

South African Heterosexual Males Paying for Sex: Motivations, Justifications and Deterrents.

Kirsten Leigh McLeod: MCLKIR010

Ida Wepener: WPNIDA001

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Dr. Despina Learmonth

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Abstract

Sex work in South Africa is poorly understood. Research focus thus far has been on sex workers and their experiences. There is a paucity of literature on the clients' realities. This research focuses on how heterosexual men construct sex work in South Africa. Due to the highly stigmatized nature of sex work, society perceives male clients to be deviant members of the community. However, our findings prove that many clients who participate in the sex industry are heterogeneous, attractive and often successful men from traditionally conservative and liberal backgrounds. Several semi-structured interviews were conducted with male clients to uncover their attitudes and motivations in paying for sex. Our research is purely exploratory therefore interviewed the participants with no preconceived agendas. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected data and to extract themes. Three main themes are identified and discussed, namely: motivations, justifications and deterrents from commercial sexual services. This research study has the potential to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of male clients' expectation, desires and construction of sexuality and sex work. Our research can aid in policy formation around sex work as well as assist with the de-stigmatization of sex work in South Africa.

Keywords: Sex Work; Client; South Africa; Motivation; Justification; Deterrent; Social Constructivism; Feminism.

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NAMES: Kirsten McLeod and Ida Wepener

SIGNATURES:

STUDENT NUMBES: MCLKRI010 and WPNIDA001

Background

The sex industry is a diverse and rapidly expanding business (Willman & Levy, 2010). The media often reports on the sensational aspects of sex work, such as illegal human trafficking networks, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the use of illegal substances in the sex trade, whilst neglecting detailed commentary on the individuals who purchase sex: partners, friends and community members (Willman & Levy, 2010). A large part of socially constructed discourse pertaining to sex work names deviance as essential to participation in the sex trade from both the client and sex worker. However, several studies indicate that sex workers' clientele are ordinary, heterogeneous citizens from numerous nationalities, cultures, religions, socio economic backgrounds and marital statuses (Mansonn, 2006, Monto & Julka 2009, Morrison, 2006, Peng 2007, Perkins 1999, Yang, Latkinin, Liu, Nelson, Wang, Luan, 2010).

In order to gain insight into how dominant society may construct sex work it is necessary to examine socially constructed frameworks around sex and sex work, as it will help in understanding the way in which male clients construct their sexual behaviour when seeking out sex workers. Firstly, dominant feminist frameworks around sex work and the sex workers' identity are discussed. These frameworks highlight important aspects of gender dichotomy and power relations that may shape dominant matrices around the construction of sex work. Secondly, the necessity of studying the client's constructions is highlighted. And lastly, factors which may shape male clients' motivation to pay for sexual services will be explored.

Feminist Frameworks Around Sex Work

The feminist debate on sex work revolves around whether it constitutes a form of voluntary sexual labour or involuntary sexual objectification (Brents & Hausbeck 2010).

Sex Work as Voluntary Sexual Labour. There is an increase in the commercialization of sexual intimacy. Sexuality and eroticism have become central to the globalized capitalist leisure culture (Sanders, 2005). Hypersexual images of seduction and eroticism are increasingly published (Sanders, 2005). These social changes are transforming norms around sexuality. Over the past 50 years we have witnessed an increasing acceptance of women's sexual agency, sex out of wedlock, sexual pleasure, and homosexuality in the general population, suggesting sexual freedom is becoming more acceptable in society. (Brents & Hausbeck, 2010). Although the introduction of oral contraception for women may have had a part to play in increasing women's

sexual choices, public commercialisation of sex through the media has certainly influenced the definitions of normative sexual behaviour.

Generally sex work is not looked upon or considered to be an acceptable career choice, but may be thought of as a part of a broader group of service occupations such as massage therapy, cocktail waitressing, or being a flight attendant (Brents & Hausbeck, 2010, Sanders, 2005). Many workers and clients retain their sexuality as consumable and marketable goods (Brents & Hausbeck, 2010).

Liberal feminists have adapted the contractarian argument. The sex worker contracts out a certain type of labour (the capacity for sexual activity) for a certain time in exchange for money. Thus, a sex worker does not sell her vagina or body, her body is therefore her 'tools' needed to carry out the service. The sex worker assumes the role of a sexual equal or superior, as she has the authority to determine what services the client gets and under what conditions (Bell, 1994; Outshoorn, 2004). Sex workers are considered to have the power to choose whether or not to sell their sex. Comparing sex work to other forms of existing interactive service work in capitalist societies may help to break stereotypes about "whores" and further sex worker rights. Liberal feminists argue that seeing sex work as a lifestyle that no person will choose for (herself) opens the door for paternalistic interpretations of what is best for women (Koken, 2010).

There are however, challenges that face this interpretation. Whilst gender inequality is changing in the arena of sexuality, women are still structurally disadvantaged in the workplace and society at large (Brents & Hausbeck, 2010). For many men in modern society, the extension of equal rights to women is experienced as a loss of male supremacy. Some men react strongly against this development, displaying regressive and anti-feminist attitudes. They cannot accept the changes; instead they cling to old notions of men's dominance over women. As women advance in real life, they are pushed back into men's fantasies (Kimmel, 2005). Some researchers suggest that women do not readily choose prostitution as a 'profession' but rather comply with the limited options available to them because of their poor economic circumstances (Hernandez & Larson, 2006, Nandipha, 2012, Raymond, 2008).

Sex Work as Involuntary Sexual Objectification. Another common conception, both among the general population and among scholars, is that sex work is inevitable and perhaps natural. According to Canadian sex researcher Gemme (1993) "people will always have sexual needs which can only be satisfied by a commercial exchange" (p.235). The popular axiom that

prostitution is the oldest profession reflects this perspective well. Seen this way, sex work comes to be considered “normal.” However, feminist scholars argue there are a number of problems with this understanding.

