

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**DIGITAL PROSTITUTION ON SNAPCHAT: A STUDY OF SELECTED  
PROSTITUTES IN GHANA**



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PROSTITUTES IN GHANA**



**A Dissertation in the Department of Development Communication,  
School of Communication and Media Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**Of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Art  
(Development Communication)  
in the University of Education, Winneba.**

**JULY 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

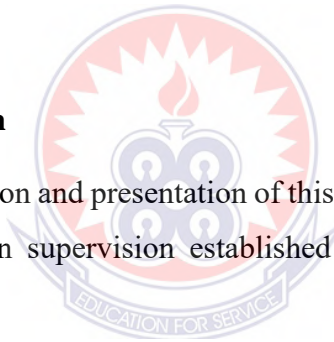
I, Emmanuel Mensah, affirm that this dissertation, except for the quotations and references derived from previously published works, which have been fully cited and recognized, is entirely my original work and has not been submitted for any other academic degree or in part elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised by the guidelines for dissertation supervision established by the University of Education, Winneba.



NAME: MS. GLORIA BAFFOE

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE: .....

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to God Almighty who gave me strength at a point where I wanted to give up.

To Him be the glory for the great things He has done. Also to my beloved parents, the

late Mr. Emmanuel K.K Mensah and Mrs. Gladys Mensah.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	3
1.2 Research Objectives	5
1.3 Research Questions	5
1.4 Significance of the Study	5
1.5 Scope/Delimitation	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>8</b>
2.0 Introduction	8
2.1 Communication	8
2.2 Prostitution	11
2.3 Prostitution Policy in Ghana	17
2.4 Forms of Prostitution in Ghana	21
2.5 Digital (Online) Prostitution	22
2.6 Digital (Online) prostitution in international context and Ghana	28
2.7 Merits of Online Prostitution	31
2.8 Dangers associated with digital (online) prostitution	33
2.9 Snapchat and prostitution	35
2.10 Theoretical framework	35
2.11 Chapter Summary	39

<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	41
3.0 Introduction	41
3.1 Research Approach	41
3.2 Research Design	43
3.3 Population	45
3.4 Sampling and Sampling Technique	46
3.5 Method of data collection	47
3.6 Data collection Procedure	49
3.7 Method of Data Analysis	50
3.8 Ethical considerations	53
3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study	54
3.10 Chapter Summary	54
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</b>	55
4.0 Introduction	55
4.1.1 Security	56
4.1.2 Convenience	58
4.1.3 Fun	58
4.2.1 Body advertisement	59
4.3.1 Video updates	62
4.3.2 Sexting	64
4.3.3 Direct post	64
4.4 Chapter Summary	84
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	85
5.0 Introduction	85
5.1 Summary and key findings of the Study	85
5.2 Limitations of the Study	88
5.3 Conclusion	88
5.4 Recommendations	89
<b>REFERENCES</b>	91



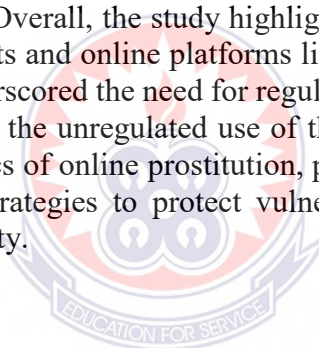
## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
Image 1: A post from participant 1	66
Image 2: Another post from participant 1	67
Image 3: A post from participant 2	68
Image 4: Another post from participant 2	69
Image 5: A post from participant 3	70
Image 6: Another post from participant 3	71
Image 7: A post from participant 4	72
Image 8: Another post from participant 4	73
Image 9: A post from participant 5	74
Image 10: Another post from participant 5	75
Image 11: A post from participant 6	76
Image 12: Another post from participant 6	77
Image 13: Post from participant 1	78
Image 14: A post from participant 2	79
Image 15: A post from participant 3	80
Image 16: A post from participant 4	81
Image 17: A post from participant 5	82
Image 18: A post from participant 6	83



## ABSTRACT

In recent years, the rise of online prostitution has been fueled by technological advancements and the unregulated nature of the internet. The sex industry has readily embraced these new information technologies, providing men with enhanced access to women and children for sexual purposes. This has created a symbiotic relationship between the internet and the sex industry, with both parties benefiting from this arrangement. Traditional street-based prostitution has gradually shifted to online platforms, allowing women to engage in prostitution discreetly from the safety of their own homes. This study specifically focused on the use of Snapchat, a widely used global communication application, as a facilitator of online prostitution in Ghana. The research delved into how the internet is effectively utilized for advertising prostitution primarily through the development of social networking sites. Employing phenomenology and observation as research methodologies, the study involved the participation of six online prostitutes. The findings from the study shed light on the motivations behind engaging in online prostitution on Snapchat. Participants highlighted that the platform offered greater security, convenience, and an element of enjoyment compared to traditional methods. They utilized various methods of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, to convey their status as prostitutes to their followers on Snapchat. These methods included body advertisement, sexting, video updates, and direct posts. Overall, the study highlighted the significant role played by technological advancements and online platforms like Snapchat in the proliferation of online prostitution. It underscored the need for regulations and measures to address the challenges associated with the unregulated use of the internet in the sex industry. By understanding the dynamics of online prostitution, policymakers and stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to protect vulnerable individuals and ensure the overall well-being of society.

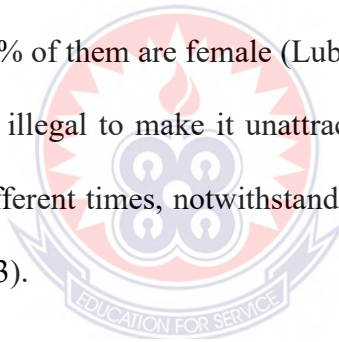


## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

Prostitution, the practice, business, or occupation of engaging in sexual activity with someone in exchange for payment has been a subject of academic interest for many years (Wylęły, 2019). Despite the shame attached to it, prostitution is practiced in virtually every part of the world with some countries instituting laws to back it to protect those engaged in it, while others have stringent laws against its practice (Gbagbo & Gbagbo, 2021). There are 40 to 42 million prostitutes in the world, according to a report from Fondation Scelles (Sawicki et al., 2019). Three quarters of them are between the ages of 13 and 25, and 80% of them are female (Lubin, 2012). Several countries in the past considered the trade illegal to make it unattractive, nonetheless, efforts for this purpose have failed at different times, notwithstanding the Church in its holiness has tried in vain (Sanger, 2013).



The traditional form of prostitution is when sex workers are seen on the street and other corners soliciting sex for money (McLean, 2019). The advancement in technology is, however, changing the traditional mode of prostitution. The advances in technology and unfettered use of the internet have created a global medium for men's sexual exploitation (Hughes, 2008). Hughes argues that the sex industry has aggressively adopted every new technology to increase men's sexual access to women and children. Prostitution or sex work is moving online and social media is booming the trade (Business Standard, 2019). Social media has become more popular than ever for sex work, which encompasses everything from paid nude photos to webcam modeling to high-end escort services all of it is strictly against platforms' rules regarding sexual

content (Ellis, 2018). Some sex workers use social media platforms to advertise their services although some of these apps are stricter on their nudes and sex policies. Instagram has historically been hostile to sex work, with many sex workers having their accounts deactivated for posting explicit sexual content (Osei, 2021).

A study conducted in the area of online prostitution by Chan, Mojumder, and Ghose (2018) “The Digital Sin City: An Empirical Study of Craigslist’s Impact on Prostitution Trends” quantified the economic impact of Craigslist’s entry on prostitution incidence and identified potential pathways in which the website affects the sex industry in some 1,796 US counties from 1999 to 2008. It established that sex workers providing niche sexual services were found to increase with site entry. In addition, site entry led to an increase in transactions of existing workers and also attracts new workers to the market. However, Chan et al (2018) also established that the increase in prostitution arrests did not catch up with the growth in prostitution trends brought in by Craigslist.

Underscoring the increasing role of the internet and social media in prostitution activities, Abdullah and Hidayat (2018) also conducted a study in Indonesia. The qualitative research study was conducted on two towns, Bandung and Banjarmasin. Abdullah and Hidayat (2018) observed that the use of the internet made it easier for prostitution activities, transactions become easier, cheaper, practical and efficient in terms of time and energy. Aside that it was realised that the optimisation of technology, for the lower class had become a promotional tool, while for the upper class, the internet was used for reservation of airline tickets, hotels and transfer payments for prostitution services.

In Africa, a study that was conducted on digital prostitution was by Iwu (2014). In the study titled: “Social media as correlate of prostitution,” Iwu examined the relationship

between social media and prostitution among students of institutions of higher learning in Delta State, Nigeria. The findings indicated that students among others, use social media for flirting/prostitution; exchanging messages; gossiping, advertisement, find social contacts, make money, search online resources, make friends, share links, find jobs online, spread rumours, contribute to public discussions, academic purpose, news, and for leisure/entertainment.

However, Iwu (2014) found that of all the uses, social media for prostitution was profound among the students. Sekyi et al (2021) also explored the issue of digital prostitution with their study titled: “Redefining the Practice of the Old Profession with Technology: Sex Work and the Use of WhatsApp for Clientele Management.” The qualitative study used phenomenological transcendental design to find out the actual usage experiences of commercial sex workers in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. The findings revealed that sex workers had favourable and positive impressions or attitude towards WhatsApp usage. Also, WhatsApp was very useful and users benefited immensely from it in various ways. Nonetheless, the study established that sex workers were beset with challenges such as stigma from future leakage of their nude information as well as internet network constraints in using WhatsApp.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The rapid development of communication and information technology, especially the internet, caused a huge change in various fields of life (Abdullah & Hidayat, 2018). Over the past decade, sex work has seen a rapid and unprecedented shift away from outdoor and venue-based work to indoor sex work mediated by Information and Communication Technology (Global Network of Sex Work Projects, 2016). Various studies exist on prostitution globally, and Ghana is no exception. Studies conducted by

(Abdullah & Hidayat, 2018; Chan, Mojumder, & Ghose, 2018; Iwu, 2014; Sekyi, Bervell, & Arkorful, 2021) have all underscored that there is a growing phenomenon of a shift from the traditional street prostitution to the use of digital platforms for prostitution. The studies have observed that the use of digital platforms gave users an escape from arrest as in many parts of the world, prostitution was illegal, and therefore, those found in the act were arrested. But with the use of these digital platforms, users escaped such arrests, making them go about their business without any security harassment. Also, these same platforms are used to recruit others into online prostitution.

It is however, observed that many studies on prostitution have focused on the history of prostitution, its extent, causes, and effects throughout the world (Sanger 2013). Minimal studies have focused on online prostitution, the modus operandi, beneficiaries, and how it is communicated to potential clients in the digital space. Considering that most social media platforms including Facebook disband explicit content, Snapchat has become a platform that people are resorting to, due to its relaxing nature.

