ACCESSING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE SPREAD OF PROSTITUTION AMONG LADIES

(A CASE STUDY OF TINDER)

PRESENTED BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project has been read and approved as meeting the requirements for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication, Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT), Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God, I also dedicate this research project to my ever supportive and lovely parents Pastor and Deaconess Ilufoye, for their contributions and efforts in my life towards this program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A fundamental goal of people across the world is to attain comfort. Individuals from different cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds desire things and engage in activities that bring succor, relief, and pleasure experiences that offer temporary escape from harsh physical, social, and economic realities. From time immemorial, people have devised systems that provide the comfort they seek. However, times have evolved, societies have changed, and the world has become a global village due to the advent of technology and social media (Branson, 2023).

The rise of social media is widely regarded as one of the greatest inventions in human history. It has become a vital element of modern life, and without it, significant social and economic achievements might not be fully attainable (Equality Now, 2022). Social media, which is central to this project, has transformed how people interact, conduct business, and share information. Unfortunately, its rise has also led to misuse notably, not just for fraud, but also as a medium that fosters prostitution (Branson, 2023).

Prostitution is a form of sexual exploitation in which an individual often a woman engages in sexual activities with a client in exchange for payment or other forms of compensation (Equality Now, 2022). It has been practiced since ancient times and is nearly as old as human civilization. In many cases, adults of both genders mutually agree to engage in sexual acts for money or goods.

According to Branson (2023), the causes of prostitution include poverty, peer pressure, financial debt, biological factors, drug addiction, and unemployment. In the modern age of increasing social media usage, various dating sites have emerged to facilitate romantic connections between individuals. One of the most prominent of these platforms is Tinder.

Tinder is among the most popular dating applications in the world. Designed primarily to help users form romantic connections, it enables individuals to browse profiles and connect with potential partners based on location, interests, and preferences. Launched in 2012, Tinder now operates in over 190 countries and has more than 75 million users (Tinder, 2023).

Though Tinder was originally created to foster meaningful relationships, this purpose has been largely compromised. Many users now focus on casual hookups rather than long-term commitments. This shift has led to widespread beliefs that Tinder serves as a digital enabler of prostitution, transforming the traditional practice into a modern, online activity (Equality Now, 2022).

In response to this criticism, Tinder has implemented several measures to curb commercial sex work on its platform. These include community guidelines, profile reviews, and user reporting systems (Tinder, 2023). Nonetheless, these efforts have yielded limited success. Many users continue to exploit the platform to meet personal or financial goals, reinforcing the perception of Tinder as a space that indirectly supports transactional sex.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Prostitution is defined as the act of selling one's body for economic or social gain. It is widely regarded as an immoral act and a sign of moral decadence in most countries, particularly those with conservative religious, cultural, and social views. Even among the liberalists, many, to an extent believe that prostitution is demeaning to women and its literally abuse of women or the female gender. That being said, despite the little difference in this school of thought, both the liberals and conservatives agree to a certain extent that prostitution is bad. Many feminists argue that it is demeaning to women and constitutes the commodification of the female body. Despite these concerns, prostitution remains a persistent problem worldwide, with the spread of HIV/AIDS, STDs and other health risks being a major worry.

Moreover, the rise of social media has facilitated the growth of prostitution, with platforms like Tinder emerging as popular medium for sex work. This research aims to investigate the relationship between social media, specifically Tinder, and engagement in prostitution, providing valuable insights into this complex issue.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of social media, precisely Tinder in the sex worker industry;

i.   Examine the relationship between social media, specifically, Tinder usage and the spread of prostitution.

ii. Discuss the effectiveness of Tinder's policies on prostitution.

iii. Proffer solution or remedies to the surge of Prostitution.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions have evolved to guide the conduct of the study.

i. What are the remote and immediate causes of prostitution among ladies?

ii. What is the impact of Tinder on the spread of prostitution?

iii. What are the likely solutions to the spread of prostitution?

