

5-2019

# Different Voices of Ethical Dilemmas: Evaluating Gender Perceptions of Human Trafficking in Films

Laurie Lawrence

Follow this and additional works at: <https://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

---

## Recommended Citation

Lawrence, Laurie, "Different Voices of Ethical Dilemmas: Evaluating Gender Perceptions of Human Trafficking in Films" (2019). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 1714.  
<https://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/1714>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact [cclouser@iup.edu](mailto:cclouser@iup.edu), [sara.parme@iup.edu](mailto:sara.parme@iup.edu), [edzimmer@iup.edu](mailto:edzimmer@iup.edu).

DIFFERENT VOICES OF ETHICAL DILEMMAS: EVALUATING GENDER  
PERCEPTIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FILMS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Laurie A. Lawrence

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2019

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Department of Communications Media

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Laurie A. Lawrence

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

---

B. Gail Wilson, Ed.D.  
Professor of Communications Media, Advisor

---

Mark Piwinsky, Ph.D.  
Professor of Communications Media

---

Rachel Porter, MFA  
Assistant Professor of Communications Media

ACCEPTED

---

Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.  
Dean  
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Different Voices of Ethical Dilemmas: Evaluating Gender Perceptions of Human Trafficking in Films

Author: Laurie A. Lawrence

Dissertation Chair: Dr. B. Gail Wilson

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Mark Piwinsky  
Ms. Rachel Porter

Human trafficking is the largest criminal activity in the world and frequently defined as intricate and complex. The realities this modern day slavery are often confusing and misunderstood due to stereotypes portrayed through the media. Feature films provide an opportunity to explore the realities of trafficking and create an awareness that breaks down stereotypes and strengthens anti-trafficking efforts. The purpose of this study was to investigate audiences' perception of human trafficking and their motivation to become agents of after viewing feature films containing narratives on human trafficking. The study utilized a pre/post-test approach to determine if feature films had an effect on the audiences' perception. Under the framework of different voices theory and proper distance concept, the researcher expected to find differences in gender responses based on the genre of movie participants were exposed to. The findings from this study concluded that films on human trafficking have an impact on audiences regardless of genre. The study also showed that films identified as difficult to watch can still promote a desire to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. Future research is needed to further explore the long term impact on audiences' perception of human trafficking and their desire to become agents of change in anti-trafficking efforts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Overall this dissertation has been an invaluable learning process. I have discovered that I know a lot more than I give myself credit for while realizing I have so much more to learn, and that is an empowering feeling. I usually joke that I'm the girl who dropped out of high school because she just didn't want to go and now I'm the woman who now never seems to want to leave the school. Life is a journey and I have learned that while it is not always graceful, it is fascinating.

I have to thank my chair, Dr. Gail Wilson, for stepping up and seeing that I had an opportunity to complete my doctoral degree (along with a grateful shout out to Dr. Jay Start for believing in me when I couldn't see through the haze) and offering me invaluable guidance and patience through every draft edit. To Dr. Mark Piwinsky for assisting me with the statistical hurdles I learned to overcome, and to Rachel Porter for having such a sincere interest in my dissertation topic and participation on my committee.

I also have to thank my children, Kyle and Jayde. The motivation that drives me through life is the desire to rest in the assurance that you are proud of me. To my parents, who had to endure 'the rough' years of my adolescents, may they take pride in seeing my accomplishments. My sister, Cheryl, who has always inspired me to reach for a new goal, and to my brother Ken, who has made me feel special, even when I felt like I had failed. And finally, to my sister Joann, whom I miss terribly but know she watches over me from above and whose words still direct my heart.

While never last, but always there, I thank God for the limitless opportunities that have enhanced my life. As I take this next step in my journey with a confidence that I can, and I will, assist in anti-trafficking efforts. My goal is to educate the public about

modern day slavery, evaluate training programs for front line identifiers so that victims can be rescued, and hopefully inspire others to make our world a better place.

I embrace the words of Mahatma Ghandi, “the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	Overview.....	1
	Statement of the Problem.....	5
	Purpose of the Study .....	6
	Theoretical Framework .....	9
	Research Questions .....	11
	Variables .....	11
	Limitations and Delimitations.....	12
	Limitations .....	12
	Delimitations.....	13
	Definition of Terms.....	13
	Active Bystander.....	13
	Agent of Change .....	14
	Ethical Dilemmas.....	14
	Feature Film .....	15
	Genre.....	15
	Human Trafficking.....	16
	Modern Day Slavery.....	17
	Proper Distance.....	17
	Self-Efficacy .....	18
	Definition of the Population.....	18
	Significance to the Field of Communications.....	19
	Organization of the Study .....	21
2	LITERATURE REVIEW .....	23
	Introduction.....	23
	Human Trafficking.....	24
	Perceptions of Human Trafficking .....	26
	Hidden Truths .....	26
	Migrant Trafficking Stereotyped .....	27
	Employee or Victim.....	28
	Media Stereotypes.....	30
	Feature Films .....	32
	Research on Audience Perception .....	33
	Human Trafficking in Films .....	34
	Vigilante Justice.....	35

Chapter	Page
Opportunities to Influence Global Policies.....	37
Reframing the Message.....	39
Disseminate Stereotypes.....	40
Capitalizing on Influences.....	41
Genre of Films.....	42
Audience Perceptions.....	43
Different Voices Theory.....	45
Gilligan’s Perspective of Care and Justice.....	47
Proper Distance Concept.....	49
Self-Efficacy.....	53
Other Theories Considered.....	54
Cognitive Dissonance Theory.....	55
Expectancy Violation Theory.....	57
Summary.....	58
3    METHODOLOGY.....	60
Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	62
Research Design.....	66
Content Analysis of Films.....	68
Movie Stimuli.....	75
Reliability and Validity.....	79
Population and Sample.....	81
Data Collection Procedures.....	85
Instruments and Equipment.....	88
Data Analysis Procedures.....	88
Summary.....	89
4    DATA ANALYSIS.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Validity and Reliability of Instruments.....	90
Pilot Study.....	91
Sample Demographics.....	92
Research Question One.....	97
H1.1.....	99
H1.2.....	106
H1.3.....	107
H1.4.....	109
H1.5.....	112
H1.6.....	114



Chapter	Page
Research Question Two .....	115
H2.1.....	116
H2.2.....	118
H2.3.....	123
Research Question Three .....	125
H3.1.....	125
H3.2.....	127
Open-Ended Responses .....	129
Other Influences.....	132
Race.....	132
Academic Majors .....	133
Conclusion .....	135
Summary of Hypotheses .....	136
Supported Hypothesis .....	137
Unsupported Hypothesis.....	139
5 DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATIONS .....	141
Introduction.....	141
Interpretation of Results and Discussion .....	142
Research Question One.....	142
Research Question Two .....	147
Research Question Three .....	149
Other Influences.....	150
Observation Theories .....	151
Limitations .....	154
Future Research .....	155
Conclusion .....	158
REFERENCES .....	159
APPENDICES .....	177
Appendix A – Informed Consent.....	177
Appendix B – Pre-Survey .....	179
Appendix C – Post-Survey .....	183
Appendix D – Juried Review Form .....	187

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Content Analysis: Feature Films Focusing on Human Trafficking .....	75
2 Participant Demographics .....	92
3 Participant Ethnicity .....	94
4 All Participants' Attitudes Towards Film Genres .....	95
5 Descriptive Statistics for All Groups Using Pre-Survey Data .....	96
6 Independent Samples Test on Awareness.....	100
7 Independent Samples Test on Control and Treatment Groups .....	101
8 Descriptive of Perceived Awareness of Human Trafficking and Movie .....	102
9 ANOVA Between and Within Groups' Awareness of Human Trafficking .....	103
10 Multiple Comparisons – Tukey HSD Awareness of Human Trafficking.....	103
11 Independent Samples Test for Genre and Impact of Human Trafficking Understanding .....	107
12 Independent Samples Test for Gender Responses to a Drama Film .....	108
13 Independent Samples Test for Gender Responses to an Action-Drama Film .....	110
14 Tests of Interaction Effects Between Gender and Genres .....	111
15 Independent Samples Test on Perception of Drama Film Deception .....	113
16 Independent Samples Test on Perception of Action-Drama Film Deception .....	115
17 Independent Samples Test Indicating Films as Disturbing or Exaggerated .....	119
18 Descriptive Statistics of Participant's Perception of Distance to the Film .....	120

Table	Page
19	Correlation Results for H2.2 .....122
20	Correlation Results for H2.3 .....124
21	Independent Samples Test on Confidence and Agent of Change After a Drama Film .....126
22	Independent Samples Test on Confidence and Agent of Change After an Action-Drama Film .....128
23	Independent Samples Test on Voluntary Contact Information Provided .....129
24	ANOVA for Pre-Treatment Understanding of Human Trafficking by Race.....132
25	ANOVA for Post-Treatment Understanding of Human Trafficking by Race.....132
26	ANOVA of Majors Knowledge about Human Trafficking Pre-Test .....134
27	ANOVA of Majors Knowledge about Human Trafficking Post-Test .....134
28	Supported and Unsupported Hypotheses .....135

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Means plot.....	105
2	Profile plot .....	112

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Overview**

The trade or exploitation of human beings for the purpose of sex slavery, forced labor, child soldiers and organ harvesting is labeled as human trafficking (United Nations General Assembly, 2000) and is often referred to as modern day slavery or trafficking in persons. This vague and open statement leads to a wide range of interpretations by nations, cultures and individuals. This ambiguity causes concerns about dismissal of the problem, the struggles for acceptance, and often the lack of legal enforcement. With an estimated 27,000,000 men, women and children enslaved in various forms of human trafficking (US Department of State, 2014), it becomes difficult for individuals to conceptualize the realities of the situation, and moreover how it affects their daily lives. The complexity of this activity is often misunderstood, inaccurate, incomplete and confusing to the public (City of New York, 2016). One of the sources of this misunderstanding comes from contemporary media including popular film production. These productions are the focus of this research.

Typically, in films depicting human trafficking, clichéd features of villains are portrayed using racial or cultural stereotypes just as victims are often defined as virginal teens, whom the audience is encouraged to see as an attractive commodity to their traffickers (Brown, 2010). Movies portraying situations of human trafficking have been highly criticized by non-government organizations (NGOs) for sensationalizing these exaggerated forms of human trafficking, making it difficult for audiences to relate to the

realities of the topic. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Anti-Trafficking Unit (2008) recognized that:

There are many forms of trafficking for many different purposes, the media has tended to focus on stereotypical messages about the 'sex trade,' failing to present different forms of exploitation and the diversity of human trafficking, such as trafficking in men and children for domestic servitude or forced labour in agriculture, textiles and construction. (p. 4)

The UNODC (2008) further suggests that an audience often has preconceived notions about trafficking in persons, which the media reinforces. Many government, Intergovernmental (IGOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) believe the media is critical in shaping public opinion and generating deeper insight into human trafficking.

The Palermo Protocol was developed by the United Nations to define human trafficking. The actual agreement is designated as the United Nations General Assembly's (2000) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, however the name was abbreviated to reference the location of the assemblage. Since the inception of the Palermo Protocol, and the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), there have been numerous documentaries released but only a fraction of films portraying issues of human trafficking have been feature length fiction or docudramas. The problem is that films often focus on the entertainment value rather than their ability to serve as a resource for anti-trafficking efforts (Brown, 2010). These dramatized narratives are often criticized for

sensationalizing and stereotyping images of human trafficking (Arthur 2012; Doezema 2001; UNODC, 2008).

This study employed a pre-test/post-test experiment to assess audience's perception of human trafficking in feature films and assessed whether that perception varies between men and women depending on the ethical dilemmas portrayed in the movie. This study also assisted in determining whether these films further reinforced stereotypes or provided a broader understanding of the complexities of modern day slavery. To investigate these inquiries, the researcher compared pre-post data as well as pre-test data to establish criteria and post-test data to examine and explore perceptions of awareness and confidence. This information obtained from this study will be useful to government and non-government agencies when developing programs for anti-trafficking campaigns and will provide a foundation for future studies.

In a search for feature length films with plots focused on modern day slavery, the researcher utilized the Internet Movie Database (IMDb, 2017), an Amazon subsidiary containing movie, television and celebrity content, in addition to reviewing other studies looking for movies about human trafficking. This investigation uncovered 22 films produced between 2000 and 2017 with a plot related to human trafficking. Those 22 films were further investigated to determine their possible role in and usefulness to this study. Out of the 22 films uncovered, 15 were determined to have connection, directly or indirectly, to the United States. This category was considered important since the study examined the perception of human trafficking from college students in the United States and whether those messages regarding human trafficking motivate viewers to become active bystanders or agents of change. The genres that emerged among these 15 films

were drama and action-drama. The development of the content analysis for these films is further discussed in Chapter 3.

The content analysis did discover that a preponderance of human trafficking films can be categorized as drama and action-drama productions. According to the American Movie Classics Network (AMC) film site (Dirks, 2017), drama films present life situations with realistic characters navigating conflicts, including societal ills and injustices. Dirks (2017) describes action films as often containing rescues, battles, escapes and adventure, but he also recognizes that many films are now hybrid and an action-drama has the elements of an action genre with the realistic characters of a drama film. According to the site, action films are often sub-classified as “guy” films and dramas are often sub-classified as “chick flicks” for being melodramatic. These gender perceptions guided the researcher to consider different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) as a framework for the study. This theory postulates that men and women have varied perception of messages that demonstrate issues of ethical dilemmas. Siegel and de Wildt (2015) and Antonino (2016) establish these ethical concerns and dilemmas of human trafficking through cultural perspectives. Their research provides a scheme that assisted this study in determining whether films with human trafficking narratives have varied realities of awareness and realism regarding matters of modern day slavery. Drama films have a tendency to present a victim-centered narrative while action-drama films focus more on justice and investigation. This study considered whether gender plays a significant role in the understanding and acceptance of narratives regarding human trafficking portrayed through the media. As previously stated, the content analysis developed to determine these inferences is provided in detail in Chapter 3.



## **Statement of the Problem**

The media is an essential means through which information can be obtained. While it may be common sense to state that media is a major source of information regarding issues of modern day slavery, it may make more sense to state that cinema and television provide two powerful outlets to not only inspire intervention, but to also raise awareness and assist in the prevention of human trafficking (Brown, 2010). According to the US Department of State (2017), the media significantly shapes the American public's discourse about human trafficking and their overall perceptions of the issue. The framing of a storyline becomes critical to the public's ability to accept or reject the enormity of the issue both internationally and domestically (Austin, 2015; Wallinger 2010). The Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP, 2016) determined that human trafficking, also referred to as modern day slavery, is the largest criminal activity in the world and a globally prominent issue. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2008), the media often highlights human trafficking through a lens of stereotypes and negative images confusing sympathy with empathy and distorting the reality of a victim's experiences. It is the reality of the victim's experiences that should be framed within the storyline (Arthur 2012). Films with highly moral and social messages of sex trafficking should attempt to maintain a distance, keeping the audience engaged and maintaining an ethical relationship with the characters by providing narratives from their point of view rather than imposing the filmmakers point of view (Arthur 2012; Doezema 2001).

The impact of these narratives may have different outcomes depending on the audience's gender. Different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) postulates that genders may

react differently when confronted with ethical dilemmas, such as trafficking in persons. Furthermore, Americans are perceived as being in a state of denial or rationalization when it comes to modern day slavery, believing it predominately occurs outside the United States borders (Archer, 2013). The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC, 2014) promotes the premise that stereotypical imagery in the media is problematic because it reinforces these misconceptions (Long, 2015; Wallinger 2010).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary focus of this study was to examine the portrayal of human trafficking in feature length, commercially distributed movies and the impact these films have on the audiences' perception of trafficking and motivation to become agents of change. Feature length films provide a greater "opportunity to explore the complex network of personnel involved in human trafficking and slavery, as well as the multiplicity of reasons for which people might find themselves caught up in it" (Brown, 2010). It is this complexity, difficult to construct in a storyline, which promotes understanding, acceptance and motivation for change. When films focus on a victim's suffering through the sensationalism and graphic imagery of sex trafficking, viewers can become overwhelmed. These voyeuristic approaches that attempt to invoke emotional responses from the audience do not actually assist in creating the motivation to become agents of change (Arthur 2012, Chouliaraki 2006). Arthur (2012) further adds that the media should focus on what can be done politically to encourage change as well as stage interventions. She concludes that 'proper distance' can encourage individuals to seek out resources that promote actions of change and provide them with a sense of responsibility.

This desire for action can develop within the audience, more than compassion, a need for justice.

Proper distance concept, another theory investigated through this study, was proposed by Silverstone (2003) as a contemplation of the distance or proximity between individuals when evaluating ethical and moral judgments. Chouliaraki (2006) reiterates this concept of proper distance when considering the relationship between the narrative of the trafficked victim's experience in relationship to the audience's perception of responsibility and ability to become agents of change. As mentioned previously, different voices theory determines whether the impact of those messages vary according to gender. Scripting a narrative on human trafficking can be problematic when the writer must invoke empathy while maintaining enough distance to allow for critique of the complex issue being displayed (Arthurs, 2012). However, the problem may become more complex when gender plays a role in the objectives and outcomes in the audience's behavior regarding actions in anti-trafficking campaigns.

Developing effective narratives for movies that promote actions from the audience in both understanding and motivation is complicated. Brown (2010) argues that appealing to the emotions of a film's audience through the use of cold, hard facts can invoke empathy and lead them to seek a positive impact on anti-trafficking efforts. Writers may have to consider both a proper distance concept as well as gender perceptions to obtain optimal outcomes that should include understanding, reduction in stereotypes, promotion of discourse about the issue, and motivation to take social action. This study attempted to determine whether messages highlighting circumstances of empathy, with narratives closely aligned with the victim's realities had stronger outcomes

of motivating women to take action and whether narratives focusing on investigation and justice had stronger outcomes of motivating men to take action.

The objective of this research was to address several considerations about the perceptions of the portrayal of human trafficking in films. The study also considered the effects of movies that portray circumstances of trafficking in persons and how those portrayals alter or reinforce the public's perception of these issues. This study explored themes related to the United States to determine whether the proper distance concept has a role in affecting the audience's perception since it is claimed that Americans remain in a state of denial regarding issues of modern day slavery (Archer, 2013). This study also examined the messages presented in human trafficking movies and sought to determine whether there was a difference in the perception of those messages between genders. The outcome of this study will assist government organizations, IGOs and NGOs in the development, convergence and synergy of campaigns and movie narratives to assist the public in understanding human trafficking and advocating for agencies of change. Feature films are an effective tool that should be developed by government agencies and NGOs collaboratively as a part of their anti-trafficking campaigns (Brown, 2010).

This study focused on college students' perceptions. This demographic was identified by National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC, 2013) and The McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University (2017) as an integral part of change as well as a vulnerable population for becoming victims of trafficking. It becomes relevant that this population should be educated and have an increased awareness of the facts associated with trafficking in persons. The demographic of college students demonstrates an elevated level of interest in media and the

convergence of that media is relevant to the accessibility of movies. The target population for this study is described in detail in Chapter Three.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The media's use of human trafficking stereotypes in the plots and narratives of feature length films is counter-productive to the mission of many anti-trafficking organizations' public awareness campaigns and educational efforts toward risk-avoidance for vulnerable populations (Downman, 2013). The development of effective messages by scriptwriters and film producers that support anti-trafficking organizations' campaigns can make an enormous impact on the public's awareness of this global problem (Arthurs, 2012). The increase and expansion of information about modern day slavery is a positive development (Todre, 2015). However, this becomes difficult when the media oversimplifies issues of human trafficking, misrepresents the realities of victims, sensationalizes the situation for greater appeal, and marginalizes vulnerable populations (Austin and Farrell, 2017; Downman, 2013; Wallinger, 2010). To understand the influence of these messages, this research called upon two theoretical frameworks, different voices theory and proper distance concept.

Broadcast media and the film industry prefer the rescue narrative that focuses on young innocent white females who need to be saved from harm and violence (Austin & Farrell, 2017). Different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) argues that women tend to think differently than men when confronted with ethical dilemmas, such as these movie themes. The theory considers a feminine ethic of care with a masculine ethic of justice. Gilligan grounds the theory in Freud's philosophy that women have a different threshold than men when considering what is ethically normal and that "they are influenced by

feelings of affection or hostility” (p.7). Gilligan, in her framework of different voices theory, also structures Socrates’ finding that men believe if they understand themselves, they will understand women where as women believe it is by understanding others they begin to understand themselves. This theory can be applied to the narratives of human trafficking movies to determine whether the messages resonate more strongly with men or women depending on the film’s genre. The study also considered whether the messages clarify realities of human trafficking or reinforce stereotypes and look at the messages’ ability to motivate individuals to consider becoming agents of change in the fight to eradicate trafficking in persons. The intent of this study was to explore the gender perceptions of the target population.

Proper distance concept (Chouliaraki, 2006) was be used to determine whether the victim’s experiences in the selected films are framed from the perspective of the victim or to sensationalize the stereotypes presumed by the audience. Does this proximity or spatial sense of distance by the audience, when the message is framed from the victim’s realities, influence them to recognize their abilities to become agents of change? Does a narrative developed to maintain a proper distance between the story and the audience intensify their belief that they can successfully assist in the eradication of human trafficking? Bandura (1994) theorized that self-efficacy determines how people motivate themselves and how to influence events that affect their lives. Different voices theory, proper distance concept, and self-efficacy were used as the frameworks to determine whether structured narratives in movie productions of human trafficking can influence and inspire individuals to engage in the fight against trafficking in persons. Exploration of these theories and their appropriateness to this study is further discussed in Chapter Two.

## **Research Questions**

This research was primarily interested in understanding the effects of cinematic productions portraying circumstances of human trafficking on the public's perception of human trafficking and to determine whether there is a difference in that perception between men and women. In addition, the study examined whether proper distance between the narrative and the audience can actually encourage and motivate viewers to act as agents of change in anti-trafficking movements. Several films have sparked the conversation about human trafficking but are presumed to reinforce stereotypes and mislead the public from understanding the nature of human trafficking (Arthur 2012; Doezema 2001). This study sought to understand the effects of these human trafficking narratives on their audiences. Therefore, through the implementation of a pre-test/post-test experiment this study sought to answer to these questions:

R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perceptions of human trafficking?

R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking effect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?

R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of his or her ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or an agent of change after viewing the movies?

## **Variables**

The following served as variables within the study to assist in answering the research questions. The independent variables (IV) for this study are the genre of the

movies and the participant's gender. As explained further in Chapter Three, an examination of four movies with plot focuses on modern day slavery were utilized. The study surveyed four groups, each exposed to one movie, either a drama with a victim-focused plot of human trafficking or an action-drama with a justice and investigative focused plot of human trafficking. A control group was the fifth group of participants, which was shown a movie with no indications of trafficking in persons. The groups' perceptions of human trafficking and self-efficacy as an agent of change were the dependent variables (DV) for this study.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Research that focuses on the experiences of human beings is limited in its ability to control all variables. It was the goal of this study to account for all obvious variables such as gender and genre and extract enough information from variables with limited control to make claims for a broader population.

#### **Limitations**

Those variables of limited control include previous exposure, impressions or views of human trafficking, as well as an individual's concept of self-efficacy; but, it was the aim of the researcher to obtain opinion and perception information through pre-test and post-test surveys. The pre-test was administered prior to exposure of the stimulus and the information was to compare to the post-test results as a method of determining any media effects. It is difficult to control all variables when considering human emotions and decision making; but the principle aim of this study was to determine the effect of human trafficking films on the audience's perception of human trafficking.



## **Delimitations**

This study drew on a convenience sample of college students from mid-sized universities and colleges in eastern Texas. The genres were limited to drama and action-drama of feature length movies to focus on the sensationalized narratives that may or may not have an impact on the audience's perception of human trafficking. The selection of these narratives is further explained in Chapter Three. In addition, a content analysis was conducted to identify movies with an American focus to the plot that also provided a narrative of empathy from the victim's perspective or narrative of justice and investigation. These movies were used for the treatment groups. No other genres were considered since the study focused on gender perceptions from a framework of different voices theory.

## **Definitions of Terms**

The following terms are defined here to clarify their meaning for the reader.

### **Active Bystander**

Most universities have an active bystander program and according to the program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2004) the term simply means "looking out for each other." Other programs expand upon this, summarizing a bystander as someone who witnesses an event or behavior that they recognize as wrong, misguided or unacceptable. The Green Dot program, developed by Edwards (2006) defines an active bystander as someone who acts to correct the situation or assist in measures that keep the situation from becoming more problematic. While many programs including Green Dot, NASPA, StepUp, BADASS and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center affirm this concept, it is important to consider the philosophy behind active bystanders. According

to Coker, et al. (2011), active bystanders are people who feel a sense of responsibility regarding social norms and the changes necessary to meet community standards. Dreeke and Sidener (2010) point out that law enforcement often relies on bystanders, compelled by values of civic duty, to offer detailed accounts that assist in the investigation process. It is the philosophy behind active bystander that is important to this study.

### **Agent of Change**

The Cambridge Dictionary (change agent, 2017) describes a change agent as “a person or thing that encourages people to change their behavior or opinions.” The motivation for some films highlighting ethical dilemmas should be to move audiences from being passive bystanders to becoming active bystanders and then agents of change according to Brown (2010). Many of the active bystander programs previously mentioned include educational materials that encourage advocacy as well. Individuals who reach the agent of change phase begin to encourage others to become actively involved in creating permanent changes to the norms. Agents of change are needed in ratifying the global epidemic of modern day slavery. The Blue Campaign (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.) asks citizens to assist law enforcement by identifying victims and reporting tips while the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (2013) provides training information for anti-trafficking organizations and resources to encourage legislation.

### **Ethical Dilemmas**

Ethical dilemmas are situations that involve conflicts and tension and often present no clear satisfactory solution. Ethical dilemmas are normally structured into ethical reasoning of utilitarianism, egoism and formalism. Ethical dilemmas are often

comprised from interrelationships that contain conflict and tension (Aroskar, 1980). Since the nature of human trafficking consists of conflict and tension that may stem from the moral judgment that modern day slavery is unethical, as declared by several government and non-government agencies (President Barrack Obama, 2012; Polaris, 2015; United Nations General Assembly, 2000; U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2016), this study looked at the audience's perception of those ethical dilemmas. This included the audience's ability to understand the enormity of human trafficking, how they perceive the problem, whether they realized they could assist in controlling these circumstances and recognize themselves as agents of change.

### **Feature Film**

A feature film is defined as a film running more than 40 minutes by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (2017) and the American Film Institute (2016). While not a requirement, a feature film is typically considered a production that is promoted and advertised for theater viewing. However, the convergence of technology and ability to self-release has expanded the acceptance of a feature film according to Tyron (2009).

### **Genre**

Genre is a classification for art; however, there appears to be very little consensus among cinematic theorists when it comes to genre analysis, nevertheless the majority tend to categorize based on the focus of the audience's attention (Altman, 1984). For this study, genre is used to clarify and describe, categorically, the expected focus of the audience's attention by the plot in the movie. The category of drama is used to describe films that are victim-centered and the category of action-drama for films focused on

justice for the victim and investigation into the crime. The study also considered categorizes that included romance, comedy, war, westerns, science-fiction and fantasy when conducting the content analysis for this research. These classifications are referred to as genres.

### **Human Trafficking**

The general understanding of human trafficking is that the situation must meet three conditions that include the act of trafficking such as recruitment, the means of trafficking such as deception or force, and the purpose of trafficking including forced labor or other areas defined by the Palermo Protocol (United Nations General Assembly, 2000). This protocol is formally known as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The actual definition of human trafficking is as follows:

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

### **Modern Day Slavery**

Modern day slavery is the preferred term for human trafficking due to its ability to provide a more accurate interpretation of the criminal activity. Government officials, including President Barrack Obama (2012, September 25), and global agencies including the United Nations (UNODC, 2008) have made many requests for the anti-trafficking industry to utilize this terminology, but most organizations are slow to adapt and still use human trafficking or trafficking in persons.

### **Proper Distance**

Silverstone (2003) recognizes this is a term not often utilized by the media but defines it as how we recognize our relationships to each other. This concept is explained as the proximity viewers of media must create between themselves and the realities of others and their circumstances to make ethical determinations about those circumstances. Silverstone adds individuals can utilize this proximity as a tool to repair their failures in communications with others and allow the learned experience from the film to aid themselves in behaviors considered responsible and ethical. Arthur (2012) looks at Silverstone’s notion that proper distance includes an individual’s search for knowledge

and understanding of the other person. The need to be close, but not too close, supports Silverstone's belief that we can utilize this concept to promote a moral responsibility beyond considerations of 'people like us.' That proper distance allows for a better understanding of individuals outside of our norms. This study examined whether proper distance in the movie narratives assists participants in not only understanding the realities of human trafficking but further motivates them to become agents of change for anti-trafficking efforts.

### **Self-Efficacy**

An individual's self-recognition of their ability to control and direct events is considered self-efficacy. This concept is framed through Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1994) which explains an individual's confidence in his or her ability to achieve a goal. For the purposes of this study, self-efficacy was applied to an individual's understanding that he or she can assist in controlling circumstances of human trafficking, take actions to reduce the demand for modern day slavery, and recognize themselves as an agent of change in the process.

### **Definition of the Population**

College students are identified by several human rights groups as an integral part of change as well as a vulnerable population for becoming victims of trafficking (NHTRC, 2013; McCain Institute for International Leadership, 2017). Therefore, this population should be educated and have an increased awareness of the facts associated with trafficking in persons. A study by Panek (2014) proposes that the demographic of college students demonstrates an elevated use of media and the convergence of that media is relevant to the accessibility of movies. Panek's study showed a significant

number of individuals in the study admitted to an overuse of leisure media and considered the popularization of new media as a contributor. This further supported the participation of this population when considering films and their impact on perception. The study solicited college students from a mid-sized university, located in eastern Texas, to participate voluntarily.

