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Transactional Sex in Nigerian Universities: Social and Demographic Implications

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Abstract

This study examines the interplay of social and environmental factors to argue that the consequences of transactional sex among university students in Nigeria are devastating, multidimensional, as well as an extension of decay in the already gasping educational system. The disorganization theory of the Chicago School and Merton's theory of differential opportunity enable the analysis to highlight the links between socio-cultural environment and prostitution. Data for the research which were collected from two universities in Southwestern Nigeria through triangulation of focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews and case-studies were analyzed using manual content analysis. Its findings show clearly that the phenomenon is common and acquiring new meanings among Nigerian students and at the same time being de-stigmatized in some quarters. The main results are: that involvement with the prostitute sub-culture entails a sequence of processes that culminate in psychological repositioning of the would-be transactional sex worker by demystification of perceived and actual risks associated with prostitution; that although poverty, the fun of belonging to the group of "happening babes", as a way of hurting parents among others predispose students to commercial sex, such predisposition is embedded in social disorganization; and that commercial sex has socio-demographic consequences which include: dropping out of school, high rate of rural-urban migration, loss of self-esteem, exposure to being raped, exposure to alcoholism, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, illegal abortions, child abandonment and death. These consequences suggest the centrality of urgent intervention from stakeholders towards re-orientating students on values that lead to meaningful human and social development.

Keywords: Demography, Social-disorganization, Transactional sex, Re-orientation, Development.

Background

Transactional sex has devastating consequences on its practitioners. Among students in particular, its effects are multidimensional inflicting both immediate and intergenerational injury on individuals and society (Nwokocha, 2000). Transactional sex which is synonymous with commercial sex or prostitution, defined as sexual intercourse on a promiscuous and mercenary basis with emotional indifference, has existed throughout written history (Clinard, 1957; Giddens, 1993; The World Book Encyclopaedia, 1995). Although the prevalence of the phenomenon in Nigeria as a whole is established, an agreeable definition has not been feasible among practitioners and groups due to perceptual and conceptual discrepancies. This ambiguity persists because definitions are given by most actors to blur its traditional meaning and to introduce epistemological distortions that reflect their comfort levels on the issue.

Commercial sex has become quite common in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and in particular universities to the extent that it is valued among a large number of students. The effect of this "Prostitution Revolution" in these institutions is that labels are designed to demean the stigma hitherto associated with the behaviour. This paper argues quite strongly that despite the truism that human nature presupposes dynamism and that individuals constantly strive to cope with changes in society, such adjustments should take into cognisance the norms and values of the community. The prevalence of transactional sex in Nigerian universities, it has been argued, is a product of general systems decay brought about by years of leadership insensitivity and recklessness (Nwokocha, 2000).

Attempts at investigating issues surrounding commercial sex are extensively documented in literature but little is known about the social psychology of initiation, apprenticeship and consolidation in these activities. These constitute critical components in the understanding of the phenomenon. The present study prioritizes analysis of the processes of transactional sex as a

way of bridging, often ignored, gaps in knowledge. A comprehensive understanding of the whole gamut of activities and consequences related to prostitution is achieved by investigating the sequence of events that characterize each stage in the continuum.

Transactional Sex: A Brief Overview

Sexuality and sexual behaviour of individuals are important issues that affect human activities and relationships. Societies therefore strive to guide perceptions and attitude of their members in a bid to ensure conformity to values (Henriques, 1968). As Zeidenstein and Moore (1996) observed, social construction of sexuality refers to the processes by which sexual thoughts, behaviour and conditions are interpreted and ascribed cultural meaning. Sen, et al (1994) also noted that the foundation of sexual and reproductive health and gender relations are laid early in life through the interplay of familial, social, economic and cultural forces. In addition, Onifade (1998) highlighted the influence of social variables like family background, economic pressure, urbanization, mass-media, peers and cultural norms on sexuality.