1.5 Significance of Study

This study examined the issues of prostitution and the role social media plays in aiding and abetting this social malady. The justification arose from the fact that, the commercial sex industry seems to have increased greatly ever since social media came on board. This research work will provide everyone with vital information on how Tinder in particular has impacted the commercial sex industry across the world while also bringing into the fore the challenges encountered by the sex workers in the usage of the website in the discharge of their services. It is believed that this research work will be of great importance to relevant agencies, ordinary folks and as well as the government. This research work will also serve as material to those who may want to carry out further research work in this regard.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is beneficially concerned with accessing the role of social media (Tinder) in the spread of prostitution among ladies. This paper seeks to study how well or otherwise the social media application has impacted commercial sex workers in the

service they offer. country and also the problems or challenges encountered during the course of attaining peace and security in the country.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Social Media

"Social media refers to online platforms or tools that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, information, or other users in a virtual environment. This includes social networking sites, video-sharing platforms, blogs, micro blogging platforms, podcasts, and other online communities that enable user-generated content and social interaction." Merriam Webster Dictionary (2022)

Kim 2012 opined that "Social media are web-based applications that enable users to create and exchange user-generated content, and to engage in social networking," Prostitution -According to World Health Organization, 2020, Prostitution is the practice or occupation of engaging in sexual activities with someone for payment or other compensation.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarification of Social Media and Prostitution

2.1.1 Social Media

Communication has been the foundation of every relationship right from the beginning of time. The human voice together with some local instruments have been used as media for thousands of centuries. Media in the sense that, information has been passed orally and through traditional means for the entire human existence however, overtime, technological advancement has been made and have taken over the modern world albeit making everything digital.

According to JahnaviBuyan (2023) social media is a collective term for websites and applications that share ideas and information through virtual networks. It facilitates communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Social networking sites are the interface between people and social media and for many the "internet" is synonymous with social networking sites (Hinton &Hjorth 2013). People use social media not only to consume online information, but also to produce unique content themselves (Gil de Zuniga et all 2014), transforming from content consumers to producers. Social Media has proven to be advantageous to the entire human existence and some of them are:

i. Sharing Ideas.

ii. Bridge communication gap.

iii.   Source of information.

iv.   Important marketing tool.

v.   Less time consuming and efficient.

2.1.3 Types of Social Media

JahnaviBuyan (2023) noted that the main item that differentiates social media platforms is the type of content that's on them and so gave the following typology of Social Media.

2.1.4 Social Network Sites

LIU& YING (2010) defined Social network sites as "those web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system".Social network sites allow people reach out and engage one another because they are websites and apps that allow users and organizations to connect, communicate, share information and form relationships. People can connect with others in the same area, families, friends, and those with the same interests (Gavins/Kinza 2023). It is important to note that Social networks are one of the most important use of the internet today because it provide a variety of ways for you to interact with existing friends and family, make new "friends," or make contacts to build your professional network. These types of sites can be great ways to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, to share photos and information with friends, and catch up on relevant news quickly.Some examples of identified social networking

platforms includes Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, TikTok among many others sites. Statista reported that, as at October 2024, there are over 5.22 billion internet users which stands at 63.8% of the world population i.e more than half of the entire human on earth.

It is important to know that there has been a massive gain by the human race since the advent of social media. Kaplan &Haenlein(2010) opined that Social media platforms have made it possible for people to "connect with others worldwide, regardless of geographical distance". In other words, it has brought about global connectivity:Social media enables users to share information, news, and ideas, facilitating knowledge exchange and dissemination. (Obar& Wildman, 2015) In this sense it is much easier and faster to share information. Looking back at a tough year like 2020 where the whole world was literally locked down, the social network provided social support for the generality of people. This opinion is further backed by the words of Burke, Marini, &McGannon(2010) Social media provides emotional support, resources, and a sense of belonging for individuals, especially during difficult times.

2.1.5 Image-Based Sites

Image based sites are online platforms that primarily deals in discovering, sharing and interacting with images or arts works. "Image-sharing platforms are online services that allow users to upload, share, and view images, often with social networking features." (Merriam-Webster). It involves the active participation of people which brings about what is known as "Image-based communities". These are online groups

that form around shared interests in visual content, such as photography, art, or design." (Community Building, 2019).

