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**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

PSYCHOLOGY MASTERS RESEARCH DISSERTATION

*The Local Knowledge of Transactional Sex in a sample of Tertiary Education Students in
KwaZulu Natal.*

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the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

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DECLARATION

I, the author Anne Glasscoe, hereby declare that this dissertation: *The Local Knowledge of Transactional Sex in a sample of Tertiary Education Students in KwaZulu Natal* is my own work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. This dissertation is being submitted in complete fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science (Dissertation) in the school of Applied Human Sciences. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Transactional sex has been cited in considerable public health literature in terms of its critical role in HIV and STI transmission (Stoebenau et al., 2011). Much of this literature has focused on women's experiences, their role, and their vulnerability. However, limited research has investigated the role, motivations, and understandings of men in transactional sex relationships. This project attempts to explore and elaborate on this gap with a focus on men as well as the dynamics between men and women in these relationships.

Methods: This study investigated the local knowledge and understandings of transactional sex amongst tertiary students. Focus groups were conducted in order to gain an in depth view of tertiary education students' knowledge about these relationships. The students were sampled from two different tertiary institutions to achieve comparison of the two.

Results: The research found that both men and women could act as both the provider and the beneficiary in transactional sex relationships. The position of women as beneficiaries was found to sit on a continuum of agency and vulnerability. Meaning, women were described as having power and control within transactional sex relationships regardless of their role as provider or beneficiary. In addition, transactional sex relationships also exist in homosexual as well as heterosexual communities. New terminology used to define both men and women was also uncovered through the focus group discussion(s).

Discussion: Although the findings recognized the often-cited risks of transactional relationships including HIV and STI transmission, this study found an emphasis placed on the dimension of emotional dangers and relationship-morality issues such as divorce, betrayal, deceit, and dependency.

Keywords: Transactional sex, role of men and women, homosexual, agency, consequences.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

DUT – Durban University of Technology

HEAIDS - The Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme

HIV –Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSRC –Human Sciences Research Council

NDOH –National Department of Health

PMB - Pietermaritzburg

SANAC –South African National AIDS Council

STI - Sexually Transmitted Infection / Disease

TS/R- Transactional sex or relationships

UKZN – University of KwaZulu- Natal

UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

FU1, 2, 3 – University of KwaZulu Natal Female Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively

MU1, 2, 3 – University of KwaZulu Natal Male Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively

FD1, 2, 3 – Durban University of Technology Female Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively

MD1, 2, 3 - Durban University of Technology Male Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is on a slow and steady decline; however, the prevalence of risky sexual behaviour still poses a public health problem (Hadebe, 2015; Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya, Dunkle, & Penn-Kekana, 2012). According to Ragnarsson, Townsend, Ekstrom, Chopra, & Thorson (2010), this problem persists because interventions have not adequately focused on the structural factors including “socio-cultural, organisational, legal and policy aspects of the environment that impede or facilitate” (p.2) risky sexual behaviour. An example of risky sexual behaviour is engaging in a transactional sex relationship (Stoebenau et al, 2011). This behaviour can be seen as risky due to a number of factors, including these relationships being defined by having multiple concurrent sexual partners, decreased likelihood of condom use and gender-based violence, to name only a few (Chatterji Murray, London, & Anglewicz, 2005; Dunkle et al., 2004; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Luke, 2003; Stoebenau et al., 2011).

One of the dominant risky characteristics of transactional sex is having multiple-concurrent partners and the tendency for these partners to have unprotected sex (Formson & Hilhorst, 2016). Due to these tendencies, this sexual practice has become a high-risk behaviour (Dunkle et al., 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007; Hunter, 2010). In addition to HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, substance abuse, socio-economic disadvantage, and murder have also been described as consequences of transactional sex relationships (Dunkle et al., 2004). Through the investigation of local knowledge, as expressed by tertiary education students from KwaZulu Natal, this research aims to elaborate on the socio-economic statuses; gender roles; role expectation(s);, relationship typologies and motivations of both benefactors and beneficiaries who engage in transactional sex relationships. Local knowledge can be defined as the knowledge or understanding that people within a particular community have developed over time based on personal and group experiences, local culture and beliefs, environmental, , cultural and political history (Warburton & Martin, 1999).

1.2 Problem Statement

The focus of this study is to, therefore, delve deeper into these structural social factors that influence individuals to engage in risky transactional sex relationships. This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the knowledge and assumptions surrounding transactional sex from the general tertiary student population, and not necessarily individuals directly involved in transactional sex relationships. By understanding the basic factors that lead to this phenomenon, researchers can better develop interventions aimed at reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as the many other risky consequences that have been associated with transactional sex relationships, namely unwanted pregnancies, substance abuse, socio-economic disadvantage and murder (Dunkle et. al., 2004).

Transactional sex and relationships (TS/R) are fast becoming an accepted and almost encouraged norm or a way of life (Formson & Hilhorst, 2016). With the extensive list of dangers that surround transactional sex relationships, it is imperative that in depth research be conducted in an attempt to identify factors that stimulate participation in these relationships and explore the knowledge or understanding the sample population has of these relationships. To date, research around this topic has had a limited focus on the local knowledge and understanding of tertiary education students. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that research be done to identify what these young individuals know and understand about transactional sex and how this knowledge may contribute to the epidemiology of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Furthermore, this research aims to explore the complex nature of morality and acceptance of transactional sex, as well as the varied consequences associated with the practice. Lastly, this research also aims to explore how economies of romance can be situated within transactional sex relationships.

1.3 Research Objectives

- I. To explore the knowledge and understanding of transactional sex relationships amongst tertiary education students in KwaZulu Natal.
- II. To identify the student's perceptions of the roles played by men and women in transactional sex relationships.
- III. To identify the assumed motivations behind men and women engaging in transactional sex relationships.
- IV. To explore the perceptions of the participants towards those who participate in transactional sex relationships.
- V. To identify the colloquial terminology that tertiary students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it.
- VI. To explore the consequences associated with transactional sex beyond HIV/AIDS.

1.4 Research Questions

The above objectives hope to be answered through the following research questions:

- I. What knowledge do tertiary education students in KwaZulu Natal have about transactional sex?
- II. What do the students know and/or understand about the roles that both men & women play in transactional sex relationships?
- III. What do students consider as the motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst male and female individuals?
- IV. What perceptions do the participants have towards individuals who participate in transactional sex relationships?
- V. What colloquial terminology do tertiary students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it?
- VI. What are the consequences that can be associated with transactional sex relationships?

1.5 Outline of the Methodology

This is a qualitative study within a socio-constructivism paradigm as discussed in the literature review. A qualitative research design seeks to explore and understand meaning individuals assign to social or human phenomena (Creswell, 2014). This research used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, also commonly referred to as availability sampling, is a non-probability sampling method that depends on the immediately available population or sample pool to draw data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). To gain rich qualitative data, this study made use of focus group discussions to collect data. The use of focus groups is a useful tool used in qualitative research where groups of people are actively encouraged to talk about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the subject (Marshall & Rossman, 1991; Greenbaum, 2000; Lindlof, Taylor, 2002). Once the focus groups were conducted, data was transcribed verbatim and then analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was appropriate for the nature and intentions of this study as, by definition, it helps to identify threads of significant codes and patterns rooted in the data that serves to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the data analysis was complete, the results were written up and discussed at length to address the research questions and objectives of the study.

1.6 Definition of Operational Terms

The phenomenon of transactional sex and transactional sex relationships can be defined as the sexual relationships where the giving and/or receiving of gifts, money or other services are a defining factor (Stoebenau, Nair, Rambelosen, Rakotoarison, Razafintsalama, & Labonte', 2013; Zembe, Townsend, Thorson & Ekstöm, 2013). The participants, however, do not frame themselves in terms of prostitutes or sex workers, but rather as girlfriends/boyfriends or sugar babies/sugar daddies (Stoebenau et al., 2013; Zembe et al., 2013). Literature shows that typical terminologies such as 'sugar-daddies', 'cougars', and 'sugar-mommies' are commonly associated with the practice of transactional sex and those who engage in it (UNAIDS, 2018). However, in an unpublished Honours thesis by Glasscoe

(2014), focus group participants described terminologies such as ‘Ben 10’s’, ‘Budhas’, and ‘Rhazols’. This study involved several focus groups conducted with students on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal. The participants described Ben 10’s to be young male individuals who engage in transactional sex relationships as beneficiaries with older wealthier women. ‘Budhas’ and ‘Rhazols’ were described as young male university graduates who had left university, become successful in their business lives and then returned to become involved in transactional sex relationships with young attractive female students.

1.7 Outline of the Chapters

The study will discuss the literature relevant to the topic of transactional sex and relationships in chapter two. This literature will also look at the different theories that underpin this topic of study. The methodology will be discussed in chapter three of this study. The methodology will include a discussion on the study design, sampling and data collection and analysis amongst other relevant subtopics. Chapter four will provide the results obtained from a thematic analysis of the collected data. In chapter five, a discussion of the results will be made. The sixth and last chapter provides the limitations, recommendations and conclusions made from the study.

1.8 Summary

In conclusion, this study is of imperative importance in the constant and ever-growing fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS and other related consequences of risky sexual behaviour. Through the application of an in-depth literature review, a qualitative research approach, and a detailed data analysis, the researcher aims to gain rich discursive results surrounding the phenomenon of transactional sex.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will give an in-depth overview of the existing literature surrounding transactional sex relationships. It must be noted that transactional sex is a complex and widely applicable phenomenon and a great deal of research has been conducted in various contexts. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on obtaining and discussing literature about the objectives of this particular study.

2.1 Defining Transactional Sex

Transactional sex has been defined as sexual intercourse within the context of an unceremonious symbiotic relationship wherein the involved partners negotiate the exchange of material items or money in return for sexual favours (Stoebenau et al., 2013; Zembe et al., 2013). This means that transactional sex is an informal negotiation between two or more individuals who both benefit from the relationship in some way, be it in sexual favours or material benefits such as money. Transactional sex is categorized as a high-risk behaviour for transmitting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections because these relationships typically involve multiple partners as well as the lack of condom use (Dunkle et al., 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007; Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012; Stephenson, Winter, & Elfstrom, 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013).

According to academic literature, transactional sex is not the same as prostitution (Stoebenau et al., 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013). Furthermore, those who engage in transactional sex relationships differentiate themselves from those who engage in commercial sex or prostitution - who formally exchange money for sex (Stoebenau et al., 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013). Furthermore, the definition of prostitution as stated by the South African Law Reform Commission, is “the exchange of any financial or another reward, favour or compensation to engage in sexual acts” (Jewkes et al., 2012; p. 1). This definition illustrates the difficulties in drawing a differentiation between transactional sex and prostitution. However, in contrast to prostitution, transactional sex does not involve a formal agreement (x amount of money for

certain sexual favour) between the parties. In addition, prostitution is generally defined by a once-off meeting with no further commitments afterward whereas transactional sex is defined by a relationship between parties, meaning, regular interactions, often involving constant negotiation (Stoebenau et al., 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013). As stated in Poulin's study (2007, p. 2389) the "carefully articulated narratives about the voluntary quality of the gift and the timing of the transfer" separate transactional relationships from sex work.

2.2 Defining the Terminology Related to Transactional Sex

Literature shows that typical terminologies such as 'sugar-daddies', 'cougars' and 'sugar-mommies' are commonly associated with the practice of transactional sex and those who engage in it (UNAIDS, 2018). However, in an unpublished Honours thesis by Glasscoe (2014), focus group participants described terminologies such as 'Ben 10's', 'Budhas' and 'Rhazols'. This study involved a number of focus groups conducted with students on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal. The participants described Ben 10's to be young male individuals who engage in transactional sex relationships as beneficiaries with older wealthier women. 'Budhas' and 'Rhazols' were described as young male university graduates who had left university, become successful in their business lives and then returned to become involved in transactional sex relationships with young attractive female students. However, it was unclear how common or widespread this behaviour is or how extensive the use of the terminology was at the time of the study. To understand these terms and how they are used, this current study will explore them in greater detail in a broader sample population.

2.3 Concurrent Partners and Sexual Networks

As mentioned above, transactional sex relationships are associated with multiple partners. In addition, these relationships have been defined as having "high-risk sex partners [and] bisexual sex..." (Bobashev, Zule, Osilla, Kline, & Wechsberg, 2009, p. 33). These relationships are, therefore, not only defined by individuals having multiple partners, but by these partners being concurrent as well. Concurrent sexual partnerships refer to having more

than one sexual partner within the same space of time (Grieb, Davey-Rothwell, & Latkin, 2011 & National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003). Research found that this phenomenon can be rooted in the various socio-economic and cultural trends and pressures placed on individuals daily. In addition, these environmental pressures seem intertwined with individual psychological factors such as self-esteem.

Sexual networks have been found to be a common source for concurrent transactional sex relationships. A sexual network refers to “a group of people who are connected to one another through direct or indirect sexual contact” (Friedman, Cooper, & Osborne, 2009, p. 1). Berkman & Glass (2000) argue that social-sexual networks, in turn, affect individual behaviour in four ways, namely: the individual’s social support system, social influence, social engagement and attachment and lastly, these networks affect an individual’s access to resources and material goods. Therefore, it is assumed that an understanding of these sexual/social networks, including how the individual members interact with one another and the greater environment, can significantly assist in effective and appropriate design of intervention and awareness efforts focused on transactional sex relationships (Goldberg, 2011).

2.4 Intergenerational Sex and Power Asymmetries

The literature showed discrepancies about the typical characteristics associated with transactional sex relationships. The majority of the literature described transactional sex relationships as characterized by age and economic differences between transactional sex partners (Atwood, Kennedy, Barbu, Nagbe, Seekey, Sirleaf, & Sosu, 2011; Shefer et al., 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013). These differences refer to factors that lead to power dynamics, abuse and manipulation, such as difficulties in the negotiation of condom use (Shefer et al., 2012; Zembe et al., 2013). According to this literature, younger women in a sexual relationship with older, wealthier and often married men typically define transactional sex relationships (Atwood et al., 2011; Luke, 2003; Shefer et al., 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013). However, recent research has identified young males acting as beneficiaries of older women as well as older men (Glasscoe, 2014).

However, the study was limited in that it did not define how, when, where, or why these young male beneficiaries became involved in transactional sex relationships.

Contrasting literature has found that significant age gaps do not necessarily define transactional sex relationships. They are, however, characterized by economic inequalities. For example, Poulin's study (2007) showed how transactional sex relationships occurred between men and women who were only 2-3 years apart in age. She described how the age of the provider was not a factor, but rather his ability to provide for the beneficiary's needs. Poulin conducted her study in Malawi with young women aged 15 – 24 years old.

2.5 Socio-political Context

Zembe et al., (2013) and Stoebenau et al., (2011) suggest that the historical, social and political context of South Africa largely shaped the gender inequalities as discussed above. These contexts have generally been found to render women as vulnerable beneficiaries in transactional sex relationships. However, a changing economic and political context may be creating a context where women can become sexual benefactors (Jackson, 2006). In addition, research has found that women have begun to show agency by using transactional sex relationships as an economic currency. Pitpitan, Kalichman, Eaton, Watt, Sikkema, Skinner, Pieterse, & Cain (2012) describe how women negotiate sexual favours in return for alcohol. This transaction was described as being accepted and informal. Women approach men in bars or clubs and request alcohol and in return, it is widely accepted that the two will have sex that night. The amount and quality of alcohol determines the nature of the sex (condom use) (Pitpitan et al., 2012). These women were also described as being poor and often without jobs (Pitpitan et al., 2012). This ties in with the economic theory of relationships that states that women have been found to use sex as an economic resource (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004).

Young foreign male students have also been found to be vulnerable to transactional sex due to their low economic and foreign status (Shefer et al., 2012). However, these international students have also been reported to use transactional sex relationships with South African partners to gain social popularity and protection (Shefer et al., 2012). Furthermore, the

increased access and exposure to radios, televisions, and other media sources such as newspapers, Facebook and Twitter have been found to be associated with increased risky sexual behaviour such as transactional sex (Stephenson, Simon, & Finneran, 2014).

The unstable economic climate has also given rise to a new form of transactional sex. This involves a third party, otherwise known as a pimp. This ‘pimp-mediated’ transactional sex dramatically transforms the way transactional sex relationships and the social obligations thereof are defined (Masvawure, 2010). Typically, these relationships have been defined by a young male student facilitating a transactional relationship between an older man such as a ‘sugar-daddy’, for instance, with one or more young female students. Both the pimp and the young women would then get paid by the sugar-daddy for their services. The attraction that these pimp mediated relationships hold is that the sugar daddies do not need to find the women themselves. Although Masvawure’s study only discusses male students acting as pimps, this study hopes to shed more light on his phenomenon.

2.6 Gender Differentiations

Research to date has focused on women as the population of interest because women are thought to be more vulnerable to the negative consequences of transactional sex (Moore, Biddlecon, & Zulu, 2007). However, knowledge on what leads men to engage in transactional sex as well as the role they play is rather scarce (Shefer et al., 2012). Although some literature describes how peer pressure, a need for social acceptance, protection and the need for power can be motivating factors for young men to participate in transactional sex relationships. However, not enough research has been done to adequately understand the role and motivations of men in transactional sex relationships (Chatterji et al., 2005; Stephenson et al., 2014; Shefer et al., 2012).