### **Significance to the Field of Communications**

The results of this study will benefit NGOs and government organizations when solicited to assist in the development of human trafficking messages in cinematic productions. Findings from this study will provide organizations with the knowledge of how to frame a movie's plot if the intention is to promote awareness and motivate audiences to become aware of their abilities to fight human trafficking. The purpose of producing films is to make money and to make people feel good (O'Brien, 2016). Those purposes can be independent of each other. A film can be created for the sole purpose of creating revenue while other films are created to alter the mood of the audience. When these drives merge, a blockbuster or film possessing great power and commercial success (Oxford Dictionaries) can emerge. A blockbuster is also described by Dictionary.com (2017) as "an unusually successful hit with widespread popularity and huge sales," and therefore the definition is a bit ambiguous. For the purposes of this study, a focus on the unlikely hood of success was considered. While many of the films based on human trafficking may not require the enormous budgets and revenue typically associated with a blockbuster, they certainly possess the probability of having great power and influence over their audience's which in turn may generate commercial success. There are few films with human trafficking plots that stand out as obtaining some level of commercial

success. These films include *Trade* (2007) which grossed over \$1.5 million dollars in the United States, *Whistleblower* (2010) which grossed over \$1.1 million in the United States and \$2.2 million worldwide, and *Spartan* (2004) which grossed over \$4.4 million in the United States and \$8.1 million worldwide. However, the leading blockbuster film on human trafficking is *Taken* (2008) which grossed \$145 million in the United States and over \$300 million worldwide according to [www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com), a subsidiary of IMDb and [www.the-numbers.com](http://www.the-numbers.com). These movies were given positive audience feedback scores as high as 85% by [rottentomatoes.com](http://rottentomatoes.com) (n.d.), an online aggregator of movie reviews and subsidiary of the Fandango Corporation.

While these movies are quite profitable, they don't always provide an accurate account of trafficking, sensationalizing the situation to capitalize on sales. Brown (2010) points out, films often focus too much on the entertainment value rather than their ability to serve as a resource for anti-trafficking efforts. Since public service announcements (PSAs) are not capable of conveying the true complexities of human trafficking, feature films and blockbuster films may offer more opportunities to convey these messages. This study will assist NGOs in development of PSAs as a cooperative effort with filmmakers. An example of these cooperative efforts occurred during the theatrical release of *Holly*. Numerous NGOs successfully utilized this film as a part of their various anti-trafficking campaigns (Brown, 2010).

Results from this study also assist in understanding the stereotypes, images and messages that must be addressed when developing effective PSAs, brochures, posters, booklets, and handouts on human trafficking for public education and awareness. The outcomes contributed to a limited body of knowledge exploring communication theory



regarding public awareness and understanding of human trafficking issues. Future considerations could include comparing the results from this study to additional studies where social context, economic standing, education levels, and geographic locations of men and women exposed to narratives of human trafficking in films are measured. These factors may be compared to determine whether these features influence the outcome of the overall results regarding gender perceptions of ethical issues in consideration of modern day slavery.

### **Organization of the Study**

This dissertation is structured and organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the research topic, purpose of the study, outlining the problem being considered and the importance of the study to the field of communications, government and non-government organizations. The second chapter provides a review of the literature and constructs a theoretical foundation for the study. The review includes literature on human trafficking, media persuasion, and media responsibility on issues of social injustices. The review also focuses on different voices theory, proper distance concept, and self-efficacy as a framework to determine whether movies about human trafficking have varied impacts depending on the audience's gender, the perceived distance in realities and their belief and motivation to become agents of change.

The third chapter outlines the research design developed and applied to this study. This chapter includes the research questions and hypotheses established based on the literature review as well as a description of the content analysis used to determine the films employed as the stimulus in the study. Population, sampling techniques, and data collection are also explained. This chapter provides information on the instruments used

to measure responses and a description of the analysis procedures used to determine results of that information.

The fourth chapter reveals the findings determined from the data collected and analyzed. This chapter also includes tables developed from this data analysis, and an explanation of those results. Chapter five considers the outcomes of those results, reflects upon limitations within the study, and offers recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Human trafficking is considered one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world (US Department of State, 2014). Research in this field tends to rely on scholarly articles, reports produced by government and non-government agencies and documentary films from independent film activists (Poućki, 2012). However, other researchers contend feature films offer an opportunity to educate the public on issues of human trafficking, but these films often perpetuate stereotypes that further confuse the audience and make it difficult to educate audiences on the complexities of trafficking (Brown, 2010). The problem script writers often face is the ability to develop empathy while providing the audience enough distance to understand these complexities (Arthurs, 2012). Discovering effective methods of awareness as well as motivating individuals to become agents of change may be the biggest challenge of all. This study considered whether audiences' perception of trafficking depicted in movies differs by gender and whether those messages increase awareness and desire by the viewers to become active in anti-trafficking efforts.

This research explores two theories. Different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and proper distance concept Silverstein (2003) were examined to determine whether NGOs and filmmakers can work collaboratively to produce feature films that promote awareness and responsiveness to issues of human trafficking; further considering whether these films can encourage audience members to engage as active bystanders or even develop into agents of change. Consideration of a social issue as complex as human trafficking is

challenging and research providing insight into societal perceptions and responses is greatly needed in the field of anti-trafficking education, awareness, and training.

### **Human Trafficking**

In 2000, the United Nations held the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime where the development of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) was adopted by the General Assembly. This international agreement describes and acknowledges the acts, means and purposes behind the enactments of human trafficking. Most commonly referred to under the umbrella terms of trafficking in persons, human trafficking, and modern day slavery, these acts include the trade or exploitation of human beings for the purpose of sex slavery, forced labor, child soldiers, and organ harvesting. In the United States, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) also uses the terms involuntary servitude, slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor. According to the 2016 TIP Report (US Department of State)

“People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, were exploited in their hometown, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking. At the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers’ goal of exploiting and enslaving their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so” (p. 30).

Trafficking in persons has become the fastest growing criminal activity in the world with some research indicating that it may be the largest industry in the world, with the United States being a main point of destination (Byrne, Parsh, & Ghilain, 2017;

McNulty, 2013). President Barak Obama re-committed the United States resolve in anti-trafficking efforts in the 2016 TIP Report by acknowledging, “across the globe, including right here at home, millions of men, women, and children are victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. We remain committed to abolishing slavery in all its forms” (U.S. Department of State). This same report estimated those millions of victims to be over 27 million and which, in turn, profits traffickers a combined \$30 billion each year.

Human trafficking inflicts significant physical and psychological trauma on the victims; often succumbing to many forms of physical abuse, emotional neglect, intimidation, sexual violence, and financial exploitation (Human Trafficking, 2016). While there is no defining characteristic by which to identify all victims of human trafficking, traffickers appear to prey on vulnerable populations including those economically oppressed, residing in unsafe living conditions, and individuals expressing the desire for a better life. In an effort to detect and protect victims, the United States President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (2017) has collaborated with many government and non-government organizations to strengthen services for victims and develop the Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking. This plan recognizes a myriad of victims from workers in agriculture, factories, strip clubs, commercial sex trade, and those enslaved as domestic servants. However, the services available to victims can vary greatly due to the complexity of human trafficking. This Federal Strategic Action Plan is intended to assist in the development of comprehensive and specialized services that addresses all the victim’s recovery needs.

## **Perceptions of Human Trafficking**

Individuals who have succumbed to some form of slavery are often concealed in plain sight, where they are seen but not identified as victims.

### **Hidden Truths**

This is often referred to as hidden truths by most of the government agencies included in the United States President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (2017) and is the premise of the public service announcement *Out of the Shadows* by Homeland Security. Many campaigns are developed to demonstrate that victims are often hidden in plain sight; this makes understanding how to identify victims more complex. According to the United States President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor Combat Trafficking in Persons (2017), the public has very little knowledge regarding the depth and breadth of victimization related to trafficking in persons, primarily in the United States. Most members of the public do not realize that victims have very little control over their own lives even if their circumstances appear that they have complete control over their decisions and wellbeing (Pittaro & Normore, 2016). They are often unable to make personal decisions, manage their own money, carry identification, or answer questions directly regarding their living arrangements or employment (Byrne, Parsh, & Ghilain, 2017).

Misconceptions and judgments occur when the public fails to realize that these victims are walking among us and not reaching out for help. Fear that arises from the threats of the traffickers are often more than sufficient to keep a victim silent. Trafficking is often misinterpreted as a verb, referring to movement of individuals, but victims do not need to be moved from one location to another to be defined as trafficked and are

sometimes exploited in their hometowns (Byrne, Parsh, & Ghilain, 2017; Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009; Pittaro & Normore, 2016). Nonetheless, removing victims from the place of comfort is often a preferred tactic by traffickers in an effort to restrict a victim's access to their social networks and their families (U.S. Department of State, 2016; Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). People are bought and sold every day as they are forced to take jobs or work in the sex industry for little to no compensation; victims are typically not hidden from sight but rather hidden from recognition (Byrne, Parsh, & Ghilain, 2017).

### **Migrant Trafficking Stereotyped**

Human trafficking is difficult and complex to define because there is no exclusion of any demographic group for potential exploitation. However, an overrepresentation often leads to the development of stereotypes. England (2004) addresses the representation that occurs when media coverage emphasizes stories related to migrants and indigenous peoples, particularly women. In affluent countries, trafficking is typically associated with illegal immigration (Austin & Farrel, 2017) and represented as young females taken by male captors; but, modern day slavery is an opportunistic crime that targets all ages, genders and socioeconomic cultures (Mahdavi, 2011; Pittaro & Normore, 2016). Complicating perceptions and creating additional confusion occurs when NGOs attempt to develop anti-trafficking campaigns that display strong messages to gain the attention of potential victims but fail to recognize the reinforcement of the stereotypes they create. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) often develops campaigns to empower women by warning them of the dangers involved with trafficking. Conversely, the reality is that the harsh images depicted in these campaigns just reinforce the stereotype that migrant females are victimized for their bodies, and most women

considered a part of this vulnerable population do not actually identify with the images (Andrijasevic, 2007).

Not all migrant workers start out as victims and trafficking is very different from human smuggling (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009), an act that describes the relationship between the transporter and the individual. That relationship is usually terminated once the targeted destination is reached. Typically, with circumstances of trafficking, victims are lured through the promise of work. However, many individuals discover upon arrival to their new destination that their relationship with the transporters does not terminate and they now have huge debts. The amounts incurred are associated with the costs of transportation and often the ability to repay these huge debts is almost impossible through their labor compensation (Byrne, Parsh, & Ghilain, 2017), not to mention the constant accrual of debt from housing, food and other expenses that also demand repayment. Those who are not lured directly into debt circumstances often find themselves in harsh conditions and unfamiliar territories, leaving them vulnerable to traffickers (Mahdavi, 2011)

### **Employee or Victim**

Defining whether an individual is an employee or a victim of circumstances not visible to the public is one of the challenges law enforcement must endure. Mendelsohn (1947) introduced Victimology as a scientific study of crime victims. It often becomes difficult to define a victim when the victim is involved in criminal activities such as prostitution (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). This form of victimology is defined as victim precipitation and considers to what extent the victim is actually responsible for the victimization that occurred. This is sometimes referred to as re-victimizing the victim



when responsibility and blame are partially placed on the offended. Taking this re-victimization, a step further leads to victim provocation. This term infers that an individual did something to incite the other person to commit the illegal act (Bergelson, 2009). Prostitution may be considered victim provocation. While the individual being trafficked may be forced, by their pimp, to perform illegal sexual acts associated with prostitution, the victim then is actually committing the crime. They are luring the John, a name given to males that solicit sex acts from prostitutes (Malarek, 2009), into the illegal sexual activity. However, being forced, deceived, or coerced by their pimp to perform these acts could be classified as victim provocation. Forced criminality is often a misunderstood characteristic of trafficking in persons according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Pittaro & Normore, 2016).

Complicating matters of sex trafficking even further, a study by Cunningham and Cromer (2016) showed men were less likely to accept prostitutes as victims of sex trafficking and more likely to blame them for their plight. The study postulates that women experience sexual victimization at a higher rate than men, therefore women may have a heightened awareness to the problem and be more resistant to stereotypes. Nonetheless, confusion for both genders regarding the realities that most victims face may emanate from public service announcements that often depict females and children being forced into some type of sexual act (Long, 2015), leading the public to believe that a victim has to be physically forced. The public can become confused with the premise that anyone not physically forced, as through rape, is not classified as a victim. The victim may not be scrutinized through the philosophy of victim provocation, since it is contrary to the PSAs the public often sees. The overrepresentation of simpler forms of

victimization such as kidnapping and deception, is problematic because these representations completely ignore the coercive form of victimization that many victims undergo (Austin & Farrel, 2017). According to the law (TVPA, 2000) a victim does not need to be bound and gagged to be victimized. Quite often they find themselves under the control of their trafficker by coercion and deception as defined in the Palermo Protocol (2000). It is through this deception that some victims do not even realize that they are being trafficked (Byrne, Parsh, & Ghilain, 2017).

The problem complexifies when government agencies, NGOs and academics try to educate both law enforcement and the public that traffickers are not always males. Long (2015) stresses that stereotyping males as perpetrators and females as victims can be damaging to anti-trafficking efforts since females are often discovered working as the pimp. This is not to be confused with females who are being trafficked and used as “bottoms,” a term that refers to a seasoned victim who is now appointed by the pimp to supervise the other victims, train them on submissive behaviors, escort them to jobs, and inflict punishment (Shared Hope International, 2015). Research shows that female traffickers are very effective at luring individuals into becoming victims and questions arise whether a “bottom” is still a victim as she is supervised by the pimp or if she is now an offender. This question further complicates and confuses both the public and law enforcement by challenging society to accurately define and identify victims of human trafficking (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009).

### **Media Stereotypes**

The public often gains their understanding of human trafficking through stereotypes and the media (Arthur 2012; Baker, 2014; Downman, 2013; United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008). This understanding has been inhibited by the illusions of trafficking framed by the media (De Shalit, Heynen, & van der Meulen, 2014).

Americans' idea of trafficked victims relies heavily on characteristics such as gender, race and age (Austin & Farrel, 2017). The media often portrays victims of sex trafficking as very young and innocent, whereas willful minors working in the sex industry are portrayed as hardened and promiscuous (Menaker & Franklin, 2013). This generalization is problematic, not because it never happens but because it tells the story of a small percentage of those enslaved and doesn't account for most of the other instances of modern day slavery (Long, 2015). The reality is that many victims of human trafficking are victimized because they are vulnerable and placing our focus on appearances and criminal activity misleads the public from understanding the truth that these vulnerabilities are often the result of larger societal matters that are difficult to explain (Austin & Farrel, 2017).

Even with a heightened awareness to sexual victimization, there is a lack of awareness to the vulnerability of the gender. Research shows that women and girls are vulnerable to trafficking due to economic hardships and often lured through promises of lucrative employment (Basu, et al., 2014). It is critical that awareness of human trafficking increase, a challenge when the complexities of the largest criminal activity in the world are still misconstrued by the public (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). Brown (2010) examines how trafficking is established as a global concern that affects everyone yet IGOs and NGOs continue to struggle in the development of campaigns that rationalize this global concern to the public. Brown (2010) further considers that while Public Service Announcements (PSAs) may help raise awareness of human trafficking,

they do not have the same coverage as feature length films, and therefore do not have the same potential to inspire and create a movement for change. That impact is acknowledged in Lambert's review of the movie *Taken* (2008) with the conclusion that the film stimulated discourse and encouraged individuals to further examine matters related to human trafficking. Arthur (2012) stresses that the media needs to focus on what can be done to encourage change and assist the process of eradicating modern day slavery.

### **Feature Films**

Movies serve as a contemporary form of storytelling and offer audiences a combined sensory experience of sight and sound. Film has become an important medium for producing knowledge and discourse, providing significance to the stories we communicate to the audience as well as the perception of those stories being told (Boyd, 2007). Fleming and Bohnel (2009) postulate that movies provide a greater opportunity for audiences to draw context from the story's narration through a combination of sensory experiences. Beyond sheer entertainment, feature films provide viewers with both overt and symbolic models of emotional and behavioral expression.

Feature films are described as a film running more than 40 minutes by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (2017) and the American Film Institute (2016). This allotment of time provides feature films the capacity to develop complex narratives. A particular strength of feature films is the ability to analyze and debate moral issues in popular culture (Lafferty, 2016). This ability to examine moral issues is established in several studies where feature films appear to provide the viewer with an opportunity to process information that is sensitive and complex from a safe distance

(Hesley & Hesley, 1998; Heston & Kottman, 1997; Moore, 1998). The effect of the distance created by the film is discussed more in the proper distance concept section of the chapter.

### **Research on Audience Perception**

Media effects associated with the input and output factors that affect viewer's habits and beliefs are significant to the field of communication. Bryant and Oliver (2009) compiled 27 studies that explored cultivation, persuasion, stereotyping, violence, and various theories related to media effects on the audience's beliefs and values. This compilation of studies provides a broad perspective across many mediums however the theories explored remain relevant to all media. This information was useful in the development of this study which focused on feature films and how the input of information on human trafficking influences the output of beliefs and behaviors. Rudowsky (2013) conducted a film tourism study to discover whether positive exposure to a geographic place would increase an audience's desire to visit that destination. The study applied a pre-test/post-test experiment similar to the one employed in this study. Rudowsky's study explored the effect of destination image on the viewer's interest and perception of that destination. Her results determined that horror films portraying negative images about a place destination had a significant impact on the output of the viewer's attitude towards that destination. The study revealed negative responses to 10 out of 14 attributes measured towards the destination after exposure to a horror stimulus. This would indicate that film genre can significantly impact a viewer's outlook and behavior regarding variables represented within the film. A similar study by Yang (2011) looked at place destination and audience perception of those destinations. The results

demonstrated that transportation, also considered proper distance concept, was an essential component in influencing and in the audience's perception of the location and visitation interest. This concept will be explored further in this study.

### **Human Trafficking in Films**

A library database search of audience perception of movies on human trafficking returned over 17,000 records. However most entries were not scholarly or based on international studies. A more specified search of United States' audience perception of movies on human trafficking returned only 279 scholarly entries. Again, while United States was in the search criteria, most of these were international studies and legal reviews with only a small component related to the United States. While the review of literature specifically associated with audience perception of human trafficking in films is sparse, there are enough considerations to build a framework. A study by Szörényi and Eate (2014) demonstrated that feature films addressing the issue of human trafficking are highly influential on the public's perception of the issue. Sometimes, at a subconscious level, these movies contribute to a society's acceptance or rejection of ethical and moral issues (Todres, 2015). Lafferty (2016) has discovered an emergence of stereotypes from the media regarding perceptions of modern day slavery and these stereotypes are proving to be counter-productive to anti-trafficking messages from NGOs and government agencies. Feature films afford an opportunity to provide the realities of trafficking in persons as well as the stereotypes associated with slavery to the audience.

A study by Haroldson (2014) explored media representation of human trafficking and how that exposure influenced the perception of criminal justice students. The results of the study demonstrated that the media does influence the viewer's perception

regarding issues of ethical dilemmas. While the study utilized grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Haroldson was able to identify a strong media influence regarding the perception of human trafficking. The movie *Taken* (2008) was cited by 17 out of the 20 participants interviewed as a frame of reference for their perception of human trafficking. Haroldson found that problematic due to the sensationalism of *Taken*, nonetheless it was highly influential in shaping the participants' perception of human trafficking. Furthermore, a study by Lambert (2009) demonstrates that this same film did increase discourse on human trafficking. However, a study by Szörényi and Eate (2014) explored how the sensationalized, one-dimensional imagery from *Taken* hindered an audience's perception of human trafficking.

The results of this study will assist anti-trafficking organizations looking to develop feature films to meet their education and awareness objectives. Providing a lens from which to examine the negative effects of sensationalism (Szörényi & Eate, 2014; Haroldson, 2008) with the advantages of actions which may include conversation beyond the initial viewing (Lambert, 2009). The data from this research will assist these organizations in determining the distance placement between the character and the audience to facilitate a positive impact creating of active bystanders and change agents. That distance may appeal to gender differently depending on the genre of movie and if there is an influence of empathy or justice for the victim.

### **Vigilante Justice**

Films about human trafficking are often dramatic and emotional, leaving an audience with reactions of rage against the traffickers and the injustices imposed upon the young, innocent victims (Siegel, 2015). Films can contribute to the ideologies that exist

in a society as well as provide new perspectives to popular beliefs about criminal activities, including trafficking (Todres, 2015). These ideologies often appear in both drama and action-drama films where the prevalent plot focus is sex trafficking. This focus ranges from big-budget Hollywood action-dramas to independent documentaries, marketed mostly to mainstream western audiences (Small, 2012). The success of these films comes from developing captivating narratives of sexual dangers alongside heroic action scenes, where the victim, the villains, and heroes are clearly identified and public opinion rallies to anti-trafficking efforts (Vance, 1992). These heightened scenarios with sensational action scenes focus on ethics of good and evil, with viewers often shocked at the violence imposed upon the victim and accepting of the vigilante justice imposed by the hero or heroine (Lambert, 2009).

The problem most researchers encounter with movies about human trafficking is that issues are often presented as black and white, yet human trafficking is one of the most complex criminal activities in the world today. Sex trafficking is portrayed simplistically with the expected naïve and innocent victim, the powerful, evil captor, and rescuer who defies the odds under extreme conditions. However, these are not common methods of trafficking (Austin & Farrell, 2017; Baker, 2014; Basu, et al., 2014; Brown, 2010; Pajnik, 2010). Two popular Hollywood films, *Taken* and *Trade*, highlight masculine portrayals of saviors utilizing American justice ethics for rescue of the female victim with narratives of redemption and rehabilitation (Szörényi & Eate, 2014). Both films portray minors being abducted and violently forced to cross borders where they are sold to the highest bidder. The film *Taken* almost romanticizes the vigilante justice that occurs through the justification of saving an innocent girl (Lambert, 2009). These movies



emphasize the criminal justice system and felonious perpetrator rather than a more comprehensive overview of the causes of sex trafficking including poverty, race, and gender oppression (Baker, 2014).

Vigilante movies are popular because ethically most individuals still adhere to the biblical belief regarding an ‘eye for an eye’ and therefore revenge against those perpetrating the crime or injustice are dutifully and justly punished (Lim, 2009). However, these narratives often provide little insight and assistance in understanding the global conditions that contribute to trafficking (Szörényi & Eate, 2014). Creating sensationalism can generate a distortion of the facts and greatly harm those who are truly at risk (Siegel, 2015). However, Lim (2009) believes that will never change considering America’s thirst for revenge and the success this passion brings to Hollywood productions.

In reality, very little research has been conducted on the media’s framing of trafficking or the significant role the media plays in the construction of the public’s understanding of this activity (Pajnik, 2010). Movies about human trafficking contribute to the stereotypes of victims and further separate reality from the public’s understanding (Szörényi & Eate, 2014). These stereotypes present a challenge in effectively framing the audience’s perception and behaviors towards the realities of human trafficking (Haroldson, 2014) and anti-trafficking efforts.

### **Opportunities to Influence Global Policies**

Movies can play a significant role in promoting public awareness of human trafficking, a topic that has recently become popular in the movie industry (Todres, 2015). The media’s representation of trafficking, both the trafficking of victims and the

traffickers, provides a broader form of representation and understanding (De Shalit, Heynen, & van der Meulen, 2014). Most film production is intended to make money, however O'Brien (2016) notes that films also have the intention of making people feel good. There is an opportunity, through film, to help victims of human trafficking by raising awareness and exhibiting resources that inspire the viewer (Brown, 2010). When these opportunities are embraced, it may provide more opportunities for revenue. Daily Variety considered movies like *Taken* (2008) to be 'sleeper hits.' In other words, the film is not expected to become a blockbuster hit. While the producers of *Taken* had Liam Neeson in the starring role, they had little else than a story and a premise (Stewart, 2012). The article goes on to quote Chris Aronson, the President of domestic distribution at 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, as stating that "there was nothing in the recent market, nor did tracking suggest that the film could do this sort of business." This success may be due to the fact that films on sex trafficking promote discourse. The adage 'sex sells' along with Boyd's (2007) premise that film produces and transmits new knowledge through pictures as well as creates a conversation about that knowledge may explain the success of some feature films highlighting issues of trafficking. These conversations are also believed to be a source for informed policy choices and the development of legislation globally (Todres, 2015). The problem arises when the conversation becomes distorted. That distortion can influence the advancement of public policy making it difficult for the public and law enforcement officers to recognize the realities of human trafficking and further subscribe to the belief that this criminal activity is not occurring in their neighborhoods (Siegal, 2015; Todres, 2015).

## **Reframing the Message**

Movies offer an opportunity to help victims of human trafficking and inspire others who may know about the problem but not be aware of the resources available to eradicate the problem (Brown, 2010). Failing to address the realities of human trafficking makes the issue more complex. While many film producers aspire to the bottom line of generating revenues, films based on human trafficking have an opportunity to exacerbate the problem with over dramatization and stereotypes while they could generate a greater understanding and inspiration. Since the premise of this study is not a discovery of how to generate large revenues through film production on issues of human trafficking, but rather how to better frame a film on human trafficking to have an impact on their audience, reframing the message is crucial in achieving a greater impact.

When considering the framing of these messages Siegal (2015) described the sensationalism as distortion for public policy. Building on this, Todres (2015) considers how cinematic portrayals of human trafficking can influence the public's current understanding of the issue and this in turn influences both the government and the policy choices made to address the problem. An account is provided in the proper distance discussion of this chapter where Jobe (2010) discovered that the courts used human trafficking movies as direct evidence in a case of human trafficking where women were seeking asylum. These women felt they needed to conform to those stereotypes in order to receive assistance. This supports Siegal's (2015) premise that the distortion displayed in movies is harmful and has a direct effect on the legal system, but also supports Todres (2015) consideration that accurate portrayals could have positive impacts. The women seeking asylum (Jobe, 2010) would not have to alter their realities to conform to

sensationalism of movie making. These cause and effect perspectives provided by Siegal and Todres support the premise that messages of trafficking can have positive and negative outcomes. From political actions to interventions to restorations as well as the discourse from which films are often framed, these can all add to the confusion surrounding these issues (Arthur 2012).

Meaning-making of human trafficking is a complex problem in which discourse is often produced through policy-oriented framing and media-based framing (Pajnik, 2010). These media frames often demonstrate human trafficking as a crime issue and not a human rights issue; and, this framing shapes how the public understands and responds to social problems (Austin & Farrell, 2017). This framing compounds the problem, according to Todres (2015), since these popular portrayals misrepresent human trafficking causing a wide range of potential problems including a lack of enforcement, a failure to adequately identify victims, and insufficient resources to combat trafficking in persons.

### **Disseminate Stereotypes**

Boyd (2007) produced an interesting study that could apply to effective use of feature films to disseminate stereotypes associated with modern day slavery. The premise of the study looks at how narratives regarding the war on drugs are framed. The study considers how the Pentagon assists with the shaping of these “war on drugs” narratives by offering incentives when ‘accurate depictions’ are portrayed in the movie. There are some stipulations, but in return film studios and directors are allowed to utilize equipment, government and military facilities, film footage, and more, which saves the production thousands, if not millions of dollars. While an indirect approach, these same

incentives could be applied to movies containing narratives of human trafficking.

According to Brown (2010) a considerable amount of research has been conducted demonstrating that feature length films provide a great opportunity to explore complex social issues, in this case, the network behind slavery as well as a multiplicity of reasons why individuals become victims.

### **Capitalizing on Influences**

Trafficking in persons continues to be a popular topic of interest for entertainment media (Austin & Farrell, 2017). Studies show that feature films are more effective when developed as a part of an anti-trafficking campaign (Brown, 2010) that could be produced in cooperation with celebrities and the anti-trafficking organizations they already support. Some of Hollywood's most well-known celebrities such as Ashton Kutcher, Demi Moore, Ashley Judd, Angelina Jolie, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jada Pinkett Smith, and Mira Sorvino have become representatives of anti-trafficking efforts (Haynes, 2014). While Mira Sorvino has acted in several movies and television series depicting issues of human trafficking, other celebrities simply support and endorse NGOs. Connecting a celebrity with their advocacy in a movie may be an untapped resource. Capitalizing on the strong connections these actors already have with the anti-trafficking industry may heighten the intensity and passion an actor brings to the character. According to Steele and Shores (2014) there is certainly power and influence when celebrities appear to be expert advocates. In addition, Steele and Shores state that celebrity activism allows fans to feel like they have a personal relationship with the actors and this can be used to leverage public opinion. Celebrity endorsements have significant impacts, but celebrity involvement in the film may support a stronger connection with the audience. According

to Arthur (2010) when humanitarian and political actions are linked to the story, trafficking films have a higher impact on the audience. Humanitarian narratives may have an even stronger influence when portrayed by celebrities already advocating for those actions. This point is discussed further in Chapter Five of this study.

### **Genre of Films**

Over the course of the past hundred years, film has become a viable source of knowledge, and in some cases, a preferable source of knowledge over the written word (Boyd, 2007). This visual stimulus provides context as well as a clarity between fact and fiction when the content needs to be defined. From this premise, the genre, or classification, of movies was developed. According to IMDb there are 22 popular film genres with numerous subgenres to further classify movies. However, Seibo (Schmitt, 2015) claims the permutations and combinations of genres makes the list endless and sometimes difficult to make general characterizations since many films possess an amalgamation of perspectives. The context of the film can have attributes that are both primary, and secondary and therefore have dual classifications (Tudor, 1995). This is sometimes referred to as subgenres but determining the attributes that contribute to the primary classification can still be difficult (Pope, 2012). Most organizations rely on the audience's preferences and response or the description of the film to provide the appropriate genre classification (Altman, 1996; Hsu, 2006; Langford, 1995).