Firstly, such a perspective ignores the ways that sexual “needs” and desires are structured and shaped by society, but instead views them as entirely biological or natural (O’Connell & Davidson, 2002). Secondly, placing men’s needs as paramount in shaping sexual practices reinforces a sense of masculine entitlement to sexual access that places the needs of others as secondary and contributes to the exploitation of women (Outshoorn, 2004). Furthermore, implying that everyone has the right to meet their exact erotic requirements neglects the fact that some sexual desires may be inconsistent with the desires of others or may bring harm to other individuals or groups (O’Connell & Davidson, 2002). And thirdly, this understanding implies a particular definition of masculine sexuality as motivated by a desire for sexual release rather than intimacy, promiscuity rather than monogamy, and a basic need that must be met rather than a desire that may or may not be fulfilled. Such a definition of masculine sexuality may actually contribute to the conditions that perpetuate sex work, as men may come to define sex work as a natural outcome of their intrinsic sex drive (Hernandez- Troyol & Larson, 2006, Raymond, 2008).

Necessity of Studying the Client

Contributing to the sex work debate there also exists arguments around whether or not legalising sex work will further harm sex workers (Hernandez- Troyol & Larson, 2006, Raymond, 2008). Those who support the legalisation of sex work believe that it will ensure greater protection for the rights of sex workers (Hernandez & Larson, 2006, Yen, 2008). However, the sex trade industry is a part of the ‘shadow economy’ of globalisation, responsible for the trafficking of girls and women from poor, developing countries to industrialised, developed countries (Martilla, 2008). Yen (2008) argues that human trafficking for the purpose of sex work can be greatly reduced through educational and legislative policies that are aimed at reducing the male demand for sexual services. The methods include educating men who make use of sexual services by changing their misguided attitudes toward female sex workers, and enacting and enforcing legislation that criminalizes the purchase of sex (Hernandez-Troyol, 2006, Raymond, 2008, Yen, 2008). Those who are opposed to legalisation view it as a legitimisation of women’s bodies as commodities (Monto & Julka, 2009), and believe that it only leads to the

further exploitation and abuse of women in *public*. In poverty-stricken countries, such as South Africa, where many women have reduced means of acquiring income, opponents to legalisation, such as Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, have implied that South Africa would be reduced to a “pimp state” status if sex work were legitimised (Nandipha, 2012). Currently, buying and selling sex is a criminal offence in South Africa. However, until December 2007, only the sex worker was criminalized, despite the fact that sex work involves at least two parties: male client and female sex worker (Peng, 2007). In order to understand the mechanisms within sex work, it is essential to look at how client’s demands may shape the profession as a whole. Without male clients’ demand for sex work the profession would not exist (Martilla, 2008, Yen, 2008). However, a dearth of literature exists on the clients’ perspective of the sex work industry. This seems to be because it is difficult to gather a sample of men who are willing to participate in research around such a sensitive topic (Perkins, 1999). Clients often go to great lengths to keep their identities hidden (Monta & Julka, 2009). Sex work is also inherently entrenched in gender and class discourses, and the demand for sex work is normalized (Kissil & Davey, 2010). Men are seen as being biologically primed to have sex with as many partners possible (Martilla, 2008, Monto & Julka, 2009, Peracca, Knodel & Seangtienchai, 1998, Raymond, 2008).

Constructions around Paying for Sex

There is evidence of an existing international cultural norm that men are naturally more sexually active and in need of a variety of sexual experiences (Marttila, 2008). Dominant discourse places the male in charge of sexual relations, and similarly emphasises that he must be an experienced lover (Peng, 2007). Campbell (1995) argues that men and women have different expectations of sex. Men are expected to be active in their conquest of women, while women are expected to passively receive sex from men. It can be argued that men internalize and necessitate stereotypical masculine norms and roles, which may also legitimize their participation in sex work. Thus there may be a discourse of entitlement for males to partake in sex work.

Evidently, visits to sex workers are often a normative social group activity. Although men are not forced into participating, the group may passively coerce an individual by creating an accepting normative setting (Yang, Latkin, Liu, et al, 2010). These visits may be considered a bonding experience with friends or an opportunity for business networking. Visits to sex workers are sometimes seen as a rite of passage into manhood (Yen, 2008) where men can prove their sexual adequacy to their peers (Peng, 2007). Some men believe that they are too ‘aroused’ to be

intimate with their girlfriends only. For example, Thai women who were interviewed seem to tolerate and accept men's 'natural' need for extramarital sex. Men succumbing to their need to satisfy their strong sexual urges is seen as inherent to their manliness (Morrison, 2006).

Men also seem to believe common myths about sex workers. They believe women are sex workers out of free will, earn a decent income and enjoy their work (Yen, 2008). These are all common patriarchal discourses, which may influence norms and behaviour towards sex workers and the industry as a whole.

Prostitution as a commodity in the literature refers to sex work as a purely being about economic exchange, thus eliminating much of the experience of sex in terms of an intimate relationship (Monto & Julka, 2009). This is referred to as unilateral pleasure (Peng, 2007) where clients do not have the time or desire to form conventional sexual relationships. In interviews with Finnish sex buyers, the men spoke as casually about buying sex as if it was any other market activity (Marttila 2008). The majority of Finnish men participating in sex work in Tallinn and Vyborg did not visit there exclusively for that purpose: the trip's focus was usually for business or a weekend trip during which paid sex services were used (Marttila 2008). Several studies have found that men use commercial sex work as a social networking tool (Peng, 2006, Raymond, 2008, Yang, et al., 2010). Treating business partners to commercial sexual services in order to gain their support of economic endeavours are often reported (Peng, 2006, Raymond, 2008). The appeal of a non-emotional and non-committed relationship and the desire for sex with a variety of different women are motivators for some men to seek commercial sex. It seems as though men are attracted to the temporal relationship available through commercial sex because of the lack of emotional attachment (Mansson, 2006). Men's fantasies around sex work often involve encountering a sexually advanced and experienced woman, who is willing to perform sexual acts not permissible with their wives or steady partners (Mansson, 2006).

Clients want to have immediate control over sexual practices. Some clients argue that they spend a lot of money on obtaining the service; therefore, they expect variety in women and in sexual exploration. The greatest benefit according to some clients is that they do not have to be considerate of sex workers' feelings or needs. For them it is an easy way of fulfilling sexual needs and/or fantasies that sometimes partners do not fulfil. . This choice may be legitimised by dominant masculinity discourse. Men have the power to choose, dismiss and demand a woman to

perform sexual acts as long as there is an economic advantage for the woman (Monto & Julka, 2009).

