

Community Awareness and Knowledge on the Nature, Scope and Concept of Human Trafficking

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Abstract

Human trafficking is a crime that most people have limited knowledge of. While there are numbers of programs introduced and implemented, research on public awareness and knowledge on human trafficking is scant. Hence, this study focused on the level of awareness and knowledge of San Pablo City community members about the nature, scope, and concept of human trafficking in terms of the acts, means employed, and purposes of human trafficking. The study employed a descriptive research design in the form of a survey questionnaire. The sample size of two hundred sixteen (216) people was drawn from various sectors using a purposive and convenience sampling. From the gathered quantitative data, frequency count, weighted mean, and ANOVA were used for analysis. The findings indicated that the community is aware and knowledgeable about human trafficking, however, some people still do not understand the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking due to their reliance on the media rather than direct participation as a social responsibility. The level of awareness and knowledge among the different group of respondents significantly varies since they have different level of perception. Further, along with other media platforms including the internet, seminars at the barangay level, radio, newspapers, seminars at educational institutions, posters, and pamphlets to familiarize the public with human trafficking, the majority preferred television as their primary source of information.

Keywords: *trafficking in persons, modern day slavery, community awareness, community knowledge, misrepresentations*

Article History:

Received: November 3, 2022
Accepted: November 21, 2022

Revised: November 18, 2022
Published online: November 26, 2022

Suggested Citation:

Nayoyos-Refugia, J.M. (2022). Community Awareness and Knowledge on the Nature, Scope and Concept of Human Trafficking. *International Review of Social Sciences Research*, Volume 2 Issue 4, pp. 18 - 39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53378/352946>

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1. Introduction

Human Trafficking (HT) or Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is a transnational crime (Litam, 2021), a widespread lucrative international criminal activity across a variety of industries (Van Buren et al., 2021) and regarded by many authors, researchers, and practitioners as ‘the new era of slavery’ (Rogers & Bryant-Davis, 2022) that endangers vulnerable individuals from around the globe severely (Zhu et.al, 2020). The nature of human trafficking is hidden (Tomkins et al., 2018; Bryant & Landman, 2020) and it is a crime that is often described as "hidden in plain sight," because victims may appear "normal" and even cope with daily life (Dummermuth, 2019). To keep the exploited individual under the control of the trafficker, HT frequently uses trickery, deceit, or force. People who become victims of human trafficking are frequently vulnerable; typically, these are people who lack the required social or governmental supports to survive (End Slavery Now, 2022). To gain labour or sex acts for a charge, people traffickers often utilize force, fraud, or other forms of compulsion.

Millions of men, women, and children are trafficked every year, including United States. Any culture can experience victims of any age, ethnicity, gender, or nationality. In order to lure victims into situations where they are being trafficked, traffickers may adopt strategies such as assault, manipulation, presenting fictitious promises of lucrative work, or love relationships (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2022). The U.S. TIP reports cited number of deficiencies, including the absence of a centralized database and aggregated data on the scope, nature, and extent of human trafficking in the nation as well as the government's failure to report on ongoing criminal investigations and the number of cases that have been prosecuted (Van der Watt, 2018). Given the obscured nature of human trafficking, understanding the full scope and scale of the problem is nearly impossible. While the true extent of human trafficking and modern slavery is unknown, an estimated 40.3 million people are trapped in modern slavery (Stop The Traffik, n.d.).

It is estimated that 27 million people are victims of human trafficking worldwide which makes a widespread impact that extends across all states. Because human trafficking is a hidden crime, many people are unaware of its existence and are unprepared to respond to it (Shoop, 2020). Similarly, in the study of Gatza (2018) due to the ephemeral and covert nature of trafficking, the variety of definitions associated with trafficking words, and the absence of a

centralized reporting and documenting agency, it is challenging to compute data about trafficking effectively. Additionally, researching human trafficking is made difficult by its illicit nature and the obscurity of high-quality data (Tomkins, et.al, 2018).

