



ONCE UPON A TIME... :

IS THERE A HAPPY END IN A HUMAN TRAFFICKING MEDIA STORY?

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OBJECTIVE

To verify whether audiences believe in the happy end of survival stories on the human trafficking situation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The narrative perspective:

The methods of empirical studies: *Paired Samples Test* before and after being exposed to HT narratives;

Sample: 38 Ukrainian humanity students representing the youth as a vulnerable category (gender 87% of females);

Case study: 35 media stories highlighted by anti-trafficking campaigns were analysed; respondents were exposed to 4 stories in the survey

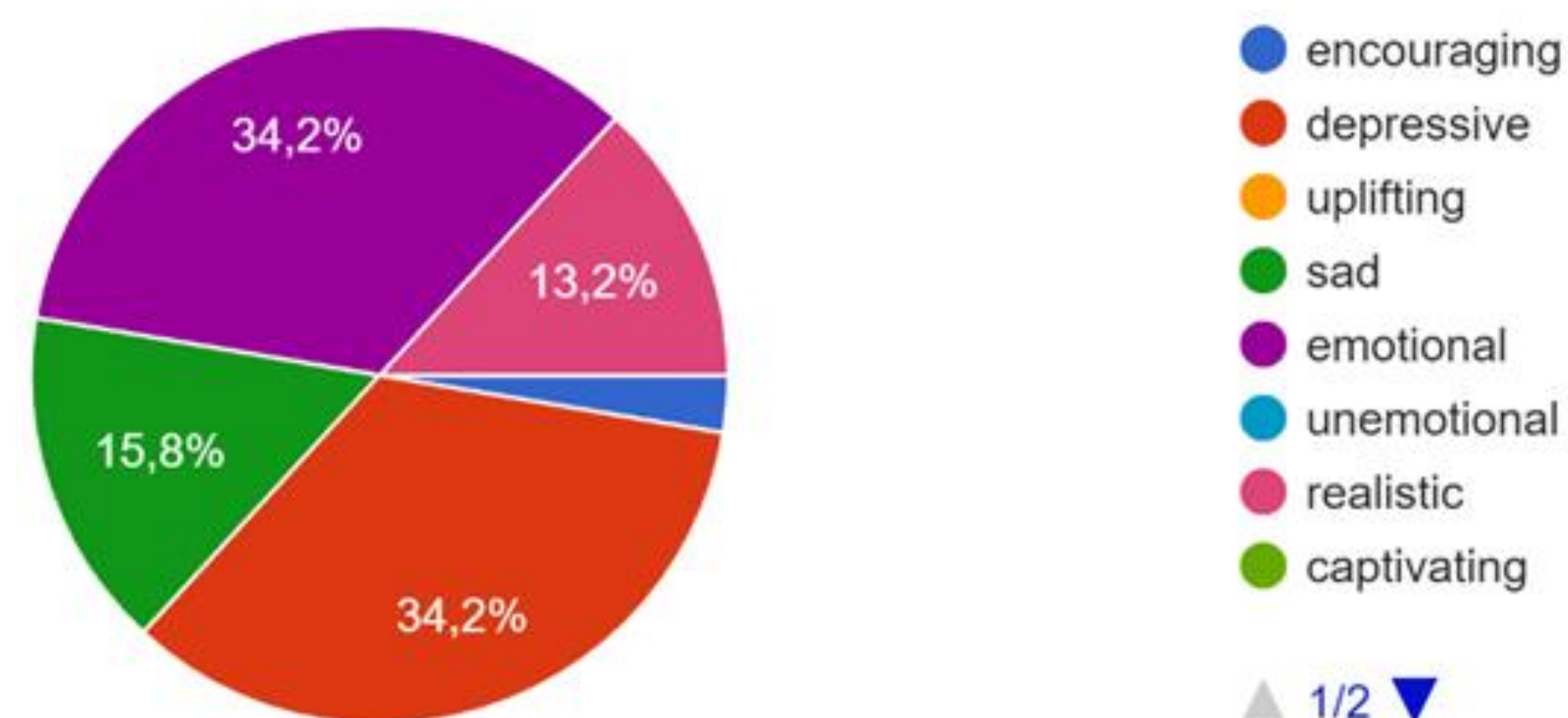
Hypothesis and variables: HT-stories transmit supportive and encouraging messages to victims that 1) survival is possible; 2) it is worth of struggling if anyone gets into slavery conditions; 3) social reintegration is possible. These variables are measured statistically.

