

SOCIAL DEVIANT ACCOUNT OF A TEENAGE PROSTITUTE IN SABOGIDA- ORA, EDO STATE: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Social deviance in teenage prostitutes is on the increase in our society and has constituted a major social menace especially in the rural communities. This article explored an account of the social vices exhibited by a teenage female sex worker as a narrative research-based study. A question and answer segment including strict surveillance were used as the data and information retrieval methods. Inform consent was signed by the brothel manager and a witness during a regular visit. Alcohol consumption, drugs abuse, hard drugs use, tobacco smoking and cultism are being orchestrated by the teenage sex worker under surveillance. The results were said to be consistent going by the responses obtained by oral testimonies in compares to the strict surveillance technique used. Also, rape, violence, and molestation were encountered continuously by the teenage prostitute from the age of ten, and daily customer patronage was mind-blowing (25-30 clients per day). Others are duration as a sex worker (9months and 3weeks), and some sexual contacts (25-35 rounds of sex per day). Teenage prostitutes are vulnerable to molestation and violence in a range of ways. The situation is worsened when alcohol, hard drugs and sex enhancing substance abuses are the driving force, which is typical in a country like Nigeria. Total eradication of teenagers from the commercial sex business should be encouraged, and reintegration of the existing ones following reorientation and rehabilitation is strongly advocated.

Keywords: Alcoholism, drug abuse, hard drugs, social vices, teenage prostitution

INTRODUCTION

Social vices are traits that are unhealthy, harmful and negative attitudes, which are against the moral standard of society. Members of the public frowned at the negative behavioural traits exhibited more frequently in teenage girls and especially by female teen prostitutes in recent time. Such traits have been documented majorly as alcoholism, licit and illicit substance and drug abuse and hard drugs as well as sexual perverseness (Coleman-Cowger *et al.*, 2017). Several social vices perpetrated by teen prostitutes include alcohol intake, smoking, substance abuse, cultism and stealing amongst others. Indiscriminate alcohol intake and tobacco smoking are the most common deviant behaviours been exhibited by teenage prostitutes in the present day and are displayed with impunity (Odigie 2017; 2018). Drug abuse or hard drugs consumption has been on the increase and have become worrisome. Cultism among teen girls is becoming a norm within the commercial sex ring and constitutes a severe social hazard in rural communities where they are rarely checkmated (Odigie, 2017). Anal and oral sexual practices, which was initially perceived as being alien to the Nigerian socio-cultural norms have become a regular and irresistible practice amongst

the teenage prostitutes in Edo State (Odigie and Odega 2013; Odigie *et al.*, 2017). Despite the rich and cultural heritage in Edo State, some indigenes still indulge in the commercial sex business. According to a report by UNODC (2015); "Edo State is one of the 36 states in the federal republic of Nigeria with the capital in Benin City. It is in the southern part of the country with a population of about four million people spread over 18 Local Government Areas. Despite the vast population, the state is poorly industrialised, and Job opportunities are insufficient. About 50% of the populations are a civil servant while others are self-employed, small-scale traders and farmers. This has created a large pool of unemployed youths that can be quickly drawn into crimes. Young females particularly those with low-income family background are easy to entice into the transnational sex trade for prostitution in European countries (Odigie, 2018). According to the research produced within the framework of the UNICRI/UNODC pilot project, the majority of trafficked persons for sexual exploitation are young women and minors from Edo State. Recent studies and presentations from NAPTIP confirmed that Edo state is the most endemic State in external trafficking for sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2015).