Image-based sites include but not limited to the following Instagram, TikTok), Flickr, Pinterest, Photobucket etc. These sites enable visual communication, which is essential for conveying complex ideas and emotions (Manovich, 2016). It also provides a platform for self-expression, creativity, and individuality (Papacharissi, 2007). People with artistic prowess are able to display and highlight their potentials to the larger part of the world as image sites in some cases serve as a rich source of inspiration and ideas for various aspects of life (Hill, 2015). Through marketing of potentials as earlier pointed out, Image-based sites offer powerful branding opportunities for businesses and organizations (Evans, 2017). Image-based sites help in gaining and generating valuable data insights, helping businesses and organizations understand their audience and preferences (Lai, 2017).

2.1.6 Video-hosting platforms

According to Burgess & Green (2018) Video hosting platforms are online services that enable users to upload, share, and stream video content, often with additional features such as editing, analytics, and monetization options.". This is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating aspect of social media. Being that, it offers captivating and engaging forms of content that aids assimilation and understanding. It enables users to upload, store, and stream video content, often with additional features such as video editing, sharing, and embedding." (Kim, 2012). Examples of Video hosting platform includes YouTube, TikTok Snapchat, Vimeo etc.

Video hosting platforms have become essential for individuals, businesses, and organizations to share their video content with a wider audience. Video hosting platforms allow content creators to reach a global audience, increasing their visibility and impact.

2.1.7 Discussion forums

Kim (2020) defines A discussion forum as a digital platform that facilitates asynchronous communication, enabling users to engage in written conversations, share knowledge, and build relationships with others.". This aspect of the social media allows one to put out their opinion, view and perspective on any issue, subject or content. Gao, 2019 further buttress the point by referring discussion forums as online spaces where individuals can engage in dialogue, share perspectives, and learn from each other through posted messages and responses.". In this community, people build relationships with others who share similar interests." (Wang, 2019). Some of the most-visited discussion forums are Reddit, Digg, Quor, Clubhouse. On theseplatforms, users engage in written conversations, share information with others. This segment of the Social media enhances communication skills and improves critical thinking.

2.1.8 Blog

A blog is a digital platform that allows individuals to create, manage, and share content, often in the form of written posts, images, or videos." (Gao, 2019). It is a type of online journal or diary where individuals can share their thoughts, experiences, and expertise with a wider audience." (Kaplan, 2019) Blogs help individuals and

businesses demonstrate their expertise and establish themselves as thought leaders in their respective fields

2.2.1 Prostitution

Prostitution is an act that is present in every society of the world. Prostitution is the practice of engaging in relatively indiscriminate sexual activity, in general with someone who is not your spouse or a friend, in exchange for money or other valuables (John P 2024). Human environment encompasses the physical surrounding, social relationships and cultural milieu within which defined groups of people function and interact. In the process of interaction and interrelationship, the subject of pleasure, pleasure house and pleasure giver comes in. Prostitution is commonly described as a custom of having sexual relations in exchange for economic gain (Qayyum et al, 2013)

Prostitution is a very complex phenomenon being that, it is based on culturally determined value that differ between societies. In some societies, prostitution is seen as legal profession while in others, it is a dirty, evil and punished. According to Fountain Scelles, there are about 40-42 million Prostitutes in the world of which 75% are between 13-25 years' old. Prostitution revolves around three major actors namely the prostitute, pimp and client.

Fountain noted further that the world of prostitution is a violent one because "prostitutes are more exposed to violence than other women and they run much greater risk of suffering physical and psychological damage" (European Parliament).

2.2.2 Causes of Prostitution

There are numerous factors motivating girls and women to enter prostitutions as a business profession of earning money, but the following are some of the factors influencing the women to prostitution (Bintu, Baba et all 2020):

2.2.3 Poverty

Poverty is a multidimensional concept. This is because the meaning of poverty varies across the world. The meaning of poverty to someone is a developing state is quite different to someone in a developed state and so there's no worldwide most acceptable definition for the concept and so the concept is defined or explained according to the perspective or orientation of the issuer. The World Bank (2002) defines poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not able to see a doctor, not been able to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, leaving one day at a time. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. Prostitutesare at the receiving end of all these problems and many more.Many individuals turn to prostitution due to lack of alternative economic opportunities or to support themselves and their families (Farley, 2004; Weitzer, 2010).