It has been argued that western civilization contributed significantly to the erosion of culturally prescribed sexual constraint in most African societies by its characteristic permissiveness of sexual expressions (Williams, 1985). For instance, Ilesanmi and Lewis (1997) pointed out that before western infiltration into Africa, elders in communities were designated to prepare young people for manhood and womanhood. In that way, societies emphasized and rewarded high morality and female chastity before marriage. Changing social practices have, however, altered attitudes about sexuality. Olutayo (1997) observed that in most African societies, including Nigeria, adolescents were, in principle expected to repress their sexual desires until marriage; virginity before marriage was rewarded and incest taboo was created around premarital sex. The present reality, however, is that the rate of premarital sex is increasing with

successive generation of young people. Oloko and Omoboye (1993) argued, for instance, that the present generation of young people are sexually more permissive compared to their counterparts in the past. Nwokocha (2000) citing a study by Renne in South Western Nigeria that focussed primarily on changes that had taken place in perception of virginity and premarital female sexuality in the last 60 years noted the links between cultural values and sexuality. The study found that virginity which was hitherto cherished as virtuous and perceived to facilitate pregnancy and safe-delivery after marriage is rather viewed presently, even among female respondents, as an anti-socialist status. This finding indicates the links between change in moral and value disposition and the attitude and behaviour of individuals in society.

The effects of rapid change on the normative organization of society have been demonstrated by the Chicago School through its Theory of Social Disorganization. This theory views deviance, including prostitution, as a natural by-product of rapid social change (Pfohl, 1994), which culminates in freedom of individuals from normative constraints. Horton and Hunt (1984) affirm the implication of structural alteration by observing that a changing society develops problems either because the resultant conditions are rejected or the society's changing values define old conditions as no longer acceptable. Prostitution in Nigeria, and among students in particular, is linked to negative changes in Nigeria's economic system beginning from the 1980s (Ilesanmi and Lewis, 1997). For some girls, commercial sex is the major instrument for overcoming poverty (Vickers, 1991) both at the micro-individual and macro-family levels. Studies have also linked factors like broken homes, general assistance from patrons, sexual orientation in the family, unemployment, breakdown in spousal communication and dwindling traditional moral and sexual values to prostitution (Robertson and Berger 1986; Henslin, 1993; Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Ilesanmi and Lewis, 1997; Olutayo, 1997; Nwokocha, 2000).

As Henriques (1968) contended, a comprehensive analysis of transactional sex necessitates examination of its causal factors, those that govern its rate and that create both clients and prostitutes. Robertson (1981) noted that recruitment into prostitution rarely results from abrupt decision; people tend to drift into the role and serve a period of apprenticeship before finally defining themselves as prostitutes. Olutayo's (1997) study of adolescent female prostitutes in Nigerian universities confirmed the latter observation:

Most ... entered that business through their friends while only ... were introduced into it by their mothers at very tender ages for financial reasons. Being introduced by a friend involves some form of subtle persuasion. The person to be introduced (hereafter referred to as 'the green') is often a willing person. This is because envying each other is the basis of beginning the relationship between the green and the initiator ... the initiator informs the green about prices of what she wears and generally has ... they even become so intimate that they sleep in each other's room and may even exchange rooms with either's official roommate. With time, the green is introduced to a man friend ... she is however told not to be faithful to the man and that she should not expect any serious relationship. Immediately she is introduced to another man and she accepts, she needs no further monitoring. She is further taught sign-languages concerning car flashes and referring to any client as their 'uncle', 'brother' or 'daddy' (Olutayo, 1997:57)

Subsequently, the 'initiate', according to Nwokocha's (2000) finding, vigorously scouts for clients given the competitive nature of the business. Clinard (1957) had noted that the prostitute

depends upon some form of organization for recruiting her patrons especially through the intermediary services of pimps for a fee.

Tomasevski (1993) stated that prostitution is acquiring new forms and pursued on an industrial scale to a dangerous dimension apparently reducing women to commodities that are bought, sold and appropriated. The preceding view conceptualises commercial sex only in the context of femininity. However, while defining prostitution as the granting of sexual favours for monetary gain, Giddens (1993) argued that most prostitutes are females although male prostitution is fairly common in some context. Although the present study limits the thematic definition to the traditional conception which is synonymous with feminization of prostitution considering that most legal definitions ignore the existence of male prostitution, it does not see the seeming gain only in monetary terms especially in the context of students' involvement. As a result, the concept of transaction has been introduced into the prostitution literature to address other aspects of exchange that characterize such sexual encounters. Transactions can go beyond money; sex for marks, political position, and status, among others.