This study is not evaluating genres but rather looking at narratives of empathy and justice within film genres. A review of feature films determined the classifications for films on human trafficking fell into some variation of action, drama, or documentary groupings. It is from these groupings that a content analysis was performed to determine

the films applied in the experiments. The focus was on action and drama genres, rather than documentary, since a study by Negra and Tasker (2013) demonstrated that fictional narratives offer an opportunity to rationalize inequalities and issues of injustices in feature films. The researcher further explains the process of content analysis in Chapter Three.

A further goal of this study was to examine the impact of human trafficking messages on gender as well as the distance needed in those narrations between the plot focus and the audience. This point is discussed further in the proper distance concept section of this chapter. The focus on gender comes from the well-documented gender gap in movie genre preference (Wühr & Schwarz, 2016) suggesting that men prefer action films and women prefer dramas. A study by Emmers (2006) considered gender differences and responses to film genre and content. The study determined that men have a greater desire to watch films portraying violence than women do. Emmers' study further supported that women prefer narratives based on love, care, and empathy. Therefore, when developing any narration, the concept of audience centeredness is a key component to the development of the content. This concept assists the storyteller in determining the content to meet the expectations of the audience (Lucas, 2012). This premise of audience consideration and gender preference guided this researcher to utilize different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) as a method of determining the most effective message framing for movies based on human trafficking.

### **Audience Perceptions**

When considering the impact the message in a film is intended to create, scriptwriters and producers must first consider the expectations of the audience. Who are

they talking to and why? This again is referred to as audience centeredness (Lucas, 2015). To achieve this objective, it may be relevant to consider the gender of the audience to which the film is being marketed. Research shows gender may make a difference in the empathy obtained from the viewers. A study by Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) demonstrates how empathy influences a viewer's response to ethical dilemmas after viewing a drama or melodramatic production. Their study uses gender as a proxy for empathy. The results of that study determined that males established more empathy when it was clear the entire storyline was fiction while women demonstrated higher levels of empathy when there was an indication of truth or 'real-life' events behind the narrative. Further, it is worth noting that many films now opt to inform audiences early in the narration if the story is based on real life events.

Argo, Zhu, and Dahl, (2008) noted that the males in their study on the influence of empathy in emotional melodramatic entertainment, were often argumentative regarding the truth of the story when it was based on real life events. This could support the premise that males are more likely to demonstrate empathy towards ethical dilemmas portrayed in action-drama films containing investigation and vigilante justice. Batson, Klein, Highberger, and Shaw (1995) conducted a study on compassion and justice conflicts that demonstrated males often have feelings of empathy that can be so strong they are motivated to forsake traditional justice in favor of vigilante justice. Through action movies, a study by Pope (2012) suggests that sympathy is attributed to the action-hero's fight against injustice. The study considered both ethnographic and psychoanalytic approaches to determine that audiences often express a feeling of being invested in the film. Williams (2001) argues there is a masculine mode to genres such as western,



gangster, and action films that significantly rationalizes moral legibility. These action-drama films may provide a sense of something more pragmatic to men, even though it is represented as a fictional narrative. When fact-related information is portrayed through fictional stories it can significantly change an individual's real-life beliefs (Appel & Richter, 2007). These audience expectations and perceptions guided the theoretical concepts used in this study.

### **Different Voices Theory**

Different voices theory by Gilligan (1982) postulates that men and women speak in different moral voices when confronted with ethical dilemmas. The theory suggests that while men and women can respond to both a justice and a care narrative, men will respond stronger to voices characterized as asserting fairness and justice, and women with voices characterized as caring and offering the ability to respond to other's needs (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000). Typically, ethical dilemmas are evaluated through an individual's cultural norms, and gender may play a role in those evaluations. Ethics research supports that human beings develop these attitudes of acceptable and unacceptable moral behavior through a learned system of social practices (Sehta, 2009). Women tend to develop a high ethical stance of care which plays a role in their process of decision making when addressing issues of ethical dilemmas (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001).

Men and women will essentially use different approaches in their responses to issues of morality. Gilligan (1982) theorizes that men believe individuals have basic rights and those rights should be respected. However, that respect for an individual's rights may restrict a man's ability to act in a situation, even if he feels it is morally wrong. A man will respond better to messages that offer fairness and justice. Conversely,

women approach morality with a sense that it is imperative to care for others; women have a self-obligation to attend to the needs of others. Gilligan summarizes her viewpoint by stating that male ethics includes a justice orientation and female ethics a responsibility orientation. Her research discovered:

The moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the 'real and recognizable trouble' of this world. For men, the moral imperative appears rather as an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment. Women's insistence on care is at first self-critical rather than self-protective, while men initially conceive obligation to others negatively in terms of noninterference. (p. 100)

This implies that women feel guided by values and desires to care for the physical and emotional needs of others. These values and desires often determine how women define their relationships to others. Men are guided by the need for rules and principles to dissolve disputes and controversial issues of ethics. Men and woman may feel differently about their responsibilities in finding a resolution.

This claim by Gilligan is not without controversy in the field of ethics. Scholars who adhere to traditional philosophies of ethics may struggle with the claim that ethical dilemmas might vary by gender (McKenny & Sande, 2013). However, it is important to note again that while Gilligan's (1982) theory suggests men will respond more strongly to voices characterized as asserting fairness and justice and women with voices characterized as caring and offering the ability to respond to other's needs, it is not exclusive. She never claims that all women or all men adhere to these approaches when

considering issues of morality. When traditional ethics philosophers take Gilligan's work out of context, and focus on the gender bias, they are failing to recognize the prospects this theory provides in linking moral reasoning with self-identity (Khell, 2008).

Khell's study examines this linkage to self-identity through our moral reasoning. Since most people cannot articulate their moral reasoning, researchers often examine how an individual's emotions are influenced (Saunders, 2015). While philosophers such as Piaget (1932/1965) considered moral reasoning merely a conscious form of moral judgment, more recent psychological studies consider the unconscious emotional process (Saunders, 2015). Bucciarelli, Khemlani, and Johnson-Laird (2008) describe moral reasoning as duty of intentions, stating that moral reasoning is influenced by the anxiety associated with an individual's recognition as to whether something should be done or left undone.

As established in this section, film narratives are influential and in turn shape our concept of right and wrong and our ability to navigate ethical dilemmas. Different voices theory by Gilligan (1982) demonstrates that gender can play a significant role in our ability to rationalize ethical dilemmas. Determining the preponderance of an audience's gender when developing films related to ethical dilemmas of human trafficking can assist in influencing their moral reasoning.

### **Gilligan's Perspective of Care and Justice**

To better understand Gilligan's work, it is important to understand how ethics of care and justice are understood. When developing her theory, Gilligan recognizes a distinct difference between flexibility and the firm perceptions that appear between

genders. Men adhere to a more rigid frame of justice where women are more flexible regarding their perception of responsibility and care. Gilligan claims:

In this conception, the moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. This conception of morality as concerned with the activity of care centers moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules. (p. 19)

In addition, Gilligan addresses issues of separation and connection between genders. Men sense a danger in being closely connected while women sense danger in being separated. This may further explain why women perceive a need to foster relationships. This need is considered an activity of care according to Gilligan, when confronted with ethical dilemmas. There is a need to provide care and develop connections so no one is left alone. Men on the other hand are more comfortable with separation and an evaluation of fairness and justice. Gilligan argues that one perspective is not better than the other, they are merely different. The commonality is they both wish to cause no harm to others. However, these differences can create difficulties since each outlook distorts the other's perception.

Therefore, care is described as the actions of creating a relationship, fostering bonds, and activities that allow individuals to feel included and connected, never alone (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001). Women construct their moral judgments, both actual and hypothetical, through a lens of responsibility. This responsibility attributes to their

creating human relationships and the care required in maintaining those relationships. Justice is presumed as the tie between fairness and reciprocity. The rights and rules that apply to the moral problem under consideration are pragmatic to men in their construction of a response. Fairness and justice play a critical role in a male's decision-making process when resolving ethical dilemmas. "The logic underlying an ethic of care is a psychological logic or relationships, which contrast with the formal logic of fairness that informs the justice approach" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 73).

Different voices theory offers an opportunity to explore gender perceptions to feature films that highlight ethical dilemmas. This study focuses on the morality of human trafficking and whether the movies employed in this study can increase the awareness of modern day slavery and influence bystander interventions. The principle investigation of this study is to consider whether gender perceptions of human trafficking are influenced by film genre.

### **Proper Distance Concept**

Determining how to create these influences on audience reactions may require the recognition of the proper distance concept. This concept demonstrates that a calculated distance between media and audience promotes what is considered a 'cosmopolitan citizenship' between ourselves and individuals who are 'not like us' (Arthur, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006). Silverstone (2004) argues that living ethically is dependent upon our ability to sustain a proper distance between ourselves and others and that media plays a significant role in our perception of others. The concept of others is defined as a person, group or member of a group who is perceived as different or foreign from oneself or a group with which one identifies (Chandler & Munday, 2011; Dictionary.com, other,

2017). The individuals portrayed in films as victims of, or exposed to, human trafficking are often considered different or foreign to the norms of the culture watching.

Understanding the realities of victims is difficult when myths of human trafficking are portrayed through the media (Cunningham & Cromer, 2016).

Proper distance concept suggests that audiences need enough information to relate to the circumstances but not so much that they become too immersed during the viewing (Silverstone, 2003). Media provides a constant reassurance of the realities we consider to be true, but those realities can vary greatly among social and cultural groups (Silverstone, 1999). If the media portrays a story but provides too much distance between the audiences' perceived realities and those being demonstrated in the movie, there is a likelihood that no empathy will develop. Argo, Zhu and Dahl (2008) identified that when a story shows little emotion and viewers do not feel transported through the story, no empathy is created. Conversely, if the movie attempts to immerse the audience in the experience, it may create a barrier of unbelievability. This occurs when the circumstances are too foreign and distant from their norms or circumstances appear hopeless, as seen from the other's viewpoint (Arthur, 2012). Silverstone (2004) explains proper distance as a:

Critical notion that implies and involves a search for enough knowledge and understanding of the other person or the other culture to enable responsibility and care, as well as to enable the kind of action that, informed by that understanding, is in turn enabling. We need to be close but not too close, distant, but not too distant. (p. 444)

Determining this balance of distance can be challenging for scriptwriters and producers when working with complex moral issues, such as the trafficking of persons.

Chouliarki (2006) argues that we need to evaluate the degree to which films meet the criteria of proper distance when attempting to invoke a cosmopolitan response of philanthropic compassion. Chouliarki (2006) suggests this perceived distance will stimulate audiences to raise questions regarding causes and solutions. Agents of change are addressed further in this section by considering the audience's perception of the film and the conversation that perception creates. Arthur (2012) further states that films require more than compassionate narratives, they require a representation of the political networks and actions taken that really make a difference.

The focus of investigation in this study is to consider the audience's perception of human trafficking films and to consider whether gender perceptions of human trafficking are influenced by film genre. Further exploring whether those influences can motivate individuals to become active bystanders and agents of change. To consider all approaches, a study by Braidotti (2006) was examined with regard to proper distance. That study argues that films based on human trafficking should avoid a voyeuristic approach. Determining that narratives providing the victim's point of view are more effective in increasing awareness than narratives portraying the victim as an object in need of our compassion. A voyeuristic approach does not motivate the audience to pursue actions of change (Arthur 2012, Chouliaraki 2006).

The distance movies create affects more than the audience's perception and motivation, this concept of distance also affects legislation, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter. A study conducted by Jobe (2010) reviewed 23 cases in the United Kingdom

of women seeking asylum on the grounds of trafficking. The study found that films were used as direct evidence at hearings by judges making decisions on their cases. The women seeking asylum felt their stories had to conform to the narratives established in these films to be believed by the courts. This creates a problem in the justice system when films are being utilized as evidence, yet most films on human trafficking are criticized for reinforcing stereotypical features (Brown, 2010; Cunningham & Cromer, 2016). Media provides a portrayal of human trafficking that shapes both popular perception and policy debates (Todres, 2015). Therefore, films on human trafficking should not force us to impose our own perspectives but consider the victim's outlooks while still maintaining a proper distance.

Media has an opportunity to inspire audiences to become, not only active bystanders, but also agents of change; this would be the goal of proper distance in a feature film on human trafficking. A study conducted by McEntire, Leiby, and Krain (2015) looked at how anti-trafficking messages were framed and their effectiveness in changing attitudes and behaviors. The study randomly selected 85 participants to engage in an experiment on the perception of human trafficking campaigns. The results determined that the use of a personal narrative, separate from voyeurism, is more successful in not only increasing an individual's knowledge and emotional reaction to the realities of human trafficking, but leads audience members to take actions in favor of anti-trafficking efforts. While the study examined how human trafficking campaign messages affected an individual's attitude and behavior, it also recognized that those changes were dependent upon the messaging strategy and the individual's trust in that strategy or medium.



## **Self-Efficacy**

Nevertheless, encouraging audiences to become agents of change and active bystanders requires more than just a change in attitude. These changes require prosocial behaviors and self-efficacy. The term self-efficacy refers to the beliefs people hold regarding their capacities to manage and deal successfully with specific situations (Bandura, 1994). Caprara, Alessandri, Eisenberg, and King (2012) conducted a study on prosocial behaviors, a premise used to reference the voluntary actions individuals take that benefit others. These actions include comforting, sharing, donating, contributing, and caring for the others involved in the circumstances being addressed. The study measured the empathetic self-efficacy of 340 participants, primarily the age of 21, a demographic similar to the sample population being employed in this study. The study demonstrated that a participant's empathetic self-efficacy aided in their prosocial behaviors. The study further considered differences in scores of agreeableness, empathetic self-efficacy, and prosocial behaviors between genders. The study determined that the female participants scored higher on these three attributes. The results of the study supported the belief that empathetic self-efficacy is a predictor of prosocial behaviors.

These discoveries support the premise that proper distance concept (Silverstone, 2004) aids in the production of empathy. Demonstrating that empathy is a key component in the understanding of ethical dilemmas among females according to different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982). This premise supports the concept that narratives can influence a change in behaviors. Aiding this premise is the understanding that self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) refers to an individual's perception of his or her ability to successfully manage or

change circumstances; an increase in empathetic self-efficacy will stimulate behaviors that promote social change (Caprara, Alessandri, Eisenberg, & King, 2012).

Based on the premise that proper distance concept aids in the production of empathy, narratives meeting proper distance can influence behaviors and increase empathetic self-efficacy to stimulate social change, it can be concluded that females exposed to messages that invoke empathy may be motivated to seek actions that aid anti-trafficking efforts. For men it was established that narratives containing justice from fictional storylines create more empathy, and therefore have a greater influence on the perception of an ethical dilemma. The proper distance in these narratives must still be relatable, not leaving the audience feeling too distant, but not drawing them in so close to the fictional story that it become unbelievable (Arthur 2012; Chouliaraki 2006). Establishing this distance, demonstrating circumstances of justice or vigilante justice can create a masculine empathy (Argo, Zhu, & Dahl, 2008). This empathy can again translate into a self-efficacy regarding their ability to actively participate in anti-trafficking measures.

### **Other Theories Considered**

The research process of any study begins with a theoretical framework. This is the blueprint that guides the argument and serves as the rationale for the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Having a theoretical framework is prevalent and, over the years, has developed into an expectancy of dissertations (Melendez, 2002). With any study it is important to address why the theoretical framework was chosen as the blue-print for that study and why other theories were dismissed. This appeals to the critical thinking of the reader. For this study several other theories were examined including cognitive

dissonance theory (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959) and expectancy violation theory (Burgoon & Jones, 1976). Ultimately different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and proper distance concept (Silverman, 2004) were deemed most appropriate to guide the study.

### **Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

Cognitive dissonance theory is considered an action opinion theory since it proposes that actions can influence beliefs. This may seem counterintuitive since many psychologists suggest that our beliefs influence our actions but Hall (1998) suggests that cognitive dissonance theory is an exception and addresses our persuasive tendency to rationalize circumstances. Cognitive dissonance theory, developed by Leon Festinger (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959) is based on three fundamental assumptions. First, people are sensitive to discrepancies between beliefs and actions. Second, people realize these discrepancies can cause conflict, and therefore motivates them to find a resolution. Finally, the conflict can be resolved through either a change in belief, a change in action, or a change in the perception or meaning behind the action.

Therefore, when a discrepancy occurs between an individual's belief and the actions that occur, there is turmoil. This refers to the discomfort experienced by a person who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values. An example of dissonance for human trafficking may be found in the long-standing belief that prostitution is wrong, and the act is criminal. This has been both an ethical and legal belief for years. However, research has shown the majority of prostitutes, both in the United States and abroad, to be victims of human trafficking. Research has tried to justify that these individuals were forced or coerced into prostitution and therefore should not be held criminally responsible

for their unlawful activities (U.S. Department of State, 2016). This concept is considered victim provocation (Bergelson, 2009) as discussed earlier in this chapter.

This premise has become evident in legislation that includes safe harbor laws. These laws state that any minor engaged in an illegal sex act is not criminally liable and should not only be treated as a victim of human trafficking but also be provided with the appropriate care and rehabilitative services as determined in each state (Polaris, 2015). Safe harbor laws for minors are the only laws that give blanket protection from a federal protocol. All other laws regarding prostitution are constructed at the state level. These laws for minors, and the variations created at the state level for adults regarding circumstances of prostitution, may contrast with an individual's beliefs. According to cognitive dissonance theory, these contrasts create conflicts that motivate individuals to seek resolutions. Another example is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which defines both the criminal's and victim's rights. However, while this federal protocol serves as a guideline, it cannot dictate that states decriminalize prostitution. This may or may not contrast with an individual's beliefs regarding the criminal or victim provocation acts of prostitution.

The lack of implementation of education regarding TVPA may further distort the public's understanding of human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking and prostitution. A deficiency in the distribution of accurate information may strengthen an individual's beliefs and fail to create a need to seek a resolution. A study by Cunningham and Cromer (2016) demonstrated that most individuals have the attitude that prostitution is not part of human trafficking and still maintain a willingness to blame the victim for the situation. Most individuals hold this belief as an unlawful offense, for either personal or religious

reasons, or consider it a cultural norm. A study conducted by Farrell and Pfeffer (2014) showed this is still the case with many police agencies. They fail to support the identification of human trafficking cases due to the evolving definitions, and therefore tend to focus more on the sex trafficking of minors since safe harbor laws are clearly defined. The struggle to clearly identify adult victims underpins the public's difficulty in accepting that the prostitute is actually a victim, not a criminal. This desire to rationalize the circumstances (Hall, 1998) may be to circumvent the mental anguish surrounding the realities of modern day slavery.

While this theory is certainly relevant to highly ethical issues of human trafficking, it was dismissed from this study due to a lack of literature and groundwork connecting cognitive dissonance theory to issues of human trafficking. The connection between belief structures and participants would require more consideration and limit the contributors in the study to a very restricted population after establishing their similar belief structures. This concept would be problematic in aggregating enough participants with shared ethical structures to postulate and define results from a feature film. In addition, it would limit and reduce the overall value of those results to NGOs when preparing campaigns on human trafficking awareness. Considerations for future studies that include cognitive dissonance theory are addressed in Chapter Five.

### **Expectancy Violation Theory**

The basis of expectancy violation theory (Burgoon & Jones, 1976) is that people consider their interactions with others through a frame of their expectations of that interaction which subsequently influences their behavior. When a violation of these expectations occurs, individuals will first concentrate on the interaction and then process

and find ways to cope with the violation of their expectancy. According to Bevan, Ang, and Fearn (2014) this evaluation of the violation assists individuals in understanding the contradictory behavior as well as determine the appropriate response behavior.

In consideration of human trafficking, a focus on the response to an unexpected violation in social norms could be measured by asking the question, does the reality of human trafficking in United States provide a violation of 'the American way' of life? However, this theory would depend heavily on determining participants' expectations and understanding of social norms along with their individual perspectives of human trafficking and their ability to process violations to their expectancies when they occur. The researcher believed this would make it too difficult to determine effective narratives for feature films, presented to a broad audience and was therefore dismissed for this study. However, Chapter Five addresses this theory for future research considerations and possibly a comparison of movie narratives that disrupt social norms and expectations.

### **Summary**

Human trafficking is an emerging field of study and while numerous studies have been conducted across multiple disciplines to obtain a grasp on this ever-growing social issue, it is clear that very little has been produced on the effects of feature films about human trafficking with regard to behavior changes in audiences. Yet the imagery surrounding human trafficking is becoming widespread due to the media (De Shalit, Heynen, & van der Meulen, 2014) and these messages often perpetuate stereotypes that are counter-productive to the efforts put forth by NGOs and government agencies (Downman, 2013).

Film is a powerful outlet to not only raise awareness, but also to inspire intervention (Brown, 2010). Attempting to measure the influence of messages regarding human trafficking in feature films, this study called upon two theoretical frameworks, different voices theory and proper distance concept. Different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) considers whether the message delivered through the movie resonates more strongly with men or women. Additionally, proper distance concept (Chouliaraki, 2006) assists in determining whether the spatial sense of distance experienced by the audience influences viewers to recognize their abilities to become active bystanders or agents of change.

More research needs to be conducted to examine the overall impact of feature films on audiences' perception of human trafficking, how those perceptions hinder or help anti-trafficking efforts, and whether these movies can motivate individuals to become active bystanders or agents of change. Media has the ability to provide a proactive approach to resolving issues associated with human trafficking through education and awareness. However, investigation for this study showed that the bulk of research has been conducted retroactively through analysis of victim perspectives, criminal cases, cultural acceptances and literature reviews.

This posterior approach to most research on the association between media portrayals of human trafficking demonstrates a gap in the literature between retroactive considerations and proactive measures. This study employs a practical approach to education and awareness as well as the perspective that properly constructed narratives can motivate individuals to take anti-trafficking actions. This information is not only important to the development of feature films highlighting issues of human trafficking

but also provides a foundation for future studies considering the construction of persuasive narratives on gender, henceforth justifying different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and proper distance concept (Silverman, 2004) a relevant foundation for this study.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to assist in understanding the effects of movies portraying circumstances of human trafficking on the public's perception of human trafficking and to determine whether there is a difference, in that perception, between men and women. In addition, the study also examined the audiences' perception of their relationship to the victim and whether proper distance between the narrative and the audience can encourage and motivate viewers to become active bystanders or act as agents of change in anti-trafficking movements. This chapter will provide the methodology employed in this study by providing the research questions and development of the hypothesis. The chapter will demonstrate the content analysis utilized to determine the appropriate films for the study and information on the stimuli as well as the design and approach to determine reliability and validity of the experiment. A description of the population, data collection procedures, instruments and equipment will also be provided followed by the procedures for data analysis.

This study employed two methods of evaluation. First, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to identify four films that established human trafficking connections either to or within the United States as well as depicting circumstances of justice or care in relation to the victim. Subsequently, an analysis of literature was conducted to assist in developing the coding used in the content analysis as well as the research questions and hypotheses. The hypotheses were then developed and consideration was given to both the null and alternative hypothesis approach. Since most of the hypotheses emerged from the theories employed in this study to consider changes

in perception between gender, but not necessarily directional, alternative hypotheses were designed (Bethel & Knapp, 2010). This determination was developed from the understanding that some hypotheses simply looked for a change and were therefore nondirectional, or two-tailed, justifying the alternative hypothesis (Nicholson, 2014); the null hypothesis must be directional. Next, an experiment for the study was designed using pre-test/post-test surveys as instruments to analyze the participants' understanding and awareness of human trafficking issues. The surveys were also used to determine whether there was an increase in the participants' desire to participate in anti-trafficking efforts after exposure to the films. These results will assist NGOs and government agencies in the development of human trafficking films or contribute to major film productions with the intent of educating individuals on the realities of modern day slavery, and possibly invoking active bystander behaviors.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This research addresses three central questions:

- *R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?*
- *R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?*
- *R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of his or her ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing the movies?*

The theoretical framework developed in this study regarding gender influence in relation to ethical dilemmas (Gilligan, 1982; Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001; Lambert, 2009; McKenny & Sande, 2013; Saunders, 2015; Sehta, 2009) assisted in the development of suitable hypotheses for *R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?* Gilligan (1982) said that men and women have different voices when it comes to ethical dilemmas and therefore the researcher presumed that an examination of audience perception to films on human trafficking would differ between genders based on the type of film presented. A review of the literature regarding human trafficking portrayals in movies (Lafferty, 2016; Menaker & Franklin, 2013; Siegel, 2015; Small, 2012; Szörényi & Eate, 2014; Todres, 2015) was conducted and from this evaluation six hypotheses emerged:

- H1.1: There will be a significant difference in the perception of human trafficking between populations who watch feature films portraying circumstances of human trafficking and populations who do not.
- H1.2: Participants who watch a drama or action-drama feature film portraying circumstances of human trafficking they will show a greater increase in their level of confidence about their understanding of the activity.
- H1.3: Women who watch feature films highlighting human trafficking issues focused on the care and restoration of the victim will have a higher change in perception of human trafficking than men who watched the same films.
- H1.4: Men who watch feature films highlighting human trafficking issues focused on investigation and vigilante justice for the victim will have a higher change in perception of human trafficking than women who watched the same films.

- H1.5: There will be a significant difference between men and women in their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in a drama film focused on issues of human trafficking.
- H1.6: There will be a significant difference between men and women in their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in an action-drama film on issues of human trafficking.

The first and second hypothesis determined whether there was a notable change in perceptions as well as the confidence of understanding modern day slavery between participants exposed to films regarding human trafficking and participants in a control group who received no stimulus of human trafficking issues. Perception for this study is defined as the participant's awareness and identification of human trafficking as determined by their survey responses. The next four hypotheses determined whether there was a significant difference between men's and women's perception of human trafficking and their confidence in the accuracy of information received from the genre of film to which they were exposed. These calculations were examined through the pre-post survey responses of participants in the study (Appendix C, Appendix D).

The next question addressed in the study is *R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?* The theoretical perspective developed in this study regarding proper distance concept examining observations regarding perceptions and the effects caused by the stimulus. This allowed the researcher to develop alternative hypothesis and establish if there is a difference in perception after exposure to the stimulus (Powers & Knapp, 2010). From

this determination, three hypotheses emerged in response to the research question:  
observations are the result of a real effect

- H2.1: There is a difference in the audience's perception of human trafficking after watching feature films portraying issues of human trafficking.
- H2.2: Men and women who perceive a film to be immersing them into disturbing and exaggerated portrayals of human trafficking will find it unbelievable.
- H2.3: Audiences who perceive a film with portrayals of human trafficking to be too foreign and distant will have a lack of empathy for the circumstances.

These hypotheses required a closer analysis of the four films being applied as treatments in the study. Through a content analysis that considered how the dramatization of the storyline and the voyeuristic level of audience connection to the victim, it was determined that *Abduction of Eden* contains the closest distance between narrative and audience. Through the same content analysis, the film *Whistleblower* was determined to contain the least amount of voyeuristic connections between the audience and the victims of trafficking, creating the greatest distance. Particulars on the content analysis performed will be explained further in the chapter. In addition, the results from the pre-test/post-test surveys (Appendix C, Appendix D), created for this study, determined whether the audience perceived a distance in realities and whether it changed their attitudes towards human trafficking; gender was not considered.

The final question addressed in the study is *R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of his or her ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing the movies?* Based on

the theoretical developments in this study regarding self-efficacy, two hypotheses emerged.

- H3.1: Women will have more confidence than men in their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing films that highlight issues of victim care and restoration.
- H3.2: Men will have more confidence than women in their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing films that highlight issues of investigation and justice.

These hypotheses examined the influence of the films used as treatments and whether these influences affected the confidence and motivation of participants. They also assisted in discovering whether a difference existed between gender perceptions and the genre of the film regarding that motivation.

### **Research Design**

There is limited research on the perceptions of human trafficking, and a knowledge of vulnerable populations along with the risks of victimization may help increase awareness (Tumiel, 2016). This conscious consideration of the realities of trafficking may assist government agencies, IGOs, and NGOs in combatting trafficking in persons. According to Brown (2010) cinema is a powerful outlet for raising awareness and inspiring intervention, a premise that assisted in the design and purpose of this research on audience perception of human trafficking as portrayed through feature films.

This study employed a pre-test/post-test experiment, as described by Creswell (2014), by exposing audiences to one of four feature films with a narrative based on human trafficking. Two films focused on plots of justice and investigation and two films

focused on plots related to victim care and suffering. The fifth film had no human trafficking issues and was utilized for the control group. This is an appropriate method for determining how to develop an effective storyline for films that include issues related to trafficking in persons. Determining the proper distance to a victim as well as the genre of film may also assist in motivating an individual to become an active bystander or change agent.

To achieve the desired outcomes of this study the following progression of developments occurred. To begin, an investigation was conducted to determine gaps of literature in the field. After an exploration of research on film's influence of audience perception, previously discussed in Chapter Two, studies with similar interests were used to guide this study. Next, a conceptual content analysis of feature films on human trafficking was conducted to determine the most effective stimuli for the study. Once a determination was made, surveys were developed to meet the needs of the study and assist in providing data relevant to the hypothesis. This information was then provided to academic experts in both the field of human trafficking and of communication to provide a juried review of the instruments selected for the study. Once the instruments were deemed acceptable, a pilot study was conducted and is further detailed in this chapter.