In addition, research has also shown how women have formed a sense of agency by using their sexual abilities as a tool or resource to better their state of living (Formson, & Hilhorst, 2016). In this context, transactional sex can be seen as a type of bartering tool that both sexes use to gain what they want, so it must be asked, who is using whom?

2.7 Traditional Provider Role & Gift Giving in Sexual Relationships

The traditional role or the social ideal of men in relationships in South Africa and globally encompasses taking on a provider role (Jewkes et al., 2012). This includes providing material benefits for their wives, families and or girlfriend(s) (Jewkes et al., 2012). It can be seen through the historical cultural practice of *lobola* that this role is highly emphasized throughout South Africa. *Lobola* is the “essential prerequisite for marriage” where a man pays a bride price before marrying his bride (Hunter, 2002 in Jewkes et al., 2012, p.1). It is argued that the culture of gift-giving and transactional sex can be seen as a modification of traditional African marriage processes (Moore et al., 2007). Although the formality of *lobola* has been modified with progressing years and changing demands, the concept of a transaction or the thought of “I give this, you give that” remains (Glasscoe, 2014).

The bride price or *lobola* is also seen as a symbol of the bride’s worth and a low price is seen as an insult to both the bride and her family (Moore et al., 2007). “Gifts or money for sex may be the modern version of the financial validation of a woman’s sexual, and perhaps, personal worth.” (Moore et al., 2007, p. 47). However, that being said, it has come to be accepted across all cultures that gift-giving and material exchanges are a part of any form of committed romantic sexual relationship (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004).

Furthermore, Hunter (2002) and Wojcicki (2002) argue that the “exchange of material goods is commonly used as an indicator of partner commitment” (Found in Musvawure, 2010, p. 858). The problem lies in what is expected in return for these gifts. Kaufman & Stavrou (2004), describe how modern committed sexual partners may consider unsafe sexual practices due to gift-giving from their partners. In addition, Chatterji et al., (2005) argue that the bigger the gifts or material assistance is, the lower the likelihood of condom use becomes.

2.8 The Economies of Relationships

According to Baumeister & Vohs (2004), “women are sellers and men are buyers of sex” (p. 339). This theory takes an economic approach to the sexual behaviour and habits of human beings (Baumeister & Vohs 2004). Essentially, it assumes that all individuals make decisions according to the benefits and costs gained or lost because of that exchange. Secondly, it implies that a scarce or highly desirable resource will fetch a higher price. Thirdly, the sellers of goods, in this case, women, actively compete to win the market. Although buyers have been found to compete as well, this specific theory assumes that competition is higher amongst sellers. Lastly, this theory assumes that all individuals are going to make decisions and engage in practices that maximize their own outcomes. Applying this theory to transactional sex, one can argue that although it is one sided in that only women are described as sellers; it does sum the practice up quite well. The costs and benefits would symbolize the risks (HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, abuse) and benefits (money, status, protection). Research has also found that contexts, where transactional partners are scarce or difficult to obtain are characterized by high benefit demands, whereas in settings where these partners are readily available or abundant, the “price’ is much lower (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004). Research has further found that the sellers of sex, namely women in this context, have been found to compete with one another to gain the best transaction (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004). Flashy clothes, hairstyles and accessories can define this competition.

This theory of exchange can be defined by supply and demand within the broader context. This means that the amount or value exchanged within a transactional sex relationship is prescribed by how common the practice is and what the accepted trends are at the time. For example, if the tendency is to exchange an accessory such as a cell phone for a specific sexual favour, then all individuals engaging in the practice can be expected to pay a similar price.

2.9 Sexuality of Men in Modern Society

As mentioned earlier in this review, recent research has identified young men acting as beneficiaries to not only older women but older men as well. This phenomenon, described as ‘gay-for-pay,’ involves young previously heterosexual males becoming or pretending to be homosexual purely for the benefits of a transactional sex relationship. This finding was remarkable in that very little research has been conducted on the complex nature of men participating in transactional sex relationships in South Africa. The extent and nature of such participants and relationships, therefore, calls for further exploration. “The socio-cultural construction of sexuality in specific social contexts is key” for any successful intervention (Ragnarsson et al., 2010, p. 2). This research hopes to also shed light on what motivates and characterises homosexual transactional sex relationships in general as well as the motivations and characteristics of the ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon in addition to other dimensions of transactional sexual relationships.

2.10 Commonality and Social Acceptance of Transactional Sex

Transactional sex is becoming increasingly prevalent, especially amongst younger populations (Moore et al., 2007). Recent literature shows that transactional sex is a general characteristic of sexual relationships across the country. Transactional sex prevalence rates is reported to be between 5% and 80% (Alledahn, 2011; Chatterji et al., 2005; Dunkle et al., 2004b; Hunter, 2002; Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah, & Jordaan, 2001; Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004; Luke & Kurz, 2002; Matasha, Ntembelea, Mayaud, Saidi, Todd, Mujaya, & Tendo-Wambua, 1998; Meekers & Calves, 1997, & Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001; Nzyuko, Lurie, McFarland, Leyden, Nyamwaya, & Mandel, 1997).

The social acceptance and morality surrounding transactional sex and those who participate in such relationships is complex and multi-dimensional. A previous study conducted by Glasscoe (2014), describes how this acceptance and morality can be defined by the intentions of the individuals involved in the transactional sex relationship (p. 32). For example, participants from the study found that transactional sex relationships conducted in the context

of consumerism (sexual favours exchanged for luxuries such as designer clothes) was unacceptable. However, the same participants leaned towards acceptance and understanding of individuals who engaged in transactional relationships out of necessity (paying for educational fees, rent, etc.). Although the participants explained what they found to be acceptable and not, their opinions and perceptions of morality surrounding transactional sex and those who engage in it were a bit more blurred (Glasscoe, 2014, p. 33-34). It is for this reason that further research, such as this study is needed.

2.11 Consequences of Transactional Sex Relationships

As previously mentioned, for those who participate in transactional sex relationships, the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other STI's / STD's is increased (Amaro, 1995; Dunkle, Stephenson, Karita, Chomba, Kayitenkore, Vwalika, Allen, 2008; Stephenson et al., 2014, p. 2). However, a mass of research and literature describes further consequences resulting from transactional sex relationships. Emotional blackmail and dependence, as well as economic dependence were found to be highly detrimental consequences (Neema, Moore, & Kibombo, 2007). In addition, the danger of death/murder resulting from being involved in transactional sex relationships was also a consequence that was found in previous research (Worrienes, 2017). Literature has also shown how unwanted pregnancies are a significant concern for women who participate in transactional sex relationships (Bandali, 2011 & Worrienes, 2017).

2.12 Motivations to Engage in Transactional Sex Relationships

Research shows two main reasons that motivate young men and women to engage in transactional sex relationships. These reasons are sex for 'necessities' such as rent, food, toiletries and employment (survival sex), and secondly, sex for 'luxuries' such as designer clothes, cosmetics, drugs and other such consumer goods (consumption sex) (Chatterji et al., 2005, p. 57; Moore et. al., 2013; Stoebenau et. al, 2011; Wamoyi, Wight, Plummer, Mshana, & Ross, 2010; Zembe et al., 2013). Survival sex can be linked to "lack of economic opportunity in increasingly populous cities" as well as the "increased market for [and acceptance] of transactional sex" (Oldenburg, Perex-Brumer, Reisner, Mattie, Bärnighausen,

Mayer, & Mimiaga, 2014, p. 99). Consumption sex has been linked not only to the material benefit that comes from being involved in transactional sex relationships, but also to the peer pressure to be “flashy on campus” (Musvawure, 2010, p. 861). Musvawure (2010) further adds that “while the money and gifts transacted surely have ‘use-value,’ the attraction lies more in the prestige value of these relationships” (p. 862). The same can be said for the benefactors. Research has shown that these benefactors will take their beneficiaries out to high-end functions just to be seen with an attractive young partner (Musvawure, 2010).

Substance addiction was also found to be a strong motivator for both men and women to engage in transactional sex relationships (Pitpitan et al., 2012). Pitpitan et al., (2012) discovered that men and women alike would sell sex to get their next fix, which involved both alcohol and drugs.

Peer pressure on men to be seen as financially and physically powerful has also been found to be a motivation factor for men to become engaged in transactional sex relationships with multiple partners (Ragnarsson et al., 2010). In addition, “a history of childhood sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, substance use and depression” as well as “sexual compulsivity,” “homelessness, bisexual behaviour and neighbourhood disorder” have all been associated with individuals who engage in transactional sex (Bobashev, Zule, Osilla, Kline, & Wechsberg, 2009, p. 32 & Oldenburg et al., 2014, p. 100).

2.13 Theoretical Framework

The socio-constructivist approach focuses on the joint learning and creation of meaning that takes place during interaction in a social setting (Hickey, 1997). In addition, this approach focuses on how meaning is created and suggests that knowledge is not only a social product, but also a product specific to a particular society (Burr, 1995). This approach or theory was linked to this study because the study focuses on local knowledge, which includes social norms, expectations and group assumptions that are ever-changing. The definition of local knowledge as defined by Warburton & Martin (1999) states that local knowledge can be defined as the knowledge or understanding that people within a particular community have

developed over time based on personal and group experiences, local culture and beliefs, environmental, cultural and political history. This approach was adopted as it not only encourages participants to actively think about their shared local knowledge and experiences, but also ties in perfectly with the core focus on an ever-changing creation of understanding within a social / group setting.

2.14 Summary

The literature review highlighted that transactional sex has been defined as an informal negotiation between two or more individuals who both benefit from the relationship in some way, be it in sexual favours or material benefits such as money. Transactional sex is categorized as a high-risk behaviour for transmitting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections because these relationships typically involve multiple concurrent partners as well as the lack of condom use (Dunkle et al., 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007; Shefer et al., 2012; Stephenson et al., 2014 & Zembe et al., 2013). However, there is a mass of research and literature that describes further consequences resulting from transactional sex relationships. Emotional blackmail and dependence, as well as economic dependence, were found to be highly detrimental consequences of transactional sex (Neema et al., 2007). This literature review also looked at different terminologies commonly associated with the practice of transactional sex and those who engage such as ‘sugar mommies’ and ‘sugar daddies.’ Lastly, this chapter also discussed the socio-constructivism theory which underpins this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design serves to inform the methods of the research. This is a qualitative study within a socio-constructivism paradigm as discussed in the literature review. A qualitative research design seeks to explore and understand meaning individuals assign to social or human phenomena (Creswell, 2014). By employing the socio-constructivism paradigm, the researcher of this study applied the assumption that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live... [and that] individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (Creswell, 2008, 9. 8). This type of design allows for an in-depth understanding of the topic of interest, namely the local knowledge and beliefs that the sample group associate this with the phenomenon of transactional sex relationships. The study aimed to gain a rich description of the tertiary students’ perceptions and assumptions regarding transactional sex/relationships. While accepting that their local knowledge is constructed and understood through multiple lenses, coloured by culture, history, individual experience and social environment. In addition, Creswell (2008) describes how an individuals’ meanings and/or understandings are “formed through interaction with others” (p. 8). Hence, a qualitative design within a socio-constructivist approach was most suitable to achieve the objectives of the study and answer the research questions posed by this study.

3.2 Sampling

3.2.1 Sample Description.

The sample was made up of 31 participants from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg (PMB) campus and the Durban University of Technology, PMB campus. The initial targeted sample size was 56 participants, 28 from UKZN, and 28 from DUT. However, the researcher obtained saturation at 31 participants. All participants recruited for the study were above 18 years of age, of varying academic levels and assumed to be from varying socio-economic backgrounds. The participants were not asked to disclose their actual involvement in

transactional sex relationships. Although recruitment involved approaching students of all racial groups, no Indian students agreed to participate, and only two White and one Colored student participated. This could be due to a number of reasons including: lack of knowledge in the minority race groups, cultural boundaries, or because the demographic spread of students on both of the campuses is skewed.

3.2.2 Sampling Strategy.

This research used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, also commonly referred to as availability sampling, is a non-probability sampling method that depends on the immediately available population or sample pool to draw data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

Using convenience sampling, the researcher approached potential participants at the university common areas and asked them to participate in the study. They were given a description of the study, and how they would benefit from participating. Such benefits included gaining an awareness of transactional sex relationships and collaboratively learning about the local knowledge surrounding the topic. In addition, participants travelling from DUT were given monetary compensation for their travelling costs. All participants were also given refreshments (cupcakes and juice) after the focus group discussions. Willing participants were given a formal invitation stating the time, date and location of the study as well as being asked to provide the researcher with contact details to confirm participation the day before the focus group (See Appendices 1 & 2).

3.3 Data Collection

This research made use of focus group discussions to collect data. The use of focus groups is an effective tool used in qualitative research where groups of people are actively encouraged to talk about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the subject (Marshall & Rossman, 1991; Greenbaum, 2000; Lindlof, Taylor, 2002). The researcher acting as a

moderator asks leading questions in an interactive group setting where participants are encouraged to talk freely with other group members (Greenbaum, 2000). Furthermore, the members are encouraged to lead the discussion to allow them to introduce and discuss new material that may not necessarily be covered in the questions. Before any focus groups were conducted, ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee (REC). In accordance with the ethical requirements of research, the students were also required to read a document detailing all the information on the study (see appendix 2). The students were then required to sign an informed consent document that declared that they had read and understood the nature and purpose of the study, as well as their role in the study (see appendix 3).

Initially, the focus groups were meant to be conducted in the Psychology Lab at the UKZN PMB campus; however, due to participants not arriving for the groups, the researcher opted to make use of a mobile recorder and conveniently approached groups of students on each campus. Upon approach, the researcher gave a description of the study. An information sheet was given to willing groups and they were then asked to sign an informed consent form (See Appendices 3 & 4, respectively). The participants were also asked to complete a demographics form for data analysis purposes (see Appendix 5). For confidentiality purposes, the groups were also asked to move to a secluded area at the university to conduct the focus group discussion.

The recommended size for a focus group discussion is 8-10 participants (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). However, due to the changes mentioned above to the site at which the focus groups took place, the groups had an average of three participants per group. These groups were predominantly either all male or all female, with only two exceptions where the groups had one member of the opposite sex participating. Multiple focus group interviews were conducted on each campus until information saturation occurred. Information saturation occurs “when the collection of new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; found in Mason, 2010). This can also be called the “point of diminishing returns” which means that gaining more data may not necessarily imply more information (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003).

One researcher facilitated the focus groups. The questions were formulated before the time of the focus groups to serve as a guide; however, it was presumed that these questions could change and take a new focus, depending on what emerged during the discussion (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) (refer to Appendix 5). The focus group interview outline or questions were formulated based on both the findings of a previous study conducted by the researcher, as well as the literature review conducted for this study. The conclusions of the previous study warranted further research, resulting in the formation of this study, with the objectives and questions based on the areas that required further research. The focus groups were audio-recorded with a mobile recording device and transcribed later. The questions were given in English, as the researcher was English. In addition, considering that the participants were drawn from tertiary education institutions, it was presumed that they could read, understand and express themselves in English. However, the participants were encouraged to express terms or phrases in their mother tongue (isiZulu) if they so needed.

Before starting the focus group, confidentiality and anonymity of responses, as well as the freedom to withdraw at any point was stressed to the participants. Participants were not required to state any identifying information such as their names, student numbers or ID numbers and were therefore given pseudonyms to use for the duration of the focus group in order to further protect their anonymity. It was clarified that none of the participants were required or expected to reveal whether they were directly involved or had been previously involved in a transactional sex relationship. The focus groups took approximately 45 minutes each.

Nine focus groups were conducted across the two campuses. The DUT groups comprised of 14 students - two groups of all female participants and one group of all male participants and one mixed-gender group. Five focus groups were conducted with 17 UKZN students - one group of all female participants, three groups of all male participants and one mixed group.

The total sample size for the focus groups was 31 participants. The reason for having individual groups with each sex was to get the opinion and perceptions of both genders without either sex influencing the other's responses.

3.4 Data Analysis

Once the focus groups were conducted, data was transcribed verbatim and then analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was appropriate for the nature and intentions of this study as by definition; it helps to identify threads of significant codes and patterns rooted in the data that serves to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These codes or patterns tend to present themselves repeatedly, thereby forming common themes. Thematic analysis is an excellent approach to research that attempts to uncover details about people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences or values from a set of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis follows six generalized steps to reach conclusive results. These steps include familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and lastly, writing up the findings. Following these steps, the researcher familiarized herself thoroughly with the data to continue with the second step of identifying codes. This was achieved by transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews. These transcriptions were done verbatim, and analyzed alongside the field notes made by the researcher during the interviews. Once the transcription was completed, the researcher qualified the preliminary codes that were found during transcription. A code is a brief explanation of what was said repeatedly during the interviews. A code offers a way of organizing a mass of data into meaningful groups or themes. Once codes were identified, themes and subthemes were attached and repeatedly reviewed in order to obtain more explicit themes.

