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Experience of Nigerian Female Prostitutes Who Are Victimized by Police

Anitha Scroggins
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Anitha Scroggins

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Experience of Nigerian Female Prostitutes Who Are Victimized by Police

by

Anitha Scroggins

MA, American Military University, 2013

BS, University of Jos, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

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Abstract

Nigerian police are not trusted by the population they swore to protect because they often assault, manipulate, exploit, and humiliate citizens as a form of intimidation to achieve a personal gain, especially from those who are involved in illegal activities like prostitution. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of Nigerian prostitutes and learn how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with the stress of police victimization. This study's underlying theory was distress tolerance theory, which was utilized to understand the emergence of adaptive coping strategies. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with nine street prostitutes in Abuja, Nigeria. Findings from thematic analysis indicated four emergent themes: experiencing constant psychological pain due to police violation and exploitation; feeling resentful due to unjust police actions on prostitutes; feeling helpless, resulting in stress; and growing feelings of social attachment among street prostitutes with other sympathizers to avoid police victimization. Findings indicated that prostitutes regularly need to seek unconventional ways of coping with the stress that comes with police victimization to ensure their survival on the streets and to maintain a stable psychological disposition. Findings may be used to educate public officers, especially in developing countries, to encourage respect for offenders' human rights. Findings may also be used in the establishment of psychological intervention centers for victimized prostitutes and police misconduct bureaus at which victimized prostitutes can report cases of police abuse.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Nigerians have often suffered physical and psychological harm due to police conduct (Agbiboa, 2015). Many prostitutes in Nigeria do not trust the police because members of law enforcement subject them to unjust assaults, public humiliation, coercion aimed at obtaining bribes, and stripping them of their personal property (Agbiboa, 2015; Akinlabi, 2017; Babatunde, 2017). Further, police officers who exhibit this type of behavior often accept sexual activity from the prostitutes who lack the financial means to bribe them (Agbiboa, 2015). The interactions between the Nigerian police, the prostitutes, and the public have created a public safety issue; for example, women who encounter corrupt police officers are increasingly at risk of being shot if they do not comply with the officer's demands (Agbiboa, 2015). More importantly, this poor treatment has led to psychological strain on the prostitutes, resulting in symptoms such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) within the prostitute community (Nwakanma, 2015). Chapter 1 of this study includes the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, definitions of terms, assumptions, scope, limitations/delimitations of the study, significance, and summary.

Background

Prostitutes are more vulnerable to victimization due to their frequent suffering from a very poor standard of living as well as the stigma associated with being in the sex trade (Kangiwa, 2015). The highest levels of violence against prostitutes ironically come from the police who are vested with the responsibility to protect the citizens of their

jurisdictions (Fick, 2006). Most arrests made by the police of prostitutes and other vulnerable women are characterized by the violation of human rights (Agbibo, 2015), such as forced sexual intercourse and demands as payment for releasing arrested prostitutes in exchange for sex (Agbibo, 2015; Fick, 2006).

In addition, the police frequently engage in sexual harassment of female prostitutes; this entails lifting prostitutes' clothes and caressing their private parts, whereby any resistance on the part of the prostitute is met with physical assault from the police. It comes in the form of a punch, slap, kick, choking with the hands, hitting with a baton or the rear part of a gun, and using pepper spray (Fick, 2006). In other words, the police almost always use excessive force toward prostitutes as a way of intimidating and humiliating them.

Furthermore, during an arrest, the police violate the laws they swore to protect by verbally abusing prostitutes by using derogatory characterizations such as *ashawo kobo kobo*, a word that stands for a prostitute who is worth nothing. This usually includes extortion demands and threats to expose the women's privacy if they fail to receive the money with which the prostitute is supposed to appease them (Fick, 2006). Even worse, the police are usually nonchalant toward protecting prostitutes from corrupt police officers and other predators in society (Kangiwa, 2015).

People who are stressed usually develop maladaptive coping skills when they do not have the ability and/or resources to manage that stress more effectively (Bittner et al., 2011). This stress has an adverse effect on individuals' overall well-being, including that of prostitutes. There is the need to advocate for increased availability of victim mental

health treatment as well as support for better economic/legal opportunities for prostitutes, rather than legalizing prostitution that could further lead them to crime because it is a stressor on their emotional health (Nwakanma, 2015).

Prostitutes have little to no formal education and few skills that would allow them to improve their economic conditions, circumstances that stem from poverty, parental neglect, and/or dysfunctional homes. Kangiwa (2015) established that legislation might not be able to stop prostitution, but the Nigerian government could create more opportunities to eradicate poverty and educate a larger section of society. These prostitutes have reasons, such as the need for survival due to abject poverty and a lack of skills/opportunities to obtain legal jobs, for continually engaging in the high-risk business of prostitution. They are often victimized by those with whom they associate, including clients (Firmin et al., 2013). The prostitutes dislike the work of a sex worker but what can begin as a means of survival can gradually become an addictive lifestyle. The prostitutes can also develop a sense of helplessness that makes it impossible for them to change those elements of their lives that led to a life of prostitution (Firmin et al., (2013). Firmin et al. (2013) advocated for positive ways in which healthy self-esteem can be built, allowing the women to establish long-term goals requiring delayed gratification.

Most indoor prostitutes are at high risk of experiencing violence, so they devise ways to handle it in the course of their business (Bungay & Guta, 2018). Indoor prostitutes are those who contact and meet with clients within the confines of a house (either their homes or the client's), practices that reduce the risks of being victimized or arrested by the police as can happen when working the streets. This also protects the

privacy of both the prostitute and the client. However, while avoiding confrontations with law enforcement, prostitutes still face risks such as financial exploitation, nonpayment, robbery, physical and sexual assault, and deceptive condom removal (Bungay & Guta, 2018).

Prostitution is a business that promotes criminality and drug use among adolescent prostitutes in Lagos, Nigeria, who inevitably suffer some form of physical or psychological stress (Olofinbiyi, S., Olofinbiyi, B., & Oyefara, 2016). Adolescent prostitutes habitually engage in drug use as a form of coping with the psychological distress of guilt and rejection they face from social discrimination and violence as a result of being perceived as deviants (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016). Further, Nigerian prostitutes are constantly victimized by the police, who intimidate them into submitting to their frequently demeaning demands (Agbibo, 2015). That generally breeds antagonism, fear, and lack of public trust toward the police.

Problem Statement

Nigerian police are not trusted by the population they are sworn to protect because they often assault, manipulate, exploit, and humiliate citizens as a form of intimidation to achieve a personal gain, especially from those who are involved in illegal activities like prostitution (Agbibo, 2015; Akinlabi, 2017; Babatunde, 2017). Prostitutes are at greater risk of police ill-treatment because their work is not only illegal, but also one that renders them vulnerable to other forms of crime. Victimization by the police advances these women's psychological distress, making it necessary for them to look for ways to cope; being able to do so can lessen psychological distress (Chao, 2011). Some of them develop

adaptive coping strategies such as planning and directing/controlling their relationships with people they believe could be of risk to them, as well as applying this strategy in managing the spaces they share with those individuals (Bungay & Guta, 2018). However, little is known about how prostitutes use such strategies. Prostitutes can gradually become addicted to a lifestyle of immediate gratification, which includes the use of drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism; however, that also promotes low self-esteem because it deprives them of feeling as if they are in control (Firmin et al., 2013). Prostitutes in Nigeria often adapt to short-term forms of coping that have a long-term negative impact on their psychological health, especially when the factors encouraging the behavior are still present, e.g., drug abuse and criminality (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016). This exacerbates their psychological distress because they continue to be exposed to the risks of the prostitution trade.

Prostitutes prefer to conform to giving a bribe rather than risk police officers' violation of their privacy, for instance by driving women who have been arrested around half-naked in their patrol van to be publicly displayed and shamed (Agbibo, 2015). There is the need to understand the experiences prostitutes face at the hands of the police because it may provide a better understanding of their psychological health and consequent decision making (Akinlabi & Murphy, 2018). Furthermore, there is a gap in understanding the adaptive coping strategies that prostitutes use, and that area needs to be researched (Bungay & Guta, 2018).

The frequently maladaptive coping strategies used by prostitutes are aimed at reducing and/or avoiding the stress that comes from police victimization. Some of these

strategies may seem harmless in the short term but could have negative long-term psychological effects (Moritz et al., 2016). Ironically, prostitutes' ability to effectively cope with the stress of police victimization may be related to their inability to obtain legal employment that would eliminate the source of that stress (Nwakanma, 2015). Most prostitutes have low self-esteem due to mental distress, something they seek to overcome by developing a false sense of self-worth. Prostitutes utilize maladaptive coping strategies because those strategies are easy ways to adapt to their uncomfortable environment through developing habits that emotionally disassociate them from their low self-esteem (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016). Prostitutes need some form of recuperative therapy to attain a sense of self-value; they especially need economic help to find jobs that would allow them to live decent lives (Kangiwa, 2015). The motives of the government systems should be to help them overcome the addictions that lead to a risky lifestyle, which makes them more vulnerable to physical and sexual exploitation and involvement in criminal activities. When society ensures this, there would be less police deviance toward prostitutes because the law would protect them as victims.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with this victimization. Most prostitutes experience depression and anxiety that gradually decreases their self-esteem and negatively affects their physical health (Heilemann & Santhiveeran, 2011). I studied the ways in which prostitutes develop individual strategies of adaptive coping to deal with the stress of police victimization, and illuminated the

factors that may encourage or discourage the possibility of the prostitute quitting when continuing becomes too risky. I also examined their maladaptive coping strategies that negatively affect their physical and psychological health. Such maladaptive coping strategies include drug/substance use, reckless sexual and criminal behavior, and personality disorders (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016). There are variations in how each prostitute copes with the stress of police victimization in Nigeria, and they differ based on the history of drug/substance addiction, age, location, social support, financial status, availability, and the length of time the prostitute has spent prostituting him/herself. These factors reflect the individuality of the participant in determining how they may be susceptible to resilience and coping (Kangiwa, 2015).

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the experience of Nigerian prostitutes who are victimized by the police?

RQ2: How do Nigerian prostitutes use adaptive coping skills to cope with police victimization?

Theoretical Framework

The theory of distress tolerance posits that a sustained state of stress leads to psychologically aversive effects on individuals; this could promote negative psychopathology symptoms such as uncomfortable bodily sensations, as well as entrenching an intolerance to emotional and somatic sensations (Zvolensky Bernstein, & Vujanovic, 2011). A sustained state of stress compels them to seek frequently negative, alternative ways of becoming psychologically sensitive. Most people have a fixed level

of stress tolerance in their physical and psychological disposition; when this exceeds the affordable limit but continues, the individual becomes irrational and can pose a high level of risk to themselves and others (Scott-Tilley et al., 2010). Quickly stabilizing distress tolerance to the degree bearable to the individual causes strain and can lead to addictions, risky behavior, and consistent avoidance of the stressor or, in some cases, to a deep sense of hopelessness, which renders them vulnerable to various forms of exploitation (Zvolensky Bernstein, & Vujanovic, 2011). The theory of distress tolerance was used to understand how the norms among female prostitutes can move toward reducing the psychological pain that comes with police victimization. The factors affecting prostitutes can influence the level of stress they suffer as they attempt to develop self-efficacy by assuming negative coping strategies or, in contrast, avoid stress by implementing positive stress management interventions (Wells & Anderson, 2011). Understanding the experience of female prostitutes who are victimized by the police could explain how these prostitutes interpret their experiences and how they choose to embrace or avoid those experiences.

Nature of the Study

I explored how prostitutes in Nigeria interpret the meaning and essence of their negative lived experiences and the ways in which they respond by attempting to avoid those experiences. I used the qualitative phenomenological tradition (see Patton, 2015), an approach that is used to understand the concepts and words used when interpreting the meaning of the contexts of relationships and cultures of a population involved with specific phenomena (Berg & Lune, 2012). Such studies require the creation of an

integrated perspective, which is derived from various interpretations and understanding; this means there is no finality to a specific interpretation because the present and past experiences of a population are considered in conjunction with their future expectations (J. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Using a phenomenological approach in qualitative research will ensure a reflective view of the description of the lived experiences of the target population (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). In the current study, the expressions of prostitutes was used to explain their experiences and consequent responses when trying to avoid police victimization in addition to its impact on them. Data were collected and analyzed through semistructured open-ended phone interviews with prostitutes in Nigeria to understand how they describe and respond to deviant police conduct toward them.

Definitions

Adaptive coping: Adaptive coping is the act of developing strategies for solving problems through realistically recognizing and appraising them toward changing possible negative emotional reactions as a means of preventing adverse effects on the body. This act could be counterproductive or maladaptive if the means of ameliorating stress is dysfunctional (Moritz et al., 2016).

Economic deprivation: Economic deprivation refers to the lack of physical resources that are considered to be the necessities of life in society (Kawalerowicz & Biggs, 2015).

Physical adaptation: Physical adaptation is the imminent behavioral and environmental changes an individual applies to themselves and the environment to foster

their ability to survive against all present unfavorable conditions (Abu-Dakka et al., 2015).

Police victimization: Police victimization is a form of police corruption and misuse of authority to discriminate against a person or persons for personal gain. Police victimization could be in the form of physical (sexual assault, bribery, and selective enforcement of justice) or mental (insults, embarrassments, and public verbal humiliations (Agbiboa, 2015; Hope, 2016).

Prostitute: The word *prostitute* has many connotations but, for the purposes of this study, was defined by social standards used to reference individuals of either gender who are engaged in the business of prostitution business. In this study, a prostitute was defined as a female who works in the sex industry and has sexual intercourse and/or other forms of sexual intimacy in exchange for money or other benefits from clients (see Ackerman, 2016).

Social support: Social support is what is provided by a person or a network of people who make human capital available, which is used as a physical and psychological resource by an individual during a life crisis to help encourage their development of a positive self-image (Lin, 2017).

Assumptions

A key assumption I made at the start of my research was that female prostitutes, who constitute the higher percentage of prostitutes in Nigeria, experience victimization at the hands of the police. Secondly, I assumed that the participants would answer my interview questions honestly and to the best of their abilities when discussing their

experiences with the police. I assured them as to their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time and that their personal information would be kept secret by using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Third, as the researcher, I assumed that I would be sufficiently reflective to effectively manage my biases. Finally, I assumed that there would be an adequate number of participants to provide sufficient data to identify the necessary themes for the study.

Scope and Delimitations

The participants of this study were female prostitutes in Abuja, Nigeria. I concentrated on the female street and indoor prostitutes in brothels; I did not recruit participants from some of the large hotels where prostitutes often lodge because it is difficult to distinguish them from the hotels' other customers. Most big cities in Nigeria, such as Abuja, Port Harcourt, Lagos, and Kano, have a large concentration of prostitutes and police. Therefore, the findings of this study may be transferred to other cities and possibly to other countries in Africa. My study did not include male prostitutes in Nigeria; they are more difficult to identify due to the societal scorn that requires them to become even more covert in their daily lives.

Limitations

Some major challenges I could have faced with participants were trust issues and shame. I needed to create a cordial rapport with them to prevent them from being afraid of participating in the research. These prostitutes are often victimized, so they needed to know I was not trying to get them arrested, especially because they are always at risk of being assaulted by the police or kidnapped by strangers for monetary or ritual purposes

(D.J Smith, 2001). Also, most of the interviews were conducted via phone because that would help to conceal their identity and allow me to remain safe. That also encouraged them to be relaxed rather than be ashamed, as most do not like to be known as prostitutes to avoid the judgment of others. As advantageous as this form of contact was, it eliminated the opportunity for me to gauge the physical expressions that otherwise would have informed my study.

Significance

I explored how the victimization prostitutes encounter weighs on and pushes them to seek unconventional ways of ameliorating a problem that is unfair and demeaning to human dignity, as well as helping Nigerian society as a whole to understand the challenges female prostitutes face. Society does not readily see the physical and psychological problems these female prostitutes face; rather, people focus on the purported shame they bring to society (Nwakanma, 2015). Most prostitutes in Nigeria come from very poor backgrounds; however, they are often and overtly perceived as people who are lazy, greedy, and have no regard for morals (Kangiwa, 2015). Although a comparatively minor crime, prostitution is considered an offense of nuisance action that could foster other crimes. Its illegality renders the population vulnerable and one that is often exploited even as they are covertly accepted by many in society.

The research findings could help the police learn to treat prostitutes better; it may also enable Nigerians to see how discrimination could be a collective problem and encourage them to proffer effective solutions to curb such inhumane treatment (see Babatunde, 2017). With mutual respect, the prostitutes may get better treatment, which

may lead to improved psychological health. The research findings could also promote improved public health and justice in prostitutes' communities, as there would be fewer female prostitutes and a healthier psychological mindset because they would garner improved self-esteem.

Summary

There is sufficient information on the victimization of prostitutes by clients, strangers, and even the police, but, prior to the research conducted for this study, there was a decided lack of information on how prostitutes cope with the stress and effectively function within their environment. This study focused on the experiences of Nigerian female prostitutes who are victimized by police. Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study, supplied background information, highlighted the gap in the literature, and presented the problem statement and the purpose of the study. The nature of the study, the process used to collect data and answer the research questions, and the theoretical framework to support the study were also included, as were definitions of key terms and explanations of the underlying assumptions, scope, delimitations/limitations, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature search strategies, a description of the gap in the literature, a detailed explanation of the framework of the study, and a review of the relevant literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The corruption of the Nigerian police has negatively affected the public view on police credibility, as the citizens believe that their actions are aimed at humiliating/exploiting both innocent and criminal suspects (Agbiboa, 2015; Akinlabi, 2017; Babatunde, 2017). Although prostitution is a crime in Nigeria, it seems like an alternative when it comes to the economic survival of some of the female prostitutes in Nigeria, and most of them try to defy the law by adamantly engaging in the trade against all the odds. This has rendered many prostitutes vulnerable to victimization and exploitation by the police and/or other criminals who believe prostitutes are helpless. Prostitutes in Nigeria suffer psychological distress as a result of police victimization, which has led them to seek ways of ameliorating its impact (Chao, 2011). That response does not necessarily come from any knowledge of coping strategies but is rather a form of adaptive behavior learned through experience. It seems to actively work for them, irrespective of any long-term negative impacts on their general well-being (Staddon, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police, how they experience this risk, and how they use adaptive coping strategies to deal with that victimization. The need to understand this stems from the frequent stress prostitutes face that often leads to depression, anxiety, and deterioration of their self-esteem, which could also result in poor physical health and even suicidal ideation or actions (Heilemann & Santhiveeran, 2011). In this study, I examined the forms of victimization prostitutes face from the police and how they choose

to cope with the stress through individual adaptation. One major section of the literature review includes the literature search strategy, including keywords and databases used to find literature relevant to this study. A discussion of the theoretical foundation of the study offers an explanation of the analytical foundations of the study through the lens of a relevant theory toward rationalizing major hypotheses. The next section is the literature review related to key variables. The cited studies show the approaches and controversies that other researchers have addressed in attempting to study the current or similar research problem.

Literature Search Strategy

My literature search strategy involved identifying keywords essential to my topic, which included *female prostitutes, police and sexual assault, decriminalization of prostitution, sex work, coping and prostitution, prostitution and sexual violence, prostitution, and substance abuse and female streetwalkers*. I used Boolean operators such as AND, NOT, and OR to broaden the scope of my search, which helped to connect different concepts like legalization or decriminalization of prostitution, drug abuse, and prostitution, female prostitutes and victimization, sex work and human trafficking, Nigerian police and public confidence, sex addiction and economic deprivation, prostitution and social stratification, prostitution and mental health, and physical adaptation and sex work. The use of YouTube video searches for relevant documentary videos on the topic was considered as well.

