

MOST USED SETTINGS, TIME OF THE DAY, LENGTH OF DURATION OF SEXUAL ACTS AMONG SEX WORKERS AND COMMERCIAL SEX HOTSPOTS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS, GHANA

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Abstract

Commercial sex work is a global phenomenon and in Ghana it exists in a number of localities. However, research on its varied facets is scanty. This study set out to examine the nature of commercial sex work, particularly the settings (venues), preferred time of the day, length of duration of the sexual act and commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. Using a nested concurrent mixed method design, a sample of 364 participants (356 commercial sex workers and 8 key persons) were reached for the study. A questionnaire, and an interview guide were used to collect data for the study. Frequencies, percentages, and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. The study found that the most preferred time of the day for sexual engagement was night time and the most preferred length of duration for sexual acts was the short – time – service. Guest houses was the most preferred setting for attending to clients. The study concluded that a number of popular and active commercial sex hotspots exist in the Cape Coast Metropolis though the practice is known to be illegal. The study recommends that the researchers should liaise with the key stakeholder institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis, particularly the Ministry of Education and the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly to intensify sensitization drives geared toward discouraging the patronage of the hotspots to render them less appealing. They should also ensure that the law-enforcement agencies are adequately resourced and empowered to effectively carry out the needed enforcement activities to discourage the creation, functioning and patronage of the commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Keywords: commercial sex work, time, sexual acts, settings, length of duration, hotspots.

Introduction

Commercial sex has existed and characterized human society for generations. In the olden days such sexual conduct and practice was considered serious affront to human dignity and social order, however, the practice has assumed a different dimension in modern times. It is quite unfathomable why in spite of the many and varied long lasting consequences on the commercial sex workers, their patrons, and society in general, some females would still engage in the practice. It is of much interest to investigate among other things whether there are commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis, the most preferred setting for sexual engagements, and the most preferred length of duration for sexual acts.

Statement of the problem

Commercial sex is considered a deviation from socially and culturally established norms (Ezeh, Ugwu, & Ngwu, 2019). The practice persists in different forms and magnitudes across the globe (Dewey, Crowhurst & Izugbara, 2019; Sanders, O'Neill, & Pitcher, 2009). In Africa, just like the other continents of the world, the practice is illegal and frowned upon (Dewey et al., 2019; Ansah, 2006). Additionally, it is largely considered an affront in most traditional societies. Acquah, as cited in Akyeampong (1997) "has indicated that commercial sex constitutes an infraction of custom and is still severally frowned upon in the rural areas, even though in the large towns it is generally accepted as one of the ways women have for earning a living" (p.163). Persons involved in commercial sex work were and are still stigmatized and discriminated against by society due to the stigma associated with the practice (Balfour & Allen, 2014; Aveling, Cornish & Oldmeadow, 2013; Kamise, 2013). In spite of the grave psychosocial consequences associated with the practice, it has assumed more sophisticated dimensions due to modernity and globalization (Gordon-Brooks, 2006).

The Internet and the proliferation of fast emerging modern and sophisticated mobile technologies have made it increasingly less

cumbersome for individuals to network and execute their commercial sex activities (Campbell, Aydin, Cunningham, Hamer, Hill, Melissa et al., 2019). They advertise, merchandise, and practice commercial sex both electronically and physically (Ezeh et al., 2019, Sanders et al., 2009). In sum commercial sex work is not restricted to the Western world such as Europe, Asia, and the Americas which may be considered more permissive; it is found in many other places globally.

The commercial sex enterprise is also prevalent in conservative African nations too (Dewey et al., 2019). For instance, in Nigeria women in the Cross-River basin were considered to be the earliest cross-border sex workers (Adesina, 2019). According to Akyeampong (1997), instances of commercial sex work and sexual exploitation, particularly of young people, are common everyday occurrences in most African communities, including Ghana. Adesina (2019), among other things opines that the period 1935-1945 witnessed the exodus of several Nigerian women in the Cross-River basin moving to the Gold Coast (Ghana) and working close to the mines as sex workers. Furthermore, greater majority of the Nigerian sex workers who migrated to Ghana settled in Accra and other locations such as Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Tamale.

