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Understanding The Demand For Human Sex Trafficking: A Study Of Attitudes Regarding The Commercial Sex Industry

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UNDERSTANDING THE DEMAND FOR HUMAN SEX TRAFFICKING: A STUDY OF
ATTITUDES REGARDING THE COMMERCIAL SEX INDUSTRY

A project based upon an independent investigation, submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Social Work.

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Literature Review

Definition and Statistics

The United Nations defines trafficking in persons as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (2006, p. 50)

Human trafficking is a global practice that involves the abduction or recruitment of a person for the purpose of exploitation. Obtaining accurate statistics on human trafficking is a very difficult process for a variety of reasons. It is a very clandestine operation and only a small percentage of victims come forward. Furthermore, many countries lack anti-trafficking legislation and thus the tools to calculate its impact (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 44). However, it is estimated that ten million women and children are currently being sexually exploited worldwide. More than one million children enter the world sex trade each year. These children are losing their childhoods through rape and exploitation (Robb, 2006, p. 23). Fifteen to eighteen thousand of these victims are believed to be trafficked into the United States, and this trend seems to be accelerating (*Human Trafficking Facts*, 2006).

There are several countries that seem to generate a larger percentage of the victims of trafficking. These countries include Belarus, the Ukraine, Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, China, Thailand, and Nigeria (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 58). Most of these countries are concentrated in Eastern Europe and Asia. There are also several countries that score very high as destination countries for victims of trafficking. These countries include

Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Israel, Turkey, Japan, Thailand, and the United States (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 63).

However, it is important to recognize that trafficking is not only a global problem, but also a local one. Trafficking does not necessarily require transportation across any borders, thus the definition of human trafficking must also be expanded to account for domestic trafficking. So on top of the tens of thousands of foreign nationals trafficked into the United States each year, there are hundreds of thousands more United States citizens being exploited against their will within their own country (Hughes, 2007).

Perpetrators can be anyone from a large criminal network to a single pimp. Within domestic trafficking, underage youths with a history of violence, sexual abuse, and drug use within their families are at risk of being trafficked. In a study done in San Francisco, it was found that seventy-eight percent of women entered prostitution before the age of eighteen (Silbert, 1982) and among these women, seventy percent were sexually assaulted an average of thirty-one times by purchasers of sex acts (“Johns”) (Silbert, 1981).

The largest populations of victims are women and children. Women are almost nine times more likely to be a victim of trafficking than men and children are nearly four times more likely (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 77). The most probable cause for this discrepancy is that the majority of trafficking takes place for the purpose of sexual exploitation (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 65).

On a more local level, trafficking takes place within every state of the United States. As an example, the State of Rhode Island houses at least nine known brothels staffed with South Korean women who are forced to service almost thirty men a day. They eat, sleep, and work in one room and are kept under surveillance whenever they are allowed to leave that

room. The women are moved around every few weeks so they will be unaware of their location and less likely to reach out for help. Apart from the brothels, trafficking also occurs in Rhode Island in the form of forced street prostitution, where pimps control prostitutes, usually coercing them into the profession in the first place. Many women entering prostitution under a pimp are minors, and they are controlled through the use of false promises, abuse, and isolation. (Human Trafficking in RI, 2006)

Clearly, the statistics show that a mass violation of human rights is currently taking place all over the world, with no local community left untouched. The UN has identified trafficking as “the world’s second-largest and second-fastest growing criminal enterprise” after only the illegal drug trade. It is not a surprise then that trafficking is a very lucrative business. A two-dollar investment made by a trafficker to lure a child can easily turn into \$10,000 when she is sold to a brothel (Robb, 2006, p.23). This literature review will take a look at trafficking as a process, the supply and demand facets of the trafficking market, the outside factors that feed the industry, and some techniques that have been implemented to prevent and combat trafficking.

Human Trafficking as a Process

Human trafficking involves, at the most basic level, the acts of the offenders and the exploitation of the victims. However, it is also a process that involves many people and a certain degree of organization. Human trafficking can most accurately be defined as a process that involves four stages: 1.) the abduction or recruitment of a victim; 2.) the transportation of the victim from point A to point B; 3.) the exploitation of the victim which

may involve sexual services or manual labor; and 4.) the profit laundering of the parties involved in trafficking the victim (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 57).

There are several identified methods for recruiting victims. Most often, the recruiter promises a job and many new opportunities to the victim. The victim almost always has a false premise of the job offer. In some cases of extreme poverty, parents may be approached to sell their child to boost the family income and combat poverty. In these cases, the victim's family may or may not know the true fate that awaits the child (Getu, 2006, pp.144-145).

Transportation of the victim may also involve other criminal offenses such as abuse of immigration laws, document forgery, bribery, acts of coercion, and unlawful confinement. As part of a study performed by the United Nations, some victims identified the use of starvation, violence, and psychotropic drugs as a means of intimidation. (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 62). A sophisticated transportation system, however, is not necessary in order for a trafficking act to be defined as such. For instance, runaway youths may be lured into prostitution by a pimp merely a few blocks from their home. This is also considered human trafficking. It can be highly sophisticated or very simple, but the result is the same in all cases: a human being is treated as a commodity to be bought and sold.

The exploitation of the victim could be carried out in any number of ways including forced provision of sexual services or manual labor. Many victims are held in captivity, threatened, abused, or even killed. The exploitation causes both physical and psychological trauma while eroding human dignity (Getu, 2006, p. 148). While this is happening, the trafficking organizers are making thousands of dollars in profits because of the high demand within the market of buying and selling human beings.

Outside Factors that Promote the Continuance of Human Trafficking

There are two sides to the market of human trafficking: supply and demand. The supply side invokes a picture of the victims and the situations that lead them to be vulnerable to trafficking. Many of these situations are social circumstances completely out of the control of the victims. It is shown that an overwhelming majority of victims are women and children with about 80 percent of victims being women and 50 percent being minors (Getu, 2006, p. 144). According to the United Nations, “minors comprise the largest percentage of persons reported as victims” and a small number of sources report victims to be adult males. (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 76). So what are the factors that leave women and children vulnerable to trafficking?

Supply

Poverty is shown to be the most powerful root cause of trafficking. Many victims of trafficking come from poverty-stricken backgrounds and are vulnerable to the promises of employment, education, and opportunity given by the traffickers. Poverty is a major problem in all of the countries that have high numbers of victims. In some cases of extreme poverty, parents will sell their children into the hands of a trafficker to raise their family income and feed themselves and possibly other children (Getu, 2006, p. 144-145). Furthermore, offenders are thought to target minors because of the combination of “mental and social immaturity” and difficult life problems. Many children who are lured into trafficking have run away from home and have few or no other options (*Trafficking in Persons*, 2006, p. 79).

Related to the issue of poverty is that of globalization, which has “bred an ever-widening wealth gap between countries” as well as between communities (Chuang, 2006, p.138). Hugely wealthy countries are profiting from the cheap labor to be found in

underdeveloped countries. This practice is sustained by the need for jobs in underdeveloped countries. However, the workers are often exploited and compensated far less than they would be in a developed country and poverty still remains. Other global trends have had an effect on the vulnerability of migrants as well. The production of goods in many countries has become “export oriented” rather than promoting a country’s own internal market. Furthermore, the rise in power of international institutions focused on markets, such as the World Trade Organization, highly exceeds those that are focused on human development and sustainability. As jobs disappear in their home countries and borders are tightening around the world, migrants are increasingly searching for employment abroad and as a result, are rendered highly vulnerable to traffickers (Chuang, 2006).

