An Analysis of the effect of Pornography

with regards to the growth of Human Trafficking

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Abstract

Human Trafficking is slavery. We thought slavery finally ended with legislation of the 1960s. Human Trafficking statistics tell us this is not the case. Slavery is still alive and well! It is found most prevalently in Human Trafficking, which is found in two forms. The forms are sex work and common labor. In both cases women, men, and children are held captive of the master they are forced to serve. For the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on sex work and more specifically how pornography plays a vital role in the growing industry of sexual human trafficking.

*Keywords: pornography, human trafficking*

An Analysis on the Effect of Pornography

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The invention of the internet has made pornography available in a moment’s notice, in many locations and especially in the privacy of one’s own home. Some internet engines, like Google Chrome, also provide a way to go online incognito, which makes pornography even more available. Some human rights groups believe the growth of pornography is a major reason human trafficking is growing at such an alarming rate. They believe pornography is a gateway and an entry opportunity. They would argue that pornography opens the door, creates the desire, and makes acceptable the purchasing of a sex worker for a massage with a “happy ending.” Pornography is comparable to marijuana being the gateway or entry opportunity to harder drugs such as heroin or meth.

In this research paper, pornography is defined as “pictures and/or writings of sexual activity intended solely to excite lascivious feelings of a particularly blatant and aberrational kind, such as acts involving children, animals, orgies, and all types of sexual intercourse. The printing, publication, sale and distribution of “hard core” pornography are either a felony or misdemeanor in most states” (Hill, 2018). Hill further explains “hard core” is subjective and difficult to define. A definition of pornography in a Seattle, Washington ordinance was similar to Hill, but also included presentations of women as inferior and degraded (Baldwin, 1989). Sex trafficking in The United States Federal Law, 22 USC § 7102, is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age”

**Literature Review**

With this understanding of the meaning of pornography and the meaning of sex trafficking, the question remains. Does pornography leads one to seek and obtain services from a prostitute and/or a sex trafficked victim. According to MacKinnon (2005) pornography is one way women and children are trafficked for sex. For example, Linda Boreman stated that every time someone watches the pornographic material in which she was portrayed, they are watching her being raped (2005). MacKinnon (2005) believes that the pornography industry by its massive production creates a demand for prostitution. Pornography stimulates the desire and demand to perform with live women, girls, and boys the acts seen in pornography (2005).

Some in the legal system argue that pornography is protected under the first amendment. However, in a court briefing by Baldwin (1998) it was decided that pornography is not protected under the first amendment. The brief further stated the women who were forced to perform in pornography were under the control of others and forced to perform (1998).

Contrary to Baldwin and MacKinnon’s findings, Weitzer takes a different approach. Weitzer (2007) believes there exists today a moral crusade against sex trafficking. He also believes the claims made regarding both trafficking and prostitution are generally suspicious. Weitzer lists the claims against pornography, one of which is that pornography leads to sex trafficking. He states there is no evidence according to research to prove that pornography leads to sex trafficking. Weitzer (2007) later states there are no empirically established links between prostitution and trafficking. Weitzer concludes his article admitting that his moral concern has come from feminist groups and religious conservatives (2007).

After reading the limited research, it would be possible to accept that Weitzer be right. There is no empirical research that establishes a link between prostitution and trafficking. For this reason, it would be of value to study such a topic, however difficult. Below is a model that can begin the process of building empirically based support for the belief that pornography does, in fact, lead to the use of prostitutes and/or sex trafficked victims.

**Model**

Pornography Use

Prostitutes

Sex Trafficked Persons

Hypothesis 1: The use of pornography will lead one to seek prostitutes and/or sex trafficked individuals to fulfill desires created by the use of pornography.

**Methods**

**Participants**

There will be two groups of participants. Group one will include those who use pornography on a regular or semi-regular basis. These participants will be asked to complete surveys describing their use of pornography. These participants will be gathered by surveying the general population within a confidential environment by random sampling Group two will include those who have been identified as trafficked victims and/or prostitutes... They will be interviewed. These participants will not be gathered through random sampling.

**Procedures**

A phenomenological qualitative approach will be utilized. The researcher will use interviews, read documentaries, watch videos and visit known sex trafficked victims. This will be compared to the knowledge gained from the Group One interviews. A preliminary determination will be made regarding pornography and its link to prostitution and sex trafficking. Surveys, interviews, and evaluations will be compared to other research, documents, and videos.

**Instruments**

The Cyber-Pornography Use Inventory (CPUI) developed by Grubbs, Sessoms, Wheeler, and Volk in 2010 will evaluate specific pornography use. This inventory uses a 31 item, Likert scale, self-report that evaluates 3 subscales. This inventory has a reliability coefficient of .84, however Cronbach’s alpha for the total inventory is not provided.

The Internet Sex Screening Test (ISST) will be the initial instrument used to determine risk level of the pornography user (Delmonico, 1997). It is a 25 true-false test to identify low risk, at risk, and high risk. There are seven factors to the assessment that look at one’s online sexual behavior. While the Cronbach alpha scale is not provided for the entire assessment, it’s limitations are the scales for four and five.

**Limitations**

One limitation to the instruments chosen is that they do not specifically address pornography use and how it may lead to the use of prostitutes and/or sex trafficked victims. An additional limitation is obtaining a self-report from both the pornography users and the sex trafficked victims that shows accuracy. A final limitation is whether the victims realize they are enslaved.

**Directions for Future Research**

In future research, it would be prudent to develop an instrument that will adequately evaluate the pornography use of individuals and the likelihood they will utilize escort services, prostitutes, and/or sex trafficked victims as a result of previous pornography use.

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Appendix

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| Table 2 |  |  |
| *Addressing the Validity of the Proposed Measure* | |  |
| Type of Validity | Definition | Application to Proposed Measure |
| Construct Validity | Does it measure what it says it measures? | Yes both assessments used will provide the data necessary that it is purports to obtain. |
| Content Validity | Does it measure all facets of a given construct? | Somewhat, there may be some issues with seeking outside the viewing, to finding a sex trafficked victim. Questions may need to be added to address this part. |
| Criterion Validity | Does the measure relate to the outcome? | Somewhat, the assessment will need to be adjusted in areas to show adequately the use of a sex trafficked victim. |
| Concurrent Validity | Does it correspond to those previously established for the same construct? | Yes as we look at pornography usage |
| Predictive Validity | Does the score on the scale predict scores on some criterion measure? | Yes it should show, with some adjustments to the assessment the criterion is met. |
| Face Validity | Does it appear effective in terms of stated aims? | Yes both assessments showed solid face validity |
| Convergent Validity | Are two measures of constructs that should be related actually related? | Yes |
| Discriminate Validity | Are measures that are not supposed to be related actually unrelated? | Yes |