However, as is the nature of qualitative research, many of these themes overlapped. In order to provide better clarity, these themes were reviewed and sub-themes identified in order to provide strong and distinguishable differences between the main themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcripts and field notes made by the researcher that conducted the focus groups were repeatedly checked to extract multiple quotes that supported the themes and subthemes. This procedure of checking and re-checking the themes brought the names of the themes to light. Theme names were identified as descriptive and they engaged with the subject material

they were titled under. At each step of the analysis, the researcher and supervisor double checked the work to increase credibility and conformability. Lastly, the findings needed to be recorded clearly and descriptively. Having already identified the themes and sub-themes, as well as identified supporting quotes and field notes, the researcher further expanded on these extracts to provide a clear context and grounding for each.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

3.5.1 Ethical Clearance and Gatekeeper's Permission.

Ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from the School of Higher Degrees Committee and finally by the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) before proceeding with any data collection (See Appendix 7; Clearance No. HSS/0274/01M). Furthermore, permission to conduct research on the UKZN and DUT grounds with university students was obtained from Mr S.S Mokoena, the UKZN Registrar and Mr Moyo, the DUT Director of research and postgraduate support (See Appendix 8 and 9 respectively).

3.5.2. Informed Consent.

All the participants involved in the research were 18 years old or above, there was, therefore, no need to consult with any guardian(s) to obtain permission for the students to partake in the study. The participants consequently gave their own informed consent to partake in the study by reading and signing an informed consent form upon arrival. To make an informed consent the students were given an information sheet on the objectives of the study to read (please refer to Appendix 2 for the information sheet and consent form).

3.5.3. Confidentiality.

The student's privacy and confidentiality was guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms throughout the interview and analysis process. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses,

as well as the freedom to withdraw at any point was stressed to participants both in written and verbal form. In addition, the participants were asked not to disclose any personal information or accounts, but rather to simply convey and discuss their knowledge about transactional sex relationships and those who participate in them. By doing this, participants that may have been active in such relationships would be protected from any negative judgment and any possible stigma generated from the group discussions. Also, participants were advised to not disclose their participation in the study to other students or to not discuss the contents of the focus groups.

3.5.4 Beneficence & Non-maleficence.

Once the focus group was completed, all the participants were treated to an Research Ethics Committee (REC) approved incentive of cupcakes or lollipops. In addition, participants were also advised that in the unlikely event that participation causes the participants any personal discomfort, anxiety or distress as a result of the content of the research, they would be debriefed by a registered counsellor, Mrs Royada Omar (See Appendix 10). In addition, relationships with both the Discipline of Psychology: Child and Family Centre (CFC) based on the UKZN campus, as well as with the DUT counselling service was established in order to provide the students with further counselling if needed (See Appendix 11 & 12 respectively). It was explained that the researcher would ensure that the necessary bookings were made to further guarantee that the participants were adequately taken care of. This was explained to the participants during the informed consent process. However, as mentioned above, this result was unlikely, as the participants did not disclose their personal sexual activities but rather ‘general’ knowledge about what they knew around the subject and nature of transactional sex behavior.

3.5.7 Dissemination of Data.

All physical data including audio tapes and handwritten notes were destroyed after being entered into an electronic database. This data will be stored electronically in a secure shared Dropbox folder that only the researcher and the supervisor have access to. Any physical data

will be shredded after entry into the electronic database and stored electronically for five years, after which it will be destroyed and permanently removed from all electronic devices.

3.6 Credibility, Conformability and Trustworthiness

3.6.1 Credibility.

The credibility of a qualitative study is heavily dependent on the results which are defined by the context in which the data is collected. Although this study involves the discussion of sensitive behaviour, the participants will not be disclosing their personal behaviour or experience but rather their knowledge thereof, which should aid in truthfulness. Credibility in a qualitative study must therefore be judged in accordance with the context, richness and relevance of the data.

In addition, Munchhausen's objectivity was used to reduce subject bias. This included having extensive field notes made by the researcher, both descriptive and theoretical, as well as a peer review (Babbie & Mouton, 2005; Silverman, 2000). Silverman, (2000) formulated five interrelated ways of obtaining validity in a qualitative study: refutability principle, the constant comparative method, the comprehensive data treatment, deviant-case analyses, and appropriate tabulations. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews and having the researcher present during the focus group(s) allowed participants to qualify their responses and identify key details associated with their discussion, in so doing, creating ecological validity (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

3.6.2 Dependability.

Reliability measures the consistency of the procedures followed throughout a study. Although difficult in qualitative research, researchers can take measures to make the study dependable. Dependability can be achieved by keeping detailed records of the progression through making field notes describing how the results in context, establishing inter-code agreements and having each step of transcription monitored and reviewed (Silverman, 2000).

3.6.3 Transferability.

Transferability is the process of applying the results of a study to the greater population. This is problematic in qualitative studies as the participants, data and results are innately contextual and reliant on the individuals involved. However, qualitative researchers can combat this problem by making their results transferable rather than generalizable by describing in detail how the meanings were developed in the specific context (Van der Reijt & Durrheim, 2006). These specific results can be transferred into more general terms that can be applied to the greater population (Babbie & Mouton, 2005).

3.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the overarching methodology of this study. It includes the research design, sampling, collection, analysis and dissemination of the data. In addition, all ethical considerations were addressed. Lastly, the beneficence and non-maleficence, credibility, conformability and trustworthiness of the data and the study as a whole were addressed.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight the main themes identified and will then link them to the research questions. Multiple focus groups were conducted on each campus in order to gain a wider view of the local knowledge held by tertiary education students. The researcher made use of students from two different institutions to determine if there were any differences in the local knowledge and understanding of the students. The themes were identified using Braun and Clarke's (2014) stages of thematic analysis as explained in chapter three of this study.

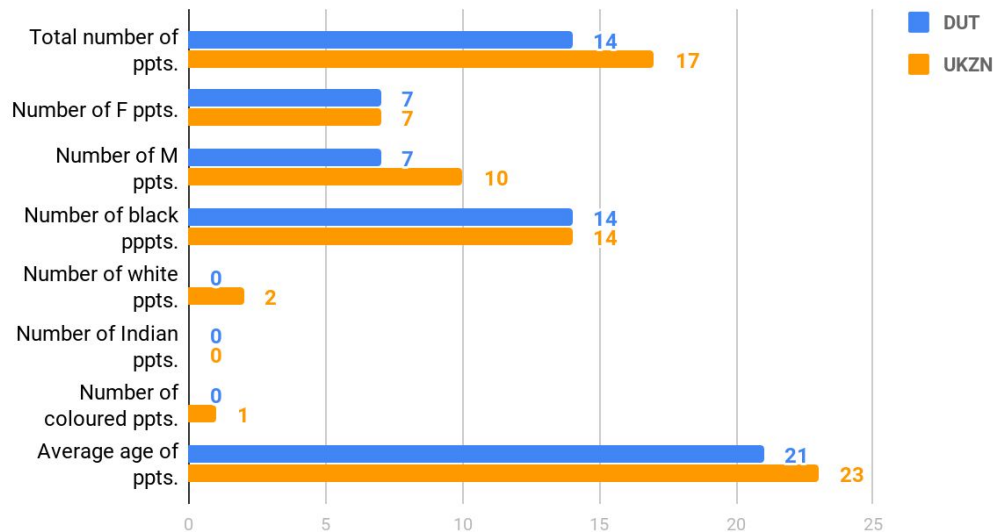
4.2 Focus Groups

Discursive data for this research study was obtained using focus groups. Multiple focus groups were conducted on each campus in order to gain a wider view of the local knowledge held by tertiary education students. It was assumed that students attending the UKZN PMB campus might be in a slightly higher socio-economic status than those attending the DUT campus based on the differences in academic fees. The researcher made use of students from two different institutions in order to determine if the above factors resulted in different accounts.

The sample size was initially intended to be 56 participants i.e. 28 from UKZN and 28 from DUT. This number was to be divided into eight focus groups. However, the researcher reached saturation with 31 participants spread across multiple focus group interviews, which were conducted on each campus. The DUT groups comprised of 14 students; two groups of all female participants and one group of all male participants and one mixed gender group. Five focus groups were conducted with 17 UKZN students; one group of all female participants, three groups of all male participants and one mixed group.

The demographics of the participants from each campus are depicted in the chart below.

Focus Group Demographics



4.3 Thematic Analysis Results

Thematic analysis is the most commonly used in qualitative research as it allows for open interpretation of rich discursive data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The principle behind this form of analysis is identifying, exploring, and recording patterns or themes within a given data set. Themes can be described as patterns that emerge throughout a given data set. These patterns or themes are deemed as particularly significant to the description of the phenomenon of interest. Once the themes are identified, they become groups or sections for further exploration and analysis. The results that hereto follow will focus on the main themes that emerged from the focus group discussions conducted in the study. The following themes are grouped according to the different research questions:

Research Question	Themes
4.3.1 What knowledge or assumptions do participants have of transactional sex?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transactional sex as sex for material things 2. Transactional sex as prostitution
4.3.2 What are the participants' assumptions on the motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst male and female individuals?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Materialism as a main motivation for transactional sex relationships. 2. Sexual performance/satisfaction

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Media 4. Social desirability and pressure
4.3.3 What do the participants know and/or understand about the roles that both men & women play in transactional sex relationships?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dynamics of power and control 2. The ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon. 3. Agency and vulnerability of the beneficiary. 4. The provider role
4.3.4. What colloquial terminology do participants use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terminology associated with men that engage in transactional sex relationships. 2. Terminology associated with women that engage in transactional sex relationships. 3. Terminology associated with transactional sex relationships in general.
4.3.5 What sort of opinions and/or judgments do the participants show towards individuals who participate in transactional sex relationships?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Morality and acceptance of transactional sex relationships. 2. Normalization of transactional sex relationships.
4.3.6 What are the consequences that can be associated with transactional sex relationships?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender-based violence 2. Broken families, single-parent-homes and neglect. 3. Dependency 4. Emotional/mental abuse and damage

4.3.1 Participants’ Knowledge or Assumptions of Transactional Sex.

This research question was answered through the identification of one main theme i.e. that transactional sex can be defined as sex for money or goods.

4.3.1.1 Transactional Sex As Sex for Material Things.

Participants described transactional sex relationships as the act of exchanging sexual favours for material needs or wants. Material needs or wants included money and other gifts.

The participant quoted below describes what she thinks the definition of a transactional sex relationship is.

UKZN FG

FUI: "...basically... if a guy buys me a handbag, let's say a Michael Kors handbag he'll expect something in return, so if I sleep with him, that might make it transactional sex... I wouldn't necessarily say it's a financial gain, it could be anything, it could just be taking care of someone, I think it's like any transaction and not specifically labelled as financial"

The above extract describes how transactional sex relationships are not entirely defined by 'sex for money,' but rather, the exchange can include material goods, as well as survival support, such as rent and food. This grey area of what defines transactional sex relationships, or rather, how the participants understood these relationships can be clearly seen in the extract below where the participant thought that transactional sex was another form of prostitution.

4.3.1.2 Transactional Sex as Prostitution.

UKZN FG

MU3: "Well prostitution is also a transactional relationship"

Researcher: "okay, you referred to it as prostitution, why do you think it's prostitution?"

MU3: "... the only difference between the two is the platform where these things take place, that's the difference they have, but the the the situation they go through is almost the same so that's why I refer to it as prostitution."

UKZN FG

Researcher: "and so you say it's not the same as prostitution, or what do you think, is it the same, is it different, what makes it different?"

MU1: "Well prostitution is also a transactional relationship"

MU2: "Yeah"

Researcher: "so you would say that these relationships are pretty much prostitution?"

MU1: "Ya, ya I would"

MU2: "I think the idea of prostitution is more of like uuh, granted the circumstances are.. I feel different, If you in prostitution, you basically doing it to survive, I would think, or at least that's what I would like to believe, uuhm, but if you, if it's not prostitution, then the people that are receiving the goods, uuhm, it's not like they need it, they just sort of gaining..."

The above extracts relate how the participants viewed transactional sex relationships. As above-mentioned, this creates a grey area or a blurred line between the two phenomena of transactional sex relationships and prostitution. In both these themes, the focus on sex as one side of an exchange was a driving factor that resonated through the participants' accounts of their local knowledge of transactional sex relationships.

4.3.2 Participants' Assumptions on the Motivations for the Practice of Transactional Sex Amongst Male and Female Individuals.

From the participants' discussions, four themes were identified to answer this research question, and these are: financial motivations, sexual performance/satisfaction, social media influences and social desirability and peer pressure.

4.3.2.1 Materialism as the Main Motivation for Transactional Sex Relationships.

Participants described transactional sex relationships as the act of exchanging sexual favours for material needs or wants. This in itself was found to be one of the main driving

motivations to become involved in a transactional sex relationship. It was, however, evident that the exchange did not necessarily imply that of a financial nature. Furthermore, greed was identified as a strong motivator to become involved in transactional sex relationships. As seen in the extract below, participants described that it is not only individuals in a financial crisis that partake in these relationships but also individuals that “just want more.”

UKZN FG

FU3: “...like I know people that are getting blessed by Blessers and it not only the poor girls or the people ... that have financial problems, no every girl in society, it’s just like, it’s all the trends that are going through, you know you can be rich at home and still want a Blesser because you don’t get everything that you want at home ... you wane do it with other people ... so you are gonna want to go and have a Blesser in order for you to do that”

UKZN FG

FU2: “yeah I would say that is happening, they do, cause like most girls, they gonna see the car and they just gonna be like, cause they [the men] know, they’ve [the men] been there, they know those type of girls, they know that if like, I [the men] just flash my car, I flash my money, some girls are gonna come”

FU1: “yeah I think that happens a lot in high schools, like...uuh so mostly it’s varsity guys, they go back to dating high school girls cause like, high school girls are like, oh my gosh I’m [school girls] dating an older guy, you know, he’s gonna fetch me at school in his car, you know, it’s more like a show off than anything and ya”

Another scenario that was highlighted was that of a current romantic partner encouraging or even pressuring his/her partner to get involved in a transactional sex relationship for the sake of the material benefits that could be shared between them. This is described in the below extract:

UKZN FG

FU1: “yeah I think that does happen often, where you’ll be in a relationship with a young guy your age, your boyfriend, and they will be like, get involved so we can both get nice stuff, so it happens where the boyfriend actually encourages it”

Participants also described how the financial motivations to get involved in a transactional sex relationship have drastically changed over time. The below extract describes how dire economic crisis and survival need would be a motivator to seek a Blesser, whereas now, in present times, individuals find Blessers to obtain and maintain a higher financial and social status.

UKZN FG

FU2: “I think back then it was about poverty, like especially child-headed homes, where the older sisters were forced to leave school early to provide for the family, she would then get Blessers or sugar daddies to get stuff to look after her family, back then you used to get things like KFC, Nandos, Eat-some-More, girls would go crazy for those things and sleep with the guy for it, now days it’s a matter of expensive handbags and weaves”

DUT FG

MD3: “Ya cause most of the guys are are maybe at our own age, usually sometimes they do like that to wear swagger, to wear expensive clothes ... to get ... to older women so they can get money to buy expensive clothes”

Earlier on, it was discussed that participants were found to have mixed views about why people get involved in transactional sex relationships. Although the primary directive was that people’s greed to have more than they can afford and the need for social acceptance, some participants from both studies pointed out that for some, transactional sex relationships may be a matter of survival.

4.3.2.2 Sexual Performance/Satisfaction as a Motivating Factor for Transactional Sex Relationships.

The second theme that emerged from the focus groups was that dissatisfaction with one's partner or sexual performance in a marriage could motivate one to partake in a transactional sex relationship. This motivation of not being "satisfied" in one's current relationship is described in the below extract:

DUT FG

MD4: "I think it has something to do with satisfaction as well... Maybe, uuh, some other womes are not satisfied with their man, uuh, in terms of, maybe the performance... Maybe, here come the young one and maybe they do better"

UKZN FG

MU2: "like some of them at home, like he's no longer attracted to his spouse and "I need something younger fresher" yeah you know.... yeah that happens a lot, like that's why they go for younger girls cuz like it's an easy target for them but also like they wanna score a hotter chick"

UKZN FG

MU2: "yeah, and uuh, sometimes I think that uuuh, the women ... sometimes they just wane be in charge. Kay some, kay I've read it somewhere, some, you find out that they having troubles in their relationships, like they're dating or they're married and having trouble, so they take like this young kid and give him money and he has to obey, obey everything that this woman is saying, so they have like the power"

The above extract describes a scenario where older women may be motivated to seek out younger Blessees in order fulfill their sexual desires. There was no mention of this being a motivator for men; instead, men were described as seeking more youthful women to engage in a transactional relationship – not necessarily a sexual one – purely to "look good."

4.3.2.3 Social Media Influences As a Motivating Factor for Transactional Sex Relationships.

Participants also described how social media perpetuates this need to have ‘more’, thereby motivating or encouraging young adults to become involved in transactional sex relationships in order to meet the societal standards depicted on social media. The participants in the below extract describe how social media could be “blamed” for making transactional sex relationships look “fashionable” or “trending”.

UKZN FG

FU3: “Because of social media and everything, it’s made this whole thing like, hey Blessers, it’s now an in thing so like hey I also want a Blesser ... I think social media has a huge role to play in this in that we no longer on social media to communicate but more to compare yourself to others, and no one wants to be left behind, no one wants to be the one looked down on, so then now, there’s a Blesser, there’s an opportunity for you to be up there with the big dogs so....”

