

Prevalence of Prostitution Among Female Undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Victoria Onyeacholem¹ and Obinna Chukwudalu Okeke¹

¹Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's Email Address: ooc.okeke@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigated prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study was guided by four research questions and two hypotheses. The research was anchored on Strain Theory and Rational Choice Theory. The mixed methods research design was used for this study and sample of 204 respondents was drawn. The questionnaire and In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide were the instruments used for data collection and the questionnaire was administered online through online google form while the IDI sessions were done on a face-to-face basis by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants. The quantitative data for the study was processed using SPSS software version 25. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables and simple percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data while narrative method of qualitative data analysis was used for analysing the qualitative data. The study hypotheses were tested using Chi-square (X^2) inferential statistics. The study found that the extent to which female undergraduates engage in prostitution in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is high. The study also found poverty as the major factor influencing involvement in prostitution among female undergraduate students. The study further found that contraction of STD/STI is the major effect of prostitution on female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that government at all levels and other stakeholders should award scholarship and bursaries to indigent students as this will take their mind off prostitution as well as discourage them from indulging in prostitution.

Keywords: academic performance, poverty, prostitution, STD

Introduction

Prostitution, often referred to as the world's oldest profession, has existed across societies for millennia. Its origin can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, where it was intricately tied to religious and social practices. Historical evidence suggests that sacred prostitution was practiced, with women serving as temple priestesses engaging in sexual relations as part of religious rites (Smith & Richards, 2021). Ancient Greece and Rome institutionalized prostitution, with prostitutes occupying various classes, including concubines and courtesans, who were often revered for their intellect and artistic talents.

These societies, despite recognizing prostitution, imposed strict regulations that both legitimized and restricted the profession (Hartman, 2020). In contrast, the medieval era, under the influence of Christianity, saw prostitution increasingly condemned as a moral sin, though the practice continued to thrive. The Church's efforts to eliminate prostitution, however, were met with resistance as economic factors and societal acceptance allowed the profession to persist, albeit clandestinely (Jones, 2019). The dichotomy between the legal status of prostitution and its persistent existence throughout history illustrates the deep-rooted economic, social, and cultural factors that perpetuate the practice.

In the 21st century, prostitution has evolved into multifaceted forms, from street-based activities to sophisticated escort services, and more recently, digital platforms enabling virtual sexual interactions (Brown, 2019). Technological advancements have made it easier for people, including students, to engage in prostitution without direct physical contact, thereby reducing certain risks while increasing accessibility (O'Brien, 2020). Despite the changes in how prostitution is practiced, the underlying drivers remain largely the same: poverty, economic disparity, and gender inequality. For young women in developing countries, particularly Nigeria, prostitution often emerges as a survival strategy in the face of dire financial circumstances (Adesina & Okon, 2020).

In Nigeria, the issue of prostitution has garnered increasing attention, particularly on university campuses, where female undergraduates engage in transactional sex as a means of sustaining themselves financially (Olumide & Aluko, 2019). Many students, especially from lower socio-economic backgrounds, struggle to meet the financial demands of tuition, accommodation, and other living expenses. Faced with limited opportunities for formal employment or access to adequate financial support, some turn to prostitution as a quick fix to alleviate their financial burdens (Eze & Adiele, 2021). This situation has given rise to what is colloquially known as "campus prostitution," where students engage in sex-for-money transactions with older men, often referred to as "sugar daddies" (Chikezie, 2020). Female students who engage in prostitution on campus are often stigmatized and face a double burden of moral judgment and health risks. The stigma stems from societal and cultural norms that cast women as the guardians of morality, thereby harshly judging those who deviate from expected behaviors (Odozi & Amadi, 2021). This societal judgment is

compounded by health risks such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, which disproportionately affect individuals involved in prostitution (Obiora, 2021). The clandestine nature of prostitution makes it difficult for these students to seek medical attention or access preventative healthcare services, as doing so would expose them to further stigma and social isolation (Okoye & Ndukwe, 2021).