RESULTS

A. Narrative features of HT media stories:

- 1) simple narrative monomyth structure;
- 2) reiterated cyclic construal;
- 3) the 1st person narrative perspective;
- 4) connotative and figurative language passive voice for showing dependent state of victims.

B. Reading perceptions: tone of stories

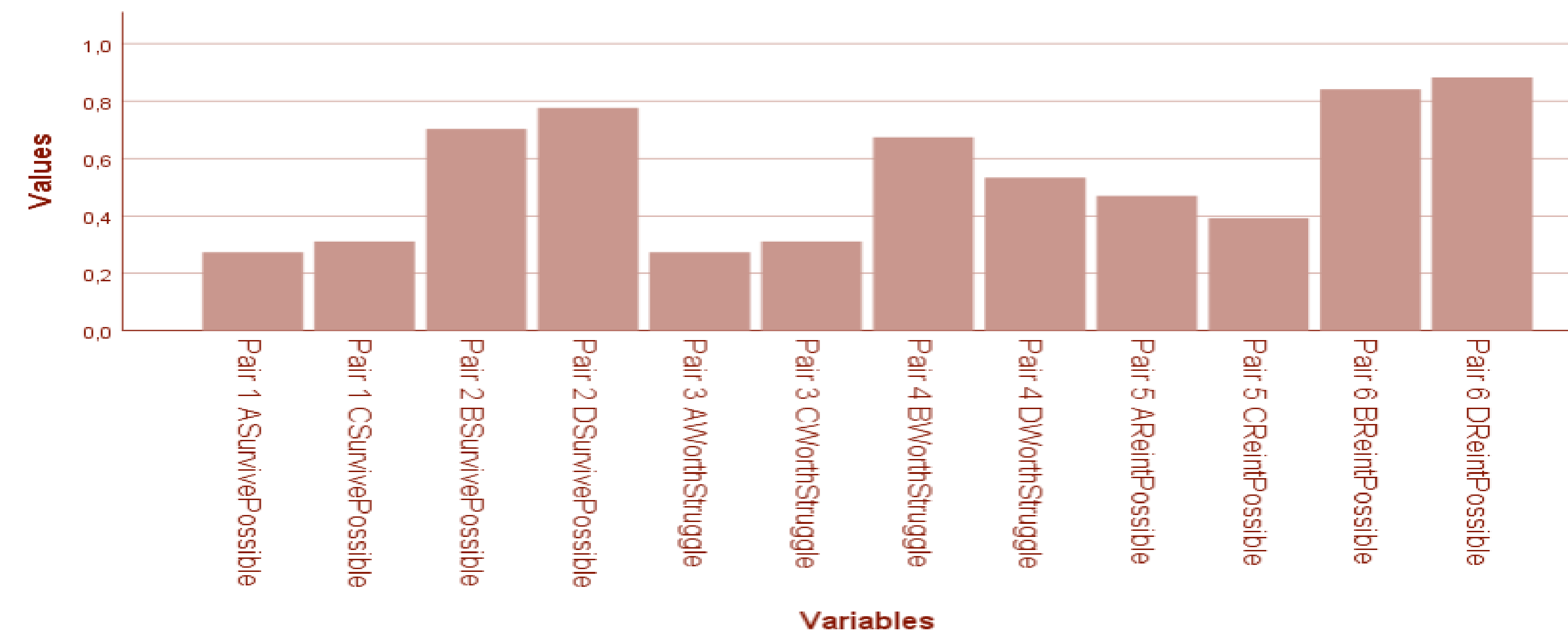


C. Paired Samples Statistics

Pair	Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ASurvivePossible	1,0789	38	,27328	,04433
	CSurvivePossible	1,1053	38	,31101	,05045
Pair 2	BSurvivePossible	3,2105	38	,70358	,11414
	DSurvivePossible	3,1316	38	,77707	,12606
Pair 3	AWorthStruggle	1,0789	38	,27328	,04433
	CWorthStruggle	1,1053	38	,31101	,05045
Pair 4	BWorthStruggle	3,6316	38	,67468	,10945
	DWorthStruggle	3,6579	38	,53405	,08663
Pair 5	AREintPossible	1,3158	38	,47107	,07642
	CREintPossible	1,1842	38	,39286	,06373
Pair 6	BReintPossible	2,6842	38	,84166	,13654
	DReintPossible	3,2368	38	,88330	,14329

