

Application of Demographic Variables in Measuring the Perception of Child Trafficking in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Across the globe, although tremendous efforts have been carried out for controlling crimes and violation of human rights but it is also a fact that the intensity and magnitude of crimes are increasing with the passage of time. Child trafficking is also one of those social problems and inhuman acts strengthening its roots all over the world particularly in developing countries, like Pakistan with alarming consequences for the society in general and for children in particular. The vulnerability of children to trafficking is due to wide range of factors associated to it, like false promises and hopes of children employment to the poor parents (Aronowitz, 2001), high financial benefits for traffickers (Keefer, 2006), poor law enforcement, and cooperation of law enforcement and politicians with traffickers (Sen, 2003). This study was conducted in district Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan with sample size of 392 respondents (i.e. 116 university teachers, 173 advocates and 104 journalists) to probe out that how demographic variables such as profession, location, gender and marital status manipulate their perception of child trafficking. Results of the data analyses, using independent t-test, showed a statistically significant positive relationship. It is recommended to devise a thorough and careful awareness raising strategy, provide more educational facilities and job openings to the masses and laws implementation in the region.

Key words

Perception, Child trafficking, Profession, Residential location, Gender, Marital Status

Introduction

Children, from futuristic perspective, are the endowment of a nation. However, being weak, they are dependent on society for their growth and grooming. The fragile and careless society put them in such a situation that distorts their psychological being, morality and personality. Family and state failure are the main players responsible for making children vulnerable to trafficking.

The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) defined child trafficking as

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, of abuse of power, giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control

over another person for the purpose of exploitation; exploitation shall include, at a minimum, prostitutions, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”

(UNICEF, 2000: and Azam, 2009)

Trafficking is a set of interrelated activities that encompass migration, prostitution as well as acts that violate human and children's rights. The term signifies the illicit trade in human beings across international borders or within the same country (ILO, 2002). Trafficking can be seen in different forms including the selling of children by parents for small financial return. This process usually emanates through placing the child with creditor's family as reimbursement or with a job promise/provision of quality education and training to the trafficked kids where they are kept in discharging their activities revolving around prostitution, domestic helpers and camel jockeys (Aronowitz, 2001).

Families with features of low profile, abusive environment, broken, with less economic resources and more population put children into a vulnerable position to be easily targeted by traffickers (Bales, 2001; Clawson, 2009). Improvement in legal framework, strong accountability in the law enforcement and judiciary, training of the concerned officials, inter agencies, regional and international cooperation will increase the risk of execution and punishment and resultantly the motivation of the traffickers will lower down and hence, the objective of controlling the crime of child trafficking will be achieved (Klueber, 2003; Carr, 2012). Deepening poverty, deteriorating living conditions, persistent unemployment, population explosion and hopelessness cultivate the environment for child trafficking (Salah, 2004). The literature so far concludes that the poverty stricken families whose population is larger in size and the resources are scarce in addition to the rise in unemployment and lack of alternative economic opportunities turn the children of such families to be the most vulnerable and could be easily targeted by the traffickers as the economically sound people do not support this vulnerable chunk of population. Further, traffickers enjoy the profitable business, being mostly supported by the corrupt officials throughout the world (Brodrick, 2005). Political instability, weaker writ of law, militancy, and forced displacement are associated with child trafficking (Tumlin, 2000; Kapstein, 2006). Gender inequality, customary practices of purchased marriages (bride price), exchange of girls for dispute settlement (*swara*), non-reporting of the trafficking cases due to the fear of shame and insult and fear of honor killing are the causes of trafficking (Klueber, 2003; Chung, 2006). Lack of educational opportunities, ignorance of parents and community, dropped out children due to harsh attitude of teachers turn children

suitable targets for trafficking. This situation also encourages and motivates the traffickers and the incidence increases. The capability of guardians to protect and care their wards is impotent due to ignorance and lack of wisdom (Mirza, 2010; Hughes, 2000).

Henry (2003) and Purzak (2006) studied demographic variables with references to its influence upon the perception of teachers in case of bullying behavior in elementary and high school students. A statistically significant result was obtained while using t-test for analyzing the difference between perception of bullying behavior of elementary school teachers and high school teachers. It shows that teaching in different schools resulted in different levels of perception of bullying. It is a clear indication of the influence of demographic variable on perception of the respondents.

Similarly, gender has a statistically significant influence on views pertaining to different issues in the world. Female, as contrary to the views of male counterpart, perceives human trafficking as a money making machine. However, male considers it a tool of exploitation (Osakue & Okoojion, 2002; Madunagu, 2002; and Ngban et al., 2009). Henry (2003) and Purzak (2006) found that gender as a demographic variable had no significant influence upon the perception of teachers regarding bullying behavior. In other words, these studies found through comparative statistical t-test that there was no difference in the perception and views of elementary school male and female teachers as well as in high school male and female teachers.

Residential location, the area where people belong to, is reported to have a significant effect on the understanding, cognition and overall personality of the person (Fontana, 1981; Ngban et al., 2009). The culture of rural, urban and even suburban areas is obviously different and distinct from one another. Hence, its effects on the dwellers could easily be detected from their views regarding world (Fontana, 1981; and Griffiths, 1990). People of the rural locality consider child trafficking as a source of mitigating the trouble rather than exploitation (Ezewu, 1983). Contrary to the findings of Fontana (1981); Griffiths (1990); and Ngban et al., (2009) regarding the nature of the residential location of people on their social structure, Purzak (2006) pointed out that residential location, that is brought up in either rural, urban, or suburban areas, had no statistically significant effect on the perception of high school teachers of bullying behavior.

