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Effects of Commercial Sex Work on Marital Breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State: Counselling Implications and Interventions

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of commercial sex work on marital breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State: counselling implications and interventions. The objective of the study was to the ascertain the prevalence of commercial sex workers, identify factors that contribute to the prevalence of commercial sex workers and determine the effect of commercial sex workers (CWS) on marital breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State and its implications for counselling. The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey research design 400 respondents was selected through the use of multistage sampling technique. Data for the study was collected through the use of structured questionnaire and oral interview. Respondents responses was analyzed through the use of mean while Chi-square inferential statistics was used to test hypotheses for the study. Additionally, interview replies were analyzed using content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that there is

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prevalence of commercial sex work activities in Wukari Metropolis. Further findings from the study revealed that poverty is the most significant factor contributing to the prevalence of commercial sex workers. The study recommends that counselling programs should integrate marital counseling and should be made more accessible to individuals and couples affected by commercial sex work.

Keywords: Commercial, Sex, Work, Marital, Breakdown, Counselling

INTRODUCTION

Marriage holds profound importance in societal, emotional, and personal realms, serving as a cornerstone for stability and continuity in communities worldwide. Beyond its role in legal and social frameworks, marriage provides individuals with emotional support, companionship, and a sense of belonging, fostering mental well-being and resilience through life's challenge. However, despite the importance of marriage in the society; Oniye, Odebode and Okesina (2018) observes that incidence of marital breakdown is on the rise globally. Reports by Statista (2023) revealed that there has been an increase in cases of marital break down in Europe, with Portugal having the highest cases of marital breakdown which stands at 91% and closely followed is Spain which stands at 86%. Consequently, in Asia, reports by The World Population Review (2024), revealed that China has experienced a significant rise in divorces, with approximately 1.893 million recorded in 2009, signaling a shift in societal norms and economic pressures. More so, in Africa, Nigeria which is the giant of Africa has witnessed increase in marital break down with over 2.9% ending in divorce as at 2023 (World Population Review, 2024). Interestingly, studies by Jando and Amase (2021) also observ an increase in cases of marital breakdown in most Nigerian homes. This rising trend of marital breakdown across different regions underscores its far-reaching consequences.

In respect to the above, Muhammad, Bara, and Sani (2019), notes that couples who experience marital breakdown frequently deal with anxiety, anger, sadness, exhaustion, guilt, low self-esteem, worry, frustration/disappointment, loneliness, and mistrust. Consequently, Olayinka et al. (2018), maintains that couples with marital breakdown may experience sadness, anxiety and depression is the cause of marriage breakup. The scholar

further posits that divorced couple may also suffer social stigma and low self-esteem. Numerous academics have identified various elements as the cause of marriage dissolution. Mensah. (2020) blames it on domestic abuse, Nelson (2020) blames it on a lack of funds, and Iroye (2021) suggests that psychological and psychosomatic factors play a role in marriage dissolution. Few researchers, nonetheless, have been able to determine whether commercial sex employment causes marital dissolution. The practice of commercial sex labor is said to have existed since the dawn of human civilization and is frequently considered to be among the oldest occupations in the world. Its actives are practiced by both developed and emerging countries (Jando & Amase, 2021). In Africa, several types of prostitution coexisted alongside slavery and colonization. Essien, Vite and Harry (2022) made a similar claim when they revealed that among the Akan people of Ghana, there were "abrakree" (public women) who performed unpaid sexual favors for bachelors, and that the Hausa in Northern Nigeria engaged in a similar practice known as "karuwanci" (divorcees), to name a couple.

In Nigeria, while commercial sex is still being considered illegal, its activities remains widespread, particularly in urban areas where poverty and unemployment drive many women and girls into the trade. Today, the industry operates both openly and clandestinely, with some sex workers operating independently while others are controlled by pimps or traffickers. social problems as marital instability, sexual harassment, divorce, overcrowding, environmental pollution, alcoholism, fighting, drug addiction environment, violence crime and delinquency, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis. In Wukari Metropolis, which forms the basis for this study. Preliminary observation shows that the presence and increase in activities of commercial sex workers may likely influenced most family structure. This influence may likely contribute to rising divorce, marital discord and domestic violence in many homes. Therefore, there is a need to understand the extent to which the presence of commercial sex work affects marital relationships, family stability, and overall social well-being in the community.