Results are significant for “social reintegration is possible” variable (Pair 5 and Pair 6): $p < 0.29$; $p < 0.015$

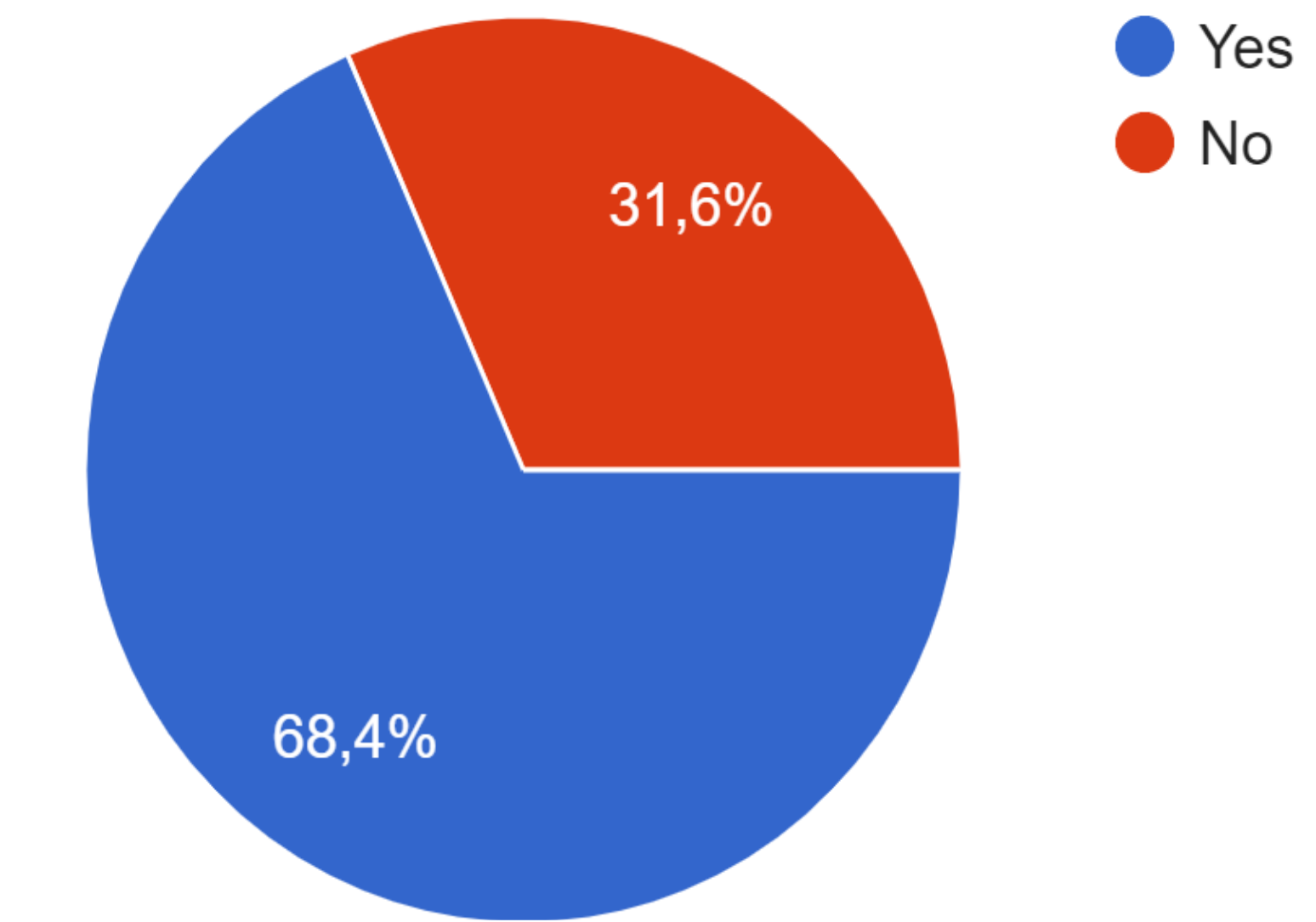
Paired Samples Statistics
Std. Deviation