FU2: “and also like adding to the point of social media, social media has persuaded us girls, uhm to make it look fashionable, to make it look, uuhm, to be trending, so we wane now engage in it, because we don’t want be seen as people who are not on style and who don’t keep up with trends that are happening around us”

The above discussion describes an environment where young individuals feel the need to align themselves with the social trends of the time. The participants describe how transactional sex relationships have become a social trend, thereby encouraging young men and women to actively seek out and engage in transactional sex relationships.

The participants went further to discuss specific social media portals that openly advertise or encourage transactional sex relationships, as seen in the extract below.

UKZN FG

FU3: "...I have heard about this website on Facebook, uuhm Finding a Blessor or something like that, so you submit your information ... and then like they make a match on the system, so it's like a dating site but strictly for Blessers and Blessees."

The above extracts cumulate to describe the online world of social media that has a pivotal role to play when it comes to the motivations for both men and women of all ages to engage in a transactional sex relationship.

4.3.2.4 Social Desirability or Peer Pressure As a Motivating Factor for Transactional Sex Relationships.

Men having a young attractive woman or women as a partner/s was also found to be a strong motivator for men specially to engage in a transactional sex relationship with one or more younger women. The below extract describes how sex might not be the main motivation for this transaction but rather, social desirability or standard amongst peers may lead men to engage in a transactional sex relationship.

UKZN FG

MU3: "men, especially in the entertainment industry, they go for awards and after parties and that kind of stuff, and in most cases their wives are not fit enough to be, or the appearance of their woman is not quite enough for the man to take her to such an event ... he usually doesn't take his first wife, he usually takes younger one because she's young, she's more attractive stuff, and more intelligent for some conversations, so yeah in some cases it's not about the sex but for style purposes, for men to gloat and feel empowered by taking a young attractive woman to an important event"

As with the men, it was reported that women may also be motivated to get involved in a transactional sex relationship due to societal and peer pressure, the need to be recognized as better or more privileged in front of their peers. However, this being said, the main

outstanding theme or trend was that women get involved in transactional sex relationships for the sake of consumerism.

UKZN FG

FU1: "mainly with girls, I'd say the first thing is pressure and that pressure would definitely come from those people that you associate yourself with..."

The above extract describes how peer pressure forms a strong motivator for women to become involved in a transactional sex relationship. An extract mentioned earlier above describes how young men would actively seek out older women to be in a transactional sex relationship with, this scenario was however described as more of a financial gain (expensive clothes), rather than a need to be societally accepted.

Another discovery that came up during the focus group discussions was that of "pimping". This phenomenon, as seen in the extract below, describes how students pressure each other into engaging in transactional sex relationships for financial gain.

UKZN FG

FU3: "and I've also heard, like, if you a girl who has Blessers, you the type of girl, they gonna ask like, bring like 10 girls"

Researcher: "so that's like pimping almost, so that's happening?"

Group agreement

FU1: "yeah the girls will be like, kay I like you you and you, come with us and you'll get like R10 000 if you do this"

FU3: "yeah I heard of a girl on this campus [UKZN, PMB campus] actually, she's looking for girls to take with her when she meets her Blesser"

DUT FG

Researcher: "okay and what defines these 'pimps'? Are they called pimps?"

MDI: “no not exactly, that’s an American term, there’s a Zulu term, Amakate...in English, the direct translation is cat, but aaaaah”

Researcher: “so now that’s the girl who finds other girls to become Blessees?”

Group agreement

The above themes have shown how different factors can motivate women and men to engage in transactional sex relationships. The main factors as mentioned by the participants are consumerism/materialism i.e. when a person is in it for money or other goods. The second factor was due to dissatisfaction with your current partner or sexual performance of the current partner. Participants assumed that this occurs even in marital relationships and especially for women. The third theme highlighted how social media also motivates or influences people to get involved in transactional sex relationships by showcasing flashy lifestyles and creating marketing websites for Blessers and blessees. The last factors highlighted how wanting to appear more socially desirable can motivate one to involve themselves in a transactional sex relationship.

4.3.3 What Do the Participants Know and/or Understand About the Roles and Dynamics that Both Men and Women Play in Transactional Sex Relationships?

The above research question was answered through in-depth discussions that led to the rise of four different themes. These themes were: the dynamics of power and control; agency and vulnerability of the beneficiary; the ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon; and the provider role.

4.3.3.1 The Dynamics of Power and Control.

Regardless of whether the provider was an older man or woman, the participants made multiple references to the fact that the provider typically maintains the role of power and control in the relationship, as seen in the extract below.

UKZN FG

FU1: "I don't know, from what I've perceived, it's always a power dynamic, so the Blesser will always be the one in control because they control the funds, they control where and when things happen, so I think as long there's a person who's reliant on another, the Blesser being the older, will have more power or get to dictate everything that happens in the relationship because they control all the strings"

UKZN FG

MU2: "yeah, and uuh, sometimes I think that uuuh, the women ... sometimes they just wane be in charge. Kay some, kay I've read it somewhere, some, you find out that they having troubles in their relationships, like they're dating or they're married and having trouble, so they take like this young kid and give him money and he has to obey, obey everything that this woman is saying, so they have like the power"

The above extract could also insinuate a lack of power in the women's marriage. To elaborate, the women may have very little say or influence with her husband and so therefore seeks out a relationship where she can maintain some sense of control or agency. As with many of the themes, this thread overlaps with the theme of female agency and motivation. That being said, there was a group agreement that the act of transactional sex relationships is more perpetuated or stimulated by men.

In contrast to this definitive sides of power, some participants described how they view parties engaging in transactional sex relationships have shared power within the relationship. The below extract shows how, although the nature of the power may vary slightly, both parties (provider and beneficiary) have equal "duties" or power.

UKZN FG

MU1: "I'd like to disagree because uuuhm, from what I've seen I think both parties are sort of equal because both parties need something from the other, so so I think both of them feel a duty, the provider feels that it's his or her duty to provide for the

receiver and the receiver it's his or her duty to please the provider for receiving all the benefits, so I feel more of a give and take"

The above extract describes how the context of a transactional sex relationship evens the playing field, for lack of a better phrase. Both parties involved are reliant on the other for some sort of favour.

4.3.3.2 The Role of Agency and Vulnerability of the Beneficiary.

Agency can be seen here through the way individuals use sex to get what they want. The act of sexual intercourse in a transactional sex relationship context was described by participants as a back and forth manipulation between the individuals involved. It must be stated here that this manipulation and bartering was not one sided. Rather the participants in the extract below described the transaction to be mutual; that both parties participated in these relationships to benefit in some way.

UKZN FG

MU2: "... I think now days, there's this very, open drive, this very feminist wave that's coming across and it's becoming more and more clearer now, uhm. Where women are trying to sort of put their feet down and like you said earlier, that uhm, it's turning into a case of older women and younger men, uhm I think it's showing the modern day change"

MU3: "yeah the woman has the power because... cause the only thing the man wants is basically, the blessing ceremony which is, [laughter], sex, so because the woman knows that she has power over the cookie jar [laughter], so she has the freedom to manipulate the guy in whatever way she wants to"

UKZN FG

MU1: "I'd like to disagree because uuuhm, from what I've seen I think both parties are sort of equal because both parties need something from the other, so so I think both of them feel a duty, the provider feels that it's his or her duty to provide for the

receiver and the receiver it's his or her duty to please the provider for receiving all the benefits, so I feel more of a give and take"

From these extracts, it can be seen how there has been a move away from women in transactional relationships being perceived as acting as weak or passive individuals in sexual relationships. Rather they were perceived as having formed a sense of agency by using their sexual abilities as a tool or resource to better their state of living. However, this train of thought was also met with some stark differences in the way the participants viewed the beneficiaries in transactional sex relationships. We can see from the extract below that the participant viewed this new sense of control or agency as a result of the ever growing feminist wave. In addition, the parties (provider and beneficiary alike) were described as having a duty to one another, rather than having a sense of intentional agency.

However, in contrast to the above, a number of participants from the study described women as being more vulnerable, even if this vulnerability was of their own doing, as described below.

UKZN FG

FU1: "like I think their greed makes them vulnerable, cause I feel like most of the it's about greed, getting a Blesser, wanting things that you can't ordinarily give yourself or that your family can't afford, and by putting yourself in that position you are making yourself vulnerable because now you're willing to take any sort of behaviour from your Blesser all in the name of looking good and showing off on Instagram"

UKZN FG

MU3: "It doesn't sound equal, it's not a mutual relationship, one of them will have more power, whatever I [provider] say goes because I am the one who pays for everything"

The above extract indicates that although the beneficiary may be showing agency by deliberately putting him/herself in a transactional relationship, the participant views it more because of these relationships.

However, a definite association was found in that when women were identified as being weak, vulnerable, desperate and easy to manipulate, furthermore the participants identified men as to blame, not only for the onset of transactional sex relationships, but also for how women are viewed and treated in these relationships. They described how older men see young women, especially varsity and high school students, as easy to take advantage of because these girls are generally of a lower socio-economic status, making them vulnerable and desperate.

However, as aforementioned, a contrast was struck to this argument when some participants described these young women as completely in control of the situation. In contrast to being the vulnerable victim, young women are described as making a business out of transactional sex relationships. This creates a continuum of sorts between vulnerability and agency as seen below.

DUT FG

Researcher: "okay so there's a little bit of a sense that she's got agency in that she is taking control of what she wants in her life, but she's also sort of vulnerable in the fact that she can't control how it happens?"

FUI: "ya ya ya exactly"

However, literature states that younger women involved with older 'sugar-daddies' are often likely to become victims of power dynamics including abuse and manipulation such as difficulties in the negotiation of condom use (Shefer et. al., 2012; Zembe et al., 2013). This was also confirmed in the focus group discussions.

These points and perceptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they could co-exist, and agency in this regard may in turn make one vulnerable in the longer term. This will be discussed further in a later theme.

4.3.3.3 The ‘Gay-for-Pay’ Role in Transactional Sex Relationships.

The focus group discussions uncovered multiple reasons and scenarios where men acted as either providers or material benefactors in transactional sex relationships. The first scenario of men acting as a material beneficiary was also found to include gay communities. Participants described a situation where men would behave or act as if they were gay in order to obtain material benefits that they otherwise would not be able to gain had they exuded their heterosexual status.

UKZN FG

MU3: “... okay so this gay-for pay thing, you basically, for example, you do gay porn simply because you wanna get paid for it, or even become a Blessee, but you’re not doing it because you have any emotional attachments or attraction to another guy but you simply doing the sex simply because you want the money. So this gay-for-pay thing, you’re not gay naturally, you’re just doing it so that you can get money...”

Researcher: “okay so you say not being gay naturally, so that would be a straight guy who pretends to be gay just to get the money?”

MU3: “yes, that is how it is”

The participants had varying descriptions of both those who participate in the ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon and about how this phenomenon came about. The extract below describes how one particular participant’s perceptions on the matter.

UKZN FG

MU3: “...so you’ll find some guy who’s been married for 25 years, he’s got kids, yet [he is] gay, so they come here on campus and they happened to find us [heterosexual men]... hahhaha... you know, so”

Researcher: “okay so you say there’s no terminology but within the community, is there nothing like, a name that you use, like you know that guy pays well or that guy is just looking for love and company, like specific terms that are used for transactional type relationships within the gay community?”

MU3: “ya actually there is, usually we refer to them as ‘fuck-boys’, because they basically only care about sex and then they do pay money but like sometimes they have excuses and then don’t pay”

The above extract describes how older gay men actively seek out transactional partners. It can be safely assumed that they are only there for the transaction based on the quotation of “they basically only care about sex and then they do pay money”.

The extract below describes the typical setup of a transactional sex relationship within the ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon. It follows the same line as a traditional transactional sex relationship in that the provider is generally much older than the beneficiary.

UKZN FG

MU1: “then he told him that they should sleep together, he’s promising to give him a sum of money”

Researcher: “and how old was that gay guy?”

MU1: “probably at that 34, 35 years and my friend 19, 20”

In addition, it was insinuated on many accounts throughout the study that the young men in these relationships were not only heterosexual, but where also in romantic relationships with partners of the opposite sex at the same time. This scenario can be seen in the below extract.

UKZN FG

FU2: “I’ve heard that a guy, like a good looking guy that doesn’t maybe make the certain amount of money that’s gonna like feed to their type of lifestyle, so

then they just like put their priorities aside and sleep with a guy, who's also in the closet, but it'll be like an older richer guy"

FU1: "doesn't like necessarily have to be like a much older guy..."

FU2: "as long as he has money"

FU1: "yeah like 2 or 3 years older, but as long as he has money, and you both in the closet, so you're gonna sleep with him and you're gonna get the nice clothes and the nice lifestyle that you wanted"

Researcher: "and still have a girlfriend on the side?"

FU1: "yes"

The above discussion also contrasts on the previously discussed notion that providers in transactional sex relationships do not always necessarily have to be much older than their beneficiary. The main consistent factor that defines a provider was confirmed to be wealth.

4.3.3.4 The Provider Role.

The traditional role or the social ideal of men in relationships in South Africa and globally encompasses taking on a provider role (Jewkes et. al., 2012). This includes providing material benefits for their wives, families and/or girlfriends (Jewkes et al., 2012). The participants were questioned about their views about the provider role and how, and if this plays a role in the development and maintenance of transactional sex relationships. The extracts below clearly show that the expectation that men take on the role of provider in a romantic or sexual relationship is still very much intact.

UKZN FG

Researcher: "okay so the provider mentality is that expectation that men should be the providers, they pay for dinner etc... how do you think this ideology in our young community affects a) the start of these relationships and b) the dynamic within the relationship...?"

FU1: "I think it still plays a huge role, hence this phenomenon of Blesser and Blessee, cause had it not been like that, I feel like women or men wouldn't find

the need now to have someone give them all these things, cause people are capable of doing or getting all these things for themselves but I think now days women just want to be taken care of, hence they willing to do anything to be provided for ... because now days, like I'm generalising, [women] want to just sit and have everything handed to them on a silver platter, hence I don't think this Blesser thing is going to stop anytime soon"

The above extracts explain how the participants clearly associate the provider role mentality with the development of transactional sex relationships. This overlaps with the theme of motivations discussed earlier where young women have begun to accept and even amplify the transactional sex phenomenon purely based on the assumption that men should provide.

This provider role mind-set can also be felt by men. As seen in the extract below, the male participant explains how he feels it is his responsibility to provide for his partner. Although, this example is out of context, the mentality of men assuming the provider role is perfectly described.

UKZN FG

MU3: "uuh in the African context, like more Zulu... also still have to provide for her needs ... and she is currently not working, I am also not working, but somehow I have to be the one who make plan of how to provide ..."

Researcher: "so there is still that underlying pressure, it's still there, not explicit but still there"

MU3: "yes it is still there that I have to provide as the man..."

Another explicit example of this assumption can be seen in the extract below. Some may view the fact that the women initially paid the bills as progress away from the provider role way of thinking. However, this is thwarted by her demands that she be refunded that money based on the assumption that she never 'should' have paid in the first place.

UKZN FG

MUI: "I heard an interesting thing on the radio this morning, on 5FM, the one presenter, a female presenter, was like you know one of her friends has started this thing called hash tag uuhm receipt-payback or something like that, so like if you break up from a relationship, when a man hasn't paid for dinner or movies or wada wada, she has kept like photographic evidence of like, I want to be paid back for all the stuff that I covered"

Researcher: "so that is proof of the pure expectation that the men must pay?"

MUI: "yeah exactly, and if you look at 5FM and their listener base, very young listener base... like if we do go out for dinner, I still feel like we should pay..."

In conclusion, the above themes and their accompanying extracts create a diverse and contested picture of the roles that men and women play within transactional sex environments. Although, for the most part, there seem to be clear lines and stereotypes that govern what and how each sex is portrayed, there is enough evidence to contest these black and white lines.

4.3.4 Colloquial Terminology Described Transactional Sex and Those Who Engage In It?

The participants were asked to discuss any terminology that they had heard being associated with transactional sex relationships, as well as the individuals who participated in them. Participants, like the one quoted below, described how terminology is fluid and how it is also constantly changing, and how they rely almost entirely on the social norms and trends of the time and place.

DUT FG

MUI: "this was created, it's like slang you know, uuuhm we can like create our own, like right now you know, it depends what type of people you are or like that certain group, uuhm like in a certain geography, ya so that's how it happens"

UKZN FG

MU1: "it's still the same thing but the terminology changes all the time... I'm sure it's going to be something else next year."

Although the above extracts describe how terminology is constantly in flux, being affected by various environmental factors, three themes however emerged from the focus group discussions. These are: terminology associated with men that engage on transactional sex relationships; terminology associated with women that engage in transactional sex relationships; and terminology associated with transactional sex relationships in general.

4.3.4.1 Terminology Associated With Men that Engage in Transactional Sex Relationships.

The use of the term 'Ben 10's' was found to be used to describe young male students that participate in transactional sex relationships as beneficiaries to older women known as 'sugar mommies' or 'cougars'. The below extract described how these "Ben 10's" could be as young as 16, young boys who were still attending high school.

DUT FG

Researcher: "... Uuh so you guys know of Ben 10's, what typically characterises a Ben 10? Like how old are they..."

MD2: "normally between the age of 18, 16 and 23 maybe"

Researcher: "16, so still school boys?"

MD4: "hahha ya"

The study also uncovered a new term used to describe these young male beneficiaries, that being "Lollypops". It was however interesting to note that the participants reported that this term was used before the term "Ben 10's" surfaced.

