
FACTORS CONSIDERED BY SEX WORKERS ENGAGED IN SEX-RELATED PROFESSION

Catalino N. Mendoza

Baliwag Polytechnic College, Baliwag, Bulacan, Philippines

John B. David

Our Lady of Fatima University, Pampanga Campus, Philippines

Joseph C. Gania

Anthony Tristan I. Escoto

Melvin B. Flores

Mark R. Punzalan

June Brian M. Santos

John Reynald Sario

Abstract

The study aimed to determine and understand the situation of male individuals who are engaging in sex related profession in the Philippines including their sex preferences and the factors that contributed or brought them into this kind of profession. The researchers made used of triangulation as a method of research and have selected five male individuals that met the qualifications of the criteria of a sex worker under purposive sampling technique. Data were collected in a form of interview following the sets of questions in an interview guide prepared by the researchers and observation on the sex workers behavior during the research proper. As a result, the study shows that all the participants preferred female as their partners. The factors that brought them into this profession are poverty, desire for money, physical desire and personal enjoyment. It also shows the challenges that the participants may face like acquiring illness or disease after engaging in sex with different people.

Keywords: sex, sex worker, sex preference, Angeles city

1.0 Introduction

It has been said that in mankind's history, there existed three fundamental professions, namely, the prostitutes, the shamans, and the spies. While historians propose that shamans gradually developed into politicians and lawyers in our recent day, the prostitutes and the spies remained as they are (Volkman,1994). In a historical

perspective, prostitution in the Philippines can follow its origin during the period when the Spaniards arrived and colonized the country.

Dr. Jose Florante J. Leyson penned in the encyclopedia of sexuality mentioning that during the period of conflict among tribes in the Philippines, those tribes that lost in the fight were enslaved for hard labor or resorted to cannibalism but not as sexual slaves. Dr. Leyson continued that even when the Chinese merchants began to intermarry with the Filipina women, the Chinese businessmen esteemed the women. But in the year 1500s when the Spaniards came to colonize the Philippines, there were some personal narrative incidents revealing that some Filipina slaves were offered for sale in European whorehouses as “exotic prostitutes” (Hays, 2015).

RA 10364 or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012 explains prostitution as “any act, transaction, scheme or design involving the use of a person by another for sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct in exchange for money, profit or any other consideration. There are at least three categories of prostitutes in the Philippines: 1) Those who work in a brothel establishments or otherwise known as the “casas” and employed by the brothel owners or pimps; 2) those who are working in bars and karaoke in a façade of a waitress and are usually controlled by the owners of the establishment they work; and 3) Those considered as freelancers, who work in the streets. (Hays, 2015)

When one offers sexual service to any customer, that is called sexual working.. A sex worker necessitates a sexual activity. This is done in exchange of sex for money, goods, service, or some other benefits or incentives that two sides or two parties discuss and agree to. Sex working happens for several reasons such as insufficient knowledge, penury, and impact in the environment where they reside or live. A lot of sex workers have not completed their education which certainly have an adverse impact when they desire to enter their chosen field one day. Thus, sex working influences the utilization of their skills in other regions or areas of the economy where they may be successful. Sex work entails sexual agreements which are voluntary in nature. This is in exchange for physical or material payment like money. This is one of the common circumstances or situations for them to avoid being destitute and being homeless.

The purpose of this study was to determine the sex preference as correlates to factors considered by the sex workers involved in the profession specially to make and create some strategies that would change their work preferences, eventually change their behavior toward more decent work.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange Theory explains that for social behavior to happen, there must be a process of exchange. This model expounds the society that we live in as a chain of interactions based on calculations of rewards and punishments. When the person has to put money, time and effort into a relationship, then this is called Costs which are visible things considered to be negative. The things that the person gains in the

relationship be it fan, friendship, companionship and social support are called rewards (Myers, 2008).

Social exchange theory asserts the causes why a person gets involved in sex related employment. This is due to the prize that they receive from doing such act. The consequences that they will experience after such activities remain unknown to them.

1.2 Variable Discussion

1.2.1 Rampant Male and Female Sex Working in Province of Pampanga

In 1991, the US 13th Air Force pulled out from its base at Clark Air Base as a result of the expiration of the agreement between the Philippine Government and the US Government. As a result, commercial sex in the Province of Pampanga has been greatly affected especially in the “area” where at least 1000 brothels were located. Despite the absence of the US base in the province, the flesh trade business in the province continued to thrive catering different types of clients. The types of prostitutes presently found in the province are both male and female willing to provide sexual gratification to their customers for a fee. While it is true that they are paid for the services they rendered, these service providers in the flesh trade are actually prone to exploitation and human rights abuses. In the City of Angeles, while being developed as an international airport, it is also being promote as a center for sex tours openly arranged by both Filipino tour operators and their foreign counter-part. Despite continuing arrests of violators and congress passing a law making a customer of a child prostitute criminally liable, sex tourism is still the third-highest money-making industry in the Philippines (Hays, 2015).

