

The Significance of preventive Activities in the Field of human trafficking

D. Barkasi (Daniela Barkasi)¹, R. Barta (Richard Barta)²

Original Article

¹ St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Sciences, Bratislava, Institute bl. M. D. Trcku Michalovce, Slovakia.

² St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Sciences, Bratislava, Institute bl. Z. J. Mallu Košice, Slovakia.

E-mail address:

daniela.barkasi@gmail.com

Reprint address:

Daniela Barkasi
Hrnciarska 8
071 01 Michalovce
Slovakia

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Gabriela Lezcano
University of California, San Francisco, USA
Roberto Cauda
Institute of Infectious Diseases, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome, IT

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Abstract:

Introduction: Slovakia is considered a country of origin for victims of human trafficking. The target destination for citizens of the Slovak Republic is mainly Western European countries. In the period from 2011 to 2014, 57% of IOM clients in Slovakia were assisted by victims of human trafficking in Great Britain. According to estimates, there are 30 to 40 million victims of human trafficking worldwide.

Research aim and objectives: The aim of our research was to highlight the importance of preventive activities for young people in the field of human trafficking. The sub-goals were to determine the level of knowledge of secondary school and grammar school students in the Michalovce district from the points of view of completing preventive activities in the field of human trafficking, gender and type of school.

Methods: To test the hypotheses, we used Pearson's chi-square test of independence at a significance level of 0.05.

Results: We discovered that differences in the level of knowledge exist among students who completed preventive activities and between men and women. No differences were found in the level of knowledge of human trafficking by school type.

Conclusion: Our research shows the clear importance of carrying out preventive activities, which have their justification both in the area of prevention as well as in providing useful information and pitfalls that young people may face when traveling abroad for work.

Biography of the first author

In 2006, I completed my master's studies in the field of physics and biology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the UPJŠ in Košice, where I subsequently took a rigorous exam in the field of biology. I finished my PhD studies at the Faculty of Woodworking TU in Zvolen in 2010. I completed master's and doctoral studies in the field of social work. Since 2010, I have been working at the University of Health and Social Work of St. Elizabeth in Bratislava. In 2019, I completed the habilitation procedure in the field of social work. At the Institute of BL. Metod Dominik Trčka VSZaSP of St. Elizabeth, I currently work as the head of the Department for Bachelor's Studies in the study field of social work. I am a lecturer and supervisor in the field of social services. I participated in the organization of several international conferences. I regularly take part in domestic and foreign professional events as an active participant.

Introduction

Human trafficking appeared as a phenomenon in our territory after 1989. The most common means for human traffickers to obtain victims is mainly the vision of a lucrative job with good earnings abroad. It is difficult to know the exact numbers of victims of human trafficking because police statistics do not record the number of trafficked persons, but only the cases where a charge of the crime of human trafficking has been raised. It is therefore very important to take significant steps to introduce adequate preventive measures that would eliminate the risks associated with working abroad. The primary international document that regulates this issue on a legislative level, especially for women and children, is the Additional Protocol on the Prevention, Suppression

and Punishment of Trafficking of Human Beings, which supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It contains the first generally accepted definition of human trafficking, which is characterized as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or acquisition of people under the threat of violence, kidnapping, fraud, enforcement, or taking advantage of position, under which this person has no other real and acceptable option, only to succumb to the threat, by providing or receiving money or other benefit in order to obtain the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of their abuse, regardless of whether the victims of trafficking agreed to the purpose of the abuse. Abuse includes, as a minimum, exploitation by prostitution of others or other forms of sexual abuse, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, enslavement or the harvesting of organs for illegal purposes (1). Social work has an important position in the prevention of human trafficking, the specificity of which is a comprehensive approach to clients' problems, which are understood in a holistic social context (2).

Prevention is very important in the field of human trafficking. The goal of primary prevention is to provide information and social skills that will help reduce the likelihood of negative development. This form of prevention has been implemented in schools for the long run, and the educational program "Prevention of Human Trafficking", which is designed for 9th grade elementary school and high school students, has been running for eighteen years. School management has an important position in this area when it comes to sharing good practices among schools (3). The main goal of the programmes is to teach students how to recognize the danger of

human trafficking, how to prevent its occurrence and how to behave in situations where a person may be trafficked. Many activities aimed at preventing this negative phenomenon are implemented within such programmes.

Research goal

The main goal of our research was to highlight the importance of preventive activities for young people in the field of human trafficking. The sub-goals were to determine the level of knowledge of secondary school and grammar school students in the Michalovce district from the point of view of completing preventive activities in the field of human trafficking, and, furthermore, to determine the differences between students who completed preventive activities and their level of knowledge in terms of gender and school type.

Collection and methodology

Our research was carried out at 12 secondary schools and grammar schools in the Michalovce district that are in the territory of the Košice self-governing region. More specifically, we conducted the research at 4 grammar schools and 8 secondary vocational schools in Michalovce, Veľké Kapušany and Sobrance. The research sample was chosen by deliberate selection and was represented by students in the final grades of secondary schools and grammar schools. The research sample consisted of 601 respondents, of which 236 respondents were from grammar schools and 365 from secondary vocational schools. Of these 12 secondary schools, 2 were private schools and 10 of them were under the founding authority of the Košice self-governing region. Of the total number of respondents, 395 were women, representing 66%, and 206 were men, representing 34%. The respondents were aged between 19 and 21 years. As a tool, we used a questionnaire of our own construction that included socio-demographic questions and questions related to the subject area. At the same time, the schools were differentiated by the fact that not all the schools implemented preventive activities in this area.