Communication plays important role in any commercial business (Radovic Markovic & Salamzadeh, 2018). Just like any other business, prostitutes also require communication tools to be profitable (Hofacker et al., 2018). These communication practices include marketing, conflict resolution and customer service (Hofacker et al., 2018; Stojanovska, & Velichkovska, 2020). Social media are also useful internet platforms (Irawan, Gultom & Amsani, 2017). Communication provides the means for sex workers to engage with clients (McLean, 2019). The ways, practices and methods of communicating on social media by these prostitutes are significant for their profits and sustainability. Despite the importance of communication in the digital space, there

is limited research on how prostitutes use social media to communicate. For this reason, the researcher was interested in how prostitutes use Snapchat to communicate to solicit patronage from potential clients.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The overarching goal of this study is to examine the phenomenon of digital prostitution in Ghana through the use of Snapchat, a multimedia instant messaging app and service.

The study would, however, be guided by the following specific objectives.

1. To examine the reasons people engage in prostitution on Snapchat.
2. To understand how prostitutes portray themselves on Snapchat.
3. To verify how sex workers, communicate their services to clients on Snapchat.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the reasons for engaging in online prostitution?
2. How do prostitutes portray themselves on Snapchat?
3. How do prostitutes communicate their services to clients on Snapchat?

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study would be of help in a number of ways to numerous stakeholders, including researchers, civil society organizations and policy think tanks within the social and human rights jurisdiction, as well as policy makers and implementers. Particularly, it would contribute to the body of existing literature on the new trajectory of the phenomenon of prostitution, a traditionally face-to-face business, which has witnessed transformation in the modus operandi, largely due to the evolution of enhanced communication technologies. The result from this study would also be helpful to the department of social welfare of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and its allied stakeholders in policy decision and programmes, as well as the

government, in formulating and implementing policies to serve as a panacea to the ordeal that young girls go through, doing this business. As a reference point, it would contribute to sound debate in the area by experts as well as institutions and individuals who would like to explore more on the subject.

### **1.5 Scope/Delimitation**

Broadly, the study would cover digital platforms for prostitution. For this research, the study area was online. The study area is the geographical location where the research was conducted (Creswell, 2009). The research aimed at gathering rich data about digital (online) sex work, including the reasons for people engaging in digital (online) sex work, the portrayal of digital (online) sex workers to clients and the communication style of digital (online) sex workers on Snapchat. Online research is a type of research that involves gathering data from the internet (Webb, 2017). The online avenue for this particular study was social media. The strategy helped me save money and time and allowed me to obtain information for the study topics in a more efficient manner (Webb, 2017). Through this online method, the researcher was able to witness first-hand the features of Snapchat that are used by prostitutes for their work. The study focused on individuals who engage in digital (online) prostitution through the social media app, Snapchat. Although there are many social media applications available including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tiktok and Telegram, Snapchat was chosen for its unique feature of deleting people's activities on the App after 24 hours. The study targeted individuals who were only aged 18 years and above. This was because the study did not focus on child prostitution on Snapchat and anyone below 18 years in such an act will be considered to be engaged in child prostitution.

## **1.6 Chapter Organization**

The study has five chapters. Chapter one has the introduction and background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study. Chapter two deals with the literature review. It looks at related studies and a theoretical framework to guide the research. Chapter three discusses the methodology or approach used to answer the research questions. Chapter four deals with findings and discussions. Chapter five deals with a summary, conclusion and recommendations for future studies.





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Prostitution, a rather popular term that most people wished would efface from history has gained a surprising notoriety for massive growth. Some prostitutes have taken prostitution from the streets to online despite the opprobrium it brings. To gain in-depth knowledge of online prostitution, the scholarly works on the subject are presented and discussed in detail in this chapter. The theoretical framework is also discussed.

#### **2.1 Communication**

Communication is the process of sharing information, ideas, or thoughts between individuals through various means. It is an essential aspect of human interaction and can take various forms. There are 6 types of communication thus: Verbal, Nonverbal, Visual, Interpersonal, Mass, and written communication. This study will dwell on the use of Visual and nonverbal communication.

##### **2.1.1 Visual Communication**

Visual communication involves the use of images, graphics, videos, and other visual aids to convey messages. It can be used to present complex information or to create an emotional response. Snapchat is a popular social media platform that allows users to share visual content, such as photos and videos, with their friends and followers. The analysis of visual communication using Snapchat can provide insights into how individuals use the platform to communicate and express themselves. Research has shown that Snapchat is a popular platform for visual communication among young people. According to a study by Pew Research Center (2018), Snapchat is used by 78% of individuals aged 18 to 24 in the United States. The platform is particularly popular

among teenagers, who use it to share personal and creative content with their peers (Valkenburg et al., 2017). One of the unique features of Snapchat is the use of filters and lenses, which allow users to add effects to their photos and videos. These features have been found to enhance the emotional expression and engagement of visual communication on the platform (Zhao et al., 2019). Research has also shown that the use of emojis and text overlays in Snapchat messages can convey emotions and facilitate social interactions (Sumter et al., 2017).

However, there are also concerns about the privacy and security of visual communication on Snapchat. The platform's self-destruct feature, which deletes messages after they have been viewed, has been found to create a false sense of security among users, leading to risky behavior and potential negative consequences (Hendry et al., 2017).

Therefore, snapchat is a popular platform for visual communication among young people, offering various features that allow users to personalize and enhance their messages. However, the platform's unique features also raise concerns about privacy and security. Understanding the use and impact of visual communication on Snapchat can help individuals identify who is communicating what to the followers.

### **2.1.2 Nonverbal Communication**

Nonverbal communication is said to be all those modes of communicating other than words or a parallel way to process social stimuli alongside language cues (Manusov 2016). The nonverbal communication system comprises facial expressions, body movements, vocalic or paralinguistic cues, personal and environmental space, objects, time, physical appearance, and smell/odor. These nonverbal modes perform important

functions for us, such as sending relational messages, emotional expression, and impression formation.

Nonverbal communication using Snapchat primarily consists of visual cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures, that are communicated through photos and videos. Research has shown that nonverbal communication plays a significant role in social interactions on the platform, particularly among young people. Snapchat offers a variety of features that allow users to communicate nonverbally. For example, users can use filters and lenses to add facial expressions and animations to their photos and videos. This has been found to enhance the emotional expression and engagement of visual communication on the platform (Zhao et al., 2019). The use of emojis and text overlays can also convey nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice and emotions (Sumter et al., 2017).

However, nonverbal communication on Snapchat can also be easily misinterpreted. Without the benefit of in-person cues, such as tone of voice and body language, it can be difficult to accurately interpret the meaning behind visual messages. This can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Lee et al., 2017). Moreover, the fleeting nature of Snapchat messages, which are automatically deleted after they are viewed, can make it difficult for users to establish meaningful and lasting connections through nonverbal communication. Research has shown that the transitory nature of Snapchat communication can contribute to a sense of disconnection and superficiality in relationships (McEwan & Zanolta, 2017).

As such, nonverbal communication using Snapchat is an important aspect of social interactions on the platform, particularly among young people. However, the lack of in-person cues and the ephemeral nature of messages can make it challenging to accurately interpret and establish meaningful connections through nonverbal communication.

## **2.2 Prostitution**

Lukasz and pavol (2018) simply define prostitution as a sexual activity provided by women, men, and transsexuals in exchange for payment. Individuals who work in the field of prostitution are called “sex workers.” The term “sex workers” includes prostitutes who are streetwalkers, who work independently with clients, work through agencies, or who work in sex clubs or massage parlors (Clements, 1996; DeCou, 1998). Prostitution can also be described as an activity that involves an individual offering money to another so as to have sexual access to the receiver’s body. This sexual access may or not include sex as the prostitute can offer other forms of sexual pleasure such as blowjob, hand job and webcam. The sex business does not relate only to the usually paid sex but also includes pornography, sexual shows, and sex surrogacy.

Prostitution can be identified as an institution (Davidson, 2001). It is so because, in more advanced countries, it is organized and has laws with paymasters serving as hierarchical regulators. The social organization of prostitution and the power relations that it entails vary greatly. There are also diverse people of varying ages, economic, education and social classes. Adult prostitutes, for example, are self-employed, thus, unlike the young ones are able to connect with high-earning clients (Davidson, 2001). This affords adult prostitutes the privilege to earn high money. On the other hand, the newbies and younger prostitutes are monitored and controlled by the older prostitutes. Some of the younger prostitutes are inexperienced and have to be coached by their

masters who are also called pimps. These pimps connect the younger prostitutes to new clients and take their commission from them on the bases of the services they render. (Davidson, 2001) further states that there is another category of prostitutes who either work with a third party or work individually. This category of invisible people controls online pornography sites. They offer their services to online pornographic sites. These services include posting nude photos, videos and webcams. They also offer clients prostitutes who would serve as escorts. Their level of power and earning depends on factors such as economic status or contractual terms with third parties.

Since prostitution is a broad term and many scholars have tried as much as possible to include key variables, thus another description of prostitution is the activity of having indiscriminate sexual affairs with anyone to whom you are not married for the purpose of getting money or any other remuneration (Bernstein, 2017; Swahn et al., 2017). Most of the time, prostitutes are immediately associated with women but that is not always the case as there are prostitutes who could be men or transgender. While the term “sex work” is frequently used interchangeably with "prostitution" (the practice of participating in various forms of direct sexual intercourse for monetary gain), it encompasses a wide range of behaviors and vocations. Exotic dance and stripping, for example, are both considered sex work. Sex job includes performing sex activities in video pornography, selling naked photos, and even voice acting in erotic content.

Moving on, Brents and Sanders (2010) posit that the prostitution industry has transformed in the last decades. The industry has become more organized and included professional attributes such as sophisticated networks, financing, and marketing. These inclusions have made the sex industry attractive, buoyant and profitable. Bernstein (2007) noted in particular that the services of prostitutes transcend mere sexual

intercourse. Bernstein (2007) posits that sex workers are professionally trained to offer skillful sex services and deeper sensual pleasure to clients. In that sense, these sex workers could be regarded as professional athlete performers. That is the case, sex clients who are mostly high-earning people pay huge sums of money for sex services. There were a variety of causes and elements that influenced women's decision to engage in prostitution. This worry for women's voluntary and involuntary participation in sex work could be divided into two categories: voluntary and involuntary (UNESCO, 2002). Qayyum et al. (2013) posit that the voluntary comprises women who enter the sex industry due to poverty, hunger, economic crises, family pressure, illness, and so on, while the involuntarily includes women who enter the sex industry through force, such as trafficking, coercion, kidnapping, and deception. In India, it has been noted that sex labour is mostly involuntary, but some women deliberately participate (Nag, 2006). Qayyum et al. (2013), agree with UNESCO's 2002 report. They agree in their study that there were a number of circumstances that pushed women into sex work, some free and others involuntarily such as poverty, worsening economic conditions, family illness, debt, sex for pleasure, peer association, family neglect, domestic clashes, drug addiction in husbands; rape, sexual assault, early marriages, trafficking, deception by family, deception by lovers.

