



**TRANSACTIONAL SEX AMONG FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:
A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE,
SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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DECLARATION

I, **Faith Miri** (Student Number 3804502) declare that the study, *Transactional sex among female university students: A case study of the University of the Western Cape, South Africa*, is my own work, that it has never been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated, acknowledged and correctly referenced.

FAITH MIRI

Signed:

Date:



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DEDICATION

This mini thesis is dedicated to all vulnerable girls globally.



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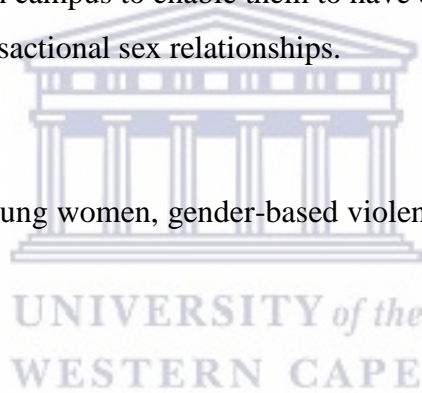
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ABSTRACT

The study uses a qualitative, narrative inquiry approach to understand the motivation for engaging in transactional sex and the challenges faced in such relationships. The target population of the study is female students registered at the University of the Western Cape. Snowball sampling was used to recruit 12 participants. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis. This study concludes that participating female students at the University of the Western Cape are motivated to engage in transactional sex due to socio-economic status, peer pressure, social norms, and the appeal of a lavish lifestyle. Lack of agency, submission, gender-based violence, and health-related problems were seen as the challenges faced by the female students in such relationships. This calls for universities to ensure the students are provided with extra-curricular activities on campus to enable them to have extra pocket money and to raise awareness on the dangers of transactional sex relationships.

Keywords: transactional sex, young women, gender-based violence, absent father, South Africa, poverty



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

GPS: Global Positioning System

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

STI: Sexually Transmitted Infection

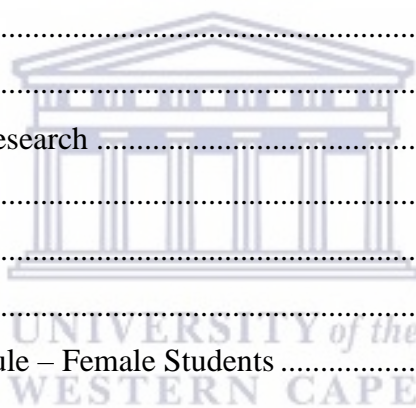


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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The meaning of sexual expression varies among different cultures and within certain populations. Sexual expression refers to different ideologies and conducts that include sexual activities, beliefs, desires, and attitudes. Common values are determined by economic and historical forces that change over time. The rapid pace of change and the effects of globalisation in different societies of the sub-continent are such that the patterns and nature of activities once considered normative not so long ago are likely to be different today. Any explanation then of what is currently seen as a normative activity, be it sexual or otherwise, must also consider the spatial specificities and the temporality settings in which they occur.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, transactional sex has become a major health concern. It is one of the patterns of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents. It is widely practiced among youths and has a direct link to HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and gender-based violence (Kilburn et al., 2018). It is a phenomenon in which money, gifts, and favours are exchanged for sexual benefits or relations. Transactional sex differs from prostitution or sex work, which is immediate sex for money (Choudhry et al., 2014). There have been different debates among scholars around the world on what constitutes transactional sex. Atwood et al. (2011) assert that it is commonly defined as the exchange of money or material gifts for sex. Other scholars have used varying definitions such as the exchange of alcohol and drugs for sex (Reuben et al., 2011). There are some scholars who only focus on the exchange of sex for money, and privileges with men or women who are not their regular partners (Atwood et al., 2011). Other definitions include a focus on both main and casual partners.

In their operationalisation of what constitutes transactional sex, some definitions include the initiation of a relationship with a regular partner or staying in a relationship longer than desired because of economic benefits (Jewkes, R.K. et al., 2010).

In this study, transactional sex is defined as sexual intercourse in exchange for material things or money. The partners involved in such relationships are referred to as “boyfriends” or “girlfriends”. This differs from partners of those engaged in sex work who are usually referred to as “clients” (Tade and Adekoya, 2012). However, a thin line exists between transactional sex and sex work,

particularly in short-term relationships that are formed in social spaces, such as bars. Stoebenau et al. (2016) argue that if young women practice transactional sex that is purely motivated by material gain, it can result in them transitioning into sex work for a living if they rely on it for so long.

Most of these relationships are imbalanced. Most times the men tend to influence the nature of the relationship. The men decide when and where the women are to meet them and due to this inequality, the men tend to decide whether they want to use condoms during sex or not. In most cases, the men decide to have sex without the use of condoms which negatively affects the young woman who can likely have an unwanted pregnancy or contract sexually transmitted diseases (Ajayi, A.I. et al.,2016).

This research focuses on the sex exchange for material gain in South Africa. It explores articles from across the African continent on transactional sex or sex exchange activities over the past twenty years. It further goes on to focus on the experiences of women at tertiary institutions. The main concerns of this investigation include understanding the motivations of young women who decide to engage in transactional sexual relationships and determining the problems they face.

1.2 Background and Rationale

According to Luke (2003), material and financial exchange has been a motivating factor essential for transactional sexual relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa. These relationships are identified as contributing to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Hunter (2002) states that such a sexual relationship, often described as transactional sex, is motivated by the possibility of gaining something good in return. In such situations where they might otherwise have abstained, transactional sex has been identified as the main cause of the vulnerability of women to sexual exploitation and gender violence.

Research shows that in Sub-Saharan Africa, exchanging sex for material means is a well-known practice. However, most women involved in these transactions do not categorise themselves as sex workers (Plummer, M.L. et al., 2004). That said, much of the research on the backgrounds and effects transactional sex remains limited. Some of the most recent scholarly inputs point out that involvement in transactional sex is linked to HIV serostatus. For this reason, the importance of understanding such sexual exchanges is needed (Dunkle et al., 2004). According to Simelala and Venter (2014), Sub-Saharan Africa is globally identified to be the epicentre of HIV/AIDS. In South

Africa, a study conducted states that the country has the majority of people who are affected by the HIV/AIDS virus (Simelala and Venter,2014).

Historically, researchers have argued that within Sub-Saharan Africa, transactional dynamics are universal and stem from the practice of *lobola*, commonly known as ‘bride price’ in South Africa. This practice turns the sexuality of women into an instrument and opens them up to commoditisation. According to Luke (2005), studies across Africa show high estimates for sex exchange by women for gifts or money, falling within the range of 5% to 78%. Jewkes et al. (2002) note that in South Africa, 18.8% of non-pregnant teenagers and 21.1% of pregnant teenagers reported having sex for presents or money. A study on women by Dunkle et al. (2004,) in a clinic in Soweto, found that 21.1% of partakers explained having sex with a non-primary male partner in exchange for money or material goods.

South Africa is the largest country in Southern Africa and is home to a variety of cultures, religions, and languages. South Africa ushered in democracy in 1994 after decades of systemic racial discrimination. After Nigeria, South Africa has the second-largest economy in Africa. However, the country has a high poverty rate despite having a relatively high GDP. Using the Gini coefficient, its inequality ratio is one of the highest in the world (World Bank, 2018).

The year 1994 marked the country’s first democratic elections and an end to the apartheid regime. With the lifting of international sanctions, the economy embraced neoliberalism and opened up to globalisation (Zembe et al., 2013). Along with this, the country was flooded with glamorised images of material, modern capitalistic lifestyles which became attractive to young people (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world with a huge gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’.

According to Stats SA (2020), unemployment remains high at almost 30% with nearly half of the country’s young people being unemployed, in education or training. Young people and women, especially black Africans are the most vulnerable to poverty (Stats SA, 2017). One reaction to this economic reality is the practice of young women turning to older men who often referred to as ‘sugar daddies’ or ‘blessers’. These men provide material items the women cannot afford themselves. This can occur while the young women try to maintain serious relationships with boyfriends within their age range (Hoss and Blokland, 2018). Leclerc-Madlala (2008) asserts that

relationships are normally seen to be age-disparate when the age gap between partners is between five and nine years. Where the age gap is 10 years or more, the relationship is seen to be intergenerational.

Many sources highlight that motivations for transactional sexual relationships are most commonly the need for subsistence and basic survival (Hunter, 2002). Young women whose access to resources is restricted tend to make use of transactional sex to enable them to gain employment, advance their education, gain high status among their peers, and have business opportunities (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). Qualitative research conducted by MacPhail and Campbell (2011) reveals that young women accept material or financial aid from men, in exchange for sex. Often this occurs without the use of condoms. Jewkes and Woods (2002) assert that in transactional sexual relationships, women may face physical violence and rape from men. The women in these relationships tend to tolerate sexual or physical violence because these arrangements offer them some form of income.

According to Luke (2003), transactional sex occurs mostly with younger women who have relationships with older men called 'sugar daddies'. In nine Sub-Saharan African countries, it was reported that 7.4% to 42.8% of younger men and 3.4% to 18.3% of older men stated receiving or giving gifts, money, or favours in exchange for sex. (Luke, 2005). A study that was carried out in Kisumu, Kenya, establishes that three-quarters of non-marital partnerships, where sex is the focus of the relationships, included goods or money transfers to the female partners (Luke, 2005).

Luke (2005) notes that transactional sex has been defined only as giving gifts or money to a sexual partner. However, few make the distinction between exchanges within primary relationships, which may be non-marital, and those with casual partners. A good number of qualitative studies on transactional sex have failed to differentiate between material or financial transfers which function as privileges such as child support or gifts (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010). The transactions are mainly motivated by the giver with a strong desire to produce resources. The motives behind transactions and gifts might not be a common understanding amongst all parties involved (Jewkes, 2010).

However, the difference between transactions and gifts is vital. While gifts form an essential part of expression or affection and care within relationships, they may not be an important factor in

sustaining the relationship or triggering a specific sexual encounter (Hunter, 2002). It is important to identify how the extent to which a relationship is characterised by irregular transfers is understood by either party to be transactional rather than gift-based. This is possibly a suggestion for understanding power dynamics that surround the choice of having sex in exchange for material gains (Hunter, 2002). Specifically, how does one distinguish between material exchange for sex and vice versa?

Money exchange and material resources in different relationships have different meanings. In some South African cultural settings, secondary and casual sexual relationships appear to be more motivated by transactional gains than main partnerships. The balance of economic and financial power may influence the sexual decision-making dynamics within main partnerships. These dialogues are necessarily impacted by significantly more complex social dialogues including childbearing, love, trust, and commitment (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003).

Conservatively, discourses on transactional sex have been influenced by two big perspectives: structuration and agency. Structuration focuses on the structural forces that affect human decision-making, causing people to make decisions they may typically be expected to avoid. On the other hand, agency acknowledges an individual's power of choice (Gukurume, 2011; Luke, 2005). Through the lens of the agency paradigm, young women are rational beings who may use their sexuality to achieve material and financial advantage over wealthy older men. Research conducted in Tanzania, for instance, shows that young women viewed themselves as fortunate to have been born as females since they could use their sexuality for enjoyment and monetary gain. They viewed men as dumb for paying for products (vaginas/sex) they could not take away (Wamoyi et al., 2011). Older spouses in transactional relationships have been denigrated in Abidjan as being old, wealthy fools who are only useful for financial exploitation (Hunter, 2002).

The results of a quantitative study carried out by Wusu (2014) among students at Lagos State University in Nigeria showed that heterosexual sexual activities are very common among undergraduates. It indicated that transactional sex was widespread, and that women were more likely to engage in it than men. The interviews revealed that the high incidence of risky sexual behaviour is caused by poverty, broken homes, and the urge to make quick money. Condoms and other safety precautions are rarely used in transactional sex. In eight private colleges in Bahir Dar

City, Ethiopia, 790 students participated in cross-sectional research in July 2012. The students in this study acknowledged having traded sex for cash. When compared to respondents who had never engaged in unprotected sex, those who reported having done it were roughly twice as likely to engage in transactional sex. Students renting homes without families had a larger chance of having sex than students living with relatives.

In a separate qualitative study with female university students in Ghana, the participants claimed that they were not simply victims and that their relationships were the outcome of difficult and deliberate decisions. They did not want to get married, and they were in short-term relationships with their partners primarily for financial gain. Despite this, they kept these relationships a secret from their families and the majority of their friends out of fear that it would harm their chances of getting married in the future. They shielded themselves from emotional connection even though they frequently perceived their spouses as caring, viewing the giving of presents as a sign of affection and occasionally as a substitute for parental love. Because of the ties, they were able to buy the trappings of a rich society, such as clothes, fast food, and gadgets. Their purpose was largely economic, to satisfy 'wants' rather than survival 'needs'. They were also inspired by the richer experiences these relationships made possible, such as feeling safe, respected, 'upper class', being a member of a daring group of elite women, and having the freedom to travel and further their studies (Adjei et al., 2014).

There were differences between men and women's participation in transactional sex in a survey conducted at Mbarara University of Science and Technology in South-Western Uganda, which had 2870 undergraduate students in 2014. A greater percentage of men (22.7% vs. 6.2%) reported paying for sex, while more women than men (15.2% vs. 10.1%) said they had received something valuable in exchange for sex (Choudry, 2015). Evidence of an increase in transactional sex among young people in South Africa, including university students, has been documented in the literature. Most of the existing literature (Gukurume, 2011; Masvawure, 2010; Shefer et al., 2012) suggests that transactional sex is particularly prevalent in Southern Africa.

Gukurume (2011) performed a qualitative study among students at Great Zimbabwe University, and the results showed that most students engage in transactional interactions for both necessities like food and clothing, and pleasures like jewellery and cosmetics. This study also showed that

money, gifts, and other material rewards decrease young students' propensity to use protection during sex thus increasing their risk of HIV infection as well as unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

In the past, having sex with 'sugar daddies', who give presents to young women in a one-way fashion, has frequently been confused with transactional sex. The results of this study, however, reveal that transactional sex is more complicated than it has been represented to be. Additionally, it was shown in this study that receiving money and presents in these relationships is not as disempowering as has usually been assumed. Rather, young students were regarded as exercising their agency by reaping the rewards of their sexuality (Gukurume, 2011).

