

## Economic Recession and Level of Female Prostitution in Selected Nigerian Universities

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### Abstract

Presently Nigeria is witnessing Economic recession. The recessions have virtually taken a hold on every institution of the country to make meaningful development, alleviate peoples suffering and especially decrease in household income. One of the many effects of the recession is the increase in female prostitution. Although female prostitution has been a long age activity, its presence and activity have increased presently in the Nigerian Universities. Female prostitution is a process of trading sex for commercial purposes and gains. Female prostitution have recently taken a new dimension considering the age of female who partake in it, the client-patronage organized system and increase in the number of girls who engage in it. The study examined the extent to which recession has impacted adversely on female students in Nigerian Universities. It argued that the level of female prostitution have increased in the Nigerian universities. It holds a correlation between economic recession and the level of female prostitution in Nigerian universities. The study found that the use of social media, organized sex ring and third party arrangement was the methods adopted by female in prostitution and that the level of prostitution is high and serving as a coping strategy for many females in Nigerian universities. Several literatures were reviewed and also data were sourced using primary sources.

**Keywords:** *Commercial sex, Economic recession, Prostitution*

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### **Background to the Study**

Presently Nigeria is witnessing economic recession, the worst ever to happen to the country since 1991. The recession has crippled almost every economic sector of the country. The downturn has severe effect on GDP of the country such that household income is depleted. There is fear and apprehension everywhere as people are laid off from job, source of living depleting and a serious burden on households. Although Businessday (2017) report that the underlying issues behind the current crisis include a combination of economic, social, and infrastructure-related challenges that require deliberate, purposeful, and concerted action; the challenges are inadequate investment, high unemployment with low productivity, heavy fiscal burden at all levels of government, declining competitiveness, insecurity, a sharply depreciated currency and exchange rate uncertainties, weak energy base and inefficient transport systems. These are broader issues emanating from the recession.

However, other underlining issues resulting from these challenges includes, loss of family values, increase in domestic violence, indulgence in armed robbery, fraud, a decline in child welfare development, suicide and prostitution. The later prostitution is the focus of this study. Although prostitution has been a long age activity in many cities in Nigeria, its presence and activity has been at the increase presently. One of the many places which have seen a boom in the trade is the University. One will argue if the boom in the trade is in the face of the present economic recession. Female prostitution is a process of trading sex for commercial purposes and gains. Female prostitution have recently taken a new dimension considering the age of female who partake in it, the client-patronage organized system and increase in the number of girls who engage in it. Today prostitution is growing at a high rate in the Nigerian Universities.

Eruke (2017) writes that it took several years for prostitution to seep into university campuses, as the vice evolved and began to consume our young girls. People chose to ignore it as a mere fad that would quickly go away, it was largely left unchecked and so took hold, becoming a way of life in Nigeria's citadels of advanced learning. In the beginning, some of the students have loathed the strange lifestyle, but as they watched their indulgent peers return to campus, night after night, with wads of cash, glitzy clothes and other ephemeral paraphernalia, their resistance began to wear thin. Apart from bringing international Opprobrium to Nigeria, prostitution has assumed a more sinister dimension with the invasion of the tertiary institutions by older male members of the privileged class to fetch girls from the school to be used as commercial sex workers (Thepointer, 2017).

Although there are many motivating factors for students engagement in Prostitution, Onwubiko & Okonkwo (2013) believes that inordinate desire for affluence and desperation by many Nigerians, especially young ladies in campuses are the motivating factors for them to be consistently lured and engaged in sexual explicit acts. Eruke (2017) attributes it causes to the huge monetary inducement in this illicit business, which results to the corporate and campus prostitute parading themselves in flashy and sophisticated

cars, jewelries and costumes to the chagrin and envy of their fellow students. Onyeoku (2012) also mademention of some factors which have been held accountable for prostitution tendency in University campuses. Such factors include broken homes, child rearing practices, peer group influence, male child preference, among others. Prostitution tendency is proneness or readiness to engage in or practice prostitution. They might be right; however, a cursory look at the happenings in the economy might point to other direction. For instance the present economic recession have created a cycle of poverty, depression, unemployment and decline in house hold income, it will be of clarification and empirical if we look at the present recession as a point of call.