2.2.4 Gender-Based Violence and Trauma

Gender based violence is a serious human right violation issue with multiple implications on individuals and communities at large however, for the purpose of this study, it is one of the remote and immediate causes of prostitution. Goulden(2017) supported this assertion by saying, "Prostitution is often a result of gender-based

violence, trauma, and exploitation, with individuals being coerced or forced into sex work". Women who experience gender-based violence may be coerced or forced into prostitution by their abusers (Farley, 2004). And this many cases often make those who are broken by gender violence traumatized for life and eventually settle for commercial sex work. Women who have experienced trauma may turn to prostitution as a coping mechanism or to numb their emotional pain (Ullman, 2018)The inability of government to tackle the issue of mental and emotionalbreakdown has caused considerable rise to the issue of prostitution in the world especially as it affects the health of those remotely or immediately concerned.

2.2.5 Migration and Human Trafficking

Migration is the movement of people from a part of a region, country or continent to another in search of better condition of living. Overtime, it has been proven that many women have been lured or forced into prostitution due to their gullibility or desperation and this brings us to human trafficking.

According to UNODC (2000) Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, especially women and children, by means of threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception or abuse of power for the purpose of exploitation". Simply put, it is a modern day slavery, involving the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit people for labor or commercial sex (Bales &Soodater, 2009). Traffickers are cunning individuals, they recruit women and girls into prostitution through deception, manipulation, or force (Farley, 2004). They make imaginary offers (too good to turn down) to harvest unsuspecting victims into the ring

of sex work and they, traffickers profit from prostitution, perpetuating the cycle of exploitation (Willman, 2017).

In managing or curtailing prostitution, proper mechanisms are needed to ensure the destruction of human traffickers ring and all of its affairs.

2.2.6 Lack of Access to Education and Job Opportunities

Education is undoubtedly one of the most important necessity in human life, this is a result of the exposure and opportunities embedded in acquired knowledge. On the contrary, lack of access to education refers to the limitations that prevents individual from acquiring skills, knowledge needed for their growth and development. Lack of access to education brings about a number of problems and one of it is the main subject of discussion here, prostitution. Without education and job opportunities, individuals may feel trapped in poverty and see prostitution as a way to improve their economic situation (Farley, 2004).Lack of education and job opportunities can make individuals more vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers and pimps (Kara, 2009). When an individual is uneducated, such an individual will have limited social mobility, decreased economic growth and productivity and as such, they may feel trapped in poverty and see prostitution as a way to improve their economic situation (Farley, 2004).

2.2.7 Substance Abuse and Addiction

Substance abuse refers to harmful or excessive use of substances, including drugs, alcohol, medication, or social problems. According to World Health Organization, Research shows a high correlation between drug abuse and prostitution, with many

individuals engaged in prostitution also struggling with drug addiction. It is further proven thatDrugis often used as an escape or coping mechanism for the trauma and stress associated with prostitution. (Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment). Substance abuse can impair decision-making, leading individuals to engage in risky behaviors like prostitution (Csete& Cohen, 2010).

2.2.6 Social and Cultural Norms

Societies are not exactly the same anywhere in the world and for this reason, women are certainly portrayed in different ways by different societies. In some, it is the objectification of women, Cultural norms that objectify women can contribute to prostitution by creating a demand for commercial sex (MacKinnon, 2011) i.e. in some ways, the culture of some societies actually paint them as object of satisfaction and nothing more hence the reason why some women engage in prostitution. In some cases, it is gender inequality. Lack of equal opportunities for the genders can lead women to prostitution becauseinequality limits women's economic opportunities and autonomy (Farley, 2004).

2.2.7 Policy and Legal Frameworks

Policy and legal framework reveals the line of actions to be taken in a country, government or organization and backed by every necessary requirement of the law. The presence or absence of effective legal framework determine the rate of prostitution in any society. Absence of regulations or oversight can create an environment where exploitation and abuse thrive (Weitzer, 2010).