As explained in chapter one, the researcher determined that a population of university students between the ages of 18-25 was appropriate after being identified as both at risk as well as an integral part of change by the NHTRC (2013) and The McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University (2017). A situational analysis was conducted to determine the most effective location and use of technology available for the experiment. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from both

Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board and Stephen F. Austin State University Institutional Review Board, the two institutions with which the researcher is connected. Once approval was received, the experiments began. Participants were provided a survey (Appendix B) prior to exposure to the stimulus. Next the stimulus was employed. Participants were immediately offered the post survey (Appendix C) at the conclusion of the film. This assisted in determining whether the stimulus influenced a change in perception. The data was then processed through SPSS where independent sample t-tests and ANOVAs were performed to analyze the mean differences in the pre-post responses. In addition, some hypothesis required a post-hoc analysis to assist in not only determining those differences but exploring where those differences are located within the data. Each step in the research design is explained in further detail throughout this chapter.

### **Content Analysis of Films**

To initiate the investigation, a content analysis was conducted to determine the films appropriate for the experiment. Vogt (2005) describes a content analysis as a method of systematically examining visual, both pictorial and written, or vocal communication through categorized measurements. According to Buddenbaum and Novak (2001) a content analysis is objective, requiring the researcher to develop strict coding rules to be applied to the distribution of information categorically. This content analysis is a basic conceptual analysis that utilizes selective reduction to determine the correct stimulus for this study.

The analysis began by examining films that claimed to highlight circumstances of human trafficking to determine whether those inferences were appropriate for the study.



The content analysis was qualitative as information on films was collected from movie databases and themes regarding genres in relation to human trafficking emerged (Bock & Krippendorff, 2009; Powers & Knapp, 2010). The study used definitions of genres provided in Chapter Two to make these assessments. Next an assessment of whether the film had a plot that was connected to the United States was used. Only films that represented some connection to the United States were included. In addition, the content analysis considered whether the connection took place domestically or overseas with American agents or victims. While the latter consideration did not dictate whether one circumstance or the other provided a stronger message, the data was collected to be utilized in future studies. The next concept considered was whether the film had a victim-centered narrative or a justice-centered narrative. The results of the content analysis are presented in Table 1 of this chapter.

To begin, a search through Internet Movie Database (IMDb, 2017) was conducted to uncover films categorized as having plots central to the theme of human trafficking. Movies produced before 2000 and the enactment of the Palermo Protocol were dismissed from the study because these movies were created before the defining of trafficking in persons. This definition is key to understanding the realities of what constitutes trafficking in persons. The remaining movies were then reviewed to determine whether they met this classification of human trafficking, as clarified in Chapter One. The criteria for a feature film to be considered in the study, it had to meet one of the following classifications for human trafficking as defined by the Palermo Protocol (United Nations General Assembly, 2000):

(a) the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Once a movie was determined to obtain a plot focused on issues of human trafficking it was included in the content analysis. While not an inclusion or exclusion criteria, it was noted that most films focused primarily on sex trafficking.

The content analysis revealed that films focusing on human trafficking are primarily documentaries. Since documentaries do not offer the same flexibility in the development of script and are unable to address the gender gap in movie genre preference (Wühr and Schwarz, 2016) which suggests that men prefer action films and women prefer dramas, documentaries were excluded from the study. Additional genres dismissed

were western, science-fiction, war, animation, and fantasy since no films were discovered to contain plots focused on human trafficking. However, there is certainly opportunity within these genres to incorporate human trafficking scenarios in the future. Moreover, an examination of both comedy and romantic-comedy films, did discover issues of human trafficking but they were dismissed for not being significant to the plot or inappropriate. A study by Ming-Yang Goh, Kien-Boon Seet, Chen, Hui Ng, and Pang (2017) showed that while humor can be effective in crisis communication it is not effective when used in relation to social issues or ethical deliberations. Since human trafficking is clearly a modern social issue, it stands to reason a comedy on this topic would be ineffective in providing knowledge to and soliciting action from the audience.

The next inclusion criterion was classification as a feature film, as defined in Chapter One. While the initial study concept intended to evaluate blockbuster films it was determined through the content analysis that only four films possessed some characteristics of a blockbuster. While the term is a bit ambiguous, a blockbuster is described by Dictionary.com (2017) as “an unusually successful hit with widespread popularity and huge sales,” as well as film possessing great power and commercial success (Oxford Dictionaries). The most notable film in this category being *Taken*, a film starring Liam Neeson which grossed over \$145 million domestically (BoxOfficeMojo, 2017). The ironic connection between this film being a blockbuster as well as a tool for anti-trafficking efforts is that this movie was not marketed with the intentions of raising awareness regarding human trafficking issues. Interestingly, many studies speculate that it actually started a dialogue about the problem, increasing awareness (Lambert, 2009; Szörényi & Eate, 2014). Unfortunately, there is a disagreement as to whether that

dialogue assisted or hindered the efforts of human trafficking awareness campaigns by portraying the typical innocent female being rescued through vigilante methods of justice (Austin & Farrell, 2017; Baker, 2014; Basu, et al., 2014; Brown, 2010; Pajnik, 2010). It may be this exaggeration of circumstances that made the film a blockbuster.

*Trade* is another movie, produced prior to *Taken*, which surprisingly did well in the box office, grossing \$1.5 million domestically (BoxOfficeMojo, 2017). The popular movie promoted dialogue on the issue of sex trafficking by highlighting the controversial investigative report by Peter Landesman that actually appeared in the *New York Times* (Szörényi & Eate, 2014). The other two films that meet the criteria of blockbuster mentioned in Chapter One are *Spartan* (2004) and *Whistleblower* (2010). Since only these four films met some of the characteristics previously described as a blockbuster, the revenue generated by the films was not a consideration in the content analysis. This guided the content analysis to consider films that met the definition of feature films rather than just blockbuster, allowing a broader investigation of films based on issues of human trafficking.

Next, only films that established human trafficking connections either to or within the United States were included for consideration in the study. According to the Kloer (2011), in cooperation with the CNN Freedom Project and NHTRC (2013), Americans have little understanding of human trafficking, particularly how it occurs in cities and towns all over the world, including in the United States. Both organizations argue that Americans need to be more aware of their connection to human trafficking to assist anti-trafficking efforts. If audiences feel the story or characters are too different or foreign, it

can affect the proper distance needed to induce empathy (Silverstone, 2003). This justified the inclusion of a United States connection to the story.

Subsequently, plots were evaluated to determine whether they provided a narrative centered on the victim's perspective. This evaluation of plots associated with human trafficking considered whether the narrative focused on ethics and care or whether the narrative concentrated on justice and investigation. Consideration was taken to determine whether the main characters were victims or were providing some type of rescue or law enforcement for the victim. From this analysis, four films were selected to be used in the pre-test/post-test experiment. The study considered two films that highlighted issues of justice and investigation, considered messages of higher impact for males, in accordance with different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982). Those films were determined to be *Trade* (2007), and *Whistleblower* (2010). While the films do not portray the violence preferred by males, according to Emmers (2006) the narratives depict investigation and forms of justice, including some circumstances of vigilant justice. While more violence is portrayed in the movie *Taken* (2008), it was determined that this film would be excluded due to its controversial sensationalism (Lambert, 2009; Szörényi & Eate, 2014). Nonetheless, under the premise of the same theory by Gilligan (1982), *8-Days* (2014) and *Abduction of Eden* (2012) were determined to highlight issues of empathy and victim care; these messages are considered higher impact for females.

The final analysis conducted was to determine the control film for the study. While there was an ample selection of action-drama and drama films available with a victim or justice focused plot, one movie stood out due to its similarities in a victim-centered narrative but without the element of human trafficking. The film also employed

a theme of justice, which offered a secondary consideration. The film *Taken in Broad Daylight* is a story of abduction, originally considered through the content analysis of films on trafficking. However, it was determined that the film did not actually meet the definition of human trafficking. This action-drama is based on real events, follows the kidnapping of a teen in the United States and the story of her captivity. However, the victim is not exploited for prostitution, forced labor or other forms of slavery and therefore it was dismissed from the content analysis of human trafficking based films. Nevertheless, the similarity of plot narratives between this film and those under consideration as the stimulus guided the research to select *Taken in Broad Daylight* to represent the control group.

The following chart, labeled Table 1, illustrates the determination of criteria and selection process for this study:

Table 1

*Content Analysis: Feature Films Focusing on Human Trafficking*

Feature Films	Genre		Plot Connection to the United States		Plot Focus	
	Action-Drama	Drama	Within the US	Outside the US	Victim Care and Suffering	Justice and Investigation
8 Days (2014)		X	X		X	
Abduction of Eden (2012)		X	X		X	
And Soon the Darkness (2010)		X		X		X
Fields of Mudan (2004)		X	X		X	
Holly (2008)		X		X		X
Human Trafficking (2005)		X	X			X
Not Today (2013)		X		X		X
Off Jackson Avenue (2008)		X	X		X	
Out of Reach (2004)	X		X			X
Skin Trade (2014)	X			X		X
Slumdog Millionaire (2008)		X		X	X	
Spartan (2004)	X		X			X
Taken (2008)	X		X			X
Trade (2007)		X	X			X
Trade of Innocence (2012)		X		X		X
The Whistleblower (2010)		Y		Y		Y

**Movie Stimuli**

The content analysis of genre and plot focus assisted in determining the four movies selected as the stimuli for this study: *8 Days* (2014), *Abduction of Eden* (2012),

*Trade* (2007), and *The Whistleblower* (2010). All movies met the criteria of being a feature film, produced after 2000 and the enactment of the Palermo Protocol, direct or indirect connections to the United States, considered a genre of drama or action-drama, and contained narratives that were justice centered or victim centered. A description of each movie is provided.

Most films about human trafficking, classified as feature films and not documentaries, appear to have narratives that focus on justice and investigation. Two of these films were selected as part of the study. *Trade* (2007), directed by Marco Kreuzpaintner, is classified by IMDb as an action, crime, drama, thriller, production and rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) for containing sexual material involving minors, rape, drugs, and violent language. With a running time of 120 minutes, this film is classified as a feature film and according to IMDb was produced with a \$12,000,000 budget. The story follows the journey of Jorge, the 17-year old brother of a 13-year old girl who is kidnapped by sex traffickers. While the story shows some of the girl's circumstances, the plot focuses on Jorge and the relationship he develops with Ray, a Texas cop who is searching for answers in a sex trafficking incident that occurred in his family. The alliance between the two is shaky to start but grows stronger as they quest to uncover the truth and rescue Jorge's sister. The movie takes viewers on a journey from Mexico to New Jersey, unveiling the underground world of sex trafficking, and exposing the audience to the barriers, terror, inhumane acts of sex trafficking, and how it crosses physical and media boundaries. This movie is an example of an action-drama film with plot focus of justice and investigation.



The second action-dram film selected was *Whistleblower* (2010). The movie is directed by Larysa Kondracki, and classified by IMDb as an action, crime, drama, thriller, production and rated R by MPAA for containing brutal sexual assaults, nudity, and violent language. Running time for the film is 112 minutes and the story is constructed from actual events. The film is based on the experiences of Kathryn Bolkovac while she served as a Peacekeeper for the United Nations. The majority of events occurring in this movie take place in Bosnia. However, the main character, Bolkovac, is a former Nebraska police officer working directly overseas as a peacekeeper. She is assigned to work with American contractors, primarily the American security firm DynCorp International, when she discovers government corruption in connection with these contractors. These aspects of the film met the criteria of a United States connection. The plot of the film focuses on the investigation of sex trafficking, the corruption of government and multinational diplomats, as well as dangers encountered by sex trafficking informants. For these reasons, *Whistleblower* (2010) was chosen as the second action-drama film with plot focus of justice and investigation.

Narratives that focused on empathy and care were selected for the next two stimuli in the experiment. *Abduction of Eden* (2012), referenced as just *Eden* in Europe and directed by Megan Griffiths, is classified by IMDb as a drama, crime, production and rated R by MPAA for containing disturbing sexual material, human trafficking, drugs, and violent language. While there is no box office data on this film, it has a run time of 98 minutes, was featured in movie theaters, and is currently available for sale and rent through Amazon, meeting the qualifications of a feature film for this study. The movie focuses on Eden, a young Korean-American girl forced into the Las Vegas, Nevada sex

trafficking industry. The story shows how Eden survives by not only obeying her captors, but also showing herself as a valuable asset within the organization. Typically girls are murdered once they reach the age of maturity and no longer serve a purpose for the trafficker. Eden is able to secure her survival by being cooperative and working with the traffickers. As stated earlier in Chapter Two, she would now be considered a bottom and possibly classified under victim provocation. The story was developed from the real-life accounts of Chong Kim's survival of abduction and captivity in the world of human trafficking.

The final film selected is *8 Days* (2014), directed by Jaco Booyans, and classified by IMDb as a drama, production and the only film in this study with a PG-13 rating by MPAA for containing sex trafficking, menacing, and drug content. This film also has no available box office data, but the film is sold commercially through outlets, including Amazon. According to IMDb, the film had a production budget of \$2.5 million. The running time for this film is 90 minutes, which makes it inclusive as a feature film. The film is also based on real life events and follows the story of a 16-year old girl through the traumatic 8 days of her captivity. The young girl is lured by a friend to a party where she is drugged and sold to sex traffickers. This movie focuses primarily on the activities faced by the main character and the investigation by law enforcement and her family is secondary to the plot. For these reasons, *8 Days* (2014) was selected as the second victim centered drama to utilize as a movie stimulus in the experiment.

The control film selected for this study is *Taken in Broad Daylight* (2009), also known as *The Presence of Two Minds* and directed by Gary Yates, is classified as a drama, thriller, according to IMDb. The movie is a feature film length with a 93-minute

running time. The film was also reproduced for in-home entertainment. The movie is based on real life events as the story represents the kidnapping of a young teen girl forced to be the love interest of an adult male for six days. The focus of the movie is on the victim with a secondary focus of justice as she leaves clues for police to assist in her recovery. The film does not contain any elements of human trafficking but does portray human suffering and investigation, and therefore was chosen as the control stimulus for this study.

### **Reliability and Validity**

This is a summative evaluation therefore a pilot study was conducted prior to the experiment to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument being employed (Baker, 1994). The instrument was a researcher-developed survey to evaluate the participants' perceptions of human trafficking pre and post of the stimulus. Pre-test/post-test surveys are effective instruments in assessing audience perceptions and attitudes. A study by Rudowsky (2013) was used to guide the development of the surveys for this experiment. To investigate the effects of movies on interest and perception of college students Rudowsky also utilized four treatment groups and one control group. Another study that examined the perception of college students on human trafficking was also considered (Jones, 2012). While Jones only used a non-experimental survey design with a single observation, the questions regarding perception of human trafficking were useful in the development of the pre-test/post-test surveys employed in this study. The statements were developed to assess general human trafficking opinions, stereotypes and self-awareness identified on a Likert Scale.

Since the design of the instrument used in this study is researcher developed, the researcher employed academic experts in the field of human trafficking as well as communication to provide a juried review to determine validity. The initial planned evaluation for face validity solicited four experts in the field, (Holden, 2010), if discrepancies develop, additional experts would be obtained to keep the study statistically sound. However, no discrepancies were identified and therefore additional jurors were not required for this study. The juried review of this study utilized a variation of Zaichkowsky's (1985) method where jurors were asked to identify whether each non-decoy survey question was "clearly represented," "somewhat represented," or "not representative of the construct of interest" (Appendix D). Reviewers were also provided an opportunity for constructive feedback to each question so that the researcher could review these comments and make any necessary adjustments. The results required minimum modification and the review clarified the construct of each question in relation to the research question it was designed to answer. A study by Hardestya & Bearden (2004) established that face validity typically involves several procedures to measure judgments; however, variations of Zaichkowsky's ratings were the most commonly used in juried reviews of construct. Results from the data collected from these reviews determined that the instrument was acceptable.

Since this study was a summative evaluation, a pilot study was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments (Doody & Doody, 2015). For the purposes of the research, 7 student participants from Stephen F. Austin State University were randomly selected as a sample group for the pilot. The participants each took the survey and then re-took the survey, without a stimulus, one week later. Each survey took

a maximum of 8 minutes to complete and each participant was compensated with a chance to win a \$25 Amazon gift card. Doody & Doody (2015) determine that in a well-conducted pilot study the answers should remain consistent with the initial survey results (+/-1). The researcher monitored the media during the week between surveys to account for any media influence regarding cases of human trafficking. No media coverage on the issue was discovered or recorded locally, domestically or internationally. The data from this pilot study remained consistent in all 7 pre-test/post-test surveys and therefore an additional pilot study was not warranted.

### **Population and Sample**

Identified as at-risk victims to circumstances of human trafficking in Chapter One, university students were used as the sample population of this study. Many factors place college students at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Mainly as demonstrated in this study, there is a serious misconception about the realities of human trafficking. While specific numbers regarding the recruitment of college students into trafficking is impossible to obtain, the NHTRC (2017) outlines the ease of recruitment through venues that include malls, parties, campuses, bus stops and social media. Traffickers wishing to exploit the strain of financial debt students incur often prey upon students. The McCain Institute for International Leadership (2017) explains how social media sites such as Seeking Arrangements entices and recruits young females into relationships that in-turn pay for their education and expenses. Similar websites entice males into prostitution to help offset financial burdens. These situations often lead to even harsher forms of trafficking. Another technique often utilized among college students in the boyfriend/girlfriend approach. This is where a trafficker convinces his or

her victim that they care about them while systematically entrapping them in trafficking (Wilson, 2017). This process is referred to as ‘grooming.’

This college student population was also identified as an essential part of change regarding activism in human trafficking (NHTRC, 2013; The McCain Institute for International Leadership, 2017). Numerous organizations focus on student involvement and activism. An article in College Magazine outlined the top 10 anti-trafficking organizations on US college campuses that raise awareness and educate students on the realities of human trafficking (Duncan-Dieujuste, 2017). The largest of these organizations include The Polaris Project, which also serves as the nation’s human trafficking hotline, A21 and Students Against Human Trafficking. Other campus inclusions foster education through events such as Walk for Freedom, Free the Girls and Goodweave. The NHTRC identifies college students as a highly influential population with the ability to raise awareness and promote anti-tolerance to forms of modern day slavery.

These considerations of college students as at-risk victims of trafficking and effective activists for anti-trafficking organizations guided the researcher to consider this population for the study. The researcher solicited undergraduate students between the ages of 18-25 from the institution at which she is employed. This midsized university is located in a small, rural area of eastern Texas but only 120 miles from Houston, a city recognized as having the largest population of human trafficking victims in Texas (Busch-Armendariz, et al., 2016). Since this study focused on the impact of ethical messages on gender, an attempt was made to solicit an equal number of male and female students. Invitation to participate in the study occurred through email, flyers, and an

email request to instructors for the research to provide a live solicitation for participation to their classes. An expedited request was submitted to the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) at both Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where the researcher is a doctoral candidate, and Stephen F Austin State University for approval.

The IRB included copies of the informed consent provided to participants (Appendix A). The consent to participate in the study was explained prior to the start of the experiment. This form clarified the purpose, benefits, and risks associated with the experiment as well as the investigators contact information. Students had the option of withdrawing their participation at any time during the study. All consent forms were scanned electronically onto a data storage drive and kept in a lock box for three years. Upon completion of federally mandated storage allotment, all data will be destroyed by the investigator.

Solicitation of participants included emails sent directly to randomly selected students and flyers displayed and distributed around campus, consistent with IRB approval. In addition, an email to instructors was sent requesting direct contact in the classroom to solicit participation. It was the discretion of any instructor to offer extra credit to students who choose to participate as long as an alternative option of equal effort was provided. The experiment was expected to take just under 2 hours. An incentive for participation was a drawing for \$50 Amazon gift cards. One gift card was offered at each screening.

This study required a sample size consisting of 140-200 participants. This provided a group of 28-40 participants in each treatment group of the experiment, with the remaining 25-40 participants in the control group. Two groups fell slightly outside of

these parameters and will be addressed in the limitations section of Chapter 5. For this experiment, the results of the two treatment groups exposed to a drama were combined as well as the two treatment groups exposed to an action-drama. This resulted in 48-60 participants for each film genre. A limited sample size is ideal in a pretest-posttest experiment. A model represented by Reinhard (2006) demonstrates that when treatment groups are too large the findings can sometimes prove false, making it too easy to determine significance and when treatment groups are too small it may be too difficult to find significance.

The films were shown on different dates to provide enough opportunities for students to participate. The films were randomly selected each night over the course of a week. Each screening location was proctored to assure compliance with the study's methodology. Proctors were instructed to discourage interaction between participants when completing the survey and this was explained at the beginning of the experiment. Prior to the screening of each film, students were asked whether they have seen the film. If so, they were asked to participate in the screening of a film they have not yet seen. If they had seen all the films, they would have been released from the study but still eligible for the participation incentive. However this criterion was not met by any participant. Students were only permitted to participate in one screening. The start of each screening included a brief introduction, explanation of the study and the informed consent. The explanation of the study withheld information regarding the focus on human trafficking in an effort to alleviate bias. The study was explained as an exploration of perceptions in ethical dilemmas. Directly following the explanation of the study, each participant was given the pre-test survey (Appendix B). Immediately after viewing the film, participants



were offered the post-test survey (Appendix C). Both surveys were provided on paper. Students wishing to remove themselves from the study at any time were still eligible for the participation incentive. The completion time for each survey was 5-7 minutes with participants' overall involvement in the experiment averaging approximately 2 hours.

Five movies were employed for this study: 2 action-drama films, 2 drama films and one drama unrelated to human trafficking but with similar appeal for the control group. Each treatment film was watched by a minimum of 28 participants assigned to watch, the control film had 23 participants in the study. While the control participation fell below the desired number of contributors to the study, the data was consistent among the participating members in the group. The researcher deemed this acceptable and addressed the issues in Chapter 5. To examine a gender difference in perception, an effort was made to obtain at least 12 males and 12 females for each movie. More students attended some movie and some films had more females but ratio of males to females was consistent with the universities demographics and determined to be acceptable. This is also discussed further in Chapter 5.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

This quantitative study employed a pre-test/post-test survey design experiment to a nonrandom selection of participants to determine whether gender perceptions of human trafficking were influenced by film genre. The surveys were provided on paper and placed in numerically coded manila envelopes. Each envelope contained color coded pre-test, post-test and informed consent so instructions for participants were clear. After completing the pre-test survey, participants retained their envelope and survey for the duration of the film. At the conclusion of the film, participants were asked to remove and

complete the yellow survey for the post-test examination. This method of distribution was designed to organize the surveys and maintain anonymity. The pre-test surveys (Appendix B) began with the collection of demographical data. This data assisted in finding themes. The survey also contained 16 questions focusing on the participant's film and visual message preferences also designed to uncover themes if patterns emerged. The survey contained 12 questions concentrating on their perception and interest in ethical issues however only 3 of these questions specifically mentioned human trafficking while the other 9 were designed as decoy questions to assist in the reduction of bias. The pre-test survey also included 4 questions focused on self-efficacy, and 10 questions regarding their opinion of the stimulus. The post-test survey (Appendix C) omitted the demographical data and was paired by coded number to the pre-test survey. This instrument collected data from 10 questions regarding the participant's film and visual preferences, 16 questions concentrating on their perception and interest in ethical issues. Once again, decoys were utilized to reduce bias. The questions relevant to human trafficking were compared to the pre-test data to determine whether a change in perception occurred based on the stimulus and assisted in answering R1 for this study. In addition, to assist with evaluating the hypotheses for R2 and R3 which addressed distance and self-efficacy, 4 questions were developed to evaluate whether participants felt connected and inspired by the stimulus to become active in anti-trafficking efforts.

A sample of these participants were reserved as the control group and viewed a film unrelated to human trafficking as their stimulus. All participants were given the pre-test prior to the film and post-test survey after viewing the entire movie. The ordinal data obtained was converted to interval data to determine whether the data between the pre-

and post-survey differed significantly. The results from the experiments using a human trafficking content as the stimulus were then compared to the results of the control group.

The experiment took place in a controlled environment conveniently accessible to the participants. A classroom and theatre conducive for entertainment purposes with projection ability were utilized. Three of the films were presented in the student movie theater and two films were presented in a tiered classroom with similar attributes. Since feature films are typically screened in audience settings, reaction from the audience was not discouraged. The same reactions obtained in the theater naturally were acceptable if mimicked in these experiments. Interaction during the survey segments of the experiment was discouraged.

Five screenings occurred. Four groups were exposed to one of the human trafficking focused movies for this study: *8-Days* (2014), *Abduction of Eden* (2012), *Trade* (2007), or *Whistleblower* (2010). The fifth group was exposed to a similar drama, *Taken in Broad Daylight* (2009) with no conditions of human trafficking being addressed; this was the control group. All 5 groups received precisely the same pre-test survey prior to the start of the film and post-test survey immediately following the conclusion of the film. A proctor for each screening assisted in the distribution and collection of all surveys. The investigator provided the explanation of informed consent, instructions for survey completion of each survey and was available to answer any questions. Some verbal responses were provided to the researcher at the conclusion of the experiment and these responses were documented in the study's journal. The data collected from the surveys was then manually input into Microsoft Excel and transferred to SPSS for statistical analysis.

## **Instruments and Equipment**

The equipment needed for this experiment included projection technology, films on human trafficking, surveys, writing instruments and statistical analysis software. In addition, both a classroom and theatre conducive for entertainment purposes were reserved for all five films. While the same location was not available for all five showings, the locations were similar in size and format, with tiered seating, large screens, and no windows or outside interferences. Incentives for participation included refreshments due to the length of time participants were expected to donate for completion of the experiment and an opportunity to win one of several \$50 Amazon gift cards.

Pre-test and post-test surveys were developed to obtain information that assisted in answering the research questions posed in this study. Since participants were not made aware that the study is focused on messages of human trafficking, simply ethical considerations, decoy questions were included within the survey. Additional questions regarding participants' opinions of film genres and accuracy of information were constructed to assist in answering the research questions. The post-test survey asked participants to include their opinion on plot, acting, and production value of the film they just watched to evaluate whether a film should not have been included in the study due to overall poor ratings. Finally, participants were provided the opportunity to include contact information for inclusion in a follow-up study should one be developed.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

The research project was presented to students at a mid-sized university located in East Texas during the spring 2018 semester. Students were told that the study was

designed to determine the influence of drama and action-drama feature films on ethical perspectives. They were not provided the exact genre of film they were being exposed to or told that the study is focused on human trafficking to reduce any influence on the participants' answers. All students were provided an informed consent with notification that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their involvement at any time.

Participants were then administered the pre-test survey for completion. The survey was developed with questions both related and unrelated to the study, but most questions focused on ethical dilemmas or film genres. The decoy questions embedded in the survey assisted in reducing bias. Subsequently the movie stimulus was employed followed by the post-test survey. Data from the surveys was compiled using Microsoft Excel. Once data from all 5 movies were compiled, it was transferred to SPSS statistical software for analysis. The appropriate tests were then determined and dictated by the data collected.

### **Summary**

This chapter examined the methodology used to conduct the experiments employed in the study. It described the rationale of the pre-posttest experiment to investigate the effects of human trafficking narratives in feature films by utilizing one control group and four treatment groups. The study examined how these narratives effect gender, as well as the proper distance concept applied to films in an effort to determine whether there was an influence or deterrent to proactive behaviors in anti-trafficking effort. The study also considered whether films assisted in inducing a self-efficacy to assist in combating issues of human trafficking. A summary of the data collection

techniques and experimental procedures used in the study was provided. Chapter Four evaluates the results of the data collected and offer a statistical analysis of that information.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the portrayal of human trafficking in feature length, commercially distributed movies and the impact these films have on the audiences' perception of trafficking and their motivation to become active bystanders or agents of change. This chapter presents the data collected from the experimental pre-test/post-test study comparing the effects of human trafficking feature films on college students. A quantitative analysis was conducted to evaluate each research question and hypothesis presented in Chapter 3. The discussion of the results of that analysis begins with a summary of the descriptive statistics followed by an analysis of the differences found between the control and treatment groups regarding age, gender, ethnicity, and academic major.

#### **Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The validity of the survey was assessed by a panel of academic experts in the field of human trafficking as well as communication. In accordance with Holden (2010), four experts were considered sufficient in determining the validity of the survey instrument. Reviewers were asked to identify whether each non-decoy survey question “clearly represented,” “somewhat represented,” or was “not representative of the construct of interest” (Appendix D). They were also asked if the demographic and decoy questions were considered “applicable” or “not applicable.” This method by Zaichkowsky (1985) determined that the instrument would be operational for the experiment. The jurors responded that all demographic and decoy questions were considered applicable. In

addition, 3 out of 4 jurors marked all non-decoy questions as “clearly represented.” One juror marked 2 non-decoy questions as “somewhat representative” with the following inquiries: Does ‘the United States’ mean the US government, US citizens, or US firms? Since this study focuses on perception, the interpretation of the statement is discretionary and would be considered in the same manner by each participant on their pre-post surveys. The data will be used to examine perceptions. The second inquiry referred to the word ‘active’ in research question 3 and what determined if a participant was active. The Definition of Terms in Chapter 1 clearly define active bystanders as people who feel a sense of responsibility regarding social norms and the changes necessary to meet community standards. As demonstrated in Appendix D, jurors were provided a brief theoretical framework to assist in evaluating the surveys but not the entire study and therefore these inquiries are logical.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the research instruments. This preliminary study consisted of twelve volunteer participants who completed the pre-test survey. All participants were provided an informed consent statement. The stimulus was withheld and nine of the participants returned a week later to complete the pre-test survey again. The pre-test was selected for both administrations due to the non-exposure of a stimulus which would make the post-test inappropriate. The researcher closely monitored news broadcasts and media posts during this time span to ensure that outside sources would not influence the participant’s responses in the second administration of the survey. No notable effects of human trafficking were uncovered through the media



during this time, and the participants' responses remained consistent (+/-1) demonstrating the soundness of the survey instruments utilized in the study.