In Ghana, the practice is no longer only associated with popular communities such as 'commercial cities' like Sekondi-Takoradi, Tema, Kumasi and Accra, but has become a major socio-cultural challenge facing the country at large (MyJoyonline.com, 2013. Mynews.gh, 2017 & Gbagbo & Gbagbo, 2021). Within the borders of Ghana, commercial sex work transpires in almost every city, district, municipality and/or metropolis. However, the practice is more prevalent in densely populated regions such as the Greater Accra and the Ashanti Regions. A metropolitan community like the Cape Coast Metropolis also grapples with the practice.

Increasing media reports and news of arrests, deportations, and imprisonment of commercial sex workers by the law enforcement agencies clearly paint a worrisome situation that call for scientific investigation (MyJoyonline.com, 2013, Gbagbo & Gbagbo, 2021, & Antwi, Ross, & Markham, 2025). Though commercial sex work is a known illegal pursuit in Ghana (Mensah-Bonsu, 2008) just like other nations of the world (Dewey et al, 2019), it continues to be practiced and patronized in some known localities across the length and breadth of Ghana. From the aforementioned, it is evident that commercial sex

work in Ghana continues to be widespread and seems to be gaining deeper roots in the Ghanaian society.

Interestingly, Cape Coast, the Central Regional Capital, one of Ghana's tourism hubs and the citadel of Western formal education in Ghana has, in the recent past, become associated with the phenomenon of sex work (Myjoyonline.com, 2013 & Mynews.gh, 2017). There are increasing reported cases of the activities of sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis despite its rich and enviable historical, cultural, and socioeconomic heritage. Also disturbing is that sections of the reports indicate that there is a steady increase in the number of young people aged not more than 19 years involved in commercial sex work in the Cape Coast Metropolis (MyJoyonline.com, 2013) and that 'child prostitutes' offer free sex in the Metropolis (Mynews.gh, 2017). Such a situation leaves much to be desired, since it may cast a slur on the image of such a highly reputed Metropolis.

The aforementioned reports, however, do not provide a comprehensive view of commercial sex work in this highly esteemed hub of education in Ghana. The phenomenon, thus, has not been well-documented to the best of the researchers' knowledge. This provides a significant gap in literature that needs urgent attention. Therefore, the study examined the nature of commercial sex work in the Cape Coast Metropolis vis-à-vis the most common settings, time of the day, length of duration of the sexual acts and common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The work of Oduro, Otoo, and Amoako-Asiama (2019) is both revealing and instructive in that the author's main focus was on commercial sex workers below age 18 (minors) and the challenges that researchers encounter when investigating such commercial sex workers. These notwithstanding, Oduro et al. (2019) did not investigate the nature of the practice, particularly the preferred venues, time of the day, length of duration for the sexual acts and the most common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Literature Review

Modern global trends on commercial sex work

Commercial sex work persists in different forms and magnitude across the globe due to certain conditions such modern day perception and attitudes to sex and digitalisation (Campbell et al., 2019; Sanders et al., 2009). Commercial sex work carries certain severe health hazards and socio-cultural consequences that may negatively impact an

individual's life (Balfour & Allen, 2014; Aveling, Cornish, & Oldmeadow, 2013; Kamise, 2013). The internet and perforation of new mobile technology and social media platforms have made it increasingly less cumbersome for individuals to network and participate in commercial sex activities both physically and electronically (Ezeh et al., 2019).

Today, the internet has become a common platform for the marketing and selling of sexual services to clients and patrons (Rand, 2019). Internet-based commercial sex activities has become more popular and attractive in the sex industry. Internet based commercial sex is done either directly through in-person services or online indirect services (Campbell et al., 2019; Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi & Bobrova, 2016). Modern day attitudes towards the essence of sex and what constitute appropriate heterosexual behaviour and conduct to some extent have been shaped by the prevailing rapidly changing social, technological, and cultural contexts (Nasir, Zamani, Ismail, Yusoff, Khairaddin, & Mohamad, 2010, Hayes, 2002).

Commonly used settings (venues) for commercial sex acts

Commercial sex acts usually take place in different settings such as street corners, strip clubs, rented apartments, brothel, escort agencies, guest houses, modelling agency, massage parlours, and resorts (Greenberg, Bruess, & Oswalt, 2014; Malarek, 2011). Typically, brothel which is also referred to as prostitutes' house is among the common venues where commercial sex workers ply their sex trade. Brothels are accommodation facility used for transacting sexual services for financial gains and material rewards (Brooks-Gordon, 2006). Brothels could be established legally or illegally either by individuals or organizations (Greenberg et al., 2014).