Social Deviant Account of a Teenage Prostitute in Sabogida-ora, Edo State: A Case Study

Little or nothing has been reported on Sabongida-ora relating to teenage prostitution or commercial sex work in general. The political patterns and behaviour are based on a situation where both the monarchical and political god-fathers ideas flourished in an integrated manner. The colourful traditional festivals in the state manifest its rich cultural heritage. Sabongida-ora is the headquarter of Owan West Local Government Area, Edo State. The people are of Owans/Oras clan, and they have a historic giant footprint of Ukhuse Oke, which is located in a sacred grove between Ukhuse-oke and Ukhuseosi in a lulehe clan of Owan west local government area (Cleen, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the theories explicated below, we employed the human ecological system theory and the social exclusion theory to describe the deviant social behaviours exhibited by a particular teenage prostitute. Lanier and Henry, (2004) pointed out that social vices are an outcome of several different causes requiring an integrated framework or a conceptual absorption approach to help analyse each of the deviant behaviours. In this regard, Lanier and Henry (2004) explain that the purpose of integrating theories is to present interaction of probabilities from different theoretical perspectives that could explain the factors contributing to a person exhibiting a particular social vice.

Human ecological system theory

Human ecological system theory, as proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1989), is concerned with the interaction and interdependence of humans. In this theory, human development is a reciprocal and life-long process of interaction between persons and their environment, which manifests in a set of nested structures. The names of each of these structures or contextual systems arise based on its distance from the individual (Hope, 2007). Bronfenbrenner's original theory proposed four systems or levels, and later a fifth one, the chronosystem, was added (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Each system contains roles, norms, and rules that can shape human development as well as help to explain the specific behaviour or experience of an individual, in this case, a prostitute (Hope, 2007). The microsystem is the individual's immediate environment (e.g., family, school, peers). The mesosystem is comprised of connections between immediate environments (e.g., a child's school and peer group). The exosystem is the external environment setting, which only indirectly affects the development of a child (e.g., parent's workplace).

The macro- system is the more significant cultural context, including the national economy and laws, as well as political, cultural, and subcultural systems. Again, the chronosystem, which is time-related, reflects dynamic environment transitions. By identifying these various systems, we will be able to examine better and understand the experiences and needs of a teenage prostitute and their likely sequence of lifestyle. Also, both micro and mesosystems will be used to explore the immediate life of this particular teenager in the prostitution business. These models will also be used to examine other factors like socialisation agents, e.g., school, peers, and family. Finally, it will allow us to investigate essential questions relating to how this particular teenage sex worker socialises. After that, it helped us to critically examine her experiences, challenges, and ordeals giving rise to becoming a prostitute at a tender age. The exosystem will help us to look at the work experience of this teenager and the after effects on her day-to-day living. The macro system also will be useful for research into to various impacts of the experiences of this young lad. The chronosystem will also permit us to survey circumstances that may have affected a sex worker's decision to enter prostitution as a teenager not minding the damages and current life situation with social vices. Through this process, we will achieve a more holistic view of prostitution in a teenager, as well as the exploitation of particular life experiences as a case study.

Social Exclusion Theory

Social exclusion is the process whereby specific groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating entirely by poverty, low education or inadequate life skills (Alexander, 2005). It distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little or no access to power and decision-making bodies and little chance of influencing decisions or policies that affect them, and little chance of bettering their standard of living (Alexander, 2005). Social exclusion theory examines the systematic method of discrimination used to isolate people from mainstream society due to their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, ancestry, gender, age, disability, HIV status, and migrant status or place of habitation (Silver & Miller, 2003). Social exclusion can also lead to exclusion from educational opportunities, leading to different education and prostitution (Barry, 1998). According to the British Medical Journal (BMJ), social exclusion may contribute to children's poor educational performance and achievements, teenage