Contradictory to the previous motivation outlined by male clients, other men who seek out the services of sex workers do so for a 'girlfriend experience'. This occurs when a woman seems as affectionate and excited as in a consensual romantic relationship with no economic remuneration (Holt & Blevins, 2007). Clients in Australia rated the sex worker experience higher when the sex worker made the client feel special by acting animated and aroused as if she is not being paid (Holt & Blevins, 2007). Some men also seemed to enjoy pleasuring a sex worker as it 'validated' them as a male by being linked to their sexual identity, esteem, performance and body image (Sanders, 2008). Additionally, there may be a cathartic element, as sex workers may offer a safe environment and listen to men's problems. Clients report that sex workers have helped them with issues in their day-to-day lives (Perkins, 1999, Sanders, 2008). Peng (2007) explains how many clients fall in love with sex workers as they fulfil romantic fantasies. In such instances, sex workers are often affectionate, caring and pretend to be reluctant for the client to leave (Peng, 2007). The practices between the client and sex worker are similar to those of typical romantic relationships: they go out on dates, chat, kiss, perform oral sex on each other and often fall asleep next to each other (Peng, 2007). Some clients visit the same sex workers for years, mimicking a monogamous relationship. Many clients consider sex workers as friends who they can trust and lean on emotionally (Peng 2007, Perkins, 1999, Sanders, 2008).

Aim of the Research Project

This research will explore the socially constructed themes that form meanings around sex work from the male client's perspective. Exploratory qualitative research is necessary to investigate males demand for sex work because it is an under researched topic, still in the infancy of establishing an agenda (Hobbs & Wright, 2006). Particularly in South Africa, where buying and selling sex is illegal, there is a paucity of research on how male clients construct buying sex. There is a significant amount of data about female sex workers, including empowering strategies and HIV/ AIDS prevention strategies (Egan & Frank, 2005, Willman & Levy, 2010, Yen, 2008). Perkins (1991) has estimated that that less than 1% of studies around sex work include data about the male clients involved. This leaves a great gap in the research for understanding of these profound social phenomena. The aim of this research is to begin to understand the lived experience and perspective of men who buy sex, in order to gain a more holistic understanding of

the demand factor in sex work. In effect, we aim to shift the focus to the male clients, who are such a vital feature of this social landscape (Erickson & Tewksbury 2000). Only by exploring the way in which the male client constructs paying for sex can we begin to reshape current dominant discourse around sex work.

Method and Design

Theoretical Approach

This research takes on a feminist position whilst focusing on the social construction of conceptualisation around sex work. We keep feminist debates around the nature of sex work in mind, in order to understand how society constructs the sex industry.

Social constructionism was applied as an approach in understanding paid sex work in South Africa. Social constructionism suggests that all forms of categorization and labeling are socially constructed (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008). In reference to our study the terms masculinity and femininity are terms that are socially constructed and therefore directly influence the perceptions of the types of males who seek out sex work and what their motivations are, as well as how males themselves perceive paid sex work. The above implies that there are multi meanings attached to masculinity and femininity. Male clients' social construction of paid sex work seems to legitimize their motivations in seeking out sexual services. Their constructions aim to legitimate as well as attribute meaning to the paid sexual encounters and frame them as masculinizing practices (Katsulis, 2010). A social constructionist approach is appropriate for this project as the research will attempt to explore the way in which male clients' realities with sex workers have been constructed by society.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

A sample of 7 males were recruited for this study (See Table 1). All of these men were selected because they have previously paid for sex. 3 participants only made use of sex workers once or twice, the rest had paid for sex multiple times. For the purpose of this study, purchase of sex work services involves direct sexual services, namely intercourse.

Recruitment Process

The sample was recruited by using the "snowballing" technique. Snowball sampling is a technique where the identification of one respondent is used to refer the researcher to other respondents (Noy, 2008). This technique is often used to find 'hidden' populations, including

groups that are thought of as deviant. Sex work clients are considered deviant because the sex work industry is illegal and highly stigmatized (Hobbs & Wright, 2006, Noy, 2008).

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Name	Province	Race	Age	Occupation	Relationship Status	Previously Married
Bob	Gauteng	Black	23	Student	In a relationship	No
Derick	Gauteng	White	30	Retail	Single	No
Frank	Western Cape	White	36	Optometrist	Single	No
Shawn	Western Cape	White	35	Construction	Complicated	Yes
Terrence	Western Cape	White	31	IT	Single	No
Tim	Western Cape	White	32	Property	Single	No
Wayne	Gauteng	Indian	31	Retail	Single	No

Data Collection Methods and Procedure

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews (See Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews allow for a time efficient and flexible approach (Corbin & Morris, 2003). Participants were interviewed at times and in settings that suit them and allow them to feel comfortable and open to talk about their experiences.

Semi-structured interviews create a comfortable context for participants to talk about their experiences because they have control over the process and content of the interview. Corbin and Morris (2003) argues when that researchers talk to a participant, and he feels the researcher is genuinely interested in his viewpoint. This is a rewarding process for the participant, as the he has a chance to reflect on his own experience. In turn, the participant may feel comfortable enough to divulge critical information that he might not have shared with anyone before. This resulted in the collection of rich, in-depth and informative data. In addition to this, participants could be encouraged to identify “real life” situations, including discussing and evaluating their specific experiences about the question.