According to Khan et al. (2010), limited possibilities, poverty, financial responsibilities, the need to survive, a lack of proper information, and the desire for greater material goods have caused girls and married women in Lahore to enter a web of selling sex. Saggurti et al. (2011), found that a combination of social, economic, and cultural reasons influences women's decision to engage in sex work. Several motivations pushed women into sex work, including a desire to escape marital life, freedom from violence, humiliation, earn for self-survival and family, and make easy and quick

money, family disease, and lack of education, bad socioeconomic conditions, and dependent children.

Poverty, illiteracy, economic unacceptability, runaways, low payroll status and societal injustice are the causes of women's entry into prostitution in Pakistan (Iram et al., 2019). Typically, women whose moms' families and acquaintances are prostitutes also become prostitutes, sometimes of their own free will and sometimes as a result of coercion. This could be construed as a foray into prostitution as a result of bad company. Poverty may be one of the underlying problems of prostitution. Low-wage jobs like domestic servants cannot meet a poor person's economic demands in impoverished countries like Pakistan. As a result, the majority of women who are poor engage in prostitution.

### **2.2.1 Conceptual understanding of Prostitution**

Prostitution or 'sex work' is touted as the world's oldest profession, although its manifestations vary across time and context (Foucault, 1978; Weeks, 2002). Currently, there is a tendency to characterize sex work as synonymous with prostitution, even though contemporary sex work encompasses a range of activities and vocations (Sagar et al., 2016). In the context of this study, online Prostitution refers exclusively to the transaction that occurs when a person engages in penetrative intercourse and/ or other sexual activities (for example, oral sex) with another person for monetary payment where the negotiation occurs digitally or on a digital platform. However, even this definition of prostitution has shifted over time. More specifically, being a prostitute has not always been defined by the act of selling sexual services. For example, prostitutes in medieval London were referred to as 'meretrices' – a word that was also used to denote women who were sexually promiscuous (Karras & Boyd, 2002). At the time,

this meant any woman who had sex outside of a monogamous, heterosexual marriage as such, being a meretrix was identity-based, and women ‘could be arrested for being [deemed] a prostitute’, rather than for engaging in prostitution. This perception of sex workers can be read as indicative of the wider social norms and values of medieval society, particularly in terms of women’s expected roles in a deeply patriarchal and religious context. Similarly, the way in which sex work and workers are understood in the twenty-first century. While scholars have been interested in studying sex work for a long time, the internet has reshaped sex work. Therefore, the rise of online sex work has led to new sets of questions for scholarly inquiry. Here, the researcher defines online sex work as the internet-mediated exchange of sexual commodities and/or services. Online sex work can relate to the use of the internet to actually deliver a service. For example, online sex work could refer to a webcam model that performs a masturbation show for a client or a pro-domme who Skype’s with a client for some set exchange value. However, online sex work can also refer to the use of the internet to market sexual services that are delivered in physical space.

Much of the existing literature focuses on the intricate ways that escort use the internet to market services and screen clients whom they meet at “out calls” [e.g., at a hotel) or “in calls” e.g., at escort’s home], (Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; Feldman 2014; Jonsson, Svedin, & Hydén, 2014). Therefore, the rise of online sex work has meant that scholars of sex work shift the focus of their research questions to thinking about how the internet has changed the workplace for sex workers. The internet is an important technological development for sex workers. However, the use of the internet to schedule appointments, screen clients, and/or market services, etc., is only one new method in the long history of technology used by sex workers. Lee-Gonyea et al. (2009) note that “the telephone, and then the pager, permitted the streetwalker to take their



business indoors. These two technological advances turned the streetwalker into the call girl” (pg. 325). So just like these previous communication technologies, scholars note that the internet has changed the workplace for sex workers.

The services offered in traditional sexual commerce have not necessarily changed; however, the ways those services are delivered, performed, branded, marketed, and sold have clearly changed. The internet has afforded sex workers new modes of operating their businesses. Walby (2012) writes “...today most sex work begins online or is mediated through internet communication, a configuration that creates a different sort of workspace. The internet makes possible work that is no longer tied to a particular locale, spreading work out across conventional boundaries and borders (168)”. There are different schools of thought on prostitution according to Big-Alabo in an article published in the Journal of Social Interactions and Humanities (JSIH) 2023. The first position argues that prostitution is a result of deficiency in one’s moral character. This position he said is drawn typically out of patriarchal and religious traditions that view female sexuality with temptation and male sexuality with dominance and sanctioned insatiability. Another position argues that prostitution is a valid form of labour and that it is not harmful to women. It is the view of this position that women have the right to decide what to do with their bodies. As such sex work, which is oppressive to some, potentially is both lucrative and empowering for other women. Researchers like (Monroe 2005), argue that prostitution is a consequence of social, political and economic inequality and that women are in prostitution due to their social vulnerability. It is noted that physically, female sex workers are frequently subjected to violence perpetuated by pimps, clients, police and madams. Also, sex work is associated with high levels of drug and alcohol abuse (Beksinska et al., 2022). Sex workers have limited bargaining power with clients and are vulnerable to violent sex, rape, and sex without

condoms (Ayamah 2023). Due to frequent engagement in risky sex, sex workers have a global HIV rate of 11.8%, which is 13.5 times greater than the general population (Kerrigan et al., 2013). These problems are directly related to the economic vulnerability of female sex workers the vast majority of whom report entering sex work for financial reasons due to a lack of alternative employment opportunities (Kerrigan et al., 2013).

### **2.3 Prostitution Policy in Ghana**

Rapid urbanization and population growth have led to a rise in the movement of people across borders in search of better lives. These have pushed many to engage in harmful and illegal ventures to meet their basic needs. These challenges have led to an increase in the commercial sex trade. Although the legal status of prostitution varies from country to country, its existence is global and not peculiar to developing countries such as Ghana (Larr, 2017). However, in Ghana, the large number of prostitutes has become a major source of concern. This unprecedented growth of the sex industry may not be connected with the rapid and wide socio-economic changes and globalization which has affected the value structure of Ghanaian society.

The basic understanding of prostitution differs across various jurisdictions. In many jurisdictions, the definition of prostitution connotes the commercial exchange of sex for money, goods, service, or some other benefit agreed upon by the transacting parties (Weitzer, 2012). This is illegal, while in others it is legal. Also soliciting in a public place, operating a brothel, and pimping is also illegal in many jurisdictions. In many jurisdictions where prostitution is legal, it is regulated; in others it is unregulated. Where the exchange of sex for money is criminalized, it may be the sex worker, the client, or both, who are subject to prosecution.

The regulation of prostitution varies according to a nation's underlying social justice commitments. There are three main legislative responses to prostitution that have emerged in response to these commitments: criminalization, legalization/decriminalization, and the Nordic model (Mathieson et al.). Advocates of the sex work position advocate the legalization or decriminalization of all prostitution-related activities by asserting that prostitution like any other regular market or economic variable can advance the well-being and interests of women. Advocates of the sex work position base their argument on Neo-liberalism thought; which seeks to bring all human action within the domain of market. Their views have influenced national and international prostitution discourse. This economic model frames prostitution in the terms of personal choice and individual freedom and market contracts made between rational, consenting adults with equal power.

Contrary to popular knowledge of prostitution being illegal in Ghana, The Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29) does not emphatically state that prostitution is illegal. Chapter six of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) outlines nine sexual offences. They are: rape, defilement of a child under sixteen years of age, carnal knowledge, indecent assault, and unnatural carnal knowledge, and incest, household permitting defilement of a child, procurement and seduction or prostitution of a child under 16 years. It is emphatic and criminalizes prostitution of children under 16 years but silent on prostitution of adults 18 years and above. However, over the years, the police have been swooping brothels and notorious areas known to harbor prostitutes to effect their arrest for 'soliciting' for sex. The Criminal Offences Act, 1960 Act 29 also points out that a person commits a misdemeanor who in a public place or in sight of a public place persistently solicits or importunes. Over the years the issue of the buyer of sex has been contested on whether the men should be criminalized or not (Weitzer, 2011).

Criminalization of clients might represent a tentative shift away from the patriarchal assumption that prostitution is a problem about women, thereby ensuring that the other participant in prostitution escapes scrutiny. Globally, many states have responded to the demand for commercial sex by criminalizing women and in a few cases, buyers. This approach in Ghana is founded on the belief that prostitution is as a result of immoral decisions and therefore requires regulation with the public order offenses. According to Agyemang-Badu (2018), criminalization as a model recognizes all forms of prostitution and technically comprises the following;

1. Brothel: keeping or pandering, this is knowingly encouraging or compelling a person to sell sex for money.
2. Pimping: receiving something of value knowing that it was earned through an act of prostitution,
3. Prostitution: engaging in sexual intercourse for money and
4. The purchase of sexual intercourse. Each of these is subject to regulation as a criminal offense and is technically illegal.

This legislation is often gender-neutral. However, based on patriarchal and Judeo norms, it is women who culturally face the higher arrest rates for selling prostitution than men do. In Ghana, prostitution is largely treated as an issue of traditional morality which implies that women are gatekeepers of sexual responsibility, and that woman who, in wielding significant sexual power over men, choose to tempt men into committing immoral sexual acts that may be held accountable for prostitution. More so, in Ghana, based on the principle of neo-conservatism, women are criminalized on engaging sexual intercourse for money or offering to do so. So, criminalization laws on prostitution fall largely on women than men (Agyemang-Badu, 2018).

Per Ghana's legal frame work on prostitution, there is a reinforcement of an age-old culture of blaming victims of prostitution for their exploitation. Deducing from this, criminalization portrays prostitution as a victimless crime, committed by immoral sexual deviant (Armstrong 2021). The portrayal of a victimless crime creates a state of paradox of Ghana's laws on prostitution which clearly states the protection of arrested prostitutes.

### **2.3.1 Legal implications on sexting in Ghana**

Non-consensual distributions of private and intimate images have been on the ascendancy in recent times. Ghana's new Cyber Security Act, 2020 (Act 1038) responds to these issues by criminalizing such conduct with stiff sanctions. Key provisions in Ghana's new Cyber Security Act partly aim at protecting children and adults from the wrongful and non-consensual exposure of their intimate images in cyberspace. The following are the offences committed:

- a. It is an offence for a person to release or put indecent images of children online.
  - b. It is an offence for a person to take indecent images of children and expose these images either through sales or online streaming regardless of whether the streaming is for reward or not. A person who commits any of these offences risks a fine of between 2500-5000 penalty units and a jail term of between 5 to 10 years.
  - c. It is an offence for a person to have or keep indecent images or photographs of children in a computer system, on a computer or any electronic storage medium.
- The ultimate goal of the act is to prevent the taking of indecent images in the first place.

## **2.4 Forms of Prostitution in Ghana**

Prostitution can be classified into four different forms, in spite of the different names such as hookers, call-girls, harlots, sluts and courtesans that those involved in it are called (Emmanuel et al 2022). These forms are discussed below:

### **2.4.1 Institutional Prostitution**

Gbagbo (2022) refers to institutional prostitution as the act of exchanging sex for financial or other favors in the hotels, brothels and bars where the prostitutes themselves have rented rooms to render solicited services to their patrons.