Human trafficking has been criminalized as a primary anti-trafficking response by nations all over the world. Despite the promise of laws designed to encourage the prosecution of human trafficking crimes, global reports show that only a small number of offenders have been prosecuted (Farrell & Kane, 2020). According to Farrell & de Vries (2020), the public's consideration about human trafficking has increased interest in measuring the extent of victimization. Despite efforts to develop comprehensive methods for studying human trafficking, there are few reliable measures available and to guide efforts, evidence about the nature and scope of the problem is required.

Anti-trafficking program evaluations have primarily focused on assessing project's progress and output achievement, rather than tracking realization of outcomes or impact that is complicated further by the hidden nature of human trafficking and the trauma experienced by victims. As a result, despite some evidence of increased awareness and funding, organizations continue to struggle to demonstrate impact and determine what works to combat human trafficking (Bryant & Landman, 2020).

Meanwhile, the Philippine government completely complies with the minimum standards for stopping human trafficking under Tier 1 (United States Department of State, 2022), still, the Philippines has a serious problem with human trafficking; it has one of the highest victim populations in the world, with an estimated 784,000 individuals being used as modern-day slaves (McGeough & The Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Cell of Mercyhurst University, 2022) and regarded as a major source country for trafficking, as well as a transit and destination country (Gatza, 2018). Hence, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge of community members in San Pablo City, Laguna on the nature, scope, and concept of human trafficking for possible information dissemination program/project based on what the community understands on the background, extent and notions relative to human trafficking specifically in terms of the (a) acts promoting HT, (b) means employed, and (c) purposes of human trafficking. Likewise, the study tested if there is a significant difference on the level of awareness and knowledge on the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking as

perceived by the different group of respondents. Furthermore, the study assessed the information dissemination medium preferred by the community to increase public awareness and knowledge in their area on human trafficking.

2. Literature review

2.1. Awareness and Knowledge

While human trafficking occupies a prominent place on the global policy agenda, many aspects of this phenomenon remain empirically underdeveloped (Blanton et al., 2020). Raising public awareness about the risks and symptoms of human trafficking is a critical component of any anti-trafficking strategy. Effective public awareness and outreach can help identify incidents of human trafficking, increase public support for governments and communities to take action, and eventually aid in the prevention of human trafficking (United States Department of State, 2021).

In the dissertation of Terwilliger (2021), she mentioned that the lack of knowledge about human trafficking, along with advances in technology and social media, have made it easier for people to be exploited. Further, the study revealed that there is a need for more information and understanding about the risks and hazards of using social media, especially among younger users. To lessen the risk of social media users becoming victims of human trafficking, increased awareness and safety measures are essential. Although public awareness is critical in the fight against human trafficking, little academic research has been conducted to examine the public policy implications of various types of messaging that the public may use in recognizing human trafficking (Farrell, 2018).

Despite the promise for social change, anti-trafficking programs frequently fall short. This is a result of inaccurate portrayals that downplay the complexity of human trafficking for sexual exploitation (THBSE) as a system of exploitation and by maintaining unfavorable assumptions about what a victim should or should not look like, which helps to silence and marginalize victims. Additionally, rather than advocating for social change, anti-trafficking initiatives typically focus on raising awareness (Costa da Silva Catela Teixeira, 2021).

In a study conducted by Shrestha et al. (2015), 76% of the students surveyed said they were aware of sex trafficking, and 94.6% said they learned about it from the media (radio or television). The results have significant implications for anti-trafficking programs, particularly

those aimed at educating adolescent females who are most vulnerable to sex trafficking. Moreover, the findings of Gonçalves et al. (2020) showed that college students knew a lot about the dynamics of the phenomenon, trafficker profiles and criminal dynamics, and human trafficking trajectories, but they knew less about the goals of human trafficking, victim characteristics and victimization dynamics, and Portuguese-specific aspects of human trafficking. Age, study area, and contact with sources other than academic institutions all have an impact on the knowledge, suggesting that academic institutions are not adhering to Portugal's third National Action Plan against Human Trafficking, which was put into effect from 2014 to 2017.