We started by asking a ‘grand tour question’ (Corbin & Morris, 2003) which allows participants to tell their story exactly as they feel and experience it. We framed the open-ended question very similarly in interviews with all participants. As we are inexperienced researchers, we only asked for clarification of meanings at the end of the interview so we do not break the flow of the participant’s narrative

The researchers conducted 3 interviews together because we are inexperienced and wanted to learn together, the rest were conducted one-on-one. We found that two females interviewing one male on this subject were viewed by the male as intimidating and therefore they may have limited their information. The researchers listened to the recorded data and transcribed it after the interview. The data was then discussed and analysed using thematic analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers had clarified the aims and details of the study to participants prior to the beginning of the interview process. The researchers requested from participants to sign consent form (Appendix B). As the research is of an exploratory nature, no deception had occurred. The researchers have ensured complete anonymity to participants, achieved by changing names and other circumstances that may make a participant identifiable (Corinne & Tamboukou, 2008). Participants had the right to withdraw from the research process at any time.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, participants may have experienced a novel confrontation with their experiences (Flick, 2007). It is critical for the researchers to minimize any potential physical or psychological harm (Corinne & Tamboukou, 2008). As the researcher sometimes adopts the role of a ‘counsellor’, it is important for the researcher to read cues of potential distress of the participant. We had to be empathetic and give the participant time to express their emotions as they chose. The participant had to feel that he was in an accepting environment. We prepared to terminate the interview when participants were clearly in great distress. A debriefing process was conducted at the end of the interview to make sure participants had not experience any trauma or difficulties whilst narrating their stories (McCosner, Barnard & Gerber, 2001).

Data Analysis

Qualitative methods have no precise definition in any of the social sciences. It is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of occurring phenomena in the social world

(Cassell & Symon, 1994). Qualitative methods are used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture, lifestyles and their perspectives are on particular issues. This form of research produces more in-depth, comprehensive information than quantitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research acknowledges that there are multiple truths, and that a person's interpretation of their experience is dependent on the social context that they are in (Goldman & Du Mont, 2001).

Thematic analysis was used to identify, record, and analyse themes within the data. Thematic analysis is beneficial as it is a flexible approach that is compatible with social constructionist frameworks which are sensitive to the underlying meaning of what a participant says (Parker, 2005). The researchers were therefore able to explore meanings clients attribute to their experiences with sex work. We undertook an inductive analysis, coding the data without trying to fit the data in a pre-conceptualized frame, in a bottom-up fashion (Denzin, 1989).. We attempted to identify themes at a latent or interpretive level. The goal was to examine underlying assumptions that shaped the semantic (implicit) content of the data. This was done by reflecting on the broader meanings and implications of the emerging themes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis was conducted within a constructionist framework which attempts to explore the socio-cultural contexts and power relations within structures that shape individual accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This has been termed 'thick description', which goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances (Denzin, 1989). It presents detail, context, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions and meanings of interacting individuals are heard (Denzin, 1989). Thick description often contains new ideas or concepts that cast new light on the activity under study whilst facilitating the identification of various social constructs upon which the male client's attitude is based on.

Thematic analysis involves a constant moving back and forward through the collected data. Therefore throughout the six phases of thematic analysis, researchers continually went back and forth between different coded data extracts, the data set as a whole and the data that one is generating. Writing was a crucial aspect of analysis and began in phase one of the analysis, it

does not only take place at the end, therefore noting ideas and potential themes carry on through the entire process of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The first phase in thematic analysis involves the process of familiarizing oneself with the data, in doing so we read and re-read the data and jotted down initial ideas and became aware of patterns. Phase two begins by producing relevant codes that appear to be interesting in the data; this is where we attempt to create significant codes or groups, data that matches up to the codes are then gathered. In phase three, the codes identified in phase two are transformed into themes. In phase four, researchers revised themes and ensured that the collated codes for each theme formed a coherent pattern. They then checked if the themes correlated with each other across the entire data set. Phase five is where themes were named and defined. There was an on-going analysis in order to refine the specifics of each theme and the story it portrays, therefore clear definitions and names for themes are important. The final phase is where researchers produced a concise and coherent description of what the data brought forth. This was done by the utilisation of the extracted themes to make an argument in relation to the research question. Ultimately men's motivations, justifications and deterrents in paying for sex were identified as main themes.

Reflexivity

The qualitative researcher is always very personally involved with the sampling and analysis of data (Parker, 2005). As reciprocal human beings, there are many feelings and views involved with the research process; between researcher and participant. Embracing our emotions can help us understand phenomena. Through reflection, researchers can use their subjective experiences and insights to better comprehend participants lived experiences and break down stereotypes and stigma around controversial topics (Hobbs & Wright, 2006). As the research is embedded within power relations, it is important for the researcher to be able to reflect on their connectedness with participants, and explore how building the relationship may have led to the specific data at hand. The researcher can also regulate the research process by reflecting on the similarities and differences between the self and participants (Corinne & Tamboukou, 2008). We as researchers have kept in mind that male participants may be reluctant to share their accounts with us in detail and that concealment may be an issue. We are single, young and attractive women from a middleclass background. We both have fairly liberal views on sexuality, for example, we are not against individuals' having multiple sexual partners throughout their life time. We feel that participants were aware of this, and felt comfortable sharing their experiences

with sex workers with us. Evidence for this is the open body language of participants, how frankly they told their stories, often using crass language, and sharing details of their sexuality that we did not ask for, for example homosexual experiences. One participant asked Kirsten out on a date, another participant flirted profusely with Ida. These types of encounters can be interpreted as participants feeling comfortable, thus creating a spontaneous atmosphere enough to be open and detailed about their experiences. On the other hand, participants who were obviously sexually attracted to the researchers may have wanted to represent themselves in a particular way, as to impress us. We found that a major overarching theme is male clients justifying their behaviour around buying sex, which may prove the latter point.

This study had received ethical approval from the Psychology Department Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town.

Analysis and Discussion

The thematic analysis began with the researchers transcribing the semi-structured interviews. The transcribed data was then reviewed and analyzed following the process outlined above. The analyzed data was reviewed independently by both researchers, and after a discussion to clarify themes and ensure agreement, the transcripts were coded according to the themes. Three main themes; motivations, justifications, and deterrents, were identified.

Motivations to Pay for Sex

A number of themes emerged in the analysis of the data relating to what motivates male clients to pay for sex. Motivations are factors that drive male clients to seek out sexual services. There are several sub themes that emerged from the data, including ‘girlfriend experience’, fulfilment, ease and fantasy.