This has become a particularly relevant problem for women. In a phenomenon often known as the “feminization of poverty,” women are greatly over-represented among survival migrants due to a lack of social structures that provide equal opportunities for women in the areas of education and employment (Chuang, 2006, p. 141). Women face discrimination through “uneven division of wage labour and salaries, citizenship rights and inheritance rights” (Chuang, 2006, p. 142). Due to the lower wage compensation for women, lack of social services, and the growth of female-headed households, women are forced to look further for income-earning activities. They may be pushed to the unregulated and informal sectors, thus making them more vulnerable to traffickers with appealing “job offers” (Chuang, 2006, p. 143).

Other root causes of trafficking are violence and sexual abuse. In many places from which victims originate, women and children are more likely to be on the level of property than person. A lack of rights and a high occurrence of abuse allows for victims to be taken

advantage of. These women and children are socially marginalized and much less likely to be protected from the exploitation of traffickers (Getu, 2006, p. 145).

Lack of awareness is another factor that allows trafficking to take place undisturbed. In many poorer countries, the flow and quality of information is limited. Therefore, the word cannot be spread about the dangers of trafficking and vulnerable populations will not be properly vigilant. Prevention of trafficking will, as a result, not be very effective. Not only are some people unaware of the issue of human trafficking, but they are also unaware of anti-trafficking laws, where to turn for help, or the full risk potential involved in the trafficking industry (Getu, 2006, p. 145). Therefore, a victim of trafficking may not realize that she is capable of being helped and her perpetrator capable of being punished.

Other situational factors that can lead to an increase in human trafficking are wars, disasters, and political instability. Wars and disasters can produce a huge population of displaced victims. Traffickers take advantage of this vulnerability by approaching these victims with offers for a “better life” in comparison to the disasters and destruction they have already experienced. Also, the closing of industries can lead to a loss of jobs and a migration to large cities. Here, people can also become vulnerable to traffickers in a foreign environment (Getu, 2006, p. 147).

Demand

There is also a large demand side to the market of human trafficking. In fact, “a prostitution market without male consumers would go broke” (O’Connor, 2006). Many factors on this side push for greater numbers of people to be forced into the trafficking industry. The buyers of trafficked persons create pull in the market on many different levels.

A large number of buyers are interested in the sex tourism and pornography markets. Sex tourists are men who travel to a certain country or place for a “sexual adventure.” Asia has one of the largest markets for sex tourism, as do other countries with legalized prostitution, such as the Netherlands. Developed countries such as the United States create some of the largest demand and produce the largest numbers of sex tourists for the commercial sex industry (Getu, 2006, p. 143).

Aside from prostitution and pornography, mail order brides and concubines are also ways in which men can further promote demand. In some places, the demand for these “brides” is high because of widening gender gaps that are a result of population control and the favoring of male children (Getu, 2006, p. 144).

Armed conflicts and wars are yet other circumstances which can lead to an increase in the demand for sexual and labor exploitation. Not only do armed conflicts undermine the capacity for law enforcement, but they also create a demand for sex trafficking victims as certain areas become populated by a large number of men. (Getu, 2006, p. 144).

So the question then arises, why are so many men willing to buy human beings for the purpose of their sexual pleasure? What can explain the exorbitantly large pull from the demand side of the sex trade industry?

Cultural Factors

As the commercial sex industry becomes filled with victims of human trafficking and modern-day slaves, one place to look for an explanation to the demand is the media. Our media culture is essentially one mass advertisement for selling women as objects of sexual pleasure. One aspect of the media is advertising. Ads are present in almost every location that our daily lives take us including television, radio, billboards, magazines, the internet and

many other places. “Advertising is our environment” and it cannot be turned off or ignored. The average American will spend three years of his life watching television commercials (Kilbourne, 1999, p. 57). So what are these ads saying about women? Women in advertising are often portrayed as objects of sexual desire. They are presented as “blank and fragile,” “virgins and whores,” “innocent and outrageous,” and nothing in between. (Kilbourne, 1999, p. 144).

Advertising and the media “are the leading source of sex education in the nation and they create a climate which encourages a very cavalier attitude towards sex” (Kilbourne, 1999, p. 147). No wonder it is culturally acceptable to buy and sell women for sex when the media and advertisements are doing just that all around us. Advertising companies spend millions of dollars on presenting their products to consumers. They hire anthropologists, psychologists and other experts to examine their consumers’ choices. They do all of this to boost their sales and turn a higher profit. If, then, advertising is so successful at convincing people to buy products, what can be said about the effect of ads on the human psyche? Clearly, advertisements are effective or no company would spend so much money on them. But they work beyond selling a product. Advertising “sells values, images, and concepts of love and sexuality, romance, success, and, perhaps most important, normalcy” (Kilbourne, 1999, p. 74).

Perhaps the reason why advertisements portray such an objectionable image of women is because of an acceptance of what Ariel Levy calls, “raunch culture.” Our modern day culture has taken part in a movement to glamorize strippers, porn stars, and pimps: all things which, in reality, truly exploit women. As a culture, we have determined that in order for a woman to be powerful, she must be “overtly and publicly sexual.” This public sexuality

is almost always portrayed in direct symmetry with “red-light entertainment” and the “aesthetic of a topless club or a *Penthouse* shoot” (Levy, 2005, p. 26). What is often worse is that women often play a large role in promoting this culture, operating under the guise of empowerment and independence. According to Dines, using these arguments to promote the commercial sex industry is like “looking at worker-controlled cooperatives to explore how labor is organized under capitalism” (1998, p. 62).

In a study conducted to research the underlying themes of pornography, it was found that it “reflects and helps maintain the sexual subordination of women” by promoting several main themes found throughout pornographic material: hierarchy, objectification, submission, and violence (Dines, 1998, p. 65). Within this industry, which markets almost solely to men, women are always portrayed as completely submissive. They are undoubtedly objectified and furthermore, portrayed as enjoying their objectification. Throughout almost all pornographic material, the female body is focused upon. Men are not the objects; they are the subjects, searching for an outlet in which they can focus solely on their own sexual experience. In many cases, violence is used and it is always portrayed as a way to heighten sexual pleasure. Out of all of the materials that were reviewed in the study conducted by Dines, all were considered to be part of mainstream and popular merchandise. It is clear that in this industry, men are always in the position of power and women are always submissive, objectified, and forced to express pleasure in response to violence (Dines, 1998).

The advent of the Internet has brought with it a mass availability of pornography and has done its part to normalize the watching of pornography, which in turn, normalizes the abuse and objectification of women. Not only are women being subjected to abuse and violence within the industry, but they very often have been victims of abuse and violence

previously. They may also be victims of trafficking, because men who buy sex “do not ask women and girls whether they are in prostitution voluntarily or if they have been forced” (O’Connor, 2006). The experience is solely about their own self-fulfillment. Furthermore, raw images of child pornography on the Internet have an effect on normalizing the sexual abuse of children.

The adult entertainment industry, in which trafficking plays a large role, is valued at about \$8-\$15 billion and the bulk of the profits go to corporate hosts such as television companies, hotels, and phone companies (Levy, 2005, p. 178). Some porn stars have become celebrities. However, life as a porn star is glamorized, often marked by much violence and violation in reality. It is found that between 65 and 90% of women in the sex industry have experienced incest or sexual abuse in their childhood (Levy, 2005, p. 180). In a study of 475 sex workers, two-thirds were found to have post-traumatic stress disorder, which is characterized by emotional numbness, recurrent nightmares, and flashbacks among other things (Levy, 2005, p. 180). It is clear that the sex industry is filled with female victims of abuse, violation, poverty, and violence.