I used limiters, peer-reviewed journals, and publication data to narrow my literature search to that which was relevant to my research, and also used psychology,

criminal justice, and social work databases. These databases included PsycINFO, with specific fields such as victimology, mental health, and behavioral addiction; SocINDEX and ProQuest with specific fields such as criminology, public health and safety, and criminal justice; and Google Scholar and JSTOR with specific fields like developing countries, social science, African studies, and administration. I ensured that the most relevant publications reviewed were not more than 5 years past the publication date.

Theoretical Foundation

Distress tolerance theory was postulated by Zvolensky, Bernstein, and Vujanovic (2011), with distress tolerance being the ability to withstand increasingly stressful situations without developing maladaptive behaviors. The researchers found that the distress tolerance of an individual could be increased when trying to prevent the propensity of developing maladaptive behavior by engaging in stress management activities such as physical exercise and relaxation. These activities help to reduce the impact of distress felt by the individual, thereby increasing their distress tolerance and reducing sensitivity toward the stressor. Zvolensky, Bernstein, and Vujanovic (2011) explained that when individuals are exposed to a stressful event for a certain period of time, that stressor could lead them to become psychologically aversive; their distress could cause psychopathology that creates a negative emotional state for the individual and fosters uncomfortable bodily sensations/intolerance to healthy emotional and somatic experiences. The troubled individual is compelled to adopt various means to ameliorate the stress in the short term.

There are a number of factors that contribute to distress tolerance, including self-regulation, personality, coping, and experiential avoidance. Each of these can be measured based on major concepts, which include the tolerance of ambiguity, which is an attempt to understand how people perceive and process complicated, unclear, or foreign stimuli from a situation and making sense of it (Zvolensky, Leyro, Bernstein, & Vujanovic, 2011). The concept is largely based on the individual's personality traits. Second is the intolerance of uncertainty, a theory that explains how people emotionally accept or reject situations when they have less control over their environment. Emotional intolerance to an uncertain situation comes from the anxiety of having to rely on predictions of future events, which could be inaccurate and consequently bring negative circumstances. Uncertainty could lead to a possible positive future outcome, or could also lead to worry about a possible negative future outcome, thereby creating stress for the individual (Dugas et al., 2004). This concept is based on the cognitive-behavioral ability of an individual to interpret their current environment and how it may influence the future. The third is discomfort intolerance, which is understood to be the individual differences among people related to their capacity to bear uncomfortable physical stimuli. This concept has to do with the degree of pain (bodily sensations) being felt by an individual when exposed to the discomfort that triggers them to seek ways to avoid it; discomfort intolerance could be due to the fear, discomfort, and anxiety they have identified with the stimuli, leading to perpetuation of a sense of self-efficacy (adaptive or maladaptive) toward managing these threatening states (Schmidt et al., 2006). Last is the distress tolerance for negative emotional states, which is the ability of individuals to

endure negative psychological states. It is multidimensional as it encompasses some form of all the other concepts. It involves the ability to tolerate negative emotion, the assessment and regulation of emotion to deem it acceptable or not, and the amount of attention that is spent on a specific negative emotion absorbed in the individual (Simons & Gaher, 2005).

Trujillo et al. (2017) argued that lower levels of distress tolerance are associated with dependence, negative reinforcement, and cravings. Vujanovic et al. (2016) went further to explain that people who suffer from PTSD symptoms may be susceptible to substance dependency if they have a low distress tolerance when they are exposed to alarming situations. The ways in which prostitutes interpret their experiences with the police based on current trade and personal factors could explain how they choose to adapt to the psychological distress through low or high distress tolerance.

Literature Review

The experience of prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police is rooted in factors that influence the way they attempt to describe their experiences. This literature review provides insight into how certain variables contribute to the experiences prostitutes have when being victimized by the police, and how those experiences influence their physical and psychological well-being.

Foundation of Police Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption in public institutions has troubled many countries but, compared to other state institutions, police corruption is widely acknowledged to be quite prevalent. The Nigerian police is an institution that was established to protect the people and

maintain law and order, but has become an ironic shadow of what its values should be. The two major forms of police corruption in Nigeria are the abuse of state powers and the use of excessive force when handling citizens, violence that is often meted out on the poor and vulnerable (Aborisade, 2019; Agbibo, 2015; Coetzee et al., 2017; Essien, 2012). The Nigerian police are widely known for human rights abuses ranging from bribery, torture, and physical and sexual assault to unlawful arrest and detention, and in some cases extrajudicial killings (Agbibo, 2015).

The foundation of police corruption in Nigeria was created by the systematic and deliberate institutional and structural failure of the British colonialists to create an egalitarian police service that would protect the interests of the people, rather than a police force that was used to protect the economic and political interests of the British colonialists (Agbibo, 2015). Today, this flaw in the role of police social priorities toward the citizenry, one that is characterized by violence, intimidation, and exploitation, has been used to foster the interests of those in political power (Agbibo, 2015). This trend was further legitimized by the more than 30 years of military rule in Nigeria. The British colonialists, when trying to create a collective consolidation of economic and political power in Nigeria, centralized the police force under one executive authority, in contrast to the previous system. Prior to their arrival, each tribe in Nigeria had their approaches to maintaining law and order, based on the people's tradition to ensure justice and fairness. However, the colonialists had no regard for those systems, compromising the people's culture and making it difficult to hold the police accountable for how they conducted investigations and arrests; therefore, so long as those in the upper administrative echelon

were satisfied, the system was good (Agbibo, 2015). This created a systematic form of corruption in the Nigerian police. A major contributing factor to police corruption in Nigeria is government funding; the police force does not receive sufficient funds, making it difficult for them to obtain the equipment they need to protect the citizens and maintain the law (Ojedokun, 2014). This has led to abuse of power, especially in taking a bribe and relegation of their core duties as police officers to protect and serve the public. This vice has been imbibed over the years by other law enforcement agencies to the extent that some law enforcement officers are affiliated with criminals and terrorist groups (Ojedokun, 2014).

According to Ojo (2014), police corruption persists in the Nigerian police due to poor police administrative policies targeted toward ensuring police accountability, which has resulted in police brutality, questionable recruitment and promotion, poor police–community relations, inadequate police funding, poor judgment during investigations, and bribery. The major factor contributing to police corruption in Nigeria is the centralization of police administrative/executive authority in the states and federal government, imitating the colonial days. That has led to mismanagement and lack of public oversight control over police operations and has resulted in gross police corruption (Amusan & Saka, 2018).

The Nigerian police department is a public institution with widespread and systemic corruption. That corruption is difficult to curb as it has been somewhat normalized among the police department and has been perpetuated as a way of doing the job; it also tolerated to a great extent by the society (Amusan & Saka, 2018).

Prostitution and the Law

Prostitution has not been determined to be an offense in Nigeria (with the exception of northern Nigeria in which Sharia law is practiced) because there is no explicit law against it. However, the Nigerian Criminal Code Act (2019) criminalizes other related offenses that promote prostitution. Sections 223, 224, and 225A of the code ban procuring female prostitutes, defilement by threat, and administration of drugs on girls and women (Nigerian Criminal Code Act, 2019). Similar offenses include indecent dressing, loitering with indecent behavior at night, and sexual assault. When the police arrest prostitutes, they are not tried for prostitution but rather for sexual, provocative behavior and illegal assembly.

Citizens, mostly females, who are found to have violated these offenses are imprisoned for a month or pay a fine, or both. These laws are vague because there is no distinction between encroaching on basic human rights and individuals engaging in prostitution. The Nigerian Criminal Code Act (2019) states that:

Any person who procures a girl or woman who is under the age of eighteen years to have an unlawful carnal connection with any other person or persons either in Nigeria or elsewhere, or procures a woman or girl to leave Nigeria with the intent that she may become an inmate of a brothel elsewhere or in Nigeria. (section 223)

It also states that a woman or girl who leaves her usual place of residence in Nigeria to work as a prostitute elsewhere is guilty of a misdemeanor and is liable for a 2-year term of imprisonment. A person cannot be convicted of any of the offenses defined in the

section upon the uncorroborated testimony of one witness (Nigerian Criminal Code Act, 2019).

Although the Penal Code Act of the Federal Capital Territory 1990, Abuja, Nigeria, criminalizes prostitution and solicitation of prostitution, it is difficult to prove in court that an offender was prostituting. It is even more difficult in cases of men who solicit the services of prostitutes, so they are rarely arrested. In contrast, girls and women engaged in prostitution are arrested but charged with lesser offenses that are readily dismissed. Invariably, the loophole in determining cases of prostitution hinders proper law enforcement and has led to vague interpretations, which are used to exploit prostitutes and their clients (Aborisade, 2019). A law is said to be legitimate when it has its authority rooted in the will and rights of the existence of citizens to live freely, but corruption within the Nigerian police departments has a ripple effect on how the law is perceived as being legitimate or not.

Since Nigeria resumed democracy in 1999 after a long period of military rule, the citizens of the country have anticipated the establishment of an egalitarian society in which all interest groups are equally considered in policy and lawmaking. The activities of the police toward prostitutes are perceived as being illegitimate because most people see them as being unfair. This shows that, to its citizens, Nigeria is regarded as a secular state in which people should live free from any form of marginalization (Sharpe, 2017). Many Nigerians believe law enforcement agencies foster mindless compulsion of its citizens, which thwarts procedural justice and erodes legitimacy, but when police legitimacy is based on fairness and procedural justice, it will promote perceived

legitimacy and foster law-abiding behavior among people in the society (Akinlabi & Murphy, 2018). Prostitution is criminalized in most countries, which has led to the victimization of prostitutes because the law already determines them to be offenders. Matthews (2015) argued that prostitution is seen as a victimless crime in some countries, but the notion does not hold because most prostitutes engage in the trade due to the pressure of fulfilling personal needs or because they are being forced by an exploiter such as a pimp or human trafficker.

Role of Public Opinion in Police Victimization of Prostitutes

Efforts made when determining the role of public opinion on issues concerning prostitution and police victimization can be difficult, as most people involved in prostitution do not readily admit to it for fear of being prosecuted or persecuted by society. Factors that influence public opinion on issues concerning prostitution often go unexamined because of social discrepancies based on gender, demography, and cultural, political, religious, and socioeconomic inclinations in most societies where prostitution is practiced (Pudifin & Bosch, 2012). These factors determine whether society tolerates prostitution or criminalizes it. This was further explained by Daniels (2012) who argued that prostitution thrives as a result of male domination over females, which has led to the relegation of females' emotional needs and has caused physical and psychological assault and the objectification of women as a tool for sexual pleasure. In countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, prostitution is banned, yet the sex trade covertly thrives and has come under serious condemnation by the international community (M. Smith, Muftić, Deljkić, & Grubb, 2015). Most citizens have passive attitudes toward or beliefs about

those who engage in the trade. The influence of these social beliefs on the activities of prostitution shows how it can thrive in a country, regardless of all moral/legal efforts to curb it. It is the same situation in Nigeria; although there is a high sense of morality in the Nigerian society, most people believe prostitution should be regulated rather than criminalized (except, as mentioned, in areas having a higher population of Muslims that are governed according to Sharia law). The prostitution market is large, even though most policymakers deny it. Denial enables society and police to trivialize or ignore the problems faced by prostitutes. Prostitution is perceived by many as a social vice that must have a quasi-form of legalization since there are pressing social challenges facing women in society. These may include marginalization of women, violent crimes due to illiteracy, unemployment, HIV/AIDS epidemic, and poverty. Prostitution is seen as a lesser vice compared to the ones mentioned above; it is somewhat tolerated, and laws relating to prostitution are only partially and occasionally imposed, usually when there are serious complaints by the community about public disruption or nuisance caused by the activities of prostitutes in an area (Pudifin & Bosch, 2012). This was made evident by the study conducted by Klambauer (2018) to determine how street and indoor prostitutes perceive their interactions with the police. The study was a qualitative one with 49 sex workers in England interviewed; his research found that indoor sex workers had far more positive experiences with the police than did outdoor sex workers. Police activities towards indoor prostitutes were more of protective policing, in spite of the stigma they suffer, because they are more discreet than the street prostitutes who experienced enforcement policing.

According to Flynn et al. (2018), structural violence comprises the social processes that promote inequalities and create distress as a result of an individual's inability to achieve their basic needs. It is encouraged through symbolic domination perpetrated by institutional and everyday violence. Structural violence facilitates the victimization of vulnerable females through social exclusion, i.e., the process of breaking social links within social life that leads to deprivation. It is done through unjust policies and organizational practices that erode basic rights to social institutions such as job opportunities, friends/family life, security, healthcare, and housing. Flynn et al. (2018) further explained social exclusion manifests in society through institutions like child protective services; these institutions may rob vulnerable children of self-esteem, in the process of trying to get them a safe home. It is enough emotional stress/pain to these children as they change homes that they should not be labeled by society in the course of achieving social recognition.

The children face social discrimination that hinders their chances of achieving some of their physical and psychological needs. In Nigeria, most people coming from a less privileged background are thought to have few skills and lack the financial capability to secure a job; thus, they are disqualified from the labor market. They cannot secure government welfare packages, housing, or even healthcare as they are discriminated against by those who work with these institutions because they are not socially and economically stable enough to demand these rights. The second factor that facilitates social violence is social control; it is institutional violence that identifies and punishes those who are perceived as being less worthy of social recognition because they have

been labeled as “bad” (Flynn et al., 2018). Profiling/labeling of people who experience social violence leads to social harassment and police victimization/brutality (Tyler et al., 2009). It could also lead to social rebellion, causing persistent delinquent behavior and depression among this population. Other forms of social control may include structural domination such as public humiliation, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault based on certain highly revered social criteria that this population may lack (Buchwald et al., 2005). Sexual assault and harassment, especially the rape of prostitutes, are often ignored or downplayed as prostitutes are viewed as either drug users, homeless, or people in dire need of financial help that should get a better job (Buchwald et al., 2005).

Nigerian citizens do not regard the police as their protector mainly because of their lack of professionalism toward enforcing the law, exhibiting justice and fairness. The police intimidate the poor/less privileged so much that they are often attacked when they attempt to make arrests in some neighborhoods; citizens no longer report incidents of crime, but rather handle the situation by either stoning, beating or even killing the individual who gravely offends them (Ayodele & Aderinto, 2014). Most people who live in poor neighborhoods sympathize with prostitutes when the police victimize them.

Given the socio-economic problems many unemployed females in Nigeria face, the need to respect human rights and, in particular, protect the rights of these sex workers is greatly needed; a former deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu made a motion aimed at the enactment of a bill in the Nigerian Senate for the regularization of the prostitution industry, but the bill was tabled (Nwakanma, 2015). Government disinterest in addressing the problem has resulted in the continued victimization of prostitutes by the

police and many others who exploit their vulnerability as offenders in the eyes of the law. Many prostitutes perceive police victimization as the risk of being involved in the prostitution trade, even though they know that they suffer human rights abuses such as extortion and rape in the course of being engaged with prostitution (Aborisade, 2019). Prostitutes strive to be cooperative with the police (or at least live an adaptive lifestyle) even as they deal with all of psychological and physical violations that they suffer. Further, they are all too aware of the reality that they have no support system to physically and legally protect them when they try to resist any form of police victimization against them (Aborisade, 2019). With the high rates of violence against prostitutes, the criminal justice system and police should have a custodial role in the protection of female sex workers, whether sex work is legal or not (Footer et al., 2019).

Effects of Socioeconomic Factors on Prostitution

A prostitute is a person (male or female) who accepts money in exchange for their sexual services (García, 2016). However, the current study focuses on female street prostitutes. Society largely views prostitution as a form of deviant behavior, but it is only a backdrop to a problem that authorities have failed to address. The uneven distribution of social opportunities among individuals and groups promotes physical/psychological problems. The social norms of society are violated by the prostitute, as their ways do not conform to what is acceptable by society (García, 2016). The life of a prostitute is characterized by negative lifestyle addictions, secrecy, and stigmatization. It makes prostitutes vulnerable to being victimized by the police and criminals alike.

Prostitution is an anomaly that originates from the breakdown of social bonding, particularly in terms of family background. Many people who engage in prostitution suffer or have suffered parental neglect, separation, emotional problems, unsupportive family members, and other related problems that promote deviant behavior. Further, when individuals are detached from kinship due to migration to mostly urban places or areas rift with social violence, there tends to be an erosion of those values that bind an individual to the need to conform to acceptable social standards (Farvid & Glass, 2014).

One form of structural violence that explains why people engage in prostitution stems from economic need. When prostitutes exchange pleasure for other economic valuables such as money, fashion wears, electronic devices, more profitable business referrals, and even real estate properties and vehicles from clients, it indicates that she is only motivated to exchange sex for any valuable reward that would enable a good standard of living. Clients enjoy the bodily pleasures that the prostitute is ready to offer at a fee because the client is often more financially secure even as both parties remain emotionally indifferent (Bucher et al., 2015). Clearly, the need to attain economic stability is one reason people engage in prostitution. However, it is not always the only reason as there are other underlying factors that have been proffered by many feminists. Scharff (2016) researched the inconsistent and unfounded nature of feminism, arguing that feminism has diverse social connotations and explaining that women who do not view themselves as feminists support some aspect of feminism but perceive it as either valuable/no longer necessary while others grasp it as ideological and even extreme as it is relative to social powers attributed to men assuming dominance over women. With the

goal of understanding their engagement with feminism, Scharff conducted a study with young female participants from Germany and Britain. Using discourse analysis and performativity theory to analyze 40 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with young women of various sexual orientations, races, classes, and religious backgrounds, Scharff introduced two interpretive repertoires embedded in a post-feminist sensibility that were central to her participants' involvement with feminism. The first repertoire claimed feminism was important in the past but was no longer needed now that gender equality has been achieved, while the second rejected feminism, claiming that it was extreme. Based on these two interpretive repertoires, 30 out of 40 research participants did not want to be identified as feminists, while eight others did.

The support for feminism, whether active or passive, comes from the notion that women suffer gender discrimination as they do not have the same opportunities men enjoy in choosing not to be objectified or to adhere to certain dominant social roles. This creates social pressure on individuals to become prostitutes and also shows gender equality has not been achieved. It steers toward women being objectified and deprives them of meaningful sexual interaction apart from that which is defined by men through prostitution.

Social variables such as gender, family, social culture, religion, and politics in the social structure of society should be considered when explaining the role of sexuality within a specific social environment and as it pertains to human interactions such as prostitution. The social and economic environment in which prostitution is practiced

influences how people view prostitution, why they may be motivated to be involved with it, and also how they relate to those who engage in prostitution.

In another study based on extensive participation observations, a review of case files and over one hundred interviews, Dewey, Germain, and Germain, (2016) focused primarily on the relationship between Denver-based street prostitutes and the criminal justice-social services alliance. The researchers made a case against that alliance, which purports to be therapeutic but is often simply punitive. The researchers explained that the militating array of social actors that comprise the therapeutic efforts of the criminal justice and social system is rooted in the negative relationship between prostitutes and police officers, social workers, judges, court counselors, treatment providers, and probation officers. Those working within both the criminal justice and social services systems tend to judge prostitutes from the standpoint of their being a menace to society, ignoring the fact that those individuals are most times socially and economically disadvantaged. That lessens the possibility of a cordial relationship developing between them. The poor quality of these social networks and actors' relationships has made it difficult for prostitutes to completely exit prostitution, given their characteristic social vulnerabilities, especially poverty, which is rarely addressed during treatment and policy interventions.

There are many forms of prostitution in Nigeria. The magnitude of the economic reward prostitutes receive from their clients is based on how educated or skilled the prostitute may be, as well as serving as a yardstick with which clients measure a prostitute's desperation for money. Another issue influencing the amount clients are

willing to pay is the relative scarcity of prostitutes, which can result in a sex worker's being paid more or less (Kangiwa, 2015). Prostitution thrives more in the large cities than in rural areas, because the wealthy often reside in the latter and there are greater opportunities to make more money. Indoor prostitutes are located in the densely populated slum areas of these urban environments, where they reside in brothels, guest houses, and hotels. These indoor prostitutes usually become street prostitutes who walk the streets in rich and busy urban neighborhoods at night to solicit clients. Indoor prostitutes decide to become street prostitutes because it increases their chances of meeting as many clients as possible, compared to their remaining indoors (Bungay & Guta, 2018), despite the risk of being victimized at night is higher than the daytime. In a qualitative study, Bungay and Guta (2018) used an interpretive thematic technique to examine indoor sex workers' strategies in preventing workplace violence and influential socio-structural conditions. From 2014 to 2016, 85 sex workers in British Columbia, Canada were interviewed, 45%-75% of whom had experienced workplace violence ranging from nonpayment, robbery, physical assault, and deceptive condom removal to exploitation by the police and clients. They concluded that the strategies the sex workers to reduce or prevent violence against themselves were effective and creative but were limited by the lack of legal, safety, and public health regulation, in addition to the stigma associated with sex work.

Kangiwa (2015) explained that the experience of a person becoming a prostitute starts with the individual establishing contacts with someone already in the business, and spending some time learning how to avoid or manage factors that could pose a risk to

their welfare in the course of prostituting. After these are learned, the prostitute tries to develop contact with potential clients. The modes of operation of prostitutes tend to be categorized into four groups. The first group is the streetwalker, who tends to assume the greatest risks because they solicit clients on the street and other public places, mostly at night to avoid being arrested by the police rather than to ensure their anonymity (Fawole et al., 2011). They are almost always arrested and made to pay a fine as penalty. The second group includes those who live in brothels in slum areas that are under the protection of a pimp, who is usually the manager of the business (Fawole et al., 2011). The pimp collects an agreed-upon fee from the prostitute for rent and protection from violent clients and the police. Members of the third group usually operate as call girls who live in a rented apartment or with family and makes contact with their clients through hotel employees with whom they have a good relationship and who they sometimes tip (Fawole et al., 2011). These hotel workers connect them with clients who require their services, and the sexual act is done in the client's hotel room or the prostitutes' apartment. It is important to mention that groups mentioned above are young people, mostly students at higher institution/universities who trade sex with both strangers and known acquaintances for favors, e.g., good grades from lecturers, that contribute to making their life more comfortable (Fawole et al., 2011). The fourth group prostitutes is often comprised of independent and professional prostitutes who may be much older and who may even have other jobs aside from prostitution (Fawole et al., 2011). They live in wealthy neighborhoods in Nigeria and are referred to as high-class "call girls" by clients who may have solicited their services in the past. These clients may

be visitors in large cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt attending conferences and who appreciate the high level of anonymity this group of prostitutes is known to provide.

Prostitution is not confined to the single and young but includes a growing population of divorced, single mothers, widows, and women separated from their husbands (Kangiwa, 2015). Most prostitutes have the characteristic of moving from one major city to the other as a means of managing the risk of the trade. With this, they learn attitudes and behaviors that gradually becomes their role in society. Prostitution in Africa and particularly in Nigeria, is different from that in Western societies as it carries less of the stigma associated with the trade. The stigma associated with prostitution in Africa is mainly from the negative attitude of people who have high moral and religious standards against prostitution. Prostitutes usually avoid this by ensuring their activities are kept secret by remaining free to managing themselves rather than being controlled by a procurer (pimp). By so doing, the prostitutes are not easily identified and are tolerated by society. The prostitution trade in Africa is less organized and quite open, unlike as is seen in the West (Kangiwa, 2015); prostitutes enjoy the liberty of discreetly entering and exiting the business whenever and wherever they desire. This may be possible due to the poor economic situation in the region.

The reasons why people engage in prostitution in Nigeria are commonly based on economic and social factors. Some women become prostitutes as a result of their desire for sexual pleasure with someone who also pays them, thus providing a dual benefit. They may also be scornful of relationships due to sexual violence against them that led to

psychological trauma, preventing them from developing any real sense of intimacy apart from mere pleasure for money. Those who embrace sexual promiscuity do so to satisfy their sexual appetite, while others may have been traumatized by a violent sexual experience, such as sexual abuse at a very young age (Fawole et al., 2011). Some prostitutes believe no harm could befall them since their work involves pleasure attached to a reward that they readily embrace (Kangiwa, 2015). A few became prostitutes at a very young age, before they could sufficiently assess the consequences of their actions; instead, they sought adventure in deviant associations (Okonkwo, 2018).

Furthermore, social cultures that, for some reason, are not sustained tend to erode, making way for the deterioration of social standards (Liu, 2017). These social cultures are the peoples' ways of life that reinforce self-esteem and a sense of belongingness, which in turn produces acceptable behavior among members of society. The erosion of social standards could happen in a family where desertion/rejection, divorce, and incapacitation of parents makes it difficult for children to receive parental affection and guidance, leading them to become prostitutes trying to seek social acceptance with the prostitution population. It could also happen when people migrate to an unfamiliar location, particularly the urban environments, and strive toward quickly attaining a better life and thereby engaging in prostitution (Liu, 2017).

Most communities in which prostitutes live do not necessarily victimize but discriminate against the prostitutes because their activities offend the cultural, religious, and moral values of society. In addition, people believe that prostitution is a way of life that increases the incidence of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in a

community, which is appalling to many members of society. Health workers in Nigeria are known to use derogatory names for prostitutes and treat them without respect. Members of communities avoid being identified with prostitutes since it makes them seem less deserving of respect among certain groups, while clients are known to harass and use violence against prostitutes (Thobejane & Mafira, 2018). These perceptions influence law enforcement practices that commonly involve prostitutes. When the police enforce the law in a discriminatory ways, it enables the women's continued victimization from both clients and society at large.

Prostitution and Criminality

Many researchers have established that there is a correlation between prostitution and criminality have found that some prostitutes steal from their clients during and after a sexual act, with the worst of it being that the clients cannot call the police since prostitution is criminalized (*Afrol News*, 2001). In areas where prostitution thrives, there is a tendency for the environment to become a hub for criminals who may perpetrate violence, rob, rape, and even kill innocent people, hide from the police and abuse and sell illicit drugs. The problem is a result of the covert nature of the prostitution business that often provides a safe harbor for criminals who may be running from the police. It also makes the prostitutes crime suspects in the event of a crime, as some do prostitutes aid and abet crimes and have been found to harbor criminals and to safeguard weapons and other valuables for them (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016).

Currently, prostitutes typically become involved with drug abuse and criminality through the Internet (social media), criminally-minded friends, and some modeling and

pornography agencies. These criminals obtain help from prostitutes by offering them the social support they desperately seek and do not receive due to the structural violence inherent in the society that portrays them as deviants and less privileged members of the society. Some researchers believe that since prostitutes use drugs to evade the reality of their psychological pain, they must be involved with criminality, but the findings are not consistent (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016).

According to Goodley (2016), when individuals must deal with some form of disability, society itself is bound to be socially impaired through the growth of criminality. Prostitution and other survival crimes have become a social menace because of the failure of the social system to care for those who suffer physical and psychological disabilities. The fact that the prostitution population is likely a youthful and active one that is prone to exuberance/social demands, social barriers to a minority population like prostitutes are a civil right concern. Fostered by the culture of the environment, these barriers serve to deny prostitutes emotional and economic independence (Olofinbiyi et al., 2019). Social pressure has led some to commit crimes such as the use and sale of illegal substances, the intentional spread of sexually transmitted diseases, aiding/abetting criminals, reckless abortion, murder, street fighting, theft, and becoming a public nuisance.

Female Prostitutes and Police Victimization

Steinberg (2015) carried out a study to investigate violence perpetrated by and against prostitutes in eighteenth-century London. Although prostitutes were both perpetrators and victims of violence, the social environment was more scandalized by

prostitutes when they physically assaulted or verbally insulted potential male clients. It prompted the authorities to perceive prostitution as a societal vice, hence its criminalization, while relegating the vulnerability of prostitutes toward being regarded as ideal victims. Police victimization of female prostitutes stems from that criminalization, as well as that of related acts, as offenses under state laws. However, the effective enforcement of prostitution laws has proven to be difficult since, as with most crimes, cases of prostitution must be proven in court. Prostitution cases often hang between violating human rights and being accused of trying to prosecute an individual (Sharpe, 2017) unjustly. With this information, the Nigerian police often do not attempt to prove prostitution cases; instead, they charge the prostitute a fine or often collect a bribe as a warning or a deterrence (Aborisade, 2019).

In a study conducted by Jorgensen (2018) with the goal of understanding the attitude of police when it comes to legislating morality, the researcher argued that the way in which police perceive prostitution is likely to influence how they enforce laws prohibiting it. The study measured police officers' attitudes about prostitution-related offenses and examined the relationships between those beliefs and their personal as well as professional characteristics. Police officers were found to display passive and punitive attitudes to prostitution offenses because characteristics of officers such as age, gender, political ideology, and education had more influence on those attitudes than professional elements such as experience with the vice or narcotics unit. These variations have led police officers to be lax in enforcing prostitution laws since the offense is largely based on morality (personal opinion) rather than legality (public opinion).

Since prostitution is not legalized in many countries, prostitutes are at the mercy of the police, who often refer to offenses against them as victimless crimes because there is little social value placed on the victims. The police believe it is a crime committed against a population who are already determined to be offenders, so victim-blaming is more likely to be evidenced by members of law enforcement a crime involves a prostitute as the victim (Matthews, 2015). In a study conducted by Dewey and St. Germain (2014), the researchers investigated the cultural beliefs that contribute to prostitutes' interactions with police and the tools prostitutes use to navigate their struggles with homelessness, addiction, and the daily violence of the street. Based on 50 interviews that took place over three years of ethnographic research with 100 female street-based sex workers in Denver, Colorado, findings indicated prostitutes believed their arrests by the police to be indiscriminate, so there is need to avoid arrest by respecting police officers so that they do not abuse their authority in the course of dealing with them, and developing an attachment with potential clients. Since prostitution considered to be a crime in many areas of the world, prostitutes tend to mitigate unavoidable risks such as police encounters; they try to please the police to avoid being victimized even as they maintain a cordial relationship with potential clients whose social value would help to dilute their own vulnerabilities. The anxiety expressed by prostitutes to avoid stigmatization in society then becomes highly visible and rather constitutes an increased risk of negative police encounters/clients.

Society is constantly trying to establish the identity of an ideal victim in the quest to determine who deserves to be compensated for a loss. Prostitutes are rarely considered

as such because they are not perceived to be a vulnerable population based on what has been determined by society to be legitimate or socially acceptable. This criterion is what qualifies the individual to be socially judged as an ideal victim or not (Schwöbel-Patel, 2018).

Sherman (2019), using baseline data collected between April 2016 to January 2017 from 250 female prostitutes and the Police Promoting Health in Risky Environments office based in Baltimore, Maryland, administered questionnaires based on abusive police encounters and experiences of client-perpetrated violence. The results indicated that frequent exposures to abusive police practices appeared to contribute to an environment where client-perpetrated violence is regularly experienced. This is evidently caused by abusive police practices reinforcing the belief among clients that the police do not protect prostitutes against violence, and that prostitutes lack significant social value since they are offenders. For prostitutes who abuse drugs, police exposure and client-perpetrated violence were worse as the police would press additional charges against them for abusing drugs and probable other crimes. It was also apparent from the data that clients could become aggressive if they also used drugs and prostitutes may be too intoxicated to avoid the risks of being victimized.

To some extent, offenders who victimize prostitutes believe that since those women are already socially marginalized, there is no chance of their being prosecuted when they commit crimes against them. As a result, most prostitutes face chronic and continual victimization because acts of violence against this population are ignored by society (Matthews, 2015).

Prostitutes are less likely to receive police assistance because they are not seen as “true victims” who are blameless/worthy of sympathy (Matthews, 2015). As backdrop, prostitutes are among the largest population of people who are victimized by the police and society; however, their victimization has not or rarely been socially recognized because the prostitution trade is determined to be illegal by the state (Matthews, 2015). The stigmatization of prostitutes has greatly increased their vulnerability, especially for the street-based prostitutes in Nigeria. Since the Nigerian criminal code does not expressly criminalize prostitution, most charges brought against prostitutes by the police are tilted toward the criminal association, illegal drug sales, human trafficking, etc., even when they have insufficient evidence to prove the prostitute was involved in those crimes. Therefore, most arrests of prostitutes are aimed at intimidating them to comply with the police officer’s demands or to deter those who may want to consider starting up the trade (Aborisade, 2019).

Street-based prostitutes are more at risk of police and public victimization than indoor prostitutes. They are often soft targets of people who may be criminals (serial killers, sex offenders, extremist cult members, and armed robbers) who pose as clients and abduct them (Barnard, 2015; Wahab & Panichelli, 2013). Prostitutes in drug houses and those who practice exotic dancing are typically in danger of being assaulted. Prostitutes are often at risk of being victimized by their clients, pimps, and intimate partners, but the police account for 24 percent of those who rape street-based prostitutes (Aborisade, 2019). In a study conducted by Aborisade and Oni (2019), the researchers explained that in the course of arresting, detaining and interrogating female suspects, the

Nigerian police breach constitutional provisions, police regulatory acts, criminal code, and human rights. Using a mixed-method approach, the researchers collected and analyzed quantitative data from 186 female inmates, from which 27 inmates were interviewed, at the Female Maximum and Medium Security Prisons in Lagos, Nigeria. Aborisade and Oni's (2019) findings showed that these violations came in the form of failure to comply with the anti-torture act, sexual assault, deception, intimidation, and extortion. 84% (157) stated they were abused and only 31% of the 186 participants indicated that they suffered no form of abuse during their encounter with the police. These prostitutes suffered many forms of verbal abuse from the police, especially "ashawo," a derogatory word for a cheap whore (Aborisade & Oni, 2019). During arrest and interrogation, they were threatened with a gun, slapped, kicked, beaten, and even injured by police officers without any form of restraint. Some prostitutes recounted incidents of rape and sexual assault by police officers who claimed they could help them to be free of charges against them (Aborisade & Oni, 2019). There were also cases in which prostitutes were locked in the same cell as male inmates as a form of psychological harassment, especially that there is the likelihood of them being repeatedly raped by those inmates (Aborisade & Oni, 2019). The vulnerability of prostitutes toward being victimized is increased if they abuse drugs, are careless about their safety during working hours, and are economically desperate and are easily coerced to engage in non-traditional sex acts (Aborisade, 2019).

Police officers and other law enforcement officials carelessly victimize prostitutes at will since they know the law does not protect them. Many prostitutes have reported

having been punched, injured, extorted, beaten, and raped by the police. The police who are the first point of contact in times of trouble or danger has been reported to be the main perpetrators of structural violence against prostitutes. In South Africa, for example, where prostitution has been outright criminalized in the country since 1957, police have exploited the opportunity to demand that prostitutes pay illegal and outrageous fees when they are arrested (Mgbako, 2011). The police regularly seize condoms found in the prostitutes' possession to use as evidence. They demand sex in exchange for a jail pass or release and use excessive force to the point of physical and sexual assault. The police are known to encourage harassment and abuse of female and male prostitutes, as well as those who are transgender; this even extends to female victims who are not engaged in prostitution (Mgbako, 2011).

In countries such as Canada, where prostitution is legal, prostitutes still experience passive forms of police victimization like using violence in the displacing of prostitutes away from city metropolis (Shannon et al., 2009). Prostitutes who have been arrested and imprisoned in Britain have experienced higher rates of police victimization than those who have not been detained (Platt et al., 2011).

It is ironic that prostitutes in India have reported being raped by law enforcement officials slightly more frequently than criminals are reported to have done in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Ministry of Health, 2015). Police victimization of sex workers in Nigeria usually goes undocumented, although there are many incidents of this vice been reported in human rights organizations and the newspapers. Prostitutes who are arrested by the police during night patrols in major streets in Nigeria are often threatened into giving free

sex to police officers. These police officers see the act as bonuses attached to being on the night duty (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Most arrests made by the police have little to do with enforcing the law because the prostitutes are never charged with any offense; instead, they are victimized by the police into meeting their selfish demands of material or sexual bribe (Human Right Watch, 2010).

Since street prostitutes are primary targets of sexual violence and are also prone to suffering even greater psychological distress, they attempt to learn about the various risks of the trade and how to avoid them without the need for police intervention. Most prostitutes believe that the violence they face is not solely as a result of the covert nature of their type of work but also of the social stigma associated with being a prostitute (Constantinou, 2017). In a study on stigma, decriminalization, and violence against street-based sex workers, Armstrong (2019) argued that the decriminalization of sex work would have little influence on the stigmatization of prostitutes, which has continuously fostered violence against them. A serious change in public attitude is required, especially in changing the language used for those engaged with sex work. Studies were done using thematic analysis with initial in-depth interviews with five street-based prostitutes and two sex-worker rights advocates from New Zealand. According to Bhana, Crewe and Aggleton (2019), stigma and violence against prostitutes could be traced from how sex education is taught to young people. In their article on sex, sexuality, and education in South Africa, the researchers argued that sexuality was and still is taught through the domain of suffering, risk, and the innocence of women who are victims of male sexuality and patriarchy that was promoted by racial separation. As a result of this notion, risk and

shame are prioritized over pleasure, desire, curiosity, and excitement. Women are then socially pressured to suppress any form of sexual expression since society perceives that to be shameful. Further, men are socially vilified, and homosexuality perceived as un-African, and any woman who dares to negate this ideology is labeled a deviant and stigmatized. This leads to violence against prostitutes because it reinforces the belief that a woman who has sexual relations outside wedlock brings dishonor to her family and society.

In a study conducted by Constantinou (2017) to assess the effectiveness of the European Union Law in safeguarding European prostitutes who were trafficked, the law was found to be counterproductive in ensuring the safety of European prostitutes, even from the police during undercover police operations. This could be traced to the overwhelming stigma placed on prostitutes that erodes any policy changes to curb the violence against them. The police are supposed to protect and serve the public by upholding constitutional laws that were primarily enacted to ensure basic human rights are respected, but this is far from the case in Nigeria. In a quantitative study by Coetzee et al. (2017), 508 female participants from Soweto, South Africa were used as voluntary participants to determine how multiple partner victimization increased the vulnerability of prostitutes in terms of contracting HIV. The researchers noted that in South Africa, 18.5 percent of prostitute victimization comes from law enforcement, especially the police who exploit them by various means when arrested. This can include sex bribery in the form of forcing the prostitutes to have sexual intercourse with the police or to perform sexual acts in exchange for their release from jail when arrested; any resistance from the

prostitute is met with physical assault. Verbal abuse and extortion are frequently used by the police to humiliate prostitutes and their clients into agreeing with their illegal demands or risk being exposed/face false charges. Islam and Conigrave (2008) studied the trends in HIV and related risk behaviors among recognized high-risk groups in Bangladesh. Policy documents and conference abstracts and proceedings were reviewed, as well as journal publications. Their findings revealed that periodic examination of recognized high-risk groups shows that HIV prevalence has been increasing steadily, particularly among drug users and prostitutes/clients, and there is a great need to curb its spread from those groups to the general population. The habit of police officers seeking sexual bribes from prostitutes and their clients increases the incidence of this spread, especially for officers who supposedly are in committed sexual relationships.

Nigerian advocates of legalization argue that the commission of an act of prostitution is difficult to prove by the police and public prosecutors, making it even more challenging to enforce prostitution laws. The only way to do so is by engaging in undercover operations, with police officers posing as clients while engaging in prostitution, which is illegal (Aborisade, 2019). Further, some officers are corrupt, having previously victimized the prostitutes; they engage in unprofessional acts, and the abuse of prostitutes persists. One major problem with enforcing prostitution laws is the onus of determining which street prostitutes are being exploited by others in exchange for drugs, shelter, or food and those who are economically and socially stable but engage in prostitution to make extra money (Constantinou, 2017). Considering this problem is important for government officials who want to enact laws that regulate prostitution; such

laws would reveal prostitutes who suffer imminent risks in the trade, especially those who are the targets of human trafficking and child labor. Undoubtedly, both categories of prostitutes are victims of a destructive lifestyle because they are unprotected by legal and social standards (Walters, 2011). Prostitutes are a highly vulnerable population, especially because they lack police protection and social support to effectively demand their constitutional and human rights without intimidation and stigmatization (Coetzee et al., 2017).

The Nigerian police are rarely charged for violating the rights of a prostitute; the courts perceive these women's grievances to be trivial with officers maintaining that excessive force is necessary when making a "reasonable arrest", even if the prostitute was tricked into soliciting an officer posing as a potential client. This trend has led to making prostitutes an even more vulnerable population, open to injustice in society (Constantinou, 2017). Therefore, as the Nigerian law ignores their rights, these women have adapted to a lifestyle of prostitution as a way to survive while managing the risks of the trade by any means accessible and affordable.

Victims' Dependency on Prostitution as a Lifestyle

Prostitution can be an addictive lifestyle. It is a result of a specific pattern of behavior required in facilitating the trade. Bodkin et al. (2015) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of the Persons At-Risk program targeted to ensure the better treatment of prostitutes in society. The population sample was collected from Ontario, Canada, and London where the program was initiated; a total of 17 interviews were conducted, 14 on present and former prostitutes and three on health workers and law

enforcement officials. It was found that prostitutes were prone to mental illnesses, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and addictions and had the greatest need for safety and flexible health care. The researchers explained that prostitutes often partner with people with whom they share the same values, such as the need to ensure secrecy and safety among the larger society, the need to use drugs and other substances to ameliorate psychological pain and the sense of belongingness towards surviving social discrimination irrespective of their backgrounds. These interactions could occur in brothels and escort services, acting as motivators to the kind of lifestyle to which they were predisposed (Firmin et al., 2013). Some prostitutes have feelings of being trapped in the lifestyle that they cannot easily leave for fear of being unable to make the amount of money they make in the prostitution field as they might not have a diploma. The prostitutes risk their health and safety in the course of the trade and sometimes for a lowered pay (Hartigan-O'Connor, 2016; Varma et al., 2015).

Many prostitutes are aware of and accept the risks, which has led them to seek ways of adapting to their lifestyle that will provide them with the best chance of surviving any situation (Gerassi, 2015). These adaptive behaviors may include using their intuition to determine the level of violence a client could pose and carrying out transactions with clients in public places to avoid being hurt. Also, one growing adaptive behavior many prostitutes around the world develop even in Nigeria is the habit of carrying weapons (guns, knives, pepper-spray) to ensure their safety if or when they are attacked (Dewey et al., 2016). Many of the prostitutes in Nigeria believe it is much easier to make efforts to protect their physical health as it is practical and difficult to protect

their psychological health in the course of prostitution. It has made many prostitutes believe their engagement with prostitution is of their free will rather than from psychological strain, which is debatable depending on the factors that motivate prostitutes to enter and remain in the trade, but most times, is a dire need (Nwakanma, 2015).

According to Benoit et al. (2018), the relationship between prostitution and self-esteem is complex, as seen in a study they conducted to determine the effect of prostitution on self-esteem using a sample of 218 Canadian prostitutes. Using thematic analysis, the researchers found three factors that influenced the self-esteem of prostitutes: self-worth (viewing oneself in a favorable light), authenticity (being one's true self) and self-efficacy (physical and social competency). The strength of these psychological factors could determine if the prostitute would experience any psychological strain as a result of being engaged in the trade. Low self-esteem is a result of negative psychological wellbeing. It develops in prostitutes when they believe they are socially disadvantaged when compared with others and that they need to change their behavior to achieve social acceptance or the desired reward. Also, when prostitutes believe that they cannot do anything to improve their physical and social abilities, they are prone to suffering psychological strain, which leads to low self-esteem. Since they lack the motivation to achieve, they most times seek short-term gratification.

Firmin et al. (2013) argued that women who are involved with prostitution have a tendency to focus on short-term gratification and reward and are motivated by extrinsic values that are short term lived, making it difficult to build self-esteem to the degree that would allow them to leave the prostitution trade. Also, the kind of associations and

interactions that prostitutes have encourages them to continue in the lifestyle as it promotes immediate gratification. In the study conducted by Firmin et al. (2013) that consisted of 25 women who were serving jail terms for street prostitution in the United States, the participants expressed dislike for the lifestyle in which they were engaged, especially in terms of the humiliation they experienced, but found it difficult to desist from engaging in prostitution. Some reasons that motivate prostitutes to maintain the prostitution lifestyle are the flexibility and the luxurious experience they gain from those who can afford to provide for all their needs. They get to choose who, where, and when to transact sex for money or favors and also the excitement that comes with belonging to a common family on the streets that cares for them even though, in reality, they know it is not true. One major problem with a lifestyle of prostitution is that it does not meet the criteria for a psychological disorder, so other problems, such as drug/substance abuse, are given greater priority during psychological interventions. However, such interventions have little to contribute when it comes to helping them overcome feelings of being trapped in the lifestyle (Firmin et al., 2013).

From Physical Violence to Psychological Stress

Women who are engaged in prostitution face serious physical violence, not only at the hands of the police but also from clients who believe they can have their way without being held accountable for their actions/violent behavior. In Nigeria, this is even worse because they are soft targets for fraudsters and money ritualists who usually kill and mutilate their body parts for ritual purposes (D. J. Smith, 2001). The prostitutes are often severely beaten/raped by clients, which leaves the women emotionally empty and

traumatized, with a sense of fear and hopelessness. Many times, they have to grapple with the need to endure being humiliated and may also require treatment for sexually transmitted diseases because they had no opportunity to use protection. Most prostitutes accept physical and sexual assault as a part of their daily life. They nurture feelings of self-efficacy through adaptive coping with the goal of preventing future physical or sexual assault; however, this violence not only results in physical harm but also deep emotional pain from shame/humiliation, which in turn breeds depression and low self-esteem (Firmin et al., 2013). Prostitutes attempt to control their environment and both their own and their clients' behavior by choosing where to trade sex, keeping weapons within their reach but concealed from clients, hiding valuables, informing other prostitutes of their movement and even getting someone to check on them when visiting clients or when a client visits their apartment. The time spent with clients has the dual goal of building intimacy and assessing the level of risk that they could pose to the prostitute. Adaptive coping strategies may also include discreetly prostituting at expensive hotels where physical security is high, drug abuse to drown the psychological pain, emotional disassociation from clients, choosing a pimp or beneficial male partner who could provide them with safety, and self-isolation to avoid unnecessary risks.

Prostitutes are usually disrespected and consequently victimized by those with whom they associate daily. They dislike the lifestyle of selling sex but believed it to be a means of survival and a way to gain a degree of emotional satisfaction, and their addiction to the lifestyle promotes prostitution. These prostitutes nurture a sense of helplessness against consistently engaging in the lifestyle that leads to prostitution

because they lack the social and financial support to exit the business, even if they wanted to. Some prostitutes are already dependent on the lifestyle of drug and substance abuse, deceptive living, and everyday reliance on other prostitutes and clients to survive. Although prostitutes may admit to having a temporary sense of psychological satisfaction, this only serves as psychological reinforcement towards the act of emotional detachment from their clients during sex and also from having decent self-esteem. Prostitutes exercise this act to ameliorate the stress they suffer from the risky lifestyle; they fake an emotional connection with a client so that their actions seem less of a meaningful reality (Firmin et al., 2013). Many prostitutes express the desire to leave the prostitution lifestyle as it is exhausting but are unhappy that they do not know how to go about it and have no reliable social support (family/friend) to help them. Prostitution involves a form of intimacy that is much different from providing labor, and it robs women of a sense of self and identity because it is not a business that one enters having other choices but one done out of pressure or coercion (Matthews, 2015). It lowers the self-esteem of the prostitute because they are pressured to make decisions that are not of their free will but what the client demands of them (Matthews, 2015). This psychological strain leads to habitual drug abuse, poor diet, and criminal behavior. Some choose not to avoid police victimization in an attempt to gain police sympathy or, eventually, even protection. Emotional distress may gradually destroy normal relationships since the strain is a regular and basic part of those who have had stressful life events (Dich et al., 2019). Most prostitutes try to disassociate themselves from emotional entanglement with strangers as a form of dealing with emotional pain. It helps to make them feel that

prostitution is like any other job that can be done without personal involvement. This coping strategy, most times, ends in the prostitutes having a poor sense of self and identity, leading to depression, suicidal feelings, anxiety, and trauma. This psychological strain eventually leads to chronic health problems (Dich et al. 2019). Those health problems may include ulcers, diarrhea, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis, tuberculosis, HIV, menstrual and ovarian problems (Matthews, 2015).

Stress sufferers, such as prostitutes who may have had low self-esteem before further victimization by the police, usually have a better level of distress tolerance and may have devised more adaptive strategies of dealing with emotional pain (Zvolensky, Leyro, Bernstein & Vujanovic, 2011). The many forms of victimization that prostitutes experience gradually lead to a lack of self-confidence, deterioration of their physical health and difficulty with building trust with others and sustaining any meaningful social relationship. Many prostitutes distance themselves from their friends and family, even their own children (Matthews, 2015).

Coping Strategies and Challenges Adapted/Experienced by Prostitutes When Avoiding the Stress of Police Victimization

Up to 75 percent of prostitutes experience high rates of workplace victimization; that has compelled them to develop creative and adaptive behaviors that can enable them to prevent violence and reduce the distress they face at work (Bungay & Guta, 2018). However, these coping strategies can prove to be maladaptive or ineffective since sex work is stigmatized and sex workers lack legal recourse as well as occupational health regulations to ensure their safety (Bungay & Guta, 2018). Maladaptive coping strategies

may include overeating, drug, and substance abuse, adopting a deceptive lifestyle, and criminality. The victimization of prostitutes has many adverse health problems, such as depression that could lead to suicidal behaviors, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV due to careless sexual encounters, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which prevents them from living lives free from anxiety, unplanned pregnancies leading to abortions or single motherhood and even death.

The criminalization of prostitution increases the risk of these women being victimized as it limits their ability to effectively safeguard them from forms of victimization that could result in mental illness, homelessness, and economic instability. As mentioned, streetwalkers are more at risk of being victimized than are indoor prostitutes, although there is a growing risk of police and client victimization of those women as well (Bungay & Guta, 2018). The degree of this risk is largely determined by where they choose to solicit clients. Although most prostitutes choose to work independently, there are limits to their ability to choose the conditions of their services, based on the location of the trade, fees charged, and the use of condoms. These elements vary according to levels of financial security which, in turn, influence the rate of victimization and the coping strategies adopted (Bungay & Guta, 2018).

Bungay and Guta (2018) conducted a study to examine indoor sex workers' strategies to prevent workplace violence and control socio-structural conditions. They found that prostitutes prevent victimization and cope with its effects through navigating both physical spaces and client relationships. Firstly, in navigating physical spaces, prostitutes were careful about placing potential weapons around their apartments so that,

in the event of an assault against them, those weapons accessible to them but not to the client. To provide security, some women allowed friends to remain inconspicuously in their apartment, while others utilised security cameras to monitor clients. They may also avoid going to clients' homes and lower-end hotels and tip hotel staff so they will check on them while they are with a client.

Secondly, in navigating client relationships, in their company, prostitutes attempt to create an atmosphere of serenity to relax tension that could arise and build trust to prevent any violent behavior. Prostitutes who use illicit substances try to conceal them so the client does not become intoxicated, which could lead to aggression that could also end in violent behavior. The collection of money upfront is another strategy used to avoid potential victimization and violence and also to prevent being robbed by a client (Bungay & Guta, 2018).

Aborisade (2019) carried out a qualitative study on police abuse of sex workers in Nigeria, collecting data from 56 prostitutes in the commercial city of Ibadan. Using content analysis of in-depth interviews, the researcher found that police abuse of prostitutes was rampant and came in the form of extortion of valuables, particularly money, verbal intimidation, sexual assault, and physical man-handling. The weight of this victimization led to adaptive coping strategies among prostitutes. This included dating police officers who would protect them from other police officers, frequent changes of location for sex work, having sex to create a false sense of intimacy to mitigate emotional pain, seeking medical help for physical injuries, allying with prostitutes whose experience had taught them ways to prevent victimization and using

drugs and other intoxicating substances to suppress the physical and psychological pain from victimization. Some prostitutes even used charms to protect themselves from being victimized spiritually. Some participants in Aborisade's (2019) study reported they had turned to religion, placing their hope in God as the only One who cared about them.

The main reason street prostitutes do not readily want to become indoor prostitutes, although they know the risk of victimization is higher on the streets, is that they prefer to meet more clients on the street and make more money while retaining the power to effectively run away from a victimizer or call for help (Aborisade, 2019). Victimization is mostly perpetrated by individuals who have some form of power over the needs of prostitutes. These include their landlords, who often act as pimps or brothel managers/owners, clients, and the police. Since prostitutes do not know who their clients are, they tend to apply caution to every potential client they meet.

The prostitutes in Nigeria believe that being victimized by strangers is an inevitable part of their job and may not always occur. Therefore, the prostitutes do not worry much about the psychological pain caused by police victimization; their concern is over physical injuries caused by police brutality. However, those who express this opinion are those that have not experienced gruesome forms of police victimization (Aborisade, 2019). Privacy concerns are of importance, with many prostitutes worried about ensuring their privacy to avoid being shamed when seeking medical attention if they contract sexually transmitted diseases or when they sustain injuries from the client or police victimization (Aborisade, 2019). In some cases, when information is made public,

prostitutes have lost decent job opportunities, have been evicted from a rented apartment, or arrested by the police.

Research Methods

It is important to use a research method that will adequately explore the issues being studied. Qualitative studies aim to identify patterns, themes, beliefs, and present models that provide an initial understanding of the phenomenon. The essential characteristic of qualitative research is the description, aimed at conveying information with the detail and specificity necessary to accurately convey the experience with exact interpretation from a sample population. The following researchers have studied similar topics using a methodology comparable to mine.

In a qualitative study conducted by Lalor (2000) with the goal of analyzing the victimization of juvenile prostitutes in Ethiopia, the researcher had a sample of 30 prostitutes between the ages of 14 and 18, who were interviewed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the period 1992-93. There were variations in the degree of their involvement in prostitution. Some occasionally practiced prostitution, while others had completely exited the sex trade. Data were collected from interviewees in a residential rehabilitation unit for ex-prostitutes who were asked about their experiences, e.g., had they been beaten, stolen from and/or sexually assaulted. The researcher found that most girls in Ethiopia began prostituting themselves between the ages of 10 to 17. Almost half of the interviewees were divided between engaging in prostitution and street begging but acknowledged the greater economic incentive of prostitution compared to begging. A third of the interview participants had been raped; a quarter had become pregnant from

prostitution/rape, and half of the interview participants did not use contraception for one reason or the other. 93% and 83% respectively of interviewees reported to have been victims of beatings and theft.

Klambauer (2018) conducted a qualitative study to understand sex workers' perception of encounters with police officers in the indoor and outdoor sectors in England. The sample population was comprised of 49 participants who were interviewed in England between September 2015 and March 2016. Participants were recruited through online forums and blogs, sex workers' organizations, grass-roots initiatives, and the NHS Sexual Health Clinic 'Open Doors'. In addition to the sex workers who responded to research advertisements, several individuals who worked with sex workers were also interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and focused on the participants' experiences in the sex industry; the questions were aimed at determining their knowledge of the legal framework, their views on the current laws on prostitution and their enforcement, their experiences with the police and their attitudes towards the police and other public authorities. In-depth interviews were held and lasted between 15 and 120 minutes, with an average length of 45 minutes. The researcher also put in 50 hours of observation on outreach with the NHS service Open Doors and Spires Streetlink that were conducted in the London boroughs of Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, and Brixton. The researcher found that indoor prostitutes had a more greater positive experience with the police than did street prostitutes. In spite of this, indoor prostitutes still resented the police and believed that their experiences with them has no real positive impact on mitigating their stigmatized status.

Aborisade (2019) conducted a qualitative study to understand police abuse of sex workers; the study was done in the commercial city of Ibadan, Nigeria, where commercial sex work thrives. The researcher's goal was to understand the legal implications of sex work, as well as other social challenges like the violation of human rights, police corruption, and other crimes against prostitutes in Nigeria. The sample population included street prostitutes who worked around major streets and red light areas in the city. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in cars, on the street and in local bars between 10 pm-2 am with street prostitutes who had willingly approached the researcher. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from the 56 street-based sex workers who agreed to be part of the study. The researcher found that the police usually abused street prostitutes through extortion of valuables, sexual assault, physical manhandling, and verbal assault. Also, the frequent sexual abuse of prostitutes without a condom by the police is a growing public health concern for the Nigerian authorities.

In terms of my own research, I conducted a qualitative study and collected data primarily from street prostitutes but also included indoor prostitutes to ensure the data are comprehensive. The study was done using semi-structured interviews conducted through phone. Data analysis was done using a phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences and adaptive strategies used by prostitutes who have been victimized by the Nigerian police.

Summary

The vague nature of the prostitution laws in Nigeria has created an avenue for the exploitation and victimization of prostitutes by the police and clients alike. Police victimization of prostitutes is gradually being normalized by society. Failing to hold the police accountable for their conduct is not only a gross marginalization of a special population but also represents an erosion of the social values members of law enforcement have sworn to uphold. Both society in general and the police in particular should ensure social support for economically and socially disadvantaged populations such as prostitutes; left unchecked, failure to do so could lead to public health and security problems. When prostitutes are not charged but rather exploited for personal gain by the police, it means those officers are also criminals and unfit to protect and serve the public. The major reason for police victimization of prostitutes is the inherent social violence in the society that criminalizes and stigmatizes prostitutes instead of seeking ways to rehabilitate them. Although initially used as a means of survival, the prostitution lifestyle has become addictive to many. Continuing on in the trade has led some of the women to develop personal coping strategies to prevent victimization, and to adopt criminality as a lifestyle to find social and financial support from more dangerous criminals.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police, and how they use adaptive coping strategies to deal with this victimization. Most prostitutes experience depression and anxiety that gradually decreases their self-esteem and negatively affects their physical health (Heilemann & Santhiveeran, 2011). Through this research, I examined the ways in which prostitutes develop individual strategies of adaptive coping with the stress of police victimization and explored the factors that may encourage or discourage the possibility of the prostitute quitting when it becomes too risky.

In my study, I explained how the victimization of prostitutes could compel them to seek ways of reducing the unfair and demeaning treatment they get from the police. This study may help Nigerians understand the challenges prostitutes suffer that cause them physical and psychological distress (see Nwakanma, 2015). Most prostitutes in Nigeria are females from a less privileged background, so they seek prostitution as a form of survival. However, Nigerians perceive prostitutes as people who are lazy, greedy, and have no regard for morals (Kangiwa, 2015). Prostitution is illegal in Nigeria, but many citizens and members of law enforcement consider it an offense of nuisance action that promotes other crimes. This renders those who engage in prostitution vulnerable and often exploited by society and law enforcement because the business is illegal but yet covertly accepted by many in society. In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the research design and methodology. I also explain why I chose the phenomenological

method for the study, the recruitment process for participants, the procedures for data collection, the data analysis plan, and issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were the focus of the study:

RQ1: What is the experience of Nigerian prostitutes who are victimized by the police?

RQ2: How do Nigerian prostitutes use adaptive coping skills to cope with police victimization?

The two central phenomena in this study were police victimization and adaptive coping. Police victimization is a form of corruption and misuse of authority to discriminate against a person for personal gain. Police victimization could be physical (sexual assault, bribery, and selective enforcement of justice) or mental (insults, embarrassments, and public verbal humiliations; Agbiboa, 2015; Hope, 2016). Adaptive coping is the act of developing strategies to solve problems through recognizing and appraising them with the goal of avoiding possible negative emotional reactions as a means of preventing adverse effects on the body. This act could be counterproductive or, if the means of ameliorating stress is dysfunctional, maladaptive (Moritz et al., 2016).

When answering the research questions, I needed to be careful in choosing a methodology that would ensure the quality of data interpretation. Quantitative methodology is used to examine associations between variables to describe consequent outcomes (Patton, 2015). In contrast, the goal of qualitative methodology is to learn the meaning ascribed to life experiences and how those experiences are perceived (J. A.

Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). Unlike quantitative studies, which address the correlation among specific factors and how they influence a certain population, qualitative studies address the experiences of people through explaining them from the cognitive viewpoint of the affected population. How people perceive an experience determines how they react to it (Patton, 2015). The current study addressed the meaning Nigerian prostitutes attach to their experience of victimization by the police and how it psychologically influences their behavior toward coping. Because a phenomenological study focuses on the structure of subjective experience and consciousness (Patton, 2015), I determined it to be the most appropriate qualitative approach to examine the experiences of Nigerian female prostitutes who are victimized by police. Its use would help improve understanding of how the participants construct, interpret, and attach meaning and modify their behavior toward specific experiences (see Spiers et al., 2020).

According to Alase (2017), interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is rooted in studying the experiences of people (phenomenology) and rigorously inferring from these experiences an interpretation of the specific meaning of a phenomenon (hermeneutics). The IPA is used to understand experiences and to give idiographic explanations in specific contexts because experiences have a tendency to vary based on a specific environment or individual, but the researcher looks for patterns that explain the phenomenon being studied (J. Smith et al., 2009). The interpretation of a phenomenon could vary from person to person, another reason the IPA approach is the most appropriate for this study in that it requires the researcher to vigorously explore, describe, interpret, and position the experiences of participants as they relate to a certain factor (J.

A. Smith, 2015). One has to understand a specific phenomenon to interpret how it may be affecting other areas of an individual's life that may be affecting their realities even as it remains unknown to them (J. Smith et al., 2009).

The current study constituted the interpretation of the victimization experiences of Nigerian prostitutes in the hands of the police. Obtaining rich data requires that detailed accounts of the experiences are freely expressed and are reflective of the ideas behind the topic being discussed (J. A. Smith, 2015). Using IPA requires commitment to collecting such data so that they reflect the unique meaning each experience attributes to a phenomenon and how it has a significant impact on participants' daily lives. Without the reflective experiences obtained by the researcher from the study participants, the researcher cannot interpret experiential phenomena in such a way as to obtain a trustworthy meaning.

For the current study, other qualitative approaches that were considered included case study, biography, and ethnography. However, they were rejected because they were not adequately reflective of the experiences of the participants. The case study approach is too specific to certain individuals and experiences. It impedes flexibility when obtaining a holistic account of experiences, while biography may have the opposite effect because such studies are specific to the unique experiences of an individual rather than an entire population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Both may have been too rigid for determining interpretations that were appropriate and insightful; the case study approach is directed toward a common problem affecting a specific population sample, while the biography approach is focused on a certain individual rather than a population. The

ethnographic approach would have focused on understanding a unique cultural system that affects the experiences of the participants with the police (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, this approach was not feasible because the socio-cultural system in Nigerian society is not reflective of the experiences of the participants.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I needed to collect rich and trustworthy data, which I did through phone interviews with prostitutes. This form of data collection was appropriate in a phenomenological study like mine. To apply interpretative phenomenological analysis, I kept notes consisting of detailed statements, responses, and discussions with participants separate from my interview questions. These notes were gathered as part of respectful interactions in getting to learn about prostitutes' daily lifestyle and to ensure I did not forget any vital detail that would contribute to the research during transcription of results. Interviews with participants were conducted in a semi-structured manner to obtain a clear description of their experience with the police and how it influenced them. I recruited the participants by developing a cordial relationship with the staff of my partner organization, a nongovernmental organization founded in 1985 committed to selfless service to the poor and vulnerable throughout Nigeria. The organization works with other private sectors empowering Nigerians to live healthier lives. My partner organization in Nigeria usually works around town giving out free condoms and advice to citizens and prostitutes on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases as a form of protecting public health. My partner organization helped

me recruit prostitutes by distributing my recruitment flyers to the prospective participants when they went to work in red-light districts during the day.

The target populations were prostitutes who loitered near and inside bars, brothels, and hotel areas in Kubwa, Lugbe, and Zuba satellite towns in Abuja, Nigeria. Because the participant population was a vulnerable one, once they volunteered, I needed time to develop a cordial relationship with them to build trust. I anticipated that it would be difficult for some participants who had been traumatized by their experiences with the police; that was the reason I chose the phone interview so that they would feel safe and comfortable to participate in my interview. I fixed an appointment date and scheduled the phone interview sessions with my participants based on a time that individually suited them. There was no need for incentives, although I gave my participants a thank you gift card of \$5 after the interview. Data collection through interactions on the phone with participants was in-depth, with the goal of gaining an accurate insight into their experiences in the trade.

My personal and professional perspectives were acknowledged to demonstrate to the participants that my role as a researcher was not a threat to them because I had previously volunteered in social work in Nigeria, Ukraine, and Columbia. However, I assured participants my previous experiences did not present any bias to my study. I had no expectations when collecting and interpreting data, so I could frequently assess that I was not biased in any way. I made certain that the participants freely volunteered in the study and had the freedom to quit at any time. I listened to the experiences of the participants by giving them the freedom to express their thoughts without making them

feel uncomfortable with intrusive questions. Only data collected were used in the analysis of, reflection on, and interpretation of participants' experiences.

Some beliefs I needed to reflect on to identify and avoid were that some prostitutes are manipulative; others are dependent on prostitution as a lifestyle because it is an easy job. To prevent these biases from interfering with my data collection and analysis, I gave every participant the time to express themselves while I listened to them, without interrupting their oral and physical expressions, which can be offensive. I was careful to develop interpretations based on how each participant felt about particular topics rather than what I believed it should be, and also had an open mind in learning about the efforts of the police toward protecting and serving the public.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The number of prostitutes in Nigeria is estimated to be 103,506 by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS and is growing (date, as cited in Sulaimon et al., 2018). Prostitution is seen by many who engage in it as an alternative source of income amid the growing economic hardship caused by increases in poverty and income inequality in the country. My target population was female prostitutes who had been victimized by members of law enforcement. I adopted a purposeful sampling in the population sampling process so I could obtain in-depth information about the phenomenon under study (see Patton, 2015). The sample selection was based on specific inclusion criteria to ensure that data collected were rich, similar, and accurate toward achieving saturation. The participants were 18- to 35-year-olds who had been victimized

at least once by any department of the police, and were fluent in English or in the country's widely spoken Pidgin English. I understand Pidgin English and translated direct quotes from the participants to English so the average reader could understand them. I chose a lower limit of 18 because this was the age most young girls are separated from a guardian and left to fend for themselves and are new in the trade. The upper limit was 35 because most older prostitutes have become or are becoming financially stable and are not as likely to solicit clients on the streets and be regularly arrested by the police. Also, older prostitutes are rarely in demand by clients because the clients often prefer younger prostitutes.

The participants had to identify as victims of police corruption that had caused them some form of harm, including physical assault (kicking, hitting with a weapon, punching, slapping and manhandling), sexual assault (rape and sexual harassment), economic exploitation (bribe, stealing, and extortion of participants' valuables), and psychological assault (public humiliation and threats). Exclusion criteria included prostitutes who did not work on the streets; had never been physically assaulted, arrested, raped, or extorted by the police; or had a romantic relationship with a police officer. Participants also had to identify how long they had been in the prostitution business to obtain a level of stability in the trade. The inclusion criteria for this study were participants who had been prostitutes for at least 1 year and often worked on the streets. Prostitutes who were violent, psychologically unstable, or had recently started receiving psychological help for serious issues (PTSD, schizophrenia, paranoia, bipolar disorder, and neurosis) were excluded because they were not psychologically healthy enough to

participate. I endeavored to determine whether my participants were confident enough to answer my interview questions and whether, generally speaking, were functioning well. In the process of creating rapport with my participants, I made sure they understood and met all inclusion criteria. I also ensured they acknowledged being victims of police victimization in the informed consent IRB Approval Number: 07-30-20-0726288.

. I interviewed more than five participants after I had achieved saturation to ensure there more differentiation in the pattern of data I had collected after reaching five participants. Data saturation refers to the point at which a researcher reaches a stage in the research process when no new information is revealed in data analysis, which prompts the researcher to realize that additional data collection has become irrelevant because it would lead to similar results confirming emerging themes and conclusions (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). Participants were identified when my partner organization distributed my flyers but were selected for the study when they contacted me through the phone number included on the flyer (see Appendix B).

Instrumentation

Interview questions were used as an instrument for the collection of data. To achieve in-depth conversations, I developed the interview questions to ensure they would be reflective of obtaining rich data on specific experiences. The interview questions were open-ended, so participants were not constrained when expressing their thoughts/feelings and their responses were not predictive, which could have introduced bias. Participants were free to answer any question without following the interview schedule, which guided me to where I needed to probe by asking follow-up questions (see Merriam & Tisdell,

2015). I formulated the interview questions to be semi-structured to ensure that the participants stayed focused on the topic and to bring purposeful insight into the conversations (J. Smith et al., 2009). Also, I tried not to rush the participants during the interview, which might have made the interviews a little time-consuming but ensured personal interpretative meaning to their experiences.

Research Question 1: What is the experience of Nigerian prostitutes who are victimized by the police?

1. How will you describe your experience with the Nigerian police?
2. What is your typical encounter with undercover night police patrols?
3. How have police treated you when they approached you?
4. What do you find troubling about being victimized by the police?
5. What actions did you take to avoid being arrested by the police?
6. What are the actions of the police when you get arrested? How did this make you feel?
7. How were you treated by the police in their station? How did this make you feel?
8. How have senior police officers treated you? How did this make you feel?
9. How do you ensure you get released when arrested by the police?
10. How do you feel when the police purport to preserve human rights while victimizing you?
11. How do you manage your vulnerabilities to being victimized by the police?

Research Question 2: How do Nigerian prostitutes use adaptive coping skills to cope with police victimization?

1. How do you manage the police related problems you face as a result of being a prostitute?
2. How has the time you have spent in the prostitution trade influenced your behavior in managing the risk of being victimized by the police?
3. How have your relationship with other prostitutes and clients helped you in coping with the stress of police victimization?
4. How has police victimization affected you psychological health?
5. How do you deal with psyche problems emanating from your experience with the police?

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I made contact with the staff of my partner organization (see Appendix A). My partner organization in Nigeria helped me in recruiting eligible participants by asking and informing potential participant if they were interested in my study and by distributing flyers (See Appendix B). As mentioned, the flyers provided my phone number which they used to call me and I then scheduled a phone appointment to get their informed consent (IRB Approval Number: 07-30-20-0726288) before the interview commenced. Data were collected through semi-structured interview questions that were done through phone interactions with participants; I also informed them that the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription. It was conducted through phone to ensure their anonymity from the comfort of their chosen location so that they are

protected from possible harm from the public. The interview sessions lasted about an hour but time was allowed if the participant wanted to talk some more. I also took notes and used follow-up questions to help participants explain more about the specific questions, to have a better understanding of the information on how they perceived their answers to interview questions. I was careful to identify participants who might be undergoing some traumatic memories and stopped the interview if their recollections caused psychological difficulties that might hinder them from continuing the interview. Participants who gradually became sad, anxious and cry, or were at the verge of evidencing those emotions were expressed huge emotional difficulty in relating personal experiences with the police. After the interview sessions, I assured them of their confidentiality by explaining that the data collected was kept safe and only assessable by me and by allowing them to use their first initial as a means of identification. I also informed them about how the data collected would be used (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For participants for whom the interview might have caused some level of psychological distress, I e-mailed them a debrief sheet to let them know the psychological services that was available to them (see Appendix C); that provided them with information on how they could get free psychological help to relieve the emotional pain they may suffer. I also verbally informed them of this during the interview.

Data Analysis Plan

The first step of the data analysis plan was to transcribe the data I had collected by transcribing my discussions with the participants. I read the transcriptions several times to ensure they reflected the experiences of the participant while avoiding any previous

thoughts I had about the topic. I then searched for parts of the transcript containing detailed information about the topic (J. Smith et al., 2009).

The second step was note-taking, which helped to identify concerns the participants had expressed by explaining how they felt about a situation and how they reacted emotionally during the interview. This was done with an open mind to understand better how their experiences contributed to how the participant felt about certain interview questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

My third step was to look for developing themes, which are those become evident while trying to reduce repetitive details (J. A. Smith, 2015). This was done by examining my notes and identifying how the participants' descriptions of experiences linked with interpretations I had inferred towards them based on the information I had compiled. Identifying important themes helped me to understand the essence of each lived experience the participant had talked about (Patton, 2015).

For my fourth step, I tried to identify connections among emergent themes and link them to present a valid interpretation by analyzing common experiences among participants and assigning them to similar themes (Patton, 2015; J. A. Smith, 2015).

The fifth step was repeating and finding links to the data analysis process I had utilized for the first participant to the other participants I interviewed. This was done while treating each participant transcript individually so I could identify unique information (J.A. Smith, 2015; J. Smith et al., 2009).

The sixth step was identifying developing patterns from each participant's case and categorizing them according to emerging themes that try to explain the true essence

of their lived experiences, information necessary to answering my research questions. Patterns were thoroughly explored to determine if that led to themes that explained something about the research questions and informed the study (J.A. Smith 2015; J. Smith et al., 2009). I created a table of themes to show how they relate to the response of each participant.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is important to fostering the quality and validity of qualitative studies since it is required to evaluate the study and the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A researcher must be able to validate the study through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure its trustworthiness. This can only be done when a researcher can give an accurate representation of the experiences of participants in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which helps to inform the pattern of data analysis that, in turn, should logically justify how themes emerge.

Credibility

Credibility is the ability to make the research process both transparent and reflective of the data collected and interpreted to ensure that its results can be trusted (Kekecs et al., 2019). The findings of a study should be without bias because this entrenches confidence in the findings' reliability, thereby making the study credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure credibility in my study, I had lengthy conversations with the participants during our scheduled appointments in the office of my partner organization. It helped me to test and check the bias I may have had about them (Lincoln

& Guba, 1985). I was empathetic with the participants and also engaged in small talk in simple or Pidgin English with the goal of better understanding their experiences.

Since I knew every singular experience may be unique as a result of coming from one source (Carter et al., 2014), I made use of triangulation. This is the process of collecting data from multiple sources with the goal of gaining better insight into a topic. I accomplished that by giving the participants equal opportunities to freely express themselves so I could evaluate variations in their perspectives, as well as utilising the information I acquired from documented and academic literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This helped to create a thick description of participants' experiences, i.e., a detailed explanation of particular experiences that has been developed from multiple sources of data to create a better understanding of a topic. I read books and articles relating to their experiences as well as watching documentary videos to obtain a rich and in-depth understanding of each experience and to ensure that my analysis/discussions about them are accurate. This was the process of verifying that my interpretations of a phenomenon coincided with what a participant expressed in the interview as to their personal experiences and was done to avoid wrong interpretations and ensure it gives a true reflection of the experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process is important, especially because I conducted some of my interviews in Pidgin English for participants who did not really understand regular English.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability of the study to be articulated and applied in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This can only be achieved when there is a

detailed description of the data collected towards ensuring external validity, which includes the individuals people, time of the study, and present situations. When data are properly interpreted, it leads to reliable judgments about particular findings, which could inform how the study could be transferred to different contexts by other researchers while understanding and following the main researcher's established patterns of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

Dependability is pivotal to any research because it gives clarity to the research process, which increases the reliability of findings and that the research process could be replicated in the future (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I ensured that the findings reflected the data collected from the interviews with participants, and were clear and easy to understand by any researcher who plans to replicate my study. I noted all steps of the research through an audit trail which helped to document all processes of the study towards ensuring the reliability of the interpretations and findings which accurately reflected the raw data collected from participants. That will help other researchers to achieve a robust revision of the research analysis process.

Confirmability

It is important to relate the exact data collected from participants, irrespective of any personal bias of the researcher that could affect the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The responses of the participants are the basis on which any interpretation is made, so it is important that they are accommodating of varying views from participants and are clear and easily understood. I sought the clarification of unfamiliar words used by

participants and refrained from using leading questions which may have influenced their responses. Instead, I used open questions to eliminate any limitation they may have had in freely expressing their feelings and thoughts.

Ethical Procedures

I obtained approval (07-30-20-0726288) from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University and the head field operations for my partner organization in Abuja Municipal Council (see Appendix A) before I started collecting data. I distributed my research flyer to street prostitutes through officials of my partner organization in Nigeria who regularly visit red light locations to do social work. They informed my prospective participants about the study and urged them to tell others who may have been qualified for the study. Prospective participants who responded contacted me through the phone number listed on the flyer. After identifying eligible participants who met the inclusion/exclusion criteria, I scheduled a phone meeting to obtain their informed consent for the research study before the interviews commenced. During the interviews, I kept the process organized by giving out serial numbers to participants that called me.

Volunteer participants were taken based on a first-come, first-serve basis until I reached saturation, my target sample size of 5 participants or more. I allowed participants to clarify any aspect of the study that was unclear to them both publicly and privately. Some participants who may have been exposed to trauma might have forced by my interview to relive their memories, so I informed them that they could let me know if they felt any psychological discomfort so that I could immediately terminate the interview.

The interview sessions was audio-recorded, serially tagged for identification, and kept safe in an external hard drive, which was only accessible by me. Real names or nicknames of participants were not used in this study, but other demographic information was included, e.g., age, number of years they have worked as a prostitute, location of streetwalking, etc. This was done to protect the confidentiality of participants by ensuring that their identities were kept anonymous. I understand some participants might have had traumatic experiences with the police, so I treated them with empathy, and when I noticed distress during the interview, I asked them if they wanted a break or to stop the interview session completely.

I, as the researcher, did this in spite of the possibility that the participants may have related their experiences to friends and family. I will continue to keep the data collected safe until I believe it is no longer necessary to do so; at that point, I will destroy those records. I did not give any incentives, although I gave a \$5 thank you gift card to those who participated in my study. I do not personally know any of the participants and intend to keep it so; hence, there was no conflict of interest towards the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I have described in detail the order of my proposed study towards using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method for my qualitative study, including the research method, design, and the rationale for using it. I also discussed the methodology and explained the participant selection logic, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; the instrumentation was also discussed. I addressed the issues of trustworthiness of the study and how I handled the ethical

procedures of the study. The purpose of this study was not to influence the participants' beliefs as to why they choose the prostitution trade but to explore the experience of female prostitutes who have been victimized by the Nigerian police and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with this victimization.

Chapter 4: Results

In as much as prostitution is illegal in Nigeria, albeit, a relatively minor crime, it is quite rampant. Prostitutes involved in the trade are treated with little regard by the Nigerian Police, which has caused these women a great deal of physical and psychological harm (Nwakanma, 2015). Most prostitutes do not see the police department as law-abiding, but as rogue, especially in that the prostitutes risk losing their lives when they choose not to agree the demands of corrupt police officers. Prostitutes frequently suffer unjust assaults, rape, public humiliation, coercion to give a bribe, sexual advances, and being stripped of personal valuables (Agbibo, 2015; Akinlabi, 2017; Babatunde, 2017). The increasing psychological distress as a result of this degradation has led many to seek adaptive coping strategies to alleviate the psychological pain they experience (Nelson, 2012).

The purpose of this IPA was to explore the experiences of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police, and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with the stress of police victimization. I sought to understand how Nigerian prostitutes make decisions about self-help to deal with psychological pain when they are victimized by the police. The theory of distress tolerance (Zvolensky, Bernstein, & Vujanovic, 2011) guided the study. Data were collected by conducting interviews with street prostitutes who had been victimized by the police. Two research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1: What is the experience of Nigerian prostitutes who are victimized by the police?

RQ2: How do Nigerian prostitutes use adaptive coping skills to cope with police victimization?

I designed the study using a qualitative phenomenological approach through semi-structured open-ended questions, which were aimed at eliciting detailed conversations that would provide explanations as to how my participants remembered, felt, and interpreted their victimizing experiences with the police. This chapter addresses the setting in which the study was conducted, the demographics of my participants, and the processes of data collection and analysis. Further, I discuss the evidence of trustworthiness and the study results, and then I summarize the chapter.

Setting

The study was conducted in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. Data were gathered through phone interviews with the participants. A total of nine participants were interviewed; eight called in to participate in their interview, while one of the participants had a smartphone and decided to contact me using the video call option. However, I only audio-recorded the conversation. As my participants responded to my recruitment flyer by phone calls and text messages, we agreed to choose specific dates and times when we were able to conduct the interview. Most of the participants said they were often less busy very early in the mornings. Participants also said they were alone from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at their private locations unless they had special clients, in which case they would call or text to notify me to reschedule the interview. In the course of data collection, four participants rescheduled; one participant wanted to take her sick child to the hospital while the other three had special clients with whom they wanted to meet. The

interviews were conducted behind the closed door of my private hotel room; I wore my headphones to ensure sound clarity of the conversations as well as the confidentiality of my participants. I was not involved in any role that could influence participants regarding how they participated in the study or how they related their experiences that could affect the results of the study.

Demographics

Participants met all inclusion criteria and identified themselves with their first initials. The participants consisted of nine female prostitutes who had been victimized by the police and who had lived as street prostitutes for at least 1 year. The participants were at least 18 years of age and were residents of Abuja. Three participants work as streetwalking prostitutes in the urban areas, while six participants do so in the suburbs. Most of my participants had a satisfactory command of spoken English, but they often expressed some words and phrases in Pidgin English so that I could better understand them. Their highest level of educational status varied; four participants had graduated high school; one had a college degree; three were high school dropouts, and one was a college dropout. The interview sessions were recorded with a digital voice recorder. I had estimated that each interview would last an hour; however, six of the interviews lasted about 50 minutes to an hour, while three of the interviews lasted about 30 to 35 minutes. This was due to the participants being distracted and nervous, probably because they could not sense my empathy toward them because the interview was conducted via phone, but as we talked they gradually became relaxed. The nervous participants were some of my first participants and did not know what to expect, were thinking it was a

scam, or chose to hastily explain their experiences so they could attend to other matters. I started the data collection process by obtaining their demographic data and then reading out the informed consent form (IRB Approval Number: 07-30-20-0726288); once they agreed, I commenced the interview.

Data Collection

Of my nine participants, five responded to the flyer that was distributed by my partner organization, and three of these participants enlisted four other participants by passing the information to them. My data collection lasted for 4 weeks; the interviews were recorded with a digital audio-recording device; after each interview, I backed up the recording on my personal computer. It was difficult getting three of my participants to concentrate as they were constantly interrupted by the background noise of their environment (moving vehicles, traders, and hawkers) but said they were used to the noise. All participants met the inclusion criteria to take part in my study. One unusual experience was that one of the participants randomly video called in and insisted she wanted to see who she was talking to and my identification card. The interview went well and helped the participant to relax and participate without the anxiety of wondering whether I was a scammer or an undercover law enforcement officer.

Data Analysis

Data collection reached saturation after I interviewed the eighth participant, but I interviewed the ninth participant to ensure I had reached saturation. My interview questions were semi-structured to gain an understanding how police victimize female prostitutes and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with the stress of police

victimization. Data analysis led to the identification of four main themes and 17 subthemes, as shown in Table 1. The data were analyzed and coded using the IPA process; because experiences vary from person to person, I attempted to explore, describe, interpret, and position the experiences of participants as they related to the experience of police victimization. The understanding of a phenomenon helps to analyze and interpret how it may be affecting other areas of participants' lives, which explains their individual realities (J. A. Smith, 2015). Therefore, I could identify how prostitutes perceived their individual police victimization experience and how they chose to adaptively cope with it. I listened to my audio data and read the transcript data multiple times, noting unique descriptive statements (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I analyzed my transcriptions individually to understand them, and then identified patterns to understand how they related with each other to identify themes (J. Smith et al., 2009). I created a spreadsheet for each participant I interviewed, which included their responses to each of the 10 interview questions I used to collect data. I used this spreadsheet to identify patterns and how they led to other subthemes. This approach revealed data that were repetitive and helped me identify those that were new.

The themes that emerged as I analyzed the data focused on the fact that street prostitutes experience constant psychological pain as a result of police violation and exploitation. Participants also experience feelings of resentment toward the police due to unjust police actions, persistent feelings of helplessness resulting in stress, and growing feelings of social attachment among street prostitutes with other sympathizers as

efforts to avoid police victimization. These themes and subthemes, as well as sample quotes supporting them, are presented in Table 1 (Appendix D).

After I had concluded the data analysis process, my participants' responses included four themes and 17 subthemes. There were no discrepant cases that would have introduced inconsistent information that could have led to contradictory results in this study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness in this study, I verified the accuracy of my research process using credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as critical tools in evaluating this qualitative study.

Credibility

It is essential as a researcher to plan the research process of recruiting eligible participants, collecting and analyzing data gathered, and discussing the findings to ensure the accuracy of the phenomenon based on the data collected. In the current study, trustworthiness was confirmed during and after each interview session as I engaged the participants for longer periods during the interview session and used reflexive strategies to understand the response better. I engaged my participants for extended periods during the interview process by using follow-up questions on specific responses, trying to elicit even more data that could have been relegated (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This approach helped me build rapport with genuine empathy by fostering understanding toward participants' experiences while reflecting on my biases to keep them in check. Initially, I noticed from the voice of my participants that they were nervous when

responding to interview questions. However, after assuring the participants of the voluntary nature of the study, I observed that they became more relaxed throughout the interview session.

Transferability

To ensure that a qualitative study is trustworthy, it is important that other researchers are able to replicate the process and context of the study to achieve similar results; hence, they must understand, reflect, and interpret the results of the study (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010). In the current study, thick description was used to describe the context and assumptions of the study that led to its results. Also, the criteria for participant selection and a detailed description of the experiences of the participants were included to enable other researchers to replicate the study (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I saved every detail of the audio-recording of the phone interview I had with my participants, listening to them repeatedly and transcribing them meticulously. I analyzed the recordings individually to find patterns leading to significant themes and subthemes, which I inserted on a spreadsheet to understand how they related with each other. This included direct quotes that enabled me to draw connections to verify participant responses and how they were applied.

Dependability

Dependability in a study ensures data collected are free from any form of bias that could alter the reliability of the findings. Dependability means the data are true and consistent in understanding the research findings and how conclusions were derived (Lishner, 2015). Dependability means the research process is clear to any researcher who

may want to replicate the process based on the same context in which the research was conducted. I used an audio recorder to capture the interview sessions with my participants, and I transcribed the data based on how they interpreted their experiences while ensuring they were not influenced by my personal opinion. I also tracked each participant's individual meaning attached to the interpretation of their responses by taking notes of how they responded to my interview questions. For example, P1 interpreted being arrested by the police as an everyday unavoidable risk, while P5 and P7 saw police arrest as persistent but irregular. This approach enabled me to keep an audit trail of the research process to ensure the interpretations and findings were reliable. I was in regular communication with my research committee to follow their guidance and consider their feedback on the progress of my study.

Confirmability

A research study must be reflective of the participants' experiences. It means the accuracy of the data collected is of great importance since it relates to the actual lived experiences of a person (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Open questions were used so my participants could freely express themselves. I carefully ensured that I audio-recorded each interview session with a participant and saved them in my personal computer and in an external hard drive with a password in ascending order as I progressed in the data collection process. This helped to label each response during data transcription, ensuring that no data was articulated based on my thoughts or opinions. I sought clarification of unfamiliar words from them and avoided using leading questions which could influence their thoughts and feelings.

Results

The purpose of this IPA study was to explore the experiences of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with the stress of police victimization. Data were collected from nine street prostitutes who were interviewed using semi-structured open questions. These interview sessions were conducted via phone calls; sixteen questions were asked, including those that probed areas in which participants did not really understand the interview question. Two research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1: What is the experience of Nigerian prostitutes who are victimized by the police?

RQ2: How do Nigerian prostitutes use adaptive coping skills to cope with police victimization?

In the following part of this chapter, I will explain the four themes and seventeen sub-themes that emerged from the research questions. The first two themes were associated with RQ1, and the second two themes were associated with RQ2.

Theme 1: Experiencing constant psychological pain as a result of police violation and exploitation.

Participants discussed how they always feel emotional pain from police ill-treatment and dehumanization, which often came in verbal and physical abuse, making them feel vulnerable, helpless, and frustrated from stress the psychological pain causes.

Subtheme 1.1: Feeling Devalued by the Police Task Force on Prostitution

Six participants expressed feelings of being devalued by the police because they are prostitutes. P1 stated, "...they don't care about us, they only care about forcing us to collect money and pussy [sex], taking advantage of us." She noted that the police task force on prostitution believes it is not a crime to have sex with prostitutes since they are already culprits in the face of the law. P2 said, "....he slapped me and was choking [forcing] his hand inside my pussy [vagina]. P4 narrated how she was once arrested in a pharmacy she went to buy drugs and said, "...he hit me like I was a common criminal and I could not in any way defend myself." P5 believed the police were victimizing her because she lacked economic power. She stated, "... they [police] know my weakness of being poor ... what can I really do?" P6 said, "...they use insulting words on us like ashawo [local slang for dejected prostitute], cheap and rotten girl while hitting us to enter their patrol vehicle when arresting us." These words made her feel like she was an outcast to society. P7 stated, "...police treat us like I'm not useful to anybody."

Subtheme 1.2: Police Extortion of Street Prostitutes Has Left Them Feeling Exploited Because They Are in a Negative Situation That They Cannot Change

Four participants expressed feelings of being exploited by the police through their incessant extortion. P2 said, "... I gave him pussy [sex] but still had to bail myself with the five thousand naira I borrowed from my friend". P3 narrated how she was beaten and molested by the police taskforce on duty to give them money. She said, "...the police bin take my small money wey I don hustle only today wey I wan send go give my people" [the police took all the money I had worked for today, which I intended to send to my

family]. P7 stated, "... we bail ourselves, nobody comes to help us." P7 said, "...the least money they can collect as bribe is five thousand naira, some days I don't make that much."

Subtheme 1.3: Feeling Threatened and Anxious While Walking Around Locations Patrolled by Police, Particularly at Night

Four participants admitted to feeling threatened and anxious in the course of working at night. P3 said, "...I watch my left and my right when hustling on the road at night...because when they [police] catch you, they are ready to follow you to an ATM, room, or even do mobile transfer just to get money from you" P5 stated, "... if I hear that the police went to a particular location that I wanted to go, I quickly change direction and get ready to run if the case arises." P6 said, "... I try not to wear high heels even though they look sexy on me so that I can run when I see the police because they sometimes wear mufti [civilian] clothing, and it's difficult identifying them." P7 stated, "... I dey fear police o! if dem start to dey pursue you, if you like fall, wound dem go still carry you...me I no dey like comot if I hear say dem dey around" [I am scared of the police! When they give you a chase, and you run from them, trip or get injured, it does not stop them from arresting you... I do not like going out when I hear the police are patrolling].

Subtheme 1.4: Feeling Helpless and Lacking Self-Worth Due to Police Imposition of Sexual Favors on Some Prostitutes, Often Leading to Rape

Of the nine participants, three expressed having feelings of low self-worth and helplessness from police sexual assault. P2 said, "... junior police officers wanted to have sex with me, but I refused, and they kept pressuring me, then a senior police officer came

into the station and demanded that I be left alone, then he took me to a dark corner and raped me without protection [condom] ... the junior officer still robbed me of the three thousand naira in my purse and the condoms I had bought and I can't do anything about it." P4 stated "...I prefer they have sex with me and leave my money, but I regret that having sex with them is not a guarantee that you will be released when arrested." P7 expressed a similar feeling of helplessness; she said, "...the female police all in the name of searching me would be caressing my breasts...the male officers always want to sleep with me, and if I refuse, I would be made to sleep in a dirty cell."

Theme 2: Feeling Resentful Due to Unjust Police Actions on Prostitutes

Participants discussed why they were angry with the police unfair treatment towards them. The participants also talked about how the gender of an officer could affect how they were treated when arrested and how this victimization has affected their relationships with the police.

Subtheme 2.1: Feeling Indignant Toward the Police and Avoiding Activities That Attract Police Attention or Even Reporting a Problem as Victims

Five participants expressed anger towards the police and avoided actions that attracted the police. P1 said, "... I can never advise anybody to join the police; they are not straight forward." P3 stated, "... they [police] don't ask useful questions when they approach you... they just want to take you to their station." P5 said, "I feel very disappointed with the police...they are the real criminals." P8 stated, "... police na worst people wey I don see. I no fit go report to police say ashawo man beat me, collect my money, dem go beat, rape you join" [the police are the worst people I have seen. I cannot

report a case where a client beats or robs me to the police because they will also beat you and rape you].

Subtheme 2.2: Experience Humiliation Mainly Perpetrated by the Female Police Officers

Three participants experienced feelings of being humiliated by female police officers. P1 said, “I was stripped of my shirt in front of male police officers by a female officer and called a common dirty prostitute.” P4 stated, “a senior female police officer insisted the junior male officers carried me at the back of their patrol truck for the passerby to see even though she knew I was dressing indecently because I was hustling on the streets when I was arrested.” P8 said, “...I feel really bad because when I was arrested by the police; the commanding female police officer did not see anything wrong putting me in the same cell with male offenders because she thought it doesn’t matter if I was molested by them.”

Subtheme 2.3: Experience a Loss of Personal Dignity From Physical and Sexual Assault Perpetrated Mostly by Male Officers

Of the participants, four experienced loss of personal dignity from being physically and sexually assaulted by male police officers. P2 stated, “... I had no other choice than to allow him to finger [penetrate with the finger] my pussy [vagina] since I didn’t have ten thousand naira to give to him.” P4 said, “when they continue catching me, fingering and having sex with me, that’s all the harm they can do to me and nothing more so I’ll just allow them to do it.” P7 stated, “...they can only arrest me and parade me around town after all everybody already knows that I am an ashawo [prostitute].” P9 said,

“I felt ashamed when I was the only one in the police station the next day after I was arrested, wearing skimpy clothes by 9am the next morning.” The personal dignity of these participants has persistently been bruised by the police, causing shame that they no longer care to protect it.

Subtheme 2.4: Experience Loss of Confidence in Law Enforcement Due to Unfair Treatment by the Police

Three participants expressed a loss of confidence in law enforcement due to police injustice towards them. P1 said, “...Nobody cares the only hope of survival is to engage in whatever means that suits you.” P5 stated, “The police do not have the interests of anybody except what they can get from you. The society shames us for trying to survive in this bad economy.” P9 said, “Ashawo [prostitution] should be legalized because police cannot solve the money problems we are facing in our families. After all, the economy is bad, and the government cannot reduce poverty affecting us as hustlers.” The participants generally believe that law enforcement marginalizes them and only works for the financially and economically privileged, while, for the most part, society stigmatizes them.

Subtheme 2.5: Nurturing a Growing Feeling of Anger and Violence Toward Police Victimization and Society’s Indifference

Three participants expressed anger due to victimization by the police and the stigmatization they experience from society. P2 stated, “...e no go better for them with all the money dem don collect from my hand” [It would not be good for the police since they always extort money from me]. P6 said, “...the police victimize us because they are not

checked by senior officers and the government, and yet they expect us to be law-abiding citizens... how person wey never chop go get sense? [How can a hungry person be reasonable?]. P8 said, "...I can never cooperate with the police; it's like playing with fire." She did not see any reason to engage with the police, even in a simple conversation.

Theme 3: Feeling Helpless Resulting in Stress

Participants discussed the psychological strain that they suffer from police victimization and how they often cope with it. The participants explained how they developed dire adaptive coping strategies such as substance and alcohol abuse, an aggressive and deceptive lifestyle and excessive engagement with hobbies to help ameliorate the stress that comes from police victimization since they could do nothing about it but also needed to remain in the prostitution business.

Subtheme 3.1: Experience Anxiety and Fearfulness

Five participants discussed their experiences of anxiety and fearfulness from police victimization. P1 said, "I'm always afraid hustling on the road, especially on weekends and public holidays; I don't want even to leave our room because most girls get arrested those days." She further explained that, on those days, she felt sad being in the prostitution business. P2 stated, "...I saw a vehicle like the police pickup truck one Monday morning when I went to buy bread, and I ran all the way home...my friend later told me it was a building construction vehicle and we laughed." P4 said, "...I fall sick from being so afraid, sad and angry when the police come to raid us because it means I will be molested and I will have no money." P5 said, "...I'm not always comfortable leaving our room once it gets dark." P8 stated, "...I no dey even sleep well for night

because person no dey know when they go come” [I don’t sleep well at night because one does not know when the police may come around].

Subtheme 3.2: Feeling Depressed, Leading to Substance Abuse and Excessive

Engagement With Hobbies

Six participants expressed feeling depressed and explained how they choose to cope with it. P3 stated, “...police problems always make me upset, so I drink enough Heineken [beer] or Campari [Vodka] everyday to get ready for them.” P4 said, “...I regularly smoke my weed [marijuana], which is the only thing that makes me happy whenever I face police and client problems.” P5 said, “I go to the gym to exercise twice every day...that’s actually the only place I feel like a real person.” P6 stated, “...I feel pained in my heart; that’s why I stay on my own.” P7 said, “...I drink Tramadol [a strong pain medication] most times to forget my sorrows, then I sleep...”. P8 stated, “...I like to watch movies all day except when I have a business outside... at least I don’t need to talk to anybody.”

Subtheme 3.3: Experience a Strong Sense of Social Marginalization as the Police

Exceptionally Maltreat Them Even for Trivial Offenses

Three participants had a strong sense that they were being maltreated and marginalized by the police for minor offenses, particularly loitering at night. P2 stated, “...they [police] know there is no job and yet we need to survive...he [a male officer] beat me with koboko [horsewhip] like I was a criminal undergoing torture.” P5 said, “...the police did not tell me why I was being arrested, and they pushed me into their vehicle like I was being kidnapped.” P7 said, “...the police chased me until I fell and

sustained some injuries on my leg...I only wished they put in efforts like this into arresting criminals in the country.”

Subtheme 3.4: Feeling Guilt Leading to Secretive Lifestyles to Avoid Social

Stigmatization

Four participants experienced feelings of guilt about being in the prostitution business, which has led them to be secretive lifestyles. P1 said, “I don’t really tell people my real name when I’m hustling on the streets...it’s all about the money and not being known.” P3 stated, “...I don’t stay in a particular location hustling for more than a month so that I don’t get known by many people.” P7 said, “I don’t tell my clients about myself ...some of them may know your distant relative, and they could go tell them that you are a street prostitute.” P9 stated, “...I never carry my phone along when hustling since it could be stolen or hacked by the police and they would know everything about me that they can use to blackmail me.” Most prostitutes live with the risk of having nobody to call if there is a problem; they rely on other prostitutes to keep watch and watch their backs when in a bad situation.

Subtheme 3.5: Experience Difficulty Developing Real Social Bonds, Resulting From an Increasingly Aggressive and Deceptive Lifestyle

Four participants explained that they had to be aggressive and deceptive most times, which has affected their need to develop real social bonding. P2 said, “...if ashawo man wey I don do with me before no give me my money complete, I go break him head...na street we dey” [...a client who thinks that he is familiar with me, must pay my complete fee after sex, if not I will break his head...we are both in the streets]. P4 stated,

“...I always tell my friends who are in the streets together with me I have children that I need to cater for with money I get from prostitution...but I don't have a child, I want them to think I'm quite responsible.” Some prostitutes lie to people with whom they are close so they can be accepted in the prostitution business, as having the same ideal goal of survival on the streets is a way of coping with the acceptance issues they face with other prostitutes and sympathizers. P5 said, “There is this boyfriend that I love, but I can't tell him what I do for a living...I tell him I work as a cleaner in a hotel.” P7 stated, “I can't stand people who stare at me at night ...I insult them since they can't mind their own business.”

Theme 4: Growing Feelings of Social Attachment Among Street Prostitutes With Other Sympathizers to Avoid Police Victimization

Participants discussed experiencing the need for social attachment with other prostitutes and sympathizers towards avoiding police victimization. Street prostitutes experience similar trouble from the police, which, being a common problem, has forced them to seek ways of helping each other. They befriend sympathetic clientele to create social attachments as a means of coping with police victimization, although some prostitutes are at less risk of being victimized as a result of the personal resources they might have.

Subtheme 4.1: Acceptance of Internalized Hopelessness Due to Police Victimization as a Risk to Be Managed Rather Than Avoided

Seven participants expressed they fear their future in the prostitution business, mainly that police victimization goes unchecked. The participants acknowledged that

they needed to manage the problem to remain in the business. P2 said, "...I always go to locations where I'm friends with hotel managers who allow prostitutes to loiter around their hotel at night so that they can come to bail me if ever I get arrested." P3 stated, "...I endeavor to have about three thousand naira on me whenever I'm hustling so that I can bribe at least one police officer who may want to arrest me." P4 said, "...we try to befriend the head of police in a division so that we can always make him happy and his boys would turn a blind eye in a location where we hustle." P6 said, "...I'm not really scared of being arrested by the police; most of them just want good sex, so I give it to them so long as they don't demand money from me." P8 stated, "I have police officers who are my friends because I buy drinks for them; they inform me when the police plan to raid us." P1 and P5 explained how they gave a percentage of their monthly income to hotel managers who regularly bribe the police wherever they come around a particular location where prostitutes walk the streets. Street prostitutes hate that they have to bribe the police to be allowed to hustle on the streets, especially as prostitution is passively accepted by society. The prostitutes accept these unfavorable conditions just because street prostitution is lucrative but they cannot do anything to stop police victimization since prostitution is still considered illegal.

Subtheme 4.2: Experience a Strong Need to Support Other Colleagues in the Business

Due to Shared Problems From the Police

Four participants expressed the need to support other prostitutes since they share the same problem of being victimized by the police. P3 said, "...when I escape being arrested by the police in my location, I quickly call my friends in other locations around,

to alert them so they can be careful as they hustle.” P5 said, “...when they arrest one of my close friends, I hurriedly dressed like a banker and went to bail her.” P8 stated, “...we dey always make sure say ashawo man comot with our friend from the room if dem nack finish” [...we always ensure that every client of our colleague comes out of a room with them after sex]. This is done to ensure that their colleague is safe from harm, especially as prostitutes are targets of victimization and are not protected by the police. P9 said, “...I try to tell my colleagues in the business that are close to me, who they can contact if I get caught up in a terrible situation”

Subtheme 4.3: Experience Peer Pressure to Conform to the Values of Other Prostitutes and Sympathizers as a Means of Being Accepted and Supported by Them

Three participants expressed feelings of being compelled to conform to the values of other street prostitutes since it bonded them with their colleagues. P5 said, “...I no dey smoke Igbo before I enter street but I don turn oga na master now ...you know say... how babes go dey high and me dey look?” [Before I became a street prostitute, I did not smoke marijuana but I’m an expert now ... how can I not get intoxicated when others are doing it?]. P7 said, “I don’t often get arrested by the police ...yet I must pay the matching ground fee” [a fee sometimes paid to an older woman in the business who solicits their release wherever the police arrest a prostitute in a particular location]. A prostitute does not have to pay this fee if she feels she can personally protect herself but, most times, she pays to show loyalty to those who have walked those streets before her. P8 stated, “I noticed that I started drinking a lot when I joined my friends who hustled on the streets...all of them drink whiskey a lot. It helps to keep us awake when we street walk at

night.” Many prostitutes in Nigeria consume alcohol and smoke marijuana or, at the least, cigarettes as a means of attracting and keeping colleagues and clients who do the same as friends, particularly that they [colleagues and clients] are not really attracted to prostitutes who do not drink or smoke. Most participants I interviewed did not initially abuse alcohol and other substances but were introduced to it by other prostitutes and clients as they socialized and bonded in the business. The behavior then grew to become a habit for them. A few participants occasionally drank alcohol/used substances to manage the stress of walking the streets. Those who fell in this category had fewer friends and had better financial resources than the other prostitutes.

Summary

A total of nine participants were involved in this study to explore the experience of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police, and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with this victimization. Participants were recruited with recruitment flyers distributed by my partner organization, which is committed to helping prostitutes maintain public health. Data were collected through phone; all the participants gave their consent for participation, while the instruments for data collection were open, semi-structured interview questions. At the end of the interview process, four major themes emerged and 17 sub-themes emerged and were used to answer the research questions: street prostitutes experience constant psychological pain as a result of police violation and exploitation; feelings of resentful towards the police due to unjust police actions towards them; persistent feelings of helplessness resulting in stress; and growing feelings of social attachment among street prostitutes with other sympathizers as efforts

to avoid police victimization. The Nigerian police victimize street prostitutes, who have considered and developed a number of adaptive strategies to cope with that victimization. Chapter 5 will provide an interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations going forward, and the implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this study, I used the IPA to explore and understand the experiences of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police. I also aimed to understand how these women used adaptive coping strategies to cope with this victimization. The police have victimized most street prostitutes in Nigeria (Agbiboa, 2015). Previous studies addressing the victimization of prostitutes indicated that the coping strategies adopted by prostitutes were mostly due to the prostitutes searching for a practical way to attract/keep clients and improve role performance (Nelson, 2012; Otutubikey, 2005). In this study, I sought to understand the essence of participants' lived experiences in Nigeria and the factors that helped them develop adaptive coping strategies to mitigate the physical pain and psychological strain caused by police victimization.

The nine participants in this study were identified as being victimized by the police. Discussions with them revolved around how they interpreted their experiences and individually coped with the stress of police victimization. From my analysis of the interview data, I identified four main themes and 17 subthemes. The main emergent themes were street prostitutes experience constant psychological pain as a result of police violation and exploitation, feelings of resentment toward the police due to unjust police actions, persistent feelings of helplessness resulting in stress, and growing feelings of social attachment among street prostitutes with other sympathizers as efforts to avoid police victimization. These themes were identified based on factors that were specific to them. The following sections include an interpretation and discussion of the findings,

limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications for positive social change, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

Recent literature focused on police corruption that leads to the incessant victimization of prostitutes (Agbibo, 2015). Research has been directed toward the criminalization and consequent stigmatization of prostitutes by society (Aborisade, 2019; Klambauer, 2018). The role of structural violence and socioeconomic issues on prostitution has been expanded upon (Flynn et al., 2018; Nwakanma, 2015). How criminality correlates with prostitution is a crucial element of analyzing and understanding the experience of female prostitutes being victimized (Farvid & Glass, 2014; Olofinbiyi et al., 2016). The risks of prostitution as a lifestyle and the coping strategies employed by indoor prostitutes to avoid the police were also examined (Bungay & Guta, 2018; Kangiwa, 2015).

The current study's findings confirmed and expanded the knowledge that prostitutes strive to cope with the Nigerian police and society victimization in general. New data in the study showed that police victimization of street prostitutes leads to those women adopting practical coping strategies in dealing with the stress of being victimized by the police. Those strategies exacerbate their psychological pain in the long term yet ameliorate it in the short term, based on the resources available to the prostitute. In the next sections, I discuss each theme in the context of the recent literature.

Theme 1

Participants in the current study felt deep emotional pain due to always being devalued by the police. Previous research showed that prostitutes are frequently molested by the police, mainly because the police perceive prostitution a nonvictim crime (Matthews, 2015). Police victimization in Nigeria is nearly inevitable because police freely abuse state powers (Aborisade, 2019); this has caused prostitutes to experience inhumane treatment in the authority's hands, which continually erodes their sense of self-esteem (Mgbako, 2011). The current study demonstrated that the police can victimize prostitutes without reservation, possibly because they believe there is no true victim. Because this victimization is without restrictions, it has become persistent, making the study's participants believe the police view them as an expendable population that could be violated without social consequences. Victimization has promoted feelings of persistent psychological pain as the participants believe the police treat them as second-class citizens who are continuously exploited and perceived as a means of gratification for sex and money.

Dewey and St. Germain (2014) explained that prostitutes most times are at the police's mercy when they are arrested, because the officers determine the type of verdict prostitutes get for violating the laws on prostitution. The findings of the current study have indicated that the psychological pain prostitutes suffer does not necessarily come from the fact that they are frequently violated by the police but from the sense that they have no means of and power to change their plight from a negative to a positive one. Current participants mainly experience psychological strain as a result of living with the

anxiety of getting arrested by the police, especially at night when they have to wear skimpy clothes for their businesses, even though they would rather wear running shoes to flee from the police. Jorgensen (2018) explained that prostitutes are a soft target for police victimization because, with no readily identified victim, the task of determining whether the crime of prostitution has occurred or not can be difficult. Further, the sole responsibility of deciding whether to carry out an arrest is decided by the police officer on duty. From my findings, prostitutes perceive this as a constant threat to their lives because when they are arrested there are no defined laws or authorities that protect them against the misuse of state powers. The situation could worsen when they are jailed or charged in court if they cannot afford bail. This has left the prostitutes feeling powerless, timid, and less valued by society. They no longer attempt to challenge any bad behavior from the police but succumb to police victimization when they cannot avoid the risk, which leads to psychological pain.

Theme 2

As a result of police victimization of prostitutes, the police have earned a negative reputation by all participants. Prostitutes believe that the police have no regard for them; that has made them not trust the police as a just institution in society (Aborisade, 2019). Police victimization of these women usually fosters negative emotions, making them resentful toward the police (Platt et al., 2011). The findings of the current study revealed showed that prostitutes believe the police are incapable of preserving justice and respecting individual rights. As a backdrop of this, prostitutes have grown to feel

resentment, and they do not feel obliged to report crimes against them or the state to the police. In fact, they avoid any activity that could make them associate with the police.

The most emotional suffering prostitutes face is caused by the humiliation perpetrated by officers through shaming and physical and sexual assaults, which erode their self-esteem and exert a sense of superiority over them, leaving them emotionally vulnerable to psychological attacks. Because prostitutes fear a worse outcome from the police when arrested, they usually consent to the officers' corrupt demands. Most times, prostitutes attempt to bribe the police with money to avoid their sexual demands, yet the police will collect their bribe money and still insist they have sex with them (Mgbako, 2011). From the interviews conducted for this study, the researcher learned that this has made most prostitutes lack confidence in law enforcement agencies and the methods they use to check crime, which pose even more risk to them. As prostitutes feel threatened psychologically and physically, they feel the need to carry weapons to prevent either rogue police officers or clients from attacking them. Dealing with these negative emotions has made prostitutes believe government policies are unfair; from their point of view, due to the bad economy, there are no jobs, yet the police adamantly enforce the law to their selfish advantage, thereby infringing on their human rights. This is unfair to them and has made them resentful and unwilling to be law-abiding citizens, as well as promoting constant feelings of rebellion, anger, and violence toward the police and public authorities that support police actions against them.

Theme 3

This study's findings revealed that prostitutes' victimization by the police without being checked by any higher authority has created helplessness among prostitutes, resulting in a psychological strain on their mental health. Prostitutes continuously experience anxiety and fear in their work, which comes from the possibility of being arrested, extorted, or injured as they attempt to escape from the police. The stress that prostitutes' experience comes from the need to continually devise and articulate new or better ways of effectively managing their vulnerabilities toward police victimization while minimizing physical and psychological costs. This has triggered depression among participants and has led them to abuse substances and drugs such as marijuana and pain medication, such as Tramadol, to ease the psychological pain from being victimized by the police. Also, according to Sahiner and Bal (2016), different distraction methods are quite effective in reducing pain and anxiety. This type of behavior is coupled with excessive engagement with hobbies such as spending more hours working out, listening to music, and watching movies as forms of distraction from the stress that comes from their painful realities.

According to Dewey et al. (2016), prostitutes perceive a strong sense of social marginalization when the police severely maltreat them, which causes them emotional hardships. Participants in the current study believe that prostitution should be a minor offense that the police should overlook, considering the economic hardship in the country and the individual rights of women to have a source of livelihood despite its lack of acceptance by society. The police often go after street prostitutes because they are soft

targets compared to other offenders (Richter & Chakuvinga, 2012; Sonke & Partners, 2014). Prostitutes in the current study indicated deep sadness, especially when they sustain injuries from running from the police. Their unhappiness is also due to their helplessness in the face of police victimization and because they suffer the guilt of being in the prostitution business.

Findings indicated that another source of stress prostitutes suffer is the need to live a secretive and deceptive lifestyle, which frustrates their efforts to be socially accepted. This increases their vulnerability toward adopting negative coping strategies such as self-isolation and substance and drug abuse to reduce stress in the short term. Prostitutes experience difficulty developing real social bonds due to the deceptive lifestyle they live. The need to often change their work locations and lie about their names and background breeds additional guilt, which in turn promotes stress; this sometimes leads to transferred aggression toward police and clients that takes the form of being deceptive. Hart et al. (2020) explained that most people who have good self-esteem and open personalities tend to have a negative tendency to lie, while those who may have neurotic personalities have a positive tendency toward lying. The type of aggression serves as a form of emotional detachment from society adopted to reduce the guilt of social stigmatization promoted by police victimization (Edwards & Verona, 2016).

Theme 4

There is an increasing need among prostitutes to become socially attached to sympathizers and fellow workers to avoid police victimization (Aborisade, 2019). Current findings indicated that prostitutes have grown to accept the constant feelings of

psychological hopelessness due to police victimization. The police often perceive violence against prostitutes as an occupational hazard, a risk to be managed rather than avoided (Bungay & Guta, 2018). Prostitutes now see the need to have some money on them, reserved for being used as a bribe whenever the police try to arrest them. Among the current participants, police victimization has become a shared problem, so they consciously try to help each other even when they might not want to. Informing each other of police activities in hotspot locations with the goal assisting others to be safe from being assaulted and arrested is a form of cooperation among prostitutes. As they encourage, lend money to, or accommodate each other when in need of help, their actions serve to develop communal social bonding.

Furthermore, when prostitutes are arrested, they call their colleagues to bail them out when there are no other options for release. Offenders face peer pressure to belong to sympathetic groups, uphold their values, and be accepted/supported by the group (Francis & Humphreys, 2016). For example, most participants in the current study who did not initially use alcohol/substances but were introduced to them by other prostitutes and clients later started abusing them to socialize and bond in the business. Some occasionally drink alcohol and use substances to manage the stress of walking the streets, but this is because they can afford not to bond with others or seek their approval. Those who fall into this category have fewer friends and are financially more secure than the other prostitutes. Usually, prostitutes are made to contribute money to their leader as a bribe for police whenever they are arrested in a police sting operation. Prostitutes try to identify and befriend sympathetic individuals or even criminals to feel some sense of

belonging and help them evade police victimization (Olofinbiyi et al., 2016). Some prostitutes in the current study indicated that they develop a degree of psychological strength that allows them to overcome the stress from being victimized by the police by being religious and developing social support from colleagues' networks. Those who managed the stress from police victimization effectively attained a reasonable level of financial stability that provided them with options for low-risk resources to cope with the stress.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of distress tolerance used for this study proposes that when a person is subjected to a continual state of stress, they become psychologically aversive toward the stressor, promoting psychopathology (Zvolensky, Bernstein, & Vujanovic, 2011). The state creates negative emotions in the individual, such as uncomfortable bodily sensations, as well as entrenching intolerance to emotional and somatic sensations (Zvolensky, Bernstein, & Vujanovic, 2011). The psychological strain compels the individual to seek alternative ways of becoming psychologically stable. There is a tendency for harmful alternatives to be sought if the individual does not have the resources to seek positive intervention measures to cope with the stress.

The participants in this study had varying levels of tolerance in their physical and psychological disposition regarding the threshold of stress each prostitute can endure from police victimization. Those forms of stress range from the pressure that comes from avoiding the police to that with which they must deal when they are arrested and victimized. These varying levels of stress they experience are the exact amount of stress

that individuals can take before expressing negative emotions; that is dependent on their biological resilience and the various experiences they have had in the past with dealing with stress. When this level of stress exceeds what the individual can afford to endure and is then increasingly sustained, the individual becomes uncomfortable and irritable, posing a high level of risk to themselves and others, especially in that they often lack the resources to employ positive coping strategies (Scott-Tilley et al., 2010). Prostitutes feel constant psychological pain as a result of police exploitation and violation. They feel frustrated as they are powerless to permanently alleviate the distress they experience from police victimization and believe it is challenging to manage since some lack the resources to keep the growing pain in check (Wells & Anderson, 2011). Most prostitutes have become resentful and aggressive towards the police, expressing negative emotions as a result of being uncomfortable and irritable. This uncomfortable bodily sensation has led to intolerance to emotional and somatic sensations causing anxiety and depression among prostitutes.

Prostitutes in this study indicated that they constantly adopt ways to deal with the stress they suffer from police victimization so as to maintain psychological stability. These coping strategies include alcohol and substance abuse, giving monetary or sexual bribes to the police, and fostering a deceptive lifestyle based on their work and background. They frequently change from a high-risk environment to one that is less risky, engage excessively in hobbies such as watching movies, exercising and listening to music, and networking with friends in the business. Some participants adapted some positive coping strategies, including turning to religion and spirituality to cope with the

psychological stress they face. They also refrain from trying to elevate their self-esteem so that they don't readily feel the pain of being humiliated, are territorial with sympathizers (strangers, criminals, and fellow street prostitutes), and carry anything that could be used as a weapon to fight off corrupt police officers who come to victimize them. These may include but are not limited to beer bottles, penknives, pebbles, evil charms, and razor blades. These behaviors are expressed as select coping strategies based on available resources to reduce the psychological strain from police victimization that continually fosters unwanted negative emotions in street prostitutes.

Limitations of the Study

One of the significant limitations of an IPA study like mine is the problem of generalizability. Being that participants were street prostitutes in Nigeria makes it difficult for the findings to apply to those from other parts of the world, as cultural values vary. Prostitutes in Nigeria and some other African countries are viewed by society as having a low social status and are treated with contempt and disrespect. Hence, their rights are readily marginalized or relegated by law enforcement. This factor could be different in other areas of the world, making this study's findings inapplicable to those environments. That would be particularly true of countries that have strong human rights advocacy. However, in countries where human rights advocacy is weak, the findings from this study are fully transferable. Secondly, there was a possibility of personal bias as a female who was interviewing other females. My personal feelings could have led to a researcher's bias, but I kept it in check by using journaling to understand my thoughts/feelings and ensured I worked exclusively with data collected to improve

trustworthiness. Third, I had the limitation of relying on individual reports on their personal experiences without observing body language or facial expressions since the interview was conducted by phone; this may have led to the loss of some essential observable data. Conducting a face-to-face interview is more reassuring to participants since they can appreciate the empathy expressed by the interviewer, which helps foster rapport. It also helps an interviewer collect observable data that synergize efforts towards the analysis and interpretation of data to improve trustworthiness. Therefore, conducting a phone interview may have been a shortfall of this study. Fourth, from the participants' verbal expressions, I noticed they were apprehensive as they were not sure I would protect their confidentiality. It made them anxious about answering some sensitive questions in-depth, even after a degree of probing to help clarify their statements. When this happened, I respected their desires. Sometimes, I felt like they answered my questions according to what they thought I wanted to hear rather than a true reflection of their opinions. For example, when I asked one of my participants how she coped with police victimization, she said she gives herself a treat that makes her forget about the pain. I probed, asking whether she used substances, and she replied no, but it all depends on what I considered a substance. During each interview session, I had to persistently make every effort to build rapport with the participants to make them feel more comfortable talking to strangers over the phone about their personal experiences. Some participants who responded to my flyer were initially reluctant to respond when they discovered I would not pay them for their time. Lastly, some participants found it difficult to fully express themselves, even after I told them they could speak in Pidgin

English. I believe they thought they should impress me with perfect English since it was an academic project, but that made them struggle to express themselves. This made it difficult to interpret their phenomenological experience, but I tried to identify keywords and told them I understood Pidgin English to understand how they explained their experiences thoroughly.

Recommendations

I decided to embark on this research to bring awareness to the experience of Nigerian female prostitutes who are victimized by the police. Although there have been similar studies to this one (Aborisade & Fayemi, 2015; Aborisade & Oni, 2019; Armstrong, 2019; Bungay & Guta, 2018; Dewey et al., 2016), there have been few studies on the coping strategies which prostitutes have adapted towards alleviating the stress they suffer from police victimization. Research has not been conducted on how these personal coping strategies to deal with the stress may be counter-productive to long-term health.

Since social culture varies, and in this study, the participants were of the Nigerian population, I recommend future researchers do a comparative study involving countries in other parts of the world where prostitution is criminalized as it is in Nigeria but also focusing on how they cope with the stress of police victimization. It is essential to find correlations and variations between countries that criminalize prostitution and those that do not, as well as what authorities could do to ensure that the human rights of prostitutes are not violated. This could include checking the abuse of state powers by the police, making them more accountable towards society, providing professional intervention

centers, and promoting human rights without biases and sentiments for vulnerable populations like street prostitutes.

Secondly, as much female prostitution has been the focus of this study, there is a growing and even more secretive trend toward male prostitution in Nigeria today. It is important to study male prostitution, especially that is considered a huge taboo in Nigerian society; likewise, gay associations are outright prohibited by law. Future researchers could explore this as they may or may not also be victimized by the police. Finally, several participants in this study were doubtful about my intentions as a researcher because we had no face-to-face interactions. Future researchers could meet with participants without compromising their confidentiality when obtaining even more relevant data that inform their study. Studies could also be conducted on police experiences with the victimization of prostitutes by fellow police officers, towards understanding where the bane of the problem lies and how to ensure prostitutes are protected from police abuse and corruption.

Implications

The major problem that has led to the victimization of female prostitutes around the world is that prostitution is perceived as a non-victim crime by law enforcement agencies, and Nigeria is no exception. The police in most countries see prostitution in that light, i.e., a crime that has no real victim because both the purported offender and the prostitute are perceived as offenders in the eyes of the law (Matthews, 2015). This has contributed to the reason prostitutes are widely victimized by society. It creates an ambiguity in determining the victim in cases of violence against prostitutes because

prostitutes are also considered to be offenders. In countries where prostitution is criminalized, or laws against it are vague, the police often exploit prostitutes, especially that they are a criminal population already relegated by state laws (Mgbako, 2011). Sadly, this reality encourages the unfair treatment of prostitutes in society, making it difficult for them to get justice. There is a need for the government, civil organizations, and the international community to champion reforms of present policies and laws on vulnerable populations so law enforcement agencies can be held accountable. There is an urgent need for the Nigerian government to check the police's excesses when dealing with street prostitutes although society has little control over how the police choose to use its powers towards prostitutes as a prostitute is considered an offender. Even when there are laws to hold the police accountable, this can lead to abuse of power. However, decriminalization and regulation of prostitution may give prostitutes the power to defend and protect themselves under law.

Furthermore, this study has implied that the victimization of street prostitutes by the police increases the risk of public health problems in society. The strategies that many prostitutes adapt to cope with police victimization stress are counter-remedial to the psychological issues with which they currently struggle, such as alcohol/substance addiction, aggressiveness, low self-esteem, and an increasing need to be involved in deceptiveness, and criminality, misplaced identity, anxiety, and depression. Professional psychological intervention centers should be encouraged to help treat victimized prostitutes with psychological issues rather than marginalize them in these situations.

This study also sheds light on the need for better police training on the need for professionalism/respect for human rights. A police misconduct bureau should be established whereby victimized prostitutes can freely report police abuse cases without being stigmatized or their concerns ignored. The government should sensitize the society towards establishing prostitutes as a vulnerable population that should get compensation and rehabilitation from a psychological deficit lifestyle to which they cannot help but succumb. This could be done through the media, religious places, medical facilities, and, most especially, the legislature by making laws that protect prostitutes and attribute positive human values.

Summary

In this study, I used interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore the lived experiences of prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police and how they use adaptive coping strategies to cope with the stress of police victimization. Victimization of prostitutes is a trend about which many in society remain are silent because they believe that it could be justified since those who engage in it are perceived as offenders or stigmatized as people who have no regard for morality. The study indicated that police victimization of prostitutes has consequently caused prostitutes to adopt strategies to cope with the psychological strain they continually suffer from corrupt police conduct. The main coping strategies include alcohol and substance abuse, changing from a high-risk location to a low one, developing camaraderie with colleagues/sympathizers, and offering a monetary or sexual bribe to the police. The Nigerian police handle matters concerning prostitutes without respect for their human rights, mainly because they target their selfish

advantage over arrested prostitutes. This has eroded the confidence prostitutes have with the police and has made them resentful. Prostitutes regularly need to seek unconventional ways of coping with the stress that comes with police victimization to ensure their survival on the streets and maintaining a stable psychological disposition. These include alcohol and substance abuse, giving monetary or sexual bribes to the police, promoting a deceptive lifestyle based on concealing prostitution, their personal, economic, and educational background. More unconventional ways of coping prostitutes seek are frequently changing from a high-risk environment to a low one, emotionally detaching from developing positive self-esteem for themselves, getting territorial with sympathizers (strangers, criminals, and fellow street prostitutes). They carry anything that could be used as a weapon (beer bottles, penknives, pebbles, evil charms, and razor blade) to ensure their security.

This study exposes that the adaptive coping strategies employed by prostitutes victimized by the Nigerian police can, over time, be counter-productive when attempting to maintain positive psychological health, which in turn poses a public health and security problem for society. This study would help educate public officers, especially in developing countries, to encourage respect for offenders' human rights. It raises the need for better police training on the need for professionalism/respect for human rights, which would aid in fighting the cause of a social problem rather than the effect. Next, it would help encourage the establishment of psychological intervention centers for victimized prostitutes and police misconduct bureaus where victimized prostitutes can freely report cases of police abuse. Lastly, sensitize society towards establishing that prostitutes are a

vulnerable population that should get compensation and rehabilitation from a psychological deficit lifestyle in which they are forced to live.

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Appendix A: Letter to the Head Field Operations of Partner Organization

Head Field Operations

Partner Organization's Office,

Abuja.

Dear Sir,

My name is Anitha Scroggins, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I'm conducting a research study on the experience of Nigerian female prostitutes who are victimized by the police in Nigeria and would be using a phenomenological approach. There are many studies that have discussed the victimization of prostitutes and their negative effects. However, how these experiences pressure them to form adaptive coping behaviors are unknown. My study will provide insight into the experience of female prostitutes who are victimized by the Nigerian police.

I will need your assistance in conducting this important research. If you agree to support me, I would like you to assist me in recruiting prostitutes who could volunteer as participants for the study. I would like to work with your field staff whenever they go on operations during the day. They would help in distributing my invitation flyers while informing the potential participants about the study. I will contact eligible participants who indicate interests to be volunteers after they have been invited. Then, I would schedule an appointment with the participants to get their consent and explain the nature of my study (IRB Approval Number: 07-30-20-0726288). The participants of this study

need to be prostitutes who mostly solicit clients on the streets and are between the ages of 18 to 35 years old. Being a participant in this study is voluntary, and participants can decide to discontinue their participation in the study whenever they wish to do so. The information the participants provide will be kept highly confidential.

I am open to discussing any uncertainties concerning this study, especially in matters of involving the researcher and prospective participants.

Sincerely,

Anitha Scroggins

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University

IRB Approval Number: 07-30-20-0726288.

Appendix B: Participants' Invitation Flyer



SFH VOLUNTEER RESEARCH STUDY

AN INTERVIEW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR VIEWS ON WOMEN'S

HEALTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OR TEXT

ANITHA

Appendix C: Debrief Form

Thank you for your participation in this research study about the experiences of victimization of female prostitutes by the Nigerian police. This form is part of the “debriefing” process, which helps to remind you as the participant the details of the study and provide supportive information in case you experience anguish.

I, Anitha Scroggins, a Walden University doctoral student, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of female prostitutes who are victims of police victimization. This will help to address the gap in the literature by understanding the adaptive coping strategies that prostitutes use to ameliorate the distress caused by police victimization.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study will also not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secured by password protection and stored in a personal computer only available to the researcher. The university requires that the data be stored for five years, and then the drive will be cleared and data destroyed.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress, or becoming upset. Being in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing. This study involves a sensitive topic,

victimization, which could be a trigger for distress or depression. The substantial risks may include;

1. There would be substantial privacy risk for the participants especially during recruitment of participants especially that you are stigmatized by society. Major risk factors include the police, pimps, madams and controlling family members. I will minimize the privacy risks through discreetly conducting the interview sessions, the participants would only be identified by their first initial towards ensuring their privacy. The true purpose of my study would be masked as a study concerning women's health so that participants would not be easily identified and stigmatized by the public. The interview sessions would have time schedules for each participant that is most safe for them
2. There may be substantial psychological risk of reliving a traumatic incident by a participant. When a participant is being interviewed by the researcher, there is a tendency for the participant to suffer psychological pain of having to remember a traumatic incident like police humiliation, extortion or even rape which could cause the participant to become sad, nervous, angry and afraid or talk and behave irrationally as a result of these. My questions would focus on their coping mechanisms rather than the actual incidents themselves. To minimize the substantial psychological risks, I will be careful to identify participants who may be undergoing some traumatic memories and stop the interview if its recollection presents psychological difficulties for the participant that hinders the participant from continuing the interview and also offer you sources of psychological support.

3. There is substantial relationship risk for the participant if pimps, madams or even a family member learns the participant gave a researcher information which they believe should have been kept private by them since it could put them at risks of losing the business and its proceeds. Participants are at the substantial legal risk of being arrested, pay a fine or even jailed if the police become aware that the participants are giving negative information about them especially that prostitution is even illegal in Nigeria. There is the substantial risk of the participant being sacked from the work they do, by their pimps, madams and controlling family members thereby losing income, if they learn that the participant has been talking to anyone about their negative experiences in the prostitution trade. Participants are at substantial physical risks of receiving physical assault as retaliation and threats as a means which the police retaliate, pimps, madams or controlling family use to exert their control and power over participants.

To minimize possible relationship, legal, economic/professional and physical risks, I will discreetly recruit participants through distributing flyers that have only the abbreviations of my partner organization and the researcher's email. Information about the study will be delivered briefly to potential participants in the course of also distributing medical supplies to potential participants, while also masking the true purpose of the study as one that seeks to learn about women's health, towards avoiding the police, pimps, madams and controlling family members from learning that participants want to or have been talking to me about their experiences in the prostitution trade which could cause them to seek retaliation on the participants as a form of

punishment to exert physical and psychological control over them. The potential benefit of this study is that it would help to sensitize the society and encourage public officers to make policies that foster the equality of female prostitutes as victims of psychological violence.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can also contact Dr. Leilani Endicott, our university's representative.

Source of Support:

Olive Prime Premium Psychological Services Center

Kado District, FCT - Abuja, Nigeria.

Their services include psychological counseling, psychological crisis response, Art therapy, drug and substance rehabilitation, and child and adolescent psychology.

Table 1*Themes and Subthemes With Supporting Quotes*

Themes and Subthemes	Quotes
Experiencing constant psychological pain as a result of police violation and exploitation	
Feeling devalued by the police task force on prostitution	P1: “they don’t care about us, they only care about forcing us to collect money and pussy [sex].”
Feeling exploited because they are in a negative situation they cannot change	P2: “I gave him pussy [sex] but still had to bail myself with the five thousand naira I borrowed from my friend.”
Feeling threatened and anxious while walking around locations patrolled by police, particularly at night	P3: “I watch my left and my right when hustling on the road at night... because when they [police] catch you, they are ready to follow you to an ATM, room, or even do mobile transfer just to get money from you.”
Feeling helpless and lacking self-worth due to police demands for sexual favors from some prostitutes, often leading to rape.	P2: “Junior police officers wanted to have sex with me, but I refused, and they kept pressuring me, then a senior police officer came into the station and demanded that I be left alone, then he took me to a dark corner and raped me without protection [condom] ... the junior officer still robbed me of the three thousand naira in my purse and the condoms I had bought and I can’t do anything about it”
Feeling resentful due to unjust police actions toward prostitutes	
Feeling indignant towards the police and avoiding activities that attract police attention or even reporting a problem as victims	P1: “I can never advise anybody to join the police; they are not straightforward.”
Have experienced humiliation that was mainly perpetrated by the female police officers	P3: “they [police] don’t ask useful questions when they approach you... they just want to take you to their station.”
Experience a loss of personal dignity from physical and sexual assault perpetrated mostly by male officers	P4: “A senior female police officer insisted the junior male officers carry me in the back of their patrol truck for the passerby to see even though she knew I was dressing indecently because I was hustling on the streets when I was arrested.”
Experience loss of confidence in law enforcement due to unfair treatment by the police	P2: “I had no other choice than to allow him to finger [penetrate with the finger] my pussy [vagina] since I didn’t have ten thousand naira to give to him.”
Nurturing a growing feeling of anger and violence towards police	P5: “The police do not have the interests of anybody except what they can get from

victimization and society's indifference

you. The society shames us for trying to survive in this bad economy.”

P6: “the police victimize us because they are not checked by senior officers and the government, and yet they expect us to be law-abiding citizens... how person wey never chop go get sense?” [How can a hungry person be reasonable?].

Feeling helpless resulting to stress

Experience anxiety and fearfulness

P2: “...I saw a vehicle like the police pickup truck one Monday morning when I went to buy bread, and I ran all the way home...my friend later told me it was a building construction vehicle and we laughed.”

Feeling depressed, leading to substance abuse and excessive engagement with hobbies

P4: “...I regularly smoke my weed [marijuana], which is the only thing that makes me happy whenever I face police and client problems.”

Experience a strong sense of social marginalization as the police exceptionally maltreat them even for trivial offenses

P7: “the police chased me until I fell and sustained some injuries on my leg...I only wished they put in efforts like this into arresting criminals in the country.”

Feeling guilt, leading to secretive lifestyles to avoid social stigmatization

P3: “I don't stay in a particular location hustling for more than a month so that I don't get known by many people.”

Experience difficulty developing real social bonds, resulting from an increasingly combative and deceptive lifestyle

P2 said, “if ashawo man wey I don do with me before no give me my money complete, I go break him head...na street we dey” [...a client who thinks that he is familiar with me, must pay my complete fee after sex, if not I will break his head...we are both in the streets].

Growing feelings of social attachment among street prostitutes with other sympathizers to avoid police victimization

Acceptance of internalized hopelessness due to police victimization as a risk to be managed rather than avoided

P3: “I endeavor to have about three thousand naira on me whenever I'm hustling so that I can bribe at least one police officer who may want to arrest me.”

Experience a strong need to support other colleagues in the business

P2: “when I escape being arrested by the police in my location, I quickly call my

due to shared problems from the police.

friends in other locations around, to alert them so they can be careful as they hustle.”

Experience peer pressure to conform to the values of other prostitutes and sympathizers as a means of being accepted and supported by them

P5 said, “I no dey smoke Igbo before I enter street but I don turn oga na master now ...you know say... how babes go dey high and me dey look?” [Before I became a street prostitute, I did not smoke marijuana but I’m an expert now ... how can I not get intoxicated when others are doing it?].