Information on condom use in transactional sex is provided by a short qualitative study of university students' health literacy in Zimbabwe. The study found that habitual partners rarely use condoms. Second, it can be challenging for female students to insist on the use of condoms in relationships with partners who are employed. This conclusion was not explained by the researchers, although it might be connected to the greater economic disparities between a young girl and a man who is employed as opposed to a young man who is unemployed (Terry et al., 2005).

1.3 Problem Statement

Most studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa show that young people, especially young women, become involved in transactional sex with older men to support their basic needs or for economic survival (Chatterji et al., 2005). On the other hand, older men prefer young women as there is the mistaken belief that young women hardly get infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and therefore it is safer to have sex without the use of condoms. Other studies have demonstrated that the anticipated economic benefit, combined with income inequality, age, and power imbalances in transactional sexual relationships compromise the ability and power of young people to negotiate for safe sex. This puts them at risk for unwanted pregnancies, HIV infection, and STIs (Kuate Defo, 2004). Kuate Defo (2004) notes that young women's transactional relationships with older men lead to the occurrence of sexual violence which is prevalent. This violence could be physical or sexual. In addition, threats are made if the young women break the agreement.

Globally, university campuses are seen as a space for sexual exploration (Adam and Mutongi 2007). Due to the concern about the HIV status of women, it is important to gain further insight into the main underpinnings of transactional sexual relationships at a South African university.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of this research was to investigate transactional sexual relationships among female students at a University of the Western Cape (UWC). The specific objectives were:

- i. To understand what motivates female students to participate in transactional sex.
- ii. To examine the nature and extent of transactional sexual relationships among female students.
- iii. To explore the challenges young women face in transactional sexual relationships.
- iv. To gain insights into whose empowerment and reality counts when it comes to transactional sex, given inherent power dynamics.

1.5 Research Questions

The overarching research question investigated in this study is: What is the nature and extent of transactional sexual relationships among female students? Are female students' practical and/or strategic needs a specific focus of this relationship? Other questions:

- i. What motivates female students at the university to participate in transactional sexual relationships and to what degree are they visible in these relationships?
- ii. What kind of challenges do female university students experience in transactional sexual relationships?
- iii. What are the practical implications of the different roles and statuses of women and men in the relationship?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature review and the theoretical framework used in this study. The literature review covers the term transactional sex, the factors motivating female students to engage in transactional sex, the challenges faced in such relations, and the timeline of transactional sex.

2.2 Definition of Concepts

2.2.1 *Transactional sex*

In Sub-Saharan Africa, transactional sex is seen as a key factor contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other related diseases. In these relationships, most people do not want to marry their partners as the relationship is just for a short while and mainly for benefits. Nyanzi et al. (2001) state that older men prefer having sexual relationships with younger women as it is believed that they have a low possibility of getting infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Depending on the context there are many definitions of transactional sex. Universally, the definition of transactional sex is referred to as sex motivated by material and financial exchange in heterosexual relationships (Morrell et al., 2012). In such relationships, the men are seen as the caregivers who make provisions of material and monetary benefits to their female partners, who in turn provide them with sex. Luke (2005) states that transactional sex tends to occur more between young women and older men. According to Adjei and Kyereme (2014), the exchange of sex for gifts, money, favours, or services is also transactional sex.

Transactional sex, which has also been defined as older men abusing younger women by offering them material resources in exchange for sex, is still a widespread practice. For instance, Ranganathan (2015) viewed transactional sex as a sexual relationship that involves an exchange of material goods especially money for sex. Hoeffnagel (2012) refers to transactional sex as “something for something relationships”. Transactional sex can also be viewed as a way a young woman exploits her sexuality to accumulate goods or earn money (Okonkwo, 2016).

Transactional sex in Sub-Saharan Africa is also described as the ‘sugar daddy’ relationship, which involves sexual relationships between older partners (mostly men) and younger women (usually of a lower economic and social status), including adolescents (Adjei and Kyereme, 2014). Dunkle et al. (2004) define transactional sex as a relationship that is mainly influenced by the exchange of material goods or money for sex. According to Castle (1999), transactional sex has been described as the exchange of gifts, money, or resources for sex and other sexual favours. Anecdotal evidence suggests that transactional sex is mutual among young adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa (Schoepf, 2004).

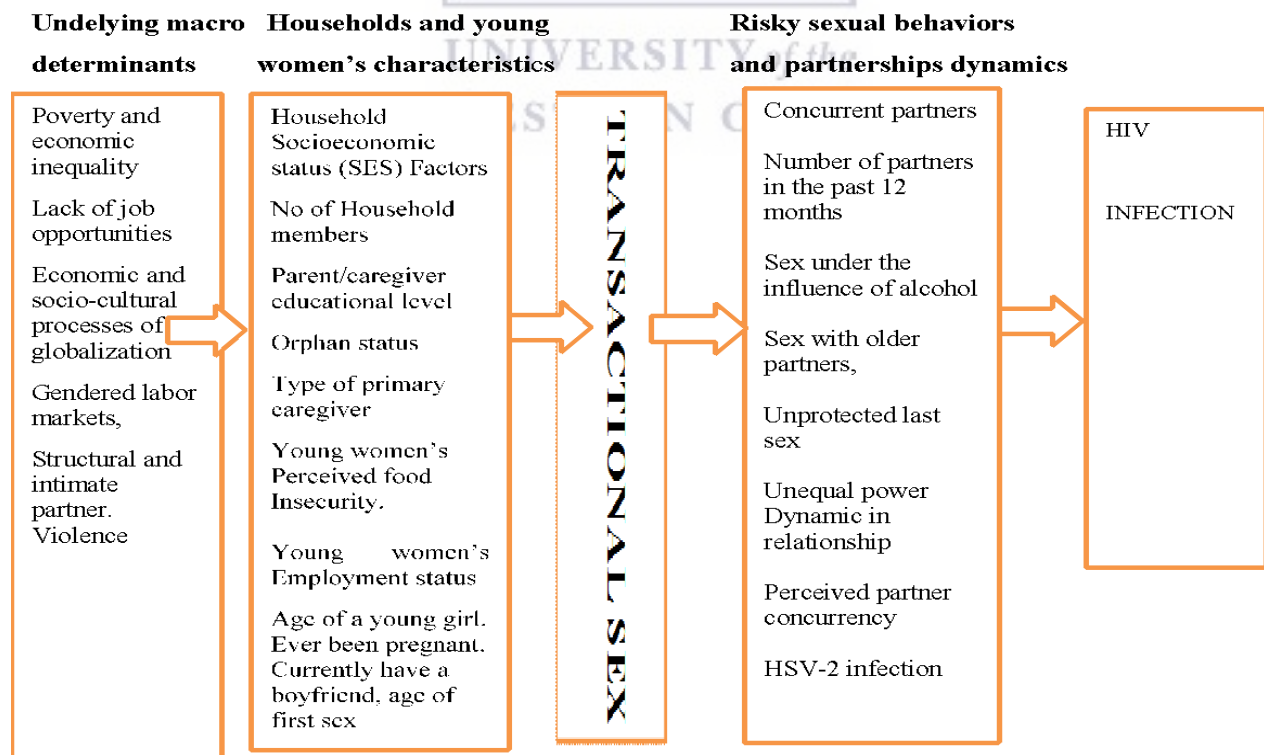
Ott et al. (2011) state that financial and material exchange are clearly the motivating forces behind these sexual relationships for women. MacPherson et al. (2012) assert that poverty is not the main force behind engaging in a ‘sugar daddy’ relationship. Rather, most young people living in urban areas have food, shelter, and other services provided by their parents. This leads to the conclusion that young women living in such communities exchange sex instead for financial rewards and a high lifestyle.

There are two kinds of transactional sex: survival and consumerism. Greene et al. (1999) argue that survival sex is the exchange of sex for subsistence needs by young women who grant men’s sexual needs. For instance, a study conducted by Greene et al. (1999) indicates that young heterosexual women who participate in transactional sex with men do so because they have been homeless and needed accommodation. As such, they were obliged to have sex with men. Another example of this is explained in a study by Béné and Merten (2008) focusing on fishing communities where the women have sex with men in exchange for fish. The women sell the fish and send their kids to school or consume the fish themselves.

The second type of transactional sex is consumerism which denotes sex in exchange for luxury or designer goods (Leclerc, 2008). Tade and Adekoya (2012) view it as the way young women have sex with men in exchange for luxurious materials such as expensive clothes, the latest cell phones, good hair, etc. This type of transactional sex has been seen to be motivated by modernism. For instance, studies carried out by Tade and Adekoya (2012) in a university show that students who have sex with men do so with the aim of getting money to use on buying expensive shoes, clothes, and accessories, among other things.

Luke and Kurz (2002) created a theoretical framework for investigating transgenerational and transactional sex with a focus on partner power imbalances. This conceptual framework acknowledges that sexual activity is a shared human experience. It is a conduct that partners have agreed upon within a larger socio-cultural and economic environment. Risky behaviours are influenced by power imbalances between sexual partners, as well as by each partner's unique traits, sociocultural and economic factors. According to this conceptual framework, teenage girls in Africa are particularly prone to participating in dangerous sexual behaviour for a variety of reasons, including: (a) Older males prefer adolescent sexual partners who are thought to be HIV-free; (b) sexual activity can be exchanged for money or material goods; and (c) Family control over young people's behaviour has decreased as a result of the breakdown of traditional social structures. However, formal education has not completely taken the place of these traditional roles, leaving young women with a knowledge gap about sexual and reproductive issues at a time when they are single and possibly experimenting with sex. The most essential source of information on sexuality and reproductive health issues is there for their peers, however this information can be misleading and false.

Figure 1: Motivations for cross-generational and transactional sex



To better understand the practice of transactional sex, it is helpful to think of such relationships as existing along a ‘continuum of volition’. This ranges from a healthy give-and-take dynamic to a coerced relationship that interferes with the ability of both partners to defend themselves and one another from abuses of power. This also raises the risk of contracting HIV. The notion of the ‘continuum of volition’ was first developed by Save the Children UK to describe the intergenerational ties amongst young South African women. It has been utilised to create interventions based on various drivers for entering into these relationships (Weissman et al., 2006).

2.2.2 Young women

The term “young women” is used frequently to denote the youthful age of the females who tend to participate in transactional sex. Young women are described in various ways. The issue of gender and sexuality is very important in identifying young women. Most studies drawn from sociology and psychology view young women as females between the ages of 18 and 25 years (Arnett and Tanner, 2006). Young women between these ages tend to face identity exploration which is associated with self-focus and instability. Arnett and Tanner (2006) argue that young women between 18 and 25 face stress in their stage of development such as puberty, making decisions, peer pressure, etc. In some communities, young women are not expected to carry out certain life events such as sexual intercourse, marriage, and pregnancy until a certain age. Jooste and Cain (2007), state that the developing stage of young women is difficult and this leads them to engage in activities such as dating and substance abuse to relieve the stress and mitigate challenges.

Ross (2008) notes that there are implications associated with the eras in which young women grow. For example, young women who tend to grow up in an industrialised society and an era of modernisation have the challenges of financial restrictions and the need to consume. The experiences of young women who grew up in the consumerist and modernisation era are different from those young women of the pre-colonial era. The young women who grew up in the pre-colonial era focused only on earning the basic needs of their families and they were more limited in their traditional homesteads.

2.2.3 Absent father

There are several definitions of an absent father, and they all point to a situation in which the father is not involved in his child's growth, whether he is recognised or not (Padi et al., 2014). Previous research has found that several types of missing fathers can be identified as being absent, unknown, and concealed (Atobrah, 2004). It is possible to determine whether a parent is completely, somewhat, or emotionally absent (Datta, 2007). Situations brought on by the absent father phenomenon include single motherhood and paternal non-involvement. Typically, the children's absent father does not live with them or is frequently away (Kruk et al., 2012). Father absence can occur in a variety of situations, including as a result of divorce, separation, imprisonment, employment in the military, frequent business travel, and living apart from the children for long periods of time. The fathers who do not live there have been noted as being partially absent. The non-resident occasionally visits his child at home, spends time with them, and occasionally contributes financially. As a result, the father is both present and absent in various ways. For instance, the absent father may be financially supporting his family but may be emotionally unavailable. Unknown fathers are those that the children do not know. The phenomenon of the unidentified father may result from a mother (or guardian) of a child not knowing or having uncertainty regarding the identity or name of the child's father. The mother could be aware of the secret father, but she chooses not to reveal or introduce him to her child(ren) (Padi et al., 2014).

2.2.4 'Sugar daddy'

The term 'sugar daddy' seems to have a very pleasant tone. A 'sugar daddy' is an older male who resembles a figure or a person that is caring and comforting, just like a father. According to Willard (2013), the term 'sugar daddy' originated around the year 1915. Adolph Spreckels, heir to the Spreckels sugar fortune, married a woman who was 24 years younger than him and she called him her 'sugar daddy'. Willard (2013) asserts that the term 'sugar daddy' was not well known because its origin was dated back to 1915-1920, though the first recorded use was in 1926. Willard (2013) notes that the term became a normal term to describe "a man who offers gifts or money to a younger woman for intimacy or companionship."

The term 'sugar daddy' at universities in South Africa needs to be expanded upon. A study by HEAIDS (2010), found that many female university students had 'sugar daddies' who would park their expensive cars at the campus gate every Friday to pick up their 'girlfriends'. The participants

in the study stated that young women who entered the university for the first time often lost their character. This means that they started seeing the need to have good clothing, cell phones, and weaves to attract older men who would give them whatever they wanted. Shefer et al. (2012), in their study show that female students in South African universities have sexual relationships with ‘sugar daddies’ so they can pay for fees or photocopies and they have a high status among their peers. However, if the ‘sugar daddy’ can no longer provide resources, the students end the sexual relationship but sometimes remain friends.

In another study by Mazvarirwofa (2014), a student added during interview that.

... female students prefer having a papa bear rather than involving in prostitution. These men are paying for my time, and to be honest, I don’t mind selling my body.

2.2.5 How to find sugar daddies

Finding a ‘sugar daddy’ on the internet is very easy. It is just a Google search away. Type in the keyword ‘sugar daddy’ and a list of opportunities will appear. Mazvarirwofa (2014), notes that students at the University of Witwatersrand downloaded and activated a WeChat account which linked them with potential ‘sugar daddies’. Tinder, which is another social media platform, is also used to get sugar daddies. When the app is installed, it shows people who are close to you. One party initiates a connection by swiping right on another person’s image and that person must also swipe right to start a conversation.