### **2.4.2 Freelance Prostitution**

According to Doris (2020), freelance prostitution is a single sex operator who usually stays in her home and goes out when there is a request for her services. Most regrettably, this form of prostitution has become the order of the day amongst female students in tertiary institutions in Ghana. Those who are involved in this line of business consider it as a matter of survival degree where starvation or other serious deprivation is imminent.

### **2.4.3 Corporate Prostitution**

This occurs when girls are compelled into sleeping with their bosses to get jobs, promotions or even keep their jobs (Morley, 2011). It also takes the form of female workers sleeping with clients to achieve their target. Some have pointed to the banking industry as a typical example where female workers engage in this form of prostitution due to target setting. This can actually be regarded as a form of sexual harassment at work place.

#### **2.4.4 Cross Border Prostitution**

Shelley (2014) explains Cross Border Prostitution as a situation where humans are smuggled or trafficked to mainly European countries. Sadly, Ghana occupies an unenvied reputation in this kind of prostitution as many of its female citizens have been trafficked to several European countries with the sole purpose of selling them into prostitution. This form of prostitution is also known as sex trafficking.

#### **2.5 Digital (Online) Prostitution**

The term “online sex work” refers to the use of the internet to provide a service (Jones, 2015). He further states that a webcam model performing a masturbation display for a client, for example, or a pro-dome skypeing with a customer for a defined exchange value are both examples of online sex work. Online sex work can relate to the use of the internet to promote sexual services that are delivered in person. Prostitution is freely accessible via social media (Farley et al., 2013). As the reality of internet publication expands, criminals are not ashamed to advertise sex services on social media (Beckham, & Prohaska, 2012). When there is a misalignment between what is embraced and what is actually happening, the situation ambiguity occurs. Prostitutes have taken to social media and personal sites to advertise and arrange in-person sessions with individuals they met online, usually after a screening process (many sex workers will ask for references from their colleagues or identification to mitigate the risk of a violent or deceitful individual).

Adult Friend Finder, Erotic Monkey, Tryst, Adult Search, Eros, and Skip the Games, are online marketplaces where individuals, including sex workers of different gender identities and sexual preferences, offer a range of services. These services include role play, non-vaginal sexual acts, consensual practices involving bondage, dominance,

submission, and masochism (BDSM), as well as erotic tantric massage. These platforms serve as digital spaces for individuals seeking adult-oriented services to connect with providers offering a diverse range of experiences. Furthermore, because the internet is more widely accessible (even those without personal computers can use internet cafés or public libraries), sex workers can solicit business online from a variety of locales, despite inequalities in economic class and a lack of access to specialized resources. Cunningham and Kendall (2011) add that the internet has made it easier for sex workers to manage their business affairs, as well as allowing more people to enter the realm of sex work, which may have been a much more difficult and harrowing procedure prior to widespread internet access.

The online prostitution industry is booming, and it is becoming a viable commercial trend due to its anonymity. Ray (2007) in her article, "Sex on the open market: sex workers harness the power of the internet" stated that "the internet has revolutionized the sex industry" and "has opened up a whole new universe of possibilities". Ray compared the popular online platform Craigslist1 and Eros Guide. Ray notes that because Eros Guide targeted professional sex workers, they were able to engage the richer clients as against Craiglist1 that provided poor services to the clientele.

Rocha et al (2010) in their article "Information Dynamics Shape the Sexual Networks of Internet-mediated Prostitution" examined the nature of online prostitution. In the last six years, their study looked at the behaviors of 6,624 anonymous contacts and 10,106 sex purchasers from online networks. It can be seen that it is increasingly coordinated over the internet and is publicized as an online and offline phenomenon. In this situation, it is similar to other social network services like dating communities or even e-mail communication. The difference is that communication takes place across



external channels (often the telephone), whereas in other system studies, direct interaction is frequently documented in the data.

Castle and Lee (2008) conducted an analysis of 76 internet escort advertisements. Appointments may be scheduled by phone and/or email on nearly half of the websites (46 per cent). This was unsurprising because email provides the same level of anonymity as the telephone, if not more. A person or company can do business using one of several free email accounts available on the internet. A customer could schedule an appointment on some websites by filling out an online form. Only three agencies provided a physical address, and they were all located in nations where prostitution is legal or decriminalized. A live chat feature on one website allows potential clients to communicate with escorts and set up appointments. The payment options for half of the websites were not specified. The basic payment choices were cash or cash/credit, with some sites naming specific cards (e.g. Visa, MasterCard). Some agencies state that credit card transactions will be listed under a different name on the statement to maintain anonymity, or that using a credit card would result in a surcharge. Some websites, for example, specify whether they accept Western Union, debit cards, wire transfers, foreign currencies, and traveler's checks as modes of payment.

Cunningham and Kendall (2011) investigated the effects of digital platforms on sex workers in the US. The study also examined the effects of digital platforms on the displacement of homeless sex workers and the associated risk behaviors that are associated with online prostitutes. First, Cunningham and Kendall discovered that online sex workers generally represent increase in the total prostitution industry, rather than simple displacement of the off-line, street-focused business, though “we do find significant displacement effects among sex workers in their 30s and 40s.”

Cunningham and Kendall also discovered that most sex workers who solicit online engage in lower-risk behaviors than traditional street-based workers; however, workers on the cusp of migrating from outdoor work bring riskier business and sexual practices with them as they enter the off-street sector. Jones (2016) studied webcams as used by sex workers. Jones was particular about the dangers of video chats, doxing, and harassment. Camgirls frequently stated that one of the key benefits of their profession was pleasure. The findings revealed that there are two basic types of pleasure in web-camming: sexual pleasure and effectual pleasure gained through “touching encounters” (Walby, 2012). For starters, one of the most enjoyable aspects of adult web-camming is the sexual aspect. With the purpose of assessing the scope of online prostitution in Samarinda, Arsanti (2017) undertook a study titled “The Use of Social Media as a Means of Online Prostitution in Samarinda.” Because many places where this activity took place were shut down by authorities, it was concluded that the use of social media usage was widely used. Additionally, commercial sex workers believe it is a good method to market their business.

In the Philippines, where Dumlao (2013) estimates that there are approximately 500,000 sex workers, Facebook-mediated prostitution is gaining traction through Walker groups. Prostitutes are referred to as “Walkers” on Facebook, and they interact with their clients either directly or through “Handlers,” a Facebook euphemism for a procurer or pimp. For sex workers, the internet is a significant technological advancement. However, using the internet to book meetings, screen customers, sell services, and so on is only one new approach in a long history of sex workers employing technology (Jones, 2015). This new, ostensibly global workplace opens up a whole new set of income prospects. The internet has aided in the creation of new options for sex workers as well as the creation of a more enticing labour environment for workers of

all socioeconomic classes (Walby, 2012). As a result, the prostitution business has grown in ways other than the mere transfer of prostitutes from the streets to the internet (Cunningham & Kendall 2011). Erotic labor may now appeal to persons who previously refused to conduct sex work due to the improved working circumstances of online sex work.

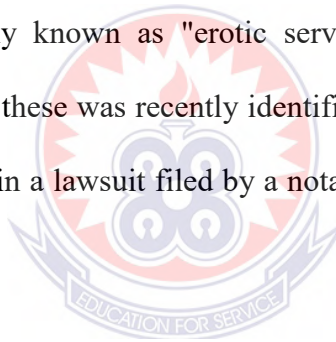
Owing to recent technical improvements, sex workers can communicate with clients without having to meet in person (Jones, 2015). Images, ages, body postures, pricing, phone numbers, and device addresses are displayed on some web-based platforms, such as websites so that service clients can contact prostitutes directly or through pimps (Jones, 2015). For social networking and user interface, online media such as chat applications, audio, and video discussions are frequently employed. The usage of these apps for online prostitution has surged since the introduction of smartphones (Schrimshaw et al., 2016). Twitter is one of the most popular social networking platforms. The contents of a person's Twitter timeline contain personal concerns, such as stories, opinions, and activities (Cunningham et al., 2018).

One notable aspect of Twitter is its follower feature, which plays a significant role in establishing credibility and perceived attractiveness for an account. The number of followers an account has can create an impression of legitimacy and influence (Nurhadi, 2017). Accounts with a large following are often seen as more credible, reputable, and influential within their respective fields. This perception stems from the notion that if many people choose to follow an account, it must provide valuable content or insights. As a result, the follower count can impact the perceived attractiveness and desirability of an account on Twitter.

Twitter is flexible such that it offers search optimization to prostitutes. What this means is that prostitutes can attach hashtags to their names. To this, a client would only have to type the prostitute's name to the hashtag and it would be easy to access the prostitutes. For example, a prostitute can advertise herself as #Sexydiva. A client would only have to type such a name on Twitter and would be able to reach the prostitute.

### **2.5.1 Online Sexual Advertising**

Indoor workers can promote their services more easily thanks to the internet, which allows them to construct their own websites for a low cost, where they may upload photographs and cost and accessibility details (Swords et al., 2021). Additionally, a number of websites, such as Eros.com, Cityvibe.com, and Craigslist.org's "adult services" area (previously known as "erotic services"), feature classified ads for prostitution. The latter of these was recently identified as "the single largest source of prostitutes in the nation" in a lawsuit filed by a notable law enforcement organization (Walberg, 2009).



### **2.5.2 Client Screening**

Client screening among indoor employees, particularly independent freelancers, is also made easier by the internet (Swords et al 2021). Search engines can be used to find information on potential clients and to conduct background checks. Client background checks are available from some classified websites. A potential consumer can pay a price to have a background check conducted by one of these companies, and then grant access to his anonymized background check when contacting a sex worker. Sex workers can also verify security personnel while clients can also do a thorough screening to know the track records of a particular prostitute (Swords et al 2021). This prevents incidences of fraud and blackmail. Also, since people have left their details on

the internet, the third-party agent can use those references to call a sex worker who might have serviced the client before so to verify their integrity. When due diligence is done, the sex worker can now transact business with the client. In all, sex sites or social media sites enable sex workers and clients to meet online to build familiarity before meeting face to face.

Four modes of sex work are provided by social media (Swords et al 2021). The first involves in-person, physical sexual encounters – including rewarded sex, exotic, or Blowjob activities. Video chat, phone sex, online chatting is the second type. The third type is an indirect content purchase, which encompasses leveraging websites to acquire sexually explicit content such as pornography. The fourth type is asynchronous consumption and engagement, which includes periodic encounters with sex workers and/or materials made by sex workers via services such as OnlyFans, and Snapchat.