### Sample Demographics

Participants for the study were recruited from Stephen F. Austin State University, located in Nacogdoches, Texas. The study obtained 169 volunteers: 146 for the stimulus films and 23 for the control film (Table 2). All participants were provided an informed consent form at the beginning of the study. No volunteers who agreed to partake in the study withdrew their involvement. This section presents the demographic information obtained from the pool of volunteers who participated in both the experiment and control studies.

**Table 2**

*Participant Demographics*

Movie <sup>a</sup>	<i>n</i>	Mean Age	Male	Female
Control	23	20	10	13
Drama 1	38	19	20	18
Drama 2	32	19	10	22
Action-Drama 1	34	19	9	25
Action-Drama 2	42	20	17	25

*Note.*<sup>a</sup> Control = *Taken in Broad Daylight*, Drama 1 = *8 Days*, Drama 2 = *Abduction of Eden*, Action-Drama 1 = *The Whistleblower*, Action-Drama 2 = *Trade*.

The demographic characteristics of the participants appeared to be consistent with the gender demographic of population of Stephen F. Austin State University. The study produced an average of 61% female and 39% male participation per movie. The study

demonstrated an average of 61% female and 39% male per movie viewing. The gender profile of students attending the university at the time of this study was a ratio of 1.0 male to 1.8 female (sfasu.edu/jackfacts, 2016), 64% female and 36% male (usnews.com/best-colleges/stephe-f-austin-3624, 2018). From this profile a slightly higher average of male students participated in the study, which was considered helpful in evaluating the gender concerns represented in the study.

All participants ranged in age from 18-25, with 78% being between 18-20 years old. Students with majors in the health care disciplines seemed to have the most interest in participating in a study on ethical dilemmas. This group comprised 20% of the population for the study. Business majors comprised 15% of the study's population while students concentrating on social work and education had the third highest interest with 12% participation. The remaining majors each constituted approximately 5% of the study population. This information was collected to determine whether interests of ethical dilemmas by disciplines had an effect on the results of this study and will be addressed later in the chapter the section, in Other Influences.

Participants were asked to classify their ethnicity since human trafficking is often identified with racial or cultural stereotypes (Brown, 2010). This identification allowed the researcher to examine racial perspectives and recognize whether the study required additional considerations. Participants identified as predominately white (48%), black (23%) and Hispanic (20%). This described 91% of participants. While these characteristics align with the university's overall ethnic demographics in relation to these three races, there was a variance in representation in the study. The university reports having a white population of 59%, a black population of 18%, and a Hispanic population

of 17% (sfasu.edu/jackfacts, 2016). This variance in race participation did not seem to have a significant effect on the study.

Table 3

*Participant Ethnicity*

	All Students	Control Group	8-Days <sup>a</sup>	Abduction of Eden <sup>a</sup>	Trade <sup>b</sup>	Whistle-blower <sup>b</sup>
American Indian/ Alaska Native	3%	4%	0%	0%	6%	5%
Asian/Asian American	3%	0%	8%	6%	0%	0%
Black/African American	24%	35%	21%	28%	17%	22%
Hispanic/Latino	20%	4%	32%	19%	21%	19%
Caucasian/White	48%	57%	39%	44%	50%	52%
Other	2%	0%	0%	3%	6%	2%
N	169	23	38	32	34	42

Participants were then asked to rate on a Likert type scale of 1-7 how much they “strongly disliked” to how much they “strongly liked” various genres of film. The genres presented in the survey were: action, animation, comedy, drama, horror, and science fiction. This information was obtained to assist in determining the likeability of the movie genre and assist whether there was a strong opposition to the likeability of the genre and if that would affect the results of the study. The majority of participants responded as neutral or favorable to the genre they were exposed to in the study. The research showed that 86% of participants ( $n = 70$ ) exposed to a drama film identified an opinion as neutral or liking the genre and 92% of participants ( $n = 76$ ) exposed to an action film identified an opinion as neutral or liking the genre. In the post survey assessment, 95.7% of

participants rated their overall likeability of the drama films as neutral or favorable and 98.6% rated their overall likeability of the action-drama films as neutral or favorable.

Table 4

*All Participants' Attitudes Towards Film Genres*

N = 169	Disliked	Neutral	Liked
Action	8%	12%	80%
Animation	11%	14%	75%
Comedy	3%	5%	92%
Drama	13%	15%	72%
Horror	35%	11%	54%
Science Fiction	26%	17%	57%

To establish a baseline for each variable, all participants were administered the pre-survey instrument (Appendix C). This instrument assessed the participant's perception of ethical issues including child abuse, drug abuse, human trafficking and poverty. The survey also considered the participants' desire to become involved in activism for any of these ethical issues as well as their overall preferences for various movie genres. The instrument assisted in demonstrating an equality among all groups. The mean and standard deviation are presented in Table 4 for the entire study as well as each individual group. An assessment of the means in each study group reveals strong similarities to the results for each variable for the entire study. Except for whether participants had difficulty watching commercials on animal abuse and starving children,

the remaining variables were all within one standard deviation of the overall means signifying an equal distribution for statistical evaluations.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for All Groups Using Pre-Survey Data*

		All Students	Control Group	8-Days <sup>a</sup>	Abduction of Eden <sup>a</sup>	Trade <sup>b</sup>	Whistle-blower <sup>b</sup>
Q. 3 Believes they understand HT <sup>c</sup> in US <sup>d</sup>	Mean	4.52	5.00	4.63	4.19	4.83	4.00
	SD	1.77	1.91	1.88	1.92	1.50	1.63
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q. 7 US needs to recognize HT <sup>c</sup> as critical problem <sup>e</sup>	Mean	6.55	6.52	6.53	6.63	6.40	6.71
	SD	.837	0.85	0.83	0.79	0.96	0.72
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q.9 Enjoys watching emotional films <sup>e</sup>	Mean	4.90	4.52	4.92	4.78	4.95	5.47
	SD	1.70	1.83	1.78	1.54	1.50	1.58
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q. 10 Enjoy watching vigilante films <sup>e</sup>	Mean	5.05	4.91	5.24	4.47	5.55	4.56
	SD	1.45	1.24	1.10	1.78	1.33	1.78
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q. 11 Difficult to watch commercials about abuse/neglect <sup>e</sup>	Mean	4.82	4.78	4.61	5.00	4.69	5.06
	SD	1.99	2.11	2.07	1.95	2.02	1.89
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q. 12 Films that don't connect me to the culture are boring <sup>e</sup>	Mean	3.80	3.74	3.82	3.72	3.71	4.00
	SD	1.65	1.42	1.75	1.63	1.55	1.90
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q. 13 Films that focus only on the victim are deceptive <sup>e</sup>	Mean	3.86	3.87	4.05	3.78	3.88	3.71
	SD	1.45	1.25	1.69	1.18	1.50	1.51
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q. 16 There are things I can do to help end HT <sup>c</sup> <sup>e</sup>	Mean	4.15	4.13	4.05	4.56	4.00	4.06
	SD	1.78	2.03	1.80	1.66	1.73	1.77
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34
Q.20 I would like to be involved HT <sup>c</sup> organization <sup>e</sup>	Mean	5.23	5.22	5.29	5.28	5.12	5.26
	SD	1.67	1.73	1.62	1.61	1.61	1.88
	N	169	23	38	32	42	34

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Drama, <sup>b</sup> Action-Drama, <sup>c</sup> Human Trafficking, <sup>d</sup> Scale from 1 through 7, with 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware, <sup>e</sup> Scale from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

An analysis of the data presented in Table 5 shows that a slight increase above neutral for participants beliefs that they possessed an understanding of human trafficking prior to the treatment. The data also establishes that participants believed the United States needs to recognize that human trafficking is a critical problem and that they possessed an interest in being active in human trafficking organizations prior to the treatment. However, there was only a slight increase above the neutral regarding participant's belief that there were things they could do to help end human trafficking. The pre-survey also demonstrated again that participants revealed an enjoyment of watching emotional films and movies portraying vigilante justice. The data also showed that most participants appeared neutral or in disagreement with the statements which said that movies failing to connect the viewer to the culture are boring and that movies showing a victim's perspective are usually deceptive.

### **Research Question One**

The central research question for this study examined: *What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?* After a comprehensive review of the literature regarding human trafficking portrayals in movies and a consideration of the theoretical framework developed in this study regarding gender influence in relation to ethical dilemmas, six hypotheses emerged:

- H1.1: There will be a significant difference in the perception of human trafficking between populations who watch feature films portraying circumstances of human trafficking and populations who do not.

- H1.2: Participants who watch a drama or action-drama feature film portraying circumstances of human trafficking they will show a greater increase in their level of confidence about their understanding of the activity.
- H1.3: Women who watch feature films highlighting human trafficking issues focused on the care and restoration of the victim will have a higher change in perception of human trafficking than men who watched the same films.
- H1.4: Men who watch feature films highlighting human trafficking issues focused on investigation and vigilante justice for the victim will have a higher change in perception of human trafficking than women who watched the same films.
- H1.5: There will be a significant difference between men and women in their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in a drama film focused on issues of human trafficking.
- H1.6: There will be a significant difference between men and women in their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in an action-drama film on issues of human trafficking.

Each of the six hypotheses were first examined through independent sample t-tests to explore differences between groups. This method was applicable with the first research question focusing more on gender perceptions and genre. Some hypothesis offered further exploration through ANOVAs and Tukey Honestly Significant Difference test (HSD) as a post-hoc analysis to assist with not only determining a difference but discovering where the differences are located within the data collected.

## **H1.1**

H1.1: There will be a significant difference in the perception of human trafficking between populations who watch feature films portraying circumstances of human trafficking and populations who do not.

Films on human trafficking are considered ethical dilemmas, as established earlier in this study, and therefore should affect the viewer's opinion of human trafficking. This hypothesis postulates films based on human trafficking narratives and investigations do affect the output of perception towards human trafficking by the viewers. To determine this, an independent sample t-test was performed to compare the participant's perception of human trafficking awareness after viewing a film with human trafficking or no human trafficking. For this test, only the post-survey data was utilized. A Levene's test for equality of variance's was performed and equal variance not assumed was used (Table 6). The surveys used a scale offering a response range of 1 = "strongly disagree" through 7 = "strongly agree." There was a significant difference in the scores for participants who viewed films with human trafficking ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ) and the film with no human trafficking ( $M = 6.45$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $t(24.3) = -3.46$ ,  $p = .002$ . These results are represented in Table 6 and demonstrate that films on human trafficking do have an impact on the viewer's awareness of human trafficking.



Table 6

*Independent Samples Test on Awareness*

Q. 46 – I am more aware of issues on human trafficking	*Group Statistics		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control Group	23	5.04	1.894
Treatment Groups	46	6.45	1.077

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree  
 \* Levene's Test  $p = .002$

Another independent sample t-test was performed to compare the participants' understanding of human trafficking in the United States pre-post of the movie. A new variable was created to measure the pre-post results. The average gains score for the new variable was obtained by subtracting the score of question 3 on the pre-survey from the score of question 25 on the post-survey. A Levene's test for equality of variance's was performed and equal variance was assumed (Table 7). The data showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the control and stimulus films. The surveys used a scale offering a response range of 1 = strongly disagree through 7 = strongly agree. There was not a significant difference in the scores for participants who viewed films with human trafficking ( $M=1.38$ ,  $SD= 1.88$ ) and the film with no human trafficking ( $M=.96$ ,  $SD= 1.52$ );  $t(-1.19)= 33.5$ ,  $p = .243$ . These results are represented in Table 7 and indicate that films on human trafficking do not have a significant impact on the viewer's understanding of human trafficking when compared to films without human trafficking.

Table 7

*Independent Samples Test on Control and Treatment Groups*

Q3/Q25: I have an understanding of human trafficking in the US	*Group Statistics		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control Group	3	.9565	1.52191
Treatment Groups	46	.3767	1.87594

Note. <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

\* Levene's Test  $p = .308$

Finally, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of movies of human trafficking on the perceived awareness regarding issues of human trafficking in *Abduction of Eden*, *8 Days*, *The Whistleblower*, *Trade* and *Taken in Broad Daylight*. A statistically significant difference was presented in the mean scores between participants exposed to the control film and participants exposed to the stimulus films at the  $p < .05$  level for the five conditions [ $F(4, 164) = 8.09, p = .000$ ]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the stimulus film *Abduction of Eden* ( $M = 6.81, SD = .471$ ) was significantly different than the control film *Taken in Broad Daylight* ( $M = 5.04, SD = 1.9$ ). However, the remaining stimulus films did not significantly differ from *Abduction of Eden*. The mean score for the control film *Taken in Broad Daylight* ( $M = 5.04, SD = 1.9$ ) was significantly different than all of the treatment films: *Abduction of Eden* ( $M = 6.81, SD = .471$ ), *8 Days* ( $M = 6.53, SD = 1$ ), *The Whistleblower* ( $M = 6.35, SD = .92$ ), and *Trade* ( $M = 6.17, SD = 1.5$ ). Taken together, these results suggest that films containing circumstances of human trafficking really do have an effect on the viewer's perceived awareness of human trafficking.

However, it should be noted that there were no effects between films that did contain circumstances of human trafficking. The descriptive findings, ANOVA, and multiple comparisons data are represented in Tables 8, 9 and 10. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the post mean results to participants' understanding of human trafficking and clearly shows a difference between the control and stimulus films. These results support the hypothesis that there will be a significant difference in the perception of human trafficking between populations who watch feature films portraying circumstances of human trafficking and populations who do not.

Table 8

*Descriptive of Perceived Awareness of Human Trafficking and Movie*

	Movie	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
<sup>a</sup> Q 46 – I am more aware of issues on human trafficking	Abduction of Eden	32	6.81	.471
	Taken in Broad Daylight	23	5.04	1.894
	8 Days	38	6.53	1.006
	The Whistleblower	34	6.35	.917
	Trade	42	6.17	1.464
	Total	169	6.25	1.305

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale for ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

Table 9

*ANOVA Between and Within Groups' Awareness of Human Trafficking*

<sup>a</sup> Q46: I am more aware of issues on human trafficking	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	41.156	4	11.789	8.093	.000*
Within Groups	238.903	164	1.457		
Total	286.059	168			

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree  
\* $p < .05$ .

Table 10

*Multiple Comparisons – Tukey HSD Awareness of Human Trafficking*

(I) Movie	(J) Movie	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Abduction of Eden	Taken in Broad Daylight	1.769*	.330	.000
	8 Days	.286	.290	.860
	The Whistleblower	.460	.297	.534
	Trade	.646	.283	.157
Taken in Broad Daylight	Abduction of Eden	-1.769*	.319	.000
	8 Days	-1.483*	.319	.000
	The Whistleblower	-1.309*	.326	.001
	Trade	-1.123	.313	.004

(I) Movie	(J) Movie	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
8 Days	Abduction of Eden	-.286	.290	.860
	Taken in Broad Daylight	1.483*	.319	.000
	The Whistleblower	.173	.285	.974
	Trade	.360	.270	.672
The Whistleblower	Abduction of Eden	-.460	.297	.534
	Taken in Broad Daylight	1.309*	.326	.001
	8 Days	-.173	.285	.974
	Trade	.186	.278	.963
Trade	Abduction of Eden	1.123*	.283	.157
	Taken in Broad Daylight	1.123*	.313	.004
	8 Days	-.360	.270	.672
	The Whistleblower	-.186	.278	.963

*Note.* \*the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

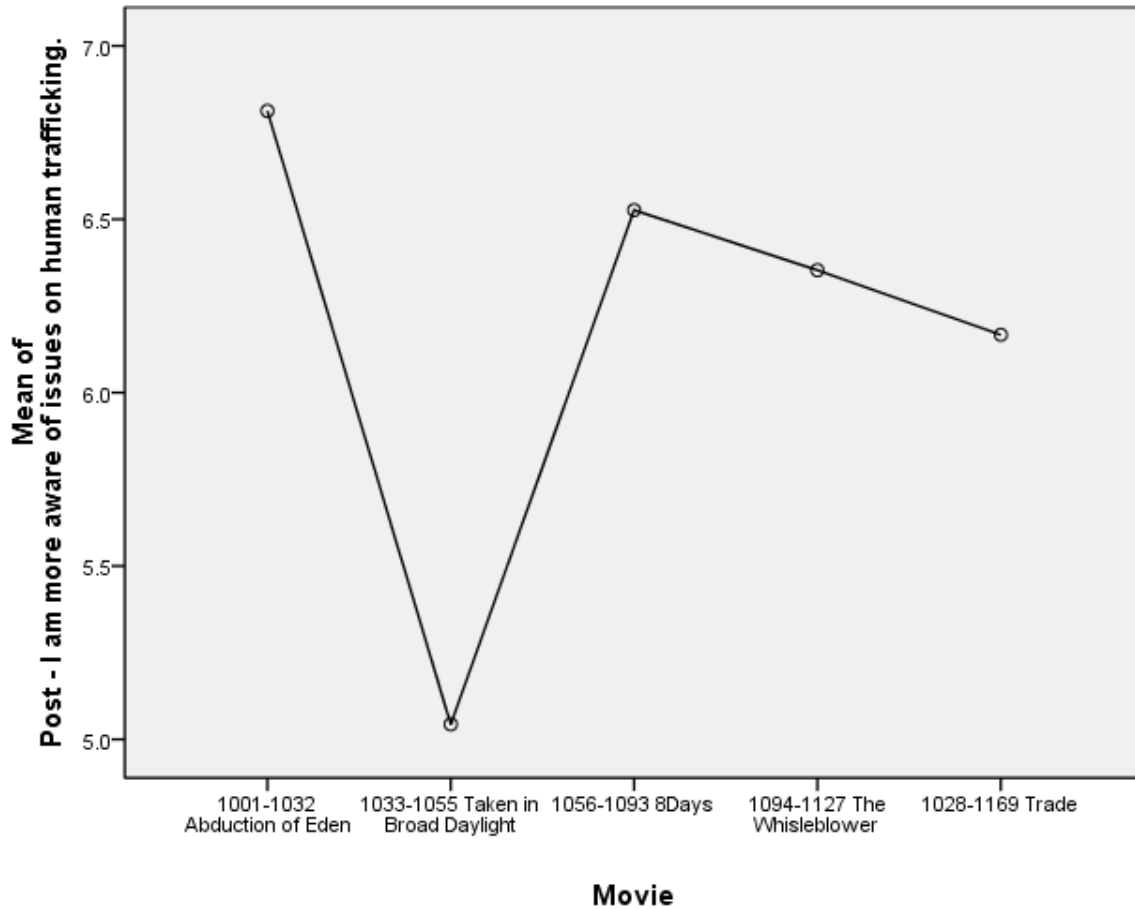


Figure 1. Means plot.

The primary purpose of the first hypothesis was to determine if feature films on human trafficking can affect an audience's perception of human trafficking. Since this is presumption is attributed to the foundation of the study, three tests were utilized to further investigate this premise. As described in this study, awareness is often attributed to the definition of perception and therefore an independent samples test was conducted to discover if participants identified with an increase in awareness in human trafficking after watching a film on human trafficking compared to the control film. Next a new variable was created to see if there was a greater increase in the participant's

understanding of human trafficking both before and after exposure to the film. Finally, an ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were between group effects that occurred. The Post Hoc demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the control film and stimulus films for this study.

## **H1:2**

H1.2: Participants who watch a drama or action-drama feature film portraying circumstances of human trafficking they will show a greater increase in their level of confidence about their understanding of the activity.

As previously established in this study, films on human trafficking are considered ethical dilemmas. Therefore, this hypothesis is similar to the first hypothesis, but considers the premise that media effects can heighten an audience's perception, and therefore postulates that films on human trafficking do effect the output of a viewer's confidence in their own understanding of human trafficking. To determine this, an independent sample t-test was performed by obtaining the average gains score of question 3 on the pre-test and question 25 on the post-test. This variable was then compared to the genre of movie the participants were exposed to. A Levene's test for equality of variance's was performed and equal variance was assumed (Table 11). The surveys used offered a scale response range of 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware. There was a significant difference in the scores for participants who viewed different drama films portraying circumstances of human trafficking ( $M=1.73$ ,  $SD= 1.94$ ) and action-drama films portraying circumstances of human trafficking ( $M=1.05$ ,  $SD= 1.77$ );  $t(144)= 2.2$ ,  $p = .029$ . These results are also represented in Table 10 and indicate that the genre of film portraying human trafficking has an impact on the viewer's increased understanding of

human trafficking. While this hypothesis was developed stating that both genres would have an impact, the results demonstrate that one genre, drama, increased the viewer's confidence in understanding issues of human trafficking significantly more than the other.

Table 11

*Independent Samples Test for Genre and Impact of Human Trafficking Understanding*

I have an understanding of human trafficking in the US	n	*Group Statistics	
		Mean	Std. Deviation
Drama	0	1.7286	1.94058
Action-Drama	6	1.0526	1.76556

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware  
 \* Levene's Test p = .029

**H1:3**

H1.3: Women who watch feature films highlighting human trafficking issues focused on the care and restoration of the victim will have a higher change in perception of human trafficking than men who watched the same films.

This hypothesis was developed to support different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and to consider whether drama narrative would have a significant impact on female viewer's perception of human trafficking when compared to male viewer's perceptions. To evaluate this statement, an independent sample t-test was performed to compare gender responses pre-post of the stimulus regarding their understanding of human trafficking. Once again, the new variable containing the average gains score of question 3 on the pre-test and question 25 on the post-test to consider a participant's change in understanding was used. This variable was then compared to the gender of participants



that viewed a drama film. A Levene's test for equality of variance's was performed and equal variance assumed was used. The surveys used a scale offering a response range of 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware. There was no significant difference in the scores for females who viewed a drama film portraying circumstances of human trafficking (M=1.63, SD= 2.12) and males who viewed a drama film portraying circumstances of human trafficking (M=1.87, SD= 1.7);  $t(68) = .513, p = .610$ . These results are represented in Table 12 and demonstrate that gender did not have an impact on a viewer's increased understanding of human trafficking pre-post of the drama film depicting human trafficking. This hypothesis was not supported. The findings suggest that males are equally impacted as females when exposed to narratives based on care and restoration, which is contrary to Gilligan's different voice's theory (1982). The results may demonstrate that this theory needs to be reexamined and this will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Table 12

*Independent Samples Test for Gender Responses to a Drama Film*

<sup>a</sup> Q3/Q25: I have an understanding of human trafficking in the US	*Group Statistics Drama Film		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female	40	1.6250	2.12056
Male	30	1.8667	1.69651

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware  
\* Levene's Test  $p = .610$

## H1.4

H1.4: Men who watch feature films highlighting human trafficking issues focused on investigation and vigilante justice for the victim will have a higher change in perception of human trafficking than women who watched the same films.

This hypothesis was also developed to support different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and to consider whether an action-drama narrative would have a significant impact on male viewer's perception of human trafficking when compared to female viewer's perceptions. An independent sample t-test was performed to compare gender responses pre-post of the stimulus regarding participants' understanding of human trafficking. The new variable containing the average gains score of question 3 on the pre-test and question 25 on the post-test to consider a participant's change in understanding was used again. This variable was then compared to the gender of participants that viewed an action-drama film. A Levene's test for equality of variance's was performed and equal variance assumed was used. The surveys used a scale offering a response range of 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware. There was no significant difference in the scores for males who viewed an action-drama film portraying circumstances of human trafficking ( $M=1.04$ ,  $SD= 1.78$ ) and females who viewed an action-drama film portraying circumstances of human trafficking ( $M=1.06$ ,  $SD= 1.78$ );  $t(74)= -0.50$ ,  $p = .960$ . These results are represented in Table 13 and indicates that gender does not have an impact on a viewer's increased understanding of human trafficking pre-post of the action-drama film resending human trafficking. This hypothesis was not supported. The findings suggest that females are equally impacted as males when exposed to narratives investigation and justice, which is contrary to Gilligan's different voice's theory (1982). The results may

also demonstrate that this theory may need to be reexamined and this will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Table 13

*Independent Samples Test for Gender Responses to an Action-Drama Film*

<sup>a</sup> Q3/Q25: I have an understanding of human trafficking in the US	*Group Statistics Action-Drama Film		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	26	.0385	1.77721
Female	50	.0600	1.77752

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware  
\* Levene's Test p = .960

Since H1.3 and H1.4 were hypotheses developed to evaluate different voices theory, a two-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether there were interactions effects between genres and gender. The descriptive statistics for this test are represented in Tables 11 and 12 regarding the gender and genre being considered. Table 14 represents the results from the tests of between-subject effects. The findings demonstrate that there is no significant difference in the change in gender perceptions, which supports the finding for the independent sample t-tests in Tables 11 and 12. However, the findings do reveal a significant different in the effect genre has on change in perception. This is representing in Figure 2. These results may also support the need for revision to different voices theory.

Table 14

*Tests of Interaction Effects Between Gender and Genres*

---

<sup>a</sup>Q3/Q25: I have an understanding of human trafficking in the US

---

Source	Type III Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17.658 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.886	1.697	.170
Intercept	267.559	1	267.559	77.125	.000
Genre	16.619	1	16.619	4.790	.030*
Gender	.415	1	.415	.120	.730
Genre*Gender	.593	1	.593	.171	.680
Error	492.623	142	3.469		
Total	787.000	146			
Corrected Total	510.281	145			

---

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = limited awareness and 7 = highly aware,

\* $p < .05$

<sup>b</sup>R. Squared=.035 (Adjusted R Squared = .014)

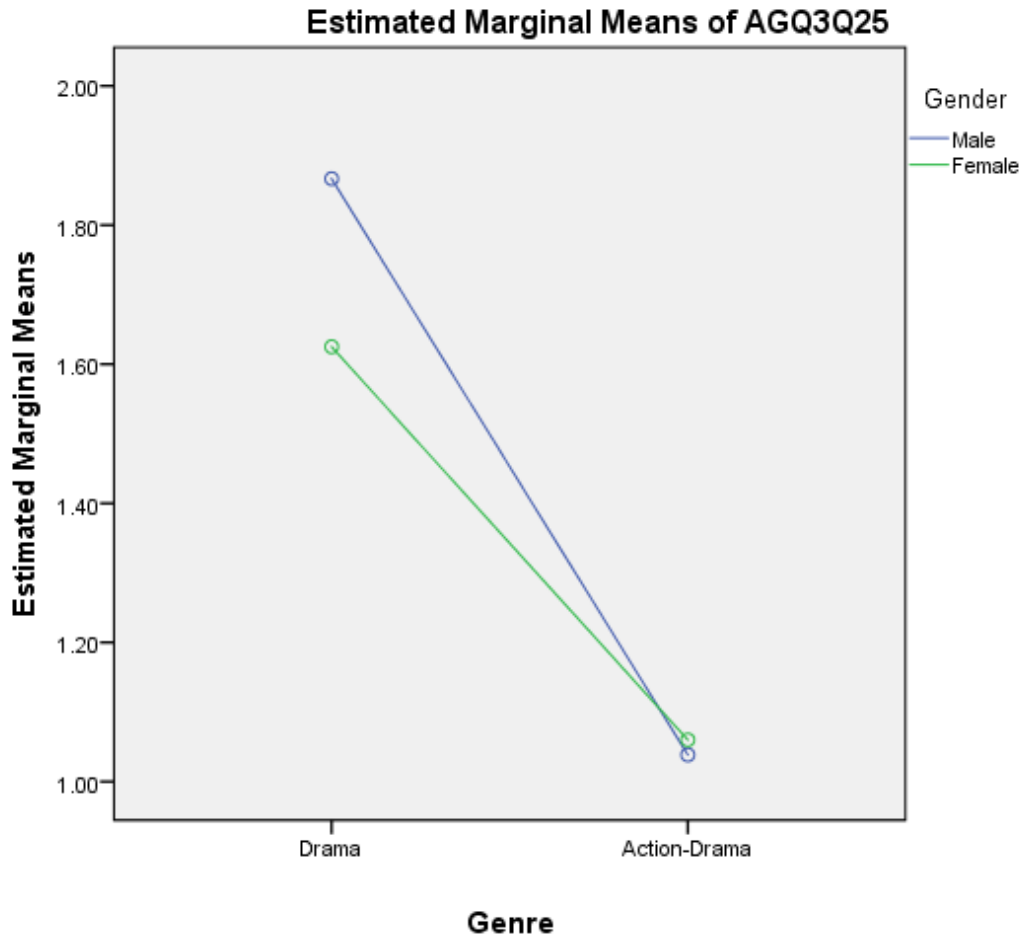


Figure 2. Profile plot.

### H1.5

H1.5: There will be a significant difference between men and women in their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in a drama film focused on issues of human trafficking.

This hypothesis was developed to evaluate whether drama films affected opinions of accuracy between men and women. This hypothesis was developed in part after considering a study by Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) that suggests men will argue the accuracy of information when the narrative is based on actual events. The drama films

employed in this study focused on the victim of human trafficking. An independent sample t-test was performed to measure the change in gender responses pre-post of the stimulus to the following statement: Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive. A new variable was created for the pre-post responses to this statement by obtaining the average gains score of question 13 on the pre-test and question 35 on the post-test to consider a participant's change in their belief that films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive. This variable was then compared to the gender of participants that viewed a drama film. The surveys used a scale offering a response with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. There was significant difference when equal variances were assumed in the scores for males (M= -.73, SD= 1.39) and females (M=.15, SD= 1.35);  $t(68) = -2.68, p = .009$ . These results are represented in Table 15 and indicates that gender does have an impact on the change in viewers' perception of victim centered narratives. The results support this hypothesis as well as the findings of Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) that men may question the accuracy of information provided in a drama film.