Sharapov (2019) concluded that the "snapshot" of public perceptions of human trafficking in the three case-study nations (Great Britain, Hungary and Ukraine) demonstrates the complexity of the issue, as several "vectors" meet to create a complicated pattern of personal responses that results in three diverse national-level patterns of views. The patterns seem to match the prevalent concepts of human trafficking that are reflected in national anti-trafficking legislation and media coverage. The findings call into doubt the relevance, scope, and goals of numerous anti-trafficking initiatives.

2.2. Acts, means and purposes of human trafficking

Human trafficking has many forms and the three most prevalent include sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage. In coerced involvement in commercial sex acts, sex trafficking disproportionately affects women and children. According to the US State Department, forced labor, also known as involuntary servitude, is the main form of trafficking in the globe. Another type of human trafficking is debt bondage, in which a victim is made to work against their will to repay a debt (Human Rights Commission - San Francisco, n.d.). Meanwhile, the most common types of trafficking to occur in the Philippines are forced labor and sexual abuse (Gatza, 2018).

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10364 which amended Republic Act No. 9208 defines human trafficking as:

“recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining, harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim’s consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position,

taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs” (Section 3 (a), Republic Act No., 10364).

To be considered as falling inside the scope of trafficking in person, a scenario must have three (3) linked and interdependent components to include act(s), means and exploitative intent/purpose. Each of these elements must be present and connected: the act/s must be carried out by one of the means, and both must be linked to the achievement of the exploitative goal. If one of the three (3) elements is missing, the situation may not involve human trafficking, unless child trafficking is involved (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020).

Act or acts of human trafficking refers to what is done which involves the recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining, harboring, or receipt of persons, with or without the victim’s consent or knowledge, within or across national borders, whereas, means can be committed by use of threat, force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. While purpose of human trafficking includes exploitation or prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, involuntary servitude, or the removal or sale of organs (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020; The Lawphil Project - Arellano Law Foundation, Inc., n.d.; International Labour Organization, n.d.).

According to McGeough and The Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Cell of Mercyhurst University (2022), the Philippines has one of the highest victim populations in the world wherein recruitment phase of human trafficking frequently involves native Filipinos. False promises of job placement are the most popular human trafficking recruitment technique. In many cases, victims are sought out to work as "entertainers" but wind up being coerced into prostitution, transported both locally and abroad, as strippers or nightclub hostesses. In real-time internet broadcasts, traffickers sexually abuse minors. Additionally, to get around the Philippine government's and the destination nations' regulatory frameworks for foreign workers and avoid detection, traffickers also employ false childcare jobs, student and intern exchange programs,

and programs for unpaid internships including porous maritime boundaries. According to one study, the Philippines employs almost 50,000 Filipino children as domestic servants, including nearly 5,000 who are under the age of 15. Children who worked often endured dangerous working conditions, maybe including signs of forced labor, in places including mines, factories, and farms.

3. Methodology

Since the purpose of the study is to assess community members' awareness of human trafficking in San Pablo City, Laguna, it employed a descriptive survey. The research is based mostly on survey questionnaires and informal interviews, which provided supplemental data for this study's completion.

Respondents of the study were divided into five groups: (1) residential area which involve the resident, house owners, and household helpers); (2) local government units to include LGU personnel and barangay officials; (3) business establishments that comprise the employers or business owners and employees/helpers; (4) educational institutions, which included students, school personnel/attendants; and (5) churches, which encompasses its personnel/members. The study was conducted in San Pablo City, Laguna and involved a total sample size of 216 respondents.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents:

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

Group of Respondents		Number	Percentage
Business Establishments	Business owners (employer); business helpers/employees	44	20.37%
LGUs	LGU personnel; barangay officials	39	18.06%
Residential Areas	Residents, house owners and helpers	72	33.33%
Educational Institution	Students; school personnel/attendants	35	16.20%
Church	Church personnel; church members	26	12.04%
Total		216	100%

Given the size of the population, the study focused on the central business district of San Pablo City, Laguna, where the different public sectors can be found (Business Establishments, LGU, Residential Areas, Educational Institution, Church) in which respondents were chosen based on their suitability for the study's completion and availability as well as their relevance to the study's purpose. The respondents for this study were chosen using the purposive and convenience sampling method. To identify and choose the respondents for the study, fixed criteria were utilized. First, the respondents must belong to a group that is particularly vulnerable to human trafficking (youth, men, women, jobseekers and the like). Second, they must have resided in San Pablo for more than a year, and third, geographical proximity, availability and/or willingness of the respondents to participate in the research at a given time.

