

Determinants of Commercial Sex in South-West Nigeria: A Case Study of Akure Metropolis

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Abstract: This study investigated the determinants of prostitution in South-West Nigeria using Akure metropolis as a case study. A purposive sampling technique was employed for data collection in Akure metropolis and logistics regression was used for the estimation. Female was found to be engaged more in offering sex for money and the youths involvement in commercial sex was at an increasing rate. More importantly, it was found that difficult economic condition, unemployment and desire to meet responsibilities and societal expectations were the key reasons for engaging in commercial sex. Price in the sex industry was found to be flexible and cheap and determined by hours of work, performance and bargaining skill. It was concluded that government should create job opportunities and introduce more social security nets for youths and different age groups to stop the growth of commercial sex in Nigeria.

Key words: Sexual Exchange, Female Sex Work, Poverty,

I. INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is commonly conceptualised as a practise of having sexual relations in exchange for economic gain (Wood, 2001) and it is one of the branches of the sex industry. Commercial sex is a world's oldest profession that involves practice of engaging in sexual activity with individuals other than a spouse or friend in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables (Mansson, 2008; Sanger & William, 1999). Prostitution had been in existence since around 300 B.C and found nearly everywhere including place of worships (Shahid, *et al*, 2013). It was a culture in certain places like Cyprus where women had to be a prostitute at least once to a stranger (Benjamin, 1964). Taylor and Jamieson (1999) argued that sex industry work on the basis of the principles of supply and demand as other industries. Prostitution market gained the attention of economists due to the incredible amount of resources that it attracts. The person who receives payment for sexual services is called a prostitute or commercial sex worker (Mansson, 2008). Contributions by economists to this field include Edlund and Korn, (2002); Cameron, (2002); Cameron and Collins, (2003) etc. These studies shared the assumptions that the object of the commercial sex transaction is sex, and that prostitution is one of the possible ways in which women supply sex to men. The 18th century was called 'The Golden Age of Prostitutes' because many places were established where people could get training to start professional life as commercial sex worker.

Several factors have been given for women adoption of prostitution and these could be voluntary and involuntary (UNESCO, 2002). The voluntary factors includes poverty, hunger, economic crisis, family pressure, illness etc. While the involuntary factors include force like trafficking, coercion, kidnapping, and being deceived. In India, it has been observed that sex work is largely involuntary and some women joined knowingly due to economic issue (Nag, 2006; Blanchard *et.al.*, 2005). Wawer *et al.*, (1996) argued that domestic responsibilities, economic crisis and lack of household economy forced women to involve in prostitution. Majority of women in sex work were found to be illiterates, belong to lower castes, lives in slum and from poor economic backgrounds (Ramesh *et al.*, 2008; USAID, 2003; Hong and Li, 2008). Also, domestic violence, coercion, threats and deception, interpersonal network influence and adult peer association leads women getting into sex work (Dalla, 2001; Busza, 2004; Dalla, 2001). In Nigeria women trafficking to European countries such as Italy began to gain attraction in the 1980s' and many were coerced into it ((Aluko-Daniels 2015; Aderinto, 2014). Evidence have shown that prostitution in Nigeria increased as a result of the adverse economic effect of the drop in oil price in the early 1980s followed by the implementation of structural adjustment programme in the middle 1980s. Brothels began to spring up in the 1980s and call-ups or part-time prostitution by young graduates and students also started (Amadiume, 2000). Since then commercial sex work and human trafficking have been thriving in Nigeria. United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute observed that about 8,000–10,000 Nigerian women practiced prostitution in Italy between 2000–2009.

Evidences have shown large number of young girls thrive and make a living on the streets as commercial sex workers in Nigeria. More so, prostitution industry keeps increasing in Nigeria with more intakes and females who are already in the industry and continues to encourage the young ones into the industry. The preponderance of female prostitution has become a serious social problem. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, family breakdown, lack of parental upbringing, peer pressure group among others have been adduced for this phenomenon in Nigeria (Oyeoku, 2012). Most prostitutes have encountered at least one of these problems, and many have experienced them in combination.