Another truly shockingly accepted part of our culture is the pimp subculture. It is a “powerful criminal subculture, with group-enforced norms of behavior, fashion, language, and ethics” (*Domestic*, 2006). A pimp is by every definition a trafficker. He “attains authoritative levels of control and obedience” through many means, including violence, psychological abuse, and emotional abuse. A pimp is motivated primarily by the prospect of making money and the endeavor to become a pimp has relatively low risk and very high profits. In fact, pimps are rarely arrested in comparison to prostitutes. Furthermore, they frequently prey on children due to their “naïveté and vulnerability” (*Domestic*, 2006). A

particularly horrendous story appeared not long ago in *New York* magazine about a thirteen-year-old girl who was lured into prostitution under a pimp. She had run away from an abusive situation at home and was merely looking for safety and love. Instead she was sold as an object and arrested many times, even as a minor. Because she collected money in exchange for the sex acts, she was considered a criminal instead of a child who had been raped (Lustig, 2007).

Pimps not only engage in numerous Federal crimes, including human trafficking, they also blatantly flaunt “their wealth and criminal success in flagrant public parties or celebrations” (*Domestic*, 2006). “The Players Ball” is an annual party attended by pimps and the women under their control. This event glorifies and idolizes pimp culture and is supported by members of the general community (*Domestic*, 2006).

In today’s society, sex has become a commodity, something to be bought and sold. Women have become objects to be consumed and overpowered, and in many cases, women are promoting this image of themselves. Pimp culture and pornography has become glamorized when in reality, it is merely a form of objectifying and violating the rights of women as human beings. Promoting a “man’s right to buy women is a direct contradiction to any society based on gender equality” (O’Connor, 2006). Today’s culture is truly playing a large role in normalizing the buying and selling of women in the trafficking industry. It has, as a result, become one of the most lucrative and successful markets in the world.

Ways of combating human trafficking

As the problem of human trafficking has surfaced within the last few years, many methods of combating the practice have been established or proposed. Many governments,

inter-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's), have become involved in combating trafficking. The general strategies look to promote prevention, prosecution, and protection (Getu, 2006, p. 150).

The prevention strategies hope that “the conditions that lead to the vulnerability of the trafficked persons are effectively addressed” (Getu, 2006, p. 150). This includes combating poverty, educating communities about trafficking, and enforcing anti-trafficking laws (Getu, 2006, p. 150). The prosecution laws are committed to fighting organized crime and corruption as well as punishing offenders. They provide guidelines for prosecuting those who buy and sell victims (Getu, 2006, p. 150). Lastly, protection laws are also enacted to care for the victims of trafficking. These laws include providing social services and legal assistance by counselors, psychologists, social workers, and lawyers.

Apart from combating trafficking from a legislative point of view, there are some other techniques that have been implemented. In Korea, “grassroots women’s organizations are the lynchpin in [the country’s] successful anti-trafficking policy” (Schuckman, 2006, p. 85). These organizations provide services to minimize the vulnerability of women by empowering them economically, socially, and politically. Other activities include publishing and distributing information about trafficking, and establishing hotlines, shelters, and health centers to serve victims (Schuckman, 2006, p. 92).

Another technique used by some countries for combating the illegal sex trade has been to legalize voluntary prostitution. This perspective asserts the right of women to enter the sex industry voluntarily and hopes to reduce numbers of trafficking victims by providing a legal and regulated sex industry. This technique has been applied in a few countries including the Netherlands and Belgium. However, there are strong arguments both for and

against this idea. Some say that “where prostitution is legalized or tolerated, there is a greater demand for human trafficking victims and nearly always an increase in the number of women and children trafficked into commercial sex slavery” (Getu, 2006, p.143). This rise in demand has been in some cases attributed to the normalization of the sex industry. “When you normalize or legalize prostitution... you’re normalizing the sexual abuse and rape of children and the trafficking of human beings” (Robb, 2006, p. 25). It has also been found that the “the world’s four major receiving countries of trafficked women all have legalized prostitution” (Robb, 2006, p. 25).

Sweden has gone the opposite route in combating human trafficking and has become the only country to criminalize the purchase of sexual services and not the selling of them. The reasoning behind this is that women are seen as the victims in the sex industry and the buyers as the perpetrators. Prostitution is regarded as an aspect of male violence against women. It is believed that “gender equality and equal participation in all areas of society cannot be obtained as long as some men buy, sell and exploit women and children by subjecting them to prostitution” (*Prostitution*, 2006, p. 1). Sweden has seen a dramatic drop in the number of street prostitutes, johns, and recruiters of the sex industry.

Conclusions

Overall, different parts of the world are in entirely different stages in regards to the activity rate of human trafficking and the strength with which it is being combated. The issue can be clearly defined as a global human rights violation because it involves so many criminal offenses and so many people and places. There are many outside factors that contribute to the success of the human trafficking and sex trade industry and it seems that the

industry itself cannot be combated without first addressing these outside issues. Our modern-day culture plays a huge role in shaping our visions of sexuality and acceptable practices. It may be in part responsible for creating such a huge demand for the buying and selling of human beings for sexual exploitation. Poverty, globalization, and migration are also factors that increase vulnerability of certain populations for being trafficked. Furthermore, the feminization of poverty may be able to help explain the disproportionate effect of trafficking on female populations.

Different countries and areas have tried different methods of combating trafficking with varying results. Considering the trafficking industry is still one of the largest markets in the world, there is clearly not enough being done about the issue. Better research and implementation of ideas need to be brought to the table if the world is serious about cutting down on a mass violation of human rights that is happening in every community of the world.

Study Question

In response to the number of factors that may be related to the continuance of human trafficking, there seems to be less information regarding the factors that create a demand. This study aims to look at attitudes regarding the commercial sex industry in hopes of providing some explanation towards the high demand. For the purpose of this study, the commercial sex industry is defined in terms of pornography, strip clubs, and the buying and selling of sex. The hypotheses upon beginning the study are as follows:

- Among all respondents, the prevalence of knowing someone who has watched pornography will be very high (around 90 percent).

- The prevalence of knowing someone who has been to a strip club will be over 50 percent.
- The prevalence of knowing someone who has bought sex will be significantly lower.
- Men will know more people who have participated in the commercial sex industry (on all three levels) than women.
- Men will be more likely than women to have an accepting attitude of the commercial sex industry.
- The age group of “over 22” will know the most people who have participated in the commercial sex industry.
- The age group of “14-15” will know the least.
- Those that find pornography acceptable will be more likely to find strip clubs acceptable.
- Those that find strip clubs acceptable will be more likely to find the buying and/or selling of sex acceptable.
- In general, people will find the buying of sex to be more acceptable than the selling of sex.
- The degree of acceptability will decrease as the commodification of sex becomes more direct (moving from pornography towards the buying of sex in person).

These hypotheses are based on some of the findings within the literature review as well as other preconceived notions about society. Since women are disproportionately victimized by trafficking, men are more likely to make up the demand side of the commercial sex industry. As a result, they will be more accepting of the industry. Also, the younger population will know less about the commercial sex industry than an older population, specifically based on

experience and exposure. Since the majority of arrests within the commercial sex industry are of prostitutes, it is concluded that women will be more negatively viewed. Finally, as the sex act becomes more direct, it is more likely to be taboo and thus found unacceptable.

Methodology

This research took the form of an empirical study of attitudes regarding the commercial sex industry. The study was conducted in the form of a survey that asked several questions about attitudes on pornography, strip clubs, and the purchasing of sex. The survey also asked questions regarding the prevalence of these three levels of commercial sex (See Appendix A). The study was administered to students at Providence College, Rhode Island College, the Met School (an alternative high school), and individuals not associated with a school. The study was conducted anonymously and respondents had a choice of whether or not to participate. There were 96 respondents altogether and the majority of respondents were between the ages of 14 and 22. The data were organized and analyzed using SPSS for Windows.

Data Analysis

The age of respondents was divided between four categories. Eleven and one-half percent of respondents were between the ages of 14 and 15; 18.8% were between 16 and 17; 52.1% were between 18 and 22; and 17.7% were over 22. Regarding gender, 32% were male and 60% were female (7 respondents did not answer).

Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	14-15	11	11.5
	16-17	18	18.8
	18-22	50	52.1
	Over 22	17	17.7
Total		96	100.0

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	31	32.3	34.8
	Female	58	60.4	65.2
	Total	89	92.7	100.0
Missing	System	7	7.3	
Total		96	100.0	

The first question related to prevalence was, “Do you know anyone (including yourself) who has actively sought out or watched pornography?” Over ninety percent of respondents answered “yes.” A second question that regarded prevalence was “Do you know anyone who has been to a strip club?” Close to eighty-seven and one-half percent of respondents answered “yes.” The next question regarding prevalence was “Do you know anyone who has solicited or paid for sex?” Twenty-five percent of respondents answered “yes.” Among those who knew someone who has solicited or paid for sex, 60.9 percent knew one person, 17.4 percent knew 2 people, 8.7 percent knew 3 people, and 13 percent knew 4 or more.

Know Someone Who's Watched Pornography

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	87	90.6
	No	9	9.4
	Total	96	100.0

Know Someone Who's Been to a Strip Club

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	83	87.4
	No	12	12.6
	Total	95	100.0

Know Someone Who's Solicited or Paid for Sex

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	24	25.0
	No	72	75.0
	Total	96	100.0

How Many Someone Knows

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1.00	14	60.9
	2.00	4	17.4
	3.00	2	8.7
	4.00	3	13.0
	Total	23	100.0

Another question regarding prevalence was worded, “How prevalent do you think the watching of pornography is amongst your peers?” The answers were marked on a scale of nine intervals, ranging from “no one watches” to “almost everyone watches.” For the purpose of analysis, these intervals were numbered afterwards from 1 to 9, with one being “no one watches” and nine being “almost everyone watches” (Please See Appendix B). The results are as follows:

Opinion on Prevalence of Watching Pornography amongst Peers

	Prevalence of Porn Among Peers
Mean	5.9579
Median	6.0000
Mode	5.00
Std. Deviation	1.86180

The mean answer was 5.96. The most frequent answer was 5, or “half and half.”

The first question relating to attitudes was “On the following scale, how acceptable do you find the watching of pornography to be?” Respondents were asked to mark a line through a scale that ranged from “not acceptable” to “always acceptable.” Including these two end answers, there were nine intervals to choose from. For the purpose of analysis, the answers were numbered from one to nine, with 1 being “not acceptable” and 9 being “always acceptable.” The results are as follows:

Respondents' Opinions on the Acceptability of Watching Pornography

	Acceptability of Watching Porn
Mean	5.1667
Median	5.0000
Mode	7.00
Std. Deviation	2.37826

The mean answer was 5.17. The most frequent answer was 7, or “acceptable sometimes.”

The next most frequent answers were 5 (“no opinion”) and 1 (“not acceptable”).

The next question relating to attitudes was “On the following scale, how acceptable do you find strip clubs to be?” The scale was set up in the exact same way as the previous question. The results are as follows:

Respondents' Opinions on the Acceptability of Strip Clubs

Acceptability of Strip Clubs	
Mean	4.9579
Median	5.0000
Mode	7.00
Std. Deviation	2.36515

The mean answer was 4.96. The most frequent answer was 7, or “acceptable sometimes.”

The next most frequent answers were 3 and 1.

The next question relating to attitudes was “If you do not believe strip clubs are acceptable, whom do you find more offensive: the strippers or the customers?” The possible answers for this question were “the strippers,” “the customers,” and “they are both equally offensive.” The results are as follows:

Who is More Offensive

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strippers	6	6.3
	Customers	21	21.9
	Both	29	30.2
	No Comment	40	41.7
	Total	96	100.0

Just over six percent of respondents found the strippers to be more offensive, while 21.9 percent found the customers to be more offensive. About thirty percent found them both equally offensive, and 41.7 percent did not comment.

The last two questions regarding attitudes addressed the buying and selling of sex. The questions were worded, “On the following scale, how acceptable do you find the buying

of sex?” and “On the following scale, how acceptable do you find the selling of sex?” The scales were the 9-interval scales as mentioned before. The results are as follows:

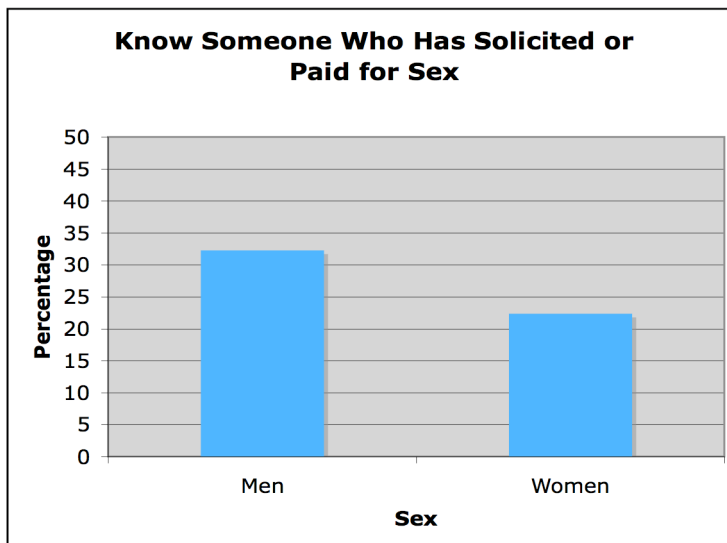
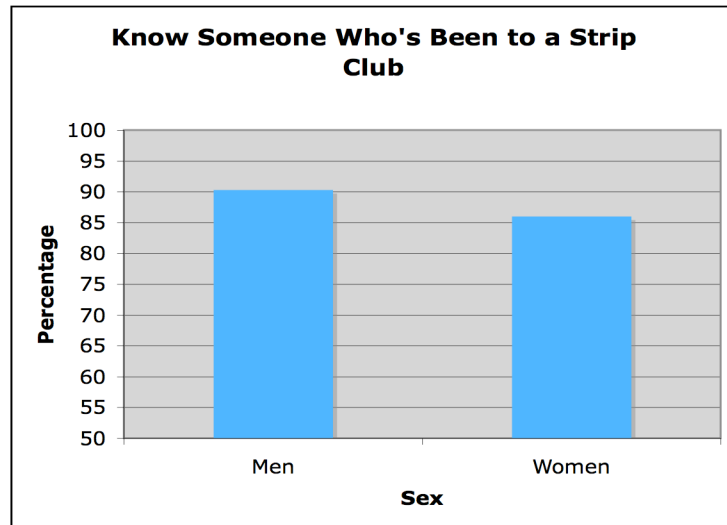
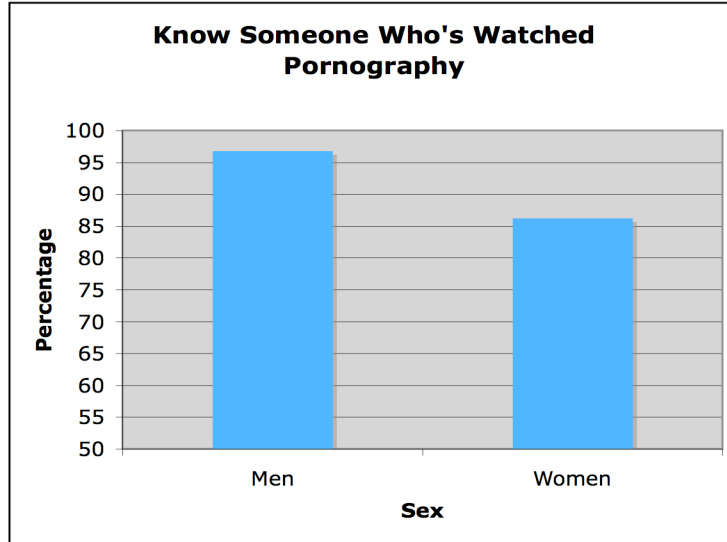
Respondents' Opinions on the Acceptability of Buying and Selling Sex

	Acceptability of Buying Sex	Acceptability of Selling Sex
Mean	2.1354	2.5729
Median	1.0000	1.0000
Mode	1.00	1.00
Std. Deviation	1.81584	2.02482

The mean answer for the acceptability of buying sex was 2.14, while the mean for the acceptability of selling sex was 2.57. The most common answer in both categories was 1 – “not acceptable.” The next most common answer for both categories was 5 – “no opinion.”