prostitution, unruly behaviour, drug misuse, teenage pregnancy, homelessness, crime, and suicide (BMJ, 2001). Importantly, social exclusion can be experienced at different levels of life because it can affect individuals, big or small, middle age or teenagers groups, or geographic areas (Jermyn, 2001). Research by Campbell et al. (2006) found that social exclusion causes changes in a person's brain function and can lead to poor decision-making and diminished learning ability. The research linked social exclusion to an individual's failure to exert self-control, mismanagement and can also lead to deviant behaviours. For instance, people who are rejected in social situations often respond by abusing alcohol, expressing aggression inappropriately, or performing poorly at school or work (Campbell et al., 2006) This theory, then, can help us understand profoundly the effect that exclusion resulting from prostitution can have on the life and wellbeing of a teenage prostitute.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Teenage sex work is on the increase in our society compared to reports in the past that teenage operations in the sex industries are rare (Odigie and Odega, 2013). The illicit activities by a single teenage sex worker have constituted a significant social menace, especially in Sabogida-ora, Edo state. The sexual and reproductive health of a teenage sex worker should be of paramount interest as it majorly served as a reservoir for sexually transmitted diseases, in which the human Papillomavirus is not spared (Odigie, 2018). The concept of teenage commercial sex working is difficult as it differs between different countries and depending on the way it is used by individuals (Odigie and Odega, 2013). According to Ogunkan *et al.*, (2010), the incidence of teenage prostitution that is a prostitute below the age of consent has been reported to be 24% in a study in Oyo State, Nigeria. However, a vast increase was observed by Odigie and Odega (2013), revealing 38% teenagers involved in prostitution in Benin City, Nigeria compared to what was reported at Ogbomosho, in Oyo State, Nigeria. There appears a considerable decline in some studies conducted in Edo State, Nigeria (Odigie and Achukwu 2017; Odigie *et al.*, 2017). However, this report is somewhat a generalised fact instead of the actual information emanating from a single teenage sex worker.

Despite the numerous works that are thought to have been published in the areas relating to social vices attributed to teenage sex workers, there is yet unpublished account of the experiences of a particular teenage prostitute as a case study. Articles

that describe the pattern of deviance social activities of teens around the globe are encouraging, but, no studies are describing the activities of a particular teenage commercial sex worker in this part of the world. Against the backdrop of unabated social vices among teenage prostitutes in Nigeria, our primary objective, therefore, was to explore an account of social deviance practices by a single teenage prostitute in Sabogida-ora, Edo State. We also aim to analyse, narrate and discuss the health-care-seeking behaviours and sexual experiences of the particular teenage prostitute as a case study.

METHODOLOGY

This is a case study of a teenage sex worker (age 13), which relates to the different social practices that are being orchestrated by a particular teenage prostitute (n=1) from Sabogida-ora, Edo state. A question and answer segment were arranged with the teenage sex worker on three occasions within a space of 3months respectively (an interview segment per month). This arrangement was meant to compare and ascertain the degree of truthfulness and consistency in retorts by the respondent. Also, strict surveillance was arranged to monitor the activities of the teenage prostitute for three months. Again, this approach was to understudy the general lifestyle of the respondent under investigation. The Respondent was unaware of the surveillance and had no prior knowledge of the survey, which served as the data information retrieval tools. The question and answer segment were conducted in vernacular (Pidgin English). The data centred primarily on social deviance practices: tobacco consumption, stealing, cultism, alcohol intake, cigarette smoking, drugs abuse and use of hard drugs. Others are socio-demographics: educational background, health-care-seeking behaviours, and sexual experiences. It also included a variety of issues regarding sexual practices, e.g. anal and oral sex, the number of sexual contacts and history of current and former disease symptoms (Odigie and Achukwu, 2015).

Ethical Approval

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was given ethics clearance by the Edo State Ministry of Health (Protocol number: HA. 577/Vol. 11. 165). The teenage sex worker in focus was treated in line with the British Psychological Society ethical guidelines (BPS, 2018). Inform consent was agreed and signed by the brothel manager and a witness during a regular visit. A statement of voluntary inclusion in this study was also obtained from the subject.

RESULTS

The results showed that the respondent orchestrated alcoholism, drug abuse, hard drugs use, cultism and tobacco smoking at a very tender age (Table 1-2). The results were said to be consistent going by the responses obtained by oral testimonies in compares to the strict surveillance technique used. Also, rape, violence, and molestation were encountered continuously by the teenage prostitute from the age of ten, and daily customer patronage was mind-blowing (25-30 clients per day) (Table 1-3). Others are duration as a sex worker (9months and 3weeks), and some sexual contacts (25-35 rounds of sex per day) (Table 3).