The increase in activities of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis has been a major concern to many people. Increase in these activities without any correctional measure put in place might make many young under aged girls to be disintegrated from their family which might cause weakened family bonds and emotional detachment. In addition, the activities of commercial sex workers may contribute to financial strain, as one

or both partners may divert significant financial resources towards engaging with commercial sex workers. As a result, funds that should be allocated for the well-being and growth of the family are instead spent on these activities, further exacerbating financial instability within the household. More so, despite the global recognition on the consequences of marital breakdown, little attention has been given to the effect of commercial sex work on marital breakdown in Wukari Metropolis.

Objectives

i. To ascertain the prevalence of commercial sex workers (CSW) in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State.

ii. To identify factors that contribute to the prevalence of commercial sex workers (CSW) in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State.

iii. To determine the effect of commercial sex workers (CWS) on Marital Breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State and its implications for counselling

Literature Review

Concept of Commercial Sex

The concept of commercial sex has been defined by several scholars. However, despite the plethora in literature, there is no universally accepted definition on the concept of commercial sex. According to Tyoanande and Samson (2014) commercial sex trading is the habit of offering oneself for hire to engage in sexual action for money. While the definition given by Tyoanande and Samson (2014) is straightforward, it is somewhat narrow as it focuses solely on the transactional nature of sex work without addressing the underlying factors that may drive individuals into this trade. Consequently, Omoniyi (2018) defines commercial sex work as an occupation in which an individual sells sex in a promiscuous and emotionally indifferent manner. The definition given by Omoniyi (2018) captures the transactional nature of sex work and overlooks the complexity of the circumstances surrounding individuals who engage in this occupation. Also, the terms "promiscuous" and "emotionally indifferent" carry negative connotations that may not fully reflect the diverse experiences of sex workers. In collaboration, Franca and Amase (2021) defines commercial sex as the practice of exchanging sex for financial favour. This practice ranges from street-level prostitution and brothels to high-end escort services and online

platforms. The scholar further avers that the legality and social acceptance of sex trading differs across regions and cultures; some places regulate and legalize it, while others criminalize or restrict it individuals who may engage in sex trading due to economic necessity, lack of other opportunities, or personal choice, exploitation and marginalization.

The definition given by Franca and Amase (2021) is encompassing as it accurately covers the diverse forms of sex work, from street-level prostitution and brothels to more upscale escort services and online platforms. More so, the scholar was able to recognize that the legality and social acceptance of sex work varies across regions and cultures. Additionally, the mention of factors like economic necessity, lack of opportunities, and personal choice helps capture the various reasons individuals may engage in sex work, while the acknowledgment of exploitation and marginalization adds an important layer of understanding to the broader context of commercial sex. This study will define commercial sex as the exchange of sexual services for money or other financial compensation. It encompasses various forms, including street-level prostitution, brothels, escort services, and online platforms. The practice is influenced by a range of factors, such as economic necessity, lack of opportunities, personal choice, and sometimes exploitation. The legality and social acceptance of commercial sex vary across regions and cultures, with some places regulating or legalizing it, while others criminalize or restrict it.

Marital Breakdown

Just like the concept of commercial sex, the term marital break down has been defined by several scholars. According to Ubong (2018) marital breakdown is the division or fragmentation of familial relationships and structures that traditionally provide emotional, social, and economic support within a household. It occurs when factors such as economic stress, interpersonal conflicts, societal pressures, or external events disrupt the cohesion, stability, and functioning of a family unit. The definition given by Ubong (2018) provides a comprehensive understanding of marital break down. The definition effectively captures the essence of how marital occurs when various factors, such as economic stress, interpersonal conflicts, societal pressures, or external events, undermine the cohesion and stability of a family. Consequently, Edet (2014) defines marriage marital break down as any form of separation between a man and his wife according to established custom. However, Edet's (2014) definition of marital breakdown as any form of separation between a man and his wife according to established custom is quite narrow. While it highlights separation,

it does not fully encompass the broader spectrum of marital breakdowns, which may include emotional or psychological disintegration, financial strain, or infidelity, among other factors. The definition also emphasizes "established custom," which may limit its applicability across different cultures or legal frameworks where the concept of marital breakdown can vary. This study defines marital breakdown as the disintegration or collapse of the relationship between spouses, leading to the cessation of emotional, social, or legal cohesion in the marriage. It can be caused by various factors, such as interpersonal conflicts, infidelity, financial stress, lack of communication, abuse, or societal pressures. Marital breakdown may result in separation or divorce, and it can also involve a deterioration in the emotional bond, trust, and support that traditionally define a marital relationship.