According to “Desperately seeking a sugar daddy” (2013), the website Seeking Arrangement showed a 58% increase in female students registering online as potential ‘sugar babies’. McGuire (2015) states in his study that 46.8% of students indicated that one could meet a ‘sugar daddy’ through a friend who is more experienced. A student who was interviewed said:

When we go out to places like Sandton or Rosebank, one must look very hot and expensive. You need to teach people how to treat you. If you treat yourself as a million bucks, people would do that too.

According to several websites for getting ‘sugar daddies’, most men are specific about what they are interested in and about the type of girl they are looking for. For instance: “fun, tall, sexy, and interesting”. Some men advertise themselves this way: “I am self-employed, very young at heart,

love partying, and would love to get laid. I am married with two kids”. Most of the ‘sugar daddies’ on the websites indicate that they are married with kids and are living with their partners or spouses.

2.3 Distinguishing Between Transactional Sex and Sex Work

Various studies distinguished between transactional sex and sex work. The main difference, according to Kaufman and Stavrou (2004), was between receiving cash as gifts vs other kinds of gifts. Cash is regarded by Nyanzi et al. (2001) as a sign of a sex transaction. They add that gifts in other forms do not guarantee sex. According to Jewkes et al. (2005) transactional sex and sex work can be thought of as existing on a continuum, with cases of transactional sex that are quite comparable to sex work at one extreme. This is the case when a sexual partner offers money after a single act of sex without first discussing it or when there is a relationship characterised by multiple sex sessions that are kept entirely constant by the receipt of cash compensation. The limitations between the two concepts are especially not clear when acts and contents differ only slightly. It is only where women are explicitly soliciting sex or embracing an identity as a sex worker or prostitute where the difference between transactional sex and sex work is clear. An individual might identify herself as a sex worker and engage in different transactional sexual relationships at different times in her life.

It is also difficult to distinguish between transactional sex and sex work where there is major belief by the woman and the man that one lover, who is usually the man will assume the role of the provider. This is usually true in the romantic love role of in filling relationships is complex and may be linked closely to expressions as gifts. In most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, sex is exchanged without any material compensation, which is supposed to be depreciating to women. Luke (2003) notes that in some countries, gifts are seen as a symbol of the worth of young women and a man’s interest whereby the young women feel upset if they do not get something in exchange for sex. According to Nobelius et al. (2010), sexual exchange means different things, such as self-respect and a partner’s readiness to wait for the relationship to become sexual and therefore that they are respected and valued by their partners. This tends to show assurance from a partner who is in the provider role.

According to Chatterji et al. (2005), transactional sex is different from sex work. Sex work has to do with payment for every sexual encounter. In transactional sexual relationships, money or gifts received and given may not be accepted or given every time or for every sexual encounter. The money or the gifts may be given prior to or even some days or months after the sexual encounter (Poulin, 2007). In some transactional relationships, the material or monetary exchange is considered a requirement of the relationship and not a payment for the sex. It can even be viewed as a way of showing love (Maganja et al., 2007). However, transactional sex and sex work are distinguished on the basis that the partners are described as ‘girlfriends’ and not ‘clients’ (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Hunter (2002) states that women who participate in transactional sex do not think of themselves as sex workers nor does society view them as such.

From the above, a prostitute is defined as a woman who is over the age of consent and willing to exchange sexual services for money (Cockayne, 2001). In society, other slang (and often derogatory language) used for prostitutes are ‘whore’, ‘slut’, etc. In order to move away from such offensive language, those who work within the sex industry use the term ‘sex worker’ to describe a person who is part of the legitimate profession. According to Leigh (1988), sex work was redefined as ‘commercial sex’, not as psychological or social characteristics of a class of women but for generating income or a source of employment for women. However, whatever term is used—‘sex worker’, ‘prostitute’, ‘slut’ or ‘whore’—the fact remains that prostitutes are those who render sexual services for money. Prostitution is seemingly a low-skilled but high-paying profession (Taylor, 2005).

2.4 Timeline of Transactional Sex

In 1992, studies on transactional sex were undertaken to find better ways to stop the spread of HIV and lessen the impact of AIDS on young people in society. The aim was to find out how the sexual activities of heterosexual young people contributed to the HIV epidemic (Thomson et al., 1992). Prostitution is considered to be one of the oldest professions in the world. The term prostitution was used interchangeably with transactional sex (Holland et al., 1992). In 1992 and 1994, women engaged in transactional sex practices to keep their relationships intact. (Holland et al., 1992). The men put so much pressure on the women to give them sex as a symbol of love. They then believed it was their responsibility to give gifts and money in return for sex.

According to McNamara (1994) one-night stands are defined as intimate or sexual relationships that occur only over one night with no exchange of contact information to keep up with commitments and communications. One-night stands sometimes come with benefits including getting money or free accommodation in exchange for sex. This can be viewed as transactional sex (Dunkle et al., 2004). Some of the risks of transactional sex is the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The major STI is HIV; a significant feature of transactional sexual relationships (Holland et al., 1992).

In a transactional sexual relationship, the older man, and the young woman are focused on sex and financial exchange only, without any intention of developing a deeper relationship (Wood and Foster, 1995). Some studies indicate that consumerism has been effective in pushing young women to participate in transactional sex with older men. The reason why young women prefer older men is because they have the material resources and the money which men in the women's peer groups do not have (McLean, 1995). The older men are seen to be the perfect choice for the young women because these men are able to support the women financially, given that they are employed and earn a reasonable amount of money (Wood and Foster, 1995).

In 1996, the notion of consumerism, which refers to the high consumption of material objects, started to emerge in studies related to transactional sex. The HIV epidemic was the major topic and main driver of the emergence of such studies (Calvès, Cornwell and Enyegue, 1996). Most studies were focused more on cities where consumerism and peer pressure among young women were normalised. (Calvès et al., 1996). In the consumerist context, young women competed in trying to raise their social statuses. Young women also used sex to remove themselves from poverty and to achieve a life that fit in with the latest trends in society. It was a common that young women did not remain virgins until they were married because the men were more interested in premarital sex.

From 1997 until present day, young African women have become vulnerable to being infected with HIV/AIDS, in large part due to transactional sexual relationships (Meekers and Calvès, 1997). The rate of HIV infections increased among young women compared to men of the same age as them. Survival sex was found to be the main form of transactional sex among young women in the late 1990s (Greene et al., 1999). According to Alexander (1998), research was carried out to find out how to improve the health conditions of people who participate in transactional sex. In the

early 2000s, there was high concern over risky adolescent sexual behaviour in South Africa and Botswana (Luke and Kurz, 2002). Social status and money were seen as the main drivers for young people who were engaged in transactional sex (Gupta, 2000).

Studies on transactional sex show that it is a survival strategy among young people, particularly those who run away from their homes and are ultimately homeless (Kidd, 2003). The young people who use transactional sex use it to access food because their families cannot support them or meet their needs. The research reports that receiving gifts or money is a routine aspect of dating (Hunter, 2007). The primary motivations of young women participating in transactional sex include: money, peer pressure and material benefits (Dunkle et al., 2007). Leclerc-Madlala (2008) asserts that the younger women's relationships with the older men gained affirm their self-worth, help them accumulate material goods, achieve social goals and increase life chances. Ultimately this adds enjoyment and value to their lives.

2.5 Motivations of Transactional Sex Among Young Women

The socio-cultural, economic, and political environments in which these relationships occur have a significant impact on the transactional sexual interaction themselves. According to several qualitative research studies, transactional sex is a common form of courtship, dating, and partying among young people. It is influenced by social pressure to consume material goods, gender and economic inequalities, and occasionally urgent financial demands (Kuate Defo, 2004). Some studies show that the increase in tuition has contributed to students joining the sex industry (Haegar and Deil-Amen, 2010). Other reasons why students join this industry include lack of government financial support, the inability of families to support their children, and a lack of stability in the labour market (Lantz, 2005). Research has found that some young women engage in transactional sex for personal gain or as a means of survival (Maganja et al., 2015). Some young women prefer to date men who can take care of them financially and who can provide them with expensive gifts (Selikow and Mbulaheni, 2013).

2.5.1 Social norm

In some cultures, women's sexuality is highly valued and thus a source of power (Conroy et al., 2016). Transactional sex then becomes a tool to exert this power. A study conducted by Baba-

Djara et al. (2013) found that women in Ghana were expected to engage in transactional sexual activities to improve their social status and be accepted by men in society.

This thinking reinforces the gender norm which views women's sexuality as a commodity that can be exchanged for favours. This position serves as an influencing factor which encourages the practice itself. There is, however, a different view which argues the practice of women engaging in transactional sex actually decreases their negotiating power and leads to negative consequences such as poor performance in academic institutions (Parnarouskis et al., 2017).

2.5.2 The desire to achieve high social status

The quest by some young men and women to achieve a higher social status has been identified as a driver for entering transactional sexual relationships (Ranganathan et al., 2017). This assertion is evidenced by Leclerc-Madlala (2003) who found that about 18% of female Nigerian university students appeared to have received sexual favours in a bid to satisfy societal pressure. In addition, the result of the study by Leclerc-Madlala (2003) provided evidence which showed that the lack of viable economic opportunities for women in Ghana served as another factor that influences their decisions to engage in transactional sexual activities.

Stoebenau et al. (2016) found that young women who were financially stable also engaged in transactional sex to gain luxury goods and increase their social status to gain access to prestigious social networks. The need for modernity in current civilisations in Sub-Saharan Africa is financed in large part by this sort of transactional sex, often known as consumer sex (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Another in-depth investigation at the University of Zimbabwe revealed that 'sugar daddies' provided students with meals off-campus, technology, trendy clothing, and beauty services (Masvawure, 2010).

2.5.3 Poverty

Poverty is one of the major reasons why young women, who are often some of the most marginalised people in society, engage in transactional sex. Poverty is a condition where the needs of people such as shelter, clothing, and food are not met (Cornelissen, 2017). In South Africa, poverty is mostly experienced by women and is characterised by a lack of access to jobs, education, and finances (Wonci, 2019). This is the major reason why women from different backgrounds struggle to make ends meet and end up looking for alternative sources of income. Poverty is also

one of the reasons why young women have sex for money at a very young age as a form of survival. The quest to satisfy the basic economic needs for food, clothing and shelter have often been viewed as the major factor that influences transactional sex (McMillan et al., 2018). Hence women who are vulnerable are forced to engage in activities that have been termed ‘survival sex’ (Farvid and Glass, 2014). This is evidenced in a study by Choudhry et al. (2015) which found that most young girls who engaged in transactional sex in Uganda highlighted poverty as the major reason for doing so.

Evidence provided by Swidler and Watkins (2007) shows that in societies where inequalities and uncertainties are prevalent, the likelihood of exchanging sex for gifts becomes very high. One may argue that those who engage in transactional sex appear to be from some of the poorest regions of the world. Several studies have provided evidence to support this assertion, especially in Africa and some parts of Asia (Oldenburg et al., 2015). An in-depth example of such study is one by Madise et al. (2007) which was carried out in four African countries. The evidence shows that in three of the four countries, young girls from poorer families experienced sex from an earlier age than those from financially stable families. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to reduce hunger and ensure development for people in across the world (UN, 2015). Transactional sexual relationships help solve monetary problems but are not a long-term solution; once the ‘sugar baby’ or ‘sugar daddy’ decides to end a relationship, the benefits end as well.

2.5.4 Sex for academic achievement

According to studies conducted at universities in Tanzania, Ghana, and Botswana the exchange of sex for good grades or tuition fees is another significant type of transactional sexual relationship. According to Seloilwe (2005), nearly 70% of University of Botswana students engaged in sexual activity to improve their academic results. This is in line with findings from research projects by Goparaju et al. (2003), conducted in Tanzania and Ghana. According to reports, teachers and administrators demand sex from young women in exchange for good marks, academic favours, and exam answers (Masvawure, 2010). Female students confirmed this explaining that they had exchanged sexual favours for better grades.

2.5.5 Peer influences

According to Mayhandu-Mudzuzi (2019), peer pressure is seen as the way people in society influence the way someone thinks or what they want in life. Most times the family unit influences the behaviour of the children. Peer pressure is mostly initiated by social media and social media is mostly influenced by western financial achievements (Georganas et al., 2015). Social media displays how wonderful it is to be young, beautiful and to be making money. The ‘sugar daddies’ in turn date younger women to make themselves feel younger. On social media, young women post their flamboyant lifestyles to fascinate their peers about the trending blessed lifestyle and this tends to put pressure on other women to adopt a new identity and undergo certain changes. Most women who get influenced are female students in the university who are not under the supervision of their parents or guardians. Bhana (2015) asserts that peer pressure is a force that can be very difficult to deal with, especially when an individual is in their first year at the university. Georganas (2015) states that peer pressure is the desire to fit in and feel like one of the groups. Peer pressure is direct influence from peers. Individuals are encouraged to follow their peers by changing their attitudes and behaviours to conform to the influencing individual or group.

Peer pressure can sometimes be a positive or negative force in the life of an individual (Vanden et al., 2014). The pressure from peers and even families has also been identified as a factor that influences young men and women to engage in transactional sex. This is because of the susceptibility of adolescents to societally prescribed norms which are promoted by their peers (Naidoo et al., 2015). A comprehensive qualitative study conducted in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Cameroon by Chatterji et al. (2005) shows that the peer pressure to acquire luxury items which include, jewellery and expensive clothing, influenced the decision for most of the youths engaged in transactional sex.

2.6 Risk Factors for Transactional Sex among Young Women

In transactional sexual relationships, the exchange of financial or material goods for sex points to unequal power dynamics in such relationships. The male sponsor in the relationship has more power because he is providing the money, so the young woman is expected to do whatever the he wants.

2.6.1 High risk of HIV/AIDS

HIV infection is one of the world's most serious health threats. In 2013, it was estimated that 33% of all new HIV infections came from women between the age of 15 and 24. The statistics indicated that young women have been affected with the disease twice the percentage of men (Choudhry et al., 2015). According to Kristin et al. (2007) women are more vulnerable when it comes to the chance of contracting diseases. Transactional sex has been noted as one of the major causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS. The 'sugar daddies' in most cases have multiple sexual partners which makes them more prone to contracting and spreading the virus (Thobejane et al., 2017). SDG 6 focuses on combating the spread of malaria, HIV/AIDS and other diseases (Department of Basic Education, 2013). According to Gobind and Du Plessis (2015), students are not bothered by the possibility of contracting the virus. The students are only concerned with how to make quick money and achieve an extravagant lifestyle (Mazvarirwofa, 2014).