In addition to the health risks, prostitution has profound emotional and psychological consequences for the students involved. Many experience feelings of shame, depression, and low self-esteem as a result of their involvement in transactional sex. The pressure to maintain academic performance while engaging in prostitution often leads to mental and emotional stress, making it difficult for these students to achieve a sense of balance and well-being (Olumide & Aluko, 2019). Moreover, the prevalence of prostitution on campus has broader societal implications, undermining the integrity of educational institutions and reinforcing negative gender stereotypes about women's worth and capabilities (Ezugwu & Maduka, 2022). The phenomenon of prostitution among female undergraduates is also linked to the broader socio-economic challenges facing Nigeria as a country. High unemployment rates, limited access to quality education, and widening income inequality create conditions that push vulnerable populations, including young women, into survival strategies such as prostitution (Adesina & Okon, 2020). Furthermore, gender inequality in Nigeria exacerbates the situation, as women are often excluded from economic opportunities that could provide financial independence (Odozi & Amadi, 2021). The absence of a robust social safety net, coupled with inadequate policies to support young women, leaves many with few options but to engage in prostitution as a means of survival.

University campuses, meant to be environments for intellectual growth and development, are increasingly becoming sites where prostitution flourishes. This situation raises serious concerns about the future of education and the values being instilled in students. It also poses questions about the role of university authorities and policymakers in addressing the root causes of prostitution, particularly the socio-economic factors that drive students to engage in the trade (Okoye & Ndukwe, 2021). Despite the efforts of some institutions to curb prostitution, the lack of a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue at its core

continues to allow the problem to persist, putting students at risk both physically and emotionally (Eze & Adiele, 2021).

In conclusion, the phenomenon of prostitution among female undergraduates at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, mirrors broader global and national trends in the history of prostitution. It is driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic factors, health risks, and societal stigma. It is against this backdrop that the present aims to investigate the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Statement of the Problem

The growing prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in universities has become a pressing issue that demands urgent attention. While prostitution has always existed in society, its manifestation on university campuses, particularly among students, raises unique concerns about the socio-economic, health, and academic implications of the practice (Chikezie, 2020). Female students engaging in transactional sex face a range of risks, from exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to academic decline, emotional trauma, and social stigma. Despite these challenges, the issue remains largely unaddressed, both at the institutional and societal levels (Olumide & Aluko, 2019).

The rise in prostitution on university campuses, especially among female undergraduates, is closely tied to the harsh economic realities facing students. In Nigeria, the cost of higher education has increased significantly in recent years, with tuition fees, accommodation, textbooks, and other expenses becoming burdensome for many students (Adesina & Okon, 2020). Female students from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular, struggle to meet these financial demands, and with limited access to scholarships or formal employment opportunities, many turn to prostitution as a means of survival (Odozi & Amadi, 2021). This situation is exacerbated by the absence of adequate financial aid programs or social safety nets to support students in need.

Prostitution, however, comes with significant risks. One of the most pressing concerns is the health risk associated with engaging in unprotected sexual activities. Female students involved in prostitution are at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections,

including HIV/AIDS, due to the nature of their transactions (Obiora, 2021). Many of these students lack access to proper healthcare or are too ashamed to seek medical assistance for fear of being stigmatized (Okoye & Ndukwe, 2021). The secrecy surrounding prostitution on campus makes it difficult to implement effective public health interventions that could reduce the spread of infections among this vulnerable population (Odozi & Amadi, 2021).

In addition to health risks, prostitution has far-reaching emotional and psychological consequences for the students involved. Engaging in transactional sex often leads to feelings of shame, guilt, and low self-esteem, as students struggle with the moral implications of their actions and the judgment they face from their peers and society at large (Okoye & Ndukwe, 2021). The emotional toll of prostitution can lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues, which in turn affect academic performance and overall well-being (Olumide & Aluko, 2019). Prostitution also affects the academic performance of female undergraduates. The time and energy spent engaging in prostitution can detract from a student's focus on their studies, leading to poor academic outcomes and, in some cases, dropping out of school (Chikezie, 2020). Moreover, the involvement in prostitution often leads to a sense of alienation from the academic community, as students may feel disconnected from their peers and professors due to the double life they are forced to lead (Eze & Adiele, 2021). This sense of isolation can further exacerbate the emotional and psychological toll of prostitution, making it even more difficult for students to succeed academically.