Table 15

*Independent Samples Test on Perception of Drama Film Deception*

<sup>a</sup> Q13/Q35: Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive	*Group Statistics Drama Film		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	30	-.7333	1.387696
Female	40	.1500	1.35021

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree  
 \* Levene's Test  $p = .009$

## **H1.6**

H1.6: There will be a significant difference between men and women in their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in an action-drama film on issues of human trafficking.

This hypothesis was developed to further examine the study by Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) and consider whether action-drama films would have the same effect regarding men and women's perception to the accuracy of information provided in the film. The action-drama films employed in this study focused on the investigation into and vigilante justice performed on behalf of the victim of human trafficking. Subsequently, an independent sample t-test was performed to measure gender responses pre-post of the stimulus to the following statement: Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive. A new variable was created for the pre-post responses of this statement. Again, the new variable was obtained through the average gains score of question 13 on the pre-test and question 35 on the post-test to consider a participant's change in their belief that films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive. This variable was then compared to the gender of participants that viewed an action-drama film. The surveys used a scale offering a response with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. There was again a significant difference when equal variances were assumed in the scores for males ( $M = -.15$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ) and females ( $M = -.6$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ );  $t(74) = 2.06$ ,  $p = .043$ . These results are represented in Table 16 and demonstrate that gender does have an impact on a viewer's change in perception of films demonstrating investigation and vigilante justice. Therefore hypothesis H1.6 is also supported.

Table 16

*Independent Samples Test on Perception of Action-Drama Film Deception*

<sup>a</sup> Q13/Q35: Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive	*Group Statistics Action-Drama Film		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	5	1538	1.43366
Female	0	.6000	1.55183

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree  
 \* Levene's Test p = .043

**Research Question Two**

In addition to gender and genre, this study explored proper distance concept in regard to the highly ethical dilemma of human trafficking. *R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?* From this inquiry, three hypotheses emerged:

- H2.1: There is a difference in the audience's perception of human trafficking after watching feature films portraying issues of human trafficking.
- H2.2: Men and women who perceive a film to be immersing them into disturbing and exaggerated portrayals of human trafficking will find it unbelievable..
- H2.3: Audiences who perceive a film with portrayals of human trafficking to be too foreign and distant will have a lack of empathy for the circumstances.

Proper distance concept is the idea that the distance, or proximity, between individuals when evaluating ethical and moral judgments affect their desire to become engaged in actions that influence a change in those ethical circumstances. The first hypothesis



utilized the same Tukey Honestly Significant Difference test (HSD) performed in H1.1. This test was used as a post-hoc analysis to assist with not only determining a difference but discovering where the differences are located within data. The next two hypotheses first used descriptive statistics to analyze the data. Then, the descriptive information was used to develop independent sample tests and discover correlations within the data.

## **H2.1**

H2.1: There is a difference in the audience's perception of human trafficking after watching feature films portraying issues of human trafficking.

While this research question addressed proper distance concept, the hypothesis is similar to H1.1 and considers human trafficking as an ethical dilemma. Proper distance concept considers the spatial distance created by the film to assist in determine the output of audience behaviors and perceptions. Based on this, the hypothesis was developed to establish that films based on human trafficking so affect the viewer's perception of human trafficking. Therefore, the data discovered in H1.1 will be utilized to exam this hypothesis. The independent sample t-test in Table 7 considers the post-test data on the participant's perception of their human trafficking awareness after viewing either the control or treatment films. A Levene's test for equality of variances was also performed and equal variance not assumed was used. The surveys used a scale offering a response range of 1 = strongly disagree through 7 = strongly agree. There was a significant difference in the scores for participants who viewed films with human trafficking (M=5.04, SD= 1.89) and the film with no human trafficking (M=6.45, SD= 1.07);  $t(24.3)=-3.46, p = .002$ . These results are represented in Table 7 and support the

hypothesis that watching films on human trafficking does have an impact on the viewer's perception of human trafficking.

H1.1 also employed an independent sample t-test to compare the participant's understanding of human trafficking in the United States pre-post of the movie. From this data, a new variable was created to measure the average gains score of question 3 in the pre-test and question 25 in the post-test. A Levene's test for equality of variance's was performed and equal variance not assumed was used. The surveys used a scale offering a response range of 1 = strongly disagree through 7 = strongly agree. There was not a significant difference in the scores for participants who viewed films with human trafficking (M=1.38, SD= 1.88) and the film with no human trafficking (M=.96, SD= 1.52);  $t(-1.19) = 33.5$ ,  $p = .243$ . These results are represented in Table 8 and further support the hypothesis that watching films on human trafficking does have an impact on the viewer's perception of human trafficking when compared to the perception of individuals who do not watch films on human trafficking.

Finally, Table 9 demonstrates the results of the one-way between subjects ANOVA which compared the effect of movies about human trafficking on the perceived awareness regarding issues of human trafficking. There was a significant effect from movies showing human trafficking on the perceived awareness regarding issues of human trafficking at the  $p < .05$  level for the five conditions [ $F(4, 164) = 8.09$ ,  $p = .000$ ]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the stimulus film *Abduction of Eden* (M = 6.81, SD = .471) was significantly different than the control film *Taken in Broad Daylight* (M = 5.04, SD = 1.9). However the remaining stimulus films did not significantly differ from *Abduction of Eden*. The mean score for the control film

*Taken in Broad Daylight* ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = 1.9$ ) was significantly different than all of the treatment films: *Abduction of Eden* ( $M = 6.81$ ,  $SD = .471$ ), *8 Days* ( $M = 6.53$ ,  $SD = 1$ ), *The Whistleblower* ( $M = 6.35$ ,  $SD = .92$ ), and *Trade* ( $M = 6.17$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ). Taken together, these results suggest that films containing circumstances of human trafficking do have an effect on viewer's perceived awareness of human trafficking. However, it should be noted that there were no effects between films that did contain circumstances of human trafficking. The descriptive findings, and multiple comparisons data are also represented in Tables 8, 10 and 11 which indicated that the genre of film portraying human trafficking has an impact on the viewer's understanding of human trafficking. Therefore, this hypothesis is supported.

## **H2.2**

H2.2: Men and women who perceive a film to be immersing them into disturbing and exaggerated portrayals of human trafficking will find it unbelievable.

This hypothesis emerged out of proper distance concept (Chouliaraki, 2006) which considers the spatial distance of viewers to the 'others' in the film and whether pulling the viewer in voyeuristically or too close to the disturbing images influence the viewer's perception of believability. To measure this, the post-test results were examined to determine whether participants found it difficult to watch the victim suffer or whether they considered the film distant and exaggerated. Only participants in the treatment films were considered for these tests. The independent samples test is presented in Table 17. This represent the mean scores between post-test question 48 and 53 by gender. The data shows that female participants found movies depicting someone suffering from human trafficking to be difficult to watch ( $M = 6.66$ ,  $SD = 1.335$ ) while male participants

believed the story was grossly exaggerated (M = 6.00, SD = .904). As will be explored in Chapter 5, this may also support Gilligan’s (1982) different voices theory as well as Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) study on male argumentation to narratives based on real events.

Table 17

*Independent Samples Test Indicating Films as Disturbing or Exaggerated*

<sup>a</sup> Q48: It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking	*Group Statistics		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	56	6.00	1.335
Female	89	6.66	.904

<sup>a</sup> Q53: I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking	**Group Statistics		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	56	2.89	2.042
Female	89	2.08	1.673

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

\* Levene’s Test p = .002.

\*\* Levene’s Test p = .014

Table 18 displays the descriptive statistics for participants’ post-test responses regarding their perception of distance to the story. Again, data from the treatment groups was used to test the following statements: “It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking” (M = 6.41, SD = 1.133), “I didn’t really feel connected to the story” (M = 2.53, SD = 1.625), “I felt a desire to help the victims in the film” (M = 6.48, SD = 1.015), “I felt a desire to take action against the injustices represented in the film” (M =

6.48, SD = 1.055), “I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking” (M = 2.39, SD = 1.861).

Table 18

*Descriptive Statistics of Participant’s Perception of Distance to the Film*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<sup>a</sup> Q48: It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking	145	6.41	1.133
<sup>a</sup> Q49: I didn’t really feel connected to the story	145	2.53	1.625
<sup>a</sup> Q51: I felts a desire to help the victims in the film	145	6.48	1.015
<sup>a</sup> Q52: I felt a desire to take action against the injustices represented in the film	145	6.48	1.055
<sup>a</sup> Q53: I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking	145	2.39	1.861

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

Table 19 displays the correlations between participants desire to take action and their disengagement from the film by not feeling connected to the story. The data showed that the more difficult a participant perceived the film to watch, the less connected to the story they felt. It also demonstrated that whether they believed the film was grossly exaggerated they also did not feel connected to the story. This supports the hypothesis and proper distance concept. However, the data also shows that when participants identified the film as difficult to watch, their desire to help increased, which is contrary to the proper distance concept and may be explained by the complex ethical dilemmas presented in the films. These points will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

These results were examined further and found that the data demonstrated a significant correlation between their identification of the film being difficult to watch and participants reporting they didn't really feel connected to the story ( $r = -.201, p < .05$ ). The same statement showed a statistically high significance when correlated with their desire to help the victim ( $r = .335, p < .01$ ), and participants' desire to take action against the injustices ( $r = .447, p < .01$ ). The correlation between participants' response to feeling of not being connected to the story and the story being exaggerated revealed a statistically high significance ( $r = .266, p < .01$ ). However even when they did not feel connected to the film, they still demonstrated a statistically high significance in correlation to the desire to take action against the injustices represented in the film ( $r = -.282, p < .01$ ). Finally the data represented a statistically high significance in correlation between participants' responses to statements of having a desire to help the victim and having a desire to take action against the injustices represented in the film after watching the movie.

Table 19

*Correlation Results for H2.2*

		Q48: It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking	Q53: I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking	Q49: I didn't really feel connected to the story	Q51: I felt a desire to help the victims in the film	Q52: I felt a desire to take action against the injustices represented in the film
Q48: It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking	Pearson Correlation	1	-.004	-.201*	.335**	.447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.963	.015	.000	.000
	N	145	145	145	145	145
Q53: I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking	Pearson Correlation	-.004	1	.266**	.002	.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.963		.001	.983	.676
	N	145	145	145	145	145

		Q48: It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking	Q53: I believe the story grossly exaggerate d circumsta nces of human trafficking	Q49: I didn't really feel connect ed to the story	Q51: I felt a desire to help the victims in the film	Q52: I felt a desire to take action against the injustices represente d in the film
Q49: I didn't really feel connected to the story	Pearson Correlation	-.201*	.266**	1	-.161	-.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.001		.053	.001
	N	145	145	145	145	145
Q51: I felt a desire to help the victims in the film	Pearson Correlation	.335**	.002	-.161	1	.835**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.983	.053		.000
	N	145	145	145	145	145
Q52: I felt a desire to take action against the injustices represente d in the film	Pearson Correlation	.447**	.035	-.282**	.835**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.676	.001	.000	
	N	145	145	145	145	145

*Note.* \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

### H2.3

H2.3: Audiences who perceive a film with portrayals of human trafficking to be too foreign and distant will have a lack of empathy for the circumstances.



The final hypothesis was constructed from proper distance concept (Silverstone, 2003) which determines how we recognize our relationship to each other. This hypothesis therefore considered the spatial distance of viewers to the ‘others’ in the film and whether making the victim appear foreign and different from the audience’s norms would create a lack of empathy by the viewer for the victim. For that reason, this hypothesis examined the difference in responses related to empathy and distance. Only participant responses in the treatment groups were considered for these tests. Empathy was computed by averaging the post-test scores of questions Q. 48, Q. 51, and Q. 52 (Appendix C) which elicited responses that identified respondents’ compassion and desire to help the victim. Distance was computed by averaging the post-test scores of Q. 49 and Q. 53 (Appendix C) which produced responses related to a perception of distance and exaggeration. The results revealed no significant difference ( $r = -.143$ ,  $p = NS$ ) in the participants’ responses. Results are presented in Table 20. The results from these tests suggest that distance does not affect empathy for the victim, at least in regard to human trafficking, and therefore this hypothesis is not supported.

Table 20

*Correlation Results for H2.3*

		Distance	Empathy
Distance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.086
	N	145	145
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	-.143	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.086	
	N	145	145

### **Research Question Three**

The final question being addressed in the study is *R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of his or her ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing the movies?* Based on the theoretical developments in this study regarding self-efficacy, two hypotheses emerged.

#### **H3.1**

H3.1: Women will have more confidence than men in their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing films that highlight issues of victim care and restoration.

This hypothesis was developed from both different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) According to different voices theory, women respond with a heightened sense of empathy and understanding when exposed to ethical dilemmas based on narratives containing care and restoration. The heightened response by women should also increase their self-efficacy to achieve perceived goals. Since drama films should have a greater impact on women, this hypothesis was developed to determine if the drama film used in this study would increase the women's perception of self-efficacy and desire to participate in anti-trafficking efforts more than men's perception of self-efficacy and desire to participate in anti-trafficking efforts. To measure the impact of the drama film, a new variable was created utilizing the average gains score from pre-test statement 16 and post-test statement 38, "I believe there are things I can do to end human trafficking," This new variable was categorized as confidence. Another new variable was created utilizing the average gains score from pre-test statement 20 and post-test statement 42, "I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end

human trafficking.” This new variable was labeled Agent of Change (AOC). An independent samples test was performed and the data shows no significant difference between male (M = 1.57, SD = 1.45) and female (M = 1.23, SD = 1.73) responses related to their level of confidence. The data also showed there was no significant difference between male (M = .90, SD = 1.16) and female (M = .60, SD = 1.35) responses related to their desire to be an agent of change after watching a drama film. The data for this hypothesis is represented in Table 21. Similar to the findings in H1.3 and H1.4, gender does not appear to be a factor when considering a drama films ability to improve self-efficacy and generate action desired responses between men and women. This would be consistent with the findings in H1.4 and H1.5 which demonstrated that there was no significant difference between men and women’s responses regarding their perceived understanding of human trafficking after exposure to a drama film on human trafficking.

Table 21

*Independent Samples Test on Confidence and Agent of Change After a Drama Film*

Confidence	*Group Statistics		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	30	1.567	1.45468
Female	40	1.225	1.73187
Agent of Change (AOC)	**Group Statistics		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	30	.900	1.15520
Female	40	.600	1.35495

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

\* Levene’s Test p = .385.

\*\* Levene’s Test p = .333

### **H3.2**

H3.2: Men will have more confidence than women in their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing films that highlight issues of investigation and justice.

This hypothesis was also developed from both different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) According to different voices theory, men respond with a heightened sense of responsiveness and understanding when exposed to ethical dilemmas based on narratives containing investigation and justice. The heightened response by men should also increase their self-efficacy to achieve perceived goals. Since action-drama films should have a greater impact on men, this hypothesis was developed to determine if the action-drama films used in this study would increase men's perception of self-efficacy and desire to participate in anti-trafficking efforts more than the women's perception of self-efficacy and desire to participate in anti-trafficking efforts. To measure the impact of the action-drama film, the new variable that created utilizing the average gains score from pre-test statement 16 and post-test statement 38, labeled as confidence, was used. In addition, the new variable containing the average gains score from pre-test statement 20 and post-test statement 42, "I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end human trafficking," labeled Agent of Change (AOC), was used. An Independent Samples Test was performed and the data shows no significant difference between male ( $M = .577$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ) and female ( $M = 1.18$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) responses related to their level of confidence. The data also showed no significant difference between male ( $M = .96$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) and female ( $M = .52$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) responses related to their desire to be an agent of change after watching an action-drama

film. However, while the data did not appear to support the hypothesis, it does show females scored higher on their perceived confidence in their ability to make a change while males scored higher on their perceived ability to actually become an agent of change. These findings may represent an opportunity for future research and will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The data for this hypothesis is represented in Table 22.

Table 22

*Independent Samples Test on Confidence and Agent of Change After an Action-Drama Film*

*Group Statistics			
Confidence	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	26	.577	1.33186
Female	50	1.18	1.35059

**Group Statistics			
Agent of Change (AOC)	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	26	.9615	1.28002
Female	50	.5200	1.14713

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Scale ranged from 1 through 7, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

\* Levene's Test p = .068.

\*\* Levene's Test p = .130

In addition to looking at gender differences in the hypothesis, additional statistical analysis were conducted to consider the overall desire to become active with organizations that combat human trafficking, regardless of gender and whether the participant provided contact information to participate in a future study. This contact information was provided on a detachable page to maintain confidentiality. An

independent samples test was conducted to measure the number of contact responses provided and the number of participants who provided a score on the post-test indicating a desire to become involved in organizations that work to combat human trafficking. Table 23 shows that there was a significant difference between responses ( $M = 6.35$ ,  $SD = 1.116$ ). These findings demonstrate that regardless of gender, both drama and action-drama films have the ability to increase a viewer's desire to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. These findings will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 23

*Independent Samples Test on Voluntary Contact Information Provided*

Post – I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end human trafficking	Group Statistics			t-test for Equality of Means				
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Yes, contact info provided	66	6.35	1.116					
No contact info provided	103	5.59	1.587					
Equal variances assumed				3.37	167	.001	.756	.224
Equal variances not assumed					165	.000	.756	.208

### Open-Ended Responses

The survey concluded with an open-ended question allowing participants to provide feedback about the film or the experiment. Feedback was provided by 36 participants and of those responses, two categories appeared to define most of the responses. First, 44% described the experiment as having an emotional impact on them and/or found the films difficult to watch. Some of the responses provided by participants

included: “I had never heard of this and watching this film has made me very, very, angry,” “I don’t know much about human trafficking but seeing stuff like this gets under my skin,” and “I can’t watch this, it’s heartbreaking.”

The second category revealed that 47% of the 36 participants that responded with open feedback described an increased awareness regarding human trafficking. Some of the responses demonstrated a personal awareness such as: “I am glad to be a part of this and I believe more people needed to be educated on this subject,” “this was very enlightening,” and “this was an eye-opener.” Other responses took the tone of victim awareness and prevention, such as “there needs to be more awareness about warning signs of danger so that these situations can be avoided” and “always be aware of your surroundings.” While some of these responses may not show a desire to become an active bystander, they do demonstrate a knowledge of need for victim awareness education. The remaining 8% provided various comments outside of these areas. Some of the open-ended comments included: “give a way for the audience to help end sex trafficking” and “I can’t wait to see what changes come from research on a topic that is so important.” One comment that should be considered for future studies was “while the movie was powerful, I don’t think it taught me anything or prepared me to actually do anything.”

These open-ended responses provided additional insight into both the experiment and future considerations. The purpose of the experiment was to evaluate media effects on the perception of human trafficking. By developing messages that are overly emotional or too distant, the media may not produce the intended outcomes. Regarding a subject as complex as human trafficking, this data may prove highly beneficial to future studies.

## **Other Influences**

Finally, after investigating the hypothesis, additional tests were conducted to determine whether other factors influenced the mean scores. Descriptive data was collected during the pre-test portion of the experiment to evaluate these influences. Tukey HSD test and ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether there were any mainstream effects with regard to race or majors.

### **Race**

Race was divided into 6 categories, representing the following: American Indian/Alaskan Native (3%), Asian or Asian American (3%), Black or African American (23.7%), Hispanic or Latino (20.1%), Caucasian or White (47.9%), and other (2.4%). Post hoc using the Tukey HSD test was used to employ multiple comparisons between race with regard to respondents' self-perception of knowledge about human trafficking in the United States, prior to the stimulus. The results indicated that only the mean score for Black or African American ( $M=1.399$ ,  $SD=.324$ ) was significantly different than scores for Caucasian and White ( $M=-1.399$ ,  $SD=.324$ ). This demonstrated that the mean difference was significantly different at the 0.05 level. An ANOVA was conducted on the pre-test statement regarding the participant's understanding of human trafficking in the United States which was again significant between the Black or African American and Caucasian or White race as represented in Table 24.



Table 24

*ANOVA for Pre-Treatment Understanding of Human Trafficking by Race*

Pre – I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	71.216	5	14.243	5.081	.000
Within Groups	456.961	163	2.803		
Total	528.178	163			

A second ANOVA was conducted to consider the post-stimulus responses to the statement regarding participant's understanding of human trafficking in the United States and no significance was indicated as demonstrated in Table 25. As compared to the significant results prior to the stimulus between, after the treatment the mean score for Black or African American ( $M=.732$ ,  $SD=.261$ ) had no significant difference to scores for Caucasian and White ( $M=-.732$ ,  $SD=.261$ ).

Table 25

*ANOVA for Post-Treatment Understanding of Human Trafficking by Race*

Post – I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	16.947	5	3.389	1.856	.105
Within Groups	297.739	163	1.827		
Total	314.686	168			

**Academic Majors**

Academic majors were divided into categories, representing the following:

Business/Accounting/Merchandising/Marketing (15.4%),

Agriculture/Forestry/Environmental Science (5.4%), Art/Music/Dance/Theater (5.4%),

Science/ Biology/Chemistry/Physics/Math/Animal Sciences/Engineering (11.2%), Education/Social Work/Children & Family Studies/Orientation & Mobility Instruction/Psychology (12.4%), Communication/Mass Communication (4.7%), Computer Science/Information Technology (3.6%), Government/Criminal Justice/Political Science (11.2%), History/English/Geography/Sociology/Languages/Liberal Arts/ Anthropology (5.9%), Nursing/Nutrition/Dietetics/Kinesiology/Health Science (20.1%), Undecided (4.7%).

A post hoc using the Tukey HSD test was used to employ multiple comparisons between majors with regard to their self-perception of knowledge about human trafficking in the United States, prior to the stimulus. The results indicated that only the mean score for Government/Criminal Justice/Political Science majors ( $M=2.724$ ,  $SD=.722$ ) was significantly different than scores for undecided majors ( $M=-2.724$ ,  $SD=.722$ ) at the .05 level. An ANOVA was also conducted to determine whether there was a media effect. The ANOVA performed on the pre-test question regarding the participant's understanding of human trafficking in the United States produced findings which represented significant differences between only two majors. These findings showed that a significant difference existed between the Government/Criminal Justice/Political Science majors compared to the scores for undecided majors, as represented in Table 26.

Table 26

*ANOVA of Majors Knowledge about Human Trafficking Pre-Test*

Pre – I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	64.255	10	6.425	2.188	.021
Within Groups	463.923	158	2.936		
Total	528.178	168			

A second post hoc using the Tukey HSD test was used to evaluate if a participant's major had an impact on the participant's understanding of human trafficking in the United States after the treatment. The results indicated that majors had no impact on the participants understanding of human trafficking at the .05 level, after watching the movie. An ANOVA was conducted to consider the same question after exposure to the stimulus and no significance was found as shown in Table 27.

Table 27

*ANOVA of Majors Knowledge about Human Trafficking Post-Test*

Post – I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.394	10	1.339	.702	.721
Within Groups	301.293	158	1.097		
Total	314.686	168			

### Conclusion

This study examined the effects of watching films based on human trafficking. The experiment considered both on gender and genre as well as the participants' motivation to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. The study employed a pre-

test/post-test experimental design where participants completed a survey that included a demographic profile and their perceptions of human trafficking prior to the stimulus. Participants were then exposed to either a drama or action-drama film on human trafficking. Immediately after, a post-test survey was administered that evaluated their perceptions, desires and confidence on the subject of human trafficking. Data analysis included Independent Samples T-tests, ANOVAs and Tukey Honestly Significant Difference test (HSD). Correlations were also evaluated between participants desire to take action and their disengagement from the film by not feeling connected to the story, as well as, a correlation between participant’s identification of the film being difficult to watch and reporting they didn’t really feel connected to the story. Results from this study are intended to assist NGOs and anti-trafficking organizations in developing effective media for both the education and awareness of human trafficking as well as motivate viewers to actively become involved in anti-trafficking efforts.

### **Summary of Hypotheses**

Table 28

*Supported and Unsupported Hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Findings	Significance
H1.1	Participants that watched films containing human trafficking when measured against participants exposed to the control film did have an increase awareness of human trafficking issues.	Yes
H1.2	Participants that watched drama films on human trafficking had a greater change in their understanding of human trafficking than participant’s exposed to action-drama films.	Yes
H1.3	There were no difference in scores between men and women after watching a drama film on human trafficking	No

Hypothesis	Findings	Significance
H1.5	The results indicated that gender does have an impact on a viewer's perception regarding the accuracy of information portrayed in a drama film on human trafficking.	Yes
H1.6	The results indicated that gender does have an impact on a viewer's perception regarding the accuracy of information portrayed in an action-drama film on human trafficking.	Yes
H2.1	Films on human trafficking do have an impact on the viewers awareness of human trafficking	Yes
H2.2	The results indicated that the more difficult a participant perceived the film to watch, the less connected to the story they felt.	Yes
H2.3	The results indicated that even if the participants felt less connected to the story they still felt empathy for the victim.	No
H3.1	The data showed that gender had no impact on a participant's response regarding their confidence in ability or desire to become an agent of change after watching a drama film.	No
H3.2	The data showed that gender had no impact on a participant's response regarding their confidence in ability or desire to become an agent of change after watching an action-drama film.	No

### Supported Hypothesis

The first research question was designed to discover what effects viewing films on human trafficking have on gender perceptions of trafficking. This question considered both the participant's gender as well as the genre of film they were exposed to since different voices theory considers gender reactions to ethical dilemmas. The first hypothesis discovered that there was a significance in the difference between participants exposed to the treatment films, which contained content on human trafficking and participants exposed to the control films regarding their awareness of human trafficking issues. The second hypothesis anticipated a significant increase in the scores for

participants who viewed drama and action-drama films portraying circumstances of human trafficking after viewing the film. It was determined that drama films have a significantly higher impact on the participant's understanding of human trafficking than action-drama films. Hypothesis five and six also consider gender and genre regarding perceived accuracy of information. The tests demonstrated that gender does have a significant effect on perceived believability of human trafficking in both a drama and an action-drama film.

The second research question was designed to discover the distance effects on viewer's perception of human trafficking between those created in the film and the audience's perceived realities of trafficking. The first hypothesis for this question utilized the test results from the first hypothesis of research question one. It also indicated that there is a significant difference regarding the perception of human trafficking between participants exposed to the treatment films and participants who watched the control film.

H2.2 expected participants who identified films as being too disturbing would also find the realities of the film to be unbelievable. The data demonstrated a significant correlation between participants' identification of the film being difficult to watch and reporting that they did not really feel connected to the story. This supports proper distance concept. The findings also demonstrated that more female participants identified films as difficult to watch and more male participants identified the films as unbelievable. This would support other theories regarding gender acceptance of true stories, as described in Chapter 3.

## **Unsupported Hypothesis**

H1.3 and H1.4 were developed to consider genre and gender and expected to find a difference in the data. The results identified no significant difference in gender responses when watching a drama film with content on human trafficking. The results also showed no significant difference in gender responses after watching an action-drama film on human trafficking.

H2.3 expected to find a significant difference in responses related to empathy and distance. Post-test responses were computed to develop an empathy response and a distance response. Results discovered no significant difference between participants who found the film to be distant and their responses related to empathy.

H3.1 and H3.2 predicted that the genre of film would significantly affect men and women's confidence in their ability and desire to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. Post-test responses were computed to develop both a confidence in ability and agent of change response. The results showed that genre had no effect on either male or female responses regarding their confidence in ability or desire to become an agent of change. While there was no significant difference in scores, it should be noted that females scored higher on confidence in ability to end human trafficking while males scored higher on their perceived ability to actually become involved with organizations as an agent of change. Genre was not a factor in these results.

Chapter five will review the results of this study in relation to the framework of literature discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, Chapter 5 will discuss this study's limitations and offer suggestions for future research. The next chapter will also further

discuss and interpret the findings from this study in relation to the impact they may have on media development for human trafficking awareness in the future.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATIONS

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the portrayal of human trafficking in feature length, commercially distributed movies and the impact these films have on the audiences' perception of trafficking and motivation to become active bystanders or agents of change. Research is developing and growing on the subject of media effects and social issues, but that research has not considered highly ethical dilemmas in relationship to gender effects and motivation. This premise guided the study. Cinema provides a powerful outlet for raising awareness and inspiration (Brown, 2010) and the examination of media effects can provide data that will assist in the development of narratives effective in educating the public on human trafficking and inspiring anti-trafficking efforts.

The objectives in this study were to first discover whether genre of films containing highly ethical dilemmas effected the viewer's perception of the issues being explored. The next objective was to examine the audience's interpretation of the movies as engaging or not and whether that created a desire to become active in activities aimed toward improving circumstances surrounding ethical dilemmas. This premise of generating an individual's desire to become engaged in activities that offer resolutions was further examined to determine whether that desire prompted a confidence in their self-efficacy to assist in anti-trafficking efforts. These objectives served as the strategic approach to the design of this research.

This chapter discusses the interpretation of the data collected in this experiment followed by a discussion of how this information benefits the field of communication media. In addition, the results may provide useful information for additional disciplines. The chapter will also address any limitations found within the study followed by future considerations for additional research.

## **Interpretation of Results and Discussion**

### **Research Question One**

The first research question addresses the influence of film genre on gender perceptions of human trafficking. This was conducted by evaluating the data and determining whether a significant difference in perception could be identified. The first hypothesis addressed the difference between participants' perception of human trafficking after exposure to films with and without human trafficking content. To begin, an independent samples t-test was conducted with the post-test data on the participants' perception of their personal awareness of human tracking. The results demonstrated there is a difference in the awareness of human trafficking for individuals who watch feature films containing narratives of human trafficking. Next, the second independent samples t-test utilized a new variable created from the pre-post responses of participants understanding of human trafficking in the United States. These results demonstrated that participants did not identify a significant change in their understanding of human trafficking in the United States after exposure to a treatment film.

