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# Juvenile Prostitution: An Exploration in Gendered Theory

Kelli Reynolds

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Juvenile Prostitution: An Exploration in Gendered Theory

A Thesis Presented

by

KELLI REYNOLDS

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies  
Bridgewater State University  
Bridgewater, Massachusetts

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in Criminal Justice

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Approved as to style and content by:

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name, Chair (please print)

Date

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name, Member (please print)

Date

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name, Member (please print)

Date

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which juvenile females enter into prostitution. This theoretical analysis will assess support for existing explanations of delinquency and prostitution of female juveniles using secondary data sources. This secondary data source is pulled from a survey of 114 adjudicated delinquent girls in South Carolina, which was collected in 2014. A comprehensive review of the literature regarding juvenile prostitution will include perspectives on polyvictimization and cumulative trauma as well as the history of prostitution. These concepts will be supported further by discussing current research and survey data. The specific focus of this study is to examine juvenile prostitution from a theoretical standpoint, in hopes of understanding juvenile entry into sex work. Theories investigated are General Strain Theory (GST), the Cycle of Violence Hypothesis and Gendered Pathways theory.

### **Introduction:**

Various forms of sex work have had a long and lucrative history on both global and domestic levels. The sex industry involves a wide variety of sexual services, some of which are considered to be legal and some are not (Weitzer, 2007). The sex work industry includes pornography, stripping, phone and Internet sex, sexual services obtained through brothels, escort services, massage parlors and or on the streets (Monto, 2004). For the purposes of this thesis, the focus will be on female juvenile prostitution occurring domestically within the United States.

Juvenile prostitution is the prostitution of children or minors. A child is legally defined as a person under the age of 14, while a minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18 in most states (Collins, 2016). According to the Department of Justice (2016), juvenile prostitution is considered to be a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The term juvenile prostitution usually refers to an individual who is prostituting themselves or is being prostituted when they are under the legal age of consent as recognized by federal law. The legal age of consent as recognized by federal law is 18.

United States Federal Child Exploitation Laws state that it is a federal offense to knowingly recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide, obtain or maintain a minor knowing or in a reckless disregard of the fact that the victim is a minor and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act (The Department of Justice, n.d.). Commercial sex acts are defined very broadly, covering any sex act on account of which anything of value is given or received by any person (The Department of Justice, n.d.). This means that it is illegal to offer and obtain a child, or coerce that child into any kind of sexual activity in exchange for items of value including money, goods, personal benefit, in kind favors.

Children do not need to be prostituted internationally or across state lines in order for it to be considered sex trafficking. While the Department of Justice (2016) emphasizes that the term prostitution may be confusing when it comes to juveniles, they are all considered to be victims. However, this does not appear to be the case in all scenarios including juvenile prostitutes as they can be arrested and charged as criminals.

While literature (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 1988) points to juvenile's involvement in prostitution as largely at will as a survival need, we grapple with whether this prostitution involvement can really be considered at will. United States Federal Child Exploitation law discusses that all juvenile prostitutes are victims, due to the fact that they cannot legally consent to sexual acts due to their age (The Department of Justice, n.d.). However, states are still able, under their laws, to arrest juveniles for prostitution charges.

United States Federal Child Exploitation Laws apply to all American children as well as foreign nationals who are brought into the United States and forced to work in prostitution. While this federal statute explains that it is illegal to prostitute children, the penalties and fines for doing such will depend on the age of the victim. If the victim is under fourteen years of age, or if the victim is forced or coerced the penalty is a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison (Department of Justice, 2016). If the victim was aged 14-17 and it does not appear 'force' was a factor, the offender receives a minimum of 5 years in prison (Department of Justice, 2016). This raises the important question regarding what should and should not be considered force, as well as the role age plays in making this determination.

Juveniles who enter prostitution may act alone or be prostituted by others. While juvenile prostitution is not a new phenomenon, it has become increasingly important to

understand what may lead juveniles into prostitution as the criminal justice system is concerned with fighting commercial child sexual exploitation. Estimates of juvenile prostitutes in the United States vary due to inconsistent reporting as well as definitional and ethical problems. For example, Estes and Weiner (2001) note that about 326,000 children are at risk for commercial exploitation, but are unable to determine an estimate of juveniles that are involved in prostitution. In comparison, a study by Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak (2009) uses arrest data to determine there are between 1,300 and 1,600 juvenile prostitutes in the United States. This is in part due to inconsistent reporting, as law enforcement agencies are inconsistent in their treatment of juvenile prostitutes in terms of treating them as victims or as offenders. This inconsistency may cause hesitation to self-report.

The core cause of juvenile prostitution has been largely debated in the literature. The act of forcing a juvenile into prostitution is reprehensible, and should be treated as such. Many articles regarding juvenile prostitution are ridden with scary rhetoric about sex trafficking rings that are taking children out of homes and prostituting them around the globe (Martin, 2009 Saar, 2014). These misconceptions are largely due to dramatic analyses of reported data, which are meant to elicit a specific emotional response from readers. These emotional responses, much like what America experienced during the War on Drugs, garner backing for more intrusive policy measures.

Investigated in this study are differing theoretical explanations for female juvenile's involvement in prostitution. If there is not a person forcing these young women into prostitution, what other factors may be at hand? Research into the relationship between General Strain Theory and juvenile prostitution has been investigated in a

quantitative study (Reid & Piquero, 2016), however further theoretical explanations have had limited exploration. By discussing the key components of three possible theoretical frameworks, I will investigate which potential theories which may be applicable to juvenile prostitution. These theories are General Strain Theory (GST), Feminist Pathways Theory, and the Cycle of Violence Hypothesis.

Gendered theories are of particular interest in this study as they examine closely victimization histories of juvenile female offenders as well as adult female offenders. These theories will be analyzed with information known about juvenile prostitutes in hopes to add to the existing literature on juvenile prostitution. While there has been an increased focus on juvenile prostitution in recent years, it is critical to understand how and why juvenile females turn to prostitution.

The history of prostitution is also important in understanding the issue. The history of prostitution will be examined with an emphasis on The Mann Act – the first federal policy in the US officially banning prostitution. I will then discuss juvenile prostitution and factors that literature suggests may be leading girls into commercial sex work. By examining these two areas, I expect that the theories discussed will explore possible factors in juvenile girls who turn to prostitution.

## Literature Review

### History of Prostitution

**Overview.** While prostitution has long been considered “the oldest profession”, debate exists between historians because although prostitution existed in ancient times, it was largely for religious purposes instead of commerce. Ditmore (2011) has noted that prostitution is a strong part of American culture, evolving through the years alongside the culture.

In ancient times, prostitution was a facilitation of temple offerings to the goddess of fertility with their beginnings rooted in ancient Mesopotamia. Lerner (1986) explains that sexual activity for and on behalf of the goddess was considered to be beneficial and sacred. As producing offspring were considered to be detrimental to a female’s social status, temple sacrifices were quite common (Lerner, 1986). Over time, prostitution began to transition into a commercial service.

**The Mann Act (1910).** The first legislation to come about prohibiting prostitution in America was The Mann Act of 1910. *The Mann Act* was also known as the *White Slave Traffic Act*. This made it a felony to transport women across state lines for purposes of prostitution, debauchery or any other immoral purpose. At its time of publication, an immoral purpose was considered “any sexual activity for which a person can be charged with a criminal offense” (18 US Code Chapter 117). *The Mann Act* covers various aspects of both adult and juvenile prostitution. Of specific interest to juvenile prostitution, *The Mann Act* includes fines and prosecution against the transportation of minors, the use

of interstate facilities to transmit information about a minor, and protections against child pornography (18 US Code Chapter 117).

*The Mann Act* set precedent for prosecuting cases of adult and juvenile prostitution in the United States. The intentions of this act have been found to have discriminatory undertones as it has been argued that it was designed to prevent Caucasian girls from having sexual relations with African Americans, immigrants and the middle class – hence it's other known name - the *White Slave Traffic Act*. During the Progressive Era, the term White Slavery was not explicitly defined, instead encompassing both voluntary and involuntary prostitution, as well as any female sexual behavior which could be considered immoral such as promiscuity, interracial sex, and homosexual acts (Bromfield, 2016). During the early 1900's, a moral panic existed around what some considered to be "white slavery" and the forced prostitution of girls (Bromfield, 2016).

At this time, a common fear was that Caucasian females were being forced into prostitution by African Americans, Eastern European Jews and other foreign men (Bromfield, 2016). Commercial sex workers were often depicted as helpless (mostly European) Caucasian females. Dramatic narratives portrayed these workers as innocent girls who were drugged, tricked and forced into prostitution. This created the character of a white slave, an innocent woman who was in need of protection as there could be no plausible explanation as to why a woman would choose this trade of her own volition (Bromfield, 2016; Conant, 1996; Lucas, 1995).

By creating this act, legislators were able to prosecute what they deemed to be immoral sexual acts, which included interracial sexual acts (Conant, 1996). Lucas (1995) notes that reformers and policy makers often perceived anyone in the working class as

well as immigrants and people of color as promiscuous and deviant in comparison to the innocent Caucasian females they were allegedly exploiting. While the rhetoric provided in this act did not explicitly determine this, the loose term of immoral sexual acts left the interpretation up to the prosecuting parties. While there were very few documented cases of legitimate white slavery as these parties had defined it, the moral panic was driven by “fears of immigration and rapidly changing social and gender roles” (Bromfield, 2016, p. 130)

This historical framework is important in understanding female juveniles entering prostitution. As witnessed during the early 1900s, venomous rhetoric around sexual relationships caused legislation to be formed based off of a moral panic that was unfounded.

While it can be argued that not all bad has come from this act as it has sought to protect juveniles who are forced into sex work, it does not appear that this was the main intention. While the discussion around human trafficking and sex trafficking is now conducted in a very different context, one cannot help but draw possible parallels between these inflammatory claims made decades ago and those of today about human trafficking. It is not argued that forced juvenile prostitution occurs and is not a reprehensible act, however portraying all juvenile females in this light leaves a gap in assistance for juvenile prostitutes who have entered sex work voluntarily.

## **Prostitution**

**Overview.** Prostitution is often defined as the exchange of sexual access to one’s body for something of value, most frequently money or drugs (Monto, 2004). Prostitution

occurs in a variety of social contexts which include the issues of consent, past victimization, violence, economic circumstance, and substance abuse (Monto, 2004).

Monto (2004) note that our understanding of prostitution is shaped most by the public perceptions and myths of prostitution. However, there are many differences between the types of prostitution. Street prostitution has been known as problematic, violent, and exploitative in comparison to indoor prostitution which includes high-end escort services. This is an important distinction to make in light of juvenile prostitution, as juvenile prostitutes largely are considered street prostitutes. Very seldom are juveniles able to access escort services that are designated for adults over the age of 18 to sell sex. This distinction between different types of prostitution is able to give insight into the type of environment which juvenile prostitutes endure.

**sex workers rights.** Women's rights activists as well as advocates for sex workers (Sex Workers Project, 2016; Sex Workers Outreach Project, 2016) argue that sex workers should share equal status with other labor intense professions. However, this argument assumes that all sex work is being performed consensually and free of coercion and violence, which is not always the case. While some sex workers make the conscious decision to enter this field, this does not account for those who are forced or coerced into the profession.

The argument for legalization and regulation of sex work often includes the argument for equal rights of sex workers (Monto, 2004). This argument is supported by the idea that prostitution is a type of sexual expression which empowers the woman to use her body in whatever way she sees fit to benefit herself. However, this idea does not address forced or coerced prostitution.

## Sex Trafficking

**Overview.** As noted, prostitution is often defined as the exchange of sexual access to one's body for something of value, most frequently money or drugs (Monto, 2004). This definition partially extends to sex trafficking, as the goal of the work is the same. There are many similarities, as it can be argued that prostitution itself is a form of sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is considered to be human trafficking and is an international problem which affects many individuals in various countries. However, the term human trafficking encompasses both labor and sexual exploitation of men and women, adults and children. Human trafficking is often referred to as modern day slavery due to the exploitation that victims may face through the use of fraud, force, threat and deception (Goodey, 2008). According to the United Nations, human trafficking involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring or receiving a person through use of force, coercion or other means (Winterdyk & Riechel, 2010).