The main basis for the questionnaire's formulation is Republic Act Number 10364, also known as the "Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012," which was validated by the Office of the Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force-Region IV (RATTF4) and likewise checked and verified by the Office of the City Social Welfare and Development-San Pablo City (OCSWD-SPC). Further, to examine the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher ran a pilot test. Using a Cronbach alpha, the overall results show that community members' understanding of the nature, breadth, and idea of human trafficking is .926 or high acceptability which set very stable reliability for the researcher-made instrument. Three (3) composites under the extent of knowledge of the community members on the nature, scope and concept of human trafficking gave their respective reliability scores: acts of trafficking in persons (.878, above acceptability) means employed in human trafficking (.843, above acceptability) and purpose (forms) of human trafficking (.863, above acceptability). The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of .70 and above is good, .80 and above is better, and .90 and above is best. While Taber (2018) mentioned in his study that alpha values were described as excellent (0.93–0.94), strong (0.91–0.93), reliable (0.84–0.90), robust (0.81), fairly high (0.76–0.95), high (0.73–0.95), good (0.71–0.91), relatively high (0.70–0.77), slightly low (0.68), reasonable (0.67–0.87), adequate (0.64–0.85), moderate (0.61–0.65), satisfactory (0.58–0.97), acceptable (0.45–0.98), sufficient (0.45–0.96), not satisfactory (0.4–0.55) and low (0.11). This indicates that the questionnaire used to assess how well-informed community people are about the nature, scope, and idea of human trafficking is strong or above the level that is considered acceptable and valid. According to Bujang et al. (2018), the internal consistency or

dependability between a number of objects, measurements, or ratings is measured by Cronbach's alpha.

The questionnaire was initially written in English before being translated into Filipino, a local tongue that is widely spoken in the study area. As the survey questionnaire contained legal terms, it was translated by expert for the respondents' convenience.

The questionnaire was individually distributed, and because of the nature of the study, the data collection process was handled with the highest confidentiality, and the respondents' identities were kept anonymous for the whole course of the study. Before participants were requested to participate in the survey, the study's principal goal was fully explained. The study secured voluntary participation, provided instructions on how to respond, and informed participants that all responses were confidential. After respondents completed the survey questionnaire and provided their answers, the study needed to clarify some of the questions by conducting an informal style of interview. These supplemental data were used to complete the study.

In the study, the statistical data were analyzed using the frequency count, weighted mean and ANOVA.

4. Findings and Discussion

As presented in table 2, statement 1 obtained the highest mean and statement 5 obtained the lowest mean but all are interpreted as “Aware and knowledgeable which shows that community are aware and knowledgeable on the acts that promote human trafficking. The community is aware and knowledgeable especially on the recruitment, obtaining or hiring of women and children on the acts that promotes HT as a result of their exposure to human trafficking cases flashed in the media, seminars conducted by various government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and their friends/neighborhood who are already knowledgeable about the issue. Yet, there are still some who fail to understand its very nature and concepts due to their failure to participate or, in some cases, their lack of interest, and who need to be educated about the said offense. Similarly, Szablewska and Kubacki (2018) discovered in their study that anti-human trafficking campaigns typically use advertising techniques to reach vulnerable groups and the general public, with the primary goal of informing and educating.

Table 2*Awareness and knowledge of the community members on the acts promoting human trafficking*