## **2.6 Digital (Online) prostitution in international context and Ghana**

In the context of this study, sexting is defined as the sending and receiving of a nude image or video via mobile phone devices. Researchers who have conducted sexting studies have been using various definitions which make studies and articles very difficult to compare (Cooper et al., 2016; Klettke et al., 2014). In spite of these inconsistencies in definitional issues, sexting studies have produced notable findings and review of such studies gives the impression of what has already been done and the gaps that exist to be filled. During the review of related studies, strengths and weaknesses of the existing studies have been highlighted to give a clearer picture. Sexting is a highly publicized social and health issue in recent times however meta-analysis shows that only a few empirical studies exist and with those ones that exist,

most were conducted in the western culture (Cooper et al., 2016; Klettke et al., 2014; Reynolds et al., 2014).

In a study from the USA, Benotsch et al (2013) sampled 763 undergraduates between the age 18 to 25 years through convenient sampling technique and it was reported that 43.8% and 44.7% of women had engaged in sexting though the content of the material sent or received respectively was not stated. From the Southwest USA, Perkins et al (2014) studied the prevalence of sexting behaviours among 287 volunteered students attending university. Based on the researchers' measure of sexting as the transmission of sexually suggestive image or video, the study found 38% of the study participants as sexters and they have sexted in the last six (6) months before the study.

Similarly, a study was conducted by Reynolds et al (2014) using 974 undergraduate college students in the age group 18-24 years attending a public university in the Midwest. Data for this study was collected online based on a measure that explains sexting as sending of sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude image and 20% and 36% reported sending and receiving such sexual content respectively. Among same college students Strassberg et al, (2014), recruited 1130 college students from the University of Utah and found 19%, 38% and 7% of the college students have sent, received and shared nude pictures respectively.

Prevalence of sexting behaviours in Africa is hard to obtain because of the scarcity of literature and especially scarcity of empirical studies on sexting behaviours in Africa. In her dissertation, Schloms-Madlener (2013) found that sexting behaviours among adolescents and adults' sample from Cape Town, South Africa, is at least, prevalent as represented in International studies, though comparison would be difficult to make. Schloms-Madlener (2013) sampled 451 adolescents' high school, 319 undergraduate

psychology students from the University of Cape Town and 82 adults who were recruited online. Schloms-Madlener (2013) reported that 5.3%- 20.1% and 6.1%-35.8% had created and sent nude photos.

In Nigeria, Dauda (2012) purposively selected 171 undergraduate students from the University of Maiduguri. He reported from the study that 31% of the participants had sent sexy messages or nude images of themselves and 56.1% of the same participants had received same sexy content from people they know personally and friend they have met on social networking sites. From Ghana, Ogbada (2013) studied determining factors of sexual risk behaviours among 422 young people between ages 14-19 who were sampled through multi-stage stratified random sampling technique among senior high students in La Dade-Kotopon Municipality in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Ogbada (2013) reported that more than half (63.5%) of mobile phone users have been involved in sexting (sexually suggestive photos or messages via mobile devices) and 30.7% of these users are still soliciting for a sexting message.

The sexting prevalence shows that sexting is a global issue where both teens and adults create, send and/or share and receive sexually suggestive messages, nearly nude photos, nude photos and videos. Studies that used national representative sample (Livingstone et al., 2011; Mitchel et al., 2012) recorded fewer prevalence rate than studies that use non-national representative sample (Benotsch et al., 2013; Gordon-Messer et al., 2013; Reyns et al., 2014; Samimi & Alderson, 2014). Most studies that used online samples show higher prevalence rate (Benotsch et al., 2013; Gordon-Messer et al., 2013; Reyns et al., 2014) and even studies that used online samples but the samples were below 19 years showed higher prevalence rate. This could be the reasons that youngest people

sample that are recruited via the internet may be familiar with sexting behaviours which are likely to increase the prevalence rate when such samples are used in a study.

## **2.7 Merits of Online Prostitution**

The literature on prostitution in a digital era focuses on the affordances of using the Internet to advertise, solicit, and perform erotic labor. Taken together, these research works demonstrate that the Internet has reshaped both the business practices and experiences of workers and clients in ways that are beneficial to both the worker and customer. The use of the Internet by sex workers decreases their risk of bodily harm and physical violence. Holt and Blevins (2007) analyze posts by male consumers, colloquially called “Johns,” in various online forums. Johns engage in information sharing online (reviews of prostitutes, their services, pricing, safety of area, etc.); this information sharing helps to facilitate prostitution offline but benefits both worker and client by minimizing risk exposure, specifically by reducing victimization. Importantly, sex work, particularly when facilitated by the Internet, is not merely about sexual commerce these encounters are both physical and effectual (Walby, 2012).

Thus, erotic labor that is in some part facilitated by Internet-mediated exchanges provides better conditions of labor for escorts. Importantly, Walby’s (2012, p.169) work emphasizes the companionship and intimacy between male escorts and their clients. His data demonstrate that “few male-for-male Internet escorts report violence at work”. These new Internet-mediated interactions may be characterized by less violence and provide an opportunity for more “touching” encounters with clients. Online sex work has led to better wages because the Internet allows prostitutes to more effectively recruit high-end desirable clientele (Bernstein 2007; Cunningham & Kendall 2011). According to Bernstein (2007 p.93), the internet has indeed reshaped predominant patterns of



sexual commerce in ways that some sex workers have been able to benefit from. For many indoor sex workers, it has become easier to work without third party management, to conduct one's business with minimal interference from the criminal justice system, and to reap greater profits by honing one's sales pitch to a more elite and specialized audience. The Internet facilitates escorting by opening new venues for "solicitation"; for example, sex workers can and do use non-sexual websites or chat rooms to meet customers (Jonsson & Svedin, 2014).

Third, the Internet is a propitious method of advertising, screening, and recruiting, which all assist in creating better wages and facilitating this new world of online sex work (Pruitt, 2005). In addition, Johns often use the Internet to create online reviews of prostitutes, which help with reputation; prostitutes' regular customers can post "testimonials" that will help their business (Cunningham & Kendall 2011). Castle and Lee (2008) study escort services that are advertised on websites. This descriptive study demonstrates that sex workers use the Internet to advertise, schedule appointments online, and screen customers prior to scheduling. The online process of screening and scheduling fosters anonymity and safeguards workers.

Another study also revealed that the use of the Internet by prostitutes reduces negative relations with law enforcement (Cunningham & Kendall, 2011). Law enforcement targets street prostitution because the public visibility of outdoor sex workers makes for easier arrests, and less money is spent on covert operations that might be associated with arresting indoor workers. In the male-for-male market, street-based sex workers represent 85 to 90 percent of arrests, yet they make up only 10–15 percent of the market (Minichiello et al., 2013). Moreover, if fewer sex workers are arrested, less money is spent on court-related costs such as fines, loss of wages, and lawyers' fees. Less frequent

arrests also may help to elevate the reputation and status of a particular prostitute – as customers do not want to be arrested either (Holt & Blevins 2007).

Recent literature suggests that the Internet also has political benefits for sex workers. Sociologists of social movements have investigated the ways activists use the Internet in collective action. However, few studies review how sex workers use the web in activism. Jones (2015) posits that sex-worker-created blogs such as Bound, Not Gagged to demonstrate enormous political potential for activists. They provide a forum for interaction and discussion among sex workers: In the face of very real and sometimes violent legal and social sanctions faced by sex workers, the Internet's anonymity allows sex workers to “come out” online and speak as sex workers on issues of interest to them in rational deliberation with political and moral opponents, the general non-sex worker public, and each other, while still safeguarding their offline identities.

## **2.8 Dangers associated with digital (online) prostitution**

Prostitution is often referred to as a “victimless crime” or a “crime without a complainant.” These terms are used to characterize crimes, such as vagrancy, gambling, pornography, and prostitution, wherein, typically, none of the involved citizens files a complaint with the police (James & Lee, 1982 cited in Bakhtadze, 2013). Because the prostitute and her customer are involved in a mutually agreed-upon relationship, neither party feels any need for the services or interference of the authorities (James & Lee, 1982). It is observed that across Africa, sex worker groups say there has been a surge in complaints from members who have become victims of non-consensual pornography, where sexually graphic material is posted online by their clients without their agreement. In recent years, there has been a massive increase in the number of sex workers working partly or exclusively through the Internet (Cunningham & Kendal,

2011). Sex work is prohibited or heavily regulated in most countries, resulting in many sex workers needing to manage digital and physical risks carefully while carrying out their work. Online, sex workers may face doxxing, harassment, or having their content stolen or misused (Jones, 2015).

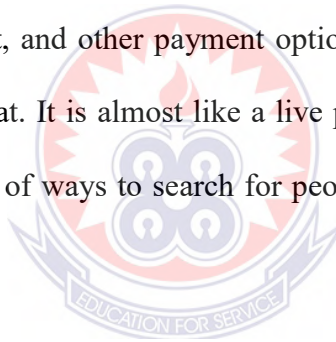
According to Stacey-Leigh (2020), in Kenya, for example, incidences of violence against sex workers more than tripled during the first month of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bhalla and Matiashe (2021) observed that the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions including lockdowns and curfews made sex workers see a shift from bars, brothels and massage parlours to websites, apps and video calls in places like Kenya and Uganda to Zimbabwe and Nigeria. However, they reported that using digital technology to offer their services comes with a barrage of online dangers, leaving sex workers vulnerable to blackmail and sextortion.

Apart from blackmail and sextortion, it has been established that online sex workers also face experience harm on non-sex-work digital platforms due to platform rules and community standards. For example, American-based digital payment platforms, like Paypal, are especially challenging for sex workers (McDonald et al., 2021). Paypal offers a popular and simple way to transfer money, but is not a reliable tool for sex workers. Many of our participants reported having accounts frozen or deleted, sometimes blocking access to their funds. This is likely done under Paypal's "Acceptable Use Policy," which prohibits "transactions involving... certain sexually oriented materials or services" Sanders, Connelly, and King (2016), in a survey of UK-based sex workers found that most (80%) had been recent victims of crime, and enumerate ways they manage risk through strategies like using pseudonyms on digital

platforms, screening for bad clients in forums, and relying on social media to have safety check-ins with friends or partners.

## **2.9 Snapchat and prostitution**

Snapchat is an American multimedia instant messaging app and service developed by Snap Inc., originally, Snapchat Inc. One of the principal features of Snapchat is that pictures and messages are usually only available for a short time before they become inaccessible to their recipients. According to the National Centre on Sexual Exploitation (2018), not only has Snapchat normalize sexting, but it has also facilitated the monetization of sexting through the advent of Snapcash, an in-app way to exchange money. The McAfee Institute also reports that: “Ever since the implementation of snap cash (sic), Google Wallet, and other payment options, more people are buying adult entertainment on snap chat. It is almost like a live porn hub because it is a simple to operate. There are plenty of ways to search for people that are selling nudes, videos, and chat on Snapchat.”



## **2.10 Theoretical framework**

A theoretical framework is a foundational review of existing theories that serve as a roadmap for developing the arguments you will use in your own work (Vins, 2022). A help in evaluating, comparing, and selecting the most relevant theories to underpin a study. Framing research within a clearly defined field of theory, helps the reader to be aware of the assumptions that inform the approach. This study will explore three theories – The Social Information Processing Theory, the Conflict theory of Prostitution and the Functionalist theory of Prostitution.