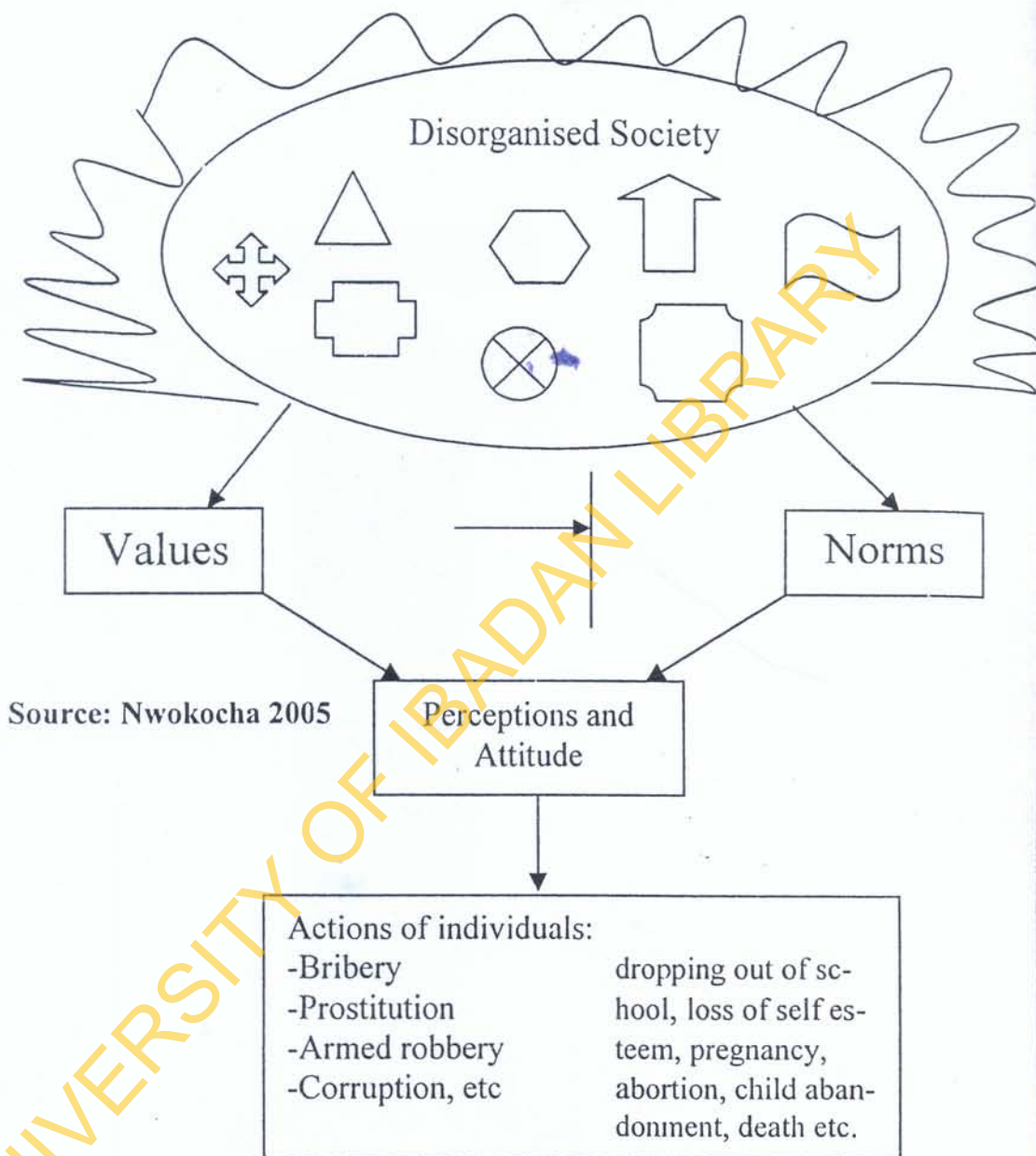
The consequences of commercial sex are sexually transmitted infections including Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), mistimed/unwanted pregnancy, abortion, social problems – drug abuse, alcoholism, poor academic performance and deviance (Elmore-Meegan, Conroy and Agala, 2004; Nwokocho, 2000; Ilesanmi and Lewis, 1997). In the event of contraceptive failure, most prostitutes in order to remain in business resort to abortion which has multidimensional implications especially when performed by quacks. Poor maternal outcomes in developing countries have been attributed to several factors especially inadequate medical facilities and non-use of available facilities. For instance, negative pregnancy outcomes resulting from induced abortion are linked to the activities of quacks whose practices are characterized by clandestinity (Nwokocho, 2004).

