

## Proposal

**Title** – Human Trafficking Myth Adherence

**Program of Study** – Psychology

**Presentation Type** – Print Poster

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**Category** – Applied

**Abstract:** The *Trafficking in Persons Report 2016* defines human trafficking as:

1. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age;
2. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

The current study builds off a previous study that researched human trafficking, myth adherence, and past sexual trauma. However, unlike previous research the current study focuses on the influences of victim and participant gender on the attribution of victim blame and human trafficking myth adherence. The attribution theory suggests that people assign responsibility based upon a personal bias that may not accurately reflect the situation at hand. The current study recognizes the limited research in the area of human trafficking and suggests that human

trafficking mythology will follow similar patterns as rape mythology. In addition, the current study employs gender specific names because previous research in rape mythology has revealed that using a gender-neutral name is incomplete in tapping the entire construct intended to measure. Additionally, research on attribution theory finds that there are differences in the way a participant will attribute blame, especially when the gender of the victim is changed. Therefore, the current study will incorporate gender specific names in order to identify differences between attribution of blame based on gender. Previous research has not intently evaluated the differences of victim blame when there is both a male and female victim. From our research, it is hypothesized that:

1. Those in the sample who have a high myth adherence will attribute more blame to the victim than the perpetrator.
2. Male participants who have a high myth adherence will attribute more blame to the victim than female participants.
3. Male participates who have a high myth adherence will attribute more victim blame to the boy victim than the girl victim in the vignette.
4. Female participants will be less likely to attribute blame to both genders as compared to male participants.