Furthermore, there is a high health risk in prostitution owing to the fact that sex workers are considered to be the main source of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, herpes, HIV/AIDS which can have negative spillover effects on the society (Oyeoku, 2012). Despite the adverse effects, women and adolescent continue and increasingly involve in commercial sex. This study investigates the determinants of prostitution in South-West Nigeria using Akure metropolis as a case study. The rest of the study is organised into four sections. Section two contains literature review while section three deals with the methodology. Section four covers results and discussion and section five concludes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

James (2007) defines commercial sex as the business or practice of engaging in sexual relations in exchange for financial reward. Prostitution or commercial sex is seen as the exchange of money or other valuables for sexual services to individuals other than a spouse or a friend (Overs 2002; Alobi & Ndifon, 2014). Prostitution can be classified into institutional prostitution, freelance prostitution, sexual harassment and sexual slavery. Institutional prostitution refers to the act of exchanging sex for financial or other favours in the hotels, brothels and bars where the prostitutes have rented rooms to render solicited services to their patrons. Freelance prostitution is a single sex operator who usually stays in her home and goes out when there is a request for her services. This form of prostitution is common among female students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Another form of prostitution in Nigeria occurs when girls are compelled into sleeping with their bosses to get jobs, promotions or even keep their jobs. It also takes the form of female workers sleeping with clients to achieve their target. Banking industry is a typical example where female workers engage in this form of prostitution in Nigeria due to target setting. This can be regarded as sexual harassment at work place. The fourth form of prostitution involves cross border prostitution; where humans are smuggled or trafficked to European countries. Many Nigerian female citizens have been trafficked to several European countries with purpose of selling them into prostitution. This is known as sexual slavery (Emmanuel & Amenze, 2018).

Studies have investigated reasons for involving in prostitution in different countries. Kangiwa (2015) conducted a study on the socio-economic effects of prostitution in Nigeria with the use of descriptive statistics. The findings shown economic gain as the driving force behind prostitution in Nigeria. Babatunde et.al, (2015) examined adolescent prostitution in south-western Nigeria with ethnographic method of in-depth interview. The results confirmed that financial gain was the reason for involvement in adolescent prostitution in Nigeria. Nkala (2014) studied the factors that influence the increase of prostitution in Bulawayo's Business Centre with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings show that Zimbabwe's dire economic situation forced many youth into prostitution. Also, Mubaraq, et.al, (2018) examined possible health and growth implications of prostitution in Nigeria with the use of conflict theory's lens.

The study concluded that the growth of poverty and income inequality will continue to drive prostitution among vulnerable group in Nigeria. Ayalew and Berhane (2000), in the examination of child prostitution, magnitude and related problems in Ethiopia, revealed that poverty, disagreement with family, and peer influence were the major reasons for prostitution in Ethiopia.

Linquin et.al, (2015) examined the acceptance of prostitution and its social determinants in Canada, using structural equation modeling (SEM). The study shows that the public has accepted prostitution overtime. Shahid et.al, (2013) in the study of causes and decision of women's involvement in prostitution and its consequences in Punjab, Pakistan, found that there are multiple pushing factors of women involvement in sex work. Some were due to voluntary factors like poverty, worse economic conditions, family neglect and other involuntary factors like rape, sexual assault, trafficking. Khan et.al, (2013), also showed that limited opportunities, financial burdens, the desire to survive, lacking adequate knowledge and the desire for more materials assets have made girls and married women entered into a web of selling sex in Lahore, Paksitan. Shillah (2011) in the examination of the effects of prostitution on the youth in Rubaga Municipality suggests that stakeholders were involved in sustaining the prostitution business and that the major causes of prostitution were prevailing poverty, easy access to condoms, peer pressure, illiteracy, family breakdown and family neglect.