The power dynamics within transactional sexual relationships make it hard for the young women to demand safe sex. According to Stoebenau et al. (2011), when women have their own resources, they depend less on men, which lowers the frequency of risky sexual behaviour. The young women also have a lot of freedom in deciding who they want to have sex with and how they want to engage in the sexual act. Because of the 'sugar daddies' disproportionate authority in the power structure, young women frequently find themselves in abusive situations.

2.6.2 Intimate partner violence, unplanned pregnancy, and abortions

According to Bloom (2008), gender-based violence is seen as the unequal power relationships between the genders in the context of a specific society. The key driver of gender-based violence is the minimal economic independence women have. Transactional sex can cause power imbalance. Women are pointed out to be victims of abuse and being taken advantage of especially in age-disparate relationships. Older men tend to use young girls (Kristin et.al, 2007).

In South Africa, power is gendered, with men typically dominating women in intimate relationships—an accepted norm since childhood (Thorpe, 2002). It is hardly unexpected that transactional sexual relationships play out this pattern. There is a higher risk of HIV transmission for women who are exposed to gender-based violence in the form of physical or sexual abuse. This is particularly true if they try to challenge the power dynamic, for example, with regard to condom

use (Zembe et al., 2013). Additionally, attempts to abandon a relationship or any conduct not deemed appropriate by the ‘blesser’ might result in gender-based violence (Wood et al., 1998). Millennium Developmental Goal (MDG) 3 places a heavy emphasis on gender equality and women empowerment (Fehling et al., 2013). It states that equality is measured by gender equality ratios but also by the quality of women’s lives. The ‘sugar baby’ realises after a while that she has lost her power and has no option than to remain in the relationship due to her dependence on the ‘sugar daddy’. This relates to the phenomenon of gender-based violence which is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women (Jewkes et al., 2015).

Hoss and Blokland (2018), in their study on bleaser relationships among secondary school students in a traditionally black township, claim that adolescent girls may be further exposed to abuse if they feel unable to confide in a parent. They might, however, also struggle academically, which would limit their options in the future. Their mental health may suffer as a result.

According to a different study conducted by BMR UNISA (2018), adolescent girls who engage in transactional sexual relationships perceive themselves as sex objects, which develops into feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem.

In addition, Chop et al. (2017) argue that a lack of power in sexual relationships prohibits young women from gaining favourable outcomes, more especially when negotiating for safer sex. According to Kuate-Defo (2004), empirical research undertaken in both developed and developing countries indicate that young women who do not practice safe sex are at high risk of falling pregnant and unwanted pregnancies are aborted.

2.7 Transactional Sex, Agency, and Self-knowledge

Young women are represented in some studies as passive victims who just wait for men to initiate an exchange for sex. Other research suggests that the exchange of goods in exchange for sex is not always a passive way to achieve goals but rather a way for young women to exercise agency. This study demonstrates that when young women choose their partners and manage many relationships, they can demonstrate agency. For instance, while picking a ‘sugar daddy’, young women consider a man's looks, prestige, and ability to support them financially (Ranganathan et al., 2017). Young women who received gifts or money felt more attractive and confident, which increased their status

and self-esteem and made them feel like their peers accepted them. Additionally, having money allowed them to spend it on things like clothing, food, underwear, wigs, shoes, transportation, cosmetics, or fees. According to Ranganathan et al. (2017), young women use this time to fund or ensure their future independence.

2.8 Transactional Sex and Sexual Empowerment

According to Zimmerman (1990), individual empowerment involves setting goals, participative behaviour, and feelings of power and control. In line with this definition, personal empowerment revolves upon a feeling of internal power and control. People are more likely to start engaging in actions that result in positive change when they feel empowered. Empowerment must be evaluated in terms of authority and control over resources rather than just a person's subjective sense of self-worth, power, or accomplishment. Ineffective attempts to enhance empowerment through subjective feelings could lead people to believe they have more power than they have (Riger, 1993).

Recently, debates have centred on the challenging idea of sexual empowerment. Debatable issues include whether women and girls who assert that their sexuality gives them a sense of empowerment, are actually doing so. Women can obtain control over men by leveraging their attractiveness to develop in the corporate sphere, which is dominated by men, as one way for them to experience power through their sexuality. Women may need this kind of power because they are a marginalised population with fewer sources of power than men. The desire for this kind of power may be increased if a woman encounters marginalisation from a different source (such as socioeconomic disadvantages). A woman does not suddenly decide that she is sexually empowered when she wakes up. The definition of empowerment provided by Rappaport (1984) identifies it as a process. He sees empowerment as a method—how individuals, groups, and communities take control of their own lives. Zimmerman (1990) asserts as well that attaining empowerment does not automatically qualify one as empowered. This thinking sees women as being on a developmental route toward empowerment. Along the way, they may experiment with a variety of sexual expressions, some of which may be modelled after media portrayals of girls' and women's sexuality.

For instance, a woman may occasionally engage in light-hearted sexual experimentation rather than displaying signs of sexual oppression when she performs a strip tease for her lover after watching a pole dance on television. The woman's sexuality is not to be inferred from the strip tease. According to Peterson (2009), sexual empowerment is a continual and multifaceted construct rather than having a flawless form at the end of the road. Despite the possibility that empowerment is a developmental process, girls (and women) are likely to feel sexual empowerment on some levels and disempowerment on others at any given time.

2.9 Social Media, Dating Apps, and Transactional Sex

Technology advancements have led to the creation of virtual reality and digital media which have opened up communication and integrated digital reality into people's lives. The ease with which the internet is now available and the speed and mobility that mobile devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops provide have altered how people communicate. The global positioning system (GPS) capabilities of mobile applications (apps) enable users to increase the number of people with whom they contact on social networks. Here they can send messages, browse profiles, make friends, and seek partners for sex (Queiroz et al., 2020).

Nowadays, people use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as well as dating applications like Tinder, Badoo, and Seeking Arrangement to find partners. This has the potential to lead to risky sexual behaviours. Research has found that users of these apps have more sexual partners, more frequent sexual encounters, unprotected sex, and sexual partners who are infected with STIs like HIV. Comparing this to people who locate partners using other strategies, Queiroz et al. (2020) claim that these technologies increase the risk of spreading HIV and STIs.

2.10 Early Childhood Neglect and Transactional Sex

Being a victim of abuse or violence as a child has been one of the most extensively researched correlates for transactional sex. According to Lavoie et al. (2010), having been raped as a youngster has been linked to both genders purchasing and selling sex. Compared to 8% of girls and 2% of boys without such experiences, 17% of American girls and 10% of American boys who had ever been coerced into sexual activity sold sex (Edwards et al., 2006). In a Swedish survey, 69% of boys and girls who sold sex admitted to having been sexually abused before they began doing so

(Syedin and Priebe, 2007). Girls, but not boys, experience acute victimisation when they are victims of physical assault in general (Choudhry et al., 2014).

In both sexes, perpetration was also associated with getting cash or goods in exchange for sexual favours, but males were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse than females (Dunkle et al., 2007). In Sweden, 43% of young people who sold sex said they had mistreated someone sexually, compared to 7% of those who had not (Syedin and Priebe, 2007). In South Africa, being a perpetrator of gender-based violence is also a significant predictor of males buying sexual favours (Dunkle et al., 2007).

It is worth noting that existing literature on transactional sex suggests that it puts women at risk of gender-based violence, sexually transmitted diseases, and rape. To that end, the proposed study extends the body of knowledge by going beyond these identified challenges and exploring nuances of these challenges. It considers strategies that facilitate young women's active involvement in the negotiation of benefits, other mechanisms they put in place to ensure that resources or benefits are not controlled or taken over by their male counterparts, challenges and self-protection strategies.

In light of this, the study will be theoretically framed with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological systems theory. The theory will help in understanding the sexual behaviours of young people and how they interact in their different environments.



CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework important to this study. According to Scott (2014) the aim is to understand how the social world is and clarify what can be seen or measured by using relationships and definitions and subsequently arranging perspectives and concepts in an organised manner. An extensive understanding of the relationship dynamics of entities and how these relationships affect the many entities involved is produced through a theoretical framework. For this study, in order to understand the environment in which students make their decisions and the elements they take into consideration, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model is used to differentiate and identify layers of influence in the participants' lives such as friendships, family, work and school and also the interaction of these factors over time.

3.2 Early Contributions of the Bio-ecological Systems Theory to Transactional Sex

According to Ranganathan et al., (2016), a theoretical approach is a useful framework to examine the effect and factors such as socio-economic and demographic factors on why young women engage in the exchange of sex. Such a framework is also useful in investigating the relationship between transactional sex and HIV. For the study purpose, the researcher will use the bio ecological systems theory, which was coined by Bronfenbrenner in the year 1979. For Choudhry (2015), Bronfenbrenner's theory is useful when determining sexual behaviours in society. This theory helps in understanding the sexual behaviour of young people and how they interact in their different environments. The essence of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that different levels of systems influence other systems which in turn influence behaviours, motivations, decisions, and other sexual interaction outcomes.

According to Stoebenau et al. (2016), to find a suitable conceptualisation of transactional sex, the best kind of model can be used for the foundation that carries ideas for meaning and efforts. The structures of the socio-cultural and economic processes of globalisation, and gender inequality, are viewed as a force that informs transactional sex. High rates of poverty are usually directed through structural adjustment policies which are focused on gender poverty. The lifestyle of youths is usually based on western ideals and those western ideals tend to have greater influence in society.

The bio-ecological systems are used to postulate why young women participate in transactional sex. For this study, it is proposed that some factors which cause the increase of transactional sex include the substance-using youth who experience risk. The theory of bio-ecological systems proposes that an individual exists and can interact in a system where people are and can be influenced by some variables like their peer groups, family, and violence in a particular environment (Patton et al., 2009). Several studies have shown that there are so many risks when an individual engages in transactional sex. Such risks include getting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV, use of drugs and alcohol, risk of getting killed, violence and suffering from depression. It has been reported by parents and young people that the youths who take part in transactional sex usually have unhealthy relationships with people around them.

3.3 Bio-ecological Systems Theory Framework

This study draws from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological systems theory of development that postulates that one cannot understand human development without looking attentively at the entire ecological system. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory indicates how the environment influences people's behaviour starting from the family to the large community. It shows the different layers of the environment that have an impact on a person. The bio-ecological system illustrated in Figure 2 provides a good understanding of the interplay and influences between different systems in society.

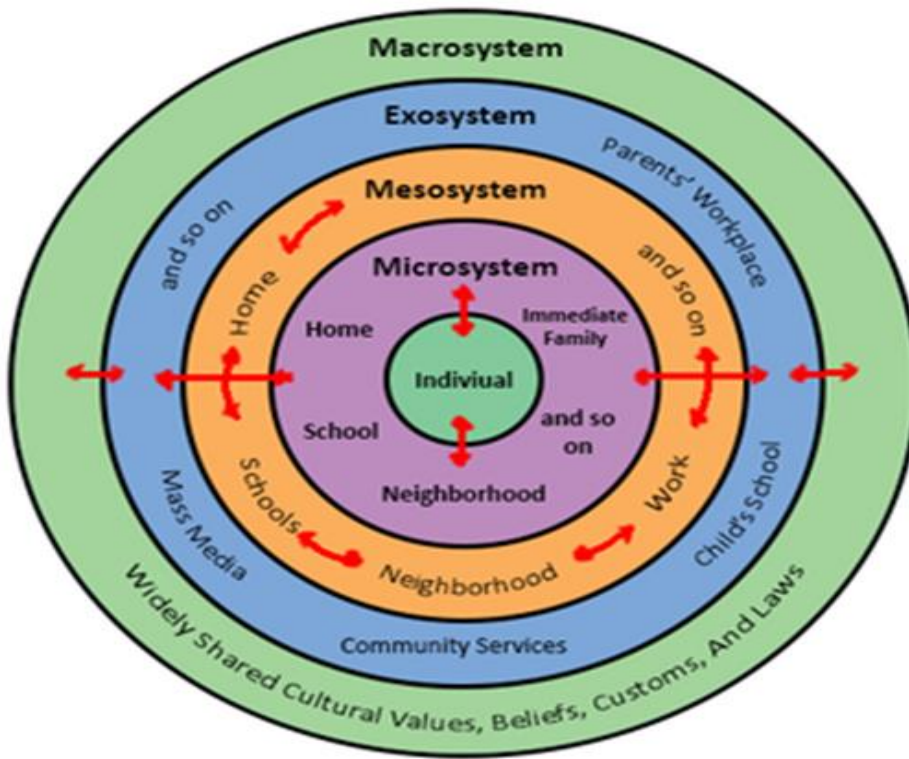


Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory (1979)

According to Choudhry (2015), the Bio-ecological Systems Theory places emphasis on sexual activities. In this regard, the theory enables one to understand why young people behave in a particular way especially when it comes to sex. Furthermore, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the systems model enables the investigation of the different influences between the environment and people living within it. The traits and actions of a system can influence the other systems. This has an influence on the behaviours, decisions, motivations and outcomes of sexual interactions among young people. The impact and influence of the different systems will be discussed briefly below.

The microsystem: According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the microsystem is a system that comprises patterns carried out by people. According to Choudhry (2015) the microsystem is composed of family, peers, and partners interacting with people who strengthen the spread of the values of sexual behaviours. It is within the nearest surroundings of the microsystem that the interaction between children and their caregivers operate. Here the relationship works to produce,

encourage, and strengthen growth. The ability to do so is determined by the structure and the content of the microsystem.

The mesosystem: For Bronfenbrenner (1979), a mesosystem is made up of the processes and interactions that occur between two or more settings that involve the person who is experiencing growth, for instance, the correlation between home and school. The mesosystem derives from the microsystem. In addition, multiple microsystems do not have the same influence on people's sexual behaviour. The mesosystems exist the moment different people interact with each other (Choudhry, 2015).

The exosystem: According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the exosystem is also made up of the interactions and processes that happen between two or more settings. According to Choudhry (2015), an exosystem happens when there is an institution that has an impact on a person's daily reality but is not really part of an individual's direct environment. Universities and schools are perfect examples of this system.

The macrosystem: The macrosystem is made up of the microsystem, exosystem, and mesosystem. It is the cultural environment in which a toddler or youngster lives. Children who come from disadvantaged homes gain greater satisfaction in life not only by their own but also by the standards of their societies. The elements of a macrosystem include cultural and societal principles and this system can have an impact on the major beliefs of sexual behaviour. The macrosystems are also composed of religion, sex standards and culture (Choudhry, 2015).

The chronosystem: According to Elder (1995), chronosystems give direction towards understanding differences experienced by human beings and families. Lives are connected and families are formed by social interdependence. However, as time goes by, chance, context and the choices people make will not affect all members in the same way.

3.4 Application of the Theory to the Study

The current study will be theoretically framed with the microsystem and the mesosystem levels. According to the microsystem theory, humans are not merely passive beneficiaries of the interactions we have with other individuals in small environments (Bronfenbrenner,1977). The daily interactions we have with our friends, family, and other individuals in our lives constitute

the microsystems setting. No one can live in isolation. The interaction between the microsystems in a person's life is part of the mesosystem. This implies that sexual behaviour or experiences may be tied to family experiences.

For instance, if a teen's parents neglect them, they can be compelled to rely on others for comfort. Teenage boys who provide money in exchange for sex may be comfortable with this act, while women who exchange sex may consider it solace. To understand the behaviours associated with transactional sex, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory is used as a person, context, time model. In this theory, to gain a deep understanding of sexual behaviours, one needs to understand the dynamic relationship between individuals and the broader family.



CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodological underpinnings of this research. According to Scott (2014), methodology refers to the general approach or methods an empirical study uses. Methodology is often related to research techniques which guide how social scientists conduct investigations and assess evidence. The research techniques or methodological approach tends to guide the researcher on what is right or not for a study. In this research, transactional sex is a very sensitive and hotly debated issue involving women. A narrative inquiry approach was used to hear silenced voices and highlight the need for a detailed understanding of transactional sex. This can only be established by talking directly with the marginalised women engaging in these relationships and allowing them to tell their stories. Qualitative methods were used to empower individuals to share their stories and to minimise any imbalance of power that often exists between a researcher and the participants.

4.2 Research Design

Research design enables the researcher to plan more precisely and choose which methodologies can and will be used for data collection and analysis. The research design serves as the study's "glue" or "roadmap"; connecting the research questions, data gathering techniques, and data analysis techniques (Yim, 2001).

In the social sciences, there are primarily two types of research design, including the qualitative and quantitative research approaches (De Vos, 1998). A step-by-step plan is made for the researcher to follow in quantitative research design (De Vos and Fouche, 1998). It should be highlighted that the researcher's decisions and actions are not made at random but rather in a methodical and repeatable manner. During the research process, the researcher creates the best research design suitable. According to Grosseohme (2014), qualitative research is a systematic way of collecting, arranging, and analysing data from an individual or group of individuals for a specific subject. Comparatively to quantitative procedures, qualitative methods result in chance findings that typically give a complete picture of the study and seem to support its validity and authenticity. The research design employed for this study was a qualitative research design. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research provides a detailed account of participants' perspectives in connection to their natural surroundings. The advantage of qualitative research is

that it enables deeper collection and analysis of personal data. Through qualitative research, it is possible to gain fresh understanding of opinions, trends, and subjective thought processes (Mohajan 2018). According to Ospina (2004), because traditional surveys examine a phenomenon that has never been studied previously, qualitative research enhances the design and interpretation of these surveys. Instead of understanding a social issue from a distance, this approach seeks to understand it from the perspective of the parties involved. It helps in understanding complicated events that are difficult or impossible to measure. Since it involves the story of human experiences, which can be expressed through individual interviews, participant observations, imagery, and sentence patterns, this research methodology is widely used in the social sciences (Grossoehme 2014).

A good qualitative research design should balance the expectations of the design with the redundancy of data (Ustafa, 2010). However, the study strategy adopted should enable the flow of data from a static point into relevant information that may be interpreted symbolically in terms of in-depth explanations. To guarantee that the research design accurately represents accurate research findings based on valuable interpretations, the research process should run naturally.

To effectively capture the essence of how qualitative research design explains concepts that grasp previous and current literature, conceptualising themes is crucial in every research project. In qualitative research, emphasis is placed more on ‘soft data’, such as words with symbolic meanings and emotional meanings (Neuman, 2011).

According to Van Manen (2006), a theme extracts a deeper meaning from lived events. It lends substance and shape to a phenomenon that was before formless. How the essence of ‘soft data’ is revealed and brought to life practically and realistically is guided by a central topic. Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that thematic frameworks enable the researcher to comprehend the various challenges connected to lived experience phenomena. The exact qualitative research approach of this study concentrated mostly on exploration and description, attempting to capture the substance of the social construction of people's views by allowing ‘soft data’ to properly locate its thematic value.

The goal of this study design is to understand events as they actually occur through investigation and description. Descriptive research gathers and organises data about a particular issue in a particular setting or the history of individuals, groups, or communities (Khanzode, 1995). The descriptive research also emphasises structures, circumstances, and social events while paying

close attention to the crucial where, when, how, who, and what questions. The information gathered from research participants was intended to clarify the significance of the acknowledged research aims and objectives. For the data gathering and analysis, the researcher employed a narrative inquiry approach, which is completely consistent with the interpretative paradigm of scientific inquiry. This study concentrated on description since narratives allow for the detailed depiction of experiences and observations.

The qualitative data collected from primary sources was used by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main method of data collection. The researcher conducted interviews with females engaged in transactional sex in the study region of concentration to achieve the goal of carrying out this study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher opted not to visit the area or take part in any group discussions. However, the researcher completed every step with the use of modern technology like WhatsApp, Zoom, and Skype.

4.3 Narrative Inquiry Approach

Using narrative analysis, the researcher was able to explain the theme that arose from the data acquired for this study. According to Scott (2014), a narrative is the way that humans try to understand the world and give it consistency. A range of styles and sources is available for obtaining narrative details. In essence, narrative analysis is interested in the sequence in which various elements are presented. Thus, narrative analysis refers to the process of identifying themes, sub themes, coding, and classifications in accordance with data patterns (Cohen et al., 2011). It serves as a tool for establishing categories and codes. According to Creswell et al. (2007), narrative analysis is frequently used in qualitative studies to examine open-ended responses, observations, interviews, or focus-group interviews.

Participants' responses were recorded, and the researcher manually entered the information into a word document. The transcripts of the transcribed data were examined and studied, and the information that was important to the study was highlighted and divided into multiple codes, which formed the initial list of codes. Coding is the process of organising data into categories and theme-based groupings (Grossoehme, 2014). Data was gathered by the researcher, who then organised it into themes, where it was organised into categories and coded. In order for the researcher to classify the developing themes and participant response directions, Cohen et al. (2011) advise

starting data analysis immediately following each finished interview. By classifying related codes into common categories, second-order coding was created.

The first-order codes' categories were then combined to create various themes that were used in the analysis phase. Additionally, the use of codes makes it simpler to organise the data collected on the ground, delete data that is not relevant to the study project, observe different trends and variances in the responses, and automate data processing. The idea is to demonstrate how the study was able to accomplish its goals in a simple and organised way.

4.4 Collection of Narratives and Sources of Data

This section of the methodology chapter shows the way the narratives of participants were gathered and organised. It begins with a description of the various strategies used to recruit the participants as well as the sampling methods that were employed. The information on the concerned parties is explained. This section also examines the study's research setting, considering crucial ethical issues that have to be taken into consideration. Finally, the section describes how data were collected from the different participants involved and how the data was analysed.

This study examines both primary and secondary sources to gather relevant data and information about what drives young women to engage in transactional sex. Primary data is information that researchers have obtained directly from key participants using techniques like questionnaires and interviews, among others. Typically, primary information is obtained directly from the main source. Primary data sources are typically chosen to ensure the accomplishment or objectives of a certain research project (Chambers and Skinner, 2003). Choosing primary data sources helps to ensure that a research effort will achieve its goals (Chambers and Skinner, 2003). Through online interviews, the researcher directly gathered primary data. Information that was gathered from sources other than the ones the specific researcher intended is referred to as secondary data. Due to COVID-19, the researcher used secondary data collection online through access to articles, virtual libraries, reports, and book chapters.

4.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to Chambers and Skinner (2003), sampling is a technique used to select certain individuals from a large group since it is impracticable to research the entire specified population as a whole. A sampling strategy was used because it was not possible to get a comprehensive list

of every participant. Snowball sampling strategies are used in the research study to identify 12 people who were engaged in transactional sex. Snowball sampling is described by Mahin et al. (2017) as a study recruiting process in which participants recruit study participants.

In the snowball sampling methodology, everyone questioned may be asked to suggest more people for interviews. This nonprobability sampling strategy is frequently used in field research. This kind of sampling will greatly help the researcher find the desired individual as soon as feasible (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). It is used in circumstances where a researcher has trouble finding willing participants. It is also vital to remember that this kind of sampling technique is typically used while researching delicate topics like sex, abuse, personal concerns, and more. In this study, the recipients were identified by the researcher through a snowball method of referrals from students who are or have actively engaged in transactional sex, who are referred to as the gatekeepers in this context.

A total of 12 participants who were participating in transactional sex were suggested by each of the respondents who were questioned. The researcher knew two of the individuals personally. Since the participants' privacy has to be kept a secret, the researcher spent two months getting to know them. This was done to earn their trust and to reassure them that the information they provided would only be used for this study's objectives. The participants were very cautious and asked questions that were addressed by confirming that it was safe for them to communicate and provide information to the researcher. An information sheet was sent to the participants before the interview to have an idea of what the research study was. A consent letter was also sent to the participants to sign before partaking in the interview.

4.6 Data Collection Technique and Procedure

The approaches used in qualitative research include in-depth interviews, focus groups, structured and semi-structured interviews, among others. Semi-structured interviews were the main strategy used in this study to obtain data. Semi-structured interviewing refers to a technique in which the researcher has pre-set questions that serve as a roadmap for the research procedures (Cohen et al., 2006). Bernard (1988) asserts that a semi-structured interview is best used when the researcher will only have one chance to speak with each subject. Interviewers are given explicit instructions by the semi-structured interview process, which can produce comparable, high-quality, and reliable data.

Due to the COVID-19 research protocols, the researcher could not conduct a face-to-face interview with the participants. However, in conducting the online interview, the researcher made use of digital technology such as Zoom and WhatsApp to carry out an online interview. The interview was conducted among twelve participants and took about 30-40 minutes per participant. The interviews lasted over six months as some of the participants were unavailable. The interview was conducted in English language, in the city of Cape town, South Africa and there was no barrier in communication. The researcher did not only make use of verbal information but also obtained information from the tone of their voices and that helped in knowing when the participants were not comfortable with a certain question or chose not to answer. Information sheets and consent forms were sent to the participants via email to read and sign before having an interview. The interview questions had three main broad themes which included: (a) social demography; (b) sexual history, behaviour and decision-making; and (c) motivation, consent, and use of contraceptives.

4.7 Method of Data Analysis

First, a transcription of the information gathered through the online semi-structured interviews was done. Following the transcription of the interviews, the data from the interviews was examined to reveal any recurrent themes. The findings from the analysis of qualitative data are typically presented as some form of comprehension, justification, or interpretation of the respondents and the situation they are in. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a narrative-thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis process occurs in six phases.

Table 1: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising with the data	Raw data transcribed, (re)reading of data and noting down original ideas
2. Generating codes	Organisation of data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes	A list of codes was produced and related to each theme
4. Reviewing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Checked if themes worked in relation to the coded extracts ● Reviewed data to look for additional themes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generated a thematic map of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generated clear definitions and names of each theme Each theme was given a thorough investigation by assembling the material into a logical report with a narrative
6. Producing report	A report was written with the results of the final analysis of the themes

4.8 Sample

In total, 12 participants participated in the study which lasted from April to June 2021. The participants who were selected for this study comprised of female university students who are involved in transactional sex aged 20 to 28 years old. Out of 12 participants, seven were undergraduates and five were postgraduate students. Eight of the participants were from South Africa while four of the participants were international students.

This section gives a summary of the participants who took part in the research study. This section introduces the 12 participants who are involved in transactional sex and also gives a brief story about their experiences. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality of the study participants, pseudonyms have been used. See Table 2 below for details about participants' demographic profiles.

Table 2: Demographic profiles of participants

Participants	Age	Religious background	Nationality	Monthly household income (sugar daddy money not included)	Level of study
Tessy	23	Christian	Ghana	R20,000	Undergraduate
Zandile	22	Christian	South Africa	R12,000	Undergraduate

Luthando	25	Christian	South Africa	R35,000	Undergraduate
Bontle	24	Christian	South Africa	R35,000	Undergraduate
Lerato	28	Christian	South Africa	R10,000	Post-graduate
Cleo	28	Christian	South Africa	R40,000	Post-graduate
Kamo	21	Christian	South Africa	R10,000	Undergraduate
Faraji	26	Christian	Mozambique	R25,000	Post-graduate
Anaishe	23	Christian	Zimbabwe	R20,000	Undergraduate
Siya	20	Christian	South Africa	R7,000	Undergraduate
Zizi	22	Christian	South Africa	R20,000	Postgraduate
Lola	25	Christian	Nigeria	R40,000	Postgraduate

Tessy

Tessy is the pseudonym used for participant one. She is 23 years old and from Ghana. She was born and brought up in Cape Town and her education was funded by her parents. She is a Christian who values her family with high esteem. She is the only girl and last child among three boys. She lives off campus and enjoys partying, shopping, and traveling outside school activities. She started having sex at the age of 19 and now has a boyfriend and a ‘sugar daddy’ who is 20 years older than her. She enjoys being with her ‘sugar daddy’ because of the benefits she receives from him and only hangs around with her boyfriend, who is her age, in order not to be seen as a lesbian. She met her ‘sugar daddy’ via the social media app called Tinder. She started engaging herself with a ‘sugar daddy’ because she was bored and needed someone to pamper her. Her ‘sugar daddy’ sponsors her on trips, gets her designer bags, and shoes, and also credits her account every week depending on how happy she makes him. The ‘sugar daddy’ determines where and how often they meet which can happen almost every week in a hotel. She usually receives a “girlfriend allowance” of about R10,000 every month. When having sex, she does not give consent, but her ‘sugar daddy’ determines whether he wants to use condoms or not. Her biggest challenge in the relationship with the ‘sugar daddy’ is that he is the controlling type and expects her to do whatever he wants. He bullies her whenever she goes late to their appointments. Tessy only intends to stop being a ‘sugar

baby' when she reaches the age of 30 because that age is very special to her and she wishes to find a man who is willing to settle down with her.