Effect of Commercial Sex Work

On the effect of commercial sex work, Christopher, Terver and Anam (2023) posited that many families are vehemently against prostitution because they view it as a form of exploitation of women and male dominance over women, and a practice which is the result of the patriarchal societal order. They argued that prostitution has a negative effect both on the prostitutes as it reinforces stereotypical views about women who are seen as sex objects which can be used and abused by men.

Health-wise, the occupational risks associated with commercial sex work, such as exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other health hazards, pose significant threats to the well-being of both the sex worker and their family members (Pitcher, 2019). The scholar further noted that health crises arising from these risks can strain familial resources and emotional resilience, further undermining family cohesion and stability. Pauw and Brener. (2003) also noted that prostitution is said to be associated with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in families. The scholar further noted that one of the main reasons for the rapid spread of sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhea, syphilis and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome HIV/AIDS in the world including Nigeria is the massive transmission among sex workers and clients.

Economically, the irregular and often inadequate income generated from sex work can strain familial financial stability, leading to tensions and conflicts over money matters (Bernstein, 2007). This economic strain can escalate into breakdowns in communication and trust among family members, exacerbating the disintegration of familial bonds.

Moreover, the stigma associated with commercial sex work can isolate families socially, subjecting them to discrimination and ostracization within their communities (Pitts & Smith, 2013). This social stigma not only affects the sex worker but also extends to their family members, impacting their relationships and support systems. Emotionally, the involvement of a family member in commercial sex work can trigger profound feelings of shame, betrayal, and guilt within the family unit (Ahmed, 2024). Children, in particular, may experience confusion and psychological distress, grappling with the societal perceptions and implications of their family member's occupation. The absence or inconsistent presence of a parent engaged in sex work can disrupt traditional parental roles and responsibilities (Ahmed, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories that can be used to explain the topic understudied. some of these theories include Social Learning Theory, Conflict Theory, Role Strain theory, Attachment Theory amongst others. However, Role Strain theory will be adopted for this study.

Role Strain Theory

Role Strain Theory was propounded by sociologist William J. Goode in 1960. The theory states that social institutions are supported and operated by role relationships. Due to these role relationships that individuals may feel "role strain", or difficulty fulfilling their sociological duties in the relationship The theory posits that society sets culturally approved goals (e.g., wealth, success) and provides institutionalized means to achieve these goals (e.g., education, employment). The theory also posits that not all individuals have equal access to the legitimate means to achieve these societal goals. This disparity creates a strain between goals and means. In addition, the theory emphasizes that social structure and inequalities contribute significantly to the strain experienced by individuals, which in turn influences their adaptation modes. Also, the in theory primarily focuses on how lower socio-economic classes, who have less access to legitimate means, are more likely to experience strain and resort to deviant behavior as a means of adaptation. However, critics of role strain theory argue that it oversimplifies the complexity of social roles by focusing primarily on individual stress, neglecting broader structural and systemic factors. Additionally, it tends to overlook how power dynamics influence role expectations and experiences.

Application/Relevance of the Theory

Individuals involved in commercial sex work in Wukari metropolis may experience intense role conflict between their identity as a provider through sex work and their role within the family unit. This conflict can lead to emotional distance, resentment, or withdrawal from family interactions as individuals navigate stigma and legal risks. More so, coping with the stressors of commercial sex work, such as stigma and economic pressures, can strain familial relationships. In extreme cases, the strain of maintaining both roles (sex worker and family member) may lead individuals to exit their familial roles entirely, either voluntarily or involuntarily due to legal or social consequences. This can result in isolation from family support networks, further exacerbating family disintegration. In addition, anger and frustration confirm negative relationships. The resulting behavior patterns will often make commercial sex workers to be characterized by more than their share of unilateral action because an individual will have a natural desire to avoid unpleasant rejections, and these unilateral actions (especially when antisocial) will further contribute to an individual's alienation from society. If particular rejections are generalized into feelings that the environment is unsupportive, more strongly negative emotions may motivate the individual to engage in crime.

Empirical Studies

Essien (2022) investigated the validity of commercial sex work in Nigeria. The reasons, aspects, and implications for policy. The study used content analysis and in-depth interviews in a strictly qualitative manner. The study included twenty (20) commercial sex workers. Findings from the study revealed that due to their precarious financial situations and lack of other sources of income, several commercial sex workers viewed sex work as employment. Beyond the economic factor, many of them were aware that sex work has legal, sociocultural, and moral ramifications. Because it violates national laws, violates social norms and values, and undermines moral standards, sex work is not regarded as legitimate employment by the majority of Nigerians.