UKZN FG

MU1: "Lollypops"

Researcher: "Lollypops? Who's the lollypop?"

MU1: "Apparently older women who like young guys, they refer to these young boys as lollypops."

The study also found that the terms "Blessers" and "Blessees" were the most commonly used terms to describe providers and beneficiaries respectively. There was however a difference in the description of "Blessers", as compared to that of "sugar-daddies". "Blessers" were described as only being slightly older, if not the same age as their "Blessees" or beneficiaries as can be seen in the below extract.

UKZN FG

MU4: "It's not always the case of a young girl and an older man, it's a situation of, I'm working and you are not working, you can be the same ... and I can provide for you, so whatever you need, I'm here"

Group: "yaa yeah that's with the Blessers"

Researcher: "So there's not always necessarily an age gap?"

MU4: "Yeah there's not"

Researcher: "So would you say that with sugar-daddies, there is usually always a gap?"

MU4: "Yea, but with Blessers, it's not an age thing, it's more a monetary financial thing"

FU2: "...I think that a Blesser, a Blesser is not only someone who's old, but when you say a sugar daddy ... they made it seem as if a sugar daddy is someone who is really old, old enough to be your dad, old enough to be your grandpa"

In addition, the below extract shows how "sugar-daddies" were also described as having more dependents in terms of their families.

UKZN FG

FU1: "... because with sugar daddies, they have families ... Whereas with the Blesser, who sometimes could be married, but doesn't have kids"

The participants also shed some light on the origin of the terms "Blesser" and "Blessee".

UKZN FG

FU2: "I only know the reason they call themselves Blessers and Blessees is because ... they being Blessed, they Blessing you with something, so in a way that's where, you know all these girls on Instagram, you know like, #Blessed..."

FU1: "#Dubai"

FU3: "Dubai – Blessed"

FU1: "Michael Corss watch – Blessed"

FU2: "so by them always saying that, before this whole Blesser thing came in, girls used to always, every time these men gave them things they used be like Hey, Blessed, so like everybody was like hey they being Blessed so where are the Blessers that are blessing them with these things"

Although the terms "Blesser" and "Blessee" were found to be the accepted and most common way to describe providers and beneficiaries, the terms were met with a little contest as seen below.

UKZN FG

FU3: "...at church, there was a preacher preaching on youth day and she was very adamant that these people should not be called Blessers because they are very, uhm, nasty, they should just be called as they are, as sugar daddies, because it is only God who can bless a person"

The terms "Budbae", "Udade" were also new terms found in the study. These terms were used to describe the providers in transactional sex relationships. In addition, from the

dialogue below, it can be seen that these terms are only used in the case of the provider being older than the beneficiary.

UKZN FG

Researcher: “okay great, and what terminology have you ladies heard being associated with these relationships...?”

FU2: “uuh Budbae”

Group agreement

FU2: “Budbae, uncle bae, it’s like you respect them, instead of calling them just bae, we put a Budbae, Uncle bae”

Group laughter and agreement

Researcher: “okay so that’s a term for one of the older men?”

Group agreement

Furthermore, the terms “Tax Payers” and “Maningi Ningi” were also terms used to describe the providers in transactional sex relationships. The term “Tax payers” was used by a male participant in a DUT based focus group and was used as another term for “sugar-daddies”. “Tax Payers” were described as being typically much older than their beneficiaries. “Maningi Ningi” was described as someone who has a lot of money but it was not clear whether this term was used solely for male or for female providers.

4.3.4.2 Terminology Associated With Women that Engage in Transactional Sex Relationships.

As in the case of ‘sugar daddies’, ‘Cougars’ were described as being much older than their male partners. Again, the terms ‘cougars’ and ‘sugar mommies’ are known terms in popular media and discussions; however, it is interesting to note that these terms have not been reported much in the literature given the focus on women as beneficiaries. As seen in the below extract, the terms “Barbie Girls”, “Trophy Girls”, and “Queens” were used to describe young female beneficiaries of transactional sex relationships.

DUT FG

Researcher: "and what kind of terminology have you guys heard associated with these relationships...?"

MD1: "Barbie girls"

Researcher: "Barbie girls, okay. Have you guys heard of the term 'trophies', so the girls are trophies?"

MD4: "like a trophy wife or..."

Researcher: "like a trophy girl, so the older guy has this young girl that's really pretty.."

MD3: "Ya like an older guy will treat a young uuh, lady like a trophy, buy her fancy hair and then buy fancy clothes and stuff, carry money to school, yes, as university students, so yeah, even now NSFAS, they didn't put money and then like, you see students like that, and then you fall for sugar daddies and stuff and the blessers"

Recent literature has also found that individuals are also starting to act as "pimps" or negotiators for these relationships. Both the pimp and the young women would then get paid by the 'sugar-daddy' for their services. Results from the study however offered an alternate view of this phenomenon. The below extract discusses how term "Amakate" was used to describe individuals that act as 'pimps' in these relationships. These individuals were however not described as being young men as stated in the literature, but rather as young women who have already been in a transactional relationship for some time and then start recruiting other women to do the same thing. Evidence of this was first found in the UKZN campus focus groups and then reiterated by the mixed group on the DUT campus, as seen below:

DUT FG

Researcher: "and have you guys heard about pimping in these relationships, like where a girl who is in a transactional sex relationship, and now she finds other girls to be Blessees to her Blesser's friends?"

MD1: "Ya definitely"

Researcher: “and is this happening here on campus [DUT]?”

Group Agreement

Researcher: “okay and what defines these pimps? Are they even called pimps?”

MD1: “No, not exactly, that’s an American term, there’s a Zulu term, Amakate...”

Researcher: “so now that’s the girl who finds other girls to become Blessees?”

Group agreement

Researcher: “okay like does she take a cut of what they getting? Or does she just hook them up and that’s the end?”

MD1: “Nah, she gets the blessing also”

The above dialogue corroborates what the literature stated, that both the pimp and the young women would then get paid by the ‘sugar-daddy’ for their services.

4.3.4.3 Terminology Associated with Transactional Sex Relationships in General.

Aside from terms used to describe the individuals who participate in these relationships, the extract below highlights how participants also discussed terms used to describe the transactional relationship itself.

UKZN FG

MU1: “guys will come through and pop bottles like 10 or 20 thousand rand that night on the bar or the club, and then they get outside and get packaged, which is like when”

MU2: “when you get picked up”

MU1: “yeah like the deal is done and now we going back to my place”

The scenario of being “packaged” or finalising a “deal” with the use of expensive alcohol as described in the above extract was confirmed by a similar scenario described in the extract below.

DUT FG

MD2: “ya even for blessers, normally like the old people that have like money, have work experience, they have good cars and stuff, they are able to provide young women with drinks at clubs and what not, and even the fancy clothing, buying the clothes, and ya they provide for young ones who have ya slept with these old man, and ya that’s how it work. To provide with money, drinks, to spend all their money, in terms of attracting them”

Lastly, the study also revealed terms or phrases that are being used to describe the transactional relationship itself. The below extract discusses how, in terms of local knowledge, this phenomenon is not called ‘transactional sex’, but has rather developed more colloquial terminologies.

UKZN FG

FU2: “... so like for example, the University at Howard, they call it the industry”

Group laughter

FU1: “yeah and they call it the Profession”

Researcher: “so we don’t call it transactional sex?”

Group: noo it’s the industry or the profession

Lastly, the phrase “gay for pay” was brought up in both studies to describe heterosexual individuals who would act or even change to homosexuality just for the benefits of a transactional sex relationship.

In conclusion, although a number of the participants described how terminology is constantly in flux, being affected by various environmental factors, they did identify and explain numerous terms associated specifically to men and women involved in transactional sex relationships. In addition, they discussed a number of terms and or phrases that were associated with the general phenomenon of transactional sex.

4.3.5 What Sort of Opinions and/or Judgments do the Participants Show Towards Individuals Who Participate in Transactional Sex Relationships?

This element of receiving material goods and subsequent status in return for sexual favours leads to the emergence of the next theme, namely, the participants' level of perception of moral acceptance of the act of transactional sex as well as the individuals involved. Participants were asked what they thought about the moral grounds or status of transactional sex. Through the discussion around this research question, the theme of morality and acceptance became known. Furthermore, a second theme, namely, the normalisation of transactional sex became known.

4.3.5.1 Morality and Acceptance of Transactional Sex Relationships.

Some participants, found transactional sex relationships to be outrightly wrong and unacceptable. This view was however not as clear for all the participants, as can be seen in the following extract.

UKZN FG

MU1: "... it's outrageous, it's something abnormal, something that is not of a human nature because that would mean that you are sleeping with someone that is not of the same age, first thing, that is not allowed"

Researcher: "okay, why do you say that?"

MU1: "the reason I say that is because, like my conscience doesn't allow me to sleep with someone who is younger than me, someone who is still uuhm growing, whilst I am an adult, so in terms of experience, I am better than him and I am out-maneuvering them, so it's like I am playing with them"

MU2: "aaah ay it's immoral,..."

Researcher: "okay and now what about the other way around, having older women and younger men, is it the same, is it also bad, is it better?"

Mumbling

MU1: "no it's the same thing, it's still immoral"

The extract above shows how some participants found transactional sex relationships (especially those defined by an older provider and a younger beneficiary) are completely “outrageous”, regardless of the motivations.

Even when transactional sex relationships were placed in the circumstance of survival, participants showed little empathy towards individuals that engage in transactional relationships. The fact that the participants identify, or point out alternate methods of generating an income and surviving such as waitressing may indicate an underlying judgment.

UKZN FG

Researcher: “so what would you say in the circumstance where people are getting involved in these relationships because they want to study and they have no other means of paying”

FU2: “hmmm hahah I would say it’s sort of the wrong way to go about it, because I for example couldn’t afford to study but I didn’t go and sleep with someone so they could pay for my studies, I had to find my own ways, I ended up having to work, I had to take out student loans, uhm at the end of the day I am going to have to pay those back, but I am going to have a job, and I would have done it myself”

FU1: “yeah an easy option”

The participants also pointed out how people that participate in transactional sex relationships may become embarrassed due to their ethnic and cultural background as seen below.

DUT FG

MD3: “I personally think it’s not okay, especially for me as a young man, dating like a 40 year old woman, and then, especially for us as Zulu people... like what your family would say ... it’s like you dating your mother”

Researcher: “so there’s like a shame [to the family] being in that relationship?”

MU3: *“ya it’s a shame it’s a shame, disgrace”*

In addition, the following extract shows how the immediate, although deliberated terminology that was associated with transactional sex relationships shows that the participants applied negative connotations to those who participate in these relationships.

UKZN FG

Researcher: *“and so you say it’s not the same as prostitution, or what do you think, is it the same, is it different, what makes it different?”*

MU1: *“Well prostitution is also a transactional relationship”*

MU2: *“Yeah”*

Researcher: *“so you would say that these relationships are pretty much prostitution?”*

MU1: *“Ya, ya I would”*

MU2: *“I think the idea of prostitution is more of like uuh, granted the circumstances are.. I feel different, If you in prostitution, you basically doing it to survive, I would think, or at least that’s what I would like to believe, uuhm, but if you, if it’s not prostitution, then the people that are receiving the goods, uuhm, it’s not like they need it, they just sort of gaining...”*

Researcher: *“as a luxury...?”*

PP2: *“as a luxury yes, more than sort of a necessity “*

In reference to the connotations associated with transactional sex relationships and the terms used to describe them, participants clearly describe how the use of different terms determine how society views these relationships.

UKZN FG

MU2: *“I think again, it’s the connotations to the name, like, uhm for example again, prostitution, it’s got a very negative connotation to it, and uhm, I think, as time has*

gone on, the idea of a sugar daddy and a sugar mommy has also sort of gained a bit of a negative idea to it.”

Researcher: “... calling yourself a Blesser sort of releases yourself from the negative connotations?”

MU2: “..., like, just the idea of the word Blesser, I mean if you’re blessed with something, it’s a positive thing”

In addition, as discussed in the extract above, the new trending term of “Blessers” and “Blessees” has been found to be more acceptable than the term “sugar daddies”.

The participants also described how transactional sex relationships that consist of a male provider and a female beneficiary are more accepted in society than it being the other way around.

Participants also discussed that it is the negative effects of a transactional sex relationship that lead to the judgement of the phenomenon.

DUT FG

FD1: “like who are we to judge, like they have their own reasons, so if it’s fine with them then we shouldn’t have a problem with it”

Researcher: “okay now let’s talk about like earlier we spoke about these girls that are dropping out of school to be in these relationships, what do you think about that?”

FD3: “no that’s just wrong”

Researcher: “so when these relationships lead to negative effects, then it’s wrong?”

Group agreement

The above extract describes how individuals engaging in a transactional sex relationship should not be judged purely for being involved in these relationships. Rather she explained that negativity or judgement is only warranted when negative impacts befall the beneficiary.

4.3.5.2 Normalization of Transactional Sex Relationships.

The participants study confirmed that social media plays a large role in both motivation and the normalization of these relationships. The extracts below describe how these sorts of websites work and how popular they have become.

DUT FG

FD1: "There actually is one agency where I've heard about guys, maybe like guys from Australia or somewhere, they say they coming to South Africa, and they they are gonna be here for 3 weeks, so they want a girl who's maybe very light in complexion, who's got a big bootie..."

The above extract describes a scenario where individuals who are interested in a transactional sex relationship can seek partners to suit their needs. In addition, the fact that university students are intricately aware of this website and practice indicates that it has become very publicly open and accepted to a certain degree.

UKZN FG

MUI: "...I once had a friend, his mother... she had sugar daddies if I may call them that ... my friend was also fine with that, it was something that he talked about it in front of other kids as if it were something normal..."

The quote from the above extract, "As if it were something normal..." clearly indicates how 'everyday' the practice of transactional sex relationships has become. Furthermore, the participant speaking was 20 years old, he speaks about the example in the context of his school going years, indicating that transactional sex relationships have been out in the open for many years.

The participants also described how society has begun to notice or associate certain markers as sure signs that individuals are involved in transactional sex relationships. These markers are discussed in the following extract.

UKZN FG

FU2: "...cause like people will be able to tell if you worked for your weave or what, so like you even scared to get a fancy weave now cause they gonna say like oooh oh she's got a Blesser now"

Group agreement

Researcher: "So it's an immediate association?"

FU3: "yeah because of how expensive weaves are, so like once you have a very expensive weave, people immediately presume that you being blessed"

FU2: "yeah I'll tell you what a Blesser starter pack is, first it's the i-Phone, a weave, a Michael Cors watch or handbag"

Group agreement

In addition, participants described that participating in transactional sex relationships has begun to be a marker of normality or an accepted form of lifestyle. Meaning that people who do not participate in such relationships were deemed as "not normal".

In summary, the participants expressed variations in the opinions and moral judgements they held about both those who involve themselves in transactional sex relationships, as well as with the phenomenon as a whole within the context of South Africa.

4.3.6 What Are the Consequences That Can Be associated with Transactional Sex Relationships?

When asked about what participants associated as consequences of engaging in transactional sex relationships, these consequences were not limited to the expected HIV/AIDS and associated STI dangers of having multiple partners. Rather, four main themes emerged,

namely: gender-based violence; broken families; single parent homes and neglect; emotional / mental violence and damage; and lastly, dependency.

4.3.6.1 Gender Based Violence.

The participants uncovered that there is a definite lean towards violence, and this violence is not isolated to the husbands, but the wives as well. The extracts below describe how the wives of men involved in transactional sex relationships with younger varsity girls can become threatening and even lead to violent action.

DUT FG

FD1: "...I've heard that one of my friends had this problem, then the wife found out, and the wife was always at school, there on campus..."

Researcher: "what like harassing her?"

FD1: "no she was just waiting, she can see the man coming to fetch her [the student] just to be sure that this is really happening"

Researcher: "and what do you think would happen then after?"

FD1: "... it's not going to be a good thing, usually it's like the wives will beat the girls"

Researcher: "okay so the older man has a sugar baby but then his wife comes to find out and then beats up the sugar baby?"

FD2: "yea with her friends, she brings her friends to beat the girl"

The abuse was further described as not only isolated to jealous spouses. The extract below describes how partners within a transactional sex relationship may come to be violent with his or her partner.

DUT FG

FD3: “and for the Ben 10’s and sugar mommies, the boys land up beating the sugar mommies or being violent towards them ... and if they leave, they take something like the sugar mommies car or money or something...”

Furthermore, the participants placed much emphasis on the danger of death from being involved in transactional sex relationships. The below extract describes a scenario where transactional sex relationships could end badly for parties that wish to end the relationship.

DUT FG

MD3: “uh most of the time, concerning that of Ben 10’s, they dating an older women, uh older women often want something back, so by doing that, maybe sometimes the Ben10 is not interested, ... but then the Ben 10 started doing favour for others, and then you find that those older women coming after those Ben 10, sometimes to kill them and to kill their girlfriends”

The above extract describes how women are now also resorting to deadly violence when shunned in transactional sex relationships

4.3.6.2 Broken Families; Single-parent-homes and Neglect.

In addition, the issue of “love children” is a major problem, especially in South Africa. This was another problem or consequence that was discussed throughout the focus group discussions, as seen below:

UKZN FG

FU3: “and adding onto what she is saying, I think it’s creating a society where people have these Blessers and they have kids and then Blessers leave them and they don’t have any way to support the kids so it’s creating an environment where we have more and more kids that don’t have proper support”

The above extract describes the scenario of a single-parent home that does not have a sufficient or stable support structure.