According to Bongaarts and Westoff (2000) citing Alan Guttmacher Institute 1999, an estimated 46 million induced abortions are performed globally annually. In Nigeria, an annual estimated 610,000 women engage in illegally induced abortion (Oye-Adeniran *et al.*, 2002); this is an abortion rate of 1 in 45 going by an estimated 27,347 500 women of reproductive age for the year 2000 (NPC, 1998). It has been pointed out that induced abortion currently accounts for 20,000 of the estimated 50,000 maternal deaths each year in Nigeria; it is the single largest contributor to maternal mortality (Otoide *et al.*, 2001). In addition, induced abortion has been implicated in chronic pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, secondary infertility, spontaneous abortion and prematurity in Nigerian women (Okonofua *et al.*, 1996).

Conceptual Framework

This framework derives largely from the disorganization theory of the Chicago School which views society as a collectivity of people bound together by a set of interrelated norms and values. The perspective sees deviance as a natural by-product of rapid social change especially when the rapidity is significant to disrupt a society's normative order. Merton's theory of Differential Opportunity finds meaning within the former by linking deviant behaviour with the social structure which allows for innovation by individuals to cope with changing situations. Figure 1, indicates interrelationships between society and individual behaviour and consequences

Figure.1, Conceptual Framework showing interconnections between social disorganization and anti-social/normative behaviours.



Source: Nwokocho 2005

The waves signify instability and social change which continuously alter existing structures ushering in as well as sustaining disorganization in society. The implication is that the normative organization of the society is fractured, leading to

different normative frameworks which compete for followers. In such situation, people are set free from normative constraint to the extent that haphazardness becomes a way of life. Fig.1. also indicates that the impingement of social disorganization on norms and values affects the perception and attitude of the individual. Consequently, people's behaviour and actions are informed by events in their society. In a society, for instance, where the normative web is stripped off its power of controlling people, anti-normative activities such as bribery, prostitution, armed robbery and deviant behaviour, generally, are common.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two universities in different states of Southwestern Nigeria for comparative purposes. The choice of these schools was necessitated by their marked similarities as well as differences. For instance, these institutions are classified as "first generation" and are owned by the federal government of Nigeria. In addition, they operate a residential system where a large number of students reside in hostels within the university. However, whereas one of the institutions is located in a megacity, the other is not. Although located in two states, it takes about an hour and half to move from one of these specific locations to the other. The implication is that activities and events in one of these locations affect what happens in the other. A triangulation of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Case-studies was used for data collection to facilitate examination of the effects of socio-cultural environment on commercial sex. At a tangential level, the snow-ball approach and key informant interviews were adopted in generating preliminary information necessary to classify respondents into categories in order to determine the most appropriate means of eliciting data from each category. Although transactional sex is common among students in the selected locations, given findings from pilot study, identification of major players with varied

experiences was considered important because of the complex nature of the thematic issue.

A total of twelve FGDs were conducted with six sessions organized in each of the chosen schools. In each of these locations, two discussion sessions were organized among identified transactional sex practitioners, while the remaining four sessions were conducted among students generally. Pilot study revealed that commercial sex workers belong to different categories and hence needed to be placed in discussion groups that reflect their levels of involvement and exposure in the trade. In each selected university, three categories of group discussants were constituted from different academic levels in the following manner: the first group comprised students at 100 and 200 levels; the second group consisted of those in 300 – 500 levels; and the third group were postgraduate students – at the time of the study. Issues discussed included the meaning and factors that pull students into transactional sex, the nature, perceived benefits and consequences.

It was realised in the course of FGDs that, given the secrecy that characterize activities of commercial sex workers, important data may be lost as a result of pretensions among transactional sex practitioners. It became necessary to introduce a complementary technique that guarantees respondents' anonymity. The use of in-depth interviews expanded the category scope of respondents for the study because apart from student commercial sex workers, other people who were directly or latently engaged in the act of prostitution were also interviewed. A total of 19 IDIs were conducted among identified student commercial sex workers, their male patrons and pimps. In each of the study locations, 4 respondents were interviewed with particular emphasis on the processes of commercial sex among students. Considering that clientele is the basis of prostitution, 5 clients were interviewed to ascertain the motivation for patronizing prostitutes as well as their experiences. In addition, 6 pimps were interviewed considering that their involvement in students' prostitution is critical for the survival of the trade.