1.2.2 Factors Related to Entry into Sex Working

There are several social and economic factors that are associated with the entry of a male person into sex working. Among the more prevalent factors are ages, early home leaving, childhood molestation and physical abuse, substance abuse, runaway behavior, and economic conditions. Additionally, parental violence, cohesion of a family unit, parental alcohol abuse, adolescent substance abuse and self-esteem contribute to an individual’s involvement in sex working (Howard, 2001). In terms of sexual abuse and running away of the individual, (Goodlin,2009) previous research estimates that 10 to 84 percent of sex workers who experience sexual abuse mentions that those who are sexually abused are at a high risk of sex working. This is particularly true among females (Wisdom and Kahn, 1996). Therefore sexual abuse is often listed as a significant correlate of prostitution (Daka, 2001). In the study of Simon and Whitbeck (1991), they discovered that the integration of untimely sexual abuse and harmful parenting generally led to their children running away from home paving the way for increased participation in deviant behaviors including sex working. And in the study of Seng (1980) it was found out that those who run away from home to escape abuse found themselves involved in sex working (Nkala, 2014)

1.2.3 Harmful Effects of Sex Working

Sex working, according to Oxford English Dictionary, is the practice or occupation of engaging in sexual activity for payment. Most of us believe that sex working is detrimental. We believe that we are harmed if we sell sex and, perhaps, injured if we buy sex. This harm is regarded to be very serious. Selling sex cannot be equated with eating too much chocolate or getting a bad grade. Rather, it is considered as so injurious that if it is allowable and proper to get involved in sex working, it must be the last alternative in a situation where the option is to suffer a fatal harm (Moen, 2012).

1.2.4 Reinventing Male Sex Work

Male sex workers take part with various changes in the society which include technological, conceptual and social. The previous research about male sex workers explains that these things are established as psychologically unstable, desperate or without the basic necessities of life and their clients' sexual behavior. This is to help us become knowledgeable about male sex workers engaging in the sex industry (Minichiello, 2013).

1.2.5 Regulating the Male Sex Industry

There is a great ongoing debate throughout history with regards to the issue of how to best manage the sex industry. The focus on the control of female sex work has remained fixed in this debate while there is relatively no talk about the concern of male sex work. When men are considered in relation with sex work, the main reason tends to be about their status as the clients of female workers. However, greater focus is still given on female sex workers because they are usually the victims of sexual exploitation. (Whowell and Gaffney 2009) The issue of male sex workers is usually bypassed (Minichiello V. e., 2014)

1.2.6 Ages of Sex Workers

In the study of Debra Boyer (1986) entitled *Male Prostitution: A Cultural Expression of Homosexuality*, it was found out that male sex workers are 16.2 years of age, the average age however is at the age of 14. These findings are almost similar with all the other studies where the age ranges between 15-23 years of age, and that there are indications that there is an increased involvement of younger boys and seldom they are at the age of 12 (Fisher, et al 1982, Allen, 1980, Deisher et al 1969). This concern has not changed much even in the recent years as revealed in the study of Calhoun and Weaver (1996) and Parsons, et. al. (2001) and Morse, et. al. (1992) as cited in the paper of Donna M. Vandiver and Jessie L. Krienert (2007) entitled "An Assessment of a Cross-National Sample of Men and Women Arrested for Prostitution" where the ages of prostitutes from 17 years old and 32 years of old. (Boyer, 2015)

1.2.7 Sexuality and Sexual Health

According to World Health Organization, sexual health was defined in a World Health Organization Technical report series in 1975 as “the action of the somatic, emotional, intellectual and social aspect of sexual being to enhance personality communication and love.”

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is an epidemic of infectious disease that spread through humans has played a major role in this, but it has not been the only factor. There are many highly reported and studied internationally and nationally regarding the gradual impact on people’s health by other sexuality transmitted infection(STI’s) unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortion infertility, sexual violence and sexual abnormality (Khosla, 2015).

1.2.8 Understanding Sex Working

People who are engaged in the sex business often have this impact on others- a loss of respect. People find the behaviour despicable. There is behavior belief that sex working has always been and shall always be considered taboo. The idea of mentioning sex working to people will usually elicit a negative reaction even though it is just disguised while the talk of legalizing prostitution is often met with laughter and shock. There are plenty of tales about sex working that moulds both the popular imagination and public policies all around this planet. (Weitzer, 2012).