Saheed, Bayo and Emmanuel (2021) investigated the factors that contribute to prostitution in South-West Nigeria. The study's sample size was 180 respondents, chosen using a purposive sampling technique, and logistics regression was used for estimation. It was discovered that women were more likely to offer sex for money, and that the number of young people participating in commercial sex was rising. More significantly, it was

discovered that poor economic conditions, unemployment, and the need to fulfill obligations and social expectations were the main drivers of commercial sex, and that prices in the sex industry were flexible and inexpensive and influenced by performance, hours worked, and negotiating skills.

Udeh, Uduka, and Mbah (2017) surveyed a few brothels in Mararaba, Nigeria, to investigate the socioeconomic impact of commercial sex work in the Abuja suburb. The study's population consisted of 181 individuals from 5 randomly chosen brothels, of whom 100 were chosen at random to serve as the study's sample. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were utilized to sample respondents' viewpoints, and qualitative analysis was done on the collected data. Because sex workers provide a variety of services, it was discovered that the commercial sex trade has raised many family incomes and decreased the rate at which sexual offenses may have grown. Respondents, however, voiced concerns about police harassment, stigmatization, and the Nigerian government's failure to recognize their predicament as a legitimate group.

METHODS

Research Design

The research design used in this study is a descriptive survey. This study strategy is justified because it facilitates the description and validation of research findings. Furthermore, it helps to capture a moment in time, which allows the researcher to characterize the impact of commercial sex activity on marital dissolution without changing the variable.

Population of the Study

The whole population of Wukari Metropolis is included in the study's population. The National Population Census (2016) estimates that Wukari Metropolis will have 374,800 residents. Among other people in Metropolis, this group consists of married couples (men and women), divorced people, commercial sex workers, community and religious leaders, and law enforcement personnel.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique.

A multi-stage sampling approach was used to establish the study's sample size, which came out to be 400 respondents. Taro Yamane worked for the researcher in the first

phase. The rationale behind employing this approach is that it offers a statistically solid formula that guarantees the chosen sample size is representative of the total population while reducing sampling error. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher in the second step of the questionnaire distribution process. This is justified by the fact that it enables the researcher to concentrate on people who have firsthand knowledge of the subject. Additionally, twelve (12) of the 400 respondents who completed the questionnaire were specifically chosen for the interview.

Sources/ Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources were used to gather data for the study. For the primary source, the researcher used a structured questionnaire and an oral interview. The questionnaire was divided into four parts A, B, C, and D. The part A comprises of the respondents' biographical information, such as gender, marital status, age group, and academic background. While the other parts B, C and D measures the study's objectives. The questionnaire's items were on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was distributed to married couples (men and women), divorced people, commercial sex workers, community and religious leaders, and law enforcement personnel.

Furthermore, the researcher used oral interviews to collect detailed, from twelve (12) respondents. This was done so that information that could not be obtained using structured questionnaires alone will be collected qualitatively. This approach made it possible for participants to freely share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, which led to a deeper understanding of how commercial sex work affected marriage dissolution in Wukari Metropolis. In addition, secondary data from government gazettes, books, journals, magazines, published and unpublished seminar papers, theses, monographs, pamphlets, periodicals, special papers, and official documents were used to gather secondary materials.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The tool exhibited both content and face validity. To assess its validity, copies of the questionnaire were distributed to a panel of independent experts in test and measurement. These experts reviewed the questions objectively, focusing on how thoroughly they addressed the entire subject of the study. They provided feedback and suggestions, which were incorporated into the questionnaire. Following these revisions, all the experts independently confirmed their strong approval of the final version.

The study used a test-retest reliability approach for reliability. A small sample of respondents in Jortar Metropolis, Benue State, were given the questionnaire. The identical set of questions was provided to the same group two weeks later. To evaluate the instrument's stability and dependability over time, the answers from the two administrations were compared. The instrument's dependability for the primary research was further supported by the high degree of similarity between the two sets of replies, which showed that it delivered consistent findings.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive, inferential, and content analysis were used to examine the study's collected data. Chi-square inferential statistics were used to assess the study hypotheses, while the mean was used to examine the respondents' answers to objectives 1, 2, and 3. Additionally, the interview replies were analyzed using content analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1. Prevalence of commercial sex workers (CSW) in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State

S/N	Statement	5 SA	4 A	3 U	2 D	1 SD	Mean X	Remarks
1	The number of commercial sex workers (CSW) in Wukari Metropolis has increased over the past years	213	104	15	18	2	4.45	Rejected
2	The high presence of commercial sex workers (CSW) has made them visibly present in multiple locations across Wukari Metropolis	120	98	75	60	25	3.48	Rejected
3	Increase in the activities of commercial sex workers (CSW) has made them to be patronized by both married and single men frequently	140	120	65	38	15	3.84	Accepted
4	A lot of young ladies have joined this trade as a result of the high prevalence in their activities	130	110	70	50	18	3.71	Accepted
5	It is very difficult seeing young ladies and guys who have not patronized the service of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis	90	100	80	75	33	3.24	Rejected
	Grand mean						3.74	Accepted

Source: Authors' Analysis **(**2025**)**

Table 1 depicts the prevalence of commercial sex workers (CSWs) in Wukari Metropolis. Statement 1, which states that the number of commercial sex workers (CSWs) in Wukari Metropolis has increased over the past years," was strongly accepted with a mean score of 4.45, indicating widespread agreement that the number of CSWs has notably increased in the area. This was followed by Statement 3, which says, "Increase in the activities of commercial sex workers (CSWs) has made them to be patronized by both married and single men frequently," was also accepted with a mean score of 3.84. This suggests that there is a strong perception of frequent patronage of CSWs by both married and single men, underlining the normalization of such activities in the community.

This was followed by statement 4, which states, "A lot of young ladies have joined this trade as a result of the high prevalence in their activities," was accepted with a mean score of 3.71, showing that respondents agree that the increasing prevalence of CSWs is attracting more young women to join the trade, possibly due to economic or social factors. Also statement 2, which states that , "The high presence of commercial sex workers (CSWs) has made them visibly present in multiple locations across Wukari Metropolis," was accepted with a mean score of 3.48. This indicates a moderate level of agreement that CSWs are widely visible across various locations in the metropolis, though perhaps not as strongly perceived as the increase in the number of CSWs or the frequency of patronage. Lastly, Statement 5, which says, "It is very difficult seeing young ladies and guys who have not patronized the service of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis," was accepted with a mean score of 3.24. While this statement received a slightly lower mean score, it still reflects a general agreement that a significant portion of the youth in Wukari have patronized CSWs.

Table 2. Factors contributing to the prevalence of commercial sex workers (CSW) in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State

S/N	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Remarks
		SA	A	U	D	SD	X	
1	Poverty	157	103	60	35	23	3.82	Accepted
2	Lack of education	120	110	68	55	25	3.67	Accepted
3	Unemployment	138	99	80	40	21	3.80	Accepted
4	Peer pressure	130	108	75	50	15	3.71	Accepted
5	Cultural influences	50	70	75	80	103	2.96	Rejected
	Grand mean						3.67	Accepted

Source: Authors' Analysis **(**2025**)**

Table 2 shows factors contributing to the prevalence of commercial sex workers (CSW) in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State**.** Statement 1 (Poverty**)** has the highest mean with a mean score of 3.82, this statement is accepted, showing that poverty is a major factor contributing to the prevalence of CSWs in Wukari. This was followed by Statement 3 (Unemployment) with a mean score of 3.80, this statement was accepted, indicating that unemployment plays a significant role in the prevalence of CSWs. This was followed by Statement 4 (Peer pressure) with a mean score of 3.71. This shows that peer pressure is also a notable factor, and the statement was accepted. This was followed by Statement 2 (Lack of education**)** with a mean score of 3.67 which indicates that lack of education is considered an important factor in the prevalence of CSWs, and it is accepted. Lastly, Statement 5 (Cultural influences) with a mean of 2.96, this statement was rejected, suggesting that cultural influences are not as significant as other factors. The Grand Mean of 3.67 was accepted, reinforcing that poverty, lack of education, and unemployment are the most significant contributors to the prevalence of CSWs in Wukari, with peer pressure playing a secondary role.