### **2.10.1 Social Information Processing Theory**

Walther's (2008) Social Information Processing Theory describes how people come to know each other online without nonverbal signs, and how they create and manage relationships in a computer-mediated setting. The first assumption of this theory is that computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides a one-of-a-kind possibility to form interpersonal connections with others. CMC systems are large and nearly always based on text. It's called an "organic setup," and it can be both synchronous and asynchronous. CMC is obviously not the same as face-to-face communication, but it does provide an unrivalled opportunity to meet someone you would never meet in person. Furthermore, interactions formed using CMC systems elicit the same emotions and feelings that all relationships do (Green-Hamann et al., 2011). Finally, because CMC systems are available all over the world, the novelty of being able to develop online relationships with people who are thousands of miles away cannot be overlooked.

The second assumption is that in online connections, impression control is critical, and players go to great lengths to ensure specific perceptions. Users who use social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook want to display themselves in a variety of ways to others (Walther et al., 2008). Because the more Facebook friends a person has, the more attractive that person is perceived to be controlling one's online image on multiple SNS and CMC system platforms remains vital (Walther et al., 2008).

Different rates of information exchange and information accrual affect relationship growth, according to SIP's third assumption. According to social information processing theory, even if the communications are verbal, communicators "adapt" to the limitations of the online medium by looking for signs in other people's messages

and changing their language to compensate for the lack of nonverbal indicators. This third assumption expresses Walther's belief that, given enough time and messages, online relationships can become as intimate as those formed face-to-face. Furthermore, online comments are frequently supplied swiftly and efficiently. These signals "build up" over time, giving internet users enough information to start and develop interpersonal interactions. For online prostitution to happen (in this case, on Snapchat), there is the need for communication first, the human establishment of relationships, leading to prostitution as espoused by the Social Information Processing Theory. The Social Information Processing Theory, thus, explains how people come to know each other online and create and manage relationships in a computer-mediated setting, which stimulates their engagement in online prostitution.

### **2.10.2 Conflict Theory of Prostitution**

Conflict theory originated in the works of Karl Max states that the society or organization functions so that each individual participant and its groups struggle to maximize their benefits, which inevitably contributes to social change such as changes in politics and revolutions. The conflict perspective highlights the relationship between power in society and sex work. According to an article published in 2021 on TriumphAIS titled; Prostitution: Sociological Perspective: Functionalism, the laws that make prostitution illegal are created by powerful dominant group members who seek to maintain cultural dominance by criminalizing sexual conduct that they consider immoral or in bad taste. The prostitution industry is filled with oppression and inequality, which is the position of the conflict theory.

Conflict theorists argue that women become prostitutes because of structural factors such as economic inequality and patriarchy. Capitalism and patriarchy foster economic

inequality between men and women and force women to view their bodies as commodities. Conflict theorists suggest that criminalizing prostitution uniquely affects poor women. According to conflict theory, prostitution reflects economic inequality in society. Many poor women feel compelled to become prostitutes because of their lack of money; because wealthier women have many other sources of income, the idea of becoming a prostitute is something they never have to consider. A conflict theorist looks at how prostitution supports existing conditions and perpetuates inequality between men and women. The Conflict theory establishes the relationship between power in society and sex work, noting that prostitution is made illegal by powerful dominant group members who seek to maintain cultural dominance. It also highlights the inequality in society, which push people to engage in transactional sexual acts. The theory, for example, argues that many poor women feel compelled to become prostitutes because they do not have money, therefore, prostitution becomes their main source of income. In this research, the prostitute especially the unemployed rely on prostitution to earn income while those engaged in the act although employed in the informal sector see it as an additional source of income to supplement their gains.

### **2.10.3 Functionalist Theory of Prostitution**

The foundation of the functionalist perspective is that everything occurs for a reason. It is necessary for a society to have rules and laws to abide by, society lives in a consensus. It is important to understand the need for there to be social members who do not conform to society; in this case prostitutes. Functionalists see prostitution as a means of controlling or channeling sexual behaviors. Thus, prostitutes meet the needs of men who otherwise do not have women always available to them. He further argues that it meets the needs of a man because it is inexpensive, non-emotional and a fleeting relationship. Functionalists contend that prostitution persists because it serves social

functions - this works by servicing people who are sexually frustrated. They also argue that without the aid from prostitutes stimulating the unstimulated, there might be other social problems that become bigger issues such as rape, sexual assault, kidnap and many more. A functionalist, Kingsley Davis, therefore, concluded that prostitutes provide a sexual outlet for men who: have difficulty in establishing sexual relationships, cannot find long-term partners, have a broken relationship, want sexual gratification that is defined as immoral, desire quick sexual gratification without attachment, are curious, and are sexually dissatisfied in marriage.

William Sanger, an American birth control activist and writer expressed a viewpoint in his book "The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World," published in 1858. Sanger states that the demand for prostitution arises from natural human desires and that individuals turn to it when other avenues of gratification are unavailable or unsatisfying due to personal or circumstantial limitations. This study will incorporate the functionalist theory of Prostitution as it gives an understanding of the reasons prostitution persists and serves a societal need.

## **2.11 Chapter Summary**

This section of the study was dedicated to the review of the literature. It, thus, reviewed previous literature on the subject matter by explaining terminologies and concepts related to prostitution and digital (online) prostitution. This chapter also assessed past related literature on prostitution on various themes including the practices of online prostitution, the legal framework of prostitution in Ghana, digital (online) prostitution in an international context and Ghana, the merits of online prostitution and the dangers associated with online prostitution. It also examined three theories - Social Information Processing Theory, Conflict theory of Prostitution and the Functionalist theory of



Prostitution. These theories underscored, first, the human establishment of relationships, leading to prostitution, the relationship between power in society and sex work and the inequality in society, which push people to engage in transactional sexual acts, as well as the social need that prostitution served, thereby, contributing to solving social problems including rape sexual assault and kidnap and make a case for prostitution to be accepted. This review, then put the current study into a proper context.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the processes and methods adopted for the study. It describes in detail, the research approach, research design, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis methods.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

Among the three research approaches available to scientific studies which are; qualitative, quantitative and mixed method, a qualitative research approach was employed in this study to help examine the lived experiences of the phenomenon of digital prostitution on Snapchat among some selected Ghanaian women in Accra. Relationships and other online engagements including prostitution is not common among Africans and for that matter, Ghanaians. However, the advent of new media applications has shifted how people involve in prostitution. With this new phenomenon, this study is focused on examining online prostitution using a qualitative research approach. As Creswell (2014) explains, when a phenomenon needs to be explored because minimal research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach.

Qualitative research is a type of research where the researcher gathers the views and experiences of research participants (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is a research method to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups of people think come from social or human problems (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research can be used to understand how an individual subjectively perceives and gives meaning to their social reality (McLeod, 2019). This study would be qualitative inclined, which unlike the quantitative method does not gather numerical data. This

approach also affords the researcher the opportunity to understand the reality of the social phenomenon. This is because, it involves intensive engagement with the people to witness their true feelings, taste, and experiences. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences (Bhandari, 2020). Bhandari (2020) adds that a qualitative method can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. This approach also helps the researcher to be in a better position to understand and interpret these rich experiences. By using a qualitative research method, it would help the researcher to gather the perceptions, beliefs, views and opinions of the study participants. It would afford the researcher the opportunity to understand the true reflections of the attitudes and approaches used by prostitutes in the digital space. According to Vaughan (2021), qualitative data capture allows researchers to be far more speculative about what areas they choose to investigate and how to do so. Chalhoub-Deville & Deville (2008), too, argued that qualitative approaches are employed to achieve deeper insights into issues related to designing, administering, and interpreting language assessment. A qualitative research design (interactive approach) has a flexible structure as the design can be constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent (Maxwell, 2012). Thus, the thorough and appropriate analyses of an issue can be produced by utilizing qualitative research methods and, therefore, the participants have sufficient freedom to determine what is consistent for them. As a result, the complex issues can be understood easily.

On the other hand, Vaughan (2021) contends that a challenge with qualitative research is that the sample size can be a big issue as self-selection bias may arise. Thus, a smaller sample size (as used in qualitative study) raises the issue of generalizability to the whole population of the research (Harry & Lipsky, 2014; Thomson, 2011). Silverman (2010)

also argues that qualitative research approaches sometimes leave out contextual sensitivities, and focus more on meanings and experiences. Nonetheless, Vaughan points out that the reality is that any research approach has both pros and cons. The art of effective and meaningful data gathering is, thus, to be aware of the limitations and strengths of each method and how to use them in any research.

In the study, the researcher examined the reasons people engage in prostitution, studied how prostitutes portray themselves to clients on Snapchat, and also highlighted how sex workers communicate their services to clients on Snapchat. The study basically involved the interaction between the researcher and participants on digital prostitution on Snapchat. The qualitative approach was used because of its exploratory nature and its ability to produce in-depth and rich detailed data as participants shared their experiences of online prostitution in a conversational way, rather than giving straightforward answers. The study sought to interpret the meanings, views, perspectives, experiences and practices expressed in data as well as making critical interpretations of the participants meaning (Bruan & Clarke, 2013).

### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is an action plan for getting the research done from the initial set of questions to be answered to the conclusions of these questions. According to Bellmann and Upward (2007), a research design is a blueprint, a guide and an enabler to address research objectives. Sekaran (2010) adds that research design imbibes a high sense of defined purpose and goals that matches the research objectives. Creswell (2014) described research design as a strategy, plan, and a structure of conducting a research project. Creswell (2014) also states that the selection of a research design is mostly dependent on the nature of the research problem or the issue being addressed, the

researcher's personal experiences and the audience for the study. This implies that the adopted strategies should be consistent to address the research objectives. The qualitative research approach was used for this study and the available designs for qualitative research approach includes narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), ethnography and case study (Alase, 2017; Colling ridge & Gantt 2008). Considering the nature of the purposes and nature of the research problem, the study adopted the phenomenology research design. Neubauer et al (2019) defines phenomenology as an approach to research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it. Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. Collingridge and Gantt (2008, p. 393) assert that "The purpose of phenomenology is to understand phenomena from the perspective of those who experience the phenomena. "The focus of this methodology is on understanding the unique lived experience of individuals by exploring the meaning of a phenomenon." From this descriptive data, further interpretation and analysis enables the researcher to uncover a description of the 'essence' of the phenomenon; the universal meaning for individuals (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). To derive the essence, the researcher puts to one side their own views of the phenomenon, referred to as bracketing, in order to deepen their understanding" Petty et al (2012, p. 379). Alase (2017) also suggests that phenomenology method enables the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the research participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

The key objective of a phenomenological study is to explicate the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experiences of a person or a group of people around a specific phenomenon (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). The phenomenology research design was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to put his perceived knowledge and feelings aside to understand how prostitutes interacted on social media. It was also chosen to help identify the meanings behind human experience as it is related to a phenomenon or notable collective occurrence (Creswell, 2013), in this case, the experiences of people engaging in online prostitution. This prevented the researcher from bias reporting. Through in-depth interviews, the researcher gathered the experiences of the prostitutes on how they use social media app, Snapchat to be precise, to communicate.