1.2.9 Sex Worker’s Perspectives

Four elements stand out when it comes to why people join the sex industry or the causes and motives behind it and these are financial sexual, recreational motives, and coercion. All of these are bound to play a role for women as well as for men but, noting that the sex work business is strongly anchored in (unequal) gender relations in sex and finance, most likely are not equally strong. For both sexes, however, the number one motive for engaging in commercial or exchange sex is, undoubtedly, to have money. Sex work is often chosen from a situation of limited other moneymaking options or is, economically speaking, simply the most favorable option. This is very true among the younger sex workers who can earn in sex work where otherwise they could not get anywhere else. Working hours flexibility also makes consolidating it with other responsibilities, like child care for instance, relatively not difficult. (Vanwesenbeeck, 2013)

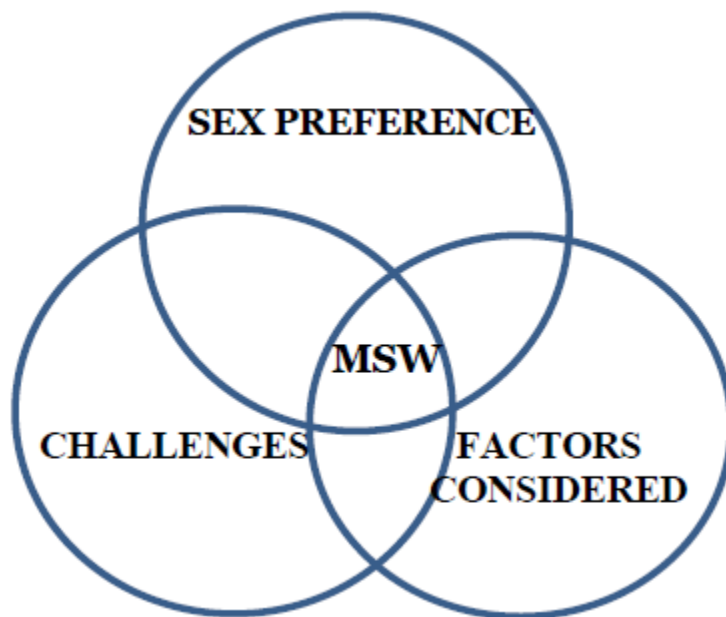
1.2.10 Male sex work a growing enterprise

According to Minichiello, et al. Male sex work is a progressive business and the male body is increasingly viewed like a commodity or a product. For example, male-to-male pornography (Thomas 2000), the 1990s has also witnessed the publication of popular magazines and newspapers, including sexually oriented commercial and classified advertisements vending or putting on sale the male body. Unsurprisingly, there has been a shift in the argument or discussion about male sex work. The discussions of

criminology, deviance, and social control have been employed as conceptual frameworks to expound male prostitution. Within this structure or scheme, both prostitution and homosexuality are thought of as deviant which requires social control. Earlier reports or versions conceptualized male prostitution as universally deviant, and prostitutes were regarded 'abnormal'. Within this extensive written works, researchers have disclosed that male sex workers tend to have varied issues and dilemmas. These problems include running away from home and early school leaving, which leads to a lack of educational, social, and employable skills (Coombs 1974). The role of alcohol and drugs has been shown as holding an unjustifiable significance in their lives (Morse et al. 1992). Attendance in retention centers, criminal records, and violence carried out against older (usually gay) males have been quoted as usual among some male sex workers (Coombs 1974; Visano 1988). These cored have headed to stereotyping of the male sex worker as either a psycho-pathological social eccentric, who has been sexually abused in childhood (Boyer 1989), a teenage runaway (Harris, 1973), or a heterosexual who engages in the sex industry because he is desperate for money (Chappell 1986).

The literature divulges that the profile of male sex workers is broad and extensive and changing from past stereotypes. The trends of such researches is to communicate that the street MSWs are less educated and higher drugs users are more likely to report financial issues and occurrences or vicious interactions with customers less likely to be tested for HIV, and SID. (Minichiello V. e., 2014)

1.3 Research Simulacrum



This research focuses on determining the sex preference as correlates to factors considered by male sex workers in the Philippines. Hence, it also identified the challenges (sickness and illness, losing job, losing beauty and physical wellness and out from the limelight) that the sex workers were facing in performing their professions.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a) Age;
 - b) Educational attainment;
 - c) Sexual preference or orientation;
 - d) Family income;
 - e) Religious affiliation?
2. What are the factors considered by male sex worker to engage in sex profession?
3. What are the challenges the male sex workers are facing in their profession?
4. What is the sex partner preference of the male sex workers?