Indicators	Business Establishment		LGU		Residential Areas		Educational Institutions		Church/es		Over-all mean	DI
	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI		
1. Recruitment, obtaining or hiring of women and children	2.91	AK	3.36	AK	3.01	AK	2.74	AK	2.96	AK	3.00	AK
2. Providing and offering clients a trafficked women and children	2.89	AK	3.21	AK	2.79	AK	2.71	AK	2.73	AK	2.87	AK
3. Transporting or transferring women and children from one place to another (not necessarily outside the country)	2.64	AK	3.33	AK	2.83	AK	2.57	AK	2.50	AK	2.77	AK
4. Maintaining (keeping) or harboring (concealing) trafficked persons	2.64	AK	3.26	AK	2.67	AK	2.57	AK	2.65	AK	2.76	AK
5. Receiving (accepting) of clients of trafficked persons	2.55	AK	3.21	AK	2.56	AK	2.46	SAK	2.54	AK	2.66	AK
over-all	2.72	AK	3.27	AK	2.77	AK	2.61	AK	2.68	AK	2.81	AK
<i>Legend:</i>	3.50 – 4.00 Highly Aware and knowledgeable (HAK)											
	2.50 – 3.49 Aware and knowledgeable (AK)											
	1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Aware and knowledgeable (SAK)											
	1.00 – 1.49 Not Aware and knowledgeable (NAK)											

According to Shoop (2020), being a clandestine crime, human trafficking leaves many individuals uninformed of it and unprepared to respond to it. Legislators can help the public become partners in a comprehensive legal structure to combat human trafficking—one that not only prosecutes traffickers and rehabilitates victims, but also takes the critical step of identifying traffickers and victims—by improving existing laws to raise public awareness of human trafficking, extending training requirements, providing tax breaks to businesses, and establishing human trafficking councils. Studies on trafficking offer a potentially fruitful field for population geography to conduct multidisciplinary, significant research on a major global issue, to guide the development of laws to stop and lessen the effects of trafficking, and to advance conceptual and theoretical understandings of the phenomenon (Smith, 2018).

However, it should be noted that among the five groups of respondents, majority from educational institutions, and churches, only slightly aware and knowledgeable that moving women and children from one location to another (not necessarily abroad), maintaining or hiding trafficked people, and accepting clients of trafficked people are among the behavior patterns that promote trafficking. The slight awareness and knowledge among this group of respondents is to be expected, and it only serves to highlight how subtle the behavioral patterns, tendencies, or actions associated with human trafficking are given that even victims and law enforcement officials are unable to identify these lucrative acts easily. As previously stated, if one of the three (3) components (act, means, and purpose) is absent, the circumstance might not constitute human trafficking unless child trafficking is included (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020).

Table 3

Awareness and knowledge of the community members on the means employed human trafficking

Statements	Business Establishments		LGU		Residential Areas		Educational Institutions		Church/es		Over-all mean	DI
	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI		
1. The use of threat, force or coercion to obtain women and children; or	3.00	AK	3.36	AK	3.01	AK	3.14	AK	3.04	AK	3.11	AK
2. Abduction or taking away of person to be involved in human trafficking; or	2.80	AK	3.23	AK	2.88	AK	3.03	AK	2.88	AK	2.96	AK
3. Use of fraud, deception or tricks to deceive women and children such as offering good job and salary to other city or country; or	2.98	AK	3.36	AK	2.85	AK	3.03	AK	2.81	AK	3.01	AK
4. Abuse of power, or taking advantage on the vulnerability (weakness or helplessness) of person (women and children); or	2.95	AK	3.28	AK	2.86	AK	3.00	AK	2.92	AK	3.00	AK
5. Giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person who has control over another.	2.80	AK	3.18	AK	2.79	AK	2.71	AK	2.77	AK	2.85	AK
over-all	2.90	AK	3.28	AK	2.88	AK	2.98	AK	2.88	AK	2.98	AK

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 Highly Aware and knowledgeable (HAK)
 2.50 – 3.49 Aware and knowledgeable (AK)
 1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Aware and knowledgeable (SAK)
 1.00 – 1.49 Not Aware and knowledgeable (NAK)

As shown in table 3, statements 1 and 5 have the greatest and lowest means, respectively, but all are interpreted as "Aware and knowledgeable", which suggests that public are aware and knowledgeable on the activities or means employed by traffickers in human trafficking. The community are conscious and have sufficient information especially when traffickers use of threat, force or coercion to obtain women and children. It would imply that the community is well informed, but some people still struggle to discern and recognize the different behaviors that make up human trafficking because they choose not to engage or, in some situations, they lack curiosity. Similar to this, public and private groups' mass media and information distribution activities had a big impact. It can be noted that community members are aware and knowledgeable yet, human trafficking continuously grow as observed. As mentioned by Shoop (2020), due to the fact that human trafficking is a hidden crime, many individuals are ignorant of it and unprepared to deal with it. Accordingly, United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime (n.d.), to trick and coerce their victims, traffickers frequently use violence or fraudulent employment agencies, as well as false promises of education and job opportunities.