‘Girlfriend Experience’. The ‘girlfriend experience’ can be defined as seeking out a more intimate experience with a sex worker, and includes forms of verbal and physical affection, such as chatting and kissing (Katsulis, 2010). The majority of participants felt a strong desire to be able to connect or feel a sense of intimacy with a woman, and thus preferred encounters with sex workers where this role has the potential to be fulfilled. Derrick makes this point quite clear, as he explains: ‘...just like to speak to the woman and get to know where she was in life’ Shawn similarly described one of his most memorable encounters: ‘We sat talking for about 20 minutes, she got undressed, and undressed me, and we started kissing and stuff like that...very easy.’ Paid sexual experiences may represent features of traditional romantic relationships and a longing for

a real and reciprocal erotic connection (Katsulis, 2010). Some of the participants desired more intimate fulfillments, other than just sex, such as Tim: 'I just kept going there and just identify one particular person, and I got like friendly with them, and then it's easier to take them home with you, because you know them better, your more comfortable... I knew the person, it felt much better!' Evidently sexuality is not only a biological drive but intertwined with psychological and emotional aspects that are longed for by the male (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008).

Fulfilment. All of the participants believed that some of the main reasons why [other] men pay for sex have to do with fulfillment of sexual needs. Frank, Tim and Terrence believed a lot of married men get 'bored' and need a variety of women; or '...are not getting at home...wife may be fridget' or '...blowjob went away...'. Tim, on the subject of married men, went on to say: 'people get bored...I think it's in the nature of men to keep looking at other women.' Bob argued that what persuaded him 'a bit more' to pay for sex was the lack of oral sex that he received from his partner(s): '...the past weeks blowjobs weren't amazing but the ass I had was great, so I'll settle for a blowjob... I'll spoil myself.' There seems to be a consensus in research that males have a high sex drive, if it cannot be fulfilled by an intimate partner, males may seek out sex workers to fulfill their needs. Sex workers often satisfy desires that are not fulfilled by an intimate partner, especially amongst married men. Male clients also often report wanting a variety of women (Mansson, 2006, Peng, 2006, Perkins, 1999, Sanders, 2008).

Ease. For some of the participants paying for sex is just easier as opposed to going out to a bar and 'picking up' a girl as well as not having to deal with the consequences thereof, such as the emotional commitment women often expect. According to Shawn 'Often you don't want the schlep of dealing with the aftermath...I don't like one night stands staying over because I can't sleep so it's pretty awkward to ask them to leave. Cape Town is a small city and I don't want to have casual sex and bump into her in town and have her call me the biggest asshole.' Research has found many male clients seek out sex work because of it is perceived easier in the sense that they often wish to avoid relationships and is less trouble (Peng, 2006, Pitts, Smith, Gierson, O'Brein, Misson, 2004). Further research has proved the above mentioned suggestion that some clients are sexually ineffective, therefore they seek out sex workers because minimal effort is required (Pitts, Smith, Gierson, et al, 2004). Similar trends were found as some participants'

report it is simply emotionally easier for them to seek out sex work when they become sexually frustrated. They regard the process of chatting a women up in a bar as too much effort, therefore it is easier for them to pay a sex worker for sex. Derrick explains ‘...You know you go out and there is a whole like mating ritual involved, so it can be exhausting to you, you know if I just try and try and try and things don’t work out...’ This can be a scribe to a fear of rejection by a potential partner therefore are reluctant to pursue traditional romantic relationships.

Fantasy. According to several of our participants the way in which they describe sex workers are representative of women who only exist in their fantasies. Shawn describes a memorable sex worker as: ‘...Very very beautiful woman...a lot like Sienna Miller kinda looking girl, stunning stunning.’ Frank also describes sex workers in Prague as: ‘...Unbelievably beautiful...I don’t think you would ever see a woman that nice in your life.’ The way in which the participants describe the sex workers are as if they cannot attain women of this calibre in general social settings. Participants are willing to pay for women that are capable of fulfilling their fantasies as Wayne says: ‘...You don’t get the type of girls that you want to get, so you will pay for a girl that you can’t get.’ Terrence explains: ‘...it’s like a fantasy world really...like in the real world it’s not that easy to stare at a woman and she comes and sits on your lap...’. When participants were asked why they think other men make use of sexual services, most of them included fantasies that are not fulfilled from partners, as well as sexual fetishes as major motivators in buying sex.

Justifications in Paying for Sex Work

The justifications in paying for sexual services reflect how male clients construct their behaviour as being ‘reasonable’. This was the most prominent theme that emerged from the analysis. Throughout the interviews, participants communication of their experiences of sex work was evident that the need to represent themselves as reasonable by normalising the act of paying for sex. In South Africa there seems to exist a hegemonic masculinity which is constructed as males having a high sex drive, needing sex, always being available for sex and having physical urges that are out of their control (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008). Tim suggests: ‘...it’s in men’s nature to keep looking at other women...’. Several subthemes relating to the justifications of paying for sexual services have been identified, including: Madonna/ whore complex, passivity, peer pressure, space and intoxication, commodity and ‘othering’

Madonna/ Whore Complex. Participants had interesting views on women who are considered promiscuous, often comparing ‘one night stands’ with buying sex. Participants seem to desire promiscuous women, and are not against spontaneous sexual interactions, but view these women in a negative light as these women are not considered dating or marriage material. Shawn explains: ‘If she makes it too easy to sleep with straight off you lose that respect...if I meet a women who has higher morals...I view her as relationship material.’

Participants attribute many negative connotations to women who are considered promiscuous or who are working within the sex industry, terms such as: ‘daddy problems’, ‘lack of self-respect and self-esteem’ and ‘self-destructive tendencies’ are mentioned. Tim explained in detail: ‘...they lose a touch of their femininity...there must be a lot of demons going through their heads.’ Women who are not ‘pure’ or have ‘good morals’ are considered to be deviant and abnormal. This is in accordance with literature around constructions of masculinity and femininity, men are typically thought be driven by biological urges and actively pursue and initiate sexual activities, whilst women are expected to be passive and relatively disinterested in sex (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008, Marttila, 2008). All participants believed common myths around sex work, all of them agreed that most sex workers choose to do the work they do, and thus they don’t feel ‘sorry’ for them, as Terrence accounts: ‘...I don’t see them as victims...it’s an opportunity to make a shit load of money...no one is putting a gun against her head and tell her she must do that.’