2.3.0 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Social Learning Theory

Social learning is a theory propounded by Albert Bandura (1977), he posited that people learn through observation, imitation, modeling and reinforcement and is influenced by cognitive factors such as attention, motivation, attitudes and emotion (Kendry 2024).

Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and communication in learning. Kendry (2024) identified the three concept with which people can learn

- Observation: In this concept, learning comes not only by hearing but also through reading and listening to instructional materials.

- Mental State: One's mental state and motivation play an important role in determining whether a behavior is learned or not. This emphasize that what brings about an action or change is pure internal and not necessarily from the environment.

- Behaviour: In this concept, learning does not necessarily lead to change.

This theory would prove how effective is of the impact of social media on prostitution with emphasis on individual factor, systemic and power of exploitation.

2.3.2 Routine Activity Theory

Routine activity theory is a theory developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson that explains why crime happens. Cohen and Felson (1979) define it as "any

prevalence and reoccurring activities which provide for basic population and individual needs, whatever their biological or cultural origins". Rational activities theory is based on the idea that offenders make rational choices about whether to commit a crime (Criminology Web 2024).

There are three elements to note in this theory. For a crime to be perpetuated, three things must be present and they are

- A motivated offender: An individual with the desire and ability to commit a crime.
- A suitable target:A vulnerable and attractive target for the offender.
- Absence of capable guardian: Insufficient protection or supervision, allowing the offender to commit the crime without detection or intervention.

For the purpose of this study, this theory will help to understand the dynamics between social and prostitution and offer context on what motivated into getting involved in prostitution, analyze the relationship or dynamism between the sex workers, clients and the social media. Finally, develop or provide a capable guardianship that would either prevent or protect sex workers.

2.3.0 Empirical Review

Rutherford (2010) found that students use social media very frequently for different purposes. Some of these purposes are noble while others are not. For instance, Dedanne found students in his research to use social media for negative purposes while some media organizations like CNN Use social media for information gathering and dissemination. The CNN example is particularly instructive. It dedicates a

program iReport mainly to stories sourced from social media particularly Facebook and Twitter. Viewers send their own reports to CNN and the anchor selects from a myriad of available stories for each day s broadcast. Leach (2009) writes that digital media, and the emerging use of social media, are exponentially expanding the reach of journalism, and this presents the practitioners and the audience, with opportunities and dilemmas. Among those who gather news, publish it, and consume it, ethical questions are raised by the demands and possibilities of this new media environment. On the issue of prostitution, McCaskey (2012) explains that many people use the social media to prostitute or to promote Prostitution.

KAKE News (2012) supports this view when it asserts that there is much prostitution via the social media. It cites the US example where the police authorities were able to burst prostitution rings through the social media in some cities in the US. KAKE NewS explains that through some social media sites, detectives from the Reno County Sheriff's Office were able to get information that related to prostitution. With the available information, detectives conducted a sting operation at a motel in the area and arrested three women aged 30, 23 and 21 and charged them for prostitution related offences.

In Nigeria, the Cynthia Osukogu case was a celebrated case. Late Cynthia met and made friends with a male on Facebook for business purposes. On the invitation of the facebook friend", Cynthia travelled to Lagos where she was ganged raped, filmed why the despicable act lasted, and later killed by her assailants (Vanguard, 2012). This is a classic example of prostitution and crime promoted through the social media. Another

example is the case of the Adelaide teenager, Carly Ryan, who was murdered by a Myspace contact in 2007.

Fewster (2010) says that her killer, Garry Francis Newman, had been contacting Carly via Myspace in 2007. On the site, he was pretending to be a 20-year-old male from Victoria named Brandon Kane, while in reality he was a 50- year-old divorced father of three who lived with his mother and had up to 200 fake online identities. It is also a common practice now to recruit young women and boys for prostitution related issues using social media (Pope, 2012). Pope cited the case of one 26-year-old African-American,

Justin Strom of Lorton, also known as "J-Dirt" who recruited young girls in Fairfax County, Virginia, USA. She specialized in recruiting white girls, Hispanic girls, and AfricanAmerican girls, sometimes at school, in the mall or on the Metro. Pope (2012) explains further that after the gang members made personal contact with the girls, court records showed, they would use social media to draw them into a life of prostitution. He discloses that detectives finally found out about the activities of the prostitution gang headed by Strom, arrested and charged her. Pope therefore notes that social media sites expose children in a way that their parents are unaware of andunable to control. This is a big challenge for most parents and guardians in this century.