Zandile

Participant two, Pseudonym Zandile is a 22-year-old female who was born in KwaZulu-Natal but is now based in Cape town. She is a Christian. She was raised by her grandmother because both her parents were never present for her and siblings. She values herself more than anything else. She enjoys going out with friends to have drinks and visiting the beach during her free time. She stays off campus and is sexually active with about three sexual partners. One of those men is her 'sugar daddy' who is 60 years old. Zandile started having sex at the age of 15. She was raped; despite this ordeal, she enjoyed having sex afterwards. What led to her having a 'sugar daddy' was when she had no money or food in school and was completely empty. She decided to ask a friend to connect her with a 'sugar daddy' so she can survive because that was the only option she had at that moment. Her reason for having a 'sugar daddy' is for social security. She needs to show off to her friends that there is someone older to protect her. She feels he can always provide whatever she needs. She claims the 'sugar daddy' is not a fan of condoms so she allows him to have his way because of the benefits she receives all the time. She enjoys the benefits of being a 'sugar baby' by going on trips and receiving money whenever she makes the man 'happy'. She stated that transactional sex is an immoral act according to her religion, but she is not against transactional sex because circumstances make you get involved when you have no other option. The biggest challenge she encounters with her 'sugar daddy' is the fact that he beats her up whenever he is drunk. Zandile, when interviewed, disclosed that she is not willing to stop being a 'sugar baby' except when she finds a man who is ready to provide her with everything she needs, most especially money and gifts.

Luthando

Participant three, chosen pseudonym Luthando is a 25-year-old female who was born and brought up in Gauteng. She is a Christian who grew up mostly with her father and two siblings. Her family and education matter most to her in life. Aside from school activities, she enjoys going out to try new foods and making new friends. She stays off campus in order to have freedom. She is sexually active and gives consent to have sex with her partners. She started having sex at the age of 14 with

her first boyfriend from high school. She imposes the use of condoms on her partners but not all of them. She views transactional sex as sex work because it is sex in exchange of gifts or money and also having sex with no pleasure. She had two ‘sugar daddies’ as at the time of interview. Her first experience with a ‘sugar daddy’ or ‘blesser’ was at a club called “Jozi” in Johannesburg when she was 18. It was not awkward to her because he looked quite young, and she only found out that he was 20 years older after a few days of their meeting. She was motivated to continue having a ‘sugar daddy’ due to the fact she was always showered with money, gifts, and anything she requested. She gets whatever she wants but must always be available whenever her ‘sugar daddy’ needs her, no matter the time of the day. Her greatest challenges are the fact she is forced to be submissive at all costs to her ‘sugar daddy’ and also the fear of stigmatisation from people around her considering she is having sex with a man who is her father’s age. Luthando does not think she would ever stop being a ‘sugar baby’ because she needs to enjoy a high standard of living and survive.

Bontle

Participant four, pseudonym Bontle is from Lesotho. She lives in Limpopo, South Africa. She is 24 years old and a Christian. Most of her life she grew up with her grandparents because her mother gave birth to her at a very young age. At the age of 13, she moved in to stay with her mother, but her father was never available. It has become a norm for most homes to be headed by one parent, usually the mother. She stays off campus and enjoys partying while stripping as a side job.

At the age of 17, she started having sex with a boy from her high school due to peer pressure. Currently, she has only one sex partner who is her ‘sugar daddy’. She found him through a friend in the club on campus. She admitted to having a ‘sugar daddy’ for monetary benefits because she lost her bursary and could not afford to pay her school fees or her rent. She wanted to be like the “big girls” on campus considering she was coming from a village in Limpopo and never had any form of exposure to the “outside lifestyle”. She receives approximately R5,000 on every engagement with her ‘sugar daddy’. Bontle confirmed that she engages in sex just for the money and never enjoys it. Her ‘sugar daddy’ is very bossy and controlling and expects her to do whatever he says or he beats her up whenever she disobeys him.

Lerato

Lerato is a pseudonym used for participant four. She is 28 years old and from the Northern Cape but resides in Cape Town. She is a Christian who grew up mostly with her grandparents. She lives alone off campus and enjoys hiking and attending the gym. She has no academic support or funding. She is sexually active with only one partner who is her 'sugar daddy'. He hates the use of condoms but always advises Lerato to use birth control pills to avoid pregnancy because he has a wife with two kids. She sees transactional sex as a "give and take" type of relationship and according to her most young women are involved in transactional sex without even knowing it. She first experienced having a 'sugar daddy' when she was 23 years old. She was struggling financially and did not have any means to pay her fees. She met this 'sugar daddy' on Tinder who asked her to visit him in Johannesburg so he could help her. After he settled her fees, she felt it was time to pay back by losing her virginity and having sex with the 'sugar daddy' and that was how she ended up having interest in blessers because of the benefits. The age gap between her and the white 'sugar daddy' is 30 years. She makes sure she is submissive to her 'blesser' to receive whatever she requests for at any time so far as she is available to give out sex. Her biggest challenge is the 'sugar daddy' refusing to use condoms during sex and she is not interested in falling pregnant. She is only willing to stop being a 'sugar baby' after her education and her 'sugar daddy' gets a good job for her to enable her to become independent.

Cleo

Cleo, is the chosen pseudonym for participant five. Cleo grew up in the Eastern Cape and lives in Johannesburg. She is 28 years old and grew up mostly with her single mother. Her family matters most to her in life because she always wants to see them happy and comfortable. She grew up mostly among women who always hustle and do anything to make money. Cleo stays off campus to enable her to do whatever she wants. She enjoys partying and living the life whenever she gets the money. According to her, "the bills need to be paid" so she must have different boyfriends to live up to that standard. She noted that she started having sex at the age of 16 with a man she met in the club who walked up to her saying he loves her not knowing her age but fell for her because of her body shape.

She agrees to be sexually active with three 'sugar daddies' who she all met in a club because of the lifestyle she lives and obviously need to pay back with her "sexy" body. What made her start having blessers was because she lost her bursary and could not afford paying her fees. Her

roommates were always laughing at her and living a lavish lifestyle and so she needed to be like them and obviously make them jealous by being “hotter”. Her ‘sugar daddies’ are never comfortable using condoms so in order to be safe, she goes for HIV/AIDS test every two months to be sure of her status. She also takes the daily contraceptive pills to avoid pregnancy. There is a huge gap between her sugar daddies who all have wives and kids.

She views transactional sex as exchanging sex to live up to standard from beginning to end of the relationship with a blesser. To her, transactional sex involves lots of fun such as going on trips and shopping unlike prostitution where there is limited fun. Cleo ended the interview by saying she would only stop following ‘sugar daddies’ when she falls pregnant with someone who is very rich.

Kamo

Participant seven is Kamo from Eastern cape. She is a Christian living with her grandmother. She is a bursary student and lives off campus. She values her wellbeing and enjoys meeting new people. She is sexually active and has two sexual partners. One is her ‘sugar daddy’ and the other is her boyfriend from the university. She does not give consent or make decisions for using condoms during sex with any of her partners. She is aware of her partners’ HIV status -- they all are negative. Her view on transactional sex is basically sex work. Transactional sex to her is selling your body for something tangible. She started having sex with a ‘sugar daddy’ during her first year at the university after she got freedom from home to travel. Her housemate suggested the Tinder app and that was where she found her first ‘sugar daddy’. At first it felt wrong and weird to her but along the way she took it as a job that pays her bills. She got a car from her ‘sugar daddy’, monthly stipends and shopping sprees. She avails herself whenever the ‘sugar daddy’ calls her. They always meet in a hotel and spend weekends together. Unfortunately for Kamo, she does not have control over her life as her ‘sugar daddy’ gets physical whenever she gives excuses to not meet him. She does not see herself getting married to her ‘sugar daddy’ even though he promises to get married to her and give her a permanent job offer after her graduation.

Faraji

Participant eight is Faraji, a 26-year-old student from Mozambique. She grew up with her parents in Mozambique and moved to study in South Africa. She is studying on a scholarship and values her family a lot. She is vibrant and enjoys trying new things such as visiting new restaurants and

other new clubs in town. She lives on campus with a roommate. She started having sex at the age of 23 after she moved out of her home country to pursue a degree. She met her 'sugar daddy' through her roommate who has a 'sugar daddy' and was living a flamboyant lifestyle. She decided to have a 'sugar daddy' to intimidate her other friends. In her transactional relationship, condoms are not used as the 'sugar daddy' has the right to decide the use of condoms. She enjoys the 'sugar baby' benefits by visiting very expensive hotels, and going for wine tasting where she gets opportunities to take photos and post on social media to get likes and followers. Her greatest challenge in this relationship is that she got infected with HIV/AIDS and ever since her 'sugar daddy' dumped her and stopped all forms of communications with her. Now she is forced to live a new life and take all her medications to get better. She sees transactional sex as an immoral act but she is not willing to stop the act until she finds a serious relationship and starts a family.

Anaishe

Participant nine is Anaishe, a 23-year-old from Zimbabwe. She studies and lives in South Africa with her mother. She grew up in a very small town in Zimbabwe and later moved to South Africa for a better standard of living. Her wellbeing matters most to her in life. She lives off campus and is sexually active. She started having sex at the age of 14 with her neighbour who deceived her with food. She has three sexual partners and she does not enjoy the use of condoms during sex. She first met her 'sugar daddy' at a wedding party. The 'sugar daddy' is about 20 years older than her. Anaishe noted that her mother was behind the motivation behind her having a 'sugar daddy' as it was expected of her to be in a relationship to enable them to have a better life. She views transactional sex as a sex work and has no difference. She meets up with her 'sugar daddy' anytime he is willing to meet. She does not value nor enjoy the relationship but is involved in that relationship mainly for survival. Her challenge is that she does not have a say in the relationship; whatever her 'sugar daddy' decides is final. She only plans to stop having a 'sugar daddy' when she is stable.

Siya

Siya is the chosen pseudonym for participant ten. She is a 20-year-old Christian who lives with her grandmother in Gauteng, South Africa. She is an orphan with two younger siblings. Her family matters most to her in life. Her household income every month is approximately R7,000. She is a

bursary student and lives off campus. Her view on transactional sex is a relationship of giving your body to enjoy luxury. At the age of 14 she started having sex with her boyfriend in high school. She admitted to having a boyfriend and a 'sugar daddy'. The major motivation to her having a 'sugar daddy' was due to the fact she lost her part-time job during the COVID-19 pandemic and could not afford to pay her bills or take care of her younger ones back at home. To Siya, her boyfriend was trying his best to give her "peanuts" which she considered to be very little. She decided to join Tinder and that was where she connected with her 'sugar daddy'. He is eighteen years older than her. The 'sugar daddy' gives her money for food, hair and airtime. Though she admitted to not having a sweet relationship with the 'sugar daddy' because he was an abuser, she had to remain in that relationship to enable her to get more money, considering he was very rich. Siya noted that she would only stop being a 'sugar baby' when she finds a better job which pays her more than her 'sugar daddy' does.

Zizi

Participant eleven is Zizi, a 22-year-old student who resides in Cape Town. She grew up with her grandmother and extended family. She stays off campus. She started having sex at the age of 15. She got influenced by her best friend in high school to get a boyfriend at a very young age. She enjoys partying and hanging out with friends outside school activities. She has a 'sugar daddy' who she met via social media and he is 18 years older than her. According to Zizi, she was bored one day and decided to explore Tinder and try something new. Her 'sugar daddy' "blesses" her with money and latest gadgets and any other thing she requests so long as she always makes him happy. In a month she ends up getting approximately R15,000 from her 'sugar daddy'. Her 'sugar daddy' lives in a different city (Gauteng) and this requires her to travel to him every weekend. Condoms are not used during sex because her 'sugar daddy' prefers it "raw". She has no idea of her 'sugar daddy's' HIV status because she is always going for a test which turns out to be negative. In this relationship, her 'sugar daddy' treats her right by showering her with gifts but he is a cheat and beats her up whenever she complains about him having other girlfriends. She has no option but to keep quiet and enjoy all the benefits despite the fact she is never happy. To Zizi, she can only stop transactional sex after her graduation and gets a better job to sustain her.

Lola

Lola is a 25-year-old Nigerian woman, living in Cape Town and studying. Her study is self-sponsored, and she grew up with both parents who were very busy and never had her time. Her household income is approximately R40,000 every month. She values her family and friends the most. She enjoys hanging out with her friends and going to the gym for exercise. She stays off campus. At the age of 19 she started having sex during her first year in the university. She first met her 'sugar daddy' at the mall where they exchanged contacts. Her greatest motivation for engaging in transactional sex was due to peer pressure from her friend who also had a 'sugar daddy'. She meets up with her 'sugar daddy' every weekend where he gives her anything she asks for. The 'sugar daddy' decides when and when not to use condoms during sex. Lola knows her 'sugar daddy's' status and she also does an HIV test every month to be sure of her status.

Whenever she meets up with her 'sugar daddy', he gives her approximately R5000 to have fun during the week. According to Lola, her 'sugar daddy' loves her so much and makes sure she is pampered but her only challenge is finding it difficult to introduce him to her friends or family. Her 'sugar daddy' is almost her father's age and so therefore, she is shy of going out with him to avoid being laughed at. Lola plans to stop engaging in transactional sex when she finds a man who is willing to marry her.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

According to Hennink et al. (2011), the researcher should adhere to three fundamental ethical standards. First and foremost, putting respect for participants before the needs of the research is essential. The researcher must reduce any possible dangers to subjects. However, the researcher upholds justice by ensuring that the study technique was carried out fairly and thoughtfully. The researcher declares that the ethics listed above are upheld by this research. Additionally, the University of the Western Cape's Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee gave their approval to this study. The researcher protected the participants' confidentiality, including their names, while also disseminating information and consent forms. The researcher made sure the data was only used for the intended academic research. The participants were informed that their involvement in this study was entirely voluntary and that they might withdraw at any moment with no repercussions. The researcher also indicated that at the end of the interview, if the participant is facing any form of trauma, they could speak to a psychologist (Ms. Susan) whose contact is on the information sheet. In addition, the researcher recorded the interviews with the

respondents' approval. The recorded information was kept secret and secure. By keeping their names private, the participants' identities were likewise protected.



CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and discussions. The researcher discusses and interprets data collected using semi-structured interviews. The main purpose of the study was to look at motivations of young females at the University of the Western Cape involving in transactional sex and the challenges they face in such relationships. The participants were given pseudonyms for the purpose of ethics. The identified themes and sub-themes are presented sequentially. Flick (2014) notes that analysing qualitative data encompasses a system of ongoing classification and interpretation. The major aim of this chapter is to analyse the narratives of the participants of this study. Different themes were identified throughout the coding process to develop an understanding of the motivations to why female university students engage in transactional sex and the challenges they face in such relationships.

5.2 Map of Themes

The theme map is sketched out at the start of this chapter. The thematic map and important themes which emerged from the interview with the research participants are explored and discussed in detail. Following the analysis of the thematic map, three main topics and eleven sub-themes, which later included the research questions, objectives, literature review, and primary theoretical foundation of the study, were identified. To accurately capture the details offered by the participants, the material was transcribed verbatim from the data.

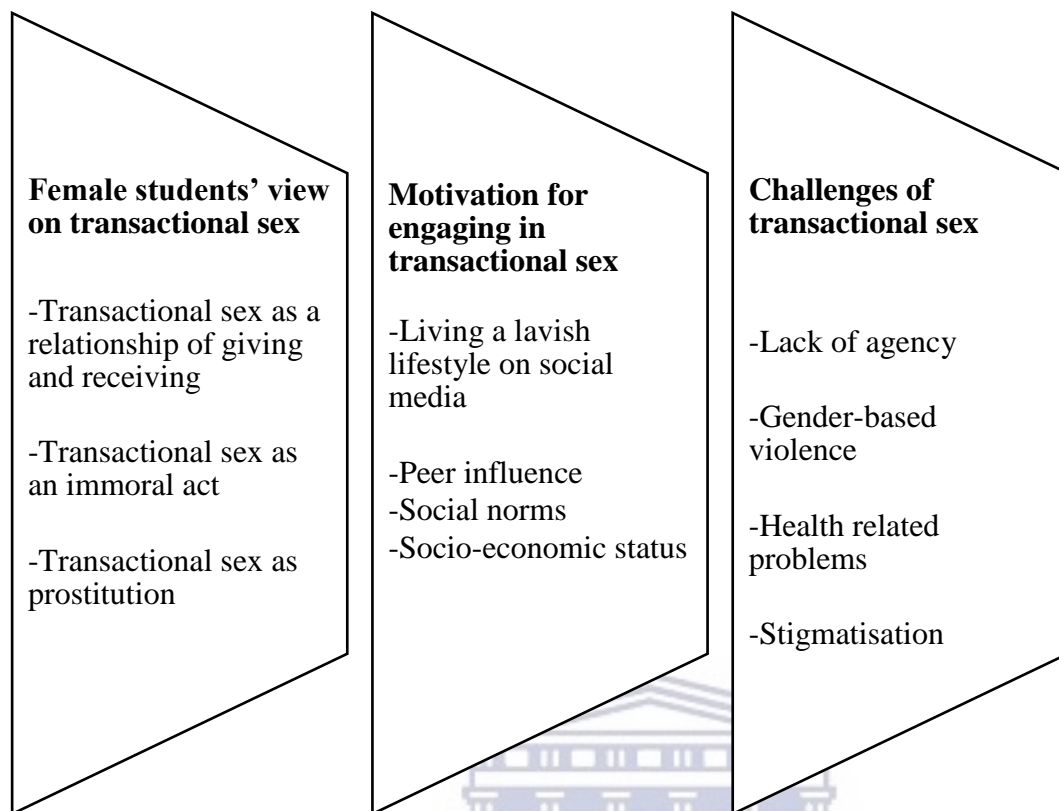


Figure 3: Map of themes

5.3 Female Students' Views on Transactional Sex

This research study revealed that to an extent, participants at the University of the Western Cape fall victim to and engage in transactional sex with outsiders. During the interview, one of the main questions was: “What is your view on transactional sex?” The participants’ views on transactional sex are presented in three sub-themes, namely:

- Transactional sex is a relationship of giving and receiving.
- Transactional sex is different from prostitution because it does not involve any negotiation of payment.
- Transactional sex as an immoral act.

5.3.1 Transactional sex as a relationship of giving and receiving

In this study, the participants viewed transactional sex as a relationship based on benefits. Some of the participants stated that most girls are involved in transactional sex without even knowing it.

To them, this relationship is a give and take kind of relationship where one has the opportunity to exchange sex for material benefits such as money to pay rent, school fees, buy expensive designer clothing etc.

Lerato said:

I will give you sex, you give me money for whatever I want ... if there is no sex, he won't give the money.

Cleo added that:

I cannot be with someone who cannot take care of me....my bills need to be paid and so I cannot be with younger boys who have nothing to offer...

There is evidence that participants' main motivation for engaging in transactional sex was material. Participants reported that they would not be in a relationship with someone who could not take care of their bills or support them financially. This finding supports previous findings from a study carried out by Shefer et al. (2012), which revealed that transactional sexual relationships were represented by respondents as an exchange built around different currencies.

5.3.2 Transactional sex as an immoral act

In the study, some of the participants viewed transactional sex as an immoral act due to the kind of family they grew up in. The participants are mostly Christians and they are aware that the Bible is against any form of immoral act. However, bringing value judgment to issues of survival does not make sense, as Zandile stated:

Transactional sex to me is an immoral act because my religion is totally against it...as a Christian, I know sex before marriage is a sin but...bills need to be paid and I need to survive and be a baby girl for life.

The environment in which participants find themselves always has an effect on their behaviour if they are found engaging in transactional sex, which is seen as improper.

5.3.3 Transactional sex as prostitution

Two of the respondents reported that transactional sex can be described as prostitution because to them transactional sex involves having sex with someone to get a favour which is mainly money. One of the participant, Lerato viewed transactional sex as prostitution:

Wena...there is no difference between transactional sex and prostitution...they are same thing to me because they both involve exchanging sex for something.

Transactional sex has been compared to prostitution in research done by Mc Phail (2011). Transactional sex and prostitution are two different things. People who are involved in transactional sex are seen as ‘girlfriends’ and not ‘clients’ or prostitutes. Wamoyi et al. (2016) also distinguishes transactional sex and prostitution by arguing that women who are involved in prostitution or sex work may actively look for sex in public areas or brothels or also accept to be sex workers or prostitutes. In transactional sex, there is no negotiation involved but different commodities such as gifts, money, or transport are received in exchange for sex. Cash is the main commodity given in prostitution and nothing more.

5.4 Motivations for Engaging in Transactional Sex

The other question in the study theme was to explore the motivations as to why female university students engage in transactional sex. These are presented in the sub-themes below.

5.4.1 Lavish lifestyle on social media

Findings indicate that one of the motivations for indulging in transactional sex was influences from social media. Respondents reported that they want to live a particular type of lifestyle which is of high standard. Social media was seen to be responsible for promoting positive images of ‘blesser’ relationships while hiding the potential negatives of such lifestyle. Participants in this study identified Facebook, Tinder, and Instagram as the major social media platforms used by girls for self-promotion and attracting ‘sugar daddies’ or ‘blessers’. Cleo admitted to wanting material items she could not afford, and she would not date a “small boy” who is on the same socio-economic level with her.

Bontle said:

Like on Instagram, I need to look very sexy and classy in order to find me a ‘sugar daddy’ who wants some sugar...

This finding was consistent with Laurie (2010), who indicates that people always want more than they have and not everyone can afford an extravagant lifestyle or even one that gives them access to sufficient basic needs. Peer pressure is motivated by the constant need to be better than everyone else and social media is the biggest influencer of peer pressure.

5.4.2 Peer influence

Peer pressure is a significant factor in both the general lives of young people and their sexual lives, according to studies conducted on the African continent and elsewhere (Djamba, 2007). The researcher discovered throughout the interviews that the young women's propensity for transactional sex was influenced by peer pressure. The following statements showed this:

...when we go to events, I want to look beautiful and hot like the other girls or else they would laugh at you if you don't have nice things... (Faraji).

The responses from the participants in this study showed how peers influenced their involvement with transactional sex. This includes witnessing their friends' lifestyles with ‘sugar daddies’, yielding to peer pressure from their friends who were benefiting from ‘sugar daddies’, and also the desire to fit in.

Zandile stated:

The kind of lifestyle my friend was living made me aspire for such things...my circumstances don't make me depressed so I needed to fit into my friend's lifestyle you know to survive...

Bontle said:

Coming from a village to the university, I needed to try new things and be like the big girls on campus...

Kamo added:

I set a good example for my friends on all the latest fashion and beauty stuff...my 'sugar daddy' buys me anything I want...

The above statements are in line with findings from a study by Wamoyi et al. (2010) where the link between peer influence, transactional sex, and HIV risk was established. The young women are often pressured by their peers to get involved in transactional sex for financial and material gain to fit in or assimilate into their friendship circles and social networks.

Peer influence was seen to be one of the factors which motivates young girls to engage in transactional sex. The female students are influenced by their counterparts. Choudhry et al. (2014), assert that peer influence is one of the major factors why youth engage in sex for material gain. The young women get influenced to live up to standard with their peers by having luxury items such as expensive designer clothes, bags, shoes, expensive weaves, etc.

5.4.3 Social norm

Some of the participants spoke about how transactions in relationships affected them, and the question of the males' socio-culturally prescribed responsibilities as providers and sources of financial stability also came up. In the interviews, this expectation was described as the driving force behind transactional sexual relationships and how they blur the boundaries with "regular" relationships. This is consistent with Shefer et al.'s (2012) findings that students acknowledged the difficulty in separating the two.

Tessy, the first participant, was explicit about her experience:

It's a norm...a man is expected to look after his woman. It is something my mother told me while growing up. I need to have someone who is like my dad...my dad had lots of money so he gave me everything I wanted...

Such norms and expectations including transactional sex were recognised as deeply rooted within South African society's historical context. This is described by Morell et al. (2012) as highly patriarchal with ingrained gender inequalities where women are forced to be submissive because the men are always there to provide their needs considering it is their job to do so.

5.4.4 Socio-economic status

In South Africa, people usually live below the poverty line and have a very low socioeconomic status. When the participants were asked their main motive for engaging in transactional sex, their answers were to acquire economic capital in the form of money and ‘things’ such as expensive bags, weaves, clothes and shoes. This was to achieve a certain lifestyle which the girls could not afford on their own and having the experience of eating at expensive restaurants or traveling.

Cleo explained:

...you know someone who enjoys partying and visiting different places, I need enough money. I need to take care of myself and look good...at this stage in my life, I also need to have my own car

Bontle said:

Who doesn't need money? I need money, money, money to pay my fees and accommodation...without money, how will I survive?

Furthermore, some of the participants admitted to exploiting their ‘sugar daddies’ to the fullest. Their ‘sugar daddy’ roles as ‘providers’.

Hmmmm, this is one relationship where you just say to yourself...at this point this is what I can get from this relationship. (Luthando)

5.5 Challenges of Transactional Sex

Another question in this study was to look at the challenges faced by young female university students in transactional sexual relationships. These are presented in the subthemes.

5.5.1 Lack of agency

Due to power imbalances in society, the ‘sugar daddies’ exert their power to control their “girlfriends” by not practicing safe sex or using condoms. In this study, all participants agree to not using condoms while having sex with their ‘sugar daddies’ because the men determine whether to use condoms or not.

One of the Participant, Lerato stated:

My man prefers it raw...skin to skin. So, I have no option than to allow him...though I always take prep to avoid getting infected just in case.

Tessy said:

My 'sugar daddy' is very controlling and expects me to behave according to his taste or wants me to be at his beck and call...arghhh, that can be so annoying.

5.5.2 Gender-based violence

In this study, it was observed that the 'sugar daddies' usually abuse their girlfriends in such types of relationships because there are no strings attached. The sugar daddies use their power to control and manipulate their girlfriends in this relationship.

Bontle said:

My 'sugar daddy' is a timekeeper...whenever he needs me and I give excuses or go to him late, I receive the beating of my life; but well...I later receive double the money he usually gives me...

Zandile added:

You know how these men can be when drunk...in order for my 'sugar daddy' to relieve himself from a hangover, he uses me as a punching bag...

5.5.3 Health-related problems

In Africa as a whole, transactional sex was found to be responsible for deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Transactional sex can also lead to depression and mental health problems.

Luthando said:

...there is this one time my 'sugar daddy' got mad at me for telling him I was busy at school. He got angry and blocked me immediately, the next day I tried reaching him but I couldn't and I was desperately in need of money to pay back a loan I took from my neighbour. The neighbour ended up calling me out on social media. I was depressed for a whole month because of how I was presented to the whole public.

Health issues are of great concern to most university students as their actions now could impact their future. Glanz et al. (2008) state that girls who are abandoned while pregnant mostly drop out of school and suffer psychological trauma associated with pain of rejection by their male partners or even their immediate families.

Zandile said:

Whenever my 'sugar daddy' wants me, I have to run to him...in fact I leave whatever I am doing to meet him even if I have an exam to write the next day...

Most students who engage in transactional sex tend to ruin their academic careers and perform with low grades. This shows that transactional sex takes much time from the female students and leads to their stagnation.

5.5.4 Stigmatisation

Two of the participants in this study noted that transactional sex led to stigmatisation. They stated that some people usually hide their transactional sexual relationship status from other friends and family for the fear of stigmatisation, name calling and discrimination. People consider or call girls who are involved in transactional sex as *shashe*, which means a "spoilt female".

Lola made a comment that,

Ehhhhh...I appreciate my 'sugar daddy' so much and wished I could introduce him to my friends and family members but they are going to laugh at me.

This aligns with the findings by with Strebel et al. (2013), who assert that young women who have relationships with taxi drivers were fully condemned in local communities. Though transactional sex is common in university campuses, people who engage in it do not want other students to know they are involved to avoid being condemned.

5.6 Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine the causes of transactional sex among female university students. The previous studies that looked at the causes of the prevalence of transactional sex in universities all around the world served as the foundation for this study. The study does, however, support the fact that transactional sex is common in South African higher institutions.

Transactional sex is typically performed by men and sustained by young women who are consistently open to exchanging sex to satisfy a variety of social requirements. In this study, ten out of the twelve participants accepted the phenomenon of ‘sugar daddy’ or ‘blesser’ as a normal practice of giving something for something. This could be prevented by promoting moral ideals and contentment in sexual relationships through dialogue and lifestyle changes. Because the men in these relationships are typically older and wealthier than the women, the involvement in transactional sex has major repercussions for the sexual and reproductive health of female students. This increases the risk of both unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortions.

In this study, some of the participants view on transactional sex was; a relationship of giving and receiving. The act is done by exchanging sex for material benefits. Transactional sex was also viewed as an immoral act which was seen as not accepted to their culture or their family lifestyles. Prostitution was also viewed as transactional sex because according to the participants, transactional sex and prostitution are similar due to the use of exchanging sex to get a favour.

The participants for this study stated that their motivations for engaging in transactional sex included; living a lavish lifestyle on social media just to trend and be considered as the biggest girls on campus. Living a lavish lifestyle on social media was to be up to standard for potential and richer sugar daddies. Peer influence was seen as one of the biggest motivations for the participants to engage in transactional sex. This is due to the fact that the participants are all students and always find themselves on campus most times where they engage in conversations and other social activities. Social norm was also considered as a motivation. To some of the participants, it is a norm for the “male gender” to always provide for the females and so therefore they are forced to engage in transactional sexual relationships in order for the male gender to provide their needs for them to be comfortable. The socio-economic status of some of the participants were very low. They came from households where they could not afford to eat and the only means of survival for them was to engage in transactional sex.

In this study, the challenges faced by the participants included; gender-based violence which occurs whenever they want to leave the relationship or when their sugar daddies are drunk. Health related problems were some of the challenges faced by the participants. A participant in this study fell pregnant and was rejected by her partner. Another one was infected with HIV/AIDS which she has to live with for the rest of her life. The participants lacked the power to make decisions in

transactional sexual relationship. A participant had to face the challenge of stigmatization as her friends and family always laugh or frown at her for staying in a relationship with an older man.

This study also found out that majority of the participants started having sex at a very young age, which makes them to see sex as a normal thing in society. To some of the participants, having sex at a young age made them feel proud. Most of the participants had multiple sexual partners including their 'sugar daddies'. With the 'sugar daddies', they usually practice unsafe sex due to the fact that the 'sugar daddies' always make the decisions of practicing safe sex or not. The sponsor ('sugar daddy'), has more powers because he is giving the woman money and so she must comply with his decisions.

Some of the participants grew up in single-parent homes, mostly dominated by their mothers or their grandmothers and this made them seek fatherly love from older men as they do not have the presence of a father figure. A participant (Siya) who is an orphan had no option than to get involved in transactional sexual relationship for survival and to also care for her younger siblings. Findings from this study found that peer influence was one of the factors why the participants engage in transactional sex. It is claimed that the students are influenced by their peers. Students choose transactional sex as a form of fulfilment because there are few other activities to engage in during their free time. Choudhry et al. (2014) provides evidence in support of the current opinion by pointing out that peer pressure is one of the reasons why young people engage in sex for financial gain. The young people experience peer pressure to wear expensive clothing, jewellery, trendy hairstyles, accessories, and make-up to keep up with the latest trends. According to ACFODE (2009), peer pressure, in addition to economic and societal factors, is a growing factor that pushes both girls and boys towards intergenerational sex.

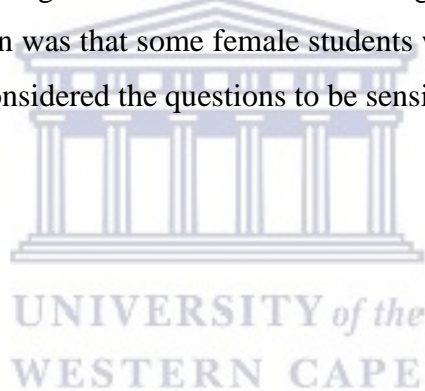
Some of the respondents in this study grew up in rural areas where they did not have access to basic amenities. When they found themselves in the cities, they were expected to live according to different standards. Looking at Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory, the environment influences the behaviour of people which starts with the family. Findings from this study revealed how one of the participants (Anaishe), who was pushed by her mother to get involved in transactional sex as means of survival for the family. The university campus is also an environment that influences mindsets of people to think of living a lavish or glamorous lifestyle, which in turn, pushes the woman to engage in transactional sex. Students come from homes where they are

restricted in their behaviour but once they go to university, they gain freedom to behave in whatever way they wish.

The participants in this study indicated that ‘sugar daddies’ would like to have someone they can instruct. These men use their resources to exert some influence or domination over the young women who find themselves having no choice other than to oblige. If not lose all the benefits they receive from the relationship. However, the female students view their engagement in transactional sex as temporary and have strong intentions to quit after securing a formal job, finding a serious relationship or after graduation.

5.7 Limitations

The focus of this research was on a small group of young female students at the University of the Western Cape. Therefore, the findings drawn from this cannot be generalised to all young females at universities. Another limitation was that some female students were unwilling to participate in the interview as some of them considered the questions to be sensitive to their mental health.



CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the motivations of participating female university students engaging in transactional sex and the challenges faced in such relationships. This study concluded that transactional sex is very common at the university under scrutiny in South Africa and is seen as the exchange of sex for material gain. Transactional sex among the participating female university students occurs in the context of peer pressure, poverty, and power disparities. However, transactional sex was seen to affect the female student's mental health and solutions are recommended. Finally, this chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

6.2 Conclusion

Physiologically, women are more vulnerable to the risk of HIV infection than their male counterparts. Young women between the ages of 15 – 24 years are at high risk of contracting HIV. Gender inequalities and subordination of women in the society has aggravated the vulnerability of women to the risk of infection. This study found transactional sex to be one of the major avenues through which to contract HIV.

This study aimed at looking deeply into the 'sugar daddy' phenomenon, the motivations of female students engaging in transactional sex, the nature and extent of transactional sex among female students, the challenges female students face in such relationships and also the insights as to whose empowerment and reality counts when it comes to transactional sexual relationship. The study found that socioeconomic factors, social media, peer influence and social norms motivate female university students to be involved in transactional sex. However, it was discovered that females in universities mostly use sex as an economic resource to ameliorate their living conditions. The material and financial exchange for sex is mostly characterised by having different sex partners without the use of condoms. The female students were faced with challenges of health-related problems such as gender-based violence and also, they lacked the power to decide what needs to be done in the relationship. With the effect of health-related problems in a student's life, it can lead to stress and also depression which can in turn affect their academics. From this study, the university was seen as a place where transactional sex was common.

6.3 Summary of findings

The first question this study attempted to answer was: “What motivates female students in the university to engage in transactional sex?” Based on the findings or emerging themes, using the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological systems theory, the two levels used for the purpose of this study were: the microsystem and the mesosystem. The first level of the theory, the microsystem, shows that family, school and church are the closest to an individual. These factors influence behaviour of an individual in their immediate environment. Findings from this study show that at the level of the microsystem, the female university students tend to engage in transactional sex because they come from low economic background and the kind of families they emerge from influences their behaviour. One of the participants was influenced by her mother to engage in transactional sex and bring in the transactional favours she receives from her ‘sugar daddy’ to support the family.

The interaction of one's microsystem is referred to as the mesosystem. This indicates that sexual experience or behaviour may be influenced by family upbringing. For instance, if a teen is abandoned by a parent, she may be forced to rely on others with whom she can find comfort by having sex (Ajayi, 2019). Findings from this study show that some of the participants grew up in single headed households or grew up with only their grandparents. This has a great impact on their sexual behaviour as some of them decided to engage in transactional sex with a ‘sugar daddy’ to find solace and feel the father figure in their lives.

An illustration of a mesosystem interaction is the reinforcement of a sexual pattern by peer experiences at a university or exposure to liberal urban surroundings such as universities while growing up in a rural area. Most of the participants grew up in the rural areas and due to their education, they had to move to the urban setting where the university is located. There, they were influenced by their peers to fit into the urban society by engaging in transactional sex.

6.4 Implications for Further Research

One of the limitations of this study is that the bulk of the data when considered as a body of work, most of the literatures on transactional sex are mostly qualitative but not much has been done in South Africa. The findings from this study should not be generalised to the broader context as most of the participants were undergraduate students and a few were postgraduate students. Most of the

participants' monthly household income was below R50,000. There is more research that needs to be done in the field of transactional sex. Considering the political economy of South Africa, it would make sense if future studies focus more on South African nationals. There should be more in-depth investigations on the implications of transactional sex relationships on the notions of intimacy and love.

6.5 Recommendations

- The university should create more part-time jobs and increase salaries for work-study to enable female students to get involved in and enable them make some extra income for themselves.
- It is hard for girls to negotiate the use of condoms during sex. However, information, education and communication campaign programmes should be made to speak bluntly against the risk involved in transactional sex and to target men who are involved in transactional sex to encourage them make use of condoms and know the health dangers involved in not using condoms.
- Parents should be fully involved in the development process of their children to prevent the children from engaging in transactional sex.



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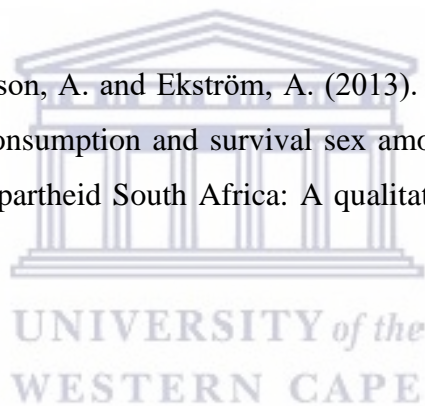
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Schedule – Female Students



University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa

Telephone : (021) 959 3858/9 Fax: (021) 959 3849

E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za or mdinbabo@uwc.ac.za

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDELINES OF INQUIRY

UNIVERSITY of the

The lines of inquiry will be based on three broad themes that emerged from the literature review and the research questions:

SECTION A: SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHY

Age

Academic level/qualification

Socio-economic status/average household income

Academic support/bursary/funding support

Race/ethnicity

SECTION B: SEXUAL HISTORY, BEHAVIOUR AND DECISION-MAKING

- Describe your upbringing up until now.
- Are you originally from Cape Town?
- What is your highest education level?
- What extramural sport and cultural activities did you enjoy whilst attending school?
- Are you sexually active?
- How many sexual partners do you have currently?
- Do you give consent to have sex with your partner?
- Do you use condoms while having sex?
- At what age did you have your first sexual experience? How did it happen?
- At what age did you have your first transactional sexual experience? How did you feel? What were the circumstances?
- What did you get in exchange for the sex?
- Describe the circumstances of your sexual negotiation and how consent works.
- Who determines the terms of engagement? When do you get rewarded?

SECTION C: MOTIVATION, CONSENT AND USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES

- If condom is not used while having sex, who makes the decision?
- In the past six months, have you entered into a relationship with a man mainly to get things you needed?
- What forms of material or offers are being exchanged or given after having sexual intercourse with your partner?
- What is the age difference between you and your sexual partner (s)?

- What motivates you to have sex with a man?
- What challenges do you face dating the older person?
- Do you encounter any form of abuse?
- Do you know your partner's HIV status?
- How does this partner value your relationship? Does he see it as a financial sex benefit or intimate relationship?
- Motivation for engaging in transactional sex



Appendix B: Information Sheet



Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa

Telephone : (021) 959 3858/6 Fax: (021) 959 3865

E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za or cobuaku@uwc.ac.za

Project Title: Transactional Sex Among Female University Students: A Case Study of the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

INFORMATION SHEET – Interview for transactional sex participants

What is this study about?

This research project is being conducted by Faith Miri, a student at the University of the Western Cape. You are invited to participate in this study as you have participated in transactional sex and reside in Cape Town. The purpose of this research is to understand why young women engage in transactional sex, challenges and how they negotiate rewards. I hope that the research will provide possible suggestions and recommendations for the government to look into the issue of female economic empowerment and gender equality in South Africa.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to participate in an interview in which you will be asked to share information, suggestions and your opinions on your personal experiences whilst growing up. The interview will take 30-45 minutes and it will take place online via zoom or WhatsApp calls. You will have the opportunity to ask for clarification on any of the questions.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

All your personal information will be kept confidential and will remain anonymous. You will be required to sign a consent form to protect your privacy and confidentiality while participating in this study. The identity of the people to be interviewed will be kept confidential and details of identity will only be provided voluntarily or used only with consent. The information collected will be kept safe and used for the purpose of this research project. In the research report, the identity of the participants will be protected to the maximum.

What are the risks of this research?

There are risks involved in participating in this research project. The aim and the objective will be made clear from the start. If any of the questions are upsetting or leading to trauma, I have consulted a counsellor in the area who has agreed to assist with personal counselling should the need for counselling arises. Counsellor: Louisa Van Romberg 0739710428 and Psychologist: Susan 0761022010.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is designed to help the participant personally. The findings from the research will however provide recommendations for effective and efficient implementation of future programmes to government and all stakeholders.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate and to stop participating at any time you want. If you stop or decide not to participate, you will not lose anything.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

There are no negative effects that could happen from participating in this study.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Faith Miri, a student at the University of the Western Cape. Her contact number is +27 843767838, 3804502@myuwc.ac.za.

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr Chinwe Obuaku-Igwe at The Department of Sociology, University of the Western Cape, her telephone number, +27 (O21) 959 3790 or a psychologist named Susan 0761022010.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Prof. Abdulkareem Razack

Head of Department: Institute for Social Development

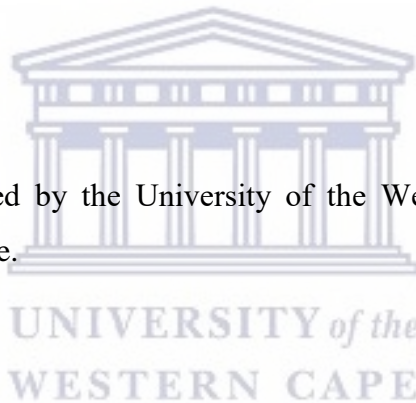
School of Government

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.



Appendix C: Letter of Consent



University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa

Telephone :(021) 959 3858/9 Fax: (021) 959 3849

E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za or mdinbabo@uwc.ac.za

Letter of Consent-Questionnaire for Research participants

I....., have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain myself.

I am aware that this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name will not be used.

I understand that if I do not want my name to be used that this will be ensured by the researcher.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I do not want to answer.

Date:.....

Participant Name:.....

Participant Signature:.....

Interviewer name:.....

Interviewer Signature:.....

If you have any questions concerning this research, feel free to send an email to me on 3804502@myuwc.ac.za or my supervisor, **Dr Chinwe Obuaku-Igwe** email: cobuaku@myuwc.ac.za at Sociology department, University of the Western cape.

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988, email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



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