Muertigue et.al, (2018) examined the prevalence of prostitution in Fiji Island with cross-sectional data. Their findings showed that the primary reasons for increasing prostitution act are economic pressure, poverty, or insufficient income. Other causes are lack of access to education, adequate housing and job opportunities. Dibua (2010) study on the socio-economic and socio-cultural predisposing risk factor to HIV/AIDS among commercial sex workers, single parents, long-distance-truck drivers, street children and students along the North-South highway in Eastern Nigeria, using t-test and chi-square statistics found that severe economic repression (poverty), illiteracy, economic-driven migration activities and unemployment were principal factors for prostitution. Also, Nnabugwu-Otesanya (2005), in a comparative study of prostitutes in Nigeria and Botswana show that about two-thirds or 67% of commercial sex workers started before age 19 and majority were from low-income households. About 63% work from the brothels and about 88% operate in cities far from their childhood home due to negative public perception of commercial sex work and many of the sex workers were trained by an older professional or pimp prior to commencement of the job. These show that many of the commercial sex workers are either willingly or forced into prostitution due to poverty and to make ends meet.

III. METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework for this study is the economic theory of prostitution of Edlund and Korn (2002). The theory examined prostitution in the context of marriage market.

According to the theory, if marriage is a source of income for women, then the prostitutes has to be compensated and this compensation arises from the fact that prostitutes are not marriageable and so should be compensated for foregone marriage market earnings. The theory pointed to three important factors that influenced prostitution as male-sex ratio, males in transit and income level. Hence, in view of Edlund and Korn (2002), prostitution is a function of male-sex ratios, males-in-transit and income level. This functional relationship can be written as:

$$Prst = f(msr, mit, inc) \text{----- (1)}$$

Equation (1) stated that the decision to go into prostitution (*Prst*) depends on male-sex ratios (*msr*), males-in-transit (*mit*) and Income level (*inc*). However, other important factors that influenced the decision to involve in prostitution includes unemployment, peer pressure, family breakdown, worse economic conditions, illiteracy, family neglect and forced rape (Shahid *et.al*, 2013; Nnabugwu-Otesanya, 2005). Thus, equation (1) can be extended to incorporate other factors that influenced the decision to go into commercial sex work thus:

$$Prst = f(msr, mit, inc, pp, fb, umt, wec, ilt, fn, fr) \text{----- (2)}$$

Where, *Prst*, *msr*, *mit* and *inc* are as defined in equation (1) and *pp* is peer pressure, *fb* is family breakdown, *umt* is unemployment, *wec* is worse economic conditions, *ilt* is illiteracy, *fn* is family neglect and *fr* is forced rape. According to Edlund and Korn (2002), male-sex ratio is positively related to the decision to engage in commercial sex work. This is because high sex-ratio of men to women makes prostitution more profitable relative to marriage. Also, males-in-transit is directly related to the decision to involve in prostitution. If men reside permanently in a place, they will participate in the marriage and sex markets but males-in-transit only participate in sex market and make returns in the sex market rise disproportionately, thus, induce a greater supply response. Income level (poverty) is assumed to be positively related to prostitution in the sense that, all things being equal, low earnings may induce the likelihood of going into prostitution. Furthermore, peer pressure, family breakdown, worse economic conditions, unemployment illiteracy, forced rape and family neglect are assumed to be positively related to the decision to engage in commercial sex work. The more leaning to the peer-group influence, the higher the tendency to involve in prostitution. Also, children from broken homes can be easily recruited into sex industry and prolonged unemployment can tempt females into prostitution to make a living. Unbearable economic conditions and lack of education can lead females into prostitution. Finally, early sexual exploitation of female children through forced rape tends to make females become commercial sex worker and children can be deceived into prostitution in case of inadequate family care.

Thus equation (2) can be stated explicitly as:

$$prst = \beta_0 + \beta_1msr + \beta_2mit + \beta_3inc + \beta_4pp + \beta_5fb + \beta_6umt + \beta_7wec + \beta_8ilt + \beta_9fn + \beta_{10}fr + \varepsilon_1 \text{----- (3)}$$

Where *prst*, *msr*, *mit*, *inc*, *pp*, *fb*, *umt*, *wec*, *ilt*, *fn* and *fr* as defined in equation (2) and ε_i is the disturbance term. A-priori $\beta_1 - \beta_{10}$ are expected to be positive. The probit form of equation (2) can be expressed as:

$$prst_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1msr_i + \beta_2mit_i + \beta_3inc_i + \beta_4pp_i + \beta_5fb_i + \beta_6umt_i + \beta_7wec_i + \beta_8ilt_i + \beta_9fn_i + \beta_{10}fr_i + v \text{----- (4)}$$

3.1 Data Source and Measurement of Variables

A survey was conducted using a purposive sampling method to collect data with questionnaires in Akure metropolis. The questionnaires were administered to the sex workers, non- sex workers, clients and non-client in the selected hotels and brothels Akure.