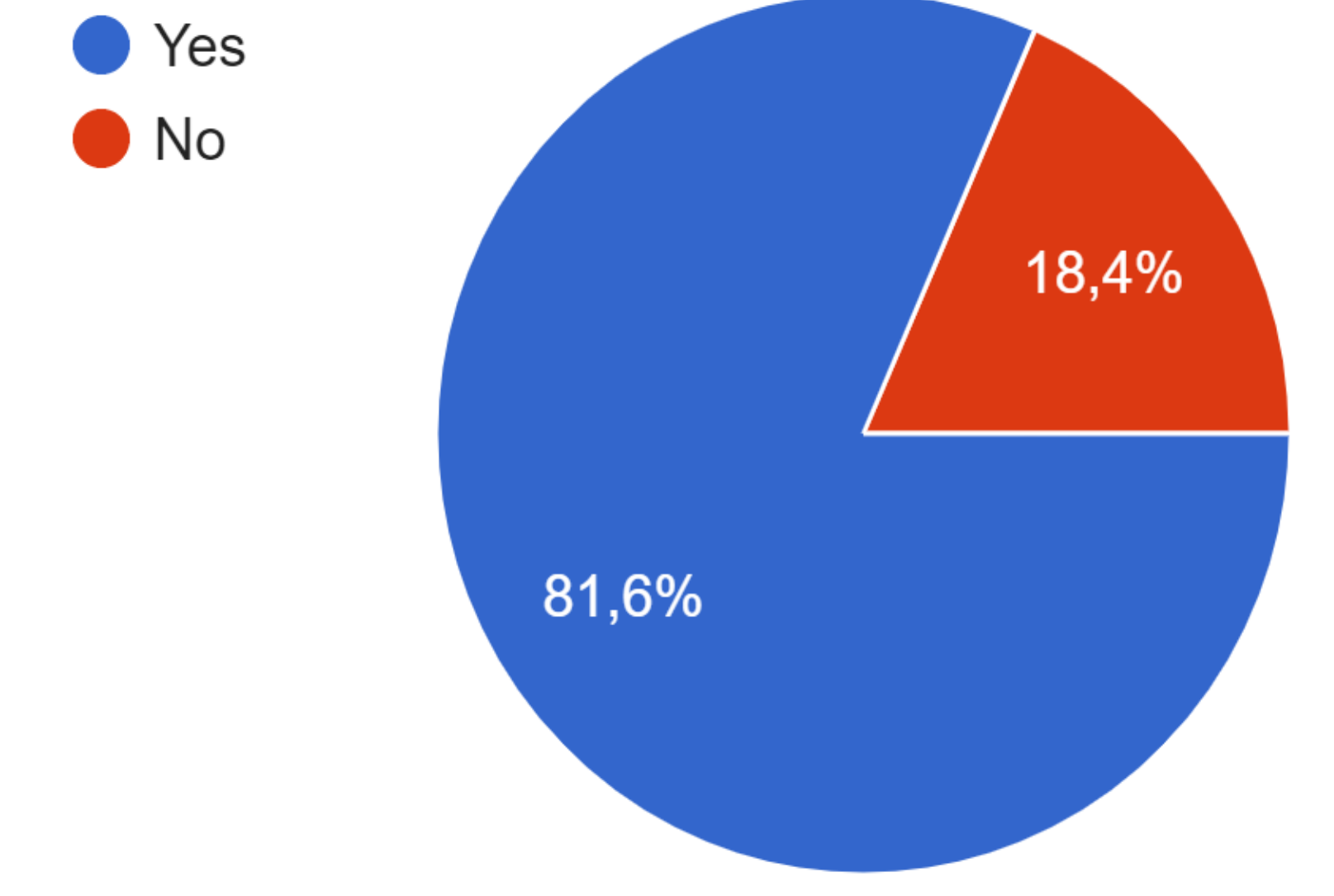
CONCLUSIONS

- No “happy-end” beliefs; no strong evidence for “survival is possible”, no confidence that it is worth of struggling;
- + high level of tolerance manifesting in acceptance that social reintegration of victims is positive.