The research also adopted the case-study technique of data gathering to ensure that concrete experiences are highlighted. Although the common nature of transactional sex among Nigerian students is established, identifying individuals as cases in the present attempt was quite difficult except for a postgraduate student who is now "born again Christian" that readily volunteered to be involved in the study at that level. In sum, a total of 3 cases were recorded – 1 postgraduate and 2 undergraduate students.

Analyzing the data collected through the three methods was done jointly. However, the challenge activated by analysis of qualitative data characterized by depth but which are textually unstructured and hence not straightforward (Bryman, 2001) was clearly evident. This signalled a need to browse through a congerie of analytical methods in an effort to resolve the antithesis between the attractiveness of data generated through qualitative techniques and the difficulty of finding analytical course (Miles, 1979). Although a catalogue of analysis methods has been highlighted by Sarantakos (1998), manual content analysis was specifically adopted for this study because of its relevance across the three major data gathering approaches used. The procedure began with the transcription of tape recordings of both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This was followed by the examination and, later, isolation of various responses that threw light into the main issues engaged by study.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the results of the study. These are presented and discussed with a view to examining interconnections between variables that interact to produce behaviours including transactional sex. By adopting the manual content method of analysis, both discussions and responses from group discussions and in-depth interviews respectively were imported, in some cases wholly, into analysis on the merit of their applicability to the thematic issue under examination.

Factors that Predispose Students to Transactional Sex

Most respondents linked commercial sex to economic crisis in families and the Nigerian society at large. The situation explains impoverishment of individuals and groups who, inevitably, strive to cope by devising various strategies. One of the FGD respondents noted that “most female students view prostitution as one of the easiest ways of making ends meet”. Although most would argue strongly to support the above insight, some other reasons explain the involvement of students from rich homes in transactional sex. The study found that some students who get involved do so for the “fun of it” rather than poverty. Another FGD participant noted:

Some of such girls join prostitute groups to achieve their quest to “belong” and are thus influenced easily by friends, room-mates, neighbours, course-mates, et cetera.

Explaining prostitution in non-economic terms among university students in Nigeria is quite difficult. The difficulty arises due to differences in individual perceptions and convictions as well as motivations in given situations. Investigation, however, shows that transactional sex among students is linkable to some factors mentioned earlier. Assuming that prostitution is linked wholly to the quest for economic empowerment, there is no guarantee that those from wealthy homes are provided all the necessary support by their families to ensure avoidance of acquaintance with the prostitute sub-culture. A lot of factors impinge on how far a person’s motives and desires are met notwithstanding family’s socio-economic status. Hence sensitivity of the Significant Others is a key issue in understanding and dealing effectively with the situation of individual members of a family. The argument advanced here is that ladies/girls from middle or low family socio-economic status whose families prioritize members’ welfare can be

given more economic support than those from high-status families that are insensitive to members' conditions.

The study also found that some students became commercial sex workers to hurt their parents and families. As pointed out in one of the FGDs:

Such girls may have demanded certain specific things from their families, may be a trip abroad; posh car to be used in school; some designer outfits; etc. Failure to be provided one or some of these items, when they know their families have the capacity to do that, makes some of them want to, kind of, retaliate by "soiling" their family names through prostitution. Some families have had to plead with these girls to desist from such perceived embarrassing behaviour by meeting their demands, most times grudgingly.

Although parents who are financially capable should readily provide for their children's needs, they should however not be encouraged to provide those things that may not add value to the education of their children. The issue, however, is that most of them hardly desist from transactional sex even after their demands are met. One in-depth interviewee noted that "once you taste it, stopping is not quite easy; what you see in most cases is a little change in technique". This is perhaps due to the network of relationships formed over a period of time by the prostitute which is difficult to dismantle. The paper argues that considering that becoming a commercial sex worker involves orientation at perceptual, attitudinal and behavioural levels, sustained de-briefing/de-orientation is a necessary approach to achieving re-orientation and de-prostitution. Achieving this requires sustained efforts among parents, families, guardians and stakeholders who have the direct responsibility of moulding the character of younger members of the society.

Over-strictness on the part of families was also cited as one of the reasons why some students get involved in commercial sex. In the view of some of the respondents, girls from such homes are "over-protected" that they hardly know what happens around them. The university, for them, is embedded in strangeness and challenges that naturally activate their quest for exploration. The study found that curiosity has led many female students to making adventures into different activities that affect their lives, including prostitution. Factors like broken homes, greed, persuasion from cult girls and promiscuity were cited, at tangential level, as also responsible for commercial sex among students.