The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has cited human trafficking to be one of the leading criminal enterprises, which disproportionately affects women and children, pulling in an estimated global profit of 32 billion annually (Okech, Morreau, & Benson, 2011). Of the 600,000 to 800,000 victims taken across borders each year, 80% were females, and 50% were children (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2006). An estimated two to four million people are victims within their own countries (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2006.)

**Sex trafficking.** It is noted by Okech et. al (2011) that a majority of human trafficking is for sexual purposes. Of 1229 alleged human trafficking incidents that proceeded to prosecution in the United States between 2007-2008 83% were for

commercial sex purposes while 12% were for labor trafficking cases (US Department of Justice, 2009).

According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, forms of trafficking are defined as:

“a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or 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” (Heil & Nichols, 2014).

Many cases of human trafficking go unreported. These cases go unreported for various reasons, including fear of arrest or in some cases deportation .

**Legislation.** The TVPA is a three pronged strategy to address human trafficking with emphasis on prosecution, protection and prevention. The TVPA has been continuously reauthorized since its original signing in 2000 every three years - 2003, 2005, and 2008 (US Department of State, n.d.). In 2013, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 was included in Title XII of the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013* (US Department of State, n.d.).

Wooditch (2011) explains that these reauthorizations have expanded the jurisdiction of federal law enforcement to investigate human trafficking crimes, enhance criminal and civil penalties of traffickers, and increases collaboration between law enforcement agencies and and victim service providers. In order to provide adequate

funding and resources to victims, the reauthorizations of this act included grants for over 42 task forces aimed at stopping domestic sex trafficking.

Each reauthorization has extended further actions to protect victims of juvenile prostitution and to prosecute their traffickers. For example, the 2003 reauthorization of TVPA established a federal civil right of action which allowed victims to sue their traffickers. In addition, this reauthorization included measures to protect victims and their families from deportation, as well as adding human trafficking to the *Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations (RICO)* statute (US Department of State, n.d.). The 2005 reauthorization included a pilot program for sheltering minors involved in prostitution, as well as provisions to assist in fighting sexual tourism. Sexual tourism is when individuals travel abroad seeking sex with juveniles. Many of the countries which these individuals travel to have more lax laws and regulations on juvenile prostitution, and or very little enforcement.

In recent decades, the international community has begun to mobilize itself in an effort to combat human trafficking (Winterdyk & Riechel, 2010). This global mobilization can be attributed to the rise in social awareness around human and sex trafficking. The first international legislation addressing human trafficking was the *1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others*. This declared that trafficking for the purpose of prostitution violated human dignity and the worth of the person (Winterdyk & Riechel, 2010). *The UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and Exploitation of Prostitution of Others* was later replaced in 2000. The replacement act is the *UN*

*Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* which is commonly known as the *Palermo Protocol* (Winterdyk & Riechel, 2010).

According to Okech et. al (2011), individuals from poor countries and families are most at risk of being trafficked because they are easily targeted due to their vulnerabilities. The environment human trafficking is ripe due to various factors contributed to globalization. Globalization makes women and children in poor countries vulnerable to human trafficking because there is little economic opportunity available to them (Winterdyk & Riechel, 2010).

Human trafficking legislation has worked to bring justice for victims as well as prosecuting offenders, however the research suggests that few victims of human trafficking are coming forward. There are several reasons why victims may not be coming forward, including gaps in victim identification, fear of retaliation, illegal alien status, and lack of support and resources (Okech, Morreau, & Benson, 2011). In efforts to prosecute offenders and help victims, several pieces of international, federal and state legislation have been passed. With recent legislation attempting to focus on victim services and resources as well as harsher punishment for offenders, reporting numbers in the United States still remain relatively low in comparison to their national and international estimates.

The United States has largely adopted human tracking policy as a foreign relations problem. The annual *Trafficking in Persons* report published by the State Department identifies and assesses countries with high rates of human trafficking. Countries who fail to abide by the international standards set forth by the United States may be hit with trade and financial sanctions (Gallagher & Holmes, 2008).

## Juvenile Prostitution

**Overview.** In recent years, women and girls have accounted for a growing number of arrests for prostitution (Siegel & Williams, 2003; Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996; Zahn et al., 2010). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the arrests of adolescent females increased between the years 1991 to 2000, more so than their adolescent male counterparts (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015; Zahn et al., 2010.). In 2004, adolescent females accounted for 30% of all juvenile arrests (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015) including prostitution.

As noted, a major focus has been placed on preventing the exploitation of children across the globe. The exploitation of children includes the sexual exploitation of children, which encompasses commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) (Estes & Weiner, 2001, Cole, Cohen, Lee & Sprang, 2014). CSEC includes child pornography, juvenile prostitution and sex trafficking (Estes & Weiner, 2001). The rise of CSEC has been attributed to various factors, including domestic or international trafficking rings (Estes & Weiner, 2001, Cole, Sprang, Lee, & Cohen, 2014). Research (Curtis, Dank, Dombrowski, Khan & Terry 2008) does suggest that there are more juvenile boys involved in prostitution than previously investigated, however for the purposes of this study juvenile females will be examined.

Despite claims that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is reaching alarming rates, sex work by juveniles remains somewhat ignored in literature. Because it has been understudied, this causes concrete quantitative and qualitative data to be scarce (Cole, Cohen, Lee, & Sprang, 2014; Curtis, Dank, Dombrowski, Khan & Terry 2008; DeHart & Moran, 2015; Estes & Weiner, 2001; Hoyt & Scherer, 1998). While estimates

of children being sexually exploited have been reported by *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) to exceed 100 million, it is unable to be confirmed. In comparison, the *World Congress against the Sexual Exploitation of Children* stated that large numbers of prostituted children are working in 'rich' countries, including the United States (Estes & Weiner, 2001). This statistic implies that the challenges faced by those hoping to research the sexual exploitation of children are bolstered by scarce data sources and unreliable statistics (Curtis, Dank, Dombrowski, Khan & Terry 2008).

Research suggests that CSEC has been fueled most by runaway children as a form of survival, not from forced exploitation (Cole, Cohen, Lee, & Sprang, 2014; Curtis, Dank, Dombrowski, Khan & Terry 2008; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012, Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996). Contradicting most literature surrounding sex trafficking, Widom (2010) suggests that commercial sex work performed by adolescent females is often times for their survival. This work is considered survival sex, because it provides basic necessities such as food, shelter, or drugs if they are abusing substances. This raises a complicated question in which the terms of force and choice must be clarified.

As Widom (2010) has suggested, some juvenile female prostitutes begin this line of work as a means of survival. Often, this is seen as a conscious choice that they are making to enter this profession on their own, as force is traditionally thought of as pressure from another individual or third party often by threats. This contradicts the widely held notion that juvenile prostitutes are being 'forced' into this profession, and are often part of domestic and international sex trafficking rings against their own will (Franklin & Menaker, 2013). While this does not suggest that the forced prostitution of juvenile females does not exist, nor does it suggest that it should not be taken seriously, it

is of increasing importance for stakeholders to be educated on why juvenile girls are entering sex work (Cole, Cohen, Lee, & Sprang, 2014).

Misunderstanding the context in which juveniles enter prostitution further fuels the misconception that child victims are being forced into prostitution by an individual or third party, when they may have more agency (Curtis, Dank, Dombrowski, Khan & Terry 2008; Estes & Weiner, 2001). Some juvenile females are turning to commercial sex work as a last resort, after leaving emotionally and physically abusive homes (Kuhns & Spatz-Widom, 1996; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012). Due to their age, there are virtually no other options for a juvenile to bring in any legal source of income due to labor laws. Depending on state law, minors under the legal working age will not be able to get a job at a local coffee shop or fast food restaurant for instance. Even those who are of the legal age may run into various obstacles obtaining legal work as they must provide a home address and in many cases a birth certificate and social security card. Left with little other options, these juveniles turn to illegal work to support themselves on the streets.

**Polyvictimization and cumulative trauma.** There is a strong relationship between the victimization that a juvenile female has experienced early in life, and ensuing substance abuse, mental health, and social issues (DeHart & Moran, 2015; Kuhns & Spatz-Widom, 1996; Zahn, et al., 2010). Regardless of race and class, both juvenile and adult prostitutes are likely to have a victimization history that includes instances of abuse, maltreatment and neglect (Hwang & Bedford, 2004; Kuhns & Spatz-Widom, 1996).

While any trauma alone has been shown to increase the likelihood of delinquency and criminality, females who experience several forms of trauma across their life course

become even more susceptible to this. Juvenile females who have experienced various victimizations and traumas are at a higher risk for delinquency and criminality later in life than individuals who experience one trauma or no trauma at all (DeHart & Moran, 2015).

Dehart (2015) describes this as polyvictimization or simultaneously experiencing several different kinds of victimization in different incidents. Cumulative trauma occurs however when multiple instances of violence are compounded on top of one another, occurring at the same time. These cumulative levels of victimization include various forms of abuse, neglect and maltreatment as well as bullying and witnessing violence. No matter which way polyvictimization has been operationalized, the *Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire* (Finkelhor, 2008) has found that children who experience multiple victimizations were at high risk for additional victimization and trauma symptomatology. Trauma symptomatology includes feelings of anger, depression, anxiety and aggression as well as experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (DeHart & Moran, 2015).

While not a causative factor as to why female juveniles enter prostitution, it is of particular interest as some juvenile prostitutes have noted past histories of multiple victimizations (DeHart & Moran, 2015; Kuhns & Spatz-Widom, 1996; Siegel & Williams, 2003; Brown & Finkelhor, 2010). DeHart (2015) notes that children who experience high levels of trauma as well as behavioral and emotional symptomology may provide insight into why some victimized juveniles will become delinquent and why others will not.

Juveniles who have been exposed to multiple forms of victimization and trauma will sometimes run away from home to escape their abuse, leaving them on the streets with few options for survival. Consequently, running away from home becomes a

primary risk factor due to the use of prostitution as a survival skill (Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996). As previously noted, survival sex among juvenile prostitutes is common in exchange for food, protection and shelter as well as drugs and money.

**Physical, sexual and emotional abuse.** Siegel and Williams (2003) note that half of female delinquents report being sexually abused, while female inmates report having a history of childhood sexual victimization that is two to three times greater than women in the general public. Childhood abuse, neglect, and maltreatment play an important role in running away as well as subsequent drug abuse, prostitution and violence leading to adult involvement in the criminal justice system later in life (Chamberlain & Leve, 2004; Mersky, Reynolds & Topitzes, 2012; Siegel & Williams, 2003).

Studies of adolescent females considered to be chronic runaways document significant levels of physical, sexual, and emotional victimization (Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996). For example, although running away or being truant in school may not seem to be a big problem on its own, it may often lend insight into a deeper issue that must be addressed (Zahn et al., 2010). Family dysfunction and child maltreatment increase the risk of delinquency and criminal behavior in girls (Zahn et al., 2010).

A study by Spatz-Widom (2010) found that a small sample of juvenile boys and girls were considered to be in a ‘sexual abuse plus group’ which meant that they experienced both sexual abuse as well as severe neglect or non-sexual physical abuse (Zahn et al., 2010). This group was considered to be more likely than any other sub group to be arrested for running away.

Roe-Sepowitz (2012) note that childhood emotional abuse transmits negative beliefs to a child about themselves and their abilities causing a pervasive lack of self-worth. The long term impact of emotional abuse on a child may lead to psychological effects resulting in adolescent victims not having adequate coping strategies or resources to deal with high risk situations they encounter. In comparison to juvenile prostitutes who had experienced physical and sexual abuse, emotional abuse was found to be a determining factor of the age in which a juvenile prostitute would begin this work (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012).

Research suggests (Chamberlain & Leve, 2004; Mersky, Reynolds & Topitzes, 2012; Kuhns & Spatz-Widom, 1996) family dysfunction and child maltreatment increase the likelihood of delinquency and subsequent criminal offending in girls. Findings from by Spatz-Widom (2012) supports this, noting that children who experienced abuse, neglect or maltreatment were at a significantly higher risk for juvenile arrests compared to their control group. This study followed children who had been abused and or neglected 25 years prior to the study as well as a control group of children who were matched by the same age, sex, race and social class (Spatz-Widom, 2013). By adulthood, this same study found that those who reported abuse, neglect or maltreatment as children were 59% more likely to have been arrested for any offense as a juvenile and 28% more likely to have been arrested for a violent crime later in life (Widom, 2010; Zahn et al., 2010).