Brothels could be owned, operated, and managed by ordinary everyday businessmen and women. However, such responsibilities often come under the domain of pimps, brokers, "madams", or "panderers" who are collectively referred to as functionaries (Greenberg et al., 2014, Darko, 2010). Among the Igbo's of Southeastern Nigeria, brothel-based sex work is the most popular. Commercial sex workers in Igboland are popularly referred to as 'city sex workers' because they carry out their commercial sex engagements in city brothels (Ezeh et al., 2019).

Commercial sex workers who carry out their commercial sex acts in brothels undertake their sexual acts under properly structured

conditions and regulations. Simple reasons are that brothels have clearly set out arrangements, rules of engagement, code of conduct and standard operational procedures (Greenberg et al., 2014). Brothels greatly help sex workers to provide sexual services to their patrons at relatively cheaper prices than that of call girls and other commercial sex workers who attend to their clients in high class establishments (Brooks-Gordon, 2006). However, decisions on the choice of client to attend to, appointments, duration of sexual acts, and remuneration are mostly done by commercial sex functionaries such as pimps (Darko, 2010).

Additionally, most brothels operate a 24 – hour service and greater majority of their patronage occurs during the night hours for some obvious reasons. Firstly, that time of the day is more convenient to both the clients and the sex worker. The reasons are that they consider them as safe haven. Secondly, it offers assurance of the safety and protection of their lives and valuables. Additionally, it serves as a cover of darkness to conceal their involvement from the open public to protect their image. Commercial sex workers who operate from brothels usually attend to more clients because they mostly provide short-term services (30 – 45 minutes) duration at relatively profitable prices.

In recent times brothel-based sex work is dwindling probably due to the heightening societal stigma, growing discrimination and social exclusion attached to brothel-based sex work (Ezeh et al., 2019; Stoebenau et al., 2016). Again, modern day digitalization, particularly, mobile technological advancement has shifted commercial sex patronage to on-line services such as webcamming and phone sex (Campbell et al., 2019). Furthermore, other appealing settings such as adult filming, modelling, agency work, exotic dance, and street sex work have emerged in the sex industry (Campbell et al., 2019).

In places such as the counties of Nevada in the United States of America and Thailand, legal brothels can be found (Greenberg et al., 2014) but in Ghana there may not be even one legal brothel due to the nature of Ghanaian culture, customs, and traditions. These notwithstanding there are notable and openly operated brothels in Ghana, particularly those at Adum in Kumasi (Boateng, 2016) and *Atembuda*, *Chisco* close to Avenor and Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra (The Ghanaian Times, 2019, April). Within the confines of Ghana, particularly, the nation's capital, Accra, and in other Metropolitan cities such as Tema, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale,

and Cape Coast have settings for commercial sex acts and well-known commercial sex hotspots dotted in several areas. Localities such as the Kwame Nkrumah Circle, Atembuda in East Legon, St Johns in Achimota, Kejetia in Kumasi, European Town and the Zenith area in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ashaiman in Tema (Ghana Web, 2019, April), Kru Town and London Bridge in Cape Coast are notable vicinities. (MyJoyonline.com, 2013, Ansah, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the social identity theory by Tajfel (1981). The theory is a social psychological theory of intergroup relations and processes and holds social context as the main determinant of self-definition and behaviour (Ellemers & Haslam, 2011). A review of the social identity theory is crucial for the study since it provides a framework relevant for conceptualising the way of behaviour. The concepts of social identity, social comparison, self-categorisation, depersonalisation, and salient identity set out by the social are crucial to comprehending the dynamics of group membership and behaviour.