Passivity. Participants represent themselves as being passive agents within the context of buying sex. Participants put forward that they were approached by sex workers when they are within the setting of sexual services, as Derick explained: ‘I was approached by a Thai girl and I was like, okay, I may as well try this thing.’ and Shawn states: ‘...she just took me by the hand and said: ‘Do you want to come up stairs.’ It seems like it may be a way of male customers to justify their choice to buy sex, as Frank explains: ‘...Beautiful women throwing themselves at you, you just end up doing it.’ and Tim states: ‘Thailand’s a place where every spot you go to chicks are just throwing themselves at you...it’s the norm...it’s acceptable.’ These findings relate to an argument made by Campbell (1995) that women are primarily held responsible for sexual risk behavior.

Peer Pressure. The majority of participants were out in group settings when paying for sexual services. When participants recounted their experiences with sex workers, they generally emphasized that they were out with friends or ‘the guys’. When we asked Terrence if he would ever go to a strip club alone, he responded with: ‘No, no, no, I don’t think I would... I guess the thing with a strip club; it’s got a lot more to do with the party.’ Going to a strip club or brothel is seen as normative within a group of male friends, as a ‘partying’ and ‘bonding’ experience. Some of the participants mentioned bachelor parties are common catalysers for paying for sexual services. Some participants felt more pressure to fit in with their male friends’ escapades, such as Tim: ‘But as I say it’s got a lot to do with peer pressure, you know men, we hunt in packs’. Bob similarly told us about his friends’ experience: ‘Every time I go out with this guy...he knows exactly where to take me, and I’m not just gonna stay in the car when this guy...gets business handled.’ Thus it seems participants do not want to feel ‘left out’ or be seen as ‘less of a man’ within their peer group. On rare occasions participants pursued sex services on their own, although they are usually referred by a friend to ‘tried-and-tested’ businesses, for example Wayne: ‘A friend of mine told me he use to look at ‘Sex Rater’, where you just like go through all the pictures, and then you like arrange to meet them at their place or a hotel.’ Thus it seems unlikely that male clients will seek out sexual services on their own.

Space and Intoxication. All participants were either under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine and acid. Under these circumstances participants normalized the act of paying for sex as it was viewed as being a feature of partying: they could be ‘wild and crazy’ and ‘let off steam’ within the safety of a male group.

‘When you’re under the influence of alcohol or drugs I think you can do anything! So paying for sex is much easier that way, and then it’s more fun! You don’t think about anything, you just do it!’- Tim

Frank states: ‘What motivates a guy as well is when they see a whole lot of naked women, you know, it’s like put them in a strip club and they become animals, you know, they having drinks..’ It was also apparent that being under the influence of a substance made the act of paying for sex easier and more ‘fun’ as their judgment is impaired. A few participants also referred to themselves as a ‘different person’ when in these situations, according to Shawn: ‘It doesn’t feel real because I was so drunk’ and Terrence explains: ‘...to do with the party...like a fantasy

world...’ Thus some participants frame sex work as normative within particular settings, such as strip clubs, because these places open up a different world from their day to day lives, fulfilling an idealized masculinity. It can be thought of as a ‘masculine space’, where men are allowed to be ‘men’ and engage in behaviors that may be frowned upon in social settings, including drinking, smoking, being ‘rowdy’ and vulgar (Katsulis, 2010).

Commodity. Participants perceive sex work as a ‘normal’ form of exchange in a capitalist society, as Derrick explains: ‘As long as you have a cash crazy society you’ll have some prostitution’, and Tim: ‘It’s a massive market... it’s available... so every male will do it once or twice in their life time... if you are wealthy you can afford to do these types of things’. Fleeting statements made by some participants such as ‘Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world’ (Terrence) and ‘Sex and money are the two biggest sins ever, they interlink so well’ (Bob) illustrates how male clients view sex workers as a commodity. Bob recounts a statement made by his friend: ‘...Why would you need a girlfriend if you got like, 30 bucks in your pocket.’ That emphasizes the idea that sex can be bought easily without any emotional investment. Shawn describes the act of paying for sex as: ‘...a business exchange, they make you feel very comfortable... you don’t have to worry about anything, they are professional’. Thus sex work is perceived as a legitimate profession that is in demand.

Participants perceive that even within a social context where their intention is to pursue a sexual encounter they have to make some form of financial investment, as Terrence states boldly ‘sex is really not for free’. In South Africa males are still considered to be the primary earners (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2010), and are more than often are expected to pay whilst courting women. Bob explained in detail: ‘...dating is kinda more expensive, you know, you’re paying... if you take a chick out, show her a good time, yea, you have a good time as well right, but your wallet aint..’. The above statements imply that ultimately males regard sex as a commodity, this might normalize the act of directly paying for sexual services. Bhana, Morrell, Hearn and Moletsane (2007) point out the dangers of individuals affirming patriarchal heterosexual gender identities, for example, if young women invest heavily in essentialist femininity, they make themselves vulnerable by using their sex as a means of attending to material needs.

Othering. Participants perceive other men, who they believe represent the typical clientele of sex workers as deviant members of society. Wayne and Bob describe some men they know who pay for sex often as ‘weird’ and ‘don’t get ass’. Bob goes on to say: ‘The fact that there’s porno out there, like, already messed up their mind...perhaps they are the ones who need prostitutes.’. According to Terrence in his travels on cruise ships: ‘Philippine’s...just purely because they can’t get women...guys who go to these places very often...that’s the *only* way they can get it, if they pay for it.’. Participants perceive these ‘regulars’ as desperate, lonely and incapable of pursuing a ‘regular’ relationship or woman. Participants emphasize that they are not part of what they perceive to be the ‘normal client’, they are part of a group of ‘animals’, men who just enjoy ‘partying’ and pay for ‘high quality’ sex workers that ‘most men’ can’t afford. The construction of a ‘deviant client’ participating in sex work as the norm is curious, as international research has confirmed that clients of sex workers are ordinary citizens off all socio-economic back grounds, religious affiliations, marital status and ages (Mansonn, 2006, Monto & Julka, 2009, Morrison, 2006, Peng, 2007, Yang, Latkin, Liu, et.al, 2010). This phenomenon is likely due to the social stigma attributed to sex work worldwide; and perhaps a way to make them feel like they are “not like these people”, justifying that what they are doing is different and therefore not wrong.