Respondents also noted that fear of being jilted by a boy friend especially those who have experienced such in the past discourages this category of ladies from settling with a partner. One FGD participant noted:

Some girls who had been jilted by boy friends find it difficult to "settle down" with a man for fear of repeat experience. What happens is that such girls may no longer have affection for men conceived as the same all over. In the process, some of them relate with several men whom they hardly have affection for, at sexual level, for some fee.

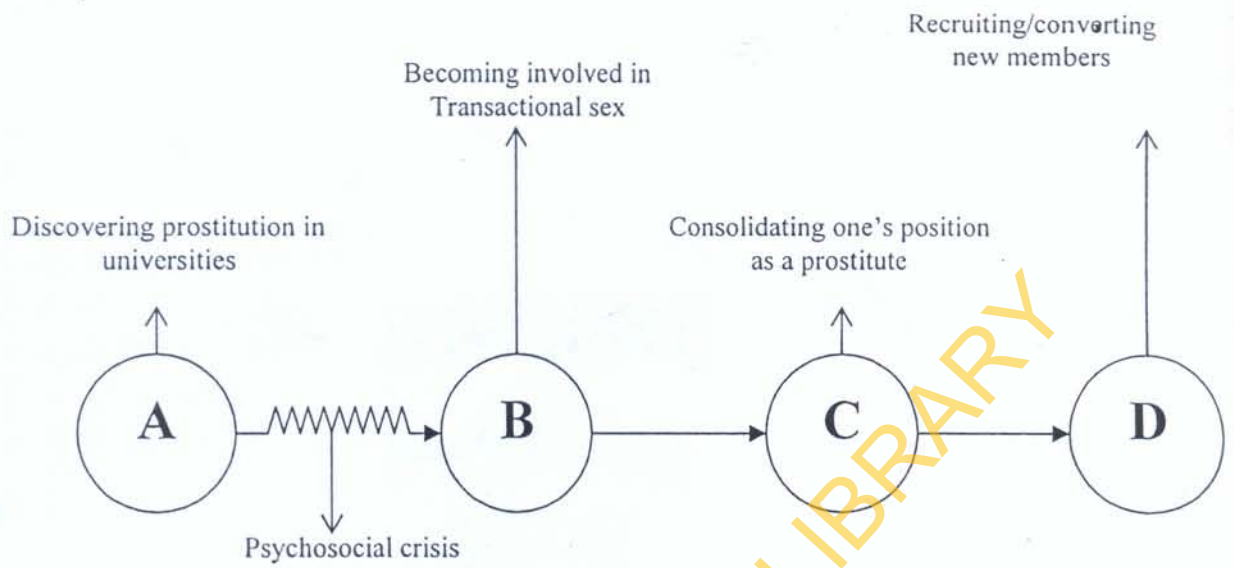
This may not be sufficient reason for prostitution because some other girls who experience same, or even worse conditions, still strive to be cautious in sexual relations especially in the era of HIV/AIDS. This paper notes that the factors cited as responsible for prostitution among university students are strong in a society like Nigeria where norms and values are loose to the extent that individuals and groups are not constrained against anti-social behaviours including prostitution.

Processes of Transactional Sex

The processes involve the whole gamut of activities that take place between the period a would-be student commercial sex worker discovers the feasibility of engaging in the trade and becoming a recruiting/converting agent. Figure 2 shows that there are different levels of involvement in the prostitute subculture terminating at point 'D' where experienced members of the group introduce students to prostitution through various techniques including the one described by Olutayo (1997).

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Figure 2, the Transactional Sex Processes indicating stages in the continuum.



Source: Nwokocha, 2006.

Although different category of respondents for the study pointed out the impingement of social, cultural, familial, economic and psychological factors on the decision of whether or not to join the trade, findings indicate that some struggle to demystify the consequences inherent in the phenomenon. Thus, points A and B are the most crucial in the prostitution continuum. The waves between these points indicate crises, puzzles, tension, contradictions and uncertainty among prospective sex workers that arise from their perceptions of real and imagined consequences of involvement and rosy information from intending mentors. One of the case studies stated:

Initially, it was not psychologically easy for me to decide to join other girls in this behaviour. I was constantly pressured by some girls in my class and room at ... hall to follow the trend. My peers mocked and ridiculed me with every kind of names. At other times, they painted a rosy picture of what I should expect as a member of the subgroup.