Understanding the relationship between victimization histories of juveniles is important in understanding their entry into prostitution. In comparing juvenile prostitutes and adult prostitutes, it has been noted that juvenile prostitutes are more likely to have

experimented with drugs and alcohol prior to prostitution where adult prostitutes, particularly high end escorts use drugs later in life (Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996).

**Entrance and introduction to prostitution.** Speculation surrounds juvenile's introduction and entry into prostitution (Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996). Common examples include white juvenile females from families with above average incomes who report experiences of physical, sexual and emotional abuse at home (Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996). Their need to run away from home is an escape from the molestation they encountered. In this example, these juveniles are recruited by pimps and commercially sexually exploited for survival purposes (Spatz-Widom & Kuhns, 1996).

Minority women turning to prostitution as a means to escape the communities where they reside is another example of this. These juveniles are likely to have begun prostituting due to economic pressure and deviant social networks that are nurtured within these communities (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012).

Most commonly, entrance into prostitution stemming from sexual abuse is reported by juveniles who have entered sex work (Allwood & Spatz-Widom, 2013; Chamberlain & Leve, 2004; Hoyt & Scherer, 1998; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012; Zahn et al., 2010). This provides support for the argument that sexual abuse may increase the probability of participation in illegal activities as a coping mechanism, causing further problems with their social skills and an eventual introduction to sex work (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012).

## Theory

**Overview.** The examination and comparison of gender neutral and gender specific theory is important in identifying what factors may lead a juvenile girl to enter prostitution. While some theorists have argued that gender neutral theories provide adequate insight into female criminality, gender specific theories will possibly allow for a better understanding as to why juvenile females are turning to prostitution. As noted, if there is not an individual pressuring or forcing a juvenile female into prostitution, what are other possible explanations that could account for their entry into prostitution? An endurance of poly-victimization opens the conversation for possible physical and emotional turmoil which may lead female juveniles into prostitution as an escape or a survival skill. Understanding this pathway will allow for stakeholders to identify and intervene with at risk female juveniles.

Many criminological theories have had a primary focus on explaining male criminality, as male subjects have long been the focus of the criminal justice system. Crime theories have then been applied across both genders in attempt to determine if male criminal behavior could also account for female criminality. The problem of generalizability addresses whether theories that have been traditionally applied to males can be applied to females as well (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 1988). This leaves gaps in understanding female criminality, as predominantly male criminal theory does not account for the many distinct differences in experiences, attitudes and emotionality between the two genders. The gender ratio problem – or gender gap problem – has examined why females were involved less in crime than their male counterparts. And while this is typical for most crimes, prostitution is the one crime that provides the most

data suggesting that females are adjudicated at higher rates than their male counterparts. Criminologists who examine the gender gap in criminality argue that patterns of crimes committed by males and females are significantly different and warrant their own theoretical frameworks (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 1988).

Gender neutral theorists, which include developmental criminologists/psychologists and mainstream correctional researchers (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006) maintain that theories of criminal conduct should be applicable to both genders as they should explain crime regardless of gender. This means that pathways to delinquency are said to be comprised largely of factors pertaining to the individual experiencing them.

While it is simple to assume that some juveniles have entered into prostitution by their own will, it is difficult to determine when this is actually the case. Supporters of decriminalization of adult prostitution often argue that this occupation is a sexual expression which adults should be able to make money off of if they so choose (Brents & Hausbeck, 2005). Law enforcement or juvenile prostitutes themselves may also echo this sentiment. However, it is difficult to determine if this is ever the case. Circumstance leading juveniles into prostitution are often clouded by survival needs, which calls into question whether this act should be treated as a criminal problem. Criminological theories were chosen to gain a further understanding of juveniles entry into prostitution.

**General strain theory.** GST argues that various stressors and strains that an individual may experience can lead to delinquency and criminality. The most important condition under which this may occur, is the environment in which the individual lives. Agnew (1992) explained that experiencing strain leads to negative emotions,

which in turn can lead to delinquency and crime when an individual hasn't learned how to deal with negative emotions or strain in a positive manner.

Social support from family members and peers may provide effective coping skills to an individual early in life. Because these skills are instilled early, they are carried through life and individuals are able to cope effectively with negative emotion and strain as they encounter it. When they do not have this social support and they have not learned effective coping skills, they may cope in a deviant manner. Deviant coping may present itself in internal ways and external ways. These possible coping mechanisms can present themselves through mental health and social issues, substance abuse issues, aggression, eating disorders or self-harm. When strain makes an individual experience negative emotions, the common human response is to eradicate this feeling. GST becomes a crime theory when individuals choose to eradicate this feeling by coping in a deviant manner.

While hundreds of types of strains and stressors exist, Agnew (1992, 2001, 2007) notes that certain types of strain are more likely to lead to delinquency and crime. An important theory to evaluate in discussing female delinquency, as GST focuses on how the negative emotions and experiences of females differ greatly from their male counterparts. Of additional importance is the fact that this theory has been tested (Agnew, 2001; Agnew, 2002; Agnew, Brezina, Cullen & Wright, 2002) on multiple groups of juveniles specifically, to determine what kinds of strain may contribute to delinquency.

GST expands from the sociological strain theory. Strain theory, articulated by Robert Merton focuses on the relationship between social structures and criminal activity. Merton (1938) placed focus on anomie, which is the deinstitutionalization of norms that occurs when there is a disconnect between cultural goals and the means to achieve such

goals. Because of this, Merton (1938) theorized that deviant behavior was likely to occur when an individual pursued illegitimate means to attain culturally established goals when they're blocked by institutionalized means. Building from Merton's strain theory, GST creates a broad gender neutral theory which can account for possible factors leading to female criminality.

GST argues that there are three major sources of strain which are the failure to achieve positively valued goals, the loss of positively valued stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli (Agnew, 1992). GST is traditionally considered to be gender neutral, as these strains occur across gender lines (Agnew, 1992). Gender differences which need further explanation come about when a person experiences strain. The same strain experienced by both a male and a female will affect them both differently, and have different consequences. Although GST is considered to be a gender neutral theory, the ways in which individuals handle strain becomes highly gendered.

*gender.* While males and females both experience trauma and abuses, Agnew (1992) notes that females may experience this range of victimizations, abuses and traumas in a different manner than their male counterparts. Males and females handle negative strain in different ways. Strains experienced by females will have varying impacts on their well-being. Females are more likely to encounter network related strains and stressors than males. Females have been found to be more concerned with their social networks, lending more care and attention to the way they interact with people and their relationships.

Arrest data (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015) shows that males and females may commit similar crimes, however their motivations for committing these crimes are very

different, stemming from the values held by each gender. For example, a male may commit a property crime as he feels he is not advancing economically, and a female may commit a property crime to provide for her family.

When females fail to achieve a positively valued goal, they are more likely to react in a self-destructive manner than males. Females may react to these stresses and strains by abusing drugs and alcohol or by developing an eating disorder (Agnew, 2002). These reactions to strain are of particular interest when discussing juvenile prostitution. Literature (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006; Brown, Greiner, Jones, & Wanamaker, 2013) suggests that juvenile females enter prostitution largely as a survival skill when they have left home.

Females are found to experience high rates of victimization across their lifetime (Allwood & Spatz-Widom, 2013, Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, & Turner, 2005). When they internalize these strains, they may often turn to drug use as an escape from their feelings. A possible way to continue this habit is by running away or turning to prostitution in order to generate an income to support their habit.

Of additional importance is the way that females are invested in their social networks. Juvenile females who lack proper coping skills and resources may try to avoid significant criminal behaviors as they do not want to affect the individuals around them (Agnew, 2001). Because of this, they turn inwards to escape and avoid a situation. This may lead to drug use, small property offenses such as shoplifting, and prostitution. These are self-focused destructive behaviors that may feel like an escape for a juvenile female who is facing serious subjective strains.

A study conducted by Piquero & Sealock (2006) determined that while no significant differences were found in the amounts of strain experienced across gender lines, females reported higher levels of anger and depression than their male counterparts. While males reported higher levels of physical and cognitive coping resources, their female counterparts did not. For example, males acted out in an aggressive manner such as physically fighting. As this study was conducted on juveniles, it lends insight into the coping mechanisms available to individuals with strain.

*juvenile delinquency:* GST provides important insight into juvenile delinquency and possible pathways which juvenile females follow into prostitution. As it pulls from both strain theory and feminist theory, it examines the life experiences of these females and how it may relate to their involvement in crime. As it has been presented, females are more likely to internalize their stressors and strain, as they often lack proper coping mechanisms. These self-destructive behaviors may be attributed to their experiences such as running away, small property crimes and eventually prostitution.

Literature suggests that many types of strain described by GST are related to delinquency (Agnew, 1992). Research from Agnew (2007) examined objective and subjective types of strain and how it affects individuals differently. An objective strain is a strain that is disliked by most people in a group, while a subjective strain will be disliked by the person who experiences it (Froggio & Agnew, 2007). Agnew & Froggio (2007) found that subjective strains are more likely correlated to crime, as these strains and stressors will elicit the negative emotions necessary to push an individual to criminality. Objective and subjective strains may overlap slightly, as what may be considered an objective strain is still evaluated on a subjective basis by the individual

experiencing the strain. The way that an individual may interpret this strain is based off of a multitude of factors, including their goals, values, identities, past experiences and personality traits. It is important to note that not all strains, objective or subjective, will lead to crime. It is simply a point where one can begin to understand the path one may take to delinquency and criminality.

***trauma as strain:*** There are several factors which influence how strain connects to delinquency (Agnew, 2002). These factors influence how the strain is experienced as well as an individual's ability to cope with the strain presented (Agnew, 2002).

Influential factors include how important the goal is to the individual, the values or identities that are threatened by the strain experienced, access to coping resources and ability to cope, low levels of social control and impulsivity (Agnew, 1992; Agnew, 2001; Agnew, 2002, Agnew, Brezina, Cullen & Wright, 2002).

Psychosocial problems for juveniles stemming from various traumas they encounter are strains that could potentially lead to criminal behavior. With negative emotions influencing their decision making, juveniles connect strain from trauma to possible delinquency. The need to escape abusive environments and traumatic experiences prompts some juveniles to disengage from their peers and familial relationships (Agnew, 1992). While some juveniles run away, others use drugs and alcohol as an escape from their environments. Both scenarios leave juvenile girls susceptible to sexual exploitation.

**Cycle of violence hypotheses.** The question which the cycle of violence hypothesis (Widom, 1989) hopes to answer is whether child abuse and neglect may lead to delinquency and eventual criminal behavior. This is based off of the idea that physical

abuse, neglect and maltreatment may have both immediate negative consequences and additional long term consequences. Abuse, neglect and maltreatment of children have been found to lead to issues later in life including behavioral issues, social problems, mental health issues, and substance abuse. While the cycle of violence references intergenerational violence such as abuse experienced as a child leading to abuse as an adult, it also lends insight into juvenile delinquency and overall criminal offending. The original hypothesis presented by Widom (1989) explains that violence breeds violence, and children who experience violence early in life will continue a life of violence eventually becoming abusive themselves.

Widom's study (1989) found that childhood abuse and neglect increased the odds of future delinquency and adult criminality overall by 29%. The cycle of violence may provide insight to female juvenile prostitution, as research (Cole, Cohen, Lee & Sprang, 2014; Widom, 2010) has found that juvenile prostitutes often report early childhood abuse, trauma and neglect. Examining the cycle of violence theory may lend support to pathways into juvenile prostitution, as polyvictimization reported by juvenile prostitutes appears to be consistent (DeHart & Moran, 2015).

While literature has suggested that abused and neglected children do have a significantly higher risk of delinquency and criminality, it of course does not mean that they will commit these crimes. Of interest, are the factors that will lead to a higher likelihood of these outcomes. In an updated account of her original study, Widom (2001) found that while abuse, neglect and maltreatment does not always lead to juvenile or adult criminality and arrests, the likelihood of arrest for these groups is 59% for juveniles, and 28% for adults.