This study therefore, examines the impact of the economic recession on the level of female prostitution in selected Nigeria Universities. Specifically it examines the motivating factors for female engagement in prostitution in Nigerian universities; and examine the methods adopted in the act of prostitution in Nigerian Universities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Marxist Political Economy Theory facilitates a sound academic analysis on Economic recession. Marxist Political Economy Theory is associated with the German Scholar, Karl Marx. As its tenet, the theory relies heavily on the materialist conception of history and therefore argues that all social processes in human history is determined by the inherent and ongoing economic activity cum relationship that act themselves out in that particular society. Karl Marx's writings provided a uniquely insightful explanation of the inner workings of capitalism, which other schools of thought generally have difficulty explaining. From this vantage point, Marx's works help to explain important features and economic problems of our age, especially as it relates to political cum economic undoing and presently the economic recession in Nigeria.

As Marx has portrayed, Capitalist economies are unstable because of the conflicting forces of extraction, realisation, and accumulation of surplus value under competitive conditions. This instability is structural, and even the best economic policies cannot avoid it completely. These competitive conditions create a cycle of class and exploitation, the owners of the means of production (capital, land, power etc) on one hand, while the preliterate provides their labour. This condition of exploiter-exploited as Marx has predicted will create an economy and resources that is concentrated in few hands.

Taking the issue of recession in Nigeria for instance, condition of exploiter-exploited as Marx has predicted created a government that is too strong (dictatorship), and which concentration of resources are in their hands. In the first place, the political structure cum economic structure in Nigeria is streamlined in the working structure of capitalism with the very aim of making profits. The workings of capitalism are structured in a way that Nigeria remains a dependent state. However capitalism will always find a willing tool in the hands of politics and politicians who works according to the dictates of capitalist orientation. The aim is to direct the polity and economy of Nigeria with the sole aim of a grip on the economy and the accumulation of profit. In this instance, the analysis so far supports the arguments that the recession witnessed in Nigeria is the workings of the

political economy of the Nigerian state; this is inherent in concentration of wealth in few hands, corruption and the mismanagement of the resources in Nigeria. All these points to the dependent nature of Nigeria that is inherent in the workings of capitalism. Although Marx theory has its contradictions and short falls, for instance, it has suffered the most from authors as being outdated, however one important aspect of the political economy theory is that, Polity and the economy determines and conditions the actions of state.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Economic Recession:**

Business day (2017) report that in terms of growth and development, Nigeria's economy in the past ten years showed signs of a strong emerging market but also exhibited common vulnerabilities of a resource-based economy. The country posted strong annual growth rates of above 6% from 2007-2010 and then slowed to 2.7% in 2015 before a decline in the first quarter of 2016, followed by a further drop in the second and quarter to signal the beginning of a first economic recession since 1991. CBN (2012) explains that Recession is a business cycle contraction, and it refers to a general slowdown in economic activity for two consecutive quarters. During recession, there is usually a decline in certain macroeconomic indicators such as GDP, employment, investment spending, capacity utilization, household income, business income, and inflation, with the attendant increase in the rate of unemployment. Fapohunda (2012) narrates that the global economic and financial crisis has sent Tsunami ripples and wave shocks across the different socio-economic and political institutions in the present global environment. Tension is mounting everywhere as job cuts are on the increase, while many global corporate organizations are shutting down their operations and a few are declaring bankruptcy. Agbaje and Ayanbadej (2016) of the RTC Advisory Services citing the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBC) data, noted that the Nigerian economy has recorded two consecutive quarters of economic contraction. In Q1 2016, GDP growth was negative (-0.36%) and recently released Q2 2016 data which reflects a larger contraction (-2.06%).