Furthermore, prostitution on campus has broader social implications. The normalization of transactional sex in university settings can undermine the integrity of educational institutions and contribute to the perpetuation of harmful gender stereotypes (Ezugwu & Maduka, 2022). Female students involved in prostitution are often viewed through a lens of moral judgment, which not only stigmatizes them but also reinforces negative perceptions of women as commodities to be bought and sold (Odozi & Amadi, 2021). This dynamic perpetuates gender inequality and undermines efforts to promote gender equity and empowerment in Nigerian society.

Despite the growing awareness of prostitution among female undergraduates, there is a lack of comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of the problem. Many interventions focus on the symptoms, such as punitive measures for those caught engaging in prostitution, rather than addressing the underlying socio-economic factors that drive students into the trade (Adesina & Okon, 2020). Without addressing these root causes, efforts to curb prostitution on campus are unlikely to succeed in the long term. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What are the factors influencing prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
3. What are the various effects of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Review of Relevant Literature

Prevalence of Prostitution among Female Students in Tertiary Institutions

Ori, Oparaocha, Ede, Nwaokoro and Nzeh (2020) investigated on perceived factors influencing the practice and prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates of Tertiary Institutions in Owerri Municipal, Imo State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and random sampling procedure was used to select 400 female undergraduates from two tertiary institutions in Owerri Municipal. A well-structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The completed and collected questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The results were presented in frequency tables and percentages in line with the research objectives. Chi-square (X^2) statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 5% (0.05) level of significance. The findings of study showed a significant relationship between perceived risk factors such as poverty, peer pressure, dereliction of parental role and uncontrolled liberty and freedom in school and academic favour and practices of prostitution among female undergraduates. The level of

practices of prostitution among female students was high and most of them have good perception of health implications of prostitutions. Therefore, the female undergraduate, should be counseled on the effect of poverty and bad friends which leads to female prostitution and subsequent poor academic performance.

In an exploratory- mixed-method design Asiya and Murtala (2019) examined the prevalence of prostitution in Nigeria, its causes, as well as its effects on the prostitutes, their patrons and the lager society with a view to exploring how adult and non-formal education provisions can be used to address the menace. Respondents were identified using purposive and snowballing techniques whiles semi-structure questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used for data collection between 2017 and 2019. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 and qualitative data analyzed thematically. Findings show that there is a proliferation of prostitution on university campuses in Ghana for financial, material and emotional gains. Student prostitutes have devised various strategies to combine academic work and prostitution. Prospective customers are solicited by hanging out in drinking bars and night clubs in and around university campuses at night and/or leaving contact details with pimps to be contacted for services. Brothels are also springing up in and around the university campuses in the form of movie houses and student prostitutes convert their hostel rooms into brothels. Price negotiation is based on the environment, duration and styles/positions adopted for sex. There is a need for a multi-sectoral approach for appropriate policy and program interventions to regulate the practice on campus.

Factors Influencing Prostitution among Undergraduates

While identifying the causes promoting prostitution among the undergraduates of Ufuophu-Biri (2014) examined social media as correlate of prostitution among students of higher institutions of learning in Delta state, Nigeria. This study sought to determine the relationship between social media and prostitution among students of institutions of higher learning in Delta State, Nigeria. The population comprised the approximate 150,000 students studying in various institutions of higher learning in Delta State. From this population, 3,438 students were selected as sample. Survey and questionnaire were used

respectively as method and instrument of data collection. The findings indicated that the students use social media significantly for prostitution. There was a significant relationship between the students' use of social media and their involvement in prostitution. There was also a significant relationship between the students' gender and their use of social media for prostitution. The study recommends that the authorities of the selected institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations and the government should mount orientation programmes and formulate policies to discourage the students from using social media for negative purpose.