This research work tries to find out some demographic variables such as profession, location, gender and marital status that are likely to influence respondents' perception of child trafficking in Peshawar.

1. Materials and Methods

This study highlighted the perception of respondents on the issue of child trafficking, where logical and statistical inferences were drawn while keeping in view the research methodology given below.

This study was conducted in district Peshawar (capital of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan). Survey method was used by using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Questionnaire covered different demographic variables and questions about respondents' perception on child trafficking.

A sample size of 392 was selected from the total population (i.e. 453) through random sampling and was distributed among all three strata proportionately by applying formula of $NI = Ni/N*n$ (i.e. 116 university teachers, 173 advocates and 104 journalists). For statistical inferences and for reaching into a logical end, Independent t-test was carried out. For pilot test of the instrument sixty (60) respondents from three strata were approached. For ensuring the variables' internal consistency, the result of Cronbach alpha was .71 which is often considered appropriate for research in social sciences (Haller & Klein, 2001; Witte & Witte, 2004; and Khan, 2012).

2. Results

T-test was used as the appropriate statistical test for analyzing the data. Null hypotheses were tested for reaching to the decision of being rejected or accepted. The null hypotheses framed for the study were i) $H_0 =$ There is no significant difference with reference to profession and perception of child trafficking, ii) $H_0 =$ There is no significant difference with reference to residential location and perception of child trafficking, iii) $H_0 =$ There is no significant difference with reference to gender and perception of child trafficking, and iv) $H_0 =$ There is no significant difference with reference to marital status and perception of child trafficking.

In other words profession, residential location, gender and marital status do not significantly influence respondent's perception of child trafficking.

Results of the present study was significant ($p < 0.05$) with references to profession and perception of child trafficking. Further, the calculated t-value, i.e., 2.07 is higher than the critical t-value, i.e., 1.97. On the basis of these results the null hypothesis is rejected. It depicts that professions significantly influence peoples' perception of child trafficking (See Table No 1).

Table No.1: Independent T-Test Analysis of the Influence of a Profession on Respondents' Perception of Child Trafficking

Group NT	N	T	P < 0.05
Advocates	173	2.07 (1.97)	
Journalists	103		

Results of the present study was significant ($p < 0.05$) with references to residential location and perception of child trafficking (See Table No II). Here, the calculated t-value 2.97 is higher than the critical t-value, i.e., 1.98. Hence, the null hypothesis, i.e., there is no significant difference with references to residential location and perception of child trafficking, is rejected. It means that there was significant difference among rural and urban people regarding perception of child trafficking (See Table II).

Table No II: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of residential location on respondents' perception of child trafficking

Group	N	T	P < 0.05
Urban	220	2.97 (1.98)	
Rural	172		

The result of the analysis furnished a t-value of 6.17, whereas the critical t-value is 1.95 at ($p < 0.05$) level of significance (See Table No. III). Based on the findings, the H_0 hypothesis was rejected. It means that there was a significant difference with reference to gender and perception of child trafficking.

Table No III: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on respondents' perception of child trafficking

Group	N	T	P < 0.05
Male	331	6.17(1.95)	
Female	61		

Results of the study (see Table No. IV) gave the calculated t-value 3.87 which is higher than the critical t-value 1.95 at ($p < 0.05$) significant level. Therefore, null hypothesis, i.e., there is no significant difference with reference to marital status and perception of child trafficking, was rejected (See Table No. IV). It implies that there was a significant difference on the basis of marital status upon perception of child trafficking.

Table No. IV: Independent T-Test Analysis of the Influence of Marital Status on Respondents' Perception of Child Trafficking

Group	N	T	P < 0.05
Married	283	3.87 (1.95)	
Unmarried	109		

1. Discussion

The result of the analysis revealed that background variables are rooted in the personality of people and it has wide impacts on the world view of the respondents. Human beings are the product of society and its culture which exposes itself in their perceptions. Profession significantly influences respondents' perception of child trafficking. The findings of the present study are in agreement with Henry (2003) and Purzak (2006) who reported that teachers from different schools have different perceptions of bullying behavior.

Similarly, with references to residential location and perception of child trafficking, the result was significant. It means that there was significant difference among rural and urban people regarding perception of child trafficking (see Table 2). The findings are in line with the findings of Fontana (1981) and Ngban et al., (2009) who maintained that people from rural area are different in their perception of child trafficking than that of urban dwellers. Urban dwellers are more exposed to media and they get experienced more than rural people.

Also, the findings of the present study showed that gender as a demographic variable had significant influence on respondents' perception of child trafficking. This finding is in line with Osakue and Okoojion (2002) and Ngban et al., (2009) who concluded that, due to gender, perception of human trafficking was distinct between male and female. Female could easily be deceived as compared to male counterpart by traffickers. The present study also supported Madunagu (2002) who found that female perceive trafficking as an enterprise whereas male take it as exploitation. Contrary to the findings of the present study, Purzak (2006) and Henry (2003) found that gender as a demographic variable had no significant influence upon the perception of teachers regarding bullying behavior. It is inferred to be due to the lack of training of both the gender with respect to recognition and understanding of bullying behavior in the same school.

In addition, marital status was detected to be one of the influencing factors on the perception of respondents regarding world affairs. Married people are more understandable of the issue than single people.

2. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study focused on analyzing the influence of demographic variables, i.e., profession, residential location, gender and marital status on respondents' perception of child trafficking in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study found that all these demographic variables are highly dominant with respect to perception of child trafficking. In order to prevent the escalating problem of child trafficking and harmonize the perception of society thereof, it is recommended to devise a thorough and careful awareness raising strategy, provide more educational facilities, job openings, and ensuring law implementation in the region.

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