Although there is no single defining characteristic shared by all human trafficking victims, traffickers all over the world prey on individuals whose vulnerabilities, such as poverty, limited English proficiency, or lack of lawful immigration status, are exacerbated by a lack of stable, safe housing and limited economic and educational opportunities. Victims of human trafficking are duped by false promises of love, a good job, or a stable life and are lured or forced into situations in which they are forced to work in deplorable conditions for little or no pay (U.S. Department of Justice, 2022). The interconnected "push" and "pull" factors make people more vulnerable to human trafficking. Poverty, gender inequity, unemployment, limited access to education/social programs, political instability, war and conflict situations are examples of "push" factors. Other "pull" factors include increased demand for cheap labor and/or exploitative labor practices, as well as the promise of money and a better life (Ontario Women's Justice Network, 2018).

In an informal interview with a social welfare officer from CSWDO-San Pablo who dealt with cases of human trafficking, the community is aware because they have already held some seminars, but some people still become victims because they were willing to take a chance in order to escape difficult circumstances in their lives, such as poverty (Personal communication, June 08, 2016). The development and enhancement of legislation, including programs or

materials to enlighten or boost public awareness for crime prevention, are likely based on the findings and recommendations of studies and reports for the related agencies and organizations. As a matter of fact, R.A. 9208, which was revised by a more extensive clause in R.A. The Philippines' Act 10364 improves human trafficking-related programs.

Clinching from these, despite their awareness and knowledge employed by traffickers in human trafficking, people nonetheless choose to take risks in order to survive or move to greener pastures as a result of various circumstances. Studies have been done on how people become victims, and organizations and entities that are concerned have made efforts to address the issue. Despite increased awareness, it appears that some people are still unaware of the problem or fall for its tricks because of the methods that human traffickers use to entice victims. As a result, it can be assumed from the results of this study that, despite being aware of it, people's attitudes and behaviors when faced with challenging circumstances expose them to the practices used by traffickers. Since no one is safe from the threat of such unlawful activity, coordination, cooperation, and engagement of responsible agencies and the community play a crucial role in the fight against human trafficking.

Table 4

Awareness and knowledge of the community members on the purpose's human trafficking

Statements	Business Establishments		LGU		Residential Areas		Educational Institutions		Church/es		Over-all mean	DI
	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI		
1. Prostitution and/or other forms of sexual exploitation such as sex tourism; or	3.20	AK	3.36	A K	3.11	AK	3.43	AK	3.00	AK	3.22	AK
2. Forced labor and/or services; or	3.05	AK	3.15	A K	2.85	AK	3.00	AK	3.00	AK	3.01	AK
3. Slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude; or	2.95	AK	3.18	A K	2.85	AK	2.89	AK	3.00	AK	2.97	AK
4. Removal or sale of organs; or	2.73	AK	3.21	A K	2.74	AK	2.89	AK	2.62	AK	2.84	AK
5. Child exploitation (for illegal production and trafficking of drugs or for illegal militant activities).	3.05	AK	3.31	A K	2.76	AK	3.09	AK	2.85	AK	3.01	AK
over-all	3.00	AK	3.24	A K	2.86	AK	3.06	AK	2.89	AK	3.01	AK
<i>Legend:</i>	3.50 – 4.00 Highly Aware and knowledgeable (HAK)											
	2.50 – 3.49 Aware and knowledgeable (AK)											
	1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Aware and knowledgeable (SAK)											
	1.00 – 1.49 Not Aware and knowledgeable (NAK)											