Adegboyega (2019) investigated the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of youth in Kwara State. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. A total of 395 youth participated in the study. One research question was raised while three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument used for data collection for this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire entitled "Influence of Social Media Questionnaire" (ISMQ). The findings revealed that social media has considerable influence on the sexual behaviour of youth in Kwara State. Social media leads students to the act of sending erotic messages, watching pornographic films and movies, and also increases risky sexual behaviour such as masturbation. There were no significant differences in the influence of social media on sexual behaviour of youth in Kwara State based on gender, age and university attended. It was therefore recommended that counselors should expose students to the danger inherent in negative uses of social media and analyze the possible result of proper usage of social media. Counselors should also provide information specifically on the safe and respectful use of technology, as well as consequences of the negative use of social media to students of different genders, ages and universities attended.

Kamila (2019) investigated on the phenomenon of prostitution among students. The main goal of this study is to analyze the phenomenon of prostitution among university students. The study presents the scale of this phenomenon and its causes. The study was conducted among 1,877 university students. Respondents were interviewed through an online panel survey. Students spoke about their own experience in prostitution and shared thoughts about the approval for this phenomenon. Based on obtained answers, it was possible to

identify conditioning for student prostitution, which encompasses biological, psychological, environmental, cultural, and economic factors. Moreover, students mentioned additional reasons for taking up prostitution: difficult financial situation during studies, above-average sex drive, laziness, and consumer mentality supported by the culture of promiscuity. It turned out that each of the mentioned factors may encourage students to become involved in prostitution. The analysis also drew attention to the lack of sexual education, conducive to risky sexual behaviours of young people. The research has shown that a large group of students exchange sex for money.

Oyeoku (2016) examine the socio-cultural and economic correlates of prostitution tendencies among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria. Seven research questions and five null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design of the study was correlational survey. The sample consisted of 1,983 university undergraduates from two federal and three state universities in South-East Nigeria. The instruments used for the study were questionnaire titled: Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors of Prostitution Tendencies Questionnaire (SCEFPTQ) and Focus Group Discussions (F.G.Ds) Guide which were validated by experts and used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation, Percentage, Pearson correlation coefficient, t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and post hoc analysis. Qualitative analytical procedure known as content analysis was employed to analyse the Focus Group Discussions (F.G.Ds). The major findings of the study are: There is positive correlation between cultural inhibition to discuss sexual matters with children and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates. There is positive correlation between child-rearing practices and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates. Peer-group to a large extent influences prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates. Family type has direct influence on the prostitution tendencies of undergraduates. Furthermore, standard of living has direct influence on the prostitution tendencies; that is university undergraduates with low standard of living exhibit highest prostitution tendencies than those with high standard of living. Prostitution tendencies have direct negative impacts on the academic performance of university undergraduates. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made among which are: seminar and workshops should be organised by sociologists of education for staff

and students of tertiary institutions on negative effects of prostitution on the academic performance of university undergraduates. Federal, States and Local Governments should award scholarship and bursaries to indigent students as this will discourage them from indulging in prostitution. Sex education should be introduced and emphasized in the curriculum programme of tertiary institutions.

Effects of Prostitution among University Undergraduates

Adiele (2014) conducted a study on causes and effects of commercial sex work among Akwa Ibom girls: A study of youths in Uyo Local Government Area. The study seeks to find out the possible ways in which the problem of commercial sex work can be eradicated in the society. The study was empirically conducted where data was obtained through the primary and secondary sources. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Data was collected and analysed with simple percentage while the hypothesis stated were tested with a simple percentage. The result in hypothesis one showed that, commercial sex work has implication on our general sexual health or wellbeing that is the act of sex work has a negative effect on our sexual being. This hypothesis was accepted. In hypothesis two, which states that sex work is more likely to be caused by poverty. Based on the result, hypothesis two was therefore not accepted. Based on the result of this study a number of recommendations were made.