Table 3.1: Socio-demographic and Economic Characteristics (n=1)

Parameters	Responses
Age	13years
Highest level of Education	Primary 3
Parental upbringing	No (living with Uncles)
Mode of residence	Rent

Table 3.2: Social Deviance Practices (n=1)

Parameters	Responses
Tobacco Consumption	Yes (regular consumption)
Stealing	Yes (sometimes and when necessary)
Cultism	Yes (blue eyes confraternity)
Alcohol Intake	Yes (regular consumption)
Cigarette Smoking	Yes (indiscriminately and regularly)
Drugs Abuse	Yes (sometimes)
Use of Hard Drugs	Yes (sometimes)

Note: Type of hard drugs use in this study refers to the oral consumption of Marijuana while drugs abuse signifies the indiscriminate ingestions of oral medication without doctor prescriptions.

Table 3.3: Health-care-seeking behaviours and sexual experiences (n=1)

Parameters	Responses
Working Duration as a Sex Worker	9months and 3weeks
Number of sexual contacts	25-35 rounds per day
Clients Daily Patronage	25-30 clients per day
Anal sex practice	practiced only on demand (not regularly)
Oral sex practice	practiced only on demand (not regularly)
Regular condom use	Sometimes

Known regular clients	12-15 client
First sexual exposure	violent abuse
Pattern of sexual exposure	molestation and rape
Gang rape experience	none

Note: Numbers of sexual contacts refer to the number of client’s penile penetrations per day. It however, differs from client’s daily patronage, which is the actual number of men patronizing a prostitute but may necessarily not have sexual intercourse due to the price tag.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Teenage girls are increasingly indulging in commercial sex work, which is very detrimental to sexual and reproductive health apart from the mental instability that may result from the social vices being practised (Odigie, 2017; 2018). Social deviance, which is a behaviour that violates the social standards in the society, is a current trend by teenage prostitutes in Nigeria. This study, thus, accounted for the social deviance nature of a teenage prostitute who was regularly abused and molested by family members at the age of ten. The respondent exposes how she was always molested from her tender age following the death of her parents in a motor accident. It consequently led to her withdrawal from primary school largely owing to lack of finance. This scenario is uncommon compared to what has been reported in different kinds of literature (Cheit & Braslow, 2005; Wolak *et al.*, 2008). Low-income family background as a significant setback towards dropping out of school by teenage prostitutes has also been reported (Odigie and Achukwu, 2017; Odigie *et al.*, 2017). Teen girls are primarily vulnerable to molestation, violence, and rape, which are being perpetrated by supposed family members. This account is synonymous with the report by Cheit & Braslow (2005); in which some teenage prostitutes are victims of rape by excessive use of force while others are intimidated. In support of the preceding; Ponton and Judice (2004); Manlove *et al.* (2005) reported that teenage girls could not often negotiate sex efficiently with old partners while young adolescents with older partners have high rates of coerced intercourse. Table 1 showed the demographic report of the respondent which is somehow similar to what has been reported by Odigie and Odega (2013); where the lowest age of a teenage sex worker was 13 and the highest being 19years. The primary education obtained in the study was primary four, and the highest was a junior secondary school dropout (Odigie and Odega, 2013). Table 3 revealed the oral and anal sex practices have also been reported in the different literature involving teenage prostitute (Odigie and Odega, 2013; Odigie

and Achukwu, 2015; Odigie and Achukwu, 2017). The practice is strongly encouraged in the advanced countries of the world but is seen as alien in Nigeria and the Sub-Sahara Africa. This habit may however not be reckoned as a different social activity but may constitute a sex ecstasy and has been reported in several kinds of literature in the past (Odigie and Achukwu, 2015; Odigie and Achukwu, 2017).

Furthermore, indiscriminate alcohol consumption is increasingly rampant in our society. The account from our respondent (Table 2) conforms to the report by Gilchrist *et al.*, 2017; where alcohol use was very high across all groups that were investigated and included teenage girls. The study further reported that teenage alcoholism in recent time is alarming. However, the experimental group was from the general population which differs from our study that witnessed alcoholism from a single monitored female prostitute in a particular locality (Gilchrist *et al.*, 2017). In corroboration of the present account, teenage alcohol consumption amongst the general population including female prostitutes has been reported notably in Scotland, while other countries like France, England and Wales are not excluded (Wine and Spirit Association, 2015). Nonetheless, our study differs from the finding by Graham *et al.*, 2012; where prison inmate in Denmark is reported to be involved in alcoholism with a vast majority being females and, was silent on teenage alcoholics. Harmful drinking has been reported in a study in Australia including teenage girls in the general population but was also silent on the teenage prostitutes as well as the core meaning of harmful drinking (Laslett *et al.*, 2017). The most common licit and illicit substance vastly smoked is the Marijuana and tobacco as confirmed by the respondent (Table 2). Marijuana and tobacco smoking is gradually becoming a norm amongst teenage sex workers with differing accounts depending on the region in which laws regulating the offenders are executed. Coleman-Cowger *et al.*, 2017 reported variation of substance and drug abuse, and the health implications in America. The report centres majorly on pregnant and non-pregnant women. Marijuana and tobacco co-use was highly observed amongst street girls and prostitutes compared to their counterparts in the general population. However, the study was limited to those above leaving the core teenage sex workers devoid of information. The present study, therefore, differ to the former by Coleman-Cowger *et al.*, 2017, which had no information on the preset point of discussing. The difference is evident as the study centred on pregnant and non-pregnant women while

this study focused strictly on account of a teenage sex worker's experience to social deviance.

Other social vices in the present study (cigarette smoking, hard drugs use, stealing, and cultism) have been observed in several teen girls apart from being a teenage sex worker. Odigie and Odega (2013); discovered and reported similar deviant behaviours in teenage sex workers and attributed the act to broken homes, lack of parental care, and supervision and attention. Also, absolute freedom to move about and keeping uncontrolled friends in the neighbourhood have been ascribed to the indecent acts. Children left at home in nanny's care, housemaids and caretakers are also among the various routes attributed to acquiring different social habits apart from family members who are in charge of children when parents are away can also constitute negative impacts on children (Weitzer, 2012). The present account is thus synonymous with the report by Omoniojo *et al.* (2013); where many commercial sex workers were shown to have emerged in a city in Kano State, Nigeria, from which vast majorly were teenage prostitutes. The study reported that social vices are practised primarily by maladjusted individuals and more, in particular, those with family problems, social breakdown, depression, and teens from the broken homes. Teen prostitutes have been reported to be involved in the series of social violence that is increasingly on display within the Nigerian society. The present study, however, corroborates the finding by Omoniojo *et al.* (2013), who reported that teenage prostitution is on the increase and as such has constituted a social menace to the immediate environment and is fast becoming a nuisance to the general population. Also, the study reported that the dominance of information technology in recent time would make it impossible for social vices to be curbed or reduced as many teens have found pleasure in the use of gadgets to enable their evil desires. Again, the present study supports the claim by Omoniojo *et al.*, (2013) relating to stealing, robbery, and cultism by female sex workers who aid in the supply of arms and ammunition for armed robbers. Cultism, on the other hand, is on the increase within the sex workers ring, and the teenage sex workers are being recruited into the devilish societies for a sole reason (protection). Therefore, the present study is not dissimilar to another report regarding cultism practices and other deviant behaviours within the society. According to the respondent poverty and parental upbringing is the predisposing factor for her involvement in the commercial sex trade. In buttress of the present account, a report has it that the bulk of social vices escalating in the society has to do with

the high level of illiteracy, mass unemployment Omonijo & Nnedum (2012a); abject poverty Omonijo et al., (2011b). However, the discussions from the preceding are based on the data of a single person who has been used as a case study, and so inference there-of might be biased or may have been over exaggerated.

CONCLUSION

Teenage prostitutes are vulnerable to molestation and violence in a range of ways. The situation is worse when alcohol, hard drugs and sex enhancing substance abuses are the driving force, which is typical in a country like Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

Total eradication of teenagers from the commercial sex business should be encouraged, and reintegration of the existing ones following reorientation and rehabilitation is strongly advocated. There should be stronger laws to checkmate social vices in a general term, alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking and use of hard drugs by teenagers with appropriate surveillance to cover the rural communities.

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