The history of economic recession follows historical trends and is as old as humanity itself; CBN (2012) recorded this trend as dating back to the 3rd Century, the period of a Military Anarchy also known as imperial crisis (AD 235-284), the 14th Century economic crisis which stemmed more or less from the banking crisis, when the Bardi family and Peruzzi family lent Edward III of England a total of 1,500,000 gold florins which he failed to repay, that of the 17th century which was as result of a Dutch prosperous era, during which the price for the supply of bulb (from Tulip mania or Tulipomania) rose to a very high level and then suddenly collapsed, the 18th century when the stock price bubble of the South Sea Company suddenly collapsed, the 19th century, post-Napoleonic depression known as post-war economic depression in Europe. the 20th century panic of 1907 (1907 Bankers' Panic or Knickerbocker Crisis) in the US, where the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) fell by over 50 per cent from the peak it attained in the previous year and the 21st century global financial crisis (GFC), which started in 2007, caused principally by the housing bubble in the US that peaked in 2006. This historical trends also follows Stijn and Kose (2009) comment that the global financial crisis is consistent with the historical record and to have occurred in advanced economies several times in the past four decades – the mid-

70s, early 80s, early 90s, and early 2000s. The reason is given that the United States is the world's largest economy and has strong trade and financial linkages with many other economies.

Some of the major causes of recession as Stijn and Kose (2009) reports, includes sharp changes in the prices of the inputs used in producing goods and services and a country's decision to reduce inflation by employing contractionary monetary or fiscal policies, which when used excessively, such policies can lead to a decline in demand for goods and services. In the same vein, Eneji, Dimis, and Umejiaku (2017), noted that the economic recession in Nigeria was caused by excessive imports, plunging oil revenue and sharply low investment inflows. They perceived economic recession as a symptom of deeper structural problems inherent in the Nigerian economy, and over dependence on external modern capitalist societies.

### **Prostitution**

Prostitution is as old as man. Female prostitution have recently taken a new dimension considering the age of female who partake in it, the client-patronage organized system, the nomenclatures attached to it, and the increase in the number of girls who engage in it. Female prostitution is a process of trading sex for commercial purposes and gains. Aloba and Ndifon (2014) pointed that prostitution gravely impair women's health and firmly belong in the category of violence against women considering its emotional and physical harmful effect. Prostitution also crosses class lines, from the poor 'streetwalker' with their stereotyped drug habits and abusive pimps to the high class brothel and escort service worker with designers' cloths and stylish apartments. In the same process, according to the statement of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2016) the term "prostitution" includes various types of sex work including street prostitution and various forms of indoor prostitution including brothels, massage parlours and escort work. The pointer(2017) argued that another problem that seems to have helped to worsen the issue of campus prostitution for instance is that some parents are not meeting their financial obligations towards their campus daughter; everyone knows the inflationary trend in Nigeria such that the value of the Naira changes at every moment for the worse.

The Sex Work Research Hub stated that criminal sanctions harmed sex workers' broader health and access to care, and that data from multiple countries linked criminalisation of sex work with up to a five-fold increase in risk of HIV infection or other sexually transmitted infections (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2016). World Bank (2009) have noted that prostitution has historically been identified as a locus for sexually transmitted disease and women and men who sell their body are commonly viewed as vectors of disease. Also on the other hand, House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2016) citing the NPCC's National Policing Sex Work Guidance noted that "the murder of sex workers continues to take place at an alarming rate", believed that about 152 sex workers had been murdered since 1990 in the United Kingdom.

### Study Method

This study adopted the cross sectional survey design. Cross sectional survey design involves the use of multiple survey methods. Total population of students which was purposively taken for the selected federal and state universities in Niger Delta is 400. The study adopted a Probability random sampling technique but using the proportional stratified sampling method, in which every unit in the population had a chance (non-zero probability) of being selected in the sample. The first step we defined the target population, and also our unit of analysis, the 400 students purposively selected for the study. They were drawn from the faculties and departments in the selected universities.

The proportional stratified sampling method ensured that each of the students were proportionally drawn and represented in each of the 8 selected federal and state universities in Niger Delta. The proportional distribution of students is as follows;

Proportional distribution of populations in the selected Universities

1. University of Calabar	60
2. University of Port Harcourt	60
3. University of Benin	60
4. Delta state university	55
5. University of Uyo	55
6. Niger Delta University	55
7. Federal University Otuoke	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

400 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 368 was completely filled and returned.