Widom's (2001) study found important gendered differences between male and female juveniles. While it has long been held that males have higher rates of criminality than females, this study adopts a different outlook. Females who were abused or neglected in childhood were found to be 73% more likely to be arrested for property crimes, alcohol and drug offenses, as well as misdemeanor offenses such as disorderly conduct and curfew violations. These findings are part of an important, large discussion in regards to juvenile female's entrance into prostitution.

Childhood victimization such as sexual abuse, physical abuse and maltreatment increases the likelihood that female juveniles will come in contact with the criminal justice system. As the literature suggests (Hoyt & Scherer, 1998; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012, Widom, 2010) a majority of juvenile prostitutes report at least one instance of childhood victimization, if not more.

In agreement with the findings of GST, the cycle of violence hypothesis postulates that females manifest their victimizations in a more subtle way than their male counterparts (Widom, 1989). When juvenile females are faced with strains, in this case abuse, neglect or maltreatment, they internalize these victimizations. By internalizing these victimizations and experiences, they may turn to substance abuse and eating disorders, typically sticking with the notion that they will be introduced to delinquency through status offenses (Widom, 1989).

These internalizations provide support for factors contributing to juvenile prostitution. As previously noted, juvenile females who experience abuse, neglect or maltreatment at home are at high risk for running away. Running away from home as a juvenile female adds additional burdens, pushing some individuals into prostitution as a

way to cope or to survive street life. This finding is of importance, as it agrees with the aspect of gendered theory that explains how females experience high rates of victimization, often leading to their delinquency and criminality.

A study in support of the cycle of violence hypothesis (Widom, 1989) claims that abuse experienced as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59%, as an adult by 28% and for violent crime by 30%. Males were found to have higher rates of delinquency, adult criminality and violent criminal behavior than their female counterparts. However, despite the fact that women generally have lower rates of arrest for criminal behavior, abused or neglected females were more likely to have an adult arrest than their control group (Widom, 1989).

**Gendered pathways theories (feminist pathways theories).** Feminist theorists have long argued that females encounter various types of strain, stressors and oppressions that their male counterparts simply do not face (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006). Focusing on the oppression of women, traditional gender roles, and restricted economic movement; feminist theorists present a sound argument for female criminality (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006). As previously discussed, some theories are applicable across gender lines. Feminist pathways theories differs from these theories, as it focuses solely on the experiences, interactions and emotionality of females. Theories that explain the unique path that females take towards deviancy fall under an umbrella of pathways which are termed gendered or feminist. These theories are not singular, as there are many different facets of gendered pathways examined.

Gendered pathways theory argues that female criminality is largely survival based, a culmination of the oppression faced by females in their daily life (Chesney-Lind

& Daly, 2006). As this study focuses on juvenile females who enter prostitution, feminist pathways theory is important in the examination of juveniles involvement in crime and prostitution.

Arrest data (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015) supports that females are committing more crimes than in the past, catching up to their male counterparts. While on paper this appears as though females are committing more crimes and thus closing the gender gap, several policies may actually be contributing to this increase. As argued by feminist theorists, these policies are created in an oppressive manner that intends to punish females (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006). These include changes in legislation such as tough on crime drug policies and police reporting practices. These policy changes have resulted in an apparent increase of crime perpetrated by females.

Feminist pathways theory postulates that delinquency and criminality do not occur simply because of one factor or another. Instead, it argues that female delinquency and criminality occur based off of a myriad of traumas, mental health issues, poverty, and disadvantage (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006). It is because of this that feminist pathways theory argues that females' delinquency and criminality are survival based. These cumulative traumas have been described as poly-victimization for females who experience a wide range of trauma over their life course (DeHart & Moran, 2015). Individual-level factors that are relationally based including victimization and trauma contribute to the likelihood of females becoming delinquent or criminal later in life.

Daly & Chesney-Lind (2006) identified five different pathways or typologies in which women come to the attention of its criminal justice system. However, with interest

to the focus of this study we will discuss two of the five pathways that may be the most conducive to juvenile prostitution. The first type of pathway is what's considered to be street women.

In agreement with the cycle of violence hypothesis and GST, this pathway explains that following years of childhood abuse and neglect the girl will attempt to flee the environment where the abuse and neglect is occurring. In turn, she will develop a substance abuse issue to assist in coping with her physical and emotional needs (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006). A girl on this path may ultimately become involved in a life of prostitution and petty crime in order to meet her survival needs which now include food and shelter as well as drugs and alcohol.

The second pathway identified by Daly & Chesney-Lind (2006) is the harmed and harming woman. This pathway has very similar characteristics to that of the street women previously identified. The similarity lies in the extensive childhood abuse and neglect experienced by this individual. Instead of committing crimes based off of survival needs, it is more likely that she will engage in interpersonally aggressive crimes. These crimes are described as possibly violent physical or emotional assaults on individuals they are personally acquainted with such as physical abuse and sexual abuse. It is also likely that this woman is plagued with psychological difficulties and substance abuse issues.

While various pathways have been proposed by Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988), it does not necessarily determine that a female juvenile who is involved in the criminal justice system will fit into these categories. Antisocial pathways have a higher focus on impulsive activity, criminal attitudes, and propensity for violence. The two items which these pathways share are neglect and substance abuse. While they may have similar

backgrounds, these two pathways create a break from traditional thought of gendered pathway theory, as the background of an antisocial pathway does not include the same items as those considered to be gendered pathways (Jones et al, 2013).

These findings are interesting, as they are closer in relation to those of their male counterparts. In a study conducted by Jones et al. (2013), nearly 50% of females surveyed fit into the antisocial pathway theory. Fifty nine percent of males displayed features that fit into an antisocial pathway. While these findings are close to one another in determining the strength of gendered pathways theory, it appears to show that female and male deviancy is closely related to one another. The study examined (Jones et al, 2013) still provided support that a portion of females follow a unique pathway into deviancy than that of their male counterparts.

**Review.** Three theories are discussed in order to provide insight to juveniles and their entry into prostitution. While each theory offers their own unique examination of the life course of a juvenile and possible deviancy and criminological behavior, there are similarities between all three. GST, gendered pathways theory and the cycle of violence hypothesis all place focus on trauma that an individual has experienced in life. These are often poly-victimizations where various traumas occur over time, or cumulative trauma where more than one trauma builds off of one another.

Of the theories examined, GST provides a strong backdrop to the understanding of juvenile's entry into prostitution. It does this by connecting factors that impact the coping of an individual when they are faced with trauma or strain (Agnew, 1992). The cycle of violence hypothesis and gendered pathways theory also examine trauma that a juvenile has faced and how it shapes their deviancy and adult life (Chesney-Lind & Daly,

2006; Widom, 1989). These theories also provide substantial support for juvenile's entry into prostitution. However they appear to provide pieces of a larger puzzle that GST puts together carefully. With consideration to both theories, their discussions of trauma and victimization as well as marginalization of women in society can be applied back into GST, where the coping mechanisms and support are essential in determining whether or not these individuals who experience trauma and victimizations will indeed become deviant, and in this case turn to juvenile prostitution (Agnew, 1992; Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006; Widom, 1989).

### **Rationale for Study**

An examination of the literature provides support for this study's research question. Relevant literature examined the impact of cumulative trauma, as well as three criminological theories that may provide a possible explanation for juvenile prostitution. In determining what theories may provide an explanation of juvenile entry into prostitution, a secondary data analysis was completed focusing on poly-victimization of juveniles and their outcomes in the juvenile justice system.

### **Research Question**

This study was based on the following question:

1. How well do gender specific theories account for the entry of juvenile girls into sex work?

## Methods

In order to investigate the research question, a qualitative study was created using a secondary data analysis of interviews and life history calendars provided from the sample. The sample is derived from adjudicated juvenile females in South Carolina. Data was originally sourced from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) within the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

A comprehensive application from the research staff was also required to be sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Bridgewater State University. The IRB application process included information regarding the structure of the study, an abstract of the project, whether the study was funded and respondents were compensated, and what contact would be made with human subjects. Also included in the IRB application was how the data would be housed. The data was housed in a secure location on a computer without access to the internet as per security requirements for receiving the data. At the conclusion of the analysis, the data was scrubbed from the hard drive in order to fulfill the confidentiality agreement. The IRB approved the research as exempt. A status of exemption from the IRB means that the research will not need review and approval from the IRB, further than the application for exempt status (Bridgewater State University, 2016). In order for the IRB to accept the research as exempt, an application must be submitted and reviewed that requests exempt status. The application must include an explanation as to why the research should be exempt from IRB review and approval (Bridgewater State University, 2016). The IRB approved this research as exempt because it was a secondary analysis of previously collected data, and there was

no direct contact with human subjects. The IRB approval letter stating exempt status is listed as Appendix 1.

In order to access this restricted data, an application and confidentiality pledge was submitted to ICPSR which included the scope of the project at hand as well as information regarding the research institution. In order to access this data, an approved security plan to secure the data was required which included a roster of the staff who would be accessing the computer where the data is being hosted as well as a confidentiality pledge from those with access.

### **Qualitative Studies**

**Overview.** A qualitative data set was chosen for use in this study. Themes were determined through a secondary analysis of the qualitative data provided. As noted by Richards (2005), observations and communication provide large sums of data which in turn contain large sums of information. Information provided in qualitative data is often rich and complex, providing ample information for a study regarding juvenile prostitution. This study utilized qualitative data collected from interviews of juvenile girls. These interviews were constructed following the organization of life history calendars.

**Interviews.** Qualitative data and research methods take a detailed look at information. At times, qualitative data provides more in depth explanations or descriptions than what can be explained in quantitative data (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015). Qualitative data works towards understanding experiences, meanings, and feelings around a situation. Analysis of qualitative data can be just as powerful and useful as

quantitative data sets, possibly more so (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015). Qualitative data does not work well in every field, however in the social sciences it can be very helpful. Mental health, sociology and criminal justice fields use qualitative data often as it assists in studying individuals in their natural setting while learning about their thoughts and their interpretation of events (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015).

The dialogue of these interviews is considered to be an active interview. Active interviews occur when the interviewer constructs a conversation with the respondent. It is constructed this way in order to understand the respondent's life, social world and opinions (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015). This type of interview is more open and loosely based than a more conventional interview - typically known as a technical interview. Technical interviews tend to be highly structured. In contrast, an active interview allows the opportunity for the respondent to express themselves within the proposed boundaries set up by guiding questions (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015).

**Life history calendars.** In the data obtained, Life History Calendars (LHC) were also used in conjunction with the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire to examine co-occurrence of multiple forms of abuse and victimization. This provides a comprehensive understanding of each girl's background and life experiences (Dehart, 2014). The Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire was used to measure exposure to abuses and victimizations, such as exposure to violence and physical and sexual abuse.

As noted by Dehart (2014), the use of the LHC is an established research tool designed to optimize accuracy in collection of event timing/sequencing data. LHC's are commonly utilized when collecting data that is retrospective as a means to gain a better understanding an individual's past experiences (Axinn, Pearce, & Ghimire, 1999). In

Dehart's (2014) data collection, the interviewer explained the calendar at the beginning of the interview and mapped memorable life experiences with the respondent's help among a calendar like matrix. When utilizing the LHC method, the interviewer provides a matrix of visual cues in order to make the task of recalling events across their lifetime an easier task (Axinn, Ghimire & Pearce, 1999; DeHart & Moran, 2015). Cues may include column headings marked with years and ages, and cues based off of events reported by the respondent (Axinn, Ghimire & Pearce, 1999). LHC's are used in social sciences as they are helpful in collecting complex life histories of respondents.

The qualitative data provided was analyzed to determine which respondents had been involved in prostitution. Out of the 100 girls surveyed, 22 were involved in prostitution. Only one respondent was arrested for juvenile prostitution, while the remaining 21 discuss their prostitution involvement in their interviews and life history calendars. Each interview was transcribed by the interviewer. Each interview was transcribed based off of the interviewer's notes. Each quote provided in this study is provided from the point of view of the respondent in the third person.

Respondents did not always identify their behavior as prostitution using the term *prostitution*. Terms used that were synonymous with prostitution included anything that discussed an exchange of sex for goods, drugs or shelter. The data explains that girls prostituted themselves in exchange for goods, drugs or shelter, or were prostituted by third parties which included their significant others and their caregivers.