The next level of data analysis was the division of these findings between male and female respondents to look for differences of opinion and prevalence. Among questions regarding prevalence, 96.8 percent of male respondents indicated that they knew someone who has watched pornography, while 86.2 percent of female respondents indicated so (n.s.)¹. Just over ninety percent of male respondents indicated that they knew someone who has been to a strip club, while 86 percent of female respondents indicated so (n.s.). Just over 32 percent of male respondents indicated that they knew someone who has solicited or paid for sex, while 22.4 percent of female respondents indicated so (n.s.).

¹ (n.s.) indicates that differences are not statistically significant.

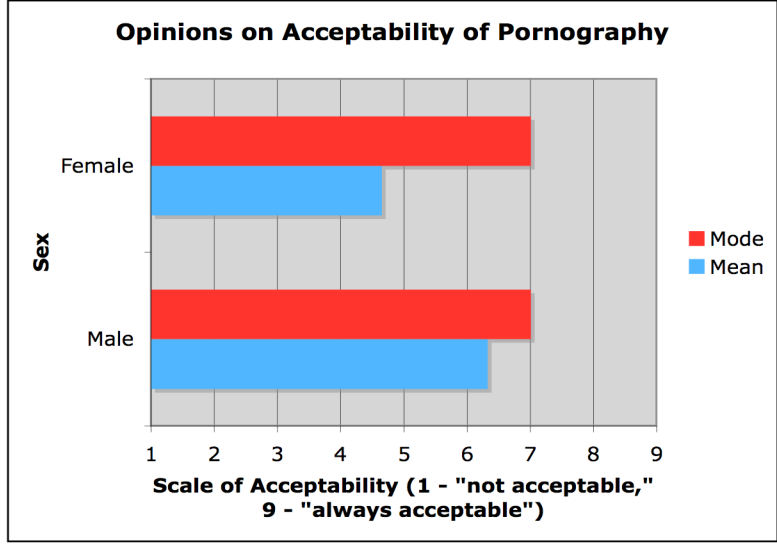


Regarding the opinion of prevalence of peers who watch pornography, the mean answer for male respondents was 6.65; close to “many people watch it.” The mean answer for female respondents was 5.60, a little closer to “half and half” ($t(58.56) = 2.56$, two-tailed $p = .013$). The most common answer among male respondents for this question was 7, while the most common answer for female respondents was 5.

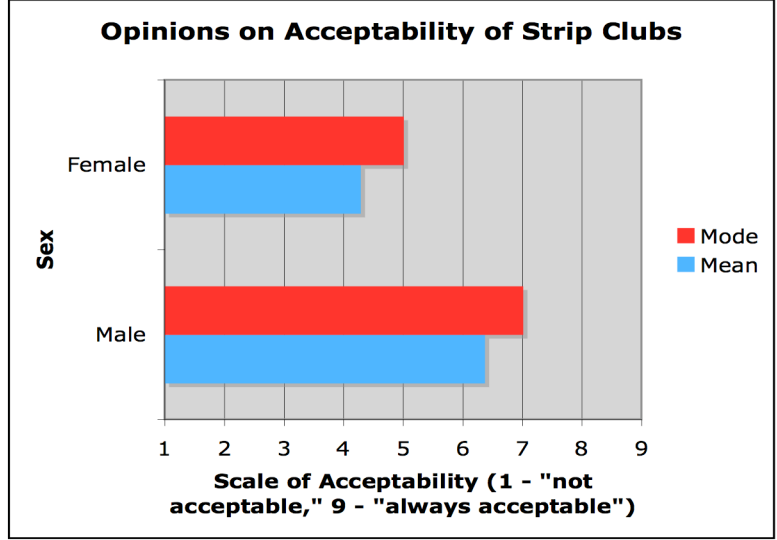
Opinions on Prevalence of Pornography Amongst Peers

Gender		Prevalence of Porn Among Peers
Male	Mean	6.6452
	Median	7.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	1.87169
Female	Mean	5.5965
	Median	5.0000
	Mode	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.77140

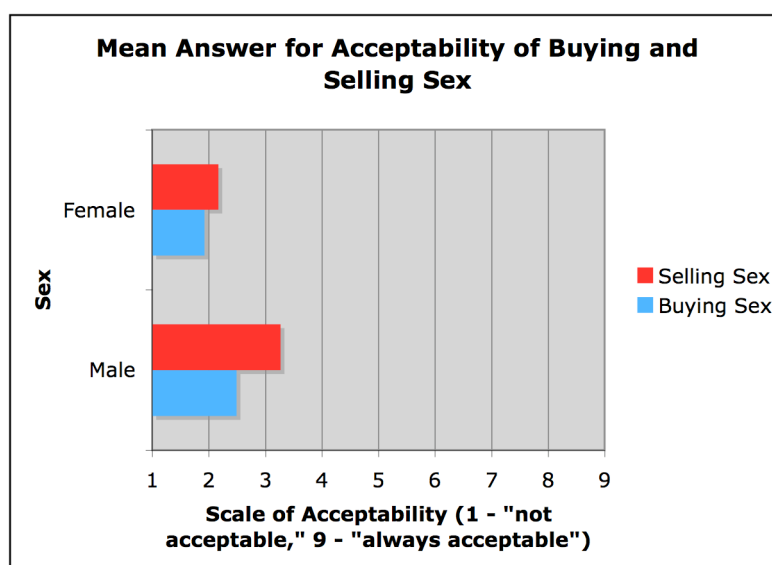
Questions regarding acceptability of the commercial sex industry also show differences between male and female respondents. In response to the question, “On the following scale, how acceptable do you find the watching of pornography to be?” the mean answer for male respondents was 6.32, while the mean answer for female respondents was 4.64 ($t(72.53) = 3.68$, two-tailed $p = .000$). The most common answer in both cases, however, was 7 – “acceptable sometimes.”



In response to the question regarding acceptability of strip clubs, the mean answer for male respondents was 6.36, while the mean answer for female respondents was 4.28 ($t(57.80) = 4.34$, two-tailed $p = .000$). The most common answer for male respondents was 7 – “acceptable sometimes,” while the most common answer for female respondents was 5 – “no opinion.”



Regarding the question of attitudes on the acceptability of purchasing sex, the mean answer for male respondents was 2.48 compared to the mean of 1.91 for female respondents (n.s.). In response to the question of acceptability of selling sex, the mean answer for male respondents was 3.26 compared to a mean of 2.16 for female respondents ($t(46.08) = 2.26$, two-tailed $p = .029$). These mean numbers are around the answers marked “not acceptable” and “rarely acceptable.”