### Results and Discussion

Data were obtained from the field through administered questionnaire. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents within the selected federal and state universities in Niger Delta respectively of which 368 were duly completed and returned which represents 92% response rate.

#### Objective 1: Economic recession impact son the level of prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta

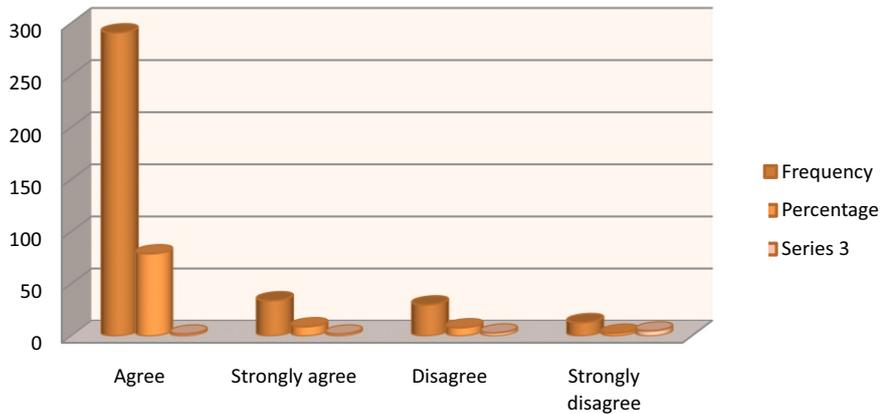
Table 1

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Agree	291	79
Strongly agree	34	9
Disagree	30	8
Strongly disagree	13	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.1 showed information on the impact of economic recession on the level of prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta. It showed that 79% of the respondents agreed that economic recession impact on the level of prostitution in the

selected universities in Niger Delta. It followed by a smaller percentage of the respondents 9%, 8% and 4% who strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

**Fig 1 frequency and percentage response on impact of economic recession and female prostitution**



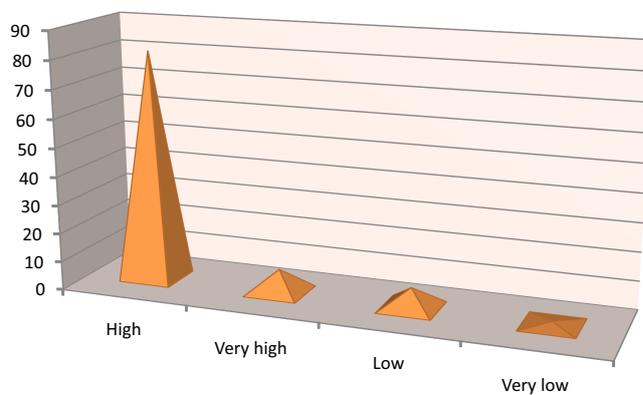
**Objective 2: Impact of economic recession on the level of prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta**

**Table 2**

Response	Frequency	Percentages
High	297	81
Very high	31	8
Low	27	7
Very low	13	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>100</b>

The impact of economic recession on the level of prostitution is high, as 81% of the respondents attested to this. It was followed by 8% of the respondents who said it is very high, 7% of the respondents said it is low while 4% of the respondents said it is very low.

**Fig 2 Impact of economic recession and level of prostitution**



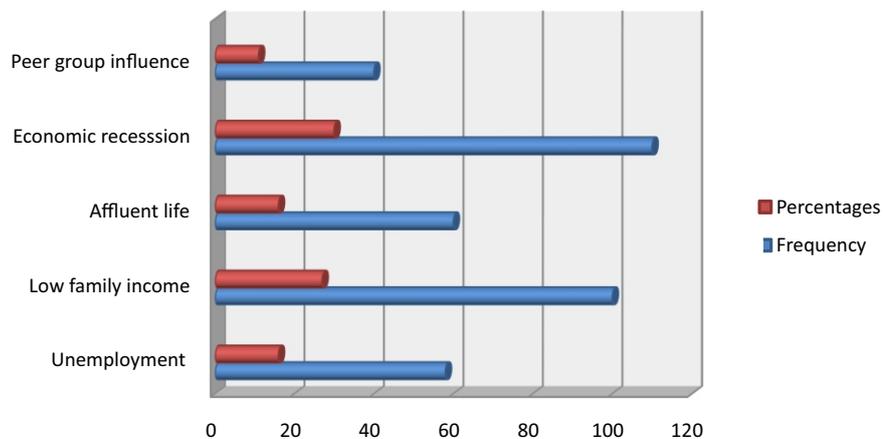
**Objective 3: Motivating factor for female engagement in prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta**