Finally, a one-way between subject's ANOVA was conducted, utilizing the post-test data, to compare the effects of the treatment films and control film on the participant's perceived awareness on human trafficking. The data showed a significant

difference between all the treatment films and the control film. This establishes that films containing circumstances of human trafficking can influence a viewer's perceived awareness of human trafficking. In addition, while there was a difference between the control and treatment films, there were no effects between treatments films. Since proper distance concept is calculation between what the viewer considers normal and determining the spatial difference portrayed by the norms of others, 'not like them,' in the film and creating a distance that engages and influences the viewer (Arthur, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006) may further support these findings. While the control film represented an adolescent kidnapping, the victim was not sexually assaulted or exploited. The film contained both investigation and a victim centered narrative that may not be unfamiliar to the audience and be a part of normal new stories in the United States. However, the films on human trafficking all represented some form of sex trafficking and exploitation of the victims. These films may have created just enough spatial distance for viewers to want to understand more about circumstances that are not within their norms. Therefore, these films on human trafficking may have may have seemed foreign but spatially invoked just enough empathy to influence viewer's perception towards their abilities to become active bystanders or agents of change.

A similar comparison to these results can be considered through the audience perception study by Rudowsky (2013) that focused on place destination and whether positive images influenced the viewer. The study focused on Australia and the results showed now significant change in attitude towards the destination between the pre-test and post-test results from most of the films used in the treatment groups. A consideration may be that Australia is not very different from the norms of American's and therefore a

proper spatial distance was not created. However, the study did postulate that negative images deterred actions after analyzing the pre-test and post-test results from viewers exposed to a horror film on Australia. This is contrary to the results in this study where negative images influenced the viewers desire to take action. As discussed in Chapter 4, when participants identified the film as difficult to watch, their desire to help increased. This disparity may be an area for further research to explore movies with ethical dilemmas in relation to proper distance concept.

The second hypothesis considered genre and explored whether participants exposed to a drama or action-drama film would have increased confidence in their understanding of human trafficking. An independent samples t-test was performed utilizing the new variable that was again created by obtaining the average gains score to the pre and post-test questions on a participants understanding of human trafficking in the United States. This variable was then compared to the genre of movie the participants were exposed to. The results demonstrated a significant difference in participants' confidence of understanding human trafficking depending on the genre of film they watched. This is inconsistent with different voices theory that postulates women will resonate stronger with narratives based on care and restoration while men will resonate stronger with narratives based on justice and investigation. Recently several studies have been published that investigate gender through diversity and biological attributes. The results from these studies may assist in supporting the findings from this study and the theory for this will be discussed further in the Observation of Theories section located in this chapter.

The third and fourth hypothesis explored gender responses and compared them to the genre of film men and women watched. These hypotheses were designed to further explore different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and determine whether the ethical dilemmas postulated in drama films had a greater effect on women's perception of human trafficking and whether those ethical dilemmas provided in action-drama films had a greater effect on men's perception. An independent sample t-test was employed for each genre that examined gender responses. Once again, the variable containing the average gains score of question 3 on the pre-test and question 25 on the post-test to consider a participant's change in understanding was used. This variable was then compared to the gender of participants that viewed a drama film, and a second independent samples test to compare the gender of participants that viewed an action-drama film. The data showed that gender does not have an impact on a viewer's change in perception of human trafficking.

To further explore these hypotheses, a two-way ANOVA was performed with the same pre-post variable used in the independent samples tests to determine whether there were interactions effects between genre and gender. The results showed there was no significance in interaction effects for males and females, which further supports the finding in the independent samples t-test. However, the results did show a significant difference in interaction effects for genre. Both males and females responded with increased awareness to human trafficking after viewing drama films. The conclusion from these hypotheses is that different voices theory, which suggests men and women respond differently to ethical dilemmas, is not supported in this study and both male and female participants responded greater to films demonstrating empathy and care.

Hypotheses five and six were designed to further explore different voices theory (Gilligan, 1982) and how empathy influences a viewer's response to ethical dilemmas. The theory by Gilligan is grounded in Freud's philosophy that women have a different threshold than men when considering ethical norms. Gilligan's theory postulates that women are influenced more through narratives centered on the care and restoration of a victim and men are influenced more through narratives centered on the investigation of issues and vigilante justice for victims of ethical dilemmas. A study by Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) concluded that men will argue the accuracy of information when the narrative is based on actual events. These hypotheses examined the difference between gender and their opinion about the accuracy of information provided in both a drama and action-drama film. An independent samples t-test was performed for each hypothesis and revealed a significant difference between men and women's perception of accuracy towards the information being provided in the narrative of both a drama and an action-drama film. These results may further support the findings by Argo, Zhu, and Dahl (2008) regarding men's rejection of narratives based on actual events. However, while the findings in this study do not directly support different voices theory, they do demonstrate that genre does have a significant effect on the participants' opinion about the accuracy of information being presented in both drama and action-drama films.

Hypotheses three and four showed the genre of film had no effect on either male or female participants' perceptions of human trafficking. However, hypotheses five and six showed genre did influence the perception of accuracy of the narrative which allowed the researcher to develop several conclusions related to the research question. First, films on human trafficking do influence a viewer's perceived awareness of human trafficking.

Second, there is no difference between a male or female perception of human trafficking after viewing either a drama or action-drama. However, there is a difference in male and female perception of accuracy in the information based on the genre of film. Therefore, in answer to the first research question, films on human trafficking do influence both male and female perception of human trafficking.

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question considered the distance between the realities created in a feature film and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking and whether this affected the audience's acceptance of human trafficking. The first hypothesis was examined to determine whether there was a difference in the audience's perception of human trafficking after watching feature films portraying issues of human trafficking. An independent sample t-test was used to compare the participants' perception of human trafficking awareness after viewing both the treatment films and the control film. For this test, the post-test data for the participant's perception of awareness regarding human trafficking after exposure to the film was utilized. The results demonstrated that films on human trafficking do increase a participant's perception of his or her awareness to the issue.

The second hypothesis explored whether audiences who perceive a film to have disturbing and exaggerated portrayals of human trafficking to be unbelievable. The results showed that female participants found movies depicting someone suffering from human trafficking to be difficult to watch while male participants believed the story was grossly exaggerated. While earlier findings did not support Gilligan's different voices theory with regard to male and female responses to ethical dilemmas, when applied to

proper distance concept a significant gender difference did emerge. This will be further addressed in future considerations. Additional data showed when participants perceived the film as difficult to watch or grossly exaggerated they did not feel connected to the story. This supports proper distance concept (Silverstone, 2004) which is considered the calculated distance between media and the audiences' understanding self and individuals who are 'not like us' (Arthur, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006).

The third hypothesis explored whether audiences who perceived a film with human trafficking content to be too foreign or distant would also have a lack of empathy for the victim. The results from the data showed no significant difference between a participant's empathy and the distance identified by the participant or also described as the participants understanding of individuals who are different from them. The conclusion is that participants will still have empathy even when the content is foreign or distant.

The data from research question two produced several conclusions. First, films on human trafficking do increase awareness of human trafficking. Second, when a film is too difficult for women to watch, they have difficulty connecting with the story while men find it to be grossly exaggerated. Finally, films that appear too distant from the audiences' norms do not affect the audiences' empathy for the victim. Therefore, when developing narratives on human trafficking with the intention of affecting the audience's acceptance of human trafficking the narratives should not be designed to shock the audience or make the content difficult to watch. The data from this study concluded that writers should utilize proper distance concept to discover the appropriate proximity of engagement to the audience even if the narrative appears distant or foreign.



### **Research Question Three**

The third research question was developed to further consider whether feature films on human trafficking not only affect a viewer's perceived realities on human trafficking, as addressed in research question two, but whether that altered perception also increased the viewer's motivation and self-efficacy to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. Since the central exploration of this study was different voices theory and whether genre affects the perception of males and females differently, the two hypotheses for this research question examined those gender and genre differences.

After evaluating the results of the data, it was determined that the genre of film had no effect on male or female participant's desire or confidence in their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. However, interesting data did emerge demonstrating females scored higher, regardless of the genre, on their perceived confidence in abilities to participate in anti-trafficking activities. In addition, 39% of overall respondents provided additional contact information, expressing interest in the participation of additional studies. At the conclusion of each experiment, the researcher received verbal responses from participants regarding their experience. These were noted and themed, one of which was an expressed interest by participants to discover whether anything was being done on the campus where the study was conducted or whether the researcher could organize more awareness activities. This demonstrates that the films did affect the participants desire to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. This will be further addressed in future considerations.

## **Other Influences**

The researcher also wanted to examine other influences on the experiment's results, however none were discovered. Factors including ethnicity and academic major were considered as possible influences. In the pre-test data, it was determined that more Black/African American participants identified as having a higher understanding of human trafficking but after viewing the treatment films, there appeared to be no significant findings for race as an influence on the data. All races seemed to identify as having a high score of understanding. Furthermore, all races identified as having an increased awareness of human trafficking in their post-test responses. These findings may demonstrate that narratives on human trafficking can have a positive effect on participant's understanding of human trafficking, regardless of race. This may also assist with disseminated race stereotypes associated with human trafficking that were discussed in Chapter Two.

This study also sought to examine whether a participant's college major had an influence on the experiment's results. The results are similar to the influences discovered in race. For this analysis, Criminology and Government majors scored higher on their perception of understanding issues of human trafficking prior to the stimulus yet the post-test responses showed no significant differences among majors. Since all factors that had significance, prior to exposure of the stimulus showed no significance after the stimulus, a conclusion can be postulated that feature films based on narratives of human trafficking do have an impact on the audience's perception of human trafficking.

## **Observation of Theories**

This study explored three theories, each a building block within the research design. The first theory considered was different voices theory by Gilligan (1982), which purports that men and women respond differently to varied narratives of ethical dilemmas. In her theory, Gilligan posited that men are inspired by messages associated with justice and investigation while women are inspired more by care and restoration. This study showed while men do respond to messages of justice and vigilante acts, they respond similarly to women regarding messages involving a victim centered narrative on care and restoration. Gilligan's theory is grounded in several of Freud's gender theories that have been questioned and studied since the turn of the century. Coates (2016) explores research that considers how gender is no longer seen as a given, instead this term now considers diversity and is not meant to distinguish a binary divide. Further noting that while science considers these differences through a biological lens, it is important that social sciences challenge the bio-logistics ideals of male and female so these fields do not lose their connections with feminism.

The transgender-rights movement demands scholars consider this diversity and asks social sciences to explore how we divide the sexes (Steinmetz, 2015). The results of this study may validate the need to question this diversity by demonstrating that a binary divide between gender responses to ethical dilemmas does not exist. This may suggest that different voices theory should be investigated and revised to consider gender diversities. Similar perspectives with binary views include Segal's (1986) assertion that boys and girls are socially oriented to gender narratives. Character romance stories are developed for girls and action-driven stories are developed for boys. Jenkins (1992)

stated that men's domination in broadcasting and film shaped narratives to have a gender bias. However, media studies are now challenging this concept. Even Jenkins (2012) published a revised text and addressed the many changes, asking the field of media studies to consider gender and sexuality beyond a binary perspective.

A recent study that explored the male fandom of *Twilight* considered that gender's enthusiasm toward romantic dramas (Click, et al., 2016). The study looked at the lack research on male responses to romantic stories but used studies similar to Allen (2007) that postulates new cultural expectations for men to be more emotionally responsive may have opened modern media to take on a view of multiplicity to masculinity. The qualitative study by Click, et al. (2016) concluded that men do enjoy feminine narratives.

Other studies have investigated masculine gender socialization and how it has changed over time. While men are still taught masculine norms, expressions contrary to those norms can positively affect mental health and this has impacted male responses in social settings (Green & Addis, 2012). Building upon this discussion of diversity in gender identification may also be supported by the results in this study which demonstrated no significant difference in perception of human trafficking between men and women when participants were presented with a narrative that focused on the care and restoration of the victim, a narrative previously presumed to have a higher impact on female viewers.

Another theory explored in this study was proper distance concept (Silverstone, 2003). This concept considers our relationship to others and whether we can understand those others from their perspective. Since proper would suggest an ethical norm, the

consideration of distance between ‘the viewer’ and ‘the other’ may assist in determining the outcome of the impact. If something is too foreign and not relatable, then the message will have little influence. Those messages may be distant and uninteresting or distant and disturbing, bearing little influence on the viewer. Arthur (2012) and Chouliaraki, (2006) argue that calculating the proper distance between the story of others and the viewers norms promotes a ‘cosmopolitan citizenship.’ The results from this study however showed while the viewers found the content disturbing, it did not affect their ability to demonstrate empathy for the victim. This may provide an interesting perspective for future studies to determine whether the emersion of new media has reduced the concept of ‘others’ and increased acceptance of distant norms.

The final concept considered self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994), a perception in one’s ability to accomplish a task and for this study to discover whether disturbing messages related to ethical dilemmas influenced individuals to become active bystanders or agents of change for those dilemmas. Examples of ethical dilemmas might include discrimination on race and gender, or economic oppression. A study by Rasul (2015) investigated films focusing on female political figures and how this changed the perception of female viewers and their perspective of success in politics. The study established that not only did the self-efficacy increase for female viewers, males also had more positive outlooks on female politicians after viewing the films. When considering the effects of human trafficking films for this study, genre did not change whether viewers were motivated to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. The results from this study show that while females had a higher increase in confidence of ability, both male and female viewers were influenced by narrative to believe they were capable of assisting

in anti-trafficking efforts. This may be attributed to Bandura's Social cognitive theory which suggests men and women are capable of learning from actions portrayed in the media, similar to witnessing actions in real life and this point could be considered for future research.

The observation of these three theories by the researcher contemplated whether the concepts needed to be revised. The conclusion is that researchers should consider updating different voices theory premise of gender from a biological lens to a more diversified context and acknowledging the concept of feminism. Proper distance concept continues to provide a speculation as to the calculated measurements of norms and others. Since this concept looks at a separate calculation for each story and each audience, it remains applicable to the study of audience perceptions. Self-efficacy can be applied to studies that consider whether narratives increases the viewers' beliefs in their ability to become active agents of change.

### **Limitations**

The primary focus of this study was to examine the representation of human trafficking in feature films and the impact these films have on the participants' perception of trafficking and their motivation to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. While the study attempted to employ the norms of social science research and evaluate for significance ( $p < 0.05$ ), caution should be used applying these results to a larger audience. Although the demographics were suitable for this study, as college students do represent a vulnerable population to traffickers, they do not represent all feature film movie goers.

Another limitation was discovered in the treatment film *The Whistleblower* (2010), an action-drama film, between female participants ( $n = 25$ ) and male participants

(n = 9). While this variance of gender was apparent, the overall mean score and standard deviation represented in Table 13 for an action-drama film remained representative and complimentary to the results examined in H1:3. The data established showed no significant difference between men and women's responses to their understanding of human trafficking in the United States after watching an action-drama film.

The final limitation was the lack of inquiry to further understand the participant's desire to become active in anti-trafficking efforts. While the post-test did explore a participant's desire to become active, the perceivability to make a difference and the tolerance for the ethical material presented in the films, it failed to discover why the participant was motivated. There may have been outside factors or previous influences beyond the film that inspired their answers to the questions in the post-survey.

Furthermore, while not a direct limitation, the researcher should have been prepared with additional information for participants after the treatment films to further support and reinforce their desire to become involved in anti-trafficking activities. At the conclusion of each film, the researcher was directly addressed by several participants with an inquiry for additional resources. In addition, some participants addressed this desire in the open-ended responses of the post-tests. While no research can be performed in a vacuum, nor account for all outside influences, information on additional influences and motivating factors would have provided further insight, a value to the overall purpose of the study.

### **Future Research**

A quantitative approach was appropriate for this study however additional support may be obtained through a qualitative approach where the purpose of the study could be re-addressed to obtain additional perspectives in the shaping future narratives and feature

films on human trafficking. Qualitative research is useful in the development of teaching and training programs (Anderson, 2010), and finding measures to educate the public through the entertainment of feature films has been recommended by the UNODC (2008) for years. While several studies show it is difficult to develop films that are effective in relating the realities of human trafficking when many films on the subject are overly dramatized narratives that sensationalize and stereotype images of human trafficking (Arthur 2012; Doezema 2001; UNODC, 2008), a qualitative approach may provide new perspectives and credibility. The results from this study demonstrated that when films are overly sensationalized and difficult to watch, the participants reported they did not really feel connected to the story. Qualitative methods could provide a deeper examination of the participants' perception regarding these stereotyped images and outside influences to further support or negate the results of this study.

This study carefully considered the theories that provided the best foundation for this study, however through this exploration, several additional theories were reviewed. While cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959) and expectancy violation theory (Burgoon & Jones, 1976) were dismissed for this study they may prove valuable in future research. The purpose of this study was to focus on proper distance concept which considered whether material used in the films was perceived as overwhelming or too distance and disconnecting. However, cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959) may also provide a beneficial lens from which to examine highly ethical dilemmas. Hall (1998) suggests that cognitive dissonance theory addresses our persuasive tendency to rationalize circumstances. This may also refer to the discomfort experienced by a person who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas,



or values. The theory postulates that people are sensitive to discrepancies between beliefs and actions and when people realize these discrepancies they recognize it can create conflict and therefore motivates them to find a resolution. This study has identified that viewers of both drama and action-drama films found the content difficult to watch but also became motivated to participate in anti-trafficking efforts. Cognitive dissonance theory may provide a lens from which to explore the distance created from the realities of self and our understanding of others and how that may provide a motivation to discover resolutions to an ethical dilemma, in this case, modern-day slavery.

Another theory dismissed from this study which may prove to be a valuable lens to examine feature films on human trafficking, is expectancy violation theory (Burgoon & Jones, 1976). This theory considers how an individual's expectation of behaviors can be violated during the exchange of actions. While this study considered film, which is not a two-way interaction, the violations of expected norms are still relevant. Individuals who experience these violations will then find ways to cope with the violation. According to Bevan, Ang, and Fearn (2014) this evaluation of the violation assists individuals in understanding the contradictory behavior as well as determine the appropriate response behavior. These considerations may assist in the development of film narratives that help the audience navigate the expectancy violations and emerge with positive attitudes toward anti-trafficking efforts.

Finally, feature films on human trafficking are not always created as a component of awareness but rather sensationalism. However, when humanitarian and political actions are linked to the story, trafficking films have a higher impact on the audience (Arthur, 2010). This premise may be examined further by considering whether celebrity

humanitarian efforts and celebrity portrayals in a role, assist in reinforcing a positive message and motivation of the audience toward anti-trafficking efforts. A follow up study could focus on the overall impact of the celebrity and their humanitarian efforts outside of the film being presented.

### **Conclusion**

The research presented in this paper attempted to investigate an audiences' perception of human trafficking and motivation to become agents of change after viewing feature films containing narratives on human trafficking. Under the framework of different voices theory and proper distance concept, the researcher expected to find differences in gender responses to narratives of empathy and care and narratives of investigation and vigilante justice. However, the overall results of this study concluded that films on human trafficking have an impact on audiences regardless of genre. The study also showed that films identified as difficult to watch do promote a desire to become active in anti-trafficking efforts.

This conclusion supports Brown's (2010) premise that cinema is a powerful outlet for raising awareness and inspiring intervention. The problem writers of films about human trafficking often face is developing a narrative that invokes empathy while maintaining enough distance to allow for critique of the complex issue being displayed (Arthurs, 2012). Additional studies in the area of media effects may prove beneficial to NGOs and government agencies in the development of human trafficking awareness campaigns. According to Arthurs (2012) the development of effective messages by scriptwriters and film producers that support anti-trafficking organizations' campaigns can make an enormous impact on the public's awareness of this global problem.

## REFERENCES

- Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. (2017, April 07). Rules & eligibility. Retrieved May 26, 2017, from <http://www.oscars.org/oscars/rules-eligibility>
- Altman, R. (1984). A semantic/syntactic approach to film genre. *Cinema Journal*, 23(3), 6-18. doi:10.2307/1225093
- American Film Institute. (2016). Catalog of feature films. Retrieved May 26, 2017, from <http://afi.com/members/catalog>
- Anderson, C. (2010). Presenting and evaluating qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 74(8), 141. doi:10.5688/aj7408141
- Andrijasevic, R. (2007). Beautiful dead bodies: Gender, migration and representation in anti-trafficking campaigns. *Feminist Review*, 86(1), 24-44. doi:10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400355
- Antonio, J. C. (2016, October 16). Modern human trafficking in the Philippines and its ethical concern. Retrieved September 5, 2018, from <http://dameanusabun.blogspot.com/2016/10/modern-human-trafficking-in-philippines.html>
- Appel, M., & Richter, T. (2007). Persuasive effects of fictional narratives increase over time. *Media Psychology*, 10(1), 113. doi:10.1080/15213260701301194
- Archer, D. (2013, April 11). Human trafficking in America: Think human trafficking is a problem that cannot happen in America? Think again! *Psychology Today*. 46(2).
- Argo, J., Zhu, R., & Dahl, D. (2008). Fact or fiction: An investigation of empathy differences in response to emotional melodramatic entertainment. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(5), 614-623. doi:10.1086/521907

- Arthurs, J. (2012). Distant suffering, proper distance: Cosmopolitan ethics in the film portrayal of trafficked women. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 8(2), p. 141-158. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-64608-4\_2
- Aroskar, A. (1980). Anatomy of an ethical dilemma: The theory. *AJN, American Journal of Nursing*, 80(4), 658-60. doi:10.2307/3470090
- Austin, R., (2015). *Human trafficking in the media: A content analysis of human trafficking frames in documentaries, movies, and television episodes* (Unpublished master's thesis).
- Austin, R., & Farrell, A. (2017). Human trafficking and the media in the United States. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology*. Retrieved 23 May. 2017, from <http://criminology.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264079-e-290>.
- Baker, C. N. (2014). An intersectional analysis of sex trafficking films. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, 12(1), 208-226.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press.
- Basu, S., Gallagher, A.T., Brennan, D., Shih, E., Lerum, K., & Weitzer, R. (2014). Selling people. *Contexts*, 13(1), 16-25. doi:10.1177/1536504214522004
- Batson, C.D., Klein, T.R., Highberger, L., & Shaw, L.L. (1995). Immorality from empathy induced altruism: When compassion and justice conflict, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68(June), 1042–54. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.68.6.1042

- Bergelson, V. (2009). *Victims' rights and victims' wrongs comparative liability in criminal law*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Bevan, Ang, & Fearn. (2014). Being unfriended on Facebook: An application of Expectancy Violation Theory. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 33, 171-178.  
doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.01.029
- Blockbuster | definition of blockbuster in English by Oxford dictionaries. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/blockbuster>
- Bock, M. A., & Krippendorff, K. (2009). *The content analysis reader*. Sage Publications.
- BoxOfficeMojo. 2017. Taken box office profits. BoxOfficeMojo.com. Retrieved June 26, 2017. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=taken.htm>.
- Boyd, S. (2007). Drug films, justice, and nationhood. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 10(3), 263-282. doi:10.1080/10282580701526070
- Braidotti, R. (2006), *Transposition: On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity
- Brown, W. (2010). Film in antitrafficking and antislavery campaigns. *Media Development*, 57(3), 51.
- Bryant, J., & Oliver, M. (2009). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (3rd ed.). NJ: Taylor and Francis. doi10.4324/9780203877111
- Buddenbaum, J. M., & Novak, K. B. (2001). *Applied communication research*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.
- Burgoon, J. K., & Jones, S. B. (1976). Toward a theory of personal space expectations and their violations. *Human Communication Research*, 2, 131-146.  
doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.1976.tb00706.x

- Busch-Armendariz, N., Nale, N. L., Kammer-Kerwick, M., Kellison, B., Maldonado Torres, I., Cook Heffron, L., & Nehme, J. (2016, December). *Human Trafficking by the Numbers: The Initial Benchmark of Prevalence and Economic Impact for Texas*. Retrieved November 10, 2017, from [https://www.scribd.com/document/337465150/Human-Trafficking-by-the-Numbers-2016#download&from\\_embed](https://www.scribd.com/document/337465150/Human-Trafficking-by-the-Numbers-2016#download&from_embed)
- Byrne, M., Parsh, B., & Ghilain, C. (2017). Victims of human trafficking: Hiding in plain sight. *Nursing*, 47(3), 48-52. doi:10.1097/01.nurse.0000512876.06634.c4
- Caprara, G., Alessandri, G., Eisenberg, N., & King, Laura. (2012). Prosociality: The contribution of traits, values, and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(6), 1289-1303. doi:10.1037/a0025626
- Chandler, D., & Munday, R. (2011). *Others. A dictionary of media and communication*, Oxford University Press. Retrieved June 6, 2017, from <http://www.oxfordreference.com>.
- Change agent. (2017). *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved June 2, 2017 from Cambridge Dictionary website <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/change-agent>
- Chouliaraki, L. (2006). *The spectatorship of suffering*. London: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781446220658
- City of New York. (2016). *Let's end human trafficking*. Retrieved October 26, 2016, from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/endht/html/home/home.shtml>
- Civic Impulse. (2017). *S. 2414 — 106th Congress: Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*. Retrieved from <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/106/s2414>

- Click, M., Miller, B., Behm-Morawitz, E., & Aubrey, J. (2016). Twi-dudes and twi-guys: How Twilight's male fans interpret and engage with a feminized text. *Men and Masculinities, 19*(3), 219-239. doi:10.1177/1097184x15575159
- Coates, J. (1986). *Women, men, and language: A sociolinguistic account of sex differences in language* (Studies in language and linguistics (London, England)). London; New York: Longman.
- Coker, A., Cook-Craig, P., Williams, C., Fisher, B., Clear, E., Garcia, L., & Hegge, L. (2011). Evaluation of Green Dot: An active bystander intervention to reduce sexual violence on college campuses. *Violence against Women, 17*(6), 777-96. doi: 10.1177/1077801211410264
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Cunningham, K., & Cromer, L. (2016). Attitudes about human trafficking: Individual differences related to belief and victim blame. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 31*(2), 228-244. doi: 10.1177/0886260514555369
- De Shalit, A., Heynen, R., & van der Meulen, E. (2014). Human trafficking and media myths: Federal funding, communication strategies, and Canadian anti-trafficking programs. *Canadian Journal of Communication, 39*(3), 385-412. doi: 10.22230/cjc.2014v39n3a2784
- Dreeke, Robin K., & Sidener, Kara D. (2010). Proactive human source development. *The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 79*(11), 1-9.
- Dirks, T. (2017). *Main Film Genres*. Retrieved November 2, 2017, from <http://www.filmsite.org/genres.html>

- Doezema, J. (2001), 'Ouch! Western feminists' wounded attachment to the third world prostitute.' *Feminist Review*, 67(1), p. 16–29. doi: 10.1080/01417780150514484
- Doody, O., & Doody, C. M. (2015). Conducting a pilot study: case study of a novice researcher. *British Journal of Nursing*, 24(21), 1074-1078. doi: 10.12968/bjon.2015.24.21.1074
- Downman, S. (2013). Victims of exploitation or victims of the media: Rethinking media coverage of human trafficking. *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics*, 10(2/3), 63-71.
- Duncan-Dieujuste, B. (2017, September 28). *10 Human trafficking organizations fighting for freedom*. Retrieved February 03, 2018, from <https://www.collegemagazine.com/10-human-trafficking-organizations-fighting-for-freedom/>
- Emmers, T. M. (2006). Love, suspense, sex, and violence: Men's and women's film predilections, exposure to sexually violent media, and their relationship to rape myth acceptance. *Sex Roles*, 55(5-6), 311-320. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9085-0
- Farrell, A., Pfeffer, R. (2014). Policing human trafficking. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 653(1), 46-64.
- Fast facts for lumberjacks 2016-17. (n.d.). Retrieved July 14, 2018, from <http://www.sfasu.edu/jackfacts/>
- Festinger, L. & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58, 203 – 210. doi: 10.1037/h0041593



- Fleming, M., & Bohnel, E. (2009). Use of feature film as part of psychological assessment. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 40(6), 641-647. doi: 10.1037/a0016432
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Pub.
- Grant, C. & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your “house.” *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice and Research*, 4(2). doi:10.5929/2014.4.2.9
- Green, J., & Addis, M. (2012). Individual differences in masculine gender socialization as predictive of men's psychophysiological responses to negative affect. *International Journal of Men's Health*, 11(1), 63-82. doi:10.3149/jmh.1101.63
- Hall, R. (1998). Cognitive dissonance. *Psychology World*. Retrieved June 12, 2017, from [https://web.mst.edu/~psyworld/cognitive\\_dissonance.htm](https://web.mst.edu/~psyworld/cognitive_dissonance.htm).
- Hardesty, & Bearden. (2004). The use of expert judges in scale development: Implications for improving face validity of measures of unobservable constructs. *Journal of Business Research*, 57(2), 98-107. doi:10.1016/S0148-2963(01)00295-8
- Haynes, D. F. (2014). The celebritization of human trafficking. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 653, 25–30. doi:10.1177/0002716213515837

- Hesley, J. W., & Hesley, J. G. (1998). *Rent two films and let's talk in the morning: Using popular movies in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: J. Wiley.
- Heston, M. L., & Kottman, T. (1997). Movies as metaphors. A counseling intervention. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 36*, 92–99.  
doi:10.1002/j.2164-4683.1997.tb00377.x
- Holden, R.B. (2010). Face validity. In Weiner, Irving B.; Craighead, W. Edward. *The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology* (4th ed.). Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.  
pp. 637–638. doi:10.1108/09504121011066941
- How does Stephen F. Austin rank among America's best colleges? (n.d.). Retrieved July 14, 2018, from <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/stephen-f-austin-3624>
- Hsu, G. (2006). Jacks of all trades and masters of none: Audiences' reactions to spanning genres in feature film production. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 51*(3), 420-450. doi:10.2189/asqu.51.3.420
- Human trafficking. (2016). *Annals of Emergency Medicine, 68*(3), 405.
- IMDb. (2017). Press Room. Retrieved May 31, 2017, from <http://www.imdb.com/pressroom>.
- Jaffee, S., & Hyde, J. S. (2000). Gender differences in moral orientation: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*(5), 703-726. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.126.5.703
- Jenkins, H. (2013). *Textual poachers*. New York: Routledge,  
doi:10.4324/9780203114339