The next comparison between data was conducted in relation to age. Age groups were split as follows: “14-15,” “16-17,” “18-22,” and “over 22.” Upon analysis of questions regarding prevalence, there were variations in answers found between each age group. Analysis of the data on the first question regarding prevalence is as follows:

Know Someone Who's Watched

Age			Frequency	Valid Percent
14-15	Valid	Yes	8	72.7
		No	3	27.3
		Total	11	100.0
16-17	Valid	Yes	18	100.0
18-22	Valid	Yes	47	94.0
		No	3	6.0
		Total	50	100.0
Over 22	Valid	Yes	14	82.4
		No	3	17.6
		Total	17	100.0

Among 14-15 year-olds, 72.7 percent of respondents indicated that they knew someone who has watched pornography. Among 16-17 year-olds, 100 percent of the eighteen respondents indicated that they knew someone who has watched pornography. Among 18-22 year-olds, 94 percent indicated that they knew someone who has watched pornography, and among individuals over 22, 82.4 percent indicated that they knew someone ($\chi = 7.97$, one-tailed $p = .047$).

The next question asks, “Do you know someone who has been to a strip club?” Among respondents aged 14-15, 36.4 percent said they knew someone. For respondents aged 16-17, 82.4 percent said they knew someone. For respondents aged 18-22, 96 percent said they knew someone, and respondents aged 22 and over had a 100 percent response rate saying that they knew someone ($\chi = 31.81$, one-tailed $p = .000$).

Know Someone Who's Been

Age			Frequency	Valid Percent
14-15	Valid	Yes	4	36.4
		No	7	63.6
		Total	11	100.0
16-17	Valid	Yes	14	82.4
		No	3	17.6
		Total	17	100.0
18-22	Valid	Yes	48	96.0
		No	2	4.0
		Total	50	100.0
Over 22	Valid	Yes	17	100.0

For the next question, which asks, “Do you know someone who has solicited or paid for sex?” 100 percent of the 14-15 year age group said “no.” Among the respondents aged 16-17, 33.3 percent said that they knew someone who had paid for sex. Among respondents aged 18-22, 26 percent said they knew someone, while 29.4 percent of individuals over age 22 responded “yes” to this question (n.s.).

Know Someone Who's Bought

Age			Frequency	Valid Percent
14-15	Valid	No	11	100.0
16-17	Valid	Yes	6	33.3
		No	12	66.7
		Total	18	100.0
18-22	Valid	Yes	13	26.0
		No	37	74.0
		Total	50	100.0
Over 22	Valid	Yes	5	29.4
		No	12	70.6
		Total	17	100.0

For the question regarding the prevalence of pornography watching amongst peers, the mean answer for respondents aged 14-15 was 4.7. The mean answer for respondents aged 16-17 was 5.94. The mean for respondents aged 18-22 was 6.3, while the mean for

respondents over age 22 was 5.7. The most common answer for respondents in the “16-17” and “18-22” age range was 7, or “many people watch it” ($\chi = 7.91$, one-tailed $p = .048$).

Prevalence of Watching Pornography by Age Group

Age		Prevalence of Porn Among Peers
14-15	Mean	4.7000
	Median	5.0000
	Mode	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.94868
16-17	Mean	5.9444
	Median	6.5000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	2.18207
18-22	Mean	6.3000
	Median	7.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	1.60675
Over 22	Mean	5.7059
	Median	5.0000
	Mode	5.00(a)
	Std. Deviation	2.33893

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Questions measuring attitudes surrounding the commercial sex industry begin with the acceptability of watching pornography. Among respondents aged 14-15, the mean answer for this question was 2.9. For those aged 16-17, the mean answer was 5.6, compared with 5.3 for those aged 18-22, and 5.82 for those over age 22. The most common answer among respondents aged 16 and over was 7, or “acceptable sometimes.” For those aged 14-15, it was 1, or “not acceptable” ($\chi = 10.96$, one-tailed $p = .012$).

Acceptability of Watching Pornography by Age Group

Age		Acceptability of Watching Porn
14-15	Mean	2.9091
	Median	2.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	2.21154
16-17	Mean	5.6111
	Median	6.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	2.35494
18-22	Mean	5.2800
	Median	6.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	2.25008
Over 22	Mean	5.8235
	Median	7.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	2.21459

The acceptability of strip clubs also varies between age groups. Among respondents aged 14-15, the mean answer was 3.0, compared with 5.9 for those aged 16-17, 4.8 for those aged 18-22, and 5.7 for those over age 22. Here the most common answer increased by age group. For those aged 14-15, it was 1, or “not acceptable.” For those aged 16-17, it was 5, or “no opinion.” For those over the age of 18, it was 7, or “acceptable sometimes” ($\chi = 11.50$, one-tailed $p = .009$).

Acceptability of Strip Clubs by Age Group

Age		Acceptability of Strip Clubs
14-15	Mean	3.0000
	Median	2.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	2.64575
16-17	Mean	5.9444
	Median	5.0000
	Mode	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.95455
18-22	Mean	4.8000
	Median	5.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	2.23150
Over 22	Mean	5.6875
	Median	7.0000
	Mode	7.00
	Std. Deviation	2.27211

The opinions regarding the acceptability of buying sex are as follows:

Acceptability of Buying Sex by Age Group

Age		Acceptability of Buying Sex
14-15	Mean	1.1818
	Median	1.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	.40452
16-17	Mean	2.5556
	Median	1.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	2.20220
18-22	Mean	2.0000
	Median	1.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	1.71429
Over 22	Mean	2.7059
	Median	2.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	2.02376

The mean answer for those aged 14-15 was 1.18, compared with 2.55 for those aged 16-17, 2.0 for those aged 18-22, and 2.7 for those over age 22. The most common answer in each case was 1, or “not acceptable” (n.s.).

The opinions regarding the acceptability of selling sex are as follows:

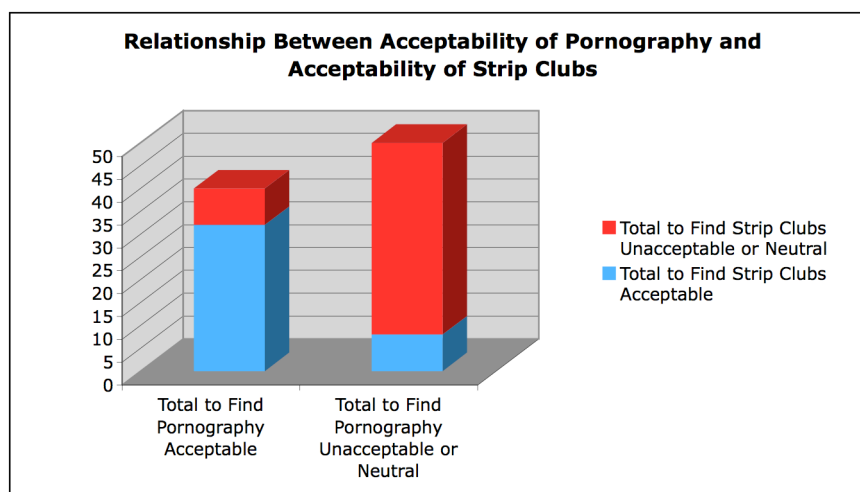
Acceptability of Selling Sex by Age Group

Age		Acceptability of Selling Sex
14-15	Mean	1.1818
	Median	1.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	.40452
16-17	Mean	3.3333
	Median	3.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	2.37635
18-22	Mean	2.4400
	Median	1.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	1.91833
Over 22	Mean	3.0588
	Median	2.0000
	Mode	1.00
	Std. Deviation	2.16421

The mean answer for those aged 14-15 was 1.18, compared with 3.33 for those aged 16-17, 2.44 for those aged 18-22, and 3.06 for those over age 22. Again, the most common answer in all age groups was 1, or “not acceptable” ($\chi = 9.27$, one-tailed $p = .026$).