As seen in table 4, statement 1 received the highest mean score and statement 4 received the lowest score, but all are regarded as "Aware and knowledgeable," demonstrating that the community is mindful of the objectives or purposes of human trafficking. This indicates that the majority of respondents have a higher level of awareness or knowledge about prostitution and/or other forms of sexual exploitation, such as sex tourism, which has received a lot of attention from reporters in the media. Videos, documentaries, reported cases in the news and live interviews that covers issues on human trafficking are available on the internet. Due to the media's focus on exposing these types of illegal activities, the community members were likely aware of other forms of human trafficking. However, some may be confused by the various forms, and others may not be aware of them due to a lack of interest in what is occurring domestically or abroad. As mentioned, sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage are the three most prevalent forms of human trafficking (Human Rights Commission - San Francisco, n.d.) and as more awareness of the global issue of sex trafficking comes to light, counselors must prepare to provide therapeutic services to this specific client population (Litam & Lam, 2021; Mays, 2021). Most significantly, perhaps, people needed to know so that they would care and raise their voices. This applies to people from all walks of life and from all of our diverse and intersectional groups (Polaris, 2022).

Settling from the several types of human trafficking, it can be concluded that while media, seminars, IEC materials, and other programs have all contributed to raising public awareness, some people are still unaware of or unable to comprehend various types of human trafficking. One explanation could be that some of it has traits in common with other crimes.

At any point, the media and other mediums play a crucial part in spreading knowledge and educating the public because they help people of the community become more aware of and knowledgeable about human trafficking. Since crime occurs everywhere, no one is exempt, there is no typical victim, and it is everyone's duty to be aware of what is going on in the neighborhood.

Table 5

Test of Difference on the Level of Awareness and knowledge on the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking as Perceived by the Different Group of Respondents

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision	Decision
acts promoting human trafficking	Between groups	1.409	4	0.352	16.460	0.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Within groups	0.428	20	0.021				
	Total	1.837	24					
means employed in human trafficking	Between groups	0.580	4	0.145	12.185	0.002	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Within groups	0.238	20	0.012				
	Total	0.818	24					
purposes of human trafficking	Between groups	0.459	4	0.115	4.173	0.013	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Within groups	0.550	20	0.028				
	Total	1.009	24					

*Legend: *p <.05;**, significant *p >.05;**, not significant*

As reflected in table 5, there is a significant difference on the level of awareness and knowledge on the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking as perceived by the different group of respondents which implies that different public sectors (business establishment, LGU, Residential areas, educational institution, and church) have different level of consciousness and information acquired. Moreover, the significant media impact and participation in seminars, the majority is aware and knowledgeable, however, some respondents are still unclear about those act that promotes human trafficking or have not grasped these differences. As expected, majority have higher level of awareness and knowledge among LGU and residential areas since most of the information dissemination campaign conducted are on the barangay level and LGU officials are likely to have more knowledge since they are required to attend mandatory seminars relative to human trafficking. On the other hand, there are some especially among the educational institution and churches who are slightly aware on the acts promoting human trafficking particularly on the transporting or transferring, keeping, or concealing and accepting of victims, thus, information dissemination campaigns shall be strengthen among schools and universities, and churches. As previously stated, majority of the respondents admitted that their level of awareness and knowledge mostly relied on the reports shown in media platforms.

Media reporting on human trafficking matters and has an impact; human trafficking victims are idealized in media coverage of the issue (Gregoriou & Ras, 2018), however, there are lots of false beliefs about human trafficking. The stories that have been told about the crime have

been significantly impacted by media representation, a lack of hard evidence, and social preconceptions (Greater New Orleans Human Trafficking Task Force, n.d.).

The public is inundated with stories of human trafficking, which are incredibly effective at illuminating the issue and providing concrete information on which to build future policies and initiatives. These accounts, however, also exaggerate the issue by generating a prevailing narrative that stifles competing accounts and fails to adequately convey the complexities of human trafficking (O'Brien, 2018). Unfortunately, media outlets can misrepresent the realities of human trafficking, and anti-trafficking campaigns and media portrayals of the issue routinely mislead the problem (Rister, 2020). Due to the complexity of human trafficking, any method of educating the public must be sensitive to prevent misinformation or misconceptions because their (media) widespread influence affects every individual's knowledge and perception. This is true even though the community is sufficiently aware of the nature, extent and concepts surrounding human trafficking. To prevent factual distortion or misinformation, more actions should be added to the media to address issues on misinformation since it is considered as the majority of the population's primary source of information similar to how coverage and reporting aided by professionals to work on complicated issues are empowered to stop public misunderstandings or misinformation