3.1.1 Population of the Study and Sample Size.

The total population of Akure metropolis inhabitants is 484,798 (Census, 2006). The sample size is calculated from this using the formula below:

$$S = \frac{z\{z^2 * p(1 - p)\}}{1} + \left\{ z^2 * \frac{p(1 - p)}{e^2} * N \right\} \text{----- (4)}$$

Where N= Population size, z = z-score as C.I, e = Margin of error and p = Standard of deviation. Population size is the total number of people within the demographic areas assumed in the study to be people living in Akure metropolis using 2006 Nigerian census figures. Z-score is a constant value automatically set based on the confidence level. It indicates the “standard normal score”, or the number of standard deviations between any selected value and the average/mean of the population. Margin of error also refers to as “confidence interval” is the amount of error allow in the results. The margin error is a percentage that indicates how close the sample results will be to the true value of the overall population. Confidence level is closely related to confidence interval (margin of error). This value measures the degree of certainty regarding how well a sample represents the overall population within the chosen margin of error. Standard of deviation indicates how much variation is expected among the responses. It is usually set at 0.5 (50%) (Wikihow, 2019). Therefore, N=484,798, z =1.96 at 95%C.I, e =0.05 and p = 50% = 0.5. Hence, the sample size for the study = 384.

3.1.2 Estimation Techniques

The estimation techniques employed in this study are descriptive statistics and logistic regression with marginal effect. The reason for using logistics regression was due to the dependent variable being in binary form of 0 and 1 (i.e. whether the respondent is a commercial sex worker or not).

3.1.3 Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was distributed based on ease of access to the respondents; 384 copies were distributed across the brothels and hotels in Akure. The head of the commercial sex workers and head of the hotels were approached and their cooperation was solicited. The questionnaires were administered to the commercial sex workers through the head

of their association for the professional sex workers and to other part-time commercial sex workers at their waiting places in Akure. The questionnaires were administered by three trained enumerators and the researcher ensured that the questionnaires were properly before final collection from the enumerators. Table 1 shows the description of the variables used in the analysis while

Table 2 shows the summary statistics of the variables employed in the analysis. Table 2 shows that the age of the respondents range from 16 to 62 years. The minimum number

of persons in the family of the respondents is 1 and maximum is 19. The size by age in the family range from 1 to 4. The minimum price charged by a commercial sex worker is ₦500 and maximum is ₦5,000. Minimum average income of individual sex worker is ₦100,000 per month and maximum is ₦250,000 per month. Lastly the minimum amount of expenses such as purchase of condoms, contraceptives e.t.c. is ₦5,000 and the maximum is ₦40,000.