Thematic elements were pulled from the life history calendars in order to determine a possible theoretical explanation for juvenile prostitution. Of the 22 interviews which identified juvenile prostitution, many shared similar themes. These

themes included unstable family relationships and homes, early sexual abuse often at the hands of a family member, poor school performance – often leading to the girl being held back in school, and charges for truancy. These themes will be discussed further in the analysis of the qualitative data.

### **Analytic Approach to Data**

To determine an applicable theory for juvenile prostitution, the qualitative data is analyzed using a thematic approach. This thematic approach allows for an analysis of patterns and commonalities between the backgrounds of these juveniles. Themes assist in organizing the data for analysis. Investigation of these themes allow for a deeper analysis of what makes juveniles turn to prostitution, why juvenile prostitution occurs, and what is it about prostitution that makes it an attractive option for juveniles.

The best method to organize and interpret the qualitative data is a combination of thematic analysis and content analysis. These methods are the most useful with the ultimate goal of identifying a theory to explain juvenile prostitution. Respondents identified their experience with prostitution in various ways, some stating that what they were doing was prostitution while others did not explicitly state this. A thorough investigation of these interviews uncovered various ways girls explained their experiences with prostitution.

Combining both methods allowed for prominent themes to be determined, while also taking into account the content in which these themes are structured. Based off of the qualitative data provided, five main themes were identified.

### **The Polyvictimization Study (Dehart, 2014)**

**Overview.** The original study utilized qualitative data compiled during interviews with adjudicated delinquent female girls. This study was conducted in order to examine the range and co-occurrence of violence across the lifespan as well as examining independent and cumulative trajectories of risk for varied types of victimization (DeHart & Moran, 2015).

As noted throughout the review of current literature, juvenile prostitutes enter prostitution due to a constellation of factors which may be considered forcible by a third party, forcible by circumstance or by their own choice. Accurate information is difficult to obtain at times, because juvenile prostitution is illegal. Self-report data is relied on heavily, however may provide a limited scope of the problem due to fear of punishment or prosecution. This study utilizes data collected from 100 girls adjudicated through the South Carolina Juvenile Justice System by Dehart (2014).

This data set was chosen for analysis as it provides insight into poly-victimization histories of juvenile females. Analysis of this data set allows for trends in polyvictimization of juvenile females to be applied in conjunction with possible theoretical explanations of juvenile prostitution.

**Polyvictimization study design.** A secondary data analysis was conducted utilizing data collected by Dehart (2014). The sample consisted of 100 girls who are adjudicated delinquent through the South Carolina Juvenile Justice system, as well as up to one primary caregiver for each girl who was interviewed. Data was collected in face to face interviews with the juvenile girls, and by mail in surveys from the caregivers. These

interviews were organized into life history calendars in order to provide a full representation of each respondent's experiences and victimizations. Face to face interviews were transcribed by an interviewer with the name of the respondent being changed to 'S' for subject.

**Sample.** The sample utilized in the current study at hand originated from Dehart's (2014) study of adjudicated delinquent girls in South Carolina. In Dehart's (2014) study, prospective participants were identified from the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice database. This updated information ensured that a reliable sample could be obtained. The sample provided ranges in age from 14 to 18. The majority of girls are between the eighth and ninth grade.

Dehart (2014) collected five total data sets from this sample. For the purposes of the study at hand, we utilized data collected in data sets 1 and 2. Data sets 1 and 2 consisted of qualitative data taken in the form of interviews with the respondents and life history calendars. This qualitative data focused primarily on topics surrounding school delinquency, household composition, experiences and discipline. Included were key variables such as experiencing caregiver violence, gang violence, dating violence, sexual violence, witnessing/indirect violence, having engaged in alcohol or drug use, stealing, running away, fighting or aggression and prostitution (Dehart, 2014).

In data set 1 there are 110 interview transcripts, and in data set 2 there are 110 Life History Calendars. While there was a sample of 100 adjudicated delinquent girls, the qualitative data also includes up to one caregiver for each respondent. Each response and life history calendar is transcribed by the interviewer. This means that the life history

calendars and responses are not verbatim of the subject, rather written by the interviewer in the way their responses were communicated to them.

In data sets 1 and 2, the sample consisted of 100 girls' adjudicated delinquent through the SCDJJ as well as up to one primary caregiver for each girl (Dehart, 2014). Data set 3 consisted of caregiver responses, which were collected from participant files which identified one primary caregiver for each girl who participated in the study. Caregiver surveys were mailed, and were sent to one caregiver for each participant (Dehart, 2014). Data sets 4 and 5 included case and archive information. This data was pulled from the South Carolina Budget and Control Boards Data Warehouse for juvenile participants in the study (Dehart, 2014). The overall response rate for adjudicated girls was 98% while the response rate for caregivers was 32%.

**Measures.** The data set received was qualitative data drawn from the life history calendars conducted with each participant in data sets 1 and 2. In each life history calendar, respondents discussed their experiences with their family, friends, school, relationships, drug use, violence, sexual abuse and physical abuse. Utilizing this qualitative data, themes were developed in order to determine relationships and similarities between the respondents.

Table 1.

<b>Age</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	2	9.1	9.1	9.1
	15-16	13	59.1	59.1	68.2
	17-18	7	31.8	31.8	100
	Total:	22	100	100	

Table 2.

<b>Highest Level of Education</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7th - 8th	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
	9th-10th	15	68.2	68.2	72.7
	11th-12th	4	18.2	18.2	90.9
	GED	1	4.5	4.5	95.5
	Begin Col	1	4.5	4.5	100
	Total:	22	100	100	

## Results and Analysis

### Overview

Interviews and life history calendars of the 100 respondents were examined. In this examination, it was determined that 22 of the girls in the sample were involved in prostitution. The qualitative data in the interviews and life history calendars were further analyzed in order to determine common themes. These themes were determined based off of patterns and commonalities between the subject's life history experiences and involvement in prostitution. Each respondent's name was changed from Subject# to a fake name in order to differentiate responses and quotes. Of the 22 interviews which identified juvenile prostitution involvement, most shared the same themes. These themes were:

Table 3.

Theme	Sub-theme
Polyvictimization	
Unstable Family Relationships and Home Environment	Violence and Physical Abuse Family Drug Use Incarceration of Parents Frequent Moving
Drug Use	
Sexual Abuse	Familial Sexual Abuse Additional Sexual Abuse
Poor School Performance	Truancy Expulsion and Suspension

## **Polyvictimization**

The most prevalent theme identified in the qualitative data was the polyvictimization that respondents experienced. Polyvictimization refers to “having experienced multiple victimizations such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, bullying, and exposure to family violence (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016).”

Every juvenile female involved juvenile prostitution within this data set experienced multiple victimizations and trauma; beginning at a very young age. While the types of traumas were not always the same, many experienced similar combinations of victimizations. Types of victimization experienced include abuse and neglect from parents or caregivers, sexual abuse from family members or close acquaintances of their family, witnessing violence in various forms, witnessing death at a young age, being bullied by peers and family members, being introduced to sex at a very young age, as well as drug use and experimentation.

Most of these respondents reported traumas early in life, and then as their individual life history interview went on, their pre-teen to teen years began to show the effects of this trauma first hand. Some of the girls had mental health, sexual health, and social problems. A majority of these respondents also have been outwardly violent.

As noted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2016), the reaction to exposure of victimization and violence may appear immediately or later in life. These reactions vary in severity and cover a range of behaviors such as distractions, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, impulsivity, becoming quiet, upset and

withdrawn, fighting with peers or adults, showing changes in school performance, getting in trouble in school and at home, engaging in risky behaviors, demonstrating an increase in aggressive behavior, refusal to follow rules or talking back with greater frequency, and using drugs and alcohol, running away from home and beginning to get in trouble with the law (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016). The qualitative data support this assertion as many respondents report an increase in negative or risky behaviors over their life history calendar.

To reflect the prevalence of polyvictimization within the respondent's life course, three victimization histories of respondents will be summarized. This reflection encompasses the wide range of victimizations which the respondents face and have appeared to affect not only their daily life, but further victimization later in life.

**Amber:** At the time of the interview, Amber was 16 years old, and in the tenth grade. Amber had not skipped any grades or been held back. She often skipped school to do drugs. Her relationship with her mother was not healthy, as her mom was addicted to crack. Amber learned how to do drugs from her mother, who taught her how to smoke crack. Amber witnessed her mother selling sex for drugs, and at one time was threatened by her mother with a knife when they were high. Amber shoplifts, and has run away about 18 times since she was 15.

In addition to witnessing her mother doing drugs and sell sex for drugs, Amber also witnessed a great deal of violence during her adolescence. She witnessed her grandparents choke her sister. She saw a friend badly beaten and almost killed after being initiated into a gang. She watched a kid get curb stomped, saw someone get dragged across pavement by a car and their skin ripped off. She saw a dead body when she was

14, and saw a murder when she was in the tenth grade. Amber was also raped by the same man three times. This man did drugs with her mother. At one point, her mother walked in on a rape in progress and blamed Amber for the entire situation.

Amber stripped for drugs and alludes to prostitution in her interview, explaining that she never thought about the sex she sold as prostitution because she was in denial of it. She sold sex and stripped in order to supply her drug habit. At the time of the interview, Amber was awaiting a bed in a rehabilitation facility to work on her substance abuse issues.

**Lucy:** Lucy was charged with criminal domestic violence and assaulting a police officer. At the time of the interview, Lucy was 17 years old and had completed her GED. She had repeated the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, changed schools often growing up and often skipped school. Lucy skipped school to find her mom during the day, as her mother was never home at night. She also skipped school to spend time with her boyfriend. Lucy was expelled in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade for threatening a teacher and was expelled three times in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade for cursing, putting lipgloss on, tardiness and skipping school.

As a child, Lucy grew up in an unstable home environment, constantly moving around from home to home. At first, Lucy and her two brothers and their mother lived in a home. During kindergarten, Lucy's Aunt and her six kids lived with them. Her mom was sent to rehab when Lucy was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade after being kicked out of a shelter due to her drug use. Lucy had to stay with her grandmother and her brothers.

Lucy received beatings from her mother all the time. Her mother would punch and slap her, and throw things. Her mother would steal money from school fundraisers,

and her mother was also working as an active prostitute. Lucy recalls waking up in random places after she and her mom were picked up on the street by men she did not know. Lucy's mother also tried to kill herself more than one time. She tried to kill herself while she was in a mental hospital, tried to drown herself in the toilet, and cut her wrists. Lucy also started cutting her wrists.

Lucy began drinking in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade with her uncle. She would go to school drunk or smoke weed at school. Lucy had sex for the first time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She had gone to an abandoned apartment with her brothers, and when they arrived everyone there was having sex. Lucy's oldest brother made her have sex with another guy that was there. Lucy started having sex regularly in the fifth grade.

**Danielle:** At the time of the interview, Danielle was 17 years old and in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. She had moved to different schools often, skipped school, and had been kicked out of school for misbehaving. Growing up, Danielle's mother was an alcoholic who physically abused her. Danielle and her mother would get into physical fights. Danielle explained that her mother would abuse her for no reason because she was drunk. Danielle's mom had friends who did heroin. She would often come home to used needles on the floor and blood in the sink from her friends using. Danielle was molested by her cousin when he was drunk, and became sexually active at 14.

They were kicked out of their house because Danielle's mom didn't have a job. Danielle's dad had been in and out of jail her whole life and did not pay child support. Danielle's mother had a boyfriend who did coke with her. When they broke up they had nowhere to live. Danielle moved in with her boyfriend when she was 15. She did sex work while running from foster care when she was 16.

These summaries display the type of traumas and victimization early in life that was typical for many of the respondents in this survey who identified involvement with juvenile prostitution. This includes unstable environments, sexual abuse, physical abuse, drug use and witnessing extreme violence. The theme of polyvictimization encompasses many individual victimizations that the respondents endured. These individual themes are further examined individually.

### **Unstable Family Relationships and Homes**

Each respondent who was involved in juvenile prostitution also had unstable relationships with their caregivers. While some were physically abused and neglected by their family members, others were also sexually abused by family members. Some experienced other victimizations at the hands of caregivers that cannot be classified as physical abuse. Victimization or family related trauma includes parents being incarcerated, parents or caregivers using drugs in front of their children or with their children, and frequent moves between homes and homeless shelters. These unstable relationships include both the interpersonal relationships between the respondents and their caregivers and parents, as well as their overall home life and structure.

The majority of respondents interviewed explained their home life either lacked structure and discipline, or they often received discipline in the form of physical beatings. The theme of unstable relationships and homes identifies the unbalanced relationships that respondents encounter with their caregivers that may affect them in harmful manner.

**Violence and physical abuse.** Such intense and frequent abuse from family and friends early in life creates a negative construction of what a normal and healthy

relationship should look like. Early on, some girls experienced intense physical abuse from their mothers. For example:

“Heather’s mom used to beat her with broomsticks and mops. Heather used to put on extra clothes because she knew she was going to get beat and wanted padding. One time, her mom told her to take her clothes off. Heather asked if she could go into the bathroom. Heather wouldn’t come out of the bathroom and she didn’t take her clothes off. Heather’s mom cut her clothes off, then put Heather’s head in the water and almost drowned her when she wouldn’t hold still.”

Another respondent, Hannah, reported drug induced violence from her mom and stepdad:

“Hannah’s mom and stepdad tied her up and hit her with a board while they were on crack. Hannah had been staying with her mom while she was on the run.”

In addition to abuse from their mothers, respondents also were abused by their caregivers or extended family, Jennifer notes:

“Jennifer was beaten by her aunt, but not by her mom. It was by her aunt and it was with a belt sometimes. When they stopped crying from the belt her aunt switched to using a drop cord. That happened about ten times, and it was beatings all over Jennifer’s body except for her face.”

While physical abuse and violence from family members was commonly reported, witnessing violence in the home was also common. For example, Hannah noted that before her parents divorced they would physically fight each other in front of her.

**Family drug use.** Respondents reported witnessing drug use from parents in various forms. Most commonly, their mother was involved in drugs and prostitution to support her drug habit. In one instance, respondent Margaret was prostituted by her mother from the time she was thirteen in order to bring in more money to support her mother's drug habit. Another respondent, Tracy, reported that she began to date the man her mom bought crack from on a regular basis. Drugs commonly discussed in their interviews include marijuana (weed, pot), ecstasy (X), methamphetamines (meth), OxyContin (oxy), crack cocaine (crack), cocaine (coke), psychedelics such as LSD, acid and mushrooms (shrooms), morphine patches, amphetamines such as Adderall and speed, and additional prescription drugs such as Vicodin, Hydrocodone, Percoset, Valium and Xanax.

Danielle, a 17 year old respondent noted that she did drugs and drank because she saw her mom do the same.

“Danielle smoked a lot of pot and drank and did coke and X, because her mom did coke and X and smoked pot.”

Amber's mother taught her how to smoke crack, and she commonly referred to her mother as a 'crack whore', because she often sold sex for drugs. While some drugs were introduced by parents, they were also introduced to respondents through extended family. For example one respondent, Casey, was introduced to weed through her sister:

“Casey started smoking weed when she was 10 with her older sister. Her sister handed it to Casey and said 'hit on this' because Casey smoked cigarettes back then.”

And Hannah, was introduced to meth by her step sister:

“Hannah did coke two or three times in seventh grade, when she was 12. She also did a lot of prescription drugs that year, like Xanax and Vicodin. She did X that year also. Hannah got into meth in tenth grade with her step sister.”

As previously noted, many of the respondents had issues with using substances, and in some cases this substance use has led to their involvement in prostitution. Drug use by their parents which was often visible relays a negative message about drug use. In addition, use of drugs by their parents breaks the wall of responsible parenting, altering the typical dynamics of a healthy parent-child relationship where the child trusts and can count on their parent for support and assistance.

**Incarceration of parents.** In addition to poor relationships with parents or caregivers that were in the home, some respondents parents were in and out of jail throughout their child’s life.

“Jennifer’s mom had been in and out of jail through her whole life. It’s old warrants from stuff that happened before Jennifer was born and on shoplifting and stuff like that. Jail would sometimes be for a night, sometimes two weeks, sometimes a month or two or three. Her mom was pretty steady in and out about two or three times a year most of Jennifer’s life up until just recently. Jennifer’s mom went to prison when she was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and just now got out. It made Jennifer and always look at her sister and aunt more like a mom...Jennifer was close to her mom and cries for her a lot. It hurt her when she was away.”

Danielle's father was in and out of jail her entire life. Danielle noted in her interview that maybe if her father had been around, none of this would have happened with her charges. She alluded to the fact that because he never paid child support, her mother had a tough time supporting their family financially. While some respondents had parents who were incarcerated causing a single parent support system, other respondents lived in a single parent household regardless of their mother or father being incarcerated. This places financial stress on the household, forcing some families to constantly move around and live with extended family, or in homeless shelters.

**Frequent moving.** Respondents reported moving to various schools and moving in with different relatives frequently over the course of their adolescence. For example, Kelly recalled moving back and forth between different homes:

“Kelly went back and forth living between her mom's house and her grandmom's house all her life. She cannot remember when she lived where or for how long. One time she lived with her grandmom for two years (the longest period), but she can't remember when.”

Lucy grew up living with her grandmother or aunt because her mother was using drugs and couldn't financially support them. They had also been kicked out of a shelter due to Lucy's mother's drug use:

“It was her, her two brothers, and her mom. For a while during kindergarten Lucy's aunt and her six kids lived with them. For a while this girl that was a runaway stayed with them until Lucy's mom cut the girl's face up. Lucy's mom got sent to rehab and Lucy had to stay with her grandmom in second grade then it

was Lucy, her grandmom, mom and her brothers. There was a house fire that Lucy's mom caused because she was drunk and trying to deep fry something. Lucy's aunt's house burnt down the same year."

Margaret, who had been raped by her brother grew up in a home environment where moves were constant. She notes:

"Margaret and her mom moved to another state when she was 5 years old. They didn't have a place to live so they stayed in a shelter. Then her mom found a two bedroom apartment where they lived."

The negative effects of the trauma and victimizations on the respondents were compounded by their unstable home life characterized by violence, drug use, and frequent moves. There was a lack of sufficient home support for them to develop effective coping mechanisms to work through their victimizations and traumas.

### **Running Away**

Running away is something that most respondents discussed in a relatively casual manner as some respondents also ran away from group homes and rehabs. Those who identified running away as a behavior discussed that they were physically running away from their problems at home, or that they were running away from discipline that their parents were trying to impose. Many of these girls had already faced victimizations and traumas. In some instances when their parents would discipline them, they felt as though they didn't need to listen to them. For example:

"Monica got involved with DJJ because she ran away from home a couple of times. They sent her to an evaluation center, and then she went from there to a

group home. Monica ran away from the group home after one or two weeks there...Monica ran away from the group home because she didn't like the staff or the juveniles. When Monica ran from there, she met with one of her friends and stayed at his house for about a month. They went all over the country with a few other people."

Margaret consistently ran away from home because her brother at home had raped her repeatedly:

"Margaret kept running away, and her mom wanted to know the reason. Margaret told, but her mom didn't believe her. Margaret kept running. When she was 12, she went to court and they put her on house arrest. She was doing good for three years, then she got locked up after that. Margaret has a history of running away, and that's how she thought she could deal with her problems."

Other reasons for running away were noted by the following respondents:

"When she ran away, Rachel was mad at her mom and just left, because her mom wouldn't let her see this guy. So Rachel went to another state to see him, and he broke up with her while she was there, right after she got there. So she ran away to another city and started doing drugs."

"When Vanessa was 16, she couldn't deal with it no more because boys were coming every single day all day. Vanessa ran away to get away from it. She ran away with a 48 year old man, and he beat her like she was grown woman."

Kimberly ran away mostly to be with boys she was dating or to get out of her house. Running away led to her sleeping with men in order to have a place to stay:

“Kimberly first got involved with DJJ for running away. She was dating somebody her mom didn’t approve of. Kimberly was 14 and he was 17. But her mom didn’t want her to date at all, anyway. They were arguing about him calling Kimberly, and Kimberly got mad and ran away. They sent her back home and told her they would charge her the next time...Kimberly ran away about eight times during her three years of ninth grade. It started as sneaking out and went straight into running away.”

Running away from home is an important theme to focus on as research suggests that running away is a behavior often associated with victimizations and abuse. In addition, running away appears to be a common status offense that introduced many of these respondents to the criminal justice system, causing them to rebel harder against the system as they continue to experience trauma and victimizations throughout their life course. Instead of finding external support for their causes of running away in the first place, they have been disciplined through the criminal justice system.

### **Drug Use**

Another prominent theme identified was drug use. Drug or substance abuse is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2016), as the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. WHO (2016) notes that psychoactive substance use can lead to dependence syndrome which is a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use which typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in use despite the harmful consequences, increased tolerance and sometimes a physical withdrawal state. Respondents reported both intentional drug use

and unintentional drug use where they were drugged by an individual. There were multiple instances where the respondent was drugged by someone they knew and taken advantage of, for example:

“Lucy never did other drugs except once when she got ‘laced’. Lucy was smoking with these guys and they put coke in the joints and didn’t tell her...when Lucy smoked, she got all numb, and said “take me home”. This different guy said he’d walk Lucy home, but he walked Lucy through the neighborhood to the back of this house where X (an unnamed man) was. X had sex with her, and she didn’t want to have sex with him.”

Some respondents experimented with a variety of drugs, which is a documented coping strategy for individuals who have experienced trauma (Agnew, 1992). One respondent listed the drugs she has done as “crack, ecstasy, speed, shrooms, morphine patches, OxyContin, Xanax bars, acid, Hydrocodone, Vicodin, Percoset, oratabs, Valium – any pill in the book. She did pills daily, she’d eat them like candy.”

While some girls experimented with drugs as a possible coping mechanism or escape from their situation, other girls ended up dependent on drugs which ultimately turned them to prostitution. For example:

“Rachel began smoking crack when she ran away to another state, the guy she met was a crackhead...that guy that was a crackhead got her into it, Rachel felt like she couldn’t go home like she had to do it or they wouldn’t have money. He suggested it as a way they could get money. Rachel has lots of flashbacks about it,

she wonders why she ever did it, how she got in that position. She gets pictures of it happening in her head.”

It can be argued that experimentation with drugs is a form of coping that the girls are using in order to mentally escape the trauma, pain and hurt that they are experiencing (Agnew, 2001). Drug use is important to note because it increases the possibility of further victimization. It additionally appears to be a factor the involvement of prostitution for some. In these instances where respondents were involved in drugs and prostitution, prostitution ended up being a means to support their drug habit as girls noted that they needed the money for drugs, or exchanged money for drugs.

### **Sexual Abuse**

As noted in the themes of polyvictimization and unstable family relationships, many of the interviewed juvenile females experienced early childhood sexual abuse. The majority of interviewed girls report this sexual abuse occurring throughout their childhood, and then went on to discuss their current sexual relationships that appear to have been shaped by this past abuse. Some of the subjects trauma from sexual abuse is evident in their approach to consensual sexual activity or refusal of sexual activity. The majority of sexual abuse early in their childhood was perpetrated by direct relatives, extended family or caregivers of the respondent. These family members ranged from fathers, to stepfathers, to brothers, to uncles and cousins. Most girls note in their interview that they had unstable homes and were moved around frequently, putting them in vulnerable positions with some family members.

Early and continuous childhood sexual abuse is one of the most prevalent themes among the respondents. The sexual abuse they faced appears to have shaped their ideas about trust in men, in relationships and in their own sexuality. These constant instances of trauma could have possibly lead to several detrimental coping mechanisms including include self-harm and drug use as reported by some subjects.

**Familial sexual abuse.** There is a high prevalence in this sample of sexual abuse and assault from family members and caregivers. Some of this abuse happened only once, but much of the abuse happened often over the course of the girl's childhood. Incidences of sexual abuse by family members or caregivers is extensively represented in literature. Environments reported in these interviews appear to be conducive with little structure, supervision, and support.