**Table 3**

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Unemployment	58	16
Low family income	100	27
Affluent life	60	16
Economic Recession	110	30
Peer group influence	40	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>100</b>

Information retrieved on the motivating factors for female engagement in prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta showed that majority of the respondents at 30% said economic recession is the motivating factor, it was closely followed by 27% of the respondents who believed that low family income is a motivating factor for female engagement in prostitution in the selected Universities in Niger Delta. 16% of the respondents all believed that unemployment and affluent life is a motivating factor responsible for female engagement in prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta. 11% of the respondents said peer group influence is a responsible factor for female engagement in female prostitution in Niger Delta.

**Fig 3 Motivating factors for female engagement in prostitution**



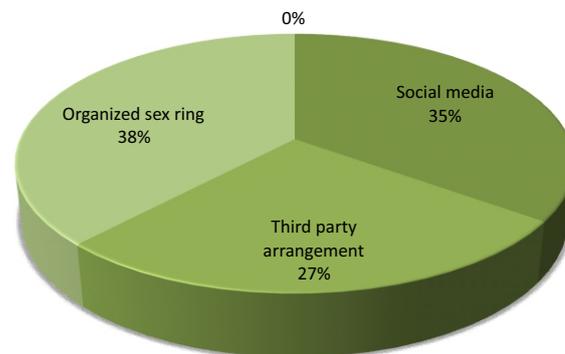
**Objective 4: Methods adopted by female in engagement in PROSTITUTION in the selected universities in Niger Delta**

**Table 4**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Social media</b>	128	35
<b>Third party arrangement</b>	100	27
<b>Organized sex rings</b>	140	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.4 above showed that social media, third party arrangement and organized sex rings were the methods adopted by female in engagement in prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta. Although organized sex rings was the most adopted methods used by female in engagement in prostitution as 38% of the students attested to this. The use of social media to source for clients which 35% of the students attested, followed as the methods adopted by female in engagement in prostitution in the universities. Third party arrangement, often done by 'pimps and tricks' who 27 % of the respondents attest, accounts for another methods adopted by female students in engagement in prostitution in the selected universities in Niger Delta.

**Fig 4 methods adopted by female in engagement in prostitution**



**Conclusion**

The downturn witnessed in the recent economic recession had severe effect on GDP of the country such that household income is depleted. There is fear and apprehension everywhere as people are laid off from their job, source of living depleting and a serious burden on households. One of the very socio-economic impacts of economic recession, is the increase in the level of prostitution in the Nigerian universities.

The study concludes that the level of prostitution is high in the selected Nigerian universities as a result of the recent economic recession. It also concludes that unemployment, Low family income, Affluent life, Economic Recession and Peer group influence are some of the motivating factors responsible for engagement in prostitution in the selected Nigerian universities, even as the social media, organized sex ring and third

party arrangement forms some of the methods adopted in engagement in prostitution in the selected Nigerian universities.

### **Recommendations**

Thus this study makes the following recommendations;

- 1. Increase in household income:** Government should and must adopt strategies to increase the inflow of revenue and the creation of jobs for qualified job seekers. Economic policies that will create a robust economy should be introduced by government, especially policies that will boost inflow of and opening of business opportunities.
- 2. Raising awareness on the dangers of prostitution:** awareness on the dangers of engagement into prostitution should be created. This will come in the form of statements from religious organizations, NGOs especially those involved in health programs on awareness on HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

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