Deterrents from Paying for Sex

Deterrents from paying for sex can be defined as factors that discourage the male client from returning to sex workers and using certain types of sex workers. Subthemes include: social status and stigma, fear of disease, distress and guilt, as well as trafficking.

Social Status and Stigma. Participants made it very clear that paying for sex is not socially acceptable. Paying for sex is a ‘hush hush thing’, to the extent that participants do not even discuss their experiences with sex workers amongst friends and family. Bob explains: ‘It’s [paying for sex] not so common...still taboo...happens from time to time, but you still won’t hear it from people.’ Participants are aware of social stigma and do not want people to know that they have participated in the sex industry, as Frank says: ‘A lot of people would look at you and be like, how can you do that?’, whilst Derick says: ‘It’s not something you’re really proud about...something to brag about.’ Participants believe that if people were to find out about their ‘in discrepancies’ it would influence how people perceive them, as Wayne reflects: ‘Society... it brings down your status level as a male’ as well as Terrence: ‘The fact that you had to pay for

sex, kinda demasculates me, like you know, it doesn't make you a man...' Participants are concerned about the stigma around sexual services, as they believe if a 'regular' woman were to find out it would ruin their chances of pursuing a traditional romantic relationship, as Tim says: 'It's not something you broadcast, you still want to have sex with regular women'. Shawn believes that sex work is taboo and would not ever tell a potential partner that he has paid for sexual services previously as he believes it: '...a sure way to end a relationship.' Thus it is clear that because of the way sex work is constructed in South Africa; male clients are discouraged from being open about their sexual experiences with sex workers. Participants want to keep their involvement with the sex industry as reticent as possible. International research supports the notion that male clients of sex work are part of a 'hidden sample' and are willing to go to great lengths to keep their involvement in the sex industry a secret (Monto & Julka, 2009, Peng, 2006, Sacramento, 2011).

Fear of Disease. The majority of participants raised concern around fear of sexually transmitted diseases, especially with South African sex workers. This was not a recurring theme in reviewed literature internationally, as those male clients often did not use protection and seemed aloof to the dangers of unprotected sexual activities (Goldenberg, Strathdee, Gallardo, Rhodes, Wagner, Patterson, 2011, Yang, Latkin, Lui, et al, 2010). Fear of disease may be more prevalent in South Africa, because South Africa has one of the highest HIV/Aids rates in the world, an estimated 5.2 million people, making it likely that South African samples may be more mindful of contracting the virus (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). Most of our participants were very mindful of contracting STD's and always used protection. Frank noted: '...You can get STD's from even with a condom on.' Feelings of extreme worry were expressed in instances where condoms broke whilst having intercourse with a sex worker.

Some participants were surprisingly naïve when it came to their views on the physical 'cleanliness' of Eastern European sex workers, like Shawn accounts: 'I just think there [in Prague] it's a lot more clean'. Frank demonstrates this discrepancy between perceived quality and cleanliness of sex workers locally and abroad quite explicitly: '...majority of the girls here [South Africa] are non-white...they are not very nice girls...I mean, R800, anybody can pay for that so you don't know what's before you...but overseas, a Russian girl, Eastern European girl who is R15000, she obviously doesn't do it that often.' The HIV epidemic in South Africa is gendered, with African women carrying the highest burden of the illness and often 'blamed' for the spread

of HIV by males (Morell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012, Shefer, 2010). The above comment displays how the construction of the ‘truth’ about black women being profoundly more likely to have HIV is entrenched in males conception of the disease. It seems that there exists a dissatisfaction with the perceived ‘quality’ of sex workers in South Africa, especially at what is considered the lower class sex workers, as Shawn recounts: ‘...the guys will decide who’s going to a place here [South Africa] but it’s shocking, so I decide not even to bother...just dodgy...’. Some participants have strict monetary boundaries and are not so much concerned with the quality of sex workers that they make use of, such as Derick: ‘My limit is R2000... I don’t think that under, if it is higher class it necessarily...’

Distress and Guilt. It is apparent that majority of the participants felt uneasy about the act of paying for sexual services. Participants expressed this discomfort with terms such as ‘awkward’, ‘weird’, ‘strange’, ‘sick’, ‘bad’ and ‘dodgy’. Shawn explains: ‘It’s not like we high five each other when we get out, we know that we’ve been misbehaving.’ Participants expressed varying degrees of distress around buying sex, Frank states: ‘You’ve got the guilt, you feel like you’ve done something wrong’, Derick explains: ‘...I can remember flipping her over...I didn’t actually want to look at her, just because it was such an awkward situation’, whilst Tim explicitly states: ‘Sleeping with that chick was the worst experience of my life!’. This may be attributed to the stigma around sex work in South Africa, although it is possible that some men may feel that paying for sex is unethical which may cause feelings of distress. Even though most participants expressed discomfort and guilt most of them said under what they believe to be appropriate circumstances would strongly consider making use of sexual services again.

Trafficking. Some participants, such as Derick, Wayne and Bob make distinction between women who are perceived to have chosen the profession and those who are trafficked and work under a ‘pimp’. These participants would not want to make use of sexual services by a sex worker who has potentially been trafficked as they believe they are more prone to ‘exploitation’ and feel ‘sorry’ for them. Derick explained that he knows a few women who have worked as exotic dancers and have ‘tried out’ engaging in sex work and ‘really regretted the decision afterwards’. Wayne felt he: ‘would...advise against it because of the dangers.’ These participants are pro legalization of sex work in South Africa, as Bob states: ‘If you want to be a prostitute we should allow that...and have some sort of security guard to help you...when there’s that freaky guy...cuss it’s so hard to control.’ Wayne similarly commented: ‘I think it should be

legalized and there should be like a whole education surrounding it... more legislation around it because, like guys end up raping prostitutes.' Thus these participants feel protective over those sex workers they perceive to be coerced or trafficked, and are not in support of these 'types' of sex workers.