### **3.3 Population**

The population, according to Babbie (2010), refers to a group of people who share characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. Bhandari (2020) also defines as the entire group that you want to draw conclusions about. The population for this study were digital (online) sex workers on Snapchat in Ghana. However, Bhandari (2020), posits that populations are used when your research question requires, or when you have access to, data from every member of the population. For this research, a target population was used since it was difficult to get the entire population. However, the target population were some selected digital (online) sex workers on Snapchat in Accra, Ghana. Shetty (2023), generally recommends that for in-depth interviews it is important to have a sample size of 20-30, if similar segments within the population are built. In some cases, a minimum of 10 is acceptable – assuming the population integrity in recruiting. However, due to the sensitive nature of the study and the difficulty in getting

the respondents, a sample size of six (6) was used for the study after having reached saturation.

### **3.4 Sampling and Sampling Technique**

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) aver that no qualitative project can capture every event as it unfolds. This assertion underscores the purposeful selection of participants of a particular study. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) further note that many qualitative researchers use a sampling strategy that guides their choices of what to observe or whom to interview. The right choice of sampling strategy enables researchers to make a systematic contact with communicative phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort. Creswell (2014) observes that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual materials) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. The sampling technique used for a study is important because it makes it easy for the researcher to identify and recruit the right participants. For this study, the researcher used convenient and snowballing sampling techniques. The convenient sample approach was used to recruit participants who are available and can be accessed for the study (Lunneborg, 2007). The snowballing approach, however, can be described as a chain referral approach (Etikan et al, 2016). This approach involves recruiting one person, and afterwards, the person would refer another person. This continues until the researcher is able to build a chain of participants.

The convenience sampling technique was used initially to recruit participants who were reachable and available for the study. The researcher had already spoken prior to this participant on Snapchat and through phone calls. Nonetheless, it became difficult to use the convenience sampling technique because some of the prior arranged participants

became unreachable and some were shy and ashamed because of the nature of their job. As a result, the researcher relied on the snowball technique for the subsequent participants. For this, the interviewed participants referred their colleagues to the researcher. The referred participants gained the trust of the researcher because of the recommendation from their colleagues. Participants were chosen based on their experiences and knowledge of the issue under investigation (Berg, 2004). Six people who engage in online prostitution were sampled for the purpose of data collection based on their experiences on Snapchat. Participants had to be users of Snapchat who were engaging in online prostitution.

### **3.5 Method of data collection**

There are two sources of data which is primary data and secondary data sources. This study relied on both sources of data collection. The primary source is the first-hand data collected from interviews conducted with six digital (online) sex workers. The primary source of data enabled the researcher to obtain fresh and new information on the topic. The secondary data, obtained from sources including previous works related to the study from journals, dissertations and books, were used during the initial stages of the research for literature review to provide understanding and give context for the current study. As stated by Ajayi (2017), secondary source is the summarization of the primary sources such as literature review.

#### **3.5.1 Semi-structured interview**

This study employed semi-structured interview technique to conduct in-depth interviews to collect data from the participants. According to Mason (2002), the term ‘qualitative interviewing’ refers to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. This may involve one-on-one interactions, larger group interviews or



focus groups and may take place face-to-face or over the telephone or internet. Mason (2002) further notes that most qualitative research operates from the perspective that knowledge is situated and contextual, therefore, the job of the interview is to ensure that relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be particularly useful for getting the story behind the participants' experiences. Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p.43) also aver that interviews allow participants' to "express and contextualize their true feelings rather than having them pigeon-holed into boxes and with little or no opportunity for contextualized explanations". The researcher used semi-structured interview as an instrument to collect data. As defined by Tegan (2022), a semi-structured interview is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. However, the questions are not set in order or in phrasing (Tegan, 2022). Semi-structured interviews combine elements of structured and unstructured interviews to ensure comparable, reliable data, and the flexibility to ask follow-up questions.

Doyle (2022), also explains that a semi-structured interview format encourages two-way communication. Thus, both the interviewer and the candidate can ask questions, which allows for a comprehensive discussion of pertinent topics. By employing semi-structured interview in this study, a set of questions were developed using an interview guide, while the interview allowed for follow-up questions from the researcher and questions for clarity from the participants. This is well espoused by Doyle (2022) who noted that a semi-structured interview format encourages two-way communication. In essence, both the interviewer and the candidate can ask questions and further the conversation (Doyle, 2022). The use of a semi-structured interview also ensured that the questions were not limited as in the case of a questionnaire, where predetermined questions are provided for respondents to answer, which gave more details and richness

to the work, Vaughan (2021). For this study, a set of questions were prepared to serve as a guide to the researcher. The interview guide helped in ensuring coherence in the questions asked to each interviewee, with respect to the research questions. The researcher's aim for using interviews as the data collection method was to study and understand the story behind the participants' lived experiences on online prostitution particularly on Snapchat. Participants were interviewed through face-to-face interactions with questions posed to them guided by the objectives of the study as well as participants' knowledge on the phenomenon. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explain that qualitative interview is an event in which the interviewer encourages others to freely articulate their interests and experiences. In-depth interviews allowed the participants to contribute much detailed information as they told their stories. The researcher also had the opportunity to track the flow of conversation towards the research objectives with questions from the interview guide. Qualitative interviews without doubt, proves to be the most remarkable adaptable method to conduct qualitative research (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), including this study.

### **3.6 Data collection Procedure**

The phenomena under study is highly sensitive, therefore, require that the researcher employ critical strategies to access the participants for the purpose of data collection. Prior to the data collection, the researcher had reached out to one of the participants by establishing friendship through Snapchat. It was that first point of contact that made referrals to reach out to the other participants for the study. As stated earlier, convenience and snowballing sampling techniques helped the researcher in accessing the other participants for the study. However, snowballing became the predominant sampling technique in reaching out to the participants. The snowballing technique was helpful because it was based on referrals. Since the other participants got to know that

their colleagues participated in the interviews without harm, they felt safe and assured. Apart from one, the other five who were interviewed demanded transportation for their time. Each of the five received GHC100.00 as transport fee.

Six people who use Snapchat for online prostitution exhibited interest in the study. Interestingly, they were not illiterates or ordinary ladies but university students, unemployed university graduates and a working nurse who are involved in this business for extra cash. All interviews were conducted in person with the interviews lasting on an average, an hour and thirty minutes each. It took two months to interview all the six participants for the research. The researcher made prior arrangements with respondents on Snapchat. Upon approval of the research proposal, the researcher informed the participants about the purpose and ethics of the study by sending them direct messages on Snapchat. The participants consented to participate in the study.

A number of questions were developed to have more prompts available and to ensure relevant information to the research questions were captured. The interview questions allowed for follow-up questions and clarity, when needed by the participants, thereby, making room for more depth, ensuring the rich data required their experiences. Because the interviews were conversational, it allowed for a flow as the participants also shared their experiences on the subject under study. The interviews were given to a professional transcriber to do the transcription for the purpose of generating codes for data analysis.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data collected for the study. Creswell (2014) indicates that data analysis involves segmenting and taking apart, the data just as one peels an onion and putting them back together to make meaning out of it. Lindlof

and Taylor (2002) explains that data management, data reduction and conceptual development are three fronts the researcher goes through to make progress in the research. Kim & Liu (2017), explains that data analysis involves the process of making sense of data collected for a study. Analyzing data, therefore, helps in making sense of the collected data to answer research questions or support or reject research hypotheses that a study is originally designed to assess.

Creswell (2013) identifies six steps followed in the process of qualitative data analysis. The very first step requires the researcher to organize and prepare the data for analysis through transcribing interviews, optimally scanning material, and cataloging each visual material among others. The second step according to Creswell (2013) is reading or looking at all the data. The essence of this step is to gain a general sense of the information and to secure the opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning. The third phase in qualitative data analysis is coding the data. In this case, a researcher organizes the collected data by categorizing the images and text and then labeling the categories with a term. In the fourth step, the coding process is utilized to come up with a description of the people, setting, or categories/themes for analysis. The step is essential as it helps to design detailed descriptions for different forms of research initiatives (Creswell, 2013). The penultimate step mandates the researcher to advance the manner in which themes and descriptions will be represented in the qualitative narrative. For example, a researcher may opt to use a narrative passage to confer the outcomes of the analysis. The last step, but not least, is making an interpretation of the findings or the results. The phase requires a researcher to ask him/herself about the lessons gained. One meaningful way data was reduced was by coding them into sub-themes and themes. All the interviews were recorded with iPhone 6s mobile phone after consent had been sought from the participants. The researcher after every interview played and listened

to the audio over and over again to make sure the recording was clear and each word could be heard. Once this was done, the audio was given to a professional transcriber to do the transcription for the purpose of generating codes for data analysis. When the transcription was done, the researcher applied the analytic process of reading and re-reading the transcribed notes to find emerging themes and also search for connections across emerging themes. The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify themes, and these themes are patterns in the data that are important and recurring, and use these themes to address the research questions. This method aided the researcher to identify themes and patterns in the data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). They emphasized that thematic analysis is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights. The researcher ensured that the story, views and experiences of the participants were told using their own words by highlighting excerpts from the transcript and ensured the quotes were accurately presented during the narrative summary.

A response to each interview question was carefully read through as it had been transcribed to develop themes. During this process, the researcher noted instances where two participants' statements needed to be clarified or expanded and the participants provided the clarity. The themes were generated from the interviews with digital (online) prostitutes with respect to the research objectives, and were mainly done manually from close readings of the transcripts. The main research questions are; reasons for engaging in prostitution on Snapchat, understand how digital (online) sex workers portray themselves on Snapchat to clients and understand how digital (online)

sex workers on Snapchat communicate their services. The three main themes that were generated to answer the first research question were security, convenience and fun. The main theme that addressed the second research question of how prostitutes portray themselves on Snapchat was body advisement. Lastly, the themes that emerged on how prostitutes communicate their services on Snapchat were video updates, sexting and direct post.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

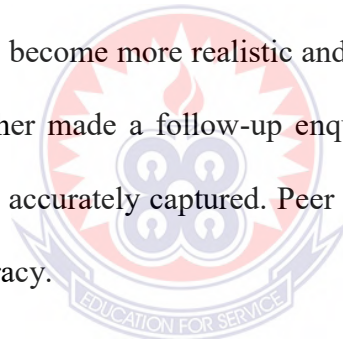
Ethical considerations are vital in a study that involves human subjects. Bowen (2009) asserts that a researcher during a study must be objective and sensitive in the selection and analysis of data. The researcher recognized some paramount issues that came up for consideration. They were issues of confidentiality, informed consent and anonymity. The researcher was careful to abide by all the research ethics. The researcher made prior arrangements with respondents by sending them direct messages on Snapchat and informed them about the research and sought for their approval before dates and time were arranged for the interviews. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the research participants. After that, the researcher sought the verbal consent of the participants in a simple yes or no response. The research participants were informed that they could terminate the interview at their discretion and the researcher ensured that the participants were not coerced to participate. The participants were informed about the researcher's intent to record the interviews before the interviews proceeded.