Table 6

Preferred Information dissemination medium of the respondents to increase public awareness and knowledge on human trafficking

Preferred medium	Business establishments	LGU	Residents	Schools	Church	TOTAL	%
1. Television	32	28	52	27	21	160	74 %
2. Radio	14	12	20	16	12	74	34 %
3. Newspaper	18	14	20	11	10	73	34 %
4. Brochures	3	13	7	4	5	32	15 %
5. Internet	25	17	33	20	14	109	50 %
6. Brgy Seminars	22	28	26	19	11	106	49 %
7. School seminars	18	11	18	19	8	74	34 %
8. Posters	11	18	18	7	12	66	31 %

**Multiple response*

As seen in table 6, the 160 or 74% out of 216 participants which obtained the highest rank preferred “television” as their main source of information, since it is the most convenient to them because majority have televisions, while 50% or 109 respondents chosen “Internet” as their

main source of information since they are more comfortable or accustomed with especially to the internet users who participated in the study. The next preferred medium of information dissemination according to 106 or 49% from the participants, is the “conduct of seminars at the barangay level” since they believe that direct participation is better for them to understand it more.

In summary, the preferred information dissemination medium of the community based on ranking are (1) television; (2) Internet; (3) Seminars at the barangay level; (4) Radio, Newspaper and Seminars on educational institutions; (5) posters; and (6) brochures. It is assumed that majority preferred television as their main source of information but not limited to other mediums such as the Internet, Seminars at the barangay level, Radio, Newspaper and Seminars on educational institutions, posters, brochures for them to be acquainted and obtain information about human trafficking.

Most of the respondents’ answer would mean that even if they preferred television or other mediums, seminars shall be conducted regularly at the barangay level even in schools for them to be acquainted. It is better to have these seminars so that they can ask questions and clarify matters that they cannot understand. On the other hand, although other mediums such as posters and brochures received the least rank, still, these mediums will help to make them aware about human trafficking since the way that people understand varies and sometimes will depend on their interest with the aid of different medium. As mentioned, Szablewska and Kubacki (2018) found in their study that advertising techniques are typically used on anti-human trafficking campaigns, significantly added that in order to demonstrate which social marketing tactics are effective and to create a foundation for future efforts, studies presenting the findings of evaluations of social marketing anti-human trafficking campaigns are desperately needed. Similarly, Arulrajah and Steele (2018) discovered in their study of assessing uptake of the opportunity to shape awareness, safeguarding, and referral in the curriculum that the majority (72%) of schools did not provide trafficking education, but 13% of these offer opportunities outside the formal curriculum. 70% had no plans to pursue educational opportunities. Similarly, 56% of the 28% of schools that offered instruction included it in their core curriculum. 56% only delivered this in their first year of study. 67% provided in-person instruction, while 78% used a combination of methods. They have significantly concluded that there is a need for more education on human trafficking and research into optimal curriculum design in order to produce

competent and capable future clinicians. This would suggest that educational institution can be one among the potential mediums to provide trafficking education.

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that the community is aware and knowledgeable about human trafficking, however, some people still don't understand the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking due to their reliance on the media rather than direct participation. This would suggest that the community's interest, attitude, and conduct in knowing about, reacting to, and being able to grasp social concerns and crime can all have an impact on the level of knowledge and awareness on human trafficking. Practically speaking, the findings of this study provide a collection of baseline facts that policymakers, anti-trafficking advocates, and the media may utilize to create more effective awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns. The information dissemination programs and means needs empowerment to prevent misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the real nature, extent and scope of HT. Knowledge and awareness should not only be viewed as personal but also as communal obligations or a social responsibility because human trafficking can affect anyone at any time or place. Moreover, educational institutions can be seen as one potential medium to provide trafficking education and shall be seen as an opportunity to shape awareness among the youth and its personnel.

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