- Jones, J. (2012). *Human trafficking: The perceptions of students towards the underground sex trafficking network*. Retrieved from <http://proxy-iup.klnpa.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/docview/1213243115?accountid=11652>
- Khell, M. (2008). *Nature ethics: An ecofeminist perspective*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kloer, A. (2011, March 15). *5 things to know about human trafficking*. Retrieved November 6, 2017, from <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/15/5-things-to-know-about-human-trafficking/?replytocom=386964#respond>
- Kropiewnicki, M. I., & Shapiro, J. P. (2001). Female leadership and the ethic of care: Three case studies. *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Seattle, WA.
- Lafferty, G. G. (2016). Opening the learning process: The potential role of feature film in teaching employment relations. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 56(1), 8-28.
- Langford, B. (1995). *Film genre: Hollywood and beyond*. Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lambert, Mark. (2009). Taken. (Movie review). *Journal of Religion and Film*, 13(1).
- Lim, D. (2009, October 19). Vigilante justice returns to screen. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved October 4, 2017 from <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/oct/19/entertainment/et-vigilante19>

- Logan, T. K., Walker, R., & Hunt, G. (2009). Understanding human trafficking in the United States. *Trauma, violence, & abuse*. Sage Publications. 10(1), pp.3-30.  
doi:10.1177/1524838008327262
- Long, M. (2015). Visual stereotypes for human trafficking. *End Slavery Now*. Retrieved May 4, 2017 from <http://www.endslaverynow.org/blog/articles/visual-stereotypes-for-human-trafficking>
- Lucas, S. (2012). *The art of public speaking*. London: McGraw Hill.
- Mahdavi, P. (2011). *Gridlock labor, migration and human trafficking in Dubai*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Malarek, V. (2009). *The Johns: Sex for sale and the men who buy it*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (2004). Active bystander program and mediation. Retrieved February 17, 2018, from <http://web.mit.edu/bystanders/strategies/index.html>
- McEntire, K. J., Leiby, M., & Krain, M. (2015). Human rights organizations as agents of change: An experimental examination of framing and micromobilization. *The American Political Science Review*, 109(3), 407-426.  
doi:10.1017/s0003055415000295
- McKenny, G. P., & Sande, J. R. (2013). *Theological analyses of the clinical encounter*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- McNulty, M. (2013). Human trafficking: Crime in our own backyard. *Nursing*, 43(10), 52-56. doi:10.1097/01.NURSE.0000434316.98441.1e

- Melendez, J. (2002). Doctoral scholarship examined: dissertation research in the field of higher education studies. Unpublished dissertation, retrieved November 5, 2017 from [http://domapp01.shu.edu/depts/uc/apps/libraryrepository.nsf/resourceid/58FC078D51AB926985256E1A006CF13B/\\$File/Melendez-John\\_Doctorate.pdf?Open](http://domapp01.shu.edu/depts/uc/apps/libraryrepository.nsf/resourceid/58FC078D51AB926985256E1A006CF13B/$File/Melendez-John_Doctorate.pdf?Open)
- Menaker, T. A., & Franklin, C. A. (2013). Commercially sexually exploited girls and participant perceptions of blameworthiness: Examining the effects of victimization history and race disclosure. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 28*, 2024-2051. doi:10.1177/0886260512471078
- Moore, C. (1998). The use of visual metaphor in logotherapy. *International Forum for Logotherapy, 21*, 85–90.
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center. (2013). *National Human Trafficking Resource Center student toolkit: Resources to engage your campus to end human trafficking*. Washington, DC: Polaris Project.
- Negra, D., & Tasker, Y. (2013). Neoliberal frames and genres of inequality: Recession-era chick flicks and male-centered corporate melodrama. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 16*(3), 344-361. doi:10.1177/1367549413481880
- Nicholson, J. (2014). Alternative hypothesis. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Mathematics*. doi:10.1093/acref/9780199679591.001.0001
- O'Brien, T. (2016). *The screening of America: Movies and values from Rocky to Rain Man*. Great Britain: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Other. (2017). *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Retrieved June 2, 2017 from Dictionary.com website <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/other>

- Piaget, J. (1965). *The moral judgment of the child* (M. Gabain, Trans.). New York: Free Press. (Original work published 1932)
- Pajnik, M. (2010). Media framing of trafficking. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 12(1), 45-64. doi:10.1080/14616740903429114
- Panek, E. (2014). Left to their own devices: College students' "guilty pleasure" media use and time management. *Communication Research*, 41(4), 561-577.  
doi:10.4135/9781473935310
- Pittaro, M., & Normore, A. (2016, June 8). *International Efforts by Police Leadership to Combat Human Trafficking* (United States, FBI, Law Enforcement Bulletin). Retrieved September 28, 2017, from <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/international-efforts-by-police-leadership-to-combat-human-trafficking>
- Pope, R. (2012). Doing justice: A ritual-psychoanalytic approach to postmodern melodrama and a certain tendency of the action film. *Cinema Journal*, 51(2), 113-136. doi:10.1353/cj.2012.0001
- Powers, B.A., & Knapp, T.R. (2010) *Dictionary of nursing theory and research: fourth edition*, Springer Publishing Company
- President Barack Obama. (2012, September 25) *Remarks by the President to the Clinton Global Initiative*. Retrieved May 22, 2017, from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative>

Polaris. (2015). *Human trafficking issue brief: Safe harbor fall 2015*. Retrieved June 12, 2017, from

<https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/2015%20Safe%20Harbor%20Issue%20brief.pdf>

Poučki, S. (2012). *The quest for root causes of human trafficking: A study on the experience of marginalized groups, with a focus on the republic of Serbia* (Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey).

Rasul, A. (2015). *When political narratives entertain: The effects of political entertainment on the attitudes of young viewers towards female lead characters*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Reinard, J. C. (2006). *Communication research statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

doi:10.4135/9781412983693

Rotten Tomatoes. (n.d.). Retrieved November 2, 2017, from

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/>

Rudowsky, C. A. (2013). *Movie genre effects on destination image, place familiarity, and visitation interest among undergraduate students: A film tourism study*. Retrieved

from [http://proxy-iup.klnpa.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy-](http://proxy-iup.klnpa.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/docview/1468689632?accountid=11652)

[iup.klnpa.org/docview/1468689632?accountid=11652](http://proxy-iup.klnpa.org/docview/1468689632?accountid=11652)

Saunders, L. F. (2015). What is moral reasoning? *Philosophical Psychology*, 28(1), 1-20.

doi:10.1080/09515089.2013.801007

Schmitt, D.A. (2015). Seibo, Jule. Film genre for the screenwriter. *CHOICE: Current*

*Reviews for Academic Libraries*, 52(6), 981. doi:10.5860/choice.187725

- Segal, E. (1986). “‘As the twig is bent ... ’ gender and childhood reading.” In *gender and reading: Essays on readers*, edited by Flynn, E. A., Schweickart, P. P., 165–186. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Sehta, B. (2009). Theorizing social justice: In a different voice. *Indian Journal of Political Science*, 70(1), 185
- Shared Hope International. (2015). *Common sex trafficking language*. Retrieved September 26, 2017, from <https://sharedhope.org/the-problem/trafficking-terms/>
- Sherlock, L. J. (2012). Canadian Feature Film Database. *CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*, 49(5), 846. doi:10.5860/choice.49-2400
- Siegal, C. (2015). Sex trafficking films, or taken for a ride. (2015). *Sex Radical Cinema*. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Siegel, D., & de Wildt, R. (Eds.). (2015). *Ethical concerns in research on human trafficking*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Silverstone, R. (1999). *Why study the media?* London: SAGE Publications.  
doi:10.1435/9781446219461
- Silverstone, R. (2003) Proper distance. In Rasmussen, T., Morrison, A., & Liestøl, G., *Digital media revisited: Theoretical and conceptual innovations in digital domains*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press.
- Silverstone, R. (2004). Regulation, media literacy and media civics. *Media, Culture & Society*, 26(3), 440-449. doi:10.1177/0163443704042557
- Small, J. L. (2012). Trafficking in truth: Media, sexuality, and human rights evidence. *Feminist Studies*, (2), 415.



- Steele, S. L., & Shores, T. (2014). More than just a famous face: Exploring the rise of the celebrity expert-advocate through anti-trafficking action by the Demi and Ashton Foundation. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 10(3), 259-272.  
doi:10.1177/1741659014558434
- Steinmetz, K. (2015, August 24). What the toy aisle can teach us about gender parity. *Time*, 25-26.
- Stewart, A. (2012). Auds 'Taken' with Liam. *Daily Variety*, 317(6), 1.
- Szörényi, A., & Eate, P. (2014). Saving virgins, saving the USA: Heteronormative masculinities and the securitisation of trafficking discourse in mainstream narrative film. *Social Semiotics*, 24(5), 608-622.  
doi:10.1080/10350330.2014.950009
- The McCain Institute for International Leadership. (2017). *Engaging Students in the Fight Against Human Trafficking*. Retrieved from <https://www.mccaininstitute.org/blog/engaging-students-in-the-fight-against-human-trafficking/>
- Todres, J. (2015). Human trafficking and film: How popular portrayals influence law and public perception. *Cornell Law Review Online*, 101(1), 1-24.
- Tudor, A. (1995). *Genre*. In B.K. Grant (Ed.), *Film genre reader II* (pp. 3-10). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

- Tumiel, K. (2016). *America's modern day slavery: Public perceptions of human trafficking* (Order No. 10253866). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. Retrieved from <http://proxy-iup.klnpa.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/docview/1871695966?accountid=11652>
- Tyron, C. (2009). *Reinventing cinema: Movies in the age of media convergence*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- United Nations General Assembly. (2000). *Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations' convention against transnational organized crime, 15 November 2000*. Retrieved April 27, 2015 <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4720706c0.html>.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2008, May 15). *The role of the media in building relationships*. Retrieved April 27, 2015, from <http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2008/BP012TheRoleoftheMedia.pdf>
- United States president's interagency task force to monitor combat trafficking in persons. (2017). *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States*.
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (n.d.). *Blue campaign*. Retrieved June 6, 2017, from <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/about-blue-campaign>
- U.S. Department of State. (2000). *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

- U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2014). *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Retrieved from website: <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2014/index.htm>
- U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2016). *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Retrieved from website: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258876.pdf>
- Vance, C. (1992). *Pleasure and danger: Exploring female sexuality*. London: Pandora.
- Vogt, W. P. (2005). *Dictionary of statistics & methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.2307/3152235
- Wallinger, C. S., (2010). Media representation and human trafficking: How anti-trafficking discourse affects trafficked persons. *Second Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Human Trafficking, 2010*. Paper 4. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/humtrafconf2/4>
- White T. I. (1992). Business, ethics, and Carol Gilligan's "two voices". *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 2(1), 51-61. doi:10.2307/3857223
- Williams, L. (2001). *Playing the race card: Melodramas of black and white from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. doi:10.1525/fq.2005.59.2.71
- Wilson, M. (2017, April 13). *How college students are fighting human and sex trafficking*. Retrieved February 03, 2018, from <http://college.usatoday.com/2017/04/13/how-college-students-are-fighting-human-and-sex-trafficking/>

- Wühr, P., & Schwarz, S. (2016). Die hard in Notting Hill: Gender differences in recalling contents from action and romantic movies. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 30*(4), 491-503. doi:10.1002/acp.3238
- Yang, F. (2011). *Movies' impact on place images and visitation interest: A product placement perspective*. Retrieved from <http://proxy-iup.klnpa.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/docview/889960482?accountid=11652>
- Yang Goh, E., Kien-Boon Seet, K., Chen, Y., Hui Ng, X., & Pang, A. (2017). Proceedings from CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2017: *Use of humor in crisis communication*. New York, NY.

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent

(Printed on Indiana University of Pennsylvania,  
Department of Communication Media, letterhead)

#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are invited to join a research study investigating the perception of ethical dilemmas in feature films. The film will either be a drama or action-drama presentation and participation will assist non-government and government organizations to effectively convey ethical dilemmas that not only promote awareness but possibly inspire action.

My name is Laurie Sadler Lawrence and for this study I will be functioning as a researcher for Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am also faculty at Stephen F Austin State University. Your cooperation will assist me in completing the research for my dissertation.

#### **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?**

If you decide to participate, you must be between the ages of 18-25. You will be asked to complete a survey prior to watching the movie and again complete another survey after the movie. Your participation should take approximately 2 hours.

- The investigator reserves the right to stop the study or remove participants at any time it is deemed within the best interest of the study.
- Participation is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher. All surveys are kept confidential and coded in accordance with the informed consent. At time of withdrawal, participant's responses will be destroyed. Withdrawal will not exclude you from any compensation offered to participants.

#### **RISKS**

This study involves the following risks: You may feel anxious or helpless to the ethical dilemmas present in the films. If you would like counseling resources, please contact:

- SFA Counseling Services, located on the third floor of the Rusk Building.  
Individual counselors, self-help resources and outreach programs are available to SFA students.
- Laurie Sadler Lawrence (investigator)  
Liberal Arts North – Dugas 420  
l.a.lawrence@iup.edu

#### **BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPANTS**

It is reasonable to expect the following benefits from this research: The movie entertaining and intriguing, enjoyable refreshments, and the opportunity to win one of several \$50 Amazon gift cards. Other benefits may emerge in the future, to both the participants as well as organizations the study is designed to assist, from findings in the research.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your confidentiality will be protected through coding. Coding will allow informed consents to be traced to corresponding surveys should you choose to withdraw your participation. All signed consents, pre-test, and post-test surveys will be scanned onto a data storage drive, hard copies will be shredded, and electronic data will be stored in a lock box for three years and destroyed after that time.

**CONTACT**

Contact Laurie Sadler Lawrence (investigator) at l.a.lawrence@iup.edu for any questions about the study or Dr. Gail Wilson (dissertation chair) at bgwilson@iup.edu.

**CONSENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Subject or Representative*  
*Date*

- This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects (phone 724.357.7730).
- This project has been approved by the Stephen F Austin State University Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects (phone 936.468.1067).

You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Code:\_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Survey

**Please read each question carefully and follow the instructions provided by the research throughout the experiment.**

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you describe yourself as?

\_\_\_\_\_ American Indian or Alaska Native

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian or Asian American

\_\_\_\_\_ Black or African American

\_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic or Latino

\_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian or White

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Have you ever lived in the following areas for more than 2 years? (check all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ Africa

\_\_\_\_\_ Asia

\_\_\_\_\_ Australia

\_\_\_\_\_ Europe

\_\_\_\_\_ North America

\_\_\_\_\_ South America

**Please use the scale to indicate how much you like or dislike these movie genres.**

Action

*Strongly dislike* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly like*

Animation

*Strongly dislike* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly like*

Comedy

*Strongly dislike* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly like*

Drama

*Strongly dislike* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly like*

Horror

*Strongly dislike* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly like*

Science Fiction

*Strongly dislike* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly like*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate how much you believe the content these films can be found in real life situations.**

Action								
<i>Strongly dislike</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly like</i>
Animation								
<i>Strongly dislike</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly like</i>
Comedy								
<i>Strongly dislike</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly like</i>
Drama								
<i>Strongly dislike</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly like</i>
Horror								
<i>Strongly dislike</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly like</i>

**Please use the scale provided to indicate how much you believe you know about the following ethical issues in the United States.**

- I have an understanding of child abuse in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*
- I have an understanding of the drug epidemic in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*
- I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*
- I have an understanding of poverty in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your agreement with the following statement**

- The United States needs to recognize that child abuse is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
- The United States needs to recognize that drug abuse is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
- The United States needs to recognize that human trafficking is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
- The United States needs to recognize that poverty is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*



**Please use the scale provided to indicate your agreement with the following statement**

9. I enjoy watching highly emotional films.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
10. I enjoy watching films that portray vigilante justice.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
11. I have difficulty watching commercials portraying abused animals or starving children.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
12. Films that don't connect me to the culture are boring.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
13. Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of confidence in the following statement**

14. I believe there are things I can do to end child abuse.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
15. I believe there are things I can do to end drug abuse.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
16. I believe there are things I can do to end human trafficking.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
17. I believe there are things I can do to end poverty.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of interest in the following statement**

18. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end child abuse.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
19. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end drug abuse.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
20. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end human trafficking.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

21. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end poverty.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**22. Have you seen any of the following movies? (check all that apply)**

- 8-Days
- Abduction of Eden
- American Gangster
- Pulp Fiction
- Taken in Broad Daylight
- Taken
- The Blind Side
- Trade
- Whistleblowers

**Thank you for participating in this survey. Another survey will be provided at the end of the film and your continued participation is greatly appreciated.**

*If you would like more information on the study, please contact  
l.a.lawrence@iup.edu or bgwilson@iup.edu.*

## Post-Survey

**Read and reconsider each question carefully and follow the instructions provided by the research throughout the experiment.**

**Please use the scale provided to indicate how much you believe you know about the following ethical issues in the United States.**

23. I have an understanding of child abuse in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*
24. I have an understanding of the drug epidemic in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*
25. I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*
26. I have an understanding of poverty in the United States.  
*Limited awareness* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Highly aware*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your agreement with the following statement**

27. The United States needs to recognize that child abuse is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
28. The United States needs to recognize that drug abuse is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
29. The United States needs to recognize that human trafficking is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
30. The United States needs to recognize that poverty is a critical problem.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your agreement with the following statement**

31. I enjoy watching highly emotional films.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
32. I enjoy watching films that portray vigilante justice.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
33. I have difficulty watching commercials portraying abused animals or starving children.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
34. Films that don't connect me to the culture are boring.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

35. Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of confidence in the following statement**

36. I believe there are things I can do to end child abuse.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

37. I believe there are things I can do to end drug abuse.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

38. I believe there are things I can do to end human trafficking.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

39. I believe there are things I can do to end poverty.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of interest in the following statement**

40. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end child abuse.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

41. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end drug abuse.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

42. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end human trafficking.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

43. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end poverty.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of awareness after watching the film**

44. I am more aware of issues on child abuse.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

45. I am more aware of issues on drug abuse.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

46. I am more aware of issues on human trafficking.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

47. I am more aware of issues on poverty.

*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your perception of the film you just watched**

48. It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
49. I didn't really feel connected to the story.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
50. I felt the movie engaged me just enough to understand human trafficking.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
51. I felt a desire to help the victims in the film.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
52. I felt a desire to take actions against the injustices represented in the film.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*
53. I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking.  
*Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly agree*

**Please use the scale provided to indicate your opinion of the film you just watched.**

54. Plot and story/narration  
*Poor* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Excellent*
55. Characters and acting  
*Poor* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Excellent*
56. Production and film quality  
*Poor* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Excellent*
57. Overall opinion of the film  
*Poor* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Excellent*

**58. Please indicate which you feel the movie focused more on: (choose one)**

\_\_\_\_\_The suffering of the victim and their experiences

\_\_\_\_\_Investigation and justice for the victim

Is there anything about this film or experiment that you would like to share with the researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**Thank you for participating in this experiment.**

*If you would be interesting in volunteering for a follow up study, please include the following information:*

*Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Phone:* \_\_\_\_\_

*If you would like more information on the study, please contact  
l.a.lawrence@iup.edu or bgwilson@iup.edu.*

## Appendix D

### Juried Review Form

#### **DIFFERENT VOICES OF ETHICAL DILEMMAS: EVALUATING GENDER PERCEPTIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FILMS**

##### **Direction for Jurors**

Thank you for your willingness to review the pre-test/post-test survey instruments for this study. This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects (phone 724.357.7730). Your evaluation of these surveys is essential to the validity of the instrument and rationale of the experiment.

The study will expose participants to one of four feature films with a narrative based on human trafficking. The theories employed in this study include different voices theory and proper distance concept. Different voices theory postulates that ethical dilemmas are perceived differently by gender; men respond to messages of justice and women respond to messages of empathy. The following focuses on this theory: R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men and women's perception of human trafficking? Proper distance concept considers that audiences need enough information to relate to the circumstances but not so much that they become too immersed during the viewing. The following focuses on this theory: R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking? For this study participants will only be informed that the films are based on ethical dilemmas to circumvent the creation of a bias for the pre-test survey.

Please review each question, observing whether the question is strictly pre-test, post-test or represented in both survey instruments. Your evaluation of each survey question will utilize Zaichkowsky's (1985) method. You will be asked to identify whether each non-decoy survey question is "clearly represented," "somewhat represented," or "not representative of the construct of interest" in relation to the research question. You will then be asked whether decoy questions are "applicable" or "not applicable" in reducing bias for the study. Finally, demographical data will be collected to analyze possible themes should they emerge, please also rate these as "applicable" or "not applicable." Please use the following scoring guide:

##### **Scoring non-decoy questions**

- 1=Not Representative of the construct of interest**
- 2= Somewhat representative (in need of modification)**
- 3= Clearly represented the construct of interest**

##### **Scoring decoy questions/demographical data collection**

**Not applicable**

**Applicable**

Please return completed responses to l.a.lawrence@iup.edu no later than (insert date).

**Juried Review of Pre-test/Post-test Surveys**

Please indicate your response with an “X” in the shaded areas. After the review, please place additional comments.

Pre-Test demographical data ONLY			
<b>Major:</b> _____			
This question is designed to evaluate whether themes of awareness exist within certain majors.	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	
<b>Gender:</b> _____			
This question is designed to categorize participants to evaluate gender perception.	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	
<b>Do you describe yourself as?</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian American <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian or White <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
This question is designed to evaluate whether themes of awareness exist within certain cultures.	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	
<b>Have you ever lived in the following areas for more than 2 years? (check all that apply)</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Africa <input type="checkbox"/> Asia <input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Europe <input type="checkbox"/> North America <input type="checkbox"/> South America			
This question is designed to evaluate whether themes of awareness exist within individuals that have spent considerable time outside the United States.	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	

Pre-test Question ONLY									
<b>Please use the scale provided to indicate how much you like or dislike these movie genres.</b>									
Action	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like
Animation	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like
Comedy	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like
Drama	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like
Horror	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like
Science Fiction	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like



This question is designed to evaluate gender movie preferences.										<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pre-test Question ONLY</b>												
<b>Please use the scale provided to indicate how much you believe the content these films can be found in real life situations.</b>												
Action	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like			
Animation	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like			
Comedy	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like			
Drama	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like			
Horror	Strongly dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly like			
This question will assist in evaluating participant's perception of genre and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?										<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Pre-test/Post-test Question</b>												
Please use the scale provided to indicate how much you believe you know about the following ethical issues in the United States.												
59. I have an understanding of child abuse in the United States.												
<i>Limited awareness</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
<i>Highly aware</i>												
60. I have an understanding of the drug epidemic in the United States.												
<i>Limited awareness</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
<i>Highly aware</i>												
61. I have an understanding of human trafficking in the United States.												
<i>Limited awareness</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
<i>Highly aware</i>												
62. I have an understanding of poverty in the United States.												
<i>Limited awareness</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
<i>Highly aware</i>												
Question 3 (Q. 25 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's perception of human trafficking and map to R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?										<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Question 1 (Q. 23 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.							<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>			
Question 2 (Q. 24 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.							<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>			
Question 4 (Q. 26 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.							<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>			

Pre-test/Post-test Question									
<b>Please use the scale provided to indicate your agreement with the following statement</b>									
63. The United States needs to recognize that child abuse is a critical problem.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
64. The United States needs to recognize that drug abuse is a critical problem.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
65. The United States needs to recognize that human trafficking is a critical problem.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
66. The United States needs to recognize that poverty is a critical problem.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Question 7 (Q. 29 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's perception of human trafficking and map to R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 5 (Q. 27 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.		<b>Not Applicable</b>					<b>Applicable</b>		
Question 6 (Q. 28 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.		<b>Not Applicable</b>					<b>Applicable</b>		
Question 8 (Q. 30 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.		<b>Not Applicable</b>					<b>Applicable</b>		

Pre-test/Post-test Question									
<b>Please use the scale provided to indicate your agreement with the following statement</b>									
67. I enjoy watching highly emotional films.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
68. I enjoy watching films that portray vigilante justice.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
69. I have difficulty watching commercials portraying abused animals or starving children.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
70. Films that don't connect me to the culture are boring.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
71. Films that only give the perspective of the victim are usually deceptive.	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Question 9 (Q. 30 on post-test) will assist in evaluating gender responses to drama films and map to R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 10 (Q. 32 on post-test) will assist in evaluating gender responses to action-drama films and map to R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 11 (Q. 33 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 12 (Q. 34 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					

trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?			
Question 13 (Q. 35 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

Pre-test/Post-test Question			
<b>Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of confidence in the following statement</b>			
72. I believe there are things I can do to end child abuse. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
73. I believe there are things I can do to end drug abuse. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
74. I believe there are things I can do to end human trafficking. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
75. I believe there are things I can do to end poverty. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
Question 16 (Q. 38 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's self-efficacy in their ability to participate in anti-trafficking efforts and map to R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing the movies?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Question 14 (Q. 36 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>
Question 15 (Q. 37 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>
Question 17 (Q. 39 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>

Pre-test/Post-test Question			
<b>Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of interest in the following statement</b>			
76. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end child abuse. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
77. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end drug abuse. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
78. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end human trafficking. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
79. I would like to become involved with organizations that work to end poverty. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 1      2      3      4      5      6      7 <i>Strongly agree</i>			
Question 20 (Q. 42 on post-test) will assist in evaluating participant's interest of involvement with anti-trafficking efforts and map to R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing the movies?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Questions 18 (Q. 40 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>

Questions 19 (Q. 41 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>	
Questions 21 (Q. 43 on post-test) will serve as decoy questions.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>	
<b>Pre-test Question ONLY</b>				
80. Have you seen any of the following movies? (check all that apply)				
<input type="checkbox"/> 8-Days				
<input type="checkbox"/> Abduction of Eden				
<input type="checkbox"/> American Gangster				
<input type="checkbox"/> Pulp Fiction				
<input type="checkbox"/> Taken in Broad Daylight				
<input type="checkbox"/> Taken				
<input type="checkbox"/> The Blind Side				
<input type="checkbox"/> Trade				
<input type="checkbox"/> Whistleblowers				
Question 20 will assist in determining whether the participant has seen feature films on human trafficking that may have influenced their perception. In addition, decoy films were included to reduce bias prior to exposure of the stimulus.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	

<b>Post-test Question ONLY</b>								
Please use the scale provided to indicate your level of awareness after watching the film								
44. I am more aware of issues on child abuse.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
45. I am more aware of issues on drug abuse.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
46. I am more aware of issues on human trafficking.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
47. I am more aware of issues on poverty.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
Question 46 will assist in evaluating participant's perception of human trafficking after the film and map to R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Questions 44 will serve as decoy questions but may be used to determine whether other ethical dilemmas were detected in the film.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>					
Questions 45 will serve as decoy questions but may be used to determine whether other ethical dilemmas were detected in the film.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>					
Questions 47 will serve as decoy questions but may be used to determine whether other ethical dilemmas were detected in the film.	<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>					

Post-test Question ONLY								
Please use the scale provided to indicate your perception of the film you just watched								
48. It was difficult to watch someone suffer from human trafficking.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
49. I didn't really feel connected to the story.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
50. I felt the movie engaged me just enough to understand human trafficking.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
51. I felt a desire to help the victims in the film.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
52. I felt a desire to take actions against the injustices represented in the film.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
53. I believe the story grossly exaggerated circumstances of human trafficking.								
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
Question 48 will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance to events in the film and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 49 will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance to events in the film and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 50 will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 51 will assist in evaluating participant's desire to help anti-trafficking efforts and map to R3: Do feature films on human trafficking affect an individual's perception of their ability to become active in anti-trafficking efforts or to become an agent of change after viewing the movies?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 52 will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance to events in the film and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					
Question 53 will assist in evaluating participant's perception of proper distance to events in the film and map to R2: Does the distance between the realities created in a feature film about human trafficking and the audience's perceived realities of human trafficking affect the audience's acceptance of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>					

Post-test Question ONLY								
54. Plot and story/narration								
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Excellent								
55. Characters and acting								
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Excellent								
56. Production and film quality								
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Excellent								
57. Overall opinion of the film								
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Excellent								
Questions 54 will evaluate participant's perception of narration. This may be used to determine themes that could affect results.						<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>
Questions 55 will evaluate participant's perception of characters. This may be used to determine themes that could affect results.						<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>
Questions 56 will evaluate participant's perception of production. This may be used to determine themes that could affect results.						<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>
Questions 57 will evaluate participant's overall opinion of the film. This may be used to determine themes that could affect results.						<b>Not Applicable</b>		<b>Applicable</b>

Post-test Question ONLY			
58. Please indicate which you feel the movie focused more on: (choose one)			
_____The suffering of the victim and their experiences			
_____Investigation and justice for the victim			
Question 58 will assist in evaluating gender responses to drama and action-drama films and map to R1: What effect do feature films about human trafficking have on men's and women's perception of human trafficking?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**Please record any comments regarding the surveys here:**

---



---



---

Juror, please include your full name, title and position:

---

**Your time and expertise are greatly appreciated!**

*If you would like more information on the study, please contact  
l.a.lawrence@iup.edu or bgwilson@iup.edu.*