Limitations

The size and nature of the sample can be considered as a limitation (See Table 1). The snowballing technique is biased in the sense that those participants we are referred to will be befriended by the original participant. We only aimed to gain understanding of the specific sample of people involved in sex work. Hobbs and Wright (2006) deem the approach of snowballing as a personal affair, where some will be included and others excluded, as in an everyday friendship group. The disadvantage of the sampling technique of snowballing is that it results in attracting the same type of participant, in terms of their demographic characteristics and personality. All participants were middle to higher class and are relatively successful in terms of their careers. Most of the participants are charismatic, confident and extroverts. Their views on sexuality may be considered very liberal and not necessarily representative of the conservative construction of sexuality in South Africa. Due to the fact that participants were aware of our gender, it could be suggested that the way in which they constructed their experiences in paying for sex were carefully conceptualized. It seemed as though the participants were mindful of how they wanted to represent themselves as males. Therefore participants may have been reluctant to divulge in details that they perceived would result in us judging them.

Qualitative research can be limiting as it tends to be descriptive, thus has limited use for hypothesis testing, is not generalizable and is difficult to establish reliability and validity in results (Bruan & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be too flexible and describes patterns across data, instead of within, making this approach markedly different from other qualitative approaches, such as discourse analysis (DA) and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Bruan & Clarke, 2006). DA encourages the exploration of how individuals use, and are used by language, enabling the researcher to rethink how individuals are positioned within different power structures molded by language (Parker, 2005). IPA aims to understand the experience of an individual's everyday lived reality in vast detail, in order to understand the phenomena at hand

(Bruan & Clarke, 2006). Future studies should adopt DA or IPA as a way to more deeply explore how men construct the use of sex workers.

Conclusion

This research revealed several themes that emerge when South African men talk about their experience of paying for sex work. The themes that we identified were: motivations, justifications and deterrents.

It is evident that men who seek out sexual services in South Africa share common motivations with male clients in other parts of the world, such as the ‘girlfriend experience’, ease, and fulfillment and fantasy (Katsulis, 2010, Mansson, 2006, Peng, 2006, Peng, 2006, Pitts, Smith, Gierson, et al, 2004, Perkins, 1999, Sanders, 2008, Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008). These motives may ‘normalise’ paying for sex and can be used to argue for the legalization of sex work. (Hernandez & Larson, 2004, Raymond, 2006). Those in favor of legalization argue that the sex industry and sex trafficking will be better controlled, leading to higher protection and better outcomes for sex workers (Hernandez & Larson, 2006, Yen, 2008). The concerns around trafficking and exploitation of sex workers in South Africa by some participants are better related to feminist discourse describing sex work as involuntary (Hernandez & Larson, 2006, O’Connell & Davidson, 2002, Outshoorn, 2004). Raymond (2006) believes that legalizing sex work will further entrench the construction of women as commodities and sex work as harmless and fun.

Throughout participants’ communication they justified their behavior in participating in the sex industry. It could be argued that this is due to South Africa’s conservative and patriarchal construction of sex and sexuality (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012, Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008). Male sexuality is regarded as ‘uncontrollable’, with men expected to always desire and be available for sex, whilst females are expected to be passive (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012, Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008). Our participants feel that sometimes paying for sex is seen as a ‘failure’ to be a ‘real man’. Masculine identity is linked to sexuality and sexual practice, a perceived sexual failure can challenge a males sense of self (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008). Possibly, because of these constructions of what a ‘real man’ is, participants feel ‘bad’ or ‘guilty’ about the act of paying for sex, so much so that two participants said that they would never pay for sex again. In contrast to feelings of guilt and distress participants perceive the ‘normal client’ to be a deviant member of society and much different to themselves, thus

constructing a separate identity when purchasing sex. Participants argued that they become 'different people' when they were under the influence of substances with their peers, blame sex workers for 'throwing' themselves at male clients and often trusting that women who choose to be sex workers do so out of free will and are compensated fairly. The construction of sex can thus lead to men caught between experiencing sex as a source of pleasure and power, reinforcing their masculine identity, whilst being constantly anxious of sexual favor, threatening masculinity (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008).

The participants are extremely conscious of the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted disease and are aware of the necessity of protection, as opposed to their male counterparts who appear to be less concerned about diseases (Campbell, 1995, Peracca, Knodel & Saengtienchai, Raymond, 2004). One could view South African men's awareness of protection in a positive light as this behavior ensures higher safety for both customer and sex worker.

Our findings offer some insight into the heterosexual male customers' construction of sex work and sex workers. The way in which participants perceive their motives in seeking sex work often seems to be entrenched in dominant constructions of gender and sexuality in South Africa. Sex work is a complicated phenomenon with a range of outcomes for all agents involved. Further research into the demand of male clients for sex work can deepen understanding of the nature and consequences of sex work, which may impact legislation around sex work and reconstruct aspects of gender and sexuality.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

We used an open-ended question to begin and guide the interview. Semi-structured interviews allow the participants to be in control of the content and direction of the interview. We only asked for clarification of certain experiences or concepts when we were sure it would not interrupt the flow of the participants' narrative. We framed the questions very similarly for all participants within sex work. The type of question asked depended on the natural flow of the interview. We asked questions like:

- Tell me about your first experience...
- Can you go into more detail please?
- How did you feel after your experience?
- How do you view sex workers?
- How do you view promiscuous women?
- Would you pay for sex again?
- What separates you from men who would pay for sex again?
- Why do you think your friends/ other men pay for sex?

Appendix B

Consent Form

You are kindly invited to participate in research that is exploring clients of sex workers motives to pay for sex. This research aims to gain a better understanding of the phenomena of sex work and the people who participate in sex work. We are currently completing our Honours in Psychology at UCT and this research will be used in support of our thesis.

Participation in the study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time with no penalty or repercussions. We ensure complete anonymity throughout the process. Participation in this study will involve an interview, which will be tape recorded for research purposes. You may request for the tape recorder to be switched off at any point during the interview.

Consent

I have been briefed about the aims and details of the study. I am aware that I am rewarded complete anonymity for participation in this study and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time I wish.

I consent to participate in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I have explained the study to the participant, and in my opinion he/she understands that participation is voluntary and is able to give informed consent.

Researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions about the study you can contact:

Kirsten McLeod: 072 340 5958

Ida Wepener: 071 365 1824

Dr. Despina Learmonth (research supervisor): (021) 650 3420