Apart from analyzing data by gender and age group, data were also analyzed across levels of commodification and resulting attitudes. One hypothesis states that, “those that find pornography acceptable will be more likely to find strip clubs acceptable.” Out of the 45 respondents that found pornography acceptable (6 or above), 32 found strip clubs to be acceptable. Out of the 50 respondents that were either neutral or found pornography

unacceptable, 8 found strip clubs to be acceptable. Out of the 40 total respondents that found strip clubs acceptable, 80 percent had previously stated that they found pornography acceptable ($\tau = .637$, $p = .000$, one-tailed).

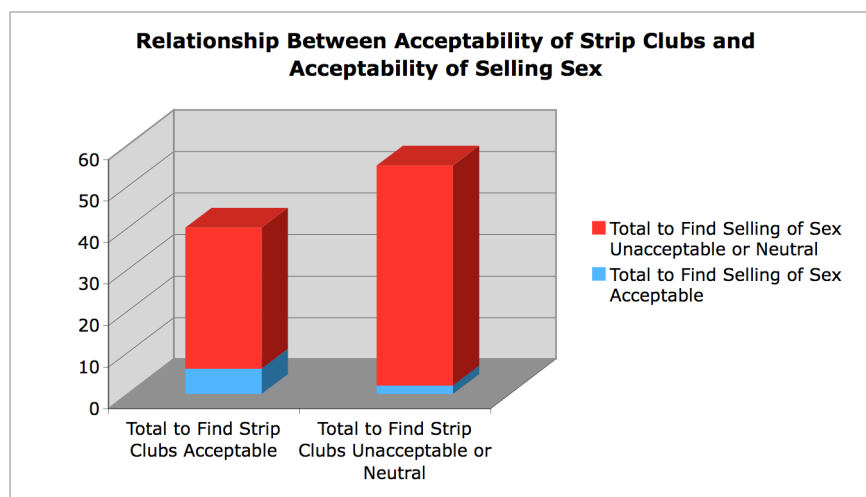


Here we see that those who find pornography acceptable are more likely to find strip clubs acceptable, although it is not impossible for respondents to find pornography unacceptable and strip clubs acceptable.

Out of the 40 respondents that found strip clubs acceptable, five found the buying of sex to be acceptable. Out of the 55 respondents who found strip clubs unacceptable, zero found the buying of sex to be acceptable. Out of the five respondents who found the buying of sex to be acceptable, one hundred percent had previously said that they found strip clubs to be acceptable ($\tau = .257$, $p = .001$, one-tailed).



Out of the 40 respondents that found strip clubs acceptable, six found the selling of sex acceptable. Out of the 55 respondents who found strip clubs unacceptable, two found the selling of sex to be acceptable. Out of the eight respondents that found the selling of sex to be acceptable, 75 percent had previously said that they found strip clubs to be acceptable ($\tau = .229$, $p = .003$, one-tailed).



Also in these cases, those that found strip clubs acceptable were more likely to find the buying and selling of sex acceptable. However the rates of acceptability for buying and selling sex were much lower than those for the acceptability of strip clubs.

Discussion

In looking at the results of these surveys, it is first significant to look at the answers of the entire pool of respondents. It is clearly evident that aspects of the commercial sex industry are reaching large amounts of people, when 90 percent of respondents know someone who has watched pornography, 87 percent of respondents know someone who has been to a strip club, and one in four respondents know someone who has paid for sex. Here the first three hypotheses are confirmed, although the rate of knowing someone who has solicited sex was higher than expected.

When looked at as a whole, the general opinion on the prevalence of pornography was that just over half of peers watch it. This is also quite a significant finding in showing the scope of individuals that the pornographic industry reaches. It is very likely that the advent of Internet pornography has caused this number to be so high. Either way, images of pornographic content are evidently not far from (or perhaps in front of) many people's eyes. As a result, the underlying cultural messages shown within pornographic content, as discussed in the literature review, are bound to have some impact on the perspectives of many people.

As far as attitudes go, most respondents leaned in favor of pornography and strip clubs. This acceptability may be related to the high prevalence of these two aspects of the commercial sex industry. When the clear majority of respondents have had some exposure to these two things, then they may be more willing to accept them.

Regarding the opinions of buying and selling sex, the mean answer was slightly higher for the category of "selling sex." This also mirrors the answers to the previous

question regarding whom respondents found to be more offensive. In this case, respondents who answered this question found customers to be more offensive than strippers by about 15 more percentage points. As a whole, this shows that women who sell sex are generally held in higher esteem than men who buy it. Perhaps a reason for this is an understanding among respondents of the situations that surround women in prostitution. As the literature review showed, many women are coerced into the profession or have a background of abuse and poverty. Perhaps the respondents better identified with the situations surrounding women in prostitution over the men who are purchasing these “services.”

When the results were divided by gender, there appeared some visible differences. For all four questions regarding prevalence, men knew a higher number of participants in these activities. This follows logically from the idea that men provide of the majority of the demand within the commercial sex industry and supports the fourth hypothesis. However, the women who answered that they knew someone could also have been referring to a male acquaintance. As a result, the number of men versus women who are actually participating in the commercial sex industry is not confirmed with this study. Regardless, the amount of participation that is known about is still very high.

Regarding the acceptability of watching pornography, the mean score for men was almost two points higher than women. However, the most common answer for both men and women was a seven, or “acceptable sometimes.” In this case, for both men and women, the majority of respondents were either at “no opinion” or towards “acceptability” for the watching of pornography. This is significant finding in relation to the exploration of the objectification of women in the literature review. Pornography, in many cases, is one of the worst forms of media in terms of objectifying women. Either many people are unaware of

this or accept it as the norm. This alone says something about our culture. Also, the results of the findings on women's attitudes towards pornography correlate with Levy's observations (as stated in the literature review) of the participation of women within the commercial sex industry.

The acceptability of strip clubs produced a larger gap of opinion between men and women, and confirmed yet another hypothesis. The mean response for women was towards the end of "unacceptable," while the mean response for men was towards the end of "acceptable." Again the numbers were about two points away, yet this time, the most common answers differed between men and women. For women, the most common answer was a five, or "no opinion." For men, it was a seven, or "sometimes acceptable." The differences here may be attributed to the fact that the majority of customers at strip clubs are male and the majority of strippers are female. As a result, women may feel that objectification is clearer in the form of strip clubs than it is within pornography. The act of stripping is rather one-sided, whereas pornography has the potential to be a mutual display of sexuality between both men and women. Also, women may find strip clubs to be less acceptable than pornography because it they are a more direct form of commercializing sex. It occurs in person and as a result requires a greater degree of desire to move from the computer to the person.

In regards to the acceptability of buying and selling sex, in both cases, men had a higher degree of acceptability. However, the mean answers were still well on the end of "not acceptable." Another interesting result is shown in the difference of answers between the opinions on buying sex versus selling sex. In the case of both men and women, selling sex was found to be more "acceptable," although it was still on the low end of the numeric scale.

For attitudes regarding the acceptability of selling sex, the mean answer among males increased about .7 percent from attitudes on buying sex, while the mean for females increased about .2 percent. This is also an interesting finding and may also be explained in terms of more sympathetic attitudes towards prostitutes and women selling sex. Selling sex may be viewed more as a necessity and last resort as compared with buying sex, which may be viewed as an autonomous decision made in the name of desire, rather than necessity.

The next level of data analysis was performed in order to separate results by age group. Regarding the prevalence of watching pornography, the highest rates were found among the “16-17” age group and the “18-22” age group. This may be explained in terms of sexual exploration. Both of these age groups are prime times to start exploring sexuality, in which pornography might play a role.

The question that addresses knowledge of someone that has been to a strip club is found to be in acceptance of the sixth and seventh hypotheses. The percentages steadily climbed along with the ages of respondents. This can be explained in terms of experience, knowledge, and exposure to the commercial sex industry. It also may be related to the higher degree of direct contact within strip clubs, as opposed to merely watching pornography on a screen. Perhaps an individual may be more inclined to take this next step of going to a strip club after having first experienced the less direct form of sexual encounters found within pornography. Therefore, an increase in age would likely present itself before the idea of going to a strip club has been proposed.

In response to the question of knowing someone who has purchased sex, the largest percentage existed among the 16-17 year old group. This seems to be an oddity within the data considering the age restrictions for engaging in the commercial sex industry. This would

limit this group's knowledge of people to only those older than themselves and none of their peers. This oddity could be explained by the small sample size of 16-17-year-olds or the particular group that participated. These results were also found to be statistically insignificant. However, among the respondents aged 16 and up, the knowledge was around the 26-33 percentile. This percentage was higher than expected and may help explain why the demand for human sex trafficking is so high. Since the subject of buying and selling sex is very taboo, the true amount of those engaged within the industry may be hard to estimate. Yet through this small survey, nearly one-third of respondents over the age of 16 knew someone who had purchased or solicited sex as a commodity from another person. Therefore, this practice can be assumed to be quite common.

In measuring opinions regarding the acceptability of watching pornography, the mean answer among respondents aged 14-15 was well on the end of "not acceptable." However, for each of the other age groups, acceptance hovered above the mid-line. Here, sexual maturity and exposure may play a factor in promoting acceptance of pornography. More exposure to the commercial sex industry within the media and other outlets may promote acceptance and normalcy of such acts and manifest itself as age increases. The results were also similar for the opinions regarding strip clubs.

Again, the acceptability of buying and selling sex was very low among the age group of 14-15, and hovered between 2 and 3 for other age groups. Yet once again, the acceptability of selling sex increased in the case of each age group (except "14-15," which remained the same) by a few fractions of a point. Again we can look to the explanation of sympathizing with women in order to understand these increases.

In general, the results of the data analysis confirmed several hypotheses while refuting others. One major surprise was the uniform increase from “acceptability of buying sex” to “acceptability of selling sex.” The hypothesis predicted the opposite attitude based on an idea that since prostitutes are viewed and treated as criminals, they would be disapproved of more so than customers. Another important result from these surveys shows the high prevalence of the commercial sex industry within the lives of the young adult population. Many young people, even down to the age of 14, are being exposed to the realities of pornography, strip clubs, and soliciting sex. This can have a major effect in normalizing the commercial sex industry and further promoting the objectification of women within it. Furthermore, as the commercial sex industry becomes more normal, the demand may increase, thus increasing the demand for sex slaves and victims of human trafficking.

While the hypotheses regarding differences between men and women were confirmed, the results among different age groups showed some variations from the expected answers. Usually, these variations were manifested in terms of younger people knowing more than expected. It is therefore, safe to assume that young people do know about the commercial sex industry. While their knowledge may be less accurate and acceptance may be lower, they are still exposed to the industry in a very real way and will only be exposed more as they age.

Implications for Social Work

The implications of this research are important in several different ways that include an understanding of the subject and points for future action. In an attempt to understand the demand for human sex trafficking, the first point to be understood is the market for sex

trafficking. The purpose of the market is to commodify sex in order to make money. The commodification can take the form of pornography, strip clubs, and the buying and selling of individuals for the purpose of sexual pleasure. As a result of this research, the high pervasiveness of certain aspects of the industry can now be inferred. It has been shown that the commodification of sex is not an event that occurs infrequently.

In a further attempt to understand the demand for human sex trafficking, this research presents important findings on people's attitudes regarding the commercial sex industry. Although most individuals tended to accept pornography and strip clubs, very few accepted the buying and selling of sex. This leads to the question of differences between these aspects of the market. Perhaps it is people's direct involvement in the act of commodification. The less direct it is, the more acceptable. However, many people may not realize that buying or watching pornography directly creates a demand for the buying and selling of individuals for the purpose of sex. After all, videos are made using real people. The same can be said for strip clubs.

For the social work profession, this research is an important step to understanding the root causes of human trafficking and sexual slavery. As a profession, social workers are concerned with the violation of human rights and dignity that is taking place as a result of human trafficking. They also know that the best way to deal with problems is to address the root cause and not merely the effects. Social workers can look at this research and gain some knowledge about the prevalence of the commercial sex industry and the generally accepting and tolerant attitudes towards it.

In response, social workers can educate individuals about the ties between human sex trafficking and aspects of the commercial sex industry. Without the demand for sex in the

form of pornography, strip clubs, and direct “services,” women and children all over the world would not be in danger of being bought and sold against their wills. Education is also necessary in regards to the harmful repercussions of the commercial sex industry as a whole. It plays a silent, but extremely influential role in our society by presenting themes of objectifying women, violence, male supremacy, rape and torture.

It is also important for social workers to have a direct impact on the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking. For victims who have made it out of a trafficking situation, social workers have the tools and skills to provide support and re-integrative services. For perpetrators that social workers have contact with, direct services can help address and eliminate the behavior that is contributing to the exploitation of victims.

Social workers can also take action on a macro level by calling for better legislation in all states that does not further punish women in the commercial sex industry by sending them to jail. This research has consistently shown that respondents favor women selling sex to those that purchase services from them. It is time for our laws to reflect these opinions. Legislation should punish the traffickers, pimps, and johns in order to ensure that justice is distributed accordingly. Professionals must work together to create a just environment in which it is not acceptable to buy and sell humans as objects.

Creating a more understanding environment and a more effective judicial system are very important ways to address the root causes of human trafficking and help redefine our cultural attitudes. A variety of techniques used by social workers can have a significant impact in doing these things, such as educating individuals and groups, lobbying, lawmaking, testifying, and providing direct services to victims and perpetrators. This research also makes way for further research on the topic. In order to continue the quest for understanding, a more

comprehensive study should be done that will broaden the generalizability and thus, the understanding. After all, human trafficking is not an isolated issue. It encompasses many separate issues including public health, mental health, violence, poverty, exploitation, and women's issues.

Limitations

The implications of this research are, however, limited in their scope. As with most research, there are limits placed on generalizing the results of this survey to a larger scope of individuals. The respondents in this research pose restrictions to generalizability in relation to their age, education and demographics.

Most respondents were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two. Those older than twenty-two were mostly only a few years older than that. As a result, this population may not be reflective of the opinions of an older sample. A younger sample would most likely be irrelevant in this study because of the nature of the subject matter and the age restrictions placed on the commercial sex industry.

The respondents of this survey were educated mostly from the high school level to the undergraduate level. This may present a challenge in generalizing this sample to those individuals who have an education below or above these criteria. Also, these respondents were mostly still in school and their opinions may not reflect those individuals who have been out of school for a long period of time, or have only known the work force.

Lastly, the respondents of this survey represent a very limited demographic. Most individuals that took part in the survey were from the Rhode Island or New England area. As

a result, their general beliefs may reflect the more progressive leaning population that lives within this area. Individuals from other parts of the country may have very different attitudes.

However, even with these limitations, the data presented in this study have very important implications. The sample can at least be used to better understand the population it represents and it can also provide a starting point for further research. It presents an understanding, no matter how small, to the strength, prevalence, and influence of the commercial sex industry.

Conclusion

This research has attempted to provide a small explanation to the ever-growing demand for the commercial sex industry. With the findings of this research, it has become a little more understandable why human trafficking is the second largest criminal industry in the world (behind drug trafficking). Social work, as a profession, has the tools and skills to make a viable impact on the lives of victims and the behaviors of perpetrators. By looking at the root cause of trafficking, located within the demand for sexual services, it is easy to see that modern-day culture fully supports and provides the foundation for this type of slavery to occur. It is time to challenge the blind acceptance of the commercial sex industry on the part of the general public and look at the themes it conveys and the conditions it creates for women and children worldwide.

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