Several respondents reported being raped multiple times by family members, while one respondent reported being set up to be raped by her own brother when she was in the second grade:

“Lucy first started being bad in school after she first had sex with this boy. She was in second grade and had gone to this abandoned apartment with her brothers. There were other people there, and everyone was having sex. Her oldest brother made Lucy have sex with this other dude that was there. He lied and made it seem like she had to because they were.”

In another interview, Margaret recalls being raped by her brother that she wasn't aware she had for most of her life:

“Up until Margaret was 9, her brother was in Iraq. Margaret’s mom called him to come home. Margaret’s never even knew she had a big brother. He raped Margaret when she was nine. Margaret didn’t say anything because she thought her mom wouldn’t believe her. Then he came back when Margaret was ten and raped her again.”

This appears to have affected some of the girls relationship and social skills through life. Without formal social bonds where the girls feel comfortable talking to their family members or friends, it is much more difficult for the girl to cope more effectively (Agnew, Brezina, Wright, & Cullen, 2002). The sexual abuse becomes a sort of norm for these girls, who then have very pointed views of sex in life. The majority of respondents who experienced such frequent and traumatic sexual abuse from family members reported having frequent consensual sexual relationships later in their pre-teens and teenage years. This may have created a skewed idea of what a consensual sexual relationship can be. In some instances, the opposite occurred. In one interview, the respondent reported becoming a lesbian due to the trauma she associates with past sexual abuses from men.

Respondents often noted having close relationships with their siblings and cousins, which at times was taken advantage of. For example, one respondent, Jennifer, notes:

“In second grade, Jennifer was sexually abused by her uncle. It happened about five times, and it involved touching, vaginal sex, oral sex, everything. Jennifer didn’t tell about it until she was locked up and her sister wanted to know why she

had so much anger inside...It made Jennifer not trust men, and not want to date them.”

**Additional sexual abuse.** In the scope of this survey, familial sexual abuse is important to note because it appears to have been a majority of early childhood sexual victimizations, and a precursor to further sexual abuse throughout the respondent’s life course. As research suggests, there is a possibility that the experience of abuse and trauma at a young age may increase the likelihood that they will be victimized again. Many respondents experienced sexual abuse at the hands of family members, and also experienced sexual assault and abuse from their peers whether it was from friends they knew, peers at a party, or their significant other.

Respondents such as Amanda and Ashley discussed with the interviewer how sexual abuse early in life made them feel, and how they still cope with that trauma in present day:

“The guy that used to try and touch her did it up until Amanda was seven. He did it about four days out of a seven day week. Amanda thinks there was penetration. It scared her. She still has flashbacks about it. It almost ruined her week last week. Amanda writes it down to cope with it.”

“When Ashley was eight years old and in the third grade, she was raped. It was a man at her uncle’s house, and he raped her. Ashley was in bed asleep and she felt someone pull her clothes down. He did it. It made Ashley scared and confused. That man hurt her. Ashley told her uncle, and he didn’t do nothing about it.

Ashley told her mom, and her mom went to the police. The man went to jail for eight years. Ashley had to go to court and all for that.”

It appears as though past sexual victimization negatively altered some respondent’s ideas about healthy and safe sexual relationships as well. For example, Hannah was sexually abused by her cousin beginning when she was five years old. This abuse continued until she was thirteen. Later, she explained about her sex life:

“Most of Hannah’s friendships included sex. Up until eighth grade she hung out with her male cousin. It was a negative influence...he made her give him head when she was five years old up until she was thirteen when she said he had to stop making her or she would tell.”

The repercussions of sexual abuse and trauma can affect many aspects of life including future relationships and negative behaviors. As previously noted, abuse and trauma may affect the behaviors of the individual in many different negative ways that can be both internal and external and recognizable to their peers and teachers.

### **Poor School Performance**

Of the 22 girls who identified prostitution involvement in their life history calendars, 12 repeated grades one time or more. Four of the interviewed subjects repeated grades more than once. The traumatic experiences that these subjects faced in their homes, in their relationships, and with drug use led to poor school performance and truancy.

**Truancy.** While some respondents had charges that range up to assault and battery, most of these girls first came into contact with law enforcement from running

away or being truant in school. Truancy is defined as missing school without a proper excuse or reason for being absent. Most states have a truancy statute in order to promote school attendance and the importance of attending classes.

For example, the state of California defines truancy as “a student missing more than thirty minutes of instruction without an excuse three times during the school year (California Dept. of Education, 2016).” Respondents appeared to be truant from school for a multitude of reasons relating to their victimizations. Many respondents ran away from home, missed school and became charged as truant. For example:

“Danielle first got involved in the DJJ in sixth grade. She’s been locked up seven times since then. Stuff at home wasn’t going right. Her mom is an alcoholic and abused Danielle. Danielle didn’t go to school, and if she missed the bus her mom wouldn’t take her. Danielle got her first warrant for truancy. In seventh grade, Danielle got her second warranty for truancy, incorrigible and uncontrollable child.”

Status offenses for truancy put these girls on an even more desolate path where less help was available to them. As pre-teen or teenage girls, most expressed their frustration with their charges in their interview. Some even expressed that the reason they were ditching school was because they had just been raped the night prior, for example.

Status offenses created hostility, resentment, and resistance of the criminal justice system from these girls. Instead of helping them by getting a better understanding of why they’re running away from home or why they’re not showing up for school, status

offenses allow the criminal justice system to use a tough approach to change their behavior.

Many girls note running away and skipping school. While it is not explicitly stated, it can be gathered from the life history calendar data that the girls who noted running away and school troubles were having difficulties maintaining their school life while they have so many other factors going on in their personal and social lives. For example:

“In April, Rebecca had been raped by a friend. Rebecca decided not to go to school because of that. They took her to court, and she was locked up in May.”

**Expulsion and suspension.** Along with skipping school and running away, a commonality shared between subjects was being suspended or expelled from school on multiple occasions. It appears that the subjects who did attend school despite their trauma acted out with verbal and physical abuse to their peers and teachers. For example:

“Melanie got suspended for cussing out the teachers, walking out of classes...Starting in seventh grade, Melanie skipped also skipped classes once a week.”

In some interviews, the subjects noted that they couldn't handle school at times due to varying issues such as relationship issues, family issues, drug use and running away from home. Respondents frequently discussed their school problems. The behaviors include being drunk or high in class, physically assaulting other students or teachers, threatening students and teachers, skipping classes and bringing weapons to school. For example, Jennifer recalled her school related issues:

“In fifth grade, Jennifer was suspended for marijuana. Then in sixth grade she did awesome. At the end of seventh and beginning of eighth grade, when she went to that one school (living with grandmom then godmom), she cut school about once a week. She’d say home, hang out, smoke pot and cigarettes, and sell weed. She’d do all this with her homies. She was expelled during that time twice in seventh grade and once in eighth grade. In seventh it was once for bringing a knife to school; she had it in her backpack and they checked. The other time was for fighting and disrespecting and threatening. Jennifer did lots of arguing and disrespecting teachers. She fought boys a lot at the bus stop around that time, and would still get suspended even though it wasn’t at school. In eighth grade her expulsion was for misbehaving; they just didn’t want her there anymore.”

Hannah also struggled with behaviors in school:

“Hannah was first suspended in third and fourth grades. She was first expelled in seventh grade for cigarettes. She was also expelled from an alternative school around the same time. In ninth grade she was expelled for having liquor in the classroom. She got in trouble for disrespecting teachers, having cigarettes in her backpack, fighting, walking out of class, and being tardy.”

Kelly explained she was constantly given suspensions for behaviors but unlike some other respondents, had never cut school. Margaret had been suspended for fighting and cutting school:

“Kelly got write ups and suspensions all through school, in school suspensions and out of school suspensions. Kelly never cut school, she just tried to not let her mom find out that she was in trouble.”

“Margaret got suspended twice in middle school for fighting and once in high school for skipping, which she did once.”

School suspensions and expulsions for behaviors such as drug use, threatening, and acting out towards peers and teachers are behaviors identified with adolescents who have experienced multiple traumas and victimizations. It is difficult to determine whether school intervention was omitted from any interviews with the respondents, but from the responses given it appears as though the schools suspended and expelled these girls for these behaviors, but there was no course in determining why they were acting out, why their grades were declining, or why they were skipping school on a regular basis. Instead, girls were often charged with truancy, introducing them to the criminal justice system at a young age.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Recap of Results

Based off of these findings from adjudicated juvenile females in South Carolina, girls enter juvenile prostitution for similar reasons. Most of these reasons appear to stem from multiple traumas and victimizations that the respondents have faced throughout their life. Prominent themes appear in the data, including polyvictimization, unstable family relationships and home environment, drug use, sexual abuse and poor school performance. The main themes identified tie into possible theoretical explanations for juvenile prostitution.

Juvenile prostitution is often discussed under the umbrella of human trafficking and sex trafficking. This language creates a slippery slope, as it primarily focuses on the forced prostitution of juveniles by a third party. The data in this study challenge that assumption. The data shows that it is far more common for female juveniles in this sample to use juvenile prostitution as a means to financially support themselves and their drug use, or for shelter. The themes identified in this study implicate polyvictimization as a main factor in their juvenile prostitution.

As noted in the literature (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006), girls often use prostitution as a means of survival sex. The themes and content of these interviews support this notion. While in some instances respondents were not forced by a third party to prostitute themselves, it can be argued that they were forced by their circumstances. For example, one respondent who had run away multiple times due to abuse at home notes:

“Miranda ran away in tenth grade. She went to another state with her cousin. They did it just to run, and they were gone a couple of months. They stayed in motels. They got money from dudes they were with – adults. They engaged in prostitution. The dudes they were with were pimps – they would get dudes to come in, and Miranda and her cousin would perform sex acts on them. They’d make \$500 to \$800 a night. Miranda and her cousin just met the pimps in the streets, they were in their 40s and 50s.”

The themes identified in the qualitative data illustrate the background life of the girls who become juvenile prostitutes. These girls experienced traumas and abuses, and received little support from their families, peers and educators. There was no mention of role models or adults that these girls looked up to. With the lack of support from adults and peers, it appears that they learned negative coping skills to help them with their trauma. The effects of negative coping skills altogether furthers risky behaviors. These risky behaviors are exemplified throughout the life history calendars provided from respondents.

### **Limitations**

A major limitation identified in this study is the information which the subjects choose to share throughout their life history calendar. Only one girl in the sample was arrested for prostitution. Because of this, the study relied solely on the personal account of each girl who either said that they were involved in prostitution. This included girls who explicitly stated they were involved in prostitution, or girls who mentioned that they exchanged sex for drugs, shelter, money or necessities as that is the definition of prostitution.

Another limitation of this study includes the way the data was recorded. As noted, the data was written by the person interviewing the subject. While it is assumed that that the interview is transcribed word for word, it is dependent upon the interviewer's transcription method of the interview to determine the information we receive in the data. Because the interview was conducted in a secure facility, it is unlikely that the interview was recorded. In these instances the interview is transcribed based off of notes taken by the interviewer.

### **Number of Prostitutes in Sample**

There were 22 identified prostitutes in this study, and a total of 100 juvenile delinquent girls interviewed.

### **Review of Theory and Juvenile Prostitution**

In the identification of factors which lead juvenile girls to prostitution, three main theories were examined. These theories were GST, the Cycle of Violence Hypothesis and Gendered Pathways Theories. Gender specific theories versus gender neutral theories possibly provide insight into factors contributing to juvenile girls involvement in prostitution. As previously noted, not all juvenile girls who are involved in prostitution are forced to do so by a third party. In some instances, juvenile females are involved in prostitution out of their own will or survival needs (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006).

While criminological theories have held a primary focus on identifying factors of male criminal behavior, crime theories may also be applicable across gender. This theoretical application leaves potential gaps in the understanding of female criminality. Of the three theories examined, GST appears to be the most applicable in explaining

juvenile prostitution. I believe that GST is the most applicable theory, because there are shared elements between GST, the cycle of violence hypothesis and gendered pathways theory. While there are commonalities between these two theories and GST, I believe that GST provides the best overall explanation for juvenile prostitution.

**General strain theory.** Of each theory presented, GST is the most fitting theoretical explanation for juvenile prostitution. GST focuses heavily on the lack of coping skills and support throughout an individual's life. It also focuses on a loss of positive valued stimuli, which was often discussed in the qualitative data. It is possible that the girls who were involved in prostitution had a lack of coping skills brought on from familial stress and relationship issues as well as trust problems early in life. This lack of support and coping skills may create a foundation for further trauma to occur. From early on, these respondents identify multiple traumas that continuously occur throughout their childhood and teenage years. These traumas built on one another, causing a further breakdown in self-esteem and coping skills for the respondent.

Respondents reported strained relationships with family members, peers and intimate partners. They experienced a loss of peers and family members and the loss of positively valued stimuli which varied between respondents. These continued losses on top of their lack of support and coping mechanisms appear to have caused them to internalize trauma, and act out with negative and risky behaviors. As reported, this internalization can cause outward aggression and drug use as well. In addition, Agnew (1997) notes that males and females experience and process strain differently. For females, they are likely to respond to strain as depression or through anger. This anger is noted to be different than their male counterparts as it is often accompanied by feelings

shame, guilt and anxiety (Broidy & Agnew, 1997). The emotional response to trauma was identified and played an important role in their response to trauma and negative behaviors. This supports GST as possible explanation for juvenile prostitution.

**Cycle of violence hypothesis.** While there are elements of the cycle of violence hypothesis within the life histories of respondents, it does not provide a full understanding of juvenile prostitution. Present in the data was one element that supports the cycle of violence hypothesis. This element was the violence that some of the respondents report experiencing. In some instances, the respondents experienced physical abuse and neglect from their caregivers. According to the cycle of violence hypothesis (Widom, 1989), children who experience violence in early life will go on to express violence later in life. This is exemplified in the data because some respondents who experienced violence early in life, acted out violently in their adolescence.

These instances of violence are noted throughout the data. Respondents described experiencing violence from caretakers and in intimate relationships. Many of these respondents also expressed this violence later in life. They reported instances of violence against their peers, violence within gangs, violence in school and violence against authorities. Because of this, there is some support that validates the cycle of violence hypothesis as a possible explanation of juvenile prostitution. The reason I do not believe it provides a full explanation of juvenile prostitution is because it only shows a portion of the trauma that the girls have experienced and how that trauma has translated into different areas of their lives. While the cycle of violence provides an explanation for their violence, it is limited in other areas such as coping strategies, drug use and internalization of aggression.

**Gendered pathways theory.** Gendered pathways theory, or feminist pathways theory, provides some support for juvenile prostitution. Feminist pathway theories focus primarily on the experiences, interactions and emotionality of females as a cause for their criminality. Within the data, there appears to be sufficient support for the “street woman” pathway discussed.

Feminist pathways theory argues that female delinquency and criminality occur based off of a myriad of traumas, mental health issues, poverty, and disadvantages from societal pressures on females (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006). Chesney-Lind & Daly (2006) argue that this contributes to the street woman pathway, who becomes delinquent or commits crime in order to support survival on the street. This occurrence was frequently reported by respondents.

As previously noted, juvenile prostitutes do not need to be forced into prostitution by a third party. Often times, a juvenile is forced into prostitution by their circumstance and for survival needs. Gendered pathways theory appears to be partially explained by GST, which is why I feel as though GST encompasses gendered pathways theory as well. Gendered Pathways Theory discusses the street woman pathway, and in this pathway many elements of GST are present such as lack of coping strategies and support systems.

### **Policy Implications**

This study provides a look into the childhood victimizations and trauma that adjudicated delinquent girls in South Carolina may face. While this was just one sample, it exposes a problem that girls are potentially facing across the country. This data sample describes unstable homes and support systems as well as various victimizations and

abuses. Some of the respondents in this sample carry these victimizations silently and internalize their trauma while others act out aggressively.

There are many opportunities communities may consider when examining policy to address juvenile prostitution. These opportunities must focus on the trauma and victimization juvenile's face early in their life, prior to their involvement in juvenile prostitution. As noted, traumatized individuals may outwardly express aggression, they may internally experience depression, and they may begin using substances. There are many characteristics that this data set is able to identify that could help stakeholders address trauma and victimization prior to an individual's involvement in prostitution.

This approach falls under the responsibility of several community stakeholders. The data from this study suggests that the girls experiencing this trauma and victimization have unstable homes and support systems. In some instances, abuse begins at home which could potentially create barriers in reporting. Instead, I suggest that the responsibility of detecting trauma and victimization with juveniles largely lies with the school systems and community programs such as victim advocate and support groups. Many girls in this data set reported that they were charged with truancy or suspended/expelled for aggressive and negative behavior in the schools. These negative behaviors cause disruptions in schools and are regularly dealt with by punishing the juvenile. Instead, educators should be trained in trauma informed care, and able to have conversations with students to find out what the root problem is that's causing their behavioral issues in schools in order to refer them to victim advocate and support groups or to contact the Department of Child Services if they feel it is necessary. While educators are mandatory reporters, juveniles are still falling through the cracks.

Victim advocate and support groups may also consider heightening their presence in schools, beginning at a young age which would ideally be at the elementary school age. It is important for victims groups to be involved in this process, as they are likely trained in trauma informed care and are able to identify trauma and victimization with a juvenile. Victim advocate and support groups are able to provide resources and information to juveniles who may not know who they can report to or if they feel they can't report to anyone. It is important that juveniles understand that there are times when adults are not "always right". This is a long instilled lesson in children at a young age, and can potentially be dangerous when they are being victimized by an adult. Having victim advocate and support groups available and visible may assist in communicating this message to juveniles who do not understand what is happening to them, and may feel like they are unable to speak to anyone about what is happening to them.

Before a discussion around ending juvenile prostitution can occur, steps must be taken in the community to address victimization and trauma that juveniles are facing in their homes and from their peers. A collaboration between school systems and victim advocate groups may provide a net to catch these juveniles who are on a path towards further victimization and delinquent behavior. While this approach does not directly address juvenile prostitution, the hope is that by addressing the signs of trauma and victimization early in the juvenile's life it will in turn address juvenile prostitution. It will address juvenile prostitution in turn because the possibility of juveniles receiving help and resources will possibly increase with the collaboration of school systems and victim advocate and support groups.

### **Future Studies**

This study focused on three possible theoretical explanations for juvenile prostitution based off of prior research regarding polyvictimization of juvenile females. This study investigated theoretical explanations of juvenile prostitution based off of the limited qualitative data provided. In order to provide further support in a theoretical explanation for juvenile prostitution, further research would be recommended with a larger sample size. If possible, a study should be conducted using data provided from both adjudicated juvenile females and non-adjudicated females. This could provide a better scope of the issue of juvenile prostitution and possible theoretical explanations. In this study, only two respondents noted that they were forced or coerced by a third party into prostitution. While it does not seem to be as common as other pathways, this is a possible route into prostitution. Further research into the experiences of juvenile prostitutes who experienced force and coercion from a third party will also assist in determining a theoretical explanation.

## **Conclusion**

The themes identified in the qualitative data provide support for GST as a theoretical explanation for juvenile prostitution. GST has a primary focus on the coping skills which one develops or does not develop (Agnew, 1992). For example, if two girls are sexually abused as children, and one has strong social relationships with family members or friends, they may have a better chance of coping with their trauma in a positive manner. It is clear from this data that most of these girls lacked positive coping mechanisms and support to assist them in through their trauma. With the lack of coping, it is more common to see girls re-victimized over time as they continued to embed themselves in negative situations (Agnew, 1992). Low self-esteem that the respondents

discussed due to abuses and bullying in school also connect to these negative relationships.

The cycle of violence hypothesis and feminist pathways were also discussed as possible theoretical explanations for juvenile prostitution. Based off of the information provided in the interviews, it appears that these two theories hold the least support in providing an explanation or juvenile prostitution. The cycle of violence hypothesis holds one commonality with the information provided by respondents. Its support comes from witnessing and experiencing violence at a young age and how this hypothesis predicts violence commission.

Some of the data appears to show this, as a handful of the girls identified with being violent in their teen years. In some cases their offense was largely based off of violence. Gendered pathways theory provides support for juvenile prostitution by means of the street woman pathway – where the experiences, trauma and coping skills lead a female to delinquency or criminality as a means of survival. Each of these commonalities are also supported in GST.

GST is fitting as the best possible explanation or juvenile prostitution as it combines the ideas of most gendered theories into one. The cycle of violence hypothesis and feminist pathways theory discuss very specifically the risks and needs of females (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006, Widom, 1989) while GST emphasizes these risks and needs explaining that the strain experienced can cause a multitude of negative effects on a juvenile female. As discussed in the literature (Chesney-Lind & Daly, 2006, Agnew, 2002) note that running away or drug use is a typical coping mechanism for juvenile girls who have faced trauma as they are trying to physically and mentally escape the abuses

they are encountering. This theme is prevalent in the data, resulting in girls being arrested on truancy charges and incorrigible/uncontrollable child charges, as well as enduring further abuse at home.

This study provides new information into theoretical explanations of juvenile prostitution. By examining three different theoretical explanations for juvenile prostitution, this allowed for a comparative analysis of each theory in regards to how applicable themes pulled from the data set were. This study provides new information in support of GST as a possible theoretical explanation of juvenile prostitution. The qualitative data examined of juvenile prostitutes showed reoccurring themes and elements that fit in accordance of GST. These themes were polyvictimization, unstable family relationships and home environment which included violence and physical abuse, family drug use, incarceration of parents and frequent moving, drug use of the participants, sexual abuse both from within their family and outside of their family, and poor school performance which included truancy, expulsions and suspensions.

Previous research includes similar data collection, however past studies have not applied qualitative data sets to a theoretical explanation. For example, previous studies examine qualitative data from in depth interviews with juvenile prostitutes. These data sets are similar to the one presented in this study, as they describe in depth victimization and childhood trauma including abuse, family dysfunction and homelessness due to running away. However, these studies do not apply theory in order to identify a pathway into juvenile prostitution. Reid and Piquero (2016) applied GST to juvenile prostitution through the use of advanced quantitative analysis, using a sample of both male and female serious youthful offenders. Reid and Piquero's (2016) study utilizes structuring equation

modeling (SEM), which allowed for them to assess the suitability of a strain reactive pathway, and examining a sample of males and females allowed for the exploration of variability across both genders. Reid and Piquero (2016) focused on four key measures which were caregiver strain, youth nurturing, negative psychosocial emotions, and endangering behaviors.

While past studies have examined GST as a theoretical explanation of juvenile prostitution utilizing quantitative methods (Reid & Piquero, 2016), there are no current published studies that have examined additional gendered theories as possible explanations for juvenile prostitution. The addition of gendered pathways theory and the cycle of violence hypothesis allows for a comparison of elements to one another in order to determine the most applicable theoretical explanation for juvenile prostitution. This study provides additional support for GST as a theoretical explanation for juvenile prostitution while investigating additional gendered theories.

It is clear that juvenile girls who face multiple trauma's and abuses need further support as they lack the social relationships and coping resources to come out of victimization positively. This victimization continues to occur across the lifecourse, leading to risky behaviors due to poor relationships they have entered, or to support themselves while living on the streets – exchanging sex for money, food, drugs, or shelter. Building off of current GST literature and information provided from the qualitative data set, GST applies to possible pathways which lead juvenile girls into prostitution. While GST has been investigated previously utilizing quantitative methods, GST along with gendered pathways theory and the cycle of violence hypothesis have not been investigated in a comparative manner utilizing a qualitative data set. This research

agrees that GST provides a theoretical framework for juvenile prostitution, contributing to growing literature in the field. In this contribution, it is adding additional support for identified themes prevalent to GST such as caregiver strain, polyvictimization and running away while potentially eliminating other possible theoretical explanations – gendered pathways theory and the cycle of violence hypothesis.

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Appendix 1.



December 16, 2015

Dr. Jennifer Hartsfield  
Criminal Justice  
311C Maxwell Library

Re: IRB Application – Case #2016085

Dear Dr. Hartsfield:

Your proposal, *Theory and Girls Involved in the Criminal Justice System*, is approved (*exempt*) by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Exempt protocols do not require additional review unless there are substantial changes to the project.

We wish you every success in this research.

Sincerely,



Dr. Elizabeth Spievak  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

ES/dfd

cc: Kelli Reynolds