Results

Around 46% of respondents answered that they consider our country to be a country of

origin of victims of human trafficking. 49% of respondents consider our country a transit country, and 5% of respondents could not answer this question. As for the most frequent target countries for illegal human trafficking, 62% of these young people answered that it is the countries of Western Europe, 25% of the respondents think that it is the countries of Southern Europe and 13% of respondents could not answer. As many as 92% of respondents stated that they have not met a person, nor do they know a person, who was a victim of human trafficking. 8% of respondents have a person in their environment or know someone who has become a victim of human trafficking. In the group of people who completed preventive activities, up to 93% said they know of the Safe mobile application designed to help victims of human trafficking. In the group of students who had not taken part in any preventive activities, only 13% knew of this application.

In H1, we assumed that there are differences in the level of knowledge among students in terms of completing preventive activities. Based on the items related to this issue, we can conclude that this hypothesis was confirmed based on the results in Table 1 of the observed values, since based on the statistical processing of the Pearson chi-square test of independence, the value is higher ($\chi^2 = 157.2774$) than the critical table value 3.84 and the calculated p value ($p = 4.45189E-36$) is well below the chosen level of significance of 0.05. Therefore we can conclude that there is a significant difference in the level of knowledge among students in terms of completing preventive activities. **Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.**

We tested the second hypothesis based on the items related to the knowledge of human trafficking by gender. A statistically significant difference was found in the analysis of relationships. The calculated p value of $4.16772E-13$ is also well below the chosen significance level of 0.05 and the calculated chi-square $\chi^2 = 52.5625$ is higher than the critical table value of 3.84. Based on the testing results, we can reject the null hypothesis H0 and accept the alternative hypothesis HA, that is, there are differences in the level of knowledge among students in terms of gender. **Hypothesis 2 was confirmed.** To verify the last hypothesis, Pearson's chi-square test was

Table 1 Evaluation of hypothesis 1

observed frequencies	knowledge of human trafficking		
	have knowledge	do not have knowledge	total
Educated	288	96	384
Uneducated	48	169	217
Total	336	265	601
expected frequencies	knowledge of human trafficking		
	have knowledge	do not have knowledge	total
Educated	214,6821963	169,3178037	384
Uneducated	121,3178037	95,68219634	217
Total	336	265	601

Table 2 Evaluation of hypothesis 2

observed frequencies	knowledge of human trafficking		
	have knowledge	do not have knowledge	Total
Gender			
Female	221	35	256
Male	67	61	128
Total	288	96	384
expected frequencies	knowledge of human trafficking		
	have knowledge	do not have knowledge	Total
Gender			
Female	192	64	256
Male	96	32	128
Total	288	96	384

Table 3 Evaluation of hypothesis 3

observed frequencies	knowledge of human trafficking		
	have knowledge	do not have knowledge	Total
Type of school			
Grammar schools	140	46	186
Vocational schools	148	50	198
Total	288	96	384
expected frequencies	knowledge of human trafficking		
	have knowledge	do not have knowledge	Total
Type of school			
Grammar schools	139,5	46,5	186
Vocational schools	148,5	49,5	198
Total	288	96	384

also used for the calculation. We put the school type variable into a causal relationship with students' knowledge of human trafficking. The marginal chi-square at the chosen significance of 0.05 is 3.84. In our case, the calculated value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 0.013902$) is lower than the table value of $df = 1$. The calculated p-value of 0.906139986 is higher than the chosen significance of 0.05. Therefore, based on the test results we can reject the alternative hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis. This means that there is no difference in the level of knowledge among students from the point of view of the school type. **Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed.**

Discussion

The field of human trafficking is very important, especially among the group of young people who plan to find a job after graduation. They are often tempted by various lucrative job offers abroad. It is therefore very important that they are sufficiently informed about the pitfalls of speculative job offers, especially abroad. A number of organizations in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic are dedicated to providing education in this area and implementing various preventive activities aimed at providing useful information on this issue to the greatest possible extent. Our results coincide with a survey by the author Rosová (2013), who came to very similar findings in her research in the area of awareness and knowledge about the issue of human trafficking (4). Frequent victims of human traffickers are women of Roma ethnicity in poor social situations, which makes them more vulnerable and easily available for human trafficking (5). Our research revealed the unequivocal importance of preventive activities in the area of human trafficking, as a certain level of awareness and knowledge was found in the group of students who completed these activities. We also discovered that in the group of students who completed these preventive and educational activities, the level of knowledge was higher among female students. The fact that females achieved a higher level of knowledge in this area is a favorable result, as according to statistics, women are victims of human trafficking more frequently than men (1). Furthermore, in 2012 it was found out that the most frequent victims of human trafficking were

women from the Košice region (5). From the school type point of view, we did not notice any differences.

Based on our research, it would be appropriate to continue implementing preventive activities in the field of human trafficking. This not only goes for the group of graduating high school students, but attention also needs to be focused on groups of people who are applicants for employment at UPSVaR, people in Roma communities and foster children in centers for children and families.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is considered one of the most serious latent crimes and violates basic human rights and freedoms. It is a serious phenomenon that affects countries all over the world, including our country. Many years of practical experience in the implementation of preventive activities aimed at the field of human trafficking are acknowledged by the results of our research as well, where it was clearly established that their implementation is of great importance. It is extremely important to pay attention to social work in the prevention of socio-pathological phenomena and in the prevention of human trafficking. At the same time this also allows us to indicate the possible field of activity for a social worker in the field of prevention of social pathology.

The results of the conducted research and the actual professional experience of preventionists from the ranks of various organizations and institutions that implement educational programmes in schools can help motivate other institutions to work to prevent human trafficking.

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