2.0 Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a triangulation method focusing on the descriptive correlation between sex preferences of sex workers and the factors that influenced them entering sex working profession in the Philippines.

Researches have chosen a triangulation method to measure the strengths of the data used in the study validating the quantitative (profile of the respondents) by the qualitative (the interview results) and vice versa. In that way it measures its validity with effectiveness and reliability on the experiences gained by the subject participants in the study, the male sex workers.

2.2 Research Locale

The research conducted in the City of Angeles, specifically along Don Juico Avenue Barangay Malabantias, where most of the bars operate. This is also the place where Angeles city is known for, the flesh trading where most of the foreign people come just to experience and explore the Philippines through sex exposition.

2.3 Sampling

The researchers have decided to utilize the purposive sampling technique to identify the subjects/participants. It was the best sampling technique to use since there are few male sex workers who are willing to be part of the research.

The following were the criteria in selecting the subjects/participants of the study: (1) performing the profession for at least 2 long years, (2) at least 21 years of age, (3) willing to answer the questions with honesty and sincerity, and (4) willing to

participate directly by answering interview questions for verification and intensification of the previous questions.

2.4 Research Ethics

This study has been submitted, scrutinized and approved by research specialists of the Office of the Research Development and Innovation Center (RDIC) on the standards in preparing and conducting a research paper.

The researchers submitted an approved request letter by the research consultant, Dr. John B. David to the business owner or manager for approval and for the participants of the study for this consent approval following a protocol. All of the information gathered by the researchers were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for its purpose.

The only male sex workers were selected on their willingness to participate in the study after they signed the consent letter provided to them as a sign of their intention to participate in the study. The consent forms were explained to them before they signed it as a sign of respect and protocol.

2.5 Research Instruments

The primary instrument used in gathering the data was an interview guide formulated by the researchers themselves which consist of two parts: the profile of the respondents and the actual questions pertaining to their profession as sex workers.

2.6 Data Collection

A letter of request was submitted to the office of the establishment for their perusal and approval. Then the participants of the study were informed for an interview schedule. The data collected were then transcribed as a source of information for interpretation, analysis and evaluation.

3.0 Results

The researchers conducted an actual oral interview and asked the questions from the interview guide, directly to the five male sex workers and following are the results.

3.1 Personal Information

All of the respondents are single during the interview whose ages are between 20 to 34 years of age. Two of the respondents have finished high school, two are undergraduate in their baccalaureate program and one is a graduate of vocational course in culinary arts and in the profession from 3 years to 9 years already. They are all affiliated in Roman Catholic as their religious affiliations.

3.2 Factors

Poverty, easy money, desire and enjoyment were the factors they have considered in entering into the profession of which at first they are hesitant to because of shyness

and personality image. But because of the identified factors they have closed their eyes and just go with the flow that eventually hooked to their activities.

3.3 Challenges

Getting older and of becoming not salable to the Customers since one of the considerations in the field of sex working as profession is beauty and looks that eventually paved out because of lighting and insufficient sleep because the schedule is only at night. This is also one reasons that most of the sex workers acquired anxiety of not being employed after their youthfulness have gone. And the last challenge is the fear of acquiring illness and sickness due to their activities engaging themselves to engage into multiple sex partners most of the time.

Sex partner preference: female but most of the customers belong to the LGBTQ plus group whose interest is to be with male of which rarely to have older women whose reasons to be with the male sex workers is to find comfort and a bit of a short time happiness and enjoyment.

4.0 Discussion

Profile

The subjects/participants were composed basically of single men between the ages 20-34 who were legitimate residents of Pampanga and affiliated to Catholic in religion who finished secondary education in general since two of them have only reached first year college while the other is vocational culinary arts graduate. In other words most of them did not prioritize education towards college degree diploma instead they have chosen working in the flesh trading as floor dancers between 3 to 9 years. According to them they were already used to what they were doing. In other words they were already expert in the field of floor dancing and eventually to trade their crafts as sex teasers that most of the times leading to a date with the customers at which they earned bigger than expected aside of course of the per drink basis while with the customers inside the bar including the “tip”.

Factors

The common factor that led these sex workers to their profession were poverty but this eventually turned into desire and also of course because of easy money. Two of the subjects/participants divulged their innate desire to pleasure activities especially sexual, since for them they are enjoying in what they were doing and at the same time earning more money in an intimate activity with different types of personalities mostly gays who openly offered a lot of money in exchange of sex and sometimes offering a lifetime support of what they like to have (material things).