Table 1: Description of Variables

Variable	Definition	Description
Dependent Variables		
Prostitution	Sexual Engagement for Commercial Purpose: Yes = 1, N = 0	Dichotomous
Independent Variables		
Single	Marital Status: Single = 1, Married = 2, Separated = 3, Divorced = 4, Widow = 5	Categorical
Male	Gender Variable: Male = 1, 0 otherwise	Dichotomous
Age	The age of the respondents	Continuous
Size by age	0-5 = 1, 6-17 = 2, 18-65 = 3, 65above = 5	Categorical
FMTYPE	Family Type: Monogamy = 1, Polygamy = 2	Categorical
FMHEAD	Head of the Family: Father = 1, Mother = 2, Self = 3	Categorical
PFAM	Position in the Family: Head of Family = 1, Spouse of the Head = 2, Male Child = 3, Female Child = 4, Others = 5	Categorical
FMHEDUC	Head of the Family Level of Education: No formal Schooling = 1, Primary Education = 2, Secondary Education = 3, Post-Secondary Education = 4	Categorical
RESEDOC	Respondents Level of Education: No formal schooling = 1, Primary education = 2, Secondary education = 3, Post-secondary education = 4	Categorical
FMHOCC	Head of the Family Occupation: Government Worker = 1, Formal Private Sector Worker = 2, Trader = 3, Transporter = 4, Farmer = 5, Self-Employed = 6, Housewife = 7, Unemployed = 8, others = 9.	Categorical
SFHOCC	Spouse of the Family Head Occupation: Student = 1 Government Worker = 2, Formal Private Sector Worker = 3, Trader = 4, Transporter = 5, Farmer = 6, Self-Employed = 7, Housewife = 8, Unemployed = 9, others = 10.	Categorical
REAPRSEX	Reasons for providing commercial sexual service: Payment of household expenses = 1, Payment for social life = 2, To save up = 3, Pay for my education = 4, To support my family members/kids = 5, Enjoy the sex = 6, Insufficient financial support from family members = 7, Insufficient emotional support from family members = 8, All my friends do it = 9, No other source of income/Low income = 10, Family background = 11, High ratio of men to women = 12, Men temporarily residing in an area = 13	Dichotomous
OTHACT	Other activities engaged in outside sex industry: No other work = 1, Studying = 2, Paid work part-time = 3, Paid work full-time = 4, Training courses = 5, Volunteer work = 6	Dichotomous
PAYMOT	Paying motives for sexual service: Problems in relationships = 1, Fun, delight, pleasure = 2, No obligation, responsibility = 3, Immediate satisfy of sexual desire = 4, Finding a variety in sexual life = 5, Emotional deficiency in a partnership relationship = 6, Sexual deficiency in a partnership relationship = 7, Sexual addiction = 8, Need to feel control, dominate over a woman = 9, It's comfortable, without an emotional connection and commitments = 10, The need for unusual sexual practices = 11	Dichotomous
AVEPRICE	Average price of commercial sex activities	Continuous
INC	Average income of individual	Continuous
EXP	Expenses involved in operating in the industry	Continuous

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables used

Variable	Mean	Std dev.	Min	Max
Age	24.87143	5.763907	16	62
Size	5.0476119	2.202134	1	19
Size by age	2.728571	.5246488	1	4

Average price of the industry	823.8095	780.9973	500	5,000
Average income	181952.4	46847.99	100000	250,000
Expenses	18438.1	8868.981	5000	40,000
Agesquare	651.6524	368.577	256	3844

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 shows reasons for providing commercial sex service and motives for paying for sex service.

Table 3: Reasons for Providing Commercial Sex Service and Motives for Paying for Sex Services

Variables/Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Payment of household expenses, save up, Insufficient financial support from family members, Support my family members/kids & No other source of income	133	63.33	63.33
Payment for social life	9	4.29	67.62
Payment for education	10	4.76	72.38
Enjoy sex	10	4.76	77.14
Insufficient emotional support	8	3.81	80.95
All my friends do it	13	6.19	87.14
Family background	15	7.14	94.29
High ratio of men to women	7	3.33	97.62
Men temporarily residing in an area	5	2.38	100.00
Motives for Paying for Sexual Services			
Problems in relationship, Fun/delight/pleasure, Need for unusual sexual practices, Sexual deficiency in a partnership relationship & Emotional deficiency in a partnership relationship	138	65.71	65.71
It's comfortable without an emotional connection & commitments	14	6.67	72.38
No obligations/responsibility	8	3.81	76.19
Immediate satisfy of sexual desire	13	6.19	82.38
Finding a variety in sexual life	13	6.19	88.57
Sexual addiction	14	6.67	95.24
Need to feel control/dominate over a woman	10	4.76	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2019

The large proportion of the respondents (about 63.33%) reported that payment of household expenses (food, rent etc.), to save up, insufficient financial support from family members, support for family members/kids & inadequate source of income are the major reasons for deciding to go into prostitution. This shows the importance of poverty in the decision to take up commercial sex work. Majority of the studies reviewed such as Muertigue et.al, (2018), Mubaraq, et.al, (2018), Kangiwa (2015), Nkala (2014), Linqun et.al, (2015) etc. supported this assertion in their various studies by arguing that poor economic conditions pushed many youths and women into prostitution. Also, about 4.29% reported payment for social life, 4.76% reported payment for education, 4.76% reported sex enjoyment, 3.81% reported insufficient emotional support, 6.19% reported peer influence, 7.14% reported family background, 3.33% reported high ratio of men to women while 2.38% gave being in a temporary residence as reasons for engaging in prostitution. These