Furthermore, personal information such as home address was not taken. The researcher also did not have any sexual intimacy with any of the respondents. The responses of the participants were also kept confidential and their identities, kept anonymous. This was

done to protect the privacy of human subjects while collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. Where possible, researchers aim to assure participants that every effort will be made to ensure that the data they provide cannot be traced back to them in reports, presentations and other forms of dissemination was also complied (Wiles et al 2008).

### **3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study**

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) assert that for researchers to be sure of the quality of their interpretations and methods they used to arrive at them, interpretations must be true, correct and dependable. They explain that the question of trustworthiness has to do with the consistency of observations. Creswell (2014) indicates that when researchers provide detailed description on the setting of a research or provide diverse perspective about a theme, the results become more realistic and richer. To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher made a follow-up enquiry from participants to confirm whether their views were accurately captured. Peer review of the transcripts was also done to confirm the accuracy.



### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided the methodology employed for this study on how prostitutes use Snapchat to communicate. The qualitative approach and phenomenology design were used for this study. The convenience and snowballing technique were used to recruit participants. With the use of an interview guide, in-depth interviews were conducted for this study. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses findings derived from the data collected from the six participants for the study. It analyzes the interviews conducted with these participants to explore their lived experiences, motivations, and perceptions about the phenomenon of online prostitution. The purpose of this research was to examine the phenomenon of digital prostitution in Ghana through the use of Snapchat. To ensure the interviewees' anonymity, the researcher used numbers to represent the six participants instead of their names. Having conducted in-depth interviews with the six participants, the researcher had a wealth of data from which three main themes emerged. Interestingly, these participants were not illiterates. They were university students, unemployed university graduates and a working nurse who are involved in this business for extra cash. With respect to the objectives of the study, the themes derived from the data collected were; to examine the reasons people engage in prostitution on Snapchat, examine how sex workers portray themselves on Snapchat and identify how sex workers use Snapchat to communicate their various services to their clients.

#### 4.1 RQ1: Why do people engage in prostitution on Snapchat?

The first objective sought to identify why sex workers use Snapchat for their work. Thus, the researcher wanted to understand why Snapchat is predominantly used by sex workers. To achieve this purpose, open-ended questions were asked on the types of social media applications they use for work, and why the app is their most preferred. The major themes that emerged were: Security, convenience and fun.



#### 4.1.1 Security

The prevalence of prostitution has shifted to social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat. Out of these apps, Snapchat has emerged as the most popular choice among sex workers due to its privacy features, which allow them to communicate with their customers and maintain anonymity. Sex workers are concerned about their privacy and choose to use Snapchat over other apps because it ensures their security and anonymity. According to Lutnick et al. (2018), the private communication capabilities of Snapchat allow sex workers to establish a sense of familiarity and trust with their clients. Additionally, the disappearing message feature further enhances the privacy and security of both parties involved in the exchange. These reasons align with the Conflict theory of prostitution, which emphasizes the relationship between power and sex work. Prostitution is made illegal by those in positions of power, leading to the preference for secret transactions by sex workers. Moreover, building relationships with clients over time aligns with Walther's (2008) Social Information Processing Theory, which explains how people come to know each other online and create and manage relationships in a computer-mediated setting. As a result, sex workers prefer using Snapchat for their transactions instead of other apps, as stated by one of the participants:

*“It’s just their privacy, their way of deleting messages.... messages just disappear and when someone screenshots your snap you will have a notification on your phone that someone or people have screenshotted your message. You will also know the number of people who have read your messages.” (Participant 4)*

As explained by the participants, the core feature of the app used by prostitutes is the ability to upload pictures and videos, which is referred to as a "snap." This feature allows them to set the duration of a Snap when sending it to a customer, and once it has been viewed, it will be automatically deleted after one to ten seconds, without leaving

any traces behind. However, followers of the prostitutes can re-watch snaps or stories as many times as they want within a 24-hour timeframe. The prostitute, also known as the "snapper," is in control of how long people can view their videos and pictures. The maximum time limit for automatic deletion of videos and pictures is 24 hours. To emphasize the use of snapchat because of security, a participant had this to say:

*“Yes, so that there are no records of any dealings. With snapchat I can prefer to use any picture for my profile, any name and even if I send you my picture, after some few minutes it disappears, and you can't screenshot whatever that I've sent to you” (Participant 2).*

Participant 6 added *“I use Snap that's how you monitor the people that watch you every day and those that take pictures and videos (screenshot) of your snap. It is much more secure to me than the other platforms.”*

The participants stressed the fact that Snapchat does not save chats and snaps, but rather deletes them once the recipient has viewed them. Additionally, any messages or snaps that go unread for 30 days are also instantly destroyed. This method ensures greater privacy for users, preventing their messages and snaps from being saved on the servers. Furthermore, sex workers on Snapchat prefer to remain anonymous to the public to avoid cyber-attacks, cyberbullying, and defamation on social media. Snapchat protects their locations, names, pictures, and videos, allowing them to maintain their anonymity. Moreover, they can filter potential clients and block those who pose a security threat from future communications. A participant shared this viewpoint:

*“For street prostitution, your face is on the street so everyone sees you but for Snapchat, you get to see me if we fix a date. I will choose Snapchat for this work because it comes with some sort of respect but the street is not safe and people talk trash to you just because you want money from them but if that happens on Snapchat, I can easily block you,” (Participant 5).*

#### 4.1.2 Convenience

Convenience was a significant theme among the participants, who praised Snapchat's user-friendly features. They found the app easy to use and appreciated its policies, which do not allow for liking or sharing. As a result, they could send brief messages to their followers without any complications.

According to Walther et al. (2008), online relationships are convenient because they allow for swift and efficient communication. Over time, these relationships can become just as intimate as face-to-face ones. During the interview, many participants mentioned their busy schedules and the difficulty of finding time to go to a photo studio to shoot photos and videos to post on Snapchat. However, they found that Snapchat's photo and video filters were a time- and cost-saving solution. By using their phones to take photos and videos and Snapchat filters to edit them, they could quickly create and post content. One participant commented:

*“It is easy to use. All you have to do is take a picture using your phone's camera, choose the people you want to send it to from your contacts, choose how long you want the message to be visible (up to 10 seconds), and hit submit. The recipient merely taps to view a snap, which is remarkably similar to receiving a text message. Once the time restriction has passed, the message also vanishes from their phone,”* (Participant 1).

#### 4.1.3 Fun

During the interviews, participants revealed that sex workers not only use Snapchat for business but also for recreational purposes. Although Snapchat was originally intended for private photo sharing between individuals, it has evolved to include features such as video sharing, live video chatting, messaging, creating caricature avatars, and sharing a chronological “story” with all followers. The Discovery section even features condensed content from well-known publishers like BuzzFeed. Sex workers can use

Snapchat to link photos and videos together into a "story" that their followers can view as a reel. This reel is only available for 24 hours, but sex workers can save their entire story or individual snaps to their private storage, known as Memory, for later viewing.

One participant shared that:

*“Snapchat is very playful and a lot of things there are brief in 24 hours a lot of things (the pictures and videos you post) are all gone; it disappears a few minutes after posting them. They have a lot of filters and they are the ones that really started these filters, you don’t really need much to enhance how you look in terms of dressing, makeup, it’s just fun when you know what you’re doing... etc.,”* (Participant 3)

## **4.2 RQ2: How do sex workers portray themselves on Snapchat?**

### **4.2.1 Body advertisement**

Kinesics and objectics are two types of nonverbal communication that convey messages through body movements and the use of objects. Kinesics involves the use of body language, such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture, to convey meaning. Objectics, on the other hand, involves the use of objects, such as clothing and personal belongings, to communicate messages about the self and the environment.

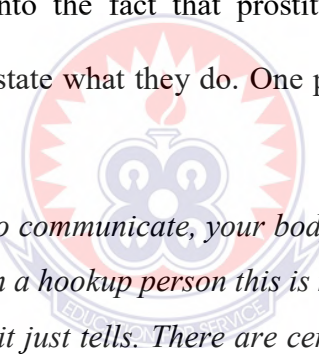
Kinesics can be used to convey a range of emotions and intentions, from happiness and excitement to anger and aggression. For example, a person who is feeling happy and confident may stand tall with their shoulders back, while a person who is feeling angry or defensive may cross their arms or take a defensive posture. Kinesics can also be used to communicate social status, such as by using dominant or submissive body language. Objectics can also communicate a range of messages, such as personality traits, cultural values, and social status. For example, clothing choices can communicate information

about a person's personality and identity, while personal belongings such as a car or phone can signal social status and economic power.

For this study, the participants said they mix their trade with the sale of clothes and obviously it is the sale of bikinis and lingerie. They wear these clothes and post pictures of themselves in those revealing outfits not only to market the clothes but themselves as prostitutes as well.

Both kinesics and objectics can be important forms of nonverbal communication in a variety of contexts, including business, social interactions, and personal relationships. Understanding and interpreting nonverbal communication can be important for effective communication and building relationships.

This response dovetails into the fact that prostitutes also use nonverbal form of communication to clearly state what they do. One participant for example had this to say:



*“You don’t have to communicate, your body tells it all, you don’t necessarily have to say ‘yo I’m a hookup person this is my number call me for this call me for that’ ....no no, it just tells. There are certain things that you do, you don’t have to necessarily open your mouth to say it, it just tells. Like sometimes I will just put an appetizing video there with just me in my bikini twerking or dancing or putting my fingers in my mouth, it should tell you I’m calling for something.”*  
(participant 4)

The analysis also draws on the conflict theory of prostitution which posits that women engage in sex work due to systemic factors such as economic disparities and patriarchal structures. Treviño (2014) discovered evidence that participants in their study recognized their bodies as commodities for financial gain, thus reinforcing this theory. The sex workers on Snapchat have honed their skills in marketing their services, as demonstrated by their strategic use of the platform to showcase their exotic body parts. When asked how clients can identify them as sex workers, the participants consistently

pointed to their body part exhibitions on Snapchat. The following are some examples of responses from participants.

*“On Snapchat people advertise a lot of things, so for us, it is important to portray ourselves in ways that are recognizable. The easiest way is to show our seductive body parts. When the men see it, they know exactly what we do,”*  
(Participant 5)

Participant 4 also noted that: *“God’s creation...what you see is what you get, yes so, I will just flaunt it out for you then you just have to Dm (send a direct message) to my premium.”*

Participant 1 added: *“You don’t have to communicate, your body tells it all, you don’t necessarily have to say ‘yo I’m a hookup person this is my number call me for this call me for that’....no no, it just tells. There are certain things that you do, you don’t have to necessarily open your mouth to say it, it just tells. Like sometimes I will just put an appetizing video there with just me in my bikini twerking or dancing or putting my fingers in my mouth, it should tell you I’m calