's career and economic status. Other instances of migration occur with an element of being forced, as the individuals have no choice but to flee their country due to a fear for their safety due to political unrest and violent conflict.	"Vulnerable migrants very often face the risk of hostility from locals that potentially escalate into violent xenophobic attacks. Many of these individuals furthermore go through illegitimate channels of movement and employment, that are often unmonitored and unregulated, which unknowingly exposes them to traffickers who view their vulnerability status as an opportunity for exploitation."
Personal Lifestyle	Personal choices that the individual makes that places them in a greater proximity to traffickers. Such as engaging in the blesser and blesses phenomenon to obtain certain goods and services (can at times be lifestyle driven) in exchange for sexual favours or services. Can be viewed as transactional which is common in the sex work industry. However, those who often work within the sex industry to engage in transactional sex face a multitude of structural and interpersonal violence.	"South African women and young girls spend their time in establishments such as bars, nightclubs and shebeens where the abuse of intoxicating substances, risky sexual behaviours and criminal activities dominate the scene."

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Pregnancy	The commodification of unborn children and/or infants. The further commodification of the pregnant body which is seen as a favourable factor for some sex users or clients.	"New-borns are commodities and therefore being pregnant increases vulnerability as the women is carrying the commodity that is sought after."
Previously Trafficked	Trafficked individuals are very often at a great risk to being re-trafficked despite being removed.	Very often trafficked individuals are weary or suspicious of support services offered and as such do not trust their aftercare services. Similarly, their dependency on substances and the lack of re-integration opportunities increases their vulnerability to be re-trafficked or to voluntarily return.
Theory Driven Codes	**Description**	**Example**
Contextual Factors		
Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade	Sex work and the trade of sex is criminalised under the Sexual Offences Act 23 of 1957, extending to all activities pertaining to the selling and buying of sex, including the use of brothels and pimping.	"Those who participate in the trade of sex as sex workers face a multitude of structural and interpersonal violence that is prevalent in police violence, exclusion from services and the experience of vulnerabilities such as acquiring HIV or bring trafficked."
Cultural Practices	In South Africa, traditional practices and beliefs are often valued and adhered to. Often the origins of such beliefs are rooted in the need to survive, yet this in its own may be quite damaging and harmful.	"This specifically relates to instances of early marriage which often takes place in instances where adolescent girls are seen as an economic burden in a family living in poverty. The adolescent girl is often offered up to an older man for marriage as a survival strategy"
Inequality	Inequality can have an impact on various systemic levels. The lack of equal opportunity. This is different to inequity which is the avoidable difference in the allocation of resources and services to a specific group, which is deemed as unfair.	"On an individual level, inequality can lead to the individual becoming more vulnerable to mental and physical illness, violence, and homelessness. These individuals are often confronted by socio-economic and individual challenges such as unemployment and poverty. This coupled with inequalities in education can make it significantly more difficult for an individual to enter into the labour field"
Lower level of Education	Level of education can be viewed as a preventative factor whereby the individual has received formals schooling that has taught awareness round	"In the quest to provide for a better life or to further one's circumstances with the hope of obtaining a better career, many will be vulnerable to accepting

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	human trafficking and the risk of exploitation. Individuals who wish to further their education are also lured with false opportunities of further study.	falsified opportunities that are actually exploitative in nature. Furthermore, the lack of awareness of trafficking methods and the lack of education round trafficking also impacts one's vulnerability."
Unemployment	The lack of employment opportunity that impacts on the ability to financially support oneself and one's family.	The despair of being unable to provide for one and/or one's family often leads to individuals being more willing to take greater risks and quick solution employment positions, to provide. These risks often expose them to traffickers who are then able to exploit their vulnerabilities."
Pandemics	Infectious diseases that have integral influences on the social and economic conditions of an individual's life.	"Research has highlighted that a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS within a family can escalate the vulnerability factors that are already present in an individual's life. Similarly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant financial constraints and pressures on the world."
Lower Socio-Economic Status	Is a multi-faceted concept that is inclusive of not only economic indicators but also political, social, and cultural indicators. This can be seen in the inability to access resources that may alleviate any political, social, cultural, and financial difficulties.	"Consideration of poverty is used to contextualise why parents are lured to sell their children to traffickers, as they cannot provide for the basic needs of their families and are coerced into the act as a means to escape debt and poverty"
Religious Practices	Traditional faith and healing practices are also amongst some of the practices that may be distorted in a manner which results in the abuse and exploitation of vulnerable individuals.	"Such cultural beliefs are ingrained in the long-held belief in the supernatural that can be connected to through acts and practices of voodoo, witchcraft, and juju"

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APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH PERMISSION

HOPE RISEN
FOUNDATION

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13 October 2020

Good day Stephanie

While our organisation will not receive direct rewards from this study, the information gathered from this study will increase understanding of the individual and contextual factors that contribute to minor and adult vulnerability during the trafficking process in South Africa. The research results may therefore contribute to existing prevention and protection approaches and strategies.

As founder of Hope Risen, I therefore give you permission to have access to the information that is contained in each case file opened on trafficking victims.

I furthermore give you permission to use the employees and volunteers of Hope Risen as participants in the study as they contain a wealth of information pertaining to the trafficking process.

Permission is also granted to use Hope Risen's name in the reporting and dissemination of the research findings.

Warm Regards

Tabitha Lage

Founder of Hope Risen Foundation

Email: info@hoperisen.org **Website**: www.hoperisen.org

Contact number: 071 183 9201 **Public Benefit Organisation NO**: 930056616

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APPENDIX VII: PERMISSION FOR COUNSELLING

Concourse
MEDICAL & DENTAL CENTRE

Your health. Our community.

3 March 2020

Ms. Stephanie Oosthuizen
Psychology Department
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Hatfield
0028

Dear Stephanie

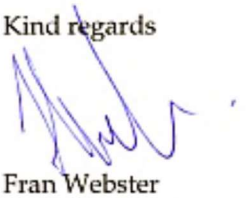
Thank you for contacting me regarding your proposed research focussing on individuals and contextual factors that make people vulnerable to human trafficking.

This letter serves to confirm that I agree to your request to refer participants from Hope Risen to me should the interview process result in their needing my services. This service will include confidential, pro-bono trauma containment and psychotherapy should they require.

Referrals can be made telephonically, either directly by the research participant requiring my service, or by yourself on 011 465 2419 or fran.psych@concoursemedical.co.za.

Good luck with this very important research. I look forward to reading your results.

Kind regards



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