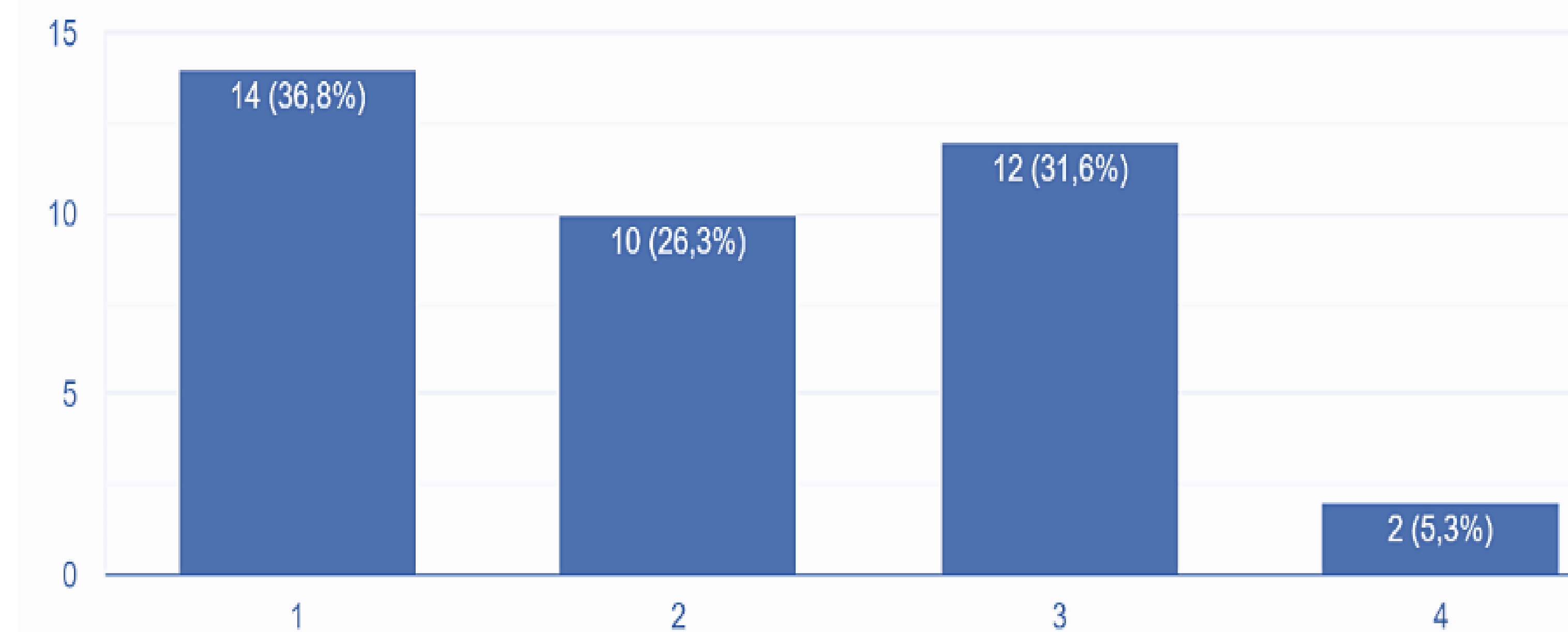
Before



After



D. “Which fragment impressed you most of all?”



Fragment 1

I knew that if I didn't leave now, I would not be able to keep my son safe. My life meant nothing to me but his life meant everything. I was 20 years old and pregnant by my pimp. The further I got along in my pregnancy, the less I was able to “work” (sell sex) and the more violent he became. At around 7 months, he beat me so severely I was taken to the hospital. It was clear I had experienced violence of some kind. My teeth had been kicked in and my face was bruised and bloody. Despite my visible injuries, I wasn't sure what to say to the hospital staff when they asked me if I needed help. I knew the consequences of outing my pimp for what he was and I was scared of what would happen if I told them the truth. So instead, dropping my head to avoid eye contact, I just told them that I was fine and didn't need help. I want other survivors who may be considering leaving but are not sure where to turn or who may be afraid to call the hotline to know this: Making that first call is scary but nothing changes if you don't change something yourself.

Fragment 2

After six long years trapped in the human trafficking networks that brought me to the United States – thanks to God – I got out alive. With the help of a good Samaritan, I'm now free from that world, where I was forced to sell my body. It wasn't easy to leave. I tried to commit suicide several times, thinking that was my only way out. I wasn't going to give my traffickers the pleasure of killing me – I would rather have done that myself. But my attempts were never successful, and only God knows why. One day, a stranger approached me in a public place and struck up a conversation. I ignored her at first because I was afraid to even speak to anyone. I felt like I was being watched by my traffickers at all times, no matter where I went, but this time that woman would change my life for the better. My story doesn't end there. I'd survived human trafficking, but the emotional trauma buried me deep, and I needed psychiatric help to get out. However, I was able to recover and find the will and strength to go on living. As part of the process, I also had to overcome my fear of trusting people. I've achieved all of this, and much more, thanks to God. He's put people in my life for a reason, and through them, he's shown me his love to this day, and in this same way he'll also allow me to help others.

KEY WORDS:

human trafficking, media storytelling, monomyth, empirical study, survival stories