4.3.6.3 Dependency.

Furthermore, the participants described scenarios where these transactional sex relationships may be causing the collapse of women's independence in South Africa. The below extract discusses how the rise of transactional sex relationships amongst the tertiary student population can be linked to drop-out rates, and in turn, lead to the rise of women depending on men for survival.

DUT FG

FD1: ".... It also destroys the youth, ... like 18 year old girls wane be Blessed, 17 year old girls, school girls, soo South Africa is trying so much for us to be these independent women ... but then these Blessers come up and say like why do you need to be independent , I've got this and this so I can take care of you, you know so, they kinda conflicting with what South Africa is trying to mould us into you know, but here comes this guy telling us there's no need to study, I've got you.."

Researcher: "so it's making women dependent all over again?"

FD1: "ya"

FD2: "it destroys us, cause you won't see the importance of going to school if you have someone who's going to give you things, cause like you go to school so you can buy things when you want it but if someone can buy those things for you then what's the use in going to school"

Researcher: "and is this happening a lot on campus [DUT], are girls dropping out of school because they have a provider?"

FD1: "yeah I know some"

UKZN FG

FU1: "It creates sort of dependency on the Blesser, be it emotional, physical, financial, I feel like this system of dependency makes it very difficult to leave that life once you have become accustomed to it"

4.3.6.4 Emotional / Mental Violence and Damage.

Furthermore, the following extract describes how participants explained how being involved in a transactional sex relationship could lead to the emotional and mental breakdown caused by repetitive abuse and manipulation.

UKZN FG

MU3: "yes, but in this case it hasn't been physical abuse but mental abuse, cause this guy, they like constantly remind you that you are nothing more than a Blessee, so I am not here to marry you, I'm just here for the sex, and there is so much emotional blackmail... if you [provider] don't provide for me [beneficiary], then I'm gonna go tell your wife that I've been your Blessee all along, so like in the long run there is so much emotional abuse"

As mentioned in the above extract, these adverse emotional effects were however, not entirely limited to young women involved in transactional sex relationships. The extract below describes how one participant viewed the effects of being in a gay-for-pay relationship.

DUT FG

MD2: "well like depression man, you can't just well, well for an example, like what we talked about now, you go sleep with a guy but you're not gay, surely you're going to be depressed man"

Researcher: "okay there's like a ripple effect...?"

MD2: "ya ya"

In terms of emotional and mental consequences, the participants placed much emphasis on the far-reaching social and psychological implications of being involved in a transactional sex

relationship, especially for young women. The extract below describes how the negative stigma associated with these relationships may lead to young women becoming isolated from their family, friends, and society as a whole.

DUT FG

FD1: "...like you won't be able to tell your friends that you have a boyfriend who's like 30 while you are 20"

Researcher: "okay so there's still sort of like a stigma associated with girls and older men?"

FD1: "ya like they will judge you and stuff so like even in your family, they will not like it"

Researcher: "uh huh okay so there's this like bad stigma for young girls and older men but for [young] men and older women...?"

MD1: "nah it's cool"

The above extract shows a clear divide between what is acceptable for men and what is acceptable for women. The fact that young women face the threat of negative stigma for being a part of these relationships while men are accepted shows the discrepancies in equality between men and women in society.

The extract below describes how the age gaps that typically characterize transactional sex relationships may also lead to negative consequences.

UKZN FG

FU3: "I think maturity wise, like maybe if I was an 18 year old girl and I start dating like a 40 year old guy, obviously I'm gonna have to mature at a much quicker pace than I normally would to keep up with him so that he doesn't think that I'm childish and stuff like that..."

Researcher: "and why do you think that is a problem?"

FU3: "... at a later stage, you don't relate with people that are your same age group and stuff"

This emotional and mental trauma may, in turn, lead to a consequence as described below, where the society is defined by risky behaviour, fuelled by dependency and a lack of self-worth.

UKZN FG

FU1: "...I also think it creates moral and ethical bankruptcy, cause I feel like if everyone believes this to be normal and this is accepted, what are we going to teach our children and our children's children because they gonna think well this is acceptable, I feel like it just creates a whole horrible ideology in society that these things are okay, when in fact it's really not, it shouldn't be the norm and the fact that as long as it happens, people are going to think that it's okay and it's just gonna be horrible in the long run for everyone involved"

In addition to the emotional, physical and mental consequences and trauma of these relationships, participants also described how these relationships may stunt professional growth as well.

UKZN FG

MU1: "I also think it draws you back in life, because if you involved in a Blesser Blessee relationship, your peers develop professionally or whatever they doing, and by the time your Blesser relationship ends, they are there, climbing up the ladder and you only on your first step, trying to get up, so yeah it pulls you back and yea, also results in a loss of self-esteem because you can't associate with them now, because they might have the same benefits as you had when you were being Blessed but now because you no longer have the Blesser, you on grass root level so..."

In conclusion, the above discussions place a much larger emphasis on the emotional and social consequences of engaging in a transactional sex relationship. Although two participants mentioned the threat of HIV/AIDS and STD/STI's, it was not at all a focus of discussion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will elaborate and discuss the themes outlined according to the research questions in chapter four. The identified themes helped in meeting the objectives of this study. The objectives of the study were to understand the knowledge and understanding of transactional sex relationships. Secondly, the study aimed at exploring the motivation leading to engagement in transactional sex relationships. From there the study aimed at investigating the terminology associated with transactional sex relations and exploring judgements or moral issues related to involvement in transactional sex relationships. Lastly, the study aimed at exploring the consequences related to transactional sex relationships. The discussion of the themes identified will be structured according to these aims.

5.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Transactional Sex

The research identified two themes under this objective. The two themes were the understanding of transactional sex or relationships as sex for money and the understanding of transactional sex as a form of prostitution.

Participants described transactional sex relationships as the act of exchanging sexual favours for material needs or wants. This correlates to the definition of transactional sex as defined by Stoebenau et. al., (2013) and Zembe et al., (2013), who defined these relationships as sexual intercourse within the context of an unceremonious symbiotic relationship wherein the involved partners negotiate the exchange of material items or money for sexual favours. It was, however, clear from multiple participant accounts that the transaction did not necessarily imply that of a purely financial nature. Instead, participants described how transactional sex relationships are not entirely defined by 'sex for money,' but rather, the exchange can include material goods, as well as survival support such as rent and food. This grey area of what defines transactional sex relationships, or rather, how the participants understood these relationships was also evident in how some of the participants also referred to transactional sex relationships as prostitution. The back-and-forth discussion around both the terminology

used and how these terminologies shape how people understand transactional sex relationships correlates to the theory of social-constructivism. This theory focuses on how meaning is created and suggests that knowledge is not only a social product, but also a product specific to a particular society (Burr, 1995). By this definition, it is clear how any given group of people will adapt and manipulate their understanding of a topic according to the social constructs that surround them at any given time. For example, the participants from the UKZN groups tended to be far more in favour of grouping transactional sex relationships and prostitution, but only after that thread of discussion was initiated by one participant. In other words, the groups' opinion or lean towards viewing transactional sex and prostitution in the same or similar lights was triggered by the discussion of one participants' view – leading to the idea that social surroundings and influences largely govern local knowledge and understanding.

The definition of prostitution stated by the South African Law Reform Commission is “the exchange of any financial or other rewards, favour or compensation to engage in sexual acts” (Jewkes et al., 2012; p. 1). This definition illustrates the difficulties in drawing a differentiation between transactional sex and prostitution. However, in contrast to prostitution, transactional sex does not involve a formal agreement (x amount of money for certain sexual favour) between the parties. In addition, prostitution is generally defined by a once-off meeting with no further commitments afterward, whereas transactional sex is defined by a relationship between parties, meaning, regular interactions, often involving constant negotiation. As stated in Poulin's study (2007, p. 2389) the “carefully articulated narratives about the voluntary quality of the gift and the timing of the transfer” separate transactional relationships from sex work.

5.3 Motivations for the Practice of Transactional Sex amongst Male and Female Individuals

According to literature, two main reasons drive engagement in transactional sex relationships. These are sex for ‘necessities’ such as rent, food, toiletries and employment (survival sex), and secondly, sex for ‘luxuries’ such as designer clothes, cosmetics, drugs and other such

consumer goods (consumption sex) (Zembe et al., 2013; Stoebenau et. al, 2011; Wamoyi et. al., 2010; Moore et. al., 2013; Chatterji et al., 2005, p. 57). Participants in the study discussed both of these main reasons. However, several other motivators were also discussed. Four themes were identified to answer this research objective i.e. financial motivations, sexual performance/satisfaction, social media influences and social desirability and peer pressure.

The exchange of money or gifts was not only seen as a defining factor for transactional relationships but was also found to be one of the main driving motivations to become involved in a transactional sex relationship. The use of transactional sex as a means of gaining both material benefits and gaining social connections has been thought of in terms of an asymmetric mutually dependent relationship (Hunter, 2002; Swindler & Watkins, 2007). This frame of thought explains how the provider or beneficiary gains the status of being part of a desired social group and the beneficiary or provider gains the support and security of being with a partner. Moore et. al., (2007) describes how the act of giving and receiving creates a social security, suggesting that the transactions go beyond the realistic value of the material gift or money exchanged, to the association embodied in being involved in the relationship. Furthermore, greed was identified as a strong motivator to become involved in transactional sex relationships. Participants described that it is not only individuals in a financial crisis that partake in these relationships but also individuals that “just want more.”

Another scenario that was highlighted was that of a current romantic partner encouraging or even pressuring his/her partner to get involved in a transactional sex relationship for the sake of the mutual material benefits. This was not cited or discussed in other literature, so it may be worth conducting further research on this. This inter-partner pressure could indicate a shift away from the stigma associated with (a) relationships defined by a large age gap and (b) relationships defined by sexual and material transactions. Furthermore, this scenario of a couple openly aware that each or one party is involved in a transactional sex relationship perhaps suggests the increasing social acceptance of such relationships or perhaps the steady erosion of a previously strong taboo around these kinds of relationships. Lastly, this could

also be associated with another point highlighted under the motivations theme. This point is that the phenomenon of “pimping” is on the rise amongst the student population in KwaZulu Natal. Students described how young women who have previously been, or are currently involved in a transactional sex relationship might start “recruiting” other young women to become involved in such relationships. This scenario of romantic partners encouraging or even pressuring their spouse to engage in transactional sex relationships could be viewed in the same light.

Participants also described how the financial motivations to get involved in a transactional sex relationship have drastically changed over time. The participants described how dire financial crisis and survival need would be a motivator to seek a transactional provider or ‘sugar-daddy,’ whereas now, in present times, individuals seek providers to obtain and maintain a higher financial and social status.

In addition to material motivators, unhappy or unfulfilling marriages were identified as another reason that may motivate older women to partake in transactional sex relationships. A changing economic and political context may be creating a context where women can become sexual benefactors (Jackson, 2006). This was confirmed by multiple participant discussions that described how young men have begun to actively seek out older women to act as a ‘sugar-mommy’. These scenarios were described as being very public, for example, one discussion surrounded a young man seeking his ‘sugar-mommy’ at a public shopping mall. Again, the publicity of this example leads to the assumption that these transactional relationships are becoming more accepted, or at the very least, more prolific. Furthermore, older men were also described as wanting a younger more attractive partner, as they had become “bored” with their older “less attractive” wives.

Participants also described how social media perpetuates this need to have ‘more’, thereby motivating or encouraging young adults to become involved in transactional sex relationships to meet the societal standards depicted in social media. Stephenson et al., (2014), also confirmed that the increased access and exposure to radios, televisions and other media

sources such as newspapers, Facebook and Twitter have been found to be associated with increased risky sexual behaviour such as transactional sex. Participants also described how social media could be blamed for making transactional sex relationships look “fashionable” or “trending”.

According to the participants, transactional sex relationships have become more evident on social media, as well as other various internet sites. Upon research, it was found that online companies that act as mediators for transactional sex relationships have also been rapidly growing. For example, online websites advertising sugar-daddies and sugar-mommies have become increasingly accessible. These websites exhibit a range of individuals of varying ages, ethnicities and genders openly expressing their desires for a ‘sugar-daddy’, ‘sugar-mommy’ or ‘sugar-baby.’ This online openness suggests that the acceptability of transactional sex relationships is on the rise with websites from across the globe becoming more and more popular. Such websites include: locally found www.sugarmummydaddy.com, www.sugardaddybaby.co.za. Nigerian based www.nairaland.com/905063/looking-sugar-mummy-daddy, United Kingdom-based www.sugarmummies.co.uk/ and www.dateasugarmummy.com/ founded in the United States. Furthermore, these websites openly use the characteristics of transactional sex as an advertising tool. For example, a United States website found at www.seekingarrangement.com/ has a list of the ‘perks’ of transactional sex relationships, including multiple partners and lack of emotional involvement.

It was assumed that men seemed to be also motivated by having a young attractive woman or women as a partner/s. This partnership may not necessarily be sexual, but more for the social desirability or standard. Musvawurw (2010) confirms that “while the money and gifts transacted surely have ‘use-value’, the attraction lies more in the prestige value of these relationships” (p. 862). The same can also be said for the benefactors, research has shown that these benefactors will take their beneficiaries out to high-end functions just to be seen with an attractive young partner (Musvawure, 2010). Peer pressure on men to be seen as financially and physically powerful has been found to be a motivating factor for men to

become engaged in transactional sex relationships with multiple partners as well (Ragnarsson et al., 2010).

Furthermore, participants asserted that men act as benefactors just as women do; however, again they described that these men benefit in the way of social recognition and status more than for material benefits. Some literature has also suggested that men participate in transactional sex relationships to gain affirmation or status with their male peers or to gain a sense of “sexual conquest” by having and securing multiple female partners (Shefer et al., 2012; Dunkle et al., 2007, p. 8; Campbell, 2003). Further research confirms this form of consumption sex to be linked not only to the material benefit that comes from being involved in transactional sex relationships, but also to the peer pressure to be “flashy on campus” (Musvawure, 2010, p. 861).

Similarly to men, women might also be motivated to get involved in a transactional sex relationship due to societal and peer pressure, the need to be recognized as better or more privileged in front of their peers. The participants described how current social trends and behaviours could become a pressured motivation to get involved in a transactional sex relationship. That being in the ‘in crowd’ may lead young women to want to be in these relationships purely to “show off” to their peers. In addition, the need to be as good as or better than those around them may lead young women to enter into a transactional sex relationship, purely for the sake of “keep[ing] up the high standards.” The use of transactional sex as a means of gaining both material benefits and gaining social connections has been thought of in terms of an asymmetric mutually dependent relationship (Hunter, 2002; Swindler & Watkins, 2007). This frame of thought explains how the provider or beneficiary gains the status of being part of a desired social group and the beneficiary or provider gains the support and security of being with a partner.

It is evident that the participants considered multiple factors as motivators for engaging in TSR. These range from materialistic and or economic factors to social factors. A combination of these factors usually pushes one towards wanting to participate in TSR.

5.4 Participants Knowledge and/or Understanding about the Roles that both Men and Women Play in Transactional Sex Relationships

Themes identified to meet this objective were: the dynamics of power and control, agency & vulnerability of the beneficiary, the ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon, and the provider role.

Regardless of whether the provider was an older man or woman, the participants made multiple references to the fact that the provider typically maintains the power in the relationship. The literature showed discrepancies about the typical characteristics associated with transactional sex relationships. The majority of the research described transactional sex relationships as characterized by age and economic differences between transactional sex partners (Shefer et. al., 2012; Zembe et al., 2013; Atwood et al., 2011 and Stoebenau et al., 2013). These differences were referred to as “factors that lead to power dynamics, abuse and manipulation such as difficulties in the negotiation of condom use” (Shefer et. al., 2012; Zembe et al., 2013). According to this literature, a younger woman with an older, wealthier and often married men (Atwood et al., 2011; Luke, 2003; Shefer et al., 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2013 & Zembe et al., 2013) typically define transactional sex relationships.

In addition to the description mentioned above of women getting involved in transactional sex relationships purely for material gain and socio-economic status, participants also described how the need to be in charge also plays a role. Zembe et al. (2013) and Stoebenau et al., (2011) suggest that the gender inequalities, as discussed above, have been largely shaped by the historical, social and political context of South Africa. These contexts have generally been found to render women as vulnerable beneficiaries in transactional sex relationships. However, a changing economic and political context may be creating a context where women can become sexual benefactors, as well as maintaining a higher level of control within the relationship (Jackson, 2006).

The above description of older women seeking a younger male beneficiary could also mention a lack of power in women’s marriage. To elaborate, the woman may have very little

say or influence with her husband and so, therefore, seeks out a relationship where she can maintain some sense of control or agency. As with many of the themes, this thread overlaps with the theme of female agency and motivations. This being said, there was a group agreement that the act of transactional sex relationships is more perpetuated or stimulated by men.

Younger men were also described as acting as providers known as ‘Blessers.’ These men were described as being very successful and wealthy young men. The participants described one motivation for these men to want such relationships to be the fulfillment of a vendetta or revenge. These men were described as being less popular or socially desirable while they were students at university, and that once they had achieved success post-graduation, they returned to show control over university students through engaging in transactional sex relationships.