More so, Abdullahi (2018) conducted a study on the socio-economic factors and effects of prostitution in Nigeria. This study deals with the problem of prostitution in Ojoo community Ibadan Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to identify the socio economic factors and condition that are associated with the profession. It is an attempt to study socio economic background, pattern of establishment, social organization and modes of operation of the prostitutes with a view to suggesting effective ways of reducing prostitution. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. A total of 150 prostitutes form the sample of the study. Multi-stage sampling technique involving cluster and simple random sampling methods were used to select the respondents. The major instrument for data collection was the interview. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used in analyzing the data collected. The findings revealed that the driving force

behind prostitution is economic gain. Prostitutes are found to have pathological problems at their backgrounds and the social relations amongst them are based on primordial pattern. Prostitution has both the positive and negative effects. Considering the fact that all attempts at legislation throughout history have not succeeded in eradicating prostitution, this study calls for urgent steps toward the reduction of prostitution in the country. Such steps include the provision of job opportunities, public enlightenment, reformation and rehabilitation programmes, provision of facilities for recreation, sports and cultural activities, formal education of the illiterate and unskilled prostitutes and the introduction of sex education in the curriculum of secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

Theoretical Framework

The theories that frame the present study are Strain Theory and Rational Choice Theory. Strain Theory, developed by Robert K. Merton, posits that societal expectations and the barriers to achieving financial stability can create significant strain for individuals, particularly female undergraduates facing rising tuition fees and living costs at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. This strain may compel students to seek alternative, often deviant, means of achieving societal goals, such as financial independence. In this context, some undergraduates may turn to prostitution as a survival strategy, perceiving it as a viable option to alleviate immediate financial burdens.

On the other hand, Rational Choice Theory, introduced by Gary Becker, provides insight into the decision-making processes of these individuals. It suggests that female undergraduates weigh the potential financial benefits of engaging in prostitution against the risks, including social stigma and legal repercussions. This cost-benefit analysis can lead students to rationalize their involvement in sex work as a necessary means to meet their financial obligations. By integrating these two theories, the present study examines how pressures and rational decision-making influence the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Study Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. There is a significant relationship between poverty and the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
2. Younger female undergraduates are more likely to engage in prostitution than older female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Materials and Methods

The study adopted mixed methods research design. Nwachukwu (2017) defined mixed methods as a design for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative and qualitative data. It involves administering of questionnaires and interviews. The study area is Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka, located at Awka South LGA, Anambra State, South Eastern Nigeria. According to the Office of Director Academic Planning NAU, the population of the undergraduates as at 2023/2024 academic session is 48,960 students comprising of both regular and part-time undergraduates. The population is made up of 32,706 regular students and 16,254 part time students. The sample size for this study is 204.

Findings/Results

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Age Categories		
18-21	58	29.3
22-25	74	37.4
26-29	42	21.2
30 & above	24	12.1
Total	198	100
Religion Affiliation		
Christianity	183	92.0
Islam	4	2.0
African Traditional Religion	6	3.0
Others	5	3.0
Total	198	100
Marital Status		
Single	145	73.0
Married	47	24.0
Separated	2	1.0
Divorced	4	2.0
Widowed	-	-
Total	198	100
Department		
Business Administration	50	25.3

Sociology and Anthropology	50	25.3
Environmental Management	49	24.7
History	49	24.7
Total	198	100
Level of Study		
100	51	25.8
200	44	22.2
300	69	34.8
400	34	17.2
500	-	-
Total	198	100
Economic Status		
Very Rich	22	11.1
Rich	29	15.0
Poor	87	43.9
Very Poor	60	30.0
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic data of the respondents. The age distribution shows that 58 respondents (29.3%) fall within the 18-21 age group, 74 respondents (37.4%) are between 22-25 years old, 42 respondents (21.2%) are in the 26-29 age bracket and 24 respondents (12.1%) are 30 years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents falls within the age category of 22-25 years. Regarding religious affiliation, 183 respondents (92.0%) identify as Christians, 4 respondents (2.0%) practice Islam, 6 respondents (3.0%) follow African Traditional Religion while 5 respondents (3.0%) fall under other categories. By implication, the study is dominated by Christians. In terms of marital status, 145 respondents (73.0%) are single, 47 respondents (24.0%) are married, 2 respondents (1.0%) are separated and 4 respondents (2.0%) are divorced. No respondents identified as widowed. This indication shows that majority of the respondents are single. For departmental distribution, 50 respondents (25.3%) are in Business Administration, 50 respondents (25.3%) are from Sociology and Anthropology, 49 respondents (24.7%) belong to Environmental Management and 49 respondents (24.7%) are from History. Regarding their level of study, 51 respondents (25.8%) are in their 100 level, 44 respondents (22.2%) are in 200 level, 69 respondents (34.8%) are in 300 level, and 34 respondents (17.2%) are in 400 level with no respondents in 500 level. The table above shows that the study is dominated by 300 level students from the four departments mentioned in the table. Lastly,

the economic status of respondents shows that 22 respondents (11.1%) consider themselves very rich, 29 respondents (15.0%) identify as rich, 87 respondents (43.9%) classify themselves as poor and 60 respondents (30.0%) view themselves as very poor. This result shows that majority of the respondents are poor students.

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Questionnaire items 7-10 were designed to answer research question 1 and findings are presented in tables 2 to 5 respectively.

Table 2: Respondents' views on their awareness of the practice of female prostitution among undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	136	68.7
No	42	21.2
I don't know	20	10.1
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 2 presents the respondents' views on their awareness of the practice of female prostitution among undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The data reveals that 136 respondents (68.7%) are aware of the practice. On the other hand, 42 respondents (21.2%) claim they are not aware while 20 respondents (10.1%) indicate that they do not know about the practice. This indicates that the majority of respondents acknowledge awareness of this issue.

Table 3: Respondents' views on extent of female prostitution among undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	57	42.0
High extent	21	15.0
Low extent	38	28.0
Very Low	15	11.0

Undecided	5	4.0
Total	136	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 3 presents the respondents' views on the extent of female prostitution among undergraduate students in Anambra State tertiary institutions. The data indicates that 57 respondents (42.0%) believe the extent is very high while 21 respondents (15.0%) consider it high. Additionally, 38 respondents (28.0%) perceive the extent to be low, and 15 respondents (11.0%) think it is very low. Meanwhile, 5 respondents (4.0%) remain undecided on the issue. This data suggests that a significant portion of respondents believe female prostitution among undergraduates occurs at a very high extent. This result supports the response of an IDI respondent who opined that;

There are lots of girls are involved in prostitution. In fact, it is not hidden anymore. As long you have the money to pay, they will give you access. A lot of students don't even hide while some do it outside Awka. Female students' involvement in prostitution is very obvious in this university (23 years old, 300 level, Female, Business Administration)

Another respondent stated that

A lot of girls engage in prostitution although not street side prostitution but there are many female students who have sex or engage in other sexual activities for money. Some even engage I road side prostitution it is very prevalent (25 Years old, Female, 400 level, Sociology).

Table 4: Respondents' views on whether they know any student involved in prostitution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	162	81.8
No	30	15.2
I don't know	6	3.0
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 4 presents the respondents' views on whether they know any student involved in prostitution. The data shows that 162 respondents (81.8%) are aware of students engaged

in prostitution. In contrast, 30 respondents (15.2%) stated they do not know any such student. Additionally, 6 respondents (3.0%) were uncertain about this matter. This indicates that a significant majority of respondents are aware of the issue of prostitution among students.

Table 5: Respondents' views on specific person they know involved in prostitution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Personal experience	28	17.0
Roommate	31	19.0
Course mate	26	16.0
Friend /Lodge mate	77	48.0
Total	162	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 5 illustrates the respondents' experiences regarding specific instances of prostitution. The data shows that 28 respondents (17.0%) had personal experiences, while 31 respondents (19.0%) identified their roommate as a key figure in prostitution. Additionally, 26 respondents (16.0%) pointed to their course mate and the majority, 77 respondents (48.0%), referred to a friend or lodge mate. This data reveals that a significant proportion of the respondents have had experiences involving their friends or lodge mates in prostitution.

Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Questionnaire items 11-12 were designed to answer research question 2 and findings are presented in tables 6 to 7 respectively.

Table 6: Respondents' views on whether they believe there are causes of female undergraduate prostitution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	141	71.2
No	32	16.2
I don't know	25	12.6
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 6 presents the respondents' views on whether they believe there are causes of female undergraduate prostitution. The data indicates that 141 respondents (71.2%) think there are causes while 32 respondents (16.2%) do not believe so. Additionally, 25 respondents (12.6%) are unsure. This shows that the majority of respondents agree that there are identifiable causes of female undergraduate prostitution.

Table 7: Respondents' views on the causes of female undergraduate prostitution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	66	46.8
Moral decadence	21	14.9
Social media influence	12	8.5
Peer group pressure	18	12.8
Academic favours from male lecturers	8	5.7
All of the above	16	11.3
None of the above	-	-
Total	141	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 7 presents the respondents' views on the causes of female undergraduate prostitution. The data indicates that 66 respondents (46.8%) believe poverty is the primary reason while 21 respondents (14.9%) attribute it to moral decadence. Additionally, 12 respondents (8.5%) feel that social media influence plays a role and 18 respondents (12.8%) think peer group pressure is a contributing factor. Furthermore, 8 respondents (5.7%) suggest that academic favors from male lecturers are a cause and 16 respondents (11.3%) believe all the aforementioned factors contribute. This demonstrates that the majority of respondents perceive poverty as the major cause of female undergraduate prostitution. This result supports the response of an IDI respondent who opined that;

The cause of prostitution among undergraduate females is poverty. I said poverty because if a girl has at least money to keep up with her basic needs, I don't think she will start looking for a person to sleep with and get paid. Most girls who engage in prostitution ordinarily do not want to but the cost of living and their needs

drive them to do it (22 years old, 200 level, Female, History Department)

Another respondent opined that:

Some female engages in prostitution as a result of greed. A lot of females are not satisfied with what they have as wants to live the baby girl lifestyle even when they don't have the resources. This quest for flashy lifestyle now drives them to look for the easy way out. This is why most of the follow people with flashy cars and other things because they know that they will be paid with huge amount of money (23 years old, Female, 400 Level, Environmental Management)

Research Question 3: What are the various effects of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Questionnaire items 13-14 were designed to answer research question 3 and findings are presented in tables 8 to 9 respectively.

Table 8: Respondents' views on whether they think there are effect to female prostitution among undergraduates

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	43.4
No	53	26.8
I don't know	59	29.8
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 8 presents the respondents' views on whether they believe there are effects of female prostitution among undergraduates. The data shows that 86 respondents (43.4%) agree that there are effects, while 53 respondents (26.8%) do not believe there are any effects. Additionally, 59 respondents (29.8%) indicated that they are unsure. This reflects that a significant portion of the respondents acknowledges the existence of effects related to female prostitution among undergraduates.

Table 9: Respondents' views on the effects of prostitution among female undergraduates.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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Indiscipline and examination malpractice	22	11.0
Not attending classes regularly	12	6.0
Rape	26	13.0
Contraction of STD/STI	67	34.0
Loss of esteem	30	15.0
All of the above	14	7.0
None of the above	27	14.0
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2024

Table 9 presents the respondents' views on the effects of prostitution among female undergraduates. The data shows that 22 respondents (11.0%) associate it with indiscipline and examination malpractice. Meanwhile, 12 respondents (6.0%) believe it leads to irregular class attendance. Additionally, 26 respondents (13.0%) identify rape as a consequence while 67 respondents (34.0%) link prostitution to the contraction of STDs/STIs. Furthermore, 30 respondents (15.0%) mention a loss of self-esteem as an effect. Moreover, 14 respondents (7.0%) acknowledge all of the aforementioned consequences and 27 respondents (14.0%) state that none of the listed effects apply. This suggests that the majority of respondents view the contraction of STDs/STIs as the most significant impact of prostitution among female undergraduates. This result supports the response of an IDI respondent who explained that:

Sexually transmitted disease is the major problem a lot of prostitute face and it is a serious problem because most of them are seen buying drugs and going for treatment and medical checkup regularly. Again, many of them face ugly situation because of the risk involved with sleeping with people you don't know (23 years old, Female, 400 Level, Environmental Management)

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between poverty and the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Data presented in table 3 and 7 were used to test hypothesis 1 and result is presented in table 12.

Table 12: Relationship between poverty and prevalence of prostitution

Causes of prostitution	Extent of involvement in prostitution					Total
	Very high extent	High extent	Low extent	Very low extent	Undecided	
Poverty	27	10	19	3	2	61
Moral decadence	7	4	5	4	1	21
Social media influence	5	2	3	2	-	12
Peer group pressure	9	1	4	3	1	18
Academic favours from male lecturers	3	1	3	1	-	8
All of the above	6	3	4	2	1	16
Total	57	21	38	15	5	136

$\chi^2 = 73.32, df = 20, p = .000$

Chi-square test for hypothesis 1 shows a Chi-square calculated value of 73.32 a degree of freedom (df) of 20 and a p-value of .000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 which is the level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. By implication, there is a significant relationship between poverty and the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Hypothesis 2: Younger female undergraduates are more likely to engage in prostitution than older female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Data presented in table 1 and table 4 were used to test hypothesis 2 and result is presented in table 13

Table 13: Relationship between age and involvement in prostitution

Age	Involvement in prostitution			Total
	Yes	No	I don't know	
18-21	46	10	2	58
22-25	64	7	3	74
26-29	31	11	-	42
30 and above	20	3	1	24
Total	162	30	6	198

$$\chi^2 = 24.91, df = 6, p = .0000$$

Chi-square test for hypothesis 2 presented in table 13 shows a Chi-square calculated value of 24.91 a degree of freedom (df) of 6 and a p-value of .000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 which is the level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis accepted. By implication, younger female undergraduates are more likely to engage in prostitution than older female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Discussion

The study in investigating prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka found that majority of females are aware of female involvement in prostitution. The study also found that the extent to which female undergraduates engage in prostitution is high. This finding supports the finding of Ori, Oparaocha, Ede, Nwaokoro and Nzeh (2020) who found high prevalence of prostitution among undergraduates. The present study also found that majority of females knows a friend or lodge mate that we involved in prostitution.

The study in investigating factors influencing female prostitution among undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka found poverty as the major factor influencing prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This finding supports the finding of Asiya and Murtala (2019) who found that prostitution among undergraduates is fuelled by financial gains. The finding of this study also supports the finding of Kamila (2019) who found that difficult financial situation during studies propel students' involvement in prostitution.

Based on the effects of prostitution on female undergraduate students, the study found that contraction of STD/STI as the major effect of prostitution on female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This finding supports the finding of Adiele (2014) who found that prostitution has a negative effect on the general sexual health of prostitute. The study also supports the finding of Ukaegbu, Eze, and Agomoh (2019) who found heightened

exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS as the major risk of involvement in prostitution.

The first hypothesis that was tested, found a significant relationship between poverty and the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The second hypothesis test found that younger female undergraduates are more likely to engage in prostitution than older female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Conclusion

The study based on its findings concludes that there is high prevalence rate of prostitution among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study also concludes that poverty is the main cause of female undergraduate students' involvement in prostitution in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study further concludes that prostitution has a negative effect on female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Recommendations

Based on its findings, the study recommends among others that:

1. Sociologists of education stakeholders should organize seminars, symposiums and workshops for students of tertiary institutions on negative effects of prostitution as this will discourage them from involving in it.
2. University authority should promulgate laws to regulate female undergraduate prostitution as this will reduce female undergraduates' involvement in prostitution.
3. Federal, State, Local Governments and other stakeholders should award scholarship and bursaries to indigent students as this will take their mind off prostitution as well as discourage them from indulging in prostitution.
4. Sexual rehabilitation education should be conducted by NGOs or mass media houses as this would go a long way in addressing the prevalence of prostitution among female undergraduate students.

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