Some respondents admitted experiencing strange attitude among people around them that ultimately affected their own behaviour. Another case recounted:

Before I came to ... for studies, I was modest in dressing and my activities generally ... In the course of my first semester here, my perception and orientation about university girls started changing; I began to appreciate real girls that have all it takes to attract anybody – superb dressing, powerful display of parts of body and cute rooms. I got attracted and later discovered that their flamboyance is sustained through the money got from meeting different men, who most times visit and take them out.

The implication of the above view is that becoming a commercial sex worker is more than perceiving activities of practitioners; subtle persuasion by peers and personal conviction

are significant factors in becoming one. The study reveals that some who later got involved in the sex trade did so for reasons such as inability to figure out the consequence of commercial sex on room mates engaged in the trade. Moreover, as recounted by one respondent:

... coupled with the big money they displayed on arrival, I decided to be involved ... again when I saw younger girls do it and still look pretty and convinced that am prettier than most of them, I summoned courage to join this class of girls. My mind was to try and then withdraw if not impressed with initial encounters ... but the decision to retreat is even harder than that of joining the bandwagon.

Findings further reveal that the decision to become prostitutes in universities does not pose problems or psychological challenges to some girls for various reasons. Some are encouraged by their mothers right from home to "do what others are doing to survive" while others learn the act in secondary schools with strong conviction to exhibit this behaviour as university students. These latter categories of prospective commercial sex workers move smoothly along the continuum without experiencing significant psychological crisis. Hence, the waves between points A and B do not manifest because of the ease with which such decisions are made. It is argued that girls in this category already know what getting involved in prostitution entails and only come to campus to brush-up their skills for relevant activities. For such girls, the quest to becoming recruiting agents, marked by point D in figure 2, is expressed *ab initio*. As the study reveals, the benefits of recruiting people into the sub-culture are two-fold: recruits pay allegiance to the "mistress" on one hand and as such a network of social relationship is maintained for immediate and unforeseen benefits. On the other hand, recruitment confers higher status on the mentor within the sub-culture.

Social and Demographic Implications of Transactional Sex

The social and demographic consequences of transactional sex among university students are examined within the context of fertility, mortality, migration, alcoholism, child abandonment, dropping-out-of-school among others. The business nature of prostitution is such that practitioners avoid pregnancy through the use of contraceptives and/or terminate these pregnancies as soon as they occur. There are indications that even when a prostitute makes the use of condom a condition for commercial sex, the client in most cases determines how sexual activities take place. Some patrons who insist on unprotected sex are willing to pay higher fees to prostitutes on the premise that sex is more pleasurable without such protection. Literature indicates that HIV has continued to spread mainly through unprotected sexual relationships between men and women (Nasidi and Harry, 2006).

The study found that most commercial sex workers undergo unsafe abortions for reasons which include ignorance, poverty and to ensure their anonymity, among others. Unsafe abortion has implications for fecundity and fertility; where it affects the reproductive system a woman may not be physiologically able to conceive later in life. In societies where a high premium is placed on children, childlessness is a major reason for partner abuse and divorce (Nwokocha, 2007). Consequently, some women struggle to give birth even when their lives are threatened as a means of legitimizing their marriages (Nwokocha, 2006). This contributes to high maternal mortality in relevant societies. Study shows that in Nigeria, 800 maternal deaths occur per 100,000 live births annually (Population Reference Bureau, 2005).

Commercial sex workers have the tendency of migrating to different locations on the request of patrons who are willing to pay higher fees for *out of station services*. Some of the respondents noted that activities of some student prostitutes prepare them for higher activities in Europe and America after graduation. One IDI respondent stated:

I had friends who were in the act (prostitution) and immediately after graduation travelled to Europe, precisely Italy and continued this activity ... although they brought some money back home to their families, their parents hardly commanded respect in the community. I would say that their activities in school prepared them to face the challenges of commercial sex abroad. It would be difficult for girls who were not involved at that level to cope in Europe; it would mean serving as apprentice for some time at huge cost.

The cost of prostitution generally is enormous and among students in particular, it is multidimensional. Those who travel abroad to engage in commercial sex are exposed to numerous risks such as exposure to cold, alcoholism, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), entering into agreements, which have ritualistic aspects, with sponsors among others.

Transactional sex among students has contributed to high incidence of school drop-outs in relevant situations. Dropping out of school among this category of students is either deliberate or results from their inability to cope with the requirements of course of study. The latter scenario has accounted for low self-esteem among some of these students, and in extreme cases frustration and aggression. Experience has shown that child abandonment is a common practice among sex workers who carry pregnancies to term. Beyond the fact that abandoned victims could contract killer diseases or die as a result of stress of abuse, a majority of those that survive face a greater burden of striving for actual survival without meaningful support. This explains high incidence of anti-social behaviour exemplified by the activities of miscreants in society, a group whose response is classified by Merton as ritualists, retreatists or rebellious (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004; Schaefer 2005) or a combination of these.

Brief Recommendations

At the macro level, reorganizing the Nigerian society, generally, in such a way that norms and values impact positively on the perception, attitude and behaviour of individuals is crucial to achieving the desired change. In practical terms, discouraging criminal and antisocial behaviours such as embezzlement, bribery and corruption, subversion of the due process, entronement of mediocrity and laziness in both public and private domains among others is a necessary approach to overcoming inadequacies inherent in a dislocated Nigeria. We are aware of the depth of decay in the system given years of military dictatorship and tele-guided mentality that characterized the country over decades, however, committed leadership embedded in positive examples and vision is suggested as an urgent step to realizing institutional change in Nigeria.

The implication of the proposed change is that sensitive government would propel development that will undermine poverty in its several manifestations. Consequently, individuals and families who constitute the micro aspect of the society would be impacted by activities of the macro component. For instance, commitment to the eradication of extreme poverty – one of the millennium development goals – will trickle down largely to elimination of behaviours such as prostitution, armed robbery and accepting bribe that are mainly ascribed to poverty. In this way, the cultivation of some of these behaviours is discouraged from the onset except for individuals who are driven into deviance for other reasons.

Parents and significant others owe their young ones the responsibility of leading exemplary lives that will impact positively on their activities as members of the society. In addition, parents and guardians should spend quality time with their wards by exchanging ideas freely and without unnecessary inhibitions that may distort the flow of information that could shape their interaction with others in a wider context. Confiding in parents is the surest way of warding off negative peer pressure that may

dislocate the relevance of the socialization received earlier by younger family members. It is also strongly recommended that parents should monitor the activities of their children in higher institutions; the view that university students ought to have unlimited freedom is erroneous and should be strongly discouraged especially when most of them gain admission as teenagers. Although achieving attitudinal change does not usually happen swiftly, immediate efforts should be made by stakeholders to begin the campaign towards discouraging perceptions and attitude that could lead to antisocial behaviour.

Conclusion

This study has established that transactional sex in Nigerian universities is an activity that transcends all categories of students. It has become clear that poverty is no longer the only factor responsible for prostitution in Nigeria and among students in particular, as hitherto perceived. Motivations for joining the prostitute subculture are better explained by examining events surrounding each sex worker because of differences in circumstances, orientations, values and convictions. This relativism explains the inclusion of the transactional component of sex in this analysis. It supposes that other non-monetary factors such as the quest for higher grades, self-esteem, and political position on campus can also be implicated in students' predisposition to sex with individuals whom they hardly have emotions for. The present study singled out female university students for investigation considering that most studies on prostitution in Nigeria that examined all classes of prostitutes together failed to reveal accurate data as a result of insensitivity to differences among categories of commercial sex workers. Such integration yielded overgeneralizations that, for the most part, were misleading in terms of predisposing factors, processes and consequences.

Our argument is that disaggregating categories of transactional sex workers for analysis not only ensures that

underlying complexities of the trade are investigated but that the peculiarities of each group are emphasized and contextually understood. The choice of student prostitutes for investigation, in the present study, resulted from the involvement of a large majority in transactional sex to the extent that the phenomenon is currently de-stigmatized (perceived as normal) in some quarters. Although reasons like poverty, fun, hurting parents for failure to meet needs among others explain students' involvement in prostitution at manifest level, these factors are separately and collectively explained by the high level of social disorganization in Nigeria. Transactional sex in Nigerian universities complements, confirms as well as extends the decay in the entire educational system. The implication is that, unless there is genuine intervention, the Nigerian society will be engulfed in intergenerational flow of prostitutes which will impact negatively on the country's development generally.

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