The Telegraph (2009) and Belicove (2012) also warn that using social media indiscriminately could harm the moral values of young persons. Jansze (2010) writes that concerns are raised in relation to the youth's level of Internet literacy (mainly

concerning knowledge around Internet crime)" and the interface design of social networking sites and settings. Lack of such knowledge could make the youths who are mainly students to use the social media for unethical practices such as prostitution.

Livingstone (2008) explains that the ability of social media to invade individual s privacy is dangerous to the youths moral standards. For example, when one signs up for a Facebook account by default, one s profile is set to be able to be seen by not only friends but also friends of friends and anyone that does a search for ones name. Only when one manually chooses to log into the privacy settings can one change and restrict who can access the profile.

Holmes (2009) says that when considering the risks involved with online social networking as a whole, one of the most serious aspects concerning young people is that of the grooming of minors for the sexual satisfaction of unknown predators. Just like cyber bullying, this can occur while the individual is within their home, and some young people do, in fact meet their abusers online, as the Internet is just as much a platform for people to use for both positive and negative behavior.

Palfreman (2009) also fears the growth and popularity of the social media and the likely effect on the law and ethics guiding public communication. He observes that the activities of social media users could have serious negative consequence on conventional practices in the society. Individuals use the social media to connect themselves, engage in social activities, find friends, and engage in various professional activities (Gubahar and Guven 2008; Dedanne, 2009).

In essence, if anything goes wrong with these connections and relationships developed online, they will obviously affect the physical space of the affected individuals. On the relationship between gender and social media use, Joinson (2008) found that women are more likely to use the social media such as Facebook or MySpace while the male are more likely to use Linkedln. The findings suggest that female users are more predisposed to some social media, while the male users are more favourably disposed to some other social media than their female counterparts are. The implication of the finding is that there is significant relationship between the social media use and the gender of the users.

Hargittai (2007) also found that gender plays a significant role in the use of social media. The finding indicates that more women than men use social media. Madden and Zickuhr (2011) found that among Internet users, social networking sites are most popular with women. Hampton et al (2011) also found that social networking site users were mainly female.

Mazman and Usluel (2011) also found that gender is a significant factor in the use of social media, with more females using the social media. The Uses and Gratification theory, which explains reasons people use the media, served as the theoretical guide for this study.

Katz and Blumler (1974) who propounded the theory explain that the theory is concerned with who uses the media; how s/he uses the media, and the gratification s/he gets or intends to get from using the media. The theory suggests that the user of

the media plays significant and active role in the selection of the media to use, the content of the media to use, and how to use them.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of social media, specifically Tinder, on the spread of prostitution among ladies. This design was selected because it allows for the collection of data from a sizable population, enabling the researcher to describe the current trends, patterns, and relationships that exist within the chosen population. The study is quantitative in nature, allowing for a broader understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises female Tinder users between the ages of 18 and 40 in Lagos, Nigeria. This age range was chosen because it represents the demographic most active on Tinder and most susceptible to exposure to both legitimate dating and illicit online activities. The estimated population size could not be precisely determined due to the privacy features of the Tinder application, hence a purposive sampling method was applied to locate active users through online forums, social media, and referrals.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A total of 200 female Tinder users were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The purposive approach helped the researcher target users who

were willing to discuss their experiences on Tinder, while the snowball method allowed referrals from initial participants to others with similar usage patterns.

The sample size of 200 was deemed adequate for a study of this nature and provided enough data to identify trends, correlations, and patterns.