Two of them accidentally became sex workers because they longed for the love of their families. They have not experienced ever since when they were growing so when somebody offered a job, actually according to them, very lucrative and pleasurable job. They never had any second thought of grabbing the opportunity. At first they felt

awkwardly with what the floor manager directed them to do but eventually learnt and grasped the profession, for them if you really love what you do it would turn to an easy task.

While the last subject/participant discussed on how he became one of the sex workers. He shared his experiences as a young man looking for attention of the people since he wanted to become one of the actors in the Philippine entertainment industry. Actually he was looking for a modeling agency to start his dream of becoming an actor as his supposed idea to start a career. That was why when someone offered a job in relation to showcasing his talent in modeling he never gave a second thought and immediately joined the group and started the show. He was then sixteen (16) years old then when he walked away from his family to realize his dream of becoming an actor/model not knowing what work he would be having. It turned out to be more on selling the flesh and innate desire to those who are longing to have temporary happiness. For almost three (3) years doing the profession he learned to love it and he has become an expert in the field. Now that he is already 20 years old he can say that he is one of the best, almost topping the rest of the performers on the dance floor and of course the most favorite by the customers as their chosen entertainer whether is was in or outside the bar.

Challenges

The most common among their fears in their profession was getting old and losing their glow or losing their youthfulness since according to them their investment is their youth fullness and beauty that can easily capture the attention of the customers especially whenever they perform on the dance floor. Customers are basically attracted to their bodies “macho” image that has full of ‘abs’ which is commonly sought after by the gays and “matronas” who are older women longing for short- time happiness and sometimes those who wanted long time relationships after their break-ups or after losing their husbands. That is also one of the reasons why these dancers keep themselves physically fit by constantly doing their routine body building and seeking the assistance of the dermatologists for the maintenance of their skin to make them still saleable to the customers.

One of the challenges was how to maintain their health despite the activities every day, since they were exposed to different partners whom they never asked of their health status and for them it is a no to ask about their (customer) health condition for as long as they have the money in exchange of the services they render. For some it was not an issue since they already accepted whatever happens to them like acquiring sickness and illnesses since it is part of their job and they have chosen to work in the profession they were into and if they acquired one, so be it. Followed by the lack of night sleep wherein it is needed by an individual to maintain the glow of their beauty that, sometimes, can lead to sickness because of lack of immunity and body resistance. And they also believed that lack of night sleep contributes greatly to acquiring sickness and

illness because of weak immune system that is supposed to fight against toxins and radicals brought about by unhealthy foods, wines and spirits causing weak bodies.

Another concern is losing income because of old age and losing one's beauty. Since, they are working in the field where age and beauty matter, if your aura is no longer attractive to customers, you will be left behind resulting to accept whatever job offers or worst is to perform the dirty works in the bar such as offering sex to whoever your customers are, even at a very low compensation or payment just to earn a living. Especially if you do not have the savings to start with since most of them spend it mostly for their beauty and wellness as needed in their jobs and the fear of not being employed, other than that or after they are no longer saleable in the field where they are in. For them what is important is the "now" where they earn much for their leisure and for maintaining their looks and tuned bodies.

Sexual Preference

All of them preferred to enter into heterosexual relationships even though they can be with anybody (the customers) whatever their sexual preferences are. At the end of the day they know what they want for themselves and know who and what they are as straight guys who preferred to be with female partners in life.

Conclusion

The study purported to understand the sexual preferences of male sex workers in the Philippines city as the factors leading to enter into sex working profession. Desire and intention drives to enter into sex working profession because of the lucrative income they can get out of it and the very obvious reason among them is the easy money even without exerting much effort and physical activity as mentioned in the study conducted by Chappel (1986) that male sex workers enter into the profession because they are desperate for money. From the analysis and discussion, there is an evident of correlation between the sexual preference of the sex workers and the factors that drive them to enter into the profession. The obvious evidence is their involvement and exposure to their profession that they are not happy until they perform their profession to whoever is the customer and whatever their sexual orientation is for as long as after they engaged into sexual activity, they earned as much as what they expected.

Recommendations

This study highly recommends that the sex workers should attend seminars on how to effectively use their income while they are still able and should save for their future, seek medical health professional every now and then to avoid acquiring illness and sickness since it is not yet too late to do it especially if they will stay in the profession for a longer period of time.

The bar owners should also monitor the health beings of their sex workers to avoid possible acquisitions of illness and sickness that would contribute to the problems of the society of the government. And for the government, if this profession will be

allowed, then legalize it but the government should have the strictest policy especially in acquiring all permits to operate such business establishments.

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