In contrast to these definitive sides of power, some participants described how they view parties engaging in transactional sex relationships that have shared power within the relationship. Several participants described how although the nature of the power may vary slightly, both parties (provider and beneficiary) have equal “duties” or power. They describe how the context of a transactional sex relationship evens the playing field, for lack of a better phrase. Both parties involved are reliant on the other for some favour.

Some participants reported that women have some agency in TSR as they can control how and when to use sex to get what they want. The act of sexual intercourse in a transactional sex relationship context was described by participants as a back and forth manipulation between the individuals involved. It must be stated here that this manipulation and bartering was not one-sided. Instead the participants described the transaction to be mutual; that both parties participated in these relationships to benefit in some way.

From the focus group discussions, it can be seen how there has been a move away from women in transactional relationships being perceived as acting as weak or passive individuals

in sexual relationships. Rather they were perceived as having formed a sense of agency by using their sexual abilities as a tool or resource to better their state of living. Again, this lends to the theory of social-constructionism in that “individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (Creswell, 2008, 9. 8).

However, this train of thought was also met with some stark differences in the way the participants viewed the beneficiaries in transactional sex relationships. The position of women in transactional sex relationships attracted a much more nuanced understanding in this study than the typical picture of vulnerability portrayed in the literature. Rather a continuum of vulnerability and agency was uncovered. While women were described as being weak and victimized by older men in some cases, they were also described as having the power to manipulate and use the men and the transactional nature of their relationship as an economic tool.

Furthermore, older women described as “cougars” or “sugar-mammas” being involved with younger male students was found to be a phenomenon on the rise, especially on campus. A possible reason for this could be the nature and position of the student population. Students are generally young and easy to manipulate. Furthermore, a large majority of the student population comes from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds, placing them in a lower socio-economic position. It could be assumed that this lower or disadvantaged status makes them more susceptible or vulnerable to the benefits of transactional sex. Literature states that young foreign male students are vulnerable to transactional sex due to their low economic and foreign status (Shefer et. al., 2012). However, these international students have also been reported to use transactional sex relationships with South African partners to gain social popularity and protection (Shefer et. al., 2012).

The dynamic between these older women and younger men was one of much debate. Some examples described a scenario of the woman having all the power to manipulate and control while others contradicted this to the extent that these older more successful women may again become victims to their younger sexual partners. However, in overall women were associated

with being weak, vulnerable, desperate and easy to manipulate. Literature states that younger women involved with older ‘sugar-daddies’ are often likely to become victims of power dynamics including abuse and manipulation such as difficulties in the negotiation of condom use (Shefer et. al., 2012; Zembe et al., 2013). This was confirmed in the focus groups.

Furthermore, the participants identified men as to “blame”, not only for the onset of transactional sex relationships, but also for how women are viewed and treated in these relationships. They described how older men see young women, especially varsity and high school students, as easy to take advantage of because these girls are generally of lower socio-economic status, making them vulnerable and desperate. These points and perceptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they could co-exist, and agency in this regard may in turn make one vulnerable in the longer term. This will be discussed further in a later theme.

Literature to date has shown that the reasons for men participating in transactional sex relationships “[has been] taken for granted as self-evident, as not requiring explanation” (Shefer et. al. 2012, p. 442). The focus group discussions however, uncovered multiple reasons and scenarios where men acted as either providers or material benefactors in transactional sex relationships. The first scenario of men acting as a material beneficiary was also found to include gay communities. Participants described a situation where men would behave or act as if they were gay to obtain material benefits that they otherwise would not be able to gain.

The participants had varying descriptions of both those who participate in the ‘gay-for-pay’ phenomenon and about how this phenomenon came about. However, multiple accounts confirmed that these homosexual transactional sex relationships follow the same lines as a traditional transactional sex relationship in that the provider is generally much older than the beneficiary. That being said, there were a couple of participants that confirmed the notion that providers in transactional sex relationships do not always necessarily have to be much older than their beneficiary. The main consistent factor that defines a provider was confirmed to be wealth.

Participants described how older gay men actively seek out transactional partners. It can be safely assumed that they are only there for the transaction based on the quotation “*they basically only care about sex and then they do pay money*”. Also, it was mentioned on many accounts throughout the study that the young men in these relationships were not only heterosexual, but also in romantic relationships with partners of the opposite sex at the same time.

The traditional role or the social ideal of men in relationships in South Africa and globally encompasses taking on a provider role (Jewkes et. al. 2012). This includes providing material benefits for their wives, families and/or girlfriends (Jewkes et al., 2012). The participants were questioned about their views about the provider role and how, and if this plays a role in the development and maintenance of transactional sex relationships. A large majority of the participants confirmed that the expectation that men take on the role of a provider in a romantic or sexual relationship is still very much intact.

The participants clearly associated the provider role mentality with the development of transactional sex relationships. This overlaps with the theme of motivations discussed earlier where young women have begun to accept and even amplify the transactional sex phenomenon purely based on the assumption that men should provide.

Men can also feel this provider role mindset. A male participant explained how he felt it was his responsibility to provide for his partner. Although, this example is out of context, the mentality of men assuming the provider role is perfectly described. Another explicit example of this assumption can be seen by a scenario described by the participants, whereby a radio presenter explained how she felt justified in demanding that her ex-boyfriend refund her for all the meals that she had paid for during their relationship. Some may view the fact that the women initially paid the bills as progress away from the provider role way of thinking. However, this is thwarted by her demands that she be refunded that money based on the assumption that she never ‘should’ have paid in the first place.

Another discovery that came up during the discussions was that of “pimping”. As described in the literature, these relationships have been typically defined by a young male student facilitating a transactional relationship between an older man such as a ‘sugar-daddy’ for instance with one or more young female students (Masvawure, 2010). Both the pimp and the young women would then get paid by the ‘sugar-daddy’ for their services. The attraction that these pimp-mediated relationships hold is that the ‘sugar-daddies’ do not need to find the women themselves. Although Mavawure’s study only discusses male students acting as pimps, this study found that young female students are joining the trend as well. Participants described how it is well known for younger women who have been engaged in a transactional sex relationship for some time to “recruit” other women to become beneficiaries. The participants described how these young women or ‘pimps’ would use large financial promises to entice or pressure women into agreeing to engage in transactional sex relationships.

This theme overlaps a great deal with the theme of agency that will be discussed later in this chapter. This phenomenon of ‘pimping’ speaks to the literature pertaining to sexual networks. Sexual networks have been found to be a common source for concurrent transactional sex relationships. A sexual network refers to “a group of people who are connected through direct or indirect sexual contact” (Friedman et.al., 2009, p. 1). Berkman & Glass (2000) argue that social-sexual networks, in turn affect individual behavior in four ways, namely, the individual’s social support system, social influence, social engagement and attachment and lastly, these networks affect the individual’s access to resources and material goods. Therefore, it can be assumed that an understanding of these sexual/social networks, including how the individual members interact with one another and the greater environment, can greatly assist in effective and appropriate design of intervention and awareness efforts focused on transactional sex relationships (Goldberg, 2011).

The above themes create a diverse and contested picture of the roles that men and women play within transactional sex relationships. Although, for the most part, there seem to be

clear lines and stereotypes that govern what and how each sex is portrayed, there is enough evidence to contest these black and white lines.

5.5 Colloquial Terminology Participants Used to Describe Transactional Sex and Those Who Engage in it

The participants were asked to discuss any terminology that they had heard that is associated with transactional sex relationships, as well as the individuals who participated in them. Literature shows that typical terminologies such as ‘sugar-daddies’, ‘cougars’ and ‘sugar-mommies’ have become commonly associated with the practice of transactional sex and those who engage in it (UNAIDS, 2018). However, recent research has brought to light new terminologies such as ‘Ben 10’s’, ‘Budhas’ and ‘Rhazols’. Participants described how terminology is fluid and how it is continually changing, and rely almost entirely on the social norms and trends of the time and place. This premise correlated to the basis theory of this study, in that peoples’ understandings are generated and governed by the societal environment around them. Furthermore, it connects to the foundation that these understandings, or this local knowledge is ever-changing.

Although the participants described how terminology is constantly in flux, being affected by various environmental factors, three themes emerged from the focus group discussions. These are: terminology associated with men that engage on transactional sex relationships, the terminology associated with women that engage on transactional sex relationships, and terminology related to transactional sex relationships in general.

The use of the term ‘Ben 10’s’ was found to be used to describe young male students that participate in transactional sex relationships as beneficiaries to older women known as ‘sugar mommies’ or ‘cougars’. The study found that these ‘Ben 10’s’ could be as young as 16 - young boys who were still attending high school. The study also uncovered a new term used to describe these young male beneficiaries, that being “Lollypops.” It was however, interesting to note that the participants reported that this term was used before the term “Ben 10’s” surfaced.

The study also found that the terms “Blessers” and “Blessees” were the most commonly used terms to describe providers and beneficiaries, respectively. There were, however, differences in the description of “Blessers”, as compared to that of “sugar-daddies.” “Blessers” were described as only being slightly older, if not the same age as their “Blessees” or beneficiaries. In addition, “sugar daddies” were also described as having more dependents in terms of their families.

The participants also came to shed some light on the origin of the terms “Blesser” and “Blessee”. They explained how the use of the word “Blessed” on the popular social media network, Instagram started the trend of labelling providers and beneficiaries as “Blessers” and “Blessees” respectively. Once again we see an overlap of themes as this ties in heavily with the theme of social media influence, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The terms “Budbae”, “Udade” were new terms discovered in the study. These terms were used to describe the providers in transactional sex relationships. In addition, it was found that these terms are only used in the case of the provider being older than the beneficiary. Furthermore, the participants referred to the fact that “Budbae” was more respectable than “Bae”, which has become a socially motivated tag for partners in a romantic and/or sexual relationship.

Furthermore, the terms “Tax Payers” and “Maningi Ningi” were also terms used to describe the providers in transactional sex relationships. The term “Taxpayers” was used by a male participant in a DUT focus group and was also used as another term for “sugar-daddies”. “Tax Payers” were described as being typically much older than their beneficiaries. “Maningi Ningi” was described as someone who has a lot of money, but it was not clear whether this term was used solely for male or female providers.

As in the case of ‘sugar daddies’, “Cougars” were described as being much older than their male partners. Again, the terms ‘cougars’ and ‘sugar mommies’ are known terms in popular

media and discussion. However, it is interesting to note that these terms have not been reported much in the literature given the focus on women as beneficiaries. The terms “Barbie Girls,” “Trophy Girls,” and “Queens” were used to describe young female beneficiaries of transactional sex relationships.

Recent literature has also found that individuals are also starting to act as “pimps” or negotiators for these relationships. Both the pimp and the young women would then get paid by the sugar-daddy for their services. Results from the study, however, offered an alternate view of this phenomenon. The term “Amakate” was used to describe individuals that act as pimps in these relationships. These individuals were however, not described as being young men as stated in the literature, but rather as young women who have already been in a transactional relationship for some time and then start recruiting other women to do the same thing. Evidence of this was first found in the UKZN campus focus groups and later reiterated by the mixed group at the DUT campus.

Aside from terms used to describe the individuals who participate in these relationships, participants also discussed terms used to describe the transactional relationship itself. Participants from both campuses confirmed the scenario of being “packaged” or finalising a “deal” with the use of expensive alcohol, flashy cars and costly name branded clothing. This implies that how transactional sex relationships are initiated seems to be standard within the community of the sample population, that being Pietermaritzburg.

5.6 Opinions and/or Judgments Participants Show towards Individuals Who Participate in Transactional Sex Relationships

This element of receiving material goods and a subsequent status in return for sexual favours leads to the emergence of the next themes, namely, the participants’ level of perception of moral acceptance of the act of transactional sex as well as the individuals involved. Participants were asked what they thought about the moral grounds or status of transactional sex. Through the discussion around this research question, the theme of morality and

acceptance became known. Furthermore, a second theme, namely, the normalisation of transactional sex, became known.

Some participants found transactional sex relationships to be outright wrong and unacceptable. This view was however not as clear for all the participants. Some participants found transactional sex relationships (especially those defined by an older provider and a younger beneficiary) are completely “outrageous”, regardless of the motivations. Even when transactional sex relationships were placed in a typical circumstance of survival, the participants showed little empathy towards individuals who engage in transactional relationships. The fact that the participants identify, or point out alternate methods of generating an income and surviving such as waitressing may indicate an underlying judgement.

The participants also pointed out how people that participate in transactional sex relationships may become embarrassed due to their ethnic and cultural background. This was described in the context of individuals being ostracized or shunned from their family, as well as their friends. This scenario strikes a definite contrast to the overarching idea that transactional sex relationships are becoming more accepted or “every-day” in modern society. It could also imply the differences between the way of thinking between urban and rural contexts. The participants described the scenario as individuals “going home” and being ashamed of their transactional partner.

In addition, the immediate, although deliberated terminology that was associated with transactional sex relationships, shows that participants applied negative connotations to those who participate in these relationships. About the implications associated with transactional sex relationships and the terms used to describe them, participants clearly described how the use of different terms determines how society views these relationships. For example, the new trending term of “Blessers” and “Blessees” has been found to be more acceptable than the term “sugar daddies.” The participants also described how transactional sex relationships

that consist of a male provider and a female beneficiary are more accepted in society than it being the other way around.

Several participants, however, described how individuals engaging in a transactional sex relationship should not be judged purely for being involved in these relationships. Instead they explained that negativity or judgement is only warranted when negative impacts befall the beneficiary because of engaging in a transactional sex relationship. For example, when young women drop out of school or university and become wholly dependent on their providers. Although the participants recognized that some individuals may partake in these relationships as a means to better their lives, they still expressed the opinion that in most cases, these relationships serve the purpose of improving one's social standing. Furthermore, one participant expressed that he thinks it is "the wrong way to go about it", implying a moral non-acceptance of the transactional behaviour.

The participants confirmed that social media plays a significant role in both the motivation and subsequently, the normalization of these relationships. The participants described multiple scenarios where individuals who are interested in a transactional sex relationship can seek partners to suit their needs online. In addition, the fact that university students are intricately aware of these websites and practices indicates that it has become very publicly open and accepted to a certain degree. Literature confirms that transactional sex is becoming increasingly prevalent and accepted, especially amongst younger populations (Moore et. al., 2007).

One participant described the phenomenon "As if it were something normal..." clearly indicating how 'everyday' the practice of transactional sex relationships has become. Furthermore, the participant speaking was 20 years old; he speaks about the example in the context of his school-going years, indicating that transactional sex relationships have been out in the open for many years.

The participants also described how society has begun to notice or associate certain markers as sure signs that individuals are involved in transactional sex relationships. They go further to describe that signs of wealth such as a new weave are so inimically associated with transactional sex relationships that individuals who are not in transactional sex relationships hesitate when getting a new weave for fear of being judged. In addition, participants described that participating in transactional sex relationships has begun to be a marker of normality or as an accepted lifestyle. This insinuates that people who do not participate in such relationships were deemed as “not normal.”

5.7 The Consequences that can be associated with Transactional Sex Relationships

For those who participate in transactional sex relationships, the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other STI's / STDs is severely heightened (Amaro, 1995; Dunkle et al., 2008; Stephenson et al., 2014, p. 2). However, when asked about what participants associated with the consequences of engaging in transactional sex relationships, these consequences were not limited to the expected HIV/AIDS and associated STI dangers of multiple partners. Rather, four main themes emerged, namely: gender-based violence, broken families, single-parent homes and neglect, emotional/mental violence and damage, and lastly, dependency.

The participants uncovered that there is a definite lean towards violence, and this violence is not isolated to the husbands, but the wives as well. However, this lean toward violence was reported more frequently in the focus groups conducted with UKZN students. The DUT students' focus was more on consequences relating to women empowerment and dependency. The below extracts describe how the wives of men involved in transactional sex relationships with younger varsity girls can become threatening and even lead to violent action. The abuse was further described as not only being isolated to jealous spouses, but the partners within the transactional sex relationship as well. Participants described how it is common for partners, both male and female to become violent with his or her partner. Furthermore, one group of participants also described how “cougars” or “sugar-mammas” are now even resorting to deadly violence when shunned in transactional sex relationships. Furthermore, the

participants placed much emphasis on the danger of murder because of being involved in transactional sex relationships with partners that were already married.

In addition, the issue of “love children” is a significant problem, especially in South Africa. This was another problem or consequence that was discussed throughout the focus group discussions. The participants described how young women are falling pregnant by their “sugar-daddies” or “Blessers” and then being left to raise the child alone. This was described as “*creating an environment where...more and more kids don’t have proper support.*” These children are often born to mothers who can barely afford to support themselves, much less support a child (Anyanwu, Tugli, & Goon, 2013). These mothers are also generally students who would either have to sacrifice their education or give up the child (Anyanwu et al., 2013). The mental and emotional consequences of such situations can be very damaging and far reaching as well. Unwanted pregnancies among younger women have been found to lead to a “higher risk of substance abuse and problem behaviour among [the] children” (Anyanwu et al., 2013, p. 923). In addition, such pregnancies can lead to the mother being humiliated and withdrawing from the society, as well as “suicidal attempts, child neglect and abandonment.” (Anyanwu et al., 2013, p. 925). Participants also described how transactional sex relationships have been known to lead to divorce and the complete breakdown of whole families.

Another consequence of TSR was how these relationships contribute to the collapse of women's independence in South Africa. All of the focus groups touched on this consequence of creating and encouraging dependency among young women in South Africa, however, it was specifically highlighted during the group's help with DUT students. Numerous accounts describe how participants had heard about or personally knew young women who had dropped out of school or university due to being involved in a transactional sex relationship. Furthermore, the participants described that even women who do not necessarily drop out, they are still severely dependent on their providers. This situation was described in terms of greed, or pride. The female focus group participants highlighted, especially how young women are willing to accept any treatment or condition to maintain the “blessings” or

provisions provided by their “sugar-daddies” or “Blessers.” Furthermore, by giving up their education, these young women put themselves in a situation where their prospects are severely limited. The participants also described how “sugar-daddies” or “Blessers” are known to threaten to leave or ending the relationship if the “Blessee” or beneficiary does not do exactly what he or she wants.

Participants also described how being involved in a transactional sex relationship could lead to the emotional and mental breakdown caused by repetitive abuse and manipulation. These adverse psychological effects were also not entirely limited to young women involved in transactional sex relationships. The participants also described how the effects of being in a ‘gay-for-pay’ relationship could have devastating emotional effects on the young men involved.

In terms of emotional and mental consequences, the participants placed much emphasis on the far-reaching social and psychological implications of being involved in a transactional sex relationship, especially for young women. They described how the negative stigma associated with these relationships might lead to young women becoming isolated from their families, friends and society as a whole. It is, however, interesting to note here that there was a clear divide between what is acceptable for men and what is acceptable for women. The fact that young women face the threat of negative stigma for being a part of these relationships while men are accepted shows the discrepancies in the societal equality between men and women. Women were described as facing a particular negative stigma when the age gap between herself and her provider was higher than around 5 – 10 years.

This was in addition to the emotional, physical and mental consequences and trauma associated with these relationships. Participants also described how these relationships might stunt professional growth as well. As discussed above, there is the consequence of destroying a potentially bright future by dropping out of school. The participants also described how young beneficiaries might also suffer the result of being set back in their professional lives because they have not had to “fight as hard” as other people their age.

In conclusion, the above discussions place a much larger emphasis on the emotional and social consequences of engaging in a transactional sex relationship. Although two participants mentioned the threat of HIV/AIDS and STD/STI's, it was not at all a focus of discussion.

5.8 Summary

In conclusion, the local knowledge surrounding this phenomenon was found to be greatly faceted and diverse. The participants identified a grey area between what is considered prostitution and a transactional sex relationship. Furthermore, the motivations for engaging in these relationships were discussed at great length, with the participants indicating that these motivations greatly influenced how this phenomenon is judged within the target group. Also, the participants discussed the dynamics that colour these relationships, such as, the roles that both men and women play, and how these roles define the nature of the relationship. Also, the participants discussed the colloquial terminology used to describe both these relationships and those who engage in them. The participants discussed how these terms have been modified and used over time, as well as how terminologies influence how these relationships are judged in the wider society. The judgement and morality of these relationships was also discussed in great detail. The participants described how the judgement of this phenomenon is not as clear as black and white, but rather forms a very intricate gray area. Lastly, the participants discussed the consequences of being involved in transactional sex relationships. They discussed how these consequences are not isolated to the expected HIV/AIDS and associated STI dangers of multiple partners. Instead, the participants discussed more emotional and mental effects that can result from these relationships. About the two different campuses, the themes remained relatively constant across both campuses. There were, however, a couple of instances, especially with regards to the consequences associated with TSR, where the students from the different campus highlighted, or focuses more on one thread than the other. For example, the UKZN students focused more on violence and negative physical consequences, whereas, the DUT students focused more on the altered or degraded socio-economic status of women who participate in TSR. However, this being said,

both sets of the students, UKZN and DUT alike discussed the same themes, but with different focus or emphasis.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

This research aimed to determine and understand what tertiary students knew and assumed about transactional sex relationships. This included the terminology associated with these relationships, as well as with those who participate in them. In addition, it included what roles both men and women play in these relationships, the complicated dynamic between the two, lastly, what consequences the sample population associated with transactional sex relationships. Focus groups were conducted with tertiary education students from two different institutions to gain a rich and detailed description of the local knowledge and their understanding of transactional sex relationships.

The results of the focus group discussions indicate that transactional sex relationships are becoming a well-known phenomenon among tertiary students. The common assumption that these relationships are comprised of older men and younger women was both confirmed and disproven. It was disproven in that young men were described as acting as both beneficiaries and providers. In addition, it was also found that transactional sex relationships are not isolated to heterosexual relationships only but rather are quite common in homosexual communities as well.

The position of women in transactional sex relationships attracted a much more nuanced understanding in this study than the typical picture of vulnerability portrayed in the literature. Rather a continuum of vulnerability and agency was uncovered. While women were described as being weak and victimized by older men in some cases, they were also described as having the power to manipulate and use the men and the transactional nature of their relationship as an economic tool. Furthermore, older women described as “cougars” or ‘sugar-mammas’ being involved with younger male students was found to be a phenomenon on the rise. The dynamic between these older women and younger men was one of much

debate. Some examples described a scenario of the woman having all the power to manipulate and control while others contradicted this to the extent that these older more successful women may again become victims to their younger sexual partners.

Furthermore, the stigma associated with these relationships has been seen to be decreasing as they are now seen as the norm, or further, something to be sought after. However, a nuanced and complex understanding of the morality surrounding the acceptance of both the act and those who participate in it has been found to be a topic of much debate. The participants showed a sense of acceptance or understanding of individuals who participate in transactional sex relationships to survive or pay for things such as education. However, they saw using transactional sex to gain luxury items such as cell phones and designer clothes as unacceptable and lazy. Although the participants showed acceptance in some situations, there was still an overlay of moral judgment on the individuals who participated in transactional sex regardless of the motivation.

Lastly, the consequences of being in a transactional sex relationship as described by the participants also deviated from the existing literature, which focuses largely on the spread of HIV/AIDS. Rather, the results showed how this consequence came second to more emotional and familial dangers such as divorce, betrayal and deceit.

6.2 Limitations

Overall, this study proved to be successful in generating an understanding of both male and female student experiences, understanding and roles in transactional sex relationships. However, that being said, all research projects will come with limitations and/or difficulties; this project is no different. The first limitation was that of generalizability. Considering this is a qualitative study, the researcher aimed for transferability rather than generalizability. However, because this study only made use of tertiary students from two different institutions, the sample population was not representative enough to transfer the results beyond the sampled population. Location was also a limiting factor in that the researcher was limited to students that were readily available to participate in the focus groups, hereby

excluding students that were off-campus or in classes. More focus groups comprising of more varied demographics could have given a better or more detailed and confirmed picture of transactional sex relationships in and around the Pietermaritzburg area. Lastly, when it came to recruitment, participants were unsure of what the term transactional sex meant but showed immediate understanding when the researchers mentioned the terms “sugar-daddy,” “Blessers” and “Blessees”. Although the participants later understood what the research was about, it may have had an impact on how the participants responded during the focus groups.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

It may be beneficial for future research to have more focus groups in the study, including groups from more than two institutions. In addition, it may be helpful to include participants who do not have access to tertiary education. By only adding tertiary students, the study excluded a large proportion of the South African population. Furthermore, another alternative is to have more than one method of data collection. For example, researchers could conduct focus groups as well as informal face-to-face interviews, web surveys, or anonymous group questionnaires. This latter method may allow quieter participants to voice their opinions, as they may feel shy in a group setting.

The emotional troubles individuals might face later in life may be worth further research. For example, the participants made mention of the emotional difficulties young women that participate in transactional sex relationships might face later in life. Relationship construction, trust and emotional stability in romantic relationships might make for an interesting study. Concerning this, a study on the consequences of transactional sex, including divorce, abuse and unplanned pregnancies, could be further explored.

The theme about the complexities around the judgment and acceptance of transactional sex relationships needs to be further researched. This was a very complex finding and could be expanded a great deal through further research. Lastly, the differentiation between transactional sex openness between races could be further explored. For example, it was stated that transactional sex was not spoken about as much in white communities as it was in

Coloured communities. The reasons for this differentiation in race could be an interesting topic for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Formal Invitation

Thank you for being willing to participate in my study. Please note that a more detailed description of our study will be given on arrival at the focus group.

The following is a reminder of where to go and when. You will be contacted one day in advance of the interview.

- ❖ Date:
- ❖ Time:
- ❖ Venue:

I look forward to seeing you.

Please provide me with the following information so that I can contact you one day in advance of the interview to confirm your participation.

Name:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Gender:

Please be advised that this personal information will not be connected to any discussion during the focus group. These details will be permanently discarded before transcription.

Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Informed Consent

Information and Consent for participation in the study

Who I am and what I am doing.

Hello, I am a Masters student involved in a study investigating the ‘local’ or general knowledge, motivations and typical characteristics associated with men who are engaged in transactional sex relationships. This study is designed to help inform researchers identify variables that motivate this risky sexual behaviour in an attempt to further diagnose behaviours that are escalating the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. This information can be used to improve research on these issues as well contribute towards designing intervention and prevention programmes to address them.

The research will be conducted using interactive focus group discussions comprised of individuals from different ethnicities, genders and age. During the focus group, I will facilitate discussion around the practice of Transactional sex in order to ascertain the discourse associated with the behaviour as well as various other differentiating variables such as differences in demographic variables such as gender, race and age.

Invitation to participate and implications of participation

I invite you to participate in this focus group study where you and I will openly discuss the topic. I will be asking leading questions pertaining to the topic but the core nature of the interview will be you as a participant to produce a discussion around the topic. Please note that I am not requesting that you disclose any personal details about your own sexual behaviour, but rather your understanding and knowledge about the topic.

There are no direct benefits for your participation in this part of the study but as a token of my appreciation for your participation and for the sacrifice of your time, you will receive

refreshments after the focus group. In addition, if you had travel to participate in the focus group (DUT students), you will receive remuneration for your costs.

Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. Anything you say in the interview discussion will remain completely anonymous and confidential. Although the discussion will be audio recorded, it will not be possible to link your responses to your personal identity, as you will be requested not use your real name, but to use a 'fake' name instead. Before the commencement of the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form indicating your informed consent to participate as well as to complete the attached demographics form, which will encompass details such as your age, race, gender and year of study. The focus group discussion should last no more than 45 minutes.

How your data will be used

During the course of the focus group, the entire discussion will be audio recorded. Thereafter, the recordings will be transcribed and analysed. This will be used to identify and analyse the above mentioned differences and tendencies associated with Transactional sex. The data may also be presented at conferences or be published. The data will also be written up as part of my Masters dissertation.

How you are protected.

It will not be possible to identify personal details of any participant so your participation and your responses will be entirely protected and confidential. This will be achieved by allocating each participant with a pseudonym throughout the research process, from the discussion in the focus group to the analysed transcription. The audio recordings will be deleted after transcription. My supervisor will safely secure the transcribed documents for 5 years after which it will be destroyed. You may withdraw at any time without any consequence.

In the unlikely event that participation causes you any personal discomfort or distress, you may contact any of the researchers (listed below) for a referral to the counselling service of

your College or to our School's Child and Family Centre. All these contact details are provided below.

If you have complaints or concerns about the study, you may contact Vernon Solomon, (Solomon@ukzn.ac.za) or the Chairperson of the UKZN Social Science research Ethics Committee through the secretary Ms. P. Ximba (ximbap@ukzn.ac.za).

Consent

Prior to your participation, I ask that you indicate your consent to participate in this research, having read and understood the information sheet, by signing the attached consent form and by filling in the attached demographics section. The signed consent form will be kept separate from the audio recordings and the transcriptions and there will be no way to identify any individual participant with any of the content due to the use of pseudonyms.

Thank you for your willingness to consider this and for your participation.

Researchers and Contact Details for concerns and questions

Course	Name	Email	Cell:
Masters:	Anne Glasscoe	anneglasscoe@gmail.com	071 485 2800
Supervisor	Vernon Solomon	Solomon@gmail.com	033 2605680
HSSREC Administrator	Ms. P. Ximba	ximbap@ukzn.ac.za	-----

Appendix 3: Declaration of Informed Consent

I(full names of participant) hereby declare that I have read and understood the nature and requirements of the study. I have been given adequate information to make an informed **decision to** consent to participate in the study. **I hereby give my informed consent to participate in this research.**

In addition, I hereby consent / do not (Please circle) consent to have the focus group discussion recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time without consequence, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT **Date:**

Please complete this if you wish to be invited to the voluntary feedback session.

I do wish to be invited to the voluntary feedback session.

I wish to be contacted by:

Email: _____

SMS – cellphone number: _____

Appendix 4: Demographics

Please circle what is applicable:

Age (please write): _____

Gender: Male Female

What population group/race would you describe yourself as?

Black Coloured Indian White Other

Appendix 5: Focus group interview outline

- What do you think the definition of transactional sex is?
- What terminology have you heard in relation to TS?
- What are the differences in these terminologies?
- What can you tell me about the role that men play in these relationships?
 - o Typical characteristics, benefactor vs provider.
 - o What effect do you think the provider role has on these types of relationships?
 - o Have you ever heard of the term 'Ben 10's'? If so, please tell me more.
- What can you tell me about the role women play in these relationships?
 - o Typical characteristics, benefactor vs provider.
 - o What can you tell me about the agency that some women have in these relationships?
- Have you ever heard about 'Pimps' playing a role in these relationships?
- Have you ever heard about the term 'gay-for-pay'?
 - o If so, what can you tell me about that?
 - o Is it common?
 - o What typically characterizes men involved in 'gay-for-pay' transactional relationships?
- Why do you think people participate in TSRs?
 - o Motivations?
- Do you think TSRs are morally correct?
 - o Could you elaborate on why?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about the subject?

Appendix 6: Research Ethics Committee Letter of Approval



30 May 2016

Ms Anne Glasscoe 210513060
School of Applied Human Sciences-Psychology
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Glasscoe

Protocol reference number: HSS/0274/016M

Project Title: The Local Knowledge of Transactional Sex in sample of Tertiary Education Students in KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 16 March 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.


Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Mr Vernon Solomon
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor D Wassenaar
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nondumiso Khanyile

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

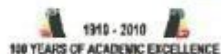
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)






Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: shnuks@ukzn.ac.za / senmanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohup@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Featuring Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Appendix 7: UKZN Registrar Letter of Approval



25 February 2016

Ms Anne Glasscoe (SN 210513060)
School of Applied Human Sciences
College of Humanities
Pietermaritzburg Campus
UKZN
Email: anneglasscoe@gmail.com

Dear Ms Glasscoe

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"The local knowledge of transactional sex in a sample of tertiary education students in KwaZulu-Natal".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by randomly approaching students, above the age of 18 years, and conducting focus group discussions with them on the Pietermaritzburg campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

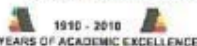
MR S S MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2208 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Expanding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 8: DUT Gatekeepers Approval



Directorate for Research and Postgraduate Support
Durban University of Technology
Tromso Annexe, Steve Biko Campus
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000
Tel.: 031-3732576/7
Fax: 031-3732946
E-mail: moyos@dut.ac.za

22nd February 2016

Ms Anne Glasscoe
c/o School of Applied Human Science
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

Dear Ms Glasscoe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT

Your email correspondence in respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research Committee (IRC) has granted provisional permission for you to conduct your research "The Local Knowledge of Transactional Sex in a sample of Tertiary Education Students in Kwa-Zulu Natal" at the Durban University of Technology.

Kindly note, that the committee requires you to provide proof of full ethical clearance prior to you commencing with your research at the DUT.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings can be submitted to the IRC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Moyo', is written over a horizontal line.

PROF. S. MOYO
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT

Appendix 9: Acceptance letter from Royada Omar.



Royada Omar

REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLOR,
TIMELINE THERAPIST, NLP AND HYPNOSIS PRACTITIONER
B. Soc.Sc(UKZN); B. Soc.Sci Hons - Psychology (UKZN);
B. Psych Accreditation (UNISA)

Cell : 074 555 5786
Tel : (033) 345 7559
Email : royada@pmbcounselling.co.za
Website : www.pmbcounselling.co.za

560 Langkhalalele Street
(Longmarket Street),
Pietermaritzburg, 3201
(Opp. Midlands Medical Centre
Private Hospital)

22 April 2016

I, Royada Omar, in private practice agree to provide initial debriefing as stipulated per the agreement.

It would be my pleasure to provide you with additional information at your request.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. ROYADA OMAR

ROYADA OMAR
REGISTERED COUNSELLOR
PRACTICE NO. 0481394
TEL: 074 555 5786

Appendix 10: CFC Counseling Referral Letter



09 November 2015

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to provide the assurance that should any participant interviewed by Ms Anne Glasscoe (Psychology Masters student) require psychological assistance as a result of any distress arising from the research project on "*The Local Knowledge of Transactional Sex in a sample of Tertiary Education Students in Kwa-Zulu Natal*"; the service will be provided by Masters one Psychology students and intern psychologists at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus Child and Family Centre – phone 033-2605166.

Yours sincerely,

K.P Maruping
Coordinator of University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus Child and Family Centre

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Founding Campuses:

-  Edgewood
-  Howard College
-  Medical School
-  Pietermaritzburg
-  Westville

Appendix 11: DUT Counseling Referral Letter