reasons constitute part of the discovery of previous studies. Table 3 further shows various motives for paying for sex. According to Table 3 about respondents 65.7% gave relationship problems, fun/delight/pleasure, need for unusual sexual practices, sexual deficiency of partners, partners 'emotional deficiency as reasons for paying for sexual service. This is an indication that people pay for sex to fill deficiency in their sex life. About 7% reported comfort without emotional connection & commitments, 3.8% reported no obligations/responsibility, 6.2% reported immediate satisfaction of sexual desire, 6.2% reported finding a variety in sexual life, 6.67% reported sexual addiction and 4.76% reported need to control a woman. Hence, motives for paying for sex do not appears to be different across race and countries.

Table 4 shows the logistics regression for the determinants of prostitution in the Akure metropolis. The coefficient of male shows that females (the reference group) are more likely to engage in prostitution. The result for age and age-square implies that young ones are more likely to involve in prostitution and the rate at which they engaged in commercial sex work increase as they grow old. Though both coefficient of age and age-square are not significant. Singles, separated and divorcee are more likely to engage in prostitution. This result corroborated many previous studies that found those without husband either through separation, divorce or not being married at all more in commercial sex work. Individuals from a monogamous home are more likely to engage in prostitution. This may be a result of desire for different sexual experience by either of the spouse or less resources availability to the family due to the number of persons in the family. In a traditional African society, people practice polygamy to have more hands and more resources within the family through contribution by each member of the family. This practice is still much with the African people and in particular Nigerians. Individuals without support and only depend on self, children from a female headed house, persons form a large family are more likely and spouse of the family head are more likely to involve in commercial sex work. Finally, a low-income person is more prone to engage in prostitution to augment her income. This happen when the person has many financial responsibility and few means of income or low income. Students of higher institutions of learning, young graduates and even youth corpors also practise prostitution for this reason. This is result is line with Muertigue et.al, (2018); Mubaraq, et.al, (2018); Kangiwa (2015); Linqun et.al, (2015). Therefore, condition of living is paramount in the decision to engage in commercial sex work.

Table 4: Logistics Regression and Marginal Effect Results of the Determinants of Prostitution

Dependent Variable: COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS				
Variables	Logistic		Marginal Effects	
	Coefficient	Std. err	dy/dx	Std. err
Male	-2.67**	1.15	-0.58	0.25

Age	0.01	0.40	0.00	0.09
Agesquare	0.04	0.01	0.09	0.02
Married	-1.02	1.62	-0.23	0.36
Separated	2.13*	1.20	0.48	0.26
Divorced	0.95	1.80	0.21	0.40
Polygamy	-0.18	0.50	0.04	0.11
Self	0.48	0.84	0.11	0.19
FHead	0.39	0.56	0.09	0.13
Spouse	1.44	1.25	-0.32	0.28
Male child	-1.08	1.21	0.24	0.27
Size of the family	0.09	0.09	0.02	0.02
Family size by age	-0.39	0.41	-0.09	0.09
Average income	-0.08	0.03	-0.01	0.08
Constant	-0.77	5.04		
No of observation	210			
Prob > chi2	0.0000			
Pseudo R ²	0.2058			

***, ** and * denote levels of significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% level, respectively.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the factors responsible for engaging in commercial sex work in South-western Nigeria with Akure metropolis as a case study. The study found that harsh economic conditions and desire to meet necessary responsibilities are principal reasons for going into commercial sex work. Also, lack of gainful employment led people to practise prostitution. The study further shows that relationship problems are more important motives of clients paying for sexual service. Price charged in the sex industry is not fixed and determined by hours of work, performance and bargaining skill. It was thus, concluded that government should create more job opportunities for the citizens and introduce different social nets for different of age groups to stems the tide of growing commercial sex work in Nigeria. Marital counselling should also be provided either at local levels for easy access to marriage advice to eradicate prostitution, human trafficking, force rape among others in Nigeria.

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