3.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Social Media Usage and Sexual Behavior Questionnaire (SMUSBQ)." The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

- Section A: Demographic information (age, education, occupation, etc.)
- Section B: Tinder usage patterns (frequency of use, purpose, types of interactions)
- Section C: Exposure to sexual content and offers
- Section D: Perception of Tinder as a facilitator of prostitution or casual sexual exchange

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to content and face validity by three experts in social sciences and research methodology. To test reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 20 respondents outside the main sample group. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated, and a reliability score of 0.82 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for the main study.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected over a six-week period through online distribution of the questionnaire. The online questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, shared in Tinder-related online communities and WhatsApp groups, while printed copies were distributed to known users through campus networks and women's social groups.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were used to analyze demographic and usage data. Inferential statistics, such as Chi-square tests and correlation analysis, were applied to test the relationship between Tinder usage and involvement in transactional sex.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to strict ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were assured of their anonymity, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of their participation. All participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequence.

Additionally, sensitive questions were framed carefully to avoid embarrassment or discomfort. Ethical approval was obtained from.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

Some limitations were encountered in the course of the research:

- Due to Tinder's anonymity features, reaching users was a challenge, making random sampling impossible.
- Some participants were hesitant to disclose sensitive information about their sexual behaviors.
- There may be some bias in self-reported data, especially where respondents underreported or exaggerated behaviors.
- The sample was limited to females, leaving out male users who may also engage in or promote prostitution via Tinder.

4.0 Results and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire and interviews conducted with 200 female Tinder users. The findings are organized according to the research objectives and questions. Quantitative Results are presented.

4.1 Data Presentation

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 187 were returned, giving a response rate of 93.5%. Out of the 187 returned, 180 were deemed valid for analysis.

4.2 Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18–24	68	37.8%
25–30	74	41.1%
31–35	24	13.3%
36–40	14	7.8%

Most Tinder users fall within the 25–30 age group (41.1%), followed by 18–24 (37.8%). This aligns with existing reports that Tinder is primarily used by young adults.

Table 4.2: Educational Background

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary School	12	6.7%
Undergraduate	102	56.7%
Graduate/Postgraduate	66	36.6%

A majority of the respondents (56.7%) are undergraduates, indicating a highly literate group of Tinder users in this study.

4.3 Analysis of Tinder Usage Patterns

Table 4.3: Purpose of Using Tinder

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Dating	88	48.9%
Friendship/Networking	32	17.8%

Casual Sex	45	25.0%
Monetary Gains/Transactional Sex	15	8.3%

While dating is the most common purpose (48.9%), a notable portion of users (25.0%) use Tinder explicitly for casual sex. 8.3% admitted to using it for transactional purposes.

Table 4.4: Have You Ever Been Offered Money for Sex via Tinder?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	35.6%
No	116	64.4%

A significant 35.6% of Tinder users reported being offered money for sex, which supports the hypothesis that Tinder may act as a channel for prostitution.

Table 4.5: Have You Ever Accepted a Transactional Relationship via Tinder?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	16.1%
No	151	83.9%

Though only 16.1% of respondents confirmed engaging in transactional sex, this figure is still significant considering the nature of the platform.

4.4 Analysis of Research Questions

RQ1: How does Tinder usage influence ladies' exposure to prostitution-related content or offers?

- 61% of respondents said they had seen explicit or sexual content shared via Tinder messages.

- 47% said they had been approached by someone suggesting a paid meet-up.

- Responses revealed that some profiles subtly or directly indicated willingness to "spoil" users, a euphemism for transactional sex.

RQ2: What proportion of Tinder users engage in or are approached for transactional sex?

- Quantitative analysis showed that 35.6% were approached, and 16.1% participated.

- Thematic analysis from highlighted that users often started with normal conversations which later escalated into discussions around money or gifts for sex.

RQ3: What are the common indicators or patterns linking Tinder use and prostitution?

- Common patterns include users listing interests like "daddy vibes," "looking for someone generous," or using terms like "arrangement" in bios.

- High frequency of profile visits and replies from older male users aged 35+.

- Offers of sponsorship, travel, or gifts in exchange for companionship.

4.5 Interpretation of Findings

The data supports the view that Tinder, while originally intended for dating, is being exploited as a platform for covert prostitution and transactional sex arrangements. Though only a minority (16.1%) confirmed involvement, the high rate of exposure (35.6%) points to the normalization and increased visibility of sex-for-money interactions on the platform.

This supports the argument that social media technologies are indirectly facilitating the spread of prostitution by connecting interested parties and creating avenues for discreet arrangements.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This study explored how Tinder, a widely-used dating application, may be influencing or facilitating the spread of prostitution among ladies. Data collected through questionnaires and interviews revealed several important findings.

5.1.1 Tinder Usage and Exposure to Sexual or Transactional Content

A notable portion (35.6%) of respondents reported being offered money for sex through Tinder, while 16.1% acknowledged accepting such offers. This finding aligns with the observation that while Tinder was originally designed for dating and casual interactions, its features—such as location-based matching, anonymous swiping, and private messaging—make it conducive for organizing sexual exchanges with minimal risk or exposure.

The data reveals a blurring of the lines between dating and commercial sex work. Some women reported initially joining the platform for dating but later found that many male users explicitly or subtly proposed financial arrangements in exchange for intimacy. This phenomenon has led to the normalization of "transactional relationships" that mimic prostitution in all but name.

5.1.2 Language and Behavioral Patterns Suggesting Prostitution

Participants identified certain terms and behaviors commonly used by individuals promoting sex work. Words like "sugar daddy," "generous man," or phrases such as "spoil me" and "arrangements" often imply an expectation of compensation for sexual

or romantic involvement. This coded language contributes to the platform being a covert marketplace for sex.

Additionally, older male users frequently sought younger women, and many respondents noted that initial friendly chats would evolve into explicit proposals involving money or material support.

5.1.3 Influence of Anonymity and Accessibility

Tinder allows users to hide their real identities through pseudonyms and limited profile information. This anonymity reduces accountability, encouraging risky behaviors and making it easier for individuals to offer or solicit sex for money without detection or stigma. The ease of access, particularly through mobile phones, and the global reach of Tinder further amplify its potential as a tool for facilitating modern forms of prostitution.

5.2 Comparison with Related Studies and Researcher's Method

Comparison with Other Research

Findings from this study are consistent with those of Gillespie (2020), who found that Tinder and similar platforms have contributed to the rise of "technology-mediated prostitution". Similarly, Martinez and Olumide (2019) reported that dating apps have normalized casual sex and created new markets for sex work among young women in urban areas.

Adesina and Okoro (2022) studied the role of Instagram and Snapchat in transactional sex and concluded that visual content and private messaging tools on social media apps empower users to discreetly advertise and negotiate sexual exchanges—paralleling what this study found on Tinder.

However, unlike some earlier studies that relied solely on content analysis or public profiles, this research combined questionnaire-based data collection with direct user interviews, providing richer, first-hand insight into users' behaviors and perceptions. This mixed-methods approach allowed for triangulation and deeper understanding of subtle patterns not evident through surface-level analysis.

5.3 Implications of the Study

This study has several social and academic implications:

- For society, it reveals the need for more awareness campaigns and education about how digital platforms are shaping sexual norms, especially among young women.
- For app developers, it highlights the need for stronger policies to detect and report solicitation of sex or exploitative behavior.
- For researchers, it provides a framework for future studies on the intersection of technology, gender, and sexual economics.

5.4 Conclusion

The research concludes that Tinder, though created for dating and social networking, is actively being used by some individuals as a medium for prostitution and

transactional sex. While not all users engage in such behavior, the platform's design and user anonymity have made it attractive for those seeking discreet arrangements.

The findings demonstrate that social media is not just a neutral tool but one that can be repurposed by users in ways that influence sexual behavior, economic decisions, and even social values. The spread of prostitution among ladies via Tinder reflects a broader societal shift influenced by digital culture, economic pressures, and evolving norms around sexuality and relationships.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Expand the study to include male users to understand the demand side of transactional sex on Tinder.
2. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine changes over time in how users engage with dating apps.
3. Explore regional and cultural variations to see if Tinder usage patterns differ across countries or urban vs. rural areas.
4. Partner with Tinder or other platforms to access backend data (where ethically permissible) to verify and extend findings.

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