Table 3. Effect of commercial sex workers (CWS) on Marital Breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State

S/N	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Remarks
		SA	A	U	D	SD	X	
1	The prevalence of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis encourages extramarital affairs, leading to marital breakdowns.	152	105	35	60	26	3.91	Accepted
2	Financial strain caused by commercial sex workers contributes to the disintegration of marriages.	115	197	72	65	29	3.52	Accepted
3	Emotional neglect due to involvement with commercial sex workers impacts marital stability.	140	103	95	51	25	3.83	Accepted
4	The emotional and psychological effects of engaging with commercial sex workers negatively affect the stability of marriages in Wukari Metropolis.	130	110	67	47	24	3.74	Accepted
5	Marital infidelity in Wukari Metropolis is largely influenced by the patronage of commercial sex workers.	990	985	650	805	451	3.11	Rejected
	Grand mean						3.74	Accepted

Table 3 depicts the effect of commercial sex workers (CSWs) on marital breakdown in Wukari Metropolis. Statement 1, which states, "The prevalence of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis encourages extramarital affairs, leading to marital breakdowns," was strongly accepted with a mean score of 3.91, indicating widespread agreement that the presence of CSWs contributes to the rise of extramarital affairs, which in turn leads to marital breakdowns. This was followed by Statement 3, which states, "Emotional neglect due to involvement with commercial sex workers impacts marital stability," with a mean score of 3.83. This suggests a strong perception that the emotional neglect resulting from interactions with CSWs significantly affects the stability of marriages, supporting the view that such involvement can cause marital instability. Next, Statement 4, which states, "The emotional and psychological effects of engaging with commercial sex workers negatively affect the stability of marriages in Wukari Metropolis," was accepted with a mean score of 3.74. This reflects an agreement that the emotional and psychological consequences of patronizing CSWs have a detrimental impact on the health and stability of marriages in the area.

Statement 2, which states, "Financial strain caused by commercial sex workers contributes to the disintegration of marriages," was also accepted with a mean score of 3.52. This suggests that a notable portion of respondents agree that the financial burden associated with patronizing CSWs contributes to marital breakdowns, indicating that financial strain is a significant factor. Lastly, Statement 5, which states, "Marital infidelity in Wukari Metropolis is largely influenced by the patronage of commercial sex workers," was rejected with a mean score of 3.11. This indicates that while some respondents may perceive a connection, the overall consensus suggests that infidelity is not predominantly influenced by CSW patronage in the area.

The **Grand Mean** of 3.62 reflects that, overall, the presence and activities of CSWs do have a significant effect on marital breakdowns in Wukari Metropolis, particularly through extramarital affairs, emotional neglect, and financial strain, while the influence on marital infidelity is less strongly perceived.

Table 4. Pearson's Chi-Square Test on effect of commercial sex workers (CWS) on Marital Break down in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.750[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	37.030	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	29.373	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	378		

Source: SPSS Output V 25

The above table is a Pearson's Chi-Square Test on effect of commercial sex workers (CWS) on Marital Break down in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State. Result from cross-tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies revealed that Pearson chi-square computed value has a value of 34.750 with 16 degrees of freedom with a probability value (p-value) of 0.000 which is less than the of 0.05. Based on this, we therefore accept the alternate which states that commercial sex work has an effect on marital break down in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State

Interview Responses of Respondents

Interview was carried out on the prevalence of commercial sex work in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State. In an interview with a local community leader in Wukari, he acknowledged that the presence of commercial sex workers in the area has become more noticeable in recent years (Oral interview, 2024). This aligns with findings by Okoro, Orji, Agbo, Mba, Anthony-Orji, Nwankwo and Obiorah (2021) who highlighted that urban areas in Nigeria are experiencing rise in commercial sex work as young ladies now see it as an alternative means of livelihood. Similarly, in an interview a hotel manager in the metropolis he confirmed that certain areas, particularly near major transportation hubs and markets are hotspots for commercial sex work in Wukari Metropolis. He noted that their activities are often peak during weekends and festive periods.

> " *You see more of them around hotels and bars, and some even operate from makeshift lodgings or rented apartments," he added* (Oral interview, 2025).

In an interview with a clergy member from one of the leading churches in Wukari Metropolis, he expressed concern over the noticeable increase in commercial sex work

within the metropolis. He highlighted that economic hardship and moral decline have fueled the prevalence.

> *"I counsel women who confess to engaging in sex work out of desperation. Some are married women who cite financial pressure at home as their reason for involvement," he revealed* (Oral interview, 2025).

A married man interviewed at a community meeting admitted that the visibility of commercial sex workers has grown, particularly around nightlife spots and lodging areas. "It's becoming more common to encounter them at bars, and some even approach men at local events. This was rare a few years ago (Oral interview, 2025). This is in corroboration with Essien, Vite and Harry. (2022) who noted that commercial sex work is becoming more prevalent in Nigeria. The scholar noted that most typical locations such as car parks, hotels, brothels, and busy streets. especially in major cities like Oshogbo, Kano, Uyo, Lagos, and Port Harcourt have become zones for commercial sex activities.

More so, a married woman shared a similar sentiment, expressing worry about the increasing number of younger women entering the trade. "Some of these girls are friends to our daughters. They see how quickly they make money and are tempted to join (Oral interview, 2025). When interviewed, a commercial sex worker operating near a hotel in Wukari confirmed that the trade has grown significantly over the past three years. she stated that

> *"There are more of us now. Some are single mothers, while others are married but need extra income. The demand is also increasing, so more women are coming into this work," she stated. According to her, the absence of other means of livelihood leaves few alternatives* (Oral interview, 2025).

Interview was carried out on factors contributing to the prevalence of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State. During an interview with a local community leader in Wukari, he pointed out that economic hardship is the most significant factor driving women into commercial sex work. He stated that "many young women find it difficult to secure jobs or sustain themselves through small businesses. Without financial stability, they often turn to sex work as a last resort. (Oral interview, 2024). This is in line with Essien et al. (2022) who posited that women of lower economic means often exploit their attractiveness for economic gain. The scholar further

noted that commercial sex workers engage in sex work for survival and for experimental and/or lifestyle purposes.

In one of the hotels in Wukari Metropolis, the leader cited lack of educational opportunities and employment opportunities as key reasons why many women enter the trade.

> "*I had to stop school because my parents couldn't afford it. This was the only way I could make ends meet," she shared. She further pointed out that inadequate government intervention and limited job creation have left many women with few alternatives* (Oral interview, 2025).

These factors align with findings by Olayiwola, Kazeem and Ajudua (2022) who noted that the urge to fulfill obligations and the difficult economic times are the main drivers behind entering. Consequently, a clergy member interviewed emphasized the role of family breakdown and lack of parental care. He stated that

> *"Young girls from broken homes are vulnerable. Without guidance or financial support, they fall into the wrong company and eventually engage in sex work," he explained. He added that the absence of structured youth empowerment programs worsens the situation* (Oral interview, 2025).

This opinion was also expressed by Olayiwola et al. (2022), who asserted that many young women have entered the commercial sex industry due to both voluntary factors like poverty, deteriorating financial circumstances and parental neglect, as well as involuntary ones like rape, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Another respondent, a married woman highlighted peer influence and societal pressure as contributing factors. "When young women see their friends earning money quickly through sex work, they are tempted to join, especially when they are struggling financially," she remarked. She also cited the glamorization of sex work on social media as a growing concern (Oral interview, 2025). This assertion was shared by Adegboyega, Ayoola and Muhammed (2019) who noted that peer pressure as led to increase in incident of commercial sex workers. The scholar noted that most teenagers feel that their friends know them better than their families do and they acquire a demand for psychological closeness, intimacy, and loyalty from their friends. These connections often make them go into commercial sex activities.

From the perspective of a security agent interviewed, he noted that urbanization and nightlife expansion in Wukari have increased the demand for sex work. With more

bars and hotels opening, there is a growing market for sex workers. Some women come from neighboring areas to work here during weekends and festive periods," he noted (Oral interview, 2025*)*. This was also shared Liqun, Ruibin, and Xiaohan. (2015) who stated that urbanization has made commercial sex activities to be tolerated by the general people. In addition, respondents were asked on the effects of commercial sex work on marital breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State. In an interview with a clergy member in Wukari, he expressed deep concern about the role commercial sex work plays in destabilizing marriages. he stated that

"I have handled several cases where husbands' involvement with commercial sex workers led to trust issues, infidelity, and eventual separation," he noted. He explained that some men develop emotional or financial attachments to sex workers, which diverts resources from their families (Oral interview, 2025). A married woman interviewed during a community forum recounted how commercial sex work has contributed to rising domestic conflicts and emotional distress among wives. She stated that "when women suspect their husbands are engaging with sex workers, it leads to arguments, resentment, and even separation. In some cases, the men abandon their families," she explained. She emphasized that the situation worsens when financial strain is involved (Oral interview, 2025). A commercial sex worker interviewed stated that while some women in the trade maintain professional boundaries, others develop long-term affairs with married clients. "Some men return frequently and even offer financial support beyond the usual transactions, which strains their marriages (Oral interview, 2025). These observations align with studies by Adebayo and Olanrewaju (2021), who highlight that commercial sex work increases the risk of infidelity, weakens marital bonds, and can lead to psychological trauma for affected spouses. The scholars argue that marriages are more prone to breakdown in areas where commercial sex work is prevalent and poorly regulated.

Also, a married man acknowledged that the easy accessibility of commercial sex workers in certain areas of Wukari has made it difficult for some men to resist temptation. "For some men, it becomes a habit that damages their relationship with their wives. It causes emotional distance, and trust erodes over time," he admitted involved (Oral interview, 2025). A practising counsellor in Wukari highlighted the psychological toll commercial sex work has on affected families. "I have counselled couples on the verge of divorce due to infidelity linked to sex workers. The emotional wounds often run deep, especially for the wives. Rebuilding trust is challenging, and many women experience

anxiety and depression," she explained. The counsellor emphasized that marital breakdown leads to social isolation and impacts children, creating a cycle of dysfunction within the household (Oral interview, 2025). This view was shared by Ahmed, (2024), who claimed that family member who engages in commercial sex work may experience intense emotions of remorse, betrayal, and shame.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the study revealed a significant prevalence of commercial sex work activities in Wukari Metropolis. This is consistent with research by Okoro et al (2021), who observed increase in activities of commercial sex work in Nigerian cities. Furthermore, Essien, et al (2022) found out that commercial sex work is becoming more prevalent in Nigeria. The scholar noted that most typical locations such as car parks, hotels, brothels, and busy streets. especially in major cities like Oshogbo, Kano, Uyo, Lagos, and Port Harcourt have become zones for commercial sex activities.

Findings from the study also revealed that the most significant factor contributing to the prevalence of commercial sex workers in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State is poverty. This was in line with Olayiwola et al. (2022), who asserted that many young women have entered the commercial sex industry due to both voluntary factors like poverty and deteriorating financial circumstances. This finding was also in line with Essien, et al (2022) who found out that a lot of women become prostitutes purely for financial gain and have unethical ways of seducing people they consider wealthy.

Findings from the study revealed that commercial sex workers (CWS) has an effect on Marital Breakdown in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State. This finding is in line with Adebayo and Olanrewaju (2021), who revealed that marriages are more prone to breakdown in areas where commercial sex work is prevalent and poorly regulated. More so, Christopher et al., (2023) revealed that commercial sex work has a negative effect on both the prostitutes and family as it reinforces stereotypical views about women who are involved in it and also led to stigmatization of families found to be involved in it

Counselling Implications

The prevalence of commercial sex work (CSW) poses significant challenges to the stability and longevity of marriages. Marital breakdowns linked to CSW often stem from

trust issues, infidelity, and financial strain, ultimately eroding the emotional foundation of relationships. Therefore, counsellors play a vital role in providing emotional and psychological support to individuals and couples affected by CSW. Consequently, counsellors should be equipped with conflict resolution strategies and effective communication techniques. By fostering active listening and empathy, counselling interventions can promote understanding and cooperation between partners.

In addition, counsellors should be able to address the underlying causes of involvement in CSW, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of education. Through career guidance, skills development, and economic empowerment programs, counselling can offer alternative paths to those engaged in CSW, reducing its prevalence and mitigating its impact on marriages. More so, family and community support systems are crucial in addressing marital breakdowns caused by CSW.

CONCLUSION

This study was able to examine the effects of Commercial Sex Work (CSW) on marital breakdowns in Wukari Metropolis, Taraba State. Findings from the study revealed that CSW activities is prevalent and increasing in the region, with poverty identified as the most significant factor contributing to the rising number of women entering commercial sex trade. The implication of this is that economic hardship in the country has driven many young women to resort into CSW so as to be able to afford basic financial needs. In addition, findings from the study revealed that increase in CSW activities in Wukari Metropolis has posed considerable challenges to the stability and longevity of marriages in the community. The implication of this is that marital breakdowns linked to CSW often cause issues such as infidelity, violations trust and financial strain which progressively undermine the emotional foundation of marital relationships. Therefore, counsellors must ensure that they are equipped with marital conflict resolution strategies and also provide emotional and psychological support to individuals and couples affected by CSW.

Recommendations

i. Given the significant effect of CSW on marital instability, counselling programs should integrate marital counseling and should be made more accessible to individuals and couples affected by CSW

ii. Government should provide skill acquisition programme and poverty alleviation initiatives. So as to make young women gainfully employed

iii. Community awareness campaigns should educate the public on the dangers of CSW and promote the importance of healthy relationships and strong family bond

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