Also, the theory helps to explicate some of the conducts of the commercial sex workers such as group commitment and loyalty, compliance and attraction. The theory underscores the reality that members of subordinate group such as commercial sex workers experience negative social identity since they suffer a great deal of marginalisation, stigmatisation, and social exclusion meted out to them by their respective communities. Invariably, the sex workers themselves categorise and rank themselves low because of the negativities associated with the commercial sex venture.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the most used setting, time of the day, length of duration for sexual acts among commercial sex workers, and the common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Research Questions

Four research questions were set to guide the conduct of the study. They are:

- What is the most used setting for sexual acts among commercial sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis?
- What is the most preferred time of the day for commercial sex acts among commercial sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis?
- What is the most preferred length of duration for sexual engagements among commercial sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis?
- What are the common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis?

Delimitation

The study was delimited to the following: only female commercial sex workers aged between 16 and 38 years in the following identified commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis: Kwaprow, Apewosika, Abura, Pedu, Antem, London Bridge, Coronation Street, Kru Town, Anafo, Ntsin, Amanful, and Brofoyedur. The most preferred setting, time of the day, the length of duration for sexual acts among commercial sex workers and common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis was the main concern to the current researchers.

Limitations of the Study

The following were the limitations of the study:

1. Reaching out to the Commercial Sex Workers and engaging them for a scientific study was not without challenges since the practice is mostly carried out under the cover of darkness because it is illegal in Ghana. There was occasional disruption in data collection at a few of the hotspots due to where they are situated and time constraints on the part of some of the clients to fully complete the questionnaire. As a result, some of the questionnaire failed to pass the eligibility for inclusion criteria for data processing. Additionally, the non-cooperative attitude of some of the respondents, particularly, quitting the data collection process unceremoniously contributed to a shortfall in the sample size of 386.
2. The subjectivity of the respondents in responding to the questionnaire due to fear of full disclosure and social

desirability, as it may pertain in every scientific research, could not be completely ruled out neither were they underestimated.

Research Methods

This section presents the method used to undertake the study. It comprises the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Research design

The procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in this research study (Creswell & Clarke, 2017) was the mixed method design. Specifically, the nested concurrent design was used. The choice of the concurrent mixed methods design was based on a number of reasons. Firstly, it is adjudged to be particularly useful when investigating complex issues such as commercial sex work where different levels of analysis are needed (Creswell & Clarke, 2017). Secondly, it is suitable for getting rich and comprehensive data that capture both the “what and the why” of a phenomenon being studied, thereby resulting in a deeper understanding of the topic.

Furthermore, the nested concurrent design borders on it being time-efficient. As pointed out by Creswell and Clark (2017). Both types of data - quantitative and qualitative are collected concurrently, this design was able to help the researchers save time better than if a sequential mixed methods design had been used. For the current study, both the quantitative and the qualitative phases of the study were carried out at the same time but independent of each other. Also, both data were converged to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Additionally, more weight was given to the quantitative data than the qualitative (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Creswell, 2003). The rationale was to ensure the provision of a more accurate description and acceptable generalisation of the findings (Ogah, 2013).

Population

The population for the study comprised two different groups. They are commercial sex workers for the quantitative component and key stakeholder institutions such as the Oguua Traditional Council and

Metro Department of Social Welfare and Community Development for the qualitative component.

Population for the quantitative

The target population for the study comprised all female commercial sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis numbering over 1,950 as per the estimates of West Africa Programme to Combat AIDS & STI (WAPCAS), Ghana, Cape Coast office, 2019. However, the accessible population was 954 female Commercial Sex Workers obtained from the 2019 annual reports and statistical data of the West Africa Programme to Combat AIDS & STI (WAPCAS), Ghana.

Population for the qualitative

Additionally, 16 key stakeholder institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis were also included in the study. The table outlines their names/designations and their operational identity. Their operational identities are classified under the following: traditional authority, civil society organisation, religious group, professional association, social unit, and government institution.

Table 1: *Targeted key stakeholder institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis*

No	Name/Designation	Operational Identity
1.	Central regional House of Chiefs	Traditional authority
2.	Regional Peace Council	Religious
3.	Oguaa Traditional Council	Religious
4.	Coalition of media houses	Civil Society organisation
5.	National Teacher Associations (GNAT/NAGRAT)	Professional Association
6.	Local Council of Churches, Cape Coast	Religious
7.	Household/Family community of a sex worker	Social unit
8.	Central Regional Coordinating Council	Government institution
9.	Regional AIDS Commission	Government institution
10.	Regional Department of Gender	Government institution

11.	Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Service	Government institution
12.	Central Regional Development Commission	Government institution
13.	Ghana Police Service (Central Region DOVVSU)	Government institution
14.	Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly	Government institution
15.	Metro Department of Social Welfare & Community Development, Cape Coast	Government institution
16.	Metro Education Directorate, Girl Child Division	Government institution

Source: *field survey (2019)*

Sample and Sampling Procedure(s)

Sample dealt with the process used in obtaining a component of the target population to represent the entire population (Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah, 2015). Simply put, it is the members of a population selected to participate in a study (White, 2015; Ogah, 2013). The sample for the study was from two different groups. Namely, commercial sex workers and persons in key positions, heads of departments and coordinators, in key stakeholder institutions in the Metropolis.

Sampling of Research Participants

The sample size for the commercial sex workers was determined based on the estimates of Creswell (2012). Creswell stipulates a minimum sample size of 350 for a research survey (of which the current study is). However, the sample size for the commercial sex workers was increased by 36 to obtain 384 based on the assertion of Glenn (1992). Glenn asserts that it is necessary for sample sizes to be adjusted.

The reason for the increase (upward adjustment) of 36 for the current study was to cater for possible fallouts, especially social desirability and fear of full disclosure. The fallouts could possibly occur during the data collection stage on the parts of the participants. Additionally, it was also to cater for any attritions during data processing stages. The attrition could result from incomplete responses and wrongful completion of the questionnaire.

A multi-stage sampling technique comprising purposive sampling, simple random sampling, and convenience sampling was used in selecting the commercial sex workers. It had been determined from the onset that 50% of the 12 commercial sex work hotspots and 50% of the key stakeholder institutions would be the sources from which the participants would be drawn. Specifically, purposive sampling was used to select 50% of the 12 commercial sex work hotspots in the Metropolis.

Simple random sampling (lottery method) was used to select the resulting number (six) commercial sex work hotspots. These were (1) Kru Town, (2) Anafo, (3) Ntsin, (4) Abura, (5) Antem and (6) Coronation Street, from the 12 commercial sex work hotspot in the Metropolis. Convenience sampling was used to select commercial sex workers from the six selected hotspots. Convenience sampling was used at this stage because it helped to include whoever happened to be available at the particular points in time among the already existing groups under investigations (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). This was facilitated through the assistance of West Africa Program for Combating AIDS & STI (WAPCAS), Ghana personnel, who by the nature of their work have well-established official regular and routine interactions with the community of the commercial sex workers in the Metropolis.

Sampling of Key Stakeholder Institutions

As said earlier, purposive sampling method was used to select key stakeholder institutions. Fifty percent of the 16 key stakeholder institutions (ie, eight) were sampled in the Metropolis for the research. Furthermore, simple random sampling (lottery method) was used to select the resulting eight key stakeholder institutions. Table 2 below shows the selected key stakeholder institutions.

Table 2: *Names and functioning identity of the selected stakeholder institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis*

No	Name of selected institutions	Functioning identity
1.	Oguaa Traditional Council	Traditional authority
2.	Girl-Child Division, Metro Education Directorate	Government institution
3.	Metro Dept of Social Welfare & Community Development	Government institution
4.	Ghana AIDS Commission, C/Region Directorate	Government institution
5.	Department of Gender	Government institution
6.	Ghana Health Service	Government institution
7.	Ghana Police Service (DOVVSU)	Government institution
8.	Household/Family community of a commercial sex worker	Government institution

Source: *field survey 2019)*

Furthermore, it was purposive sampling that was used to select one person in a key position from each of the eight key stakeholder institutions. They had to be either heads of departments or coordinators of key stakeholder institutions. The principles of adequacy (DeVillis, 2017) and saturation (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Cobern & Adams, 2020) greatly informed the sampling of the participants for the qualitative component. In sum, the sample size used for the study was 364. It comprised 356 commercial sex workers and eight persons in key positions in the selected key stakeholder institutions in the Metropolis.

Data Collection Instruments

Two data collection instruments designed by the researchers were used for the study: a questionnaire titled “Nature and Practice of Commercial Sex Work Questionnaire” and an interview guide titled “Interview Guide on Nature and Practice of Commercial Sex Work”. Certain key considerations informed and guided the development and construction of the instruments. Notably among them are the objectives

of the study and observations from the pilot testing. Furthermore, reviewed literature and the eight guidelines for scale construction outlined by DeVillis (2017) played a vital role. Both data collection instruments were administered directly to the participants on one-on-one basis.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire had two sections: A and B and a total of 9 items. Section A - demographic characteristics of respondents (5 items) and Section B – settings (location), preferred time of the day and length of duration for commercial sex acts (4 items). There was one question each for settings and length of duration while preferred time of the day had two questions, one on the side of the sex worker and the other, the clients attended to. Each of the four items had stated responses from which the participants selected their responses. Responses were selected by ticking in the appropriate box. The questionnaire was administered directly to the participants with the help of trained field research assistants. The research assistants were carefully trained by the researchers.

Table 3: Setting, time of the day and length of duration for commercial sexual acts

Question (s)	Setting (Venue)
Where do you attend to your clients?	Street corners [] Rented houses[] Hotels [] Guest houses [] Ghettos [] Brothels [] Escort agencies[] Clubs/bars []
Time of day you prefer your sexual acts?	Day-time [] Night-time []
Time of the day your clients prefer sexual acts?	Day-time [] Night-time []

Your most preferred duration for servicing clients?	Short-time services [] Long-time services []
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Source: *field survey (2019)*

The Interview Guide

Unlike the questionnaire, the interview guide was administered to only the selected persons in key positions in the key stakeholder institutions in the Metropolis. The interview guide had a brief introduction and a section on respondent's demographics as well as a section on questions that were asked. There were four main questions, however, follow up and/or subsidiary questions were asked as and when necessary to either elucidate some of the participant's responses or provide more clarity on some of their responses. The interview was conducted by the researchers on a face-to-face basis using a tape recorder. The recorded interviews were carefully transcribed and typed. Hard copy versions were given directly to the respondents to confirm or otherwise. Furthermore, the data was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was pilot-tested in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis in the Western Region of Ghana. Reasons for their choice include the fact that the two Metropolis are identical in many respects. For instance, both are coastal metropolis with well-patronized landing beaches and fishing harbours. Also, both cities are Regional Capitals, Metropolitan administrative headquarters, and political heads (assemblies) and have had extensive contacts with early European merchants in the then Gold Coast. Additionally, both Metropolis have a history of commercial sex work and activities dating back to the colonial era. They also host active and popular commercial sex hotspots.

Thirty (30) Commercial Sex Workers participated in the pilot study on two different occasions with an interval period of two weeks. The same participants were used in both instances for pilot testing the questionnaire. The feedback from the pilot study greatly assisted in effecting changes and making corrections in the instrument.

Ambiguities identified and poorly worded items that were not clearly understood, together with irrelevant items that readily became exposed during the pilot study were carefully and appropriately dealt with. The pilot study provided useful information about deficiencies and elicited appropriate suggestions for improvement and modifications which ensured the content validity of the instrument. It also afforded first-hand experience and direction which greatly facilitated the smooth running and success of the main study (Creswell, 2012; Frankel & Wallen, 1993).

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments was determined by five experienced professionals and 3 experts in the field of instrument development who thoroughly scrutinized and vetted them. The content validity of the instrument was determined by a team of three experts in the University of Cape Coast. The expert views and opinions of these were sought because the validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment (DeVon, Block, Moyle-Wright, Ernest, Hayden, Lazzara et al., 2007). McDonald's omega or coefficient omega and the test-retest methods (DeVellis, 2017) helped in determining the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The test – retest method was used in determining the reliability of the section B of the questionnaire. The same questionnaire was administered to the same respondents on two different occasions and the correlation between the two scores for each of the items were estimated (DeVellis, 2017; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009; Pallant, 2004). The reliability coefficients for the items on section B of the questionnaire ranged from .78 to .85 thus, suggesting a good level of reliability (Pallant, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was formally sought and obtained and the needed measures were put in place to ensure the maximum protection of the anonymity of both the participants and their responses. Informed consent was also duly sought and obtained. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast. Respondents for both the quantitative and qualitative components were duly informed about the purposes of the study. The participants were adequately briefed about the goals and

benefits of the study. Finally, all the participants were well assured of anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

Data processing and analysis

The study examined the most used setting, preferred time of the day, length of duration for the sexual acts and the most common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The research question had both quantitative (4 items) and qualitative (1 item) components. Hence, they were processed and analysed using both quantitative and qualitative analytical procedure. The quantitative data were processed with the assistance of the SPSS software version 25.0. The same SPSS was also used in carrying out the descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages, were used in the analysis of data and discussions thereof. In each case decisions and conclusions were based on simple majority of responses. In addition to the quantitative analysis, data collected from the persons in key positions in the key stakeholder institutions via interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated during the data analysis stage.

Results

Setting, Time of the day, the duration for commercial sex acts

Table 4: Setting, time of the day and length of duration for commercial sex acts

Question	Setting (Venue)	Freq.	%	Rank
Where do you attend to your clients?	Street corners	8	2.2	4 th
	Rented houses	31	8.7	3 rd
	Hotels	90	25.3	2 nd
	Guest houses	219	61.5	1 st
	Ghettos	4	1.1	5 th
	Brothels	1	0.3	7 th
	Escort agencies	1	0.3	7 th
	Clubs/drinking bars	2	0.6	6 th
	Total	356	100.0	

Time of day you prefer your sexual activity?	Day-time	22	6.2	2 nd
	Night-time	334	93.8	1 st
	Total	356	100.0	
Time of the day your clients prefer for sexual activity?	Day-time	27	7.6	2 nd
	Night-time	329	92.4	1 st
	Total	356	100.0	
Your most preferred duration for servicing clients?	Short-time services	270	75.9	1 st
	Long-time services	86	24.1	2 nd
	Total	356	100.0	

Source: field survey (2019)

From Table 4, information on the setting, time of the day, and length of duration for the commercial sex consummation are presented. As shown in Table 4, the majority ($n = 219$ or 61.5%) of the respondents indicated they mostly attend to their clients in guest houses. Quite a significant number of the respondents totalling ($n = 334$, 93.8%) reported commercial sex activities mostly take place during night-time. Similarly, ($n = 329$, 92.4%) of the respondents reported that their clients mostly prefer to have sexual activities during night-time. Commercial sex activities were predominantly short-time services, as reported by the majority of respondents ($n = 270$, 75.9%).

In addition to the information provided by the commercial sex workers, responses were taken from key informants with respect to the most common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Participants' responses indicated that there are indeed popular commercial sex hotspots within the Cape Coast Metropolis. The data showed that Anafo, Coronation Street, Ntsin, Brofuyedur, Kwaprow, Abura, London Bridge and Kru Town are among the most common commercial sex hotspots within the Metropolis.

Distribution of Key Informants with respect to Gender and Place of Work/Institution

The eight respondents or key informants that were interviewed for the study were persons who possessed knowledge of commercial sex work within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Table 2 presents the distribution of Key Informants by gender and place of work.

Table 5: Distribution of key informants with respect to gender and institution of work

Description	Group	Freq.	%
Sex	Male	5	62.5
	Female	3	37.5
	<i>Total</i>	8	100.0
Place of work/Institution	Government	5	62.5
	Institution		
	Traditional	1	12.5
	Authority		
	NGO	1	12.5
	Guardian/relative	1	12.5
	<i>Total</i>	8	100.0

Source: *field survey (2019)*

From Table 5, the participants comprised five males and three females. Out of the eight participants, five were selected from government institutions and the remaining three were selected from a traditional authority, a non-governmental organisation, and a guardian/relative of a commercial sex worker.

Results of the qualitative component:

Commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis

The participants revealed that some communities within the Cape Coast Metropolis are noted as commercial sex hotspots. In other words, the sale and purchase of sexual services are available within these identified communities. The following are some of the extracts from the responses of the participants to that effect.

Yes, from the little I know, there are certain areas that are prone to commercial sex work and activities. From my work experiences I have come to realise that places like along the beach, Anafo, Brofuyedur area, I also know that around the

Baakano area that is also prone to such sex works. Then I also have heard about Apewosika/Amamoma area, Kwaprow, these areas behind the UCC as part of the areas that this kind of trade goes on. (GRDO)

Yes, the NGO (WAPCAS) that normally deals with the commercial sex workers for us, have places they call hotspots, these are places where commercial sex work and activities take place in the Metropolis. . . . Ntsin, Anafo, OLA, Kwaprow, Coronation and Gyeagyeno are some of the places in Cape Coast where WAPCAS operates. (GACOH)

We work in about Nine (9) places in Cape Coast, so since we work in these places, it might be dominant in these places. We have Kru Town, Coronation, Abura, London Bridge, Ntsin, Aboom Wells, Melcom, Brofoyedur, and Top Yard. These are places where sex work is really predominant in the Cape Coast Metropolis. (WCCM)

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the setting, preferred time of the day, length of duration for sexual acts and most common commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The results of the study showed that sex workers mostly preferred to attend to their clients in recognizable hospitality facilities such as guest houses and hotels (86.8%: comprising guest houses, 61.5% and hotels, 25.3%). Reasons on the side of the sex workers may be to ensure their maximum security and protection necessary to safeguard themselves against abuses, defrauding, trafficking, and sexual enslavement that usually characterise sex work. This finding closely aligns with the publications of Greenberg et al. (2014) and Malarek, (2011). They both identify guest houses and rented apartments as some of the venues where commercial sexual acts are carried out. Nonetheless, their publications did not classify guest house as the most preferred setting for commercial sexual acts as is the case of the current study.

Additionally, this finding is at variance with Ezeh et al. (2019) and Brooks-Gordon (2006) who reported that brothel sex work(ers) are the most predominant among the Igbo's of Southeastern Nigeria. Their findings clearly point out that brothel sex work in that region is the most popular. Brooks-Gordon on his part acknowledges the prominence and

popularity of brothel in sex work. He intimates that brothel to a large extent helps sex workers to offer sexual services to their clients at relatively cheaper prices than call girls. The finding of Campbell et al., (2019) based on a study which sought to explore technology-mediated sex work: fluidity, networking and regulation in the United Kingdom, revealed that with the advent of mobile technology commercial sex workers have shifted to the use of on-line services such as webcamming, phone sex, and other attractive settings – exotic dance, agency work, and street work. This finding contradicts the finding of this current study which found that the majority of sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis use guest house and hotels for their commercial sex engagements.

Regarding the most preferred time of the day for sexual acts, the study found that from the point of view of the respondents, both they and their clients, predominantly preferred night time engagements to day time, 93.8% and 92.4%, respectively. This may be an attempt on the part of both parties to conceal their involvement in the commercial sex trade from the attention of the general public. Such a choice helps them greatly to deal with the fear of stigmatization, marginalization and social exclusion as well as danger of arrest, prosecution, and consequently fines and custodial sentences that are usually meted out to such offenders.

It also came to light that the most preferred length of duration for sexual acts was the short - time - services (30 - 45 minutes). About 76% of the respondents indicated that their most preferred length of duration for sexual acts with their clients was the short - time service. It is plausible that the short - time - services are safer for them, less stressful and less demanding. Under such a situation it is unlikely for any strong emotional attachments to be established between the two parties. Again, the short - time services may have a high rate of turnover, resulting in accruing more financial and/or material rewards.

Conclusion

The study revealed that most of the commercial sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis attend to their clients in guest houses and hotels and their sexual acts and activities mostly occur during night - time. The length of duration for sexual engagements was mostly the short-time-services. Additionally, although commercial sex work is illegal and prohibited by the laws of Ghana, there are common

commercial sex “hotspots” found in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The existence and activities of these common hotspots are very well known by the general public. It was evident from the study that most of the communities within which commercial sex work hotspots are coastal towns and predominantly fishing communities. Also, the commercial sex hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis are not only popular but vibrant and well patronized.

Recommendations

The researchers should liaise with the key stakeholder institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis, especially the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development together with the Oguaa traditional council to undertake awareness campaigns within the common commercial sex hotspots in the Metropolis aimed at facilitating effective disbandment of such commercial sex hotspots.

Additionally, the Ministries of Education and Local Government together with the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly, should not only intensify sensitization drives geared toward discouraging the patronage of the hotspots to render them less appealing. They must ensure that the law-enforcement agencies are adequately resourced and empowered to effectively undertake all the needed enforcement activities to discourage the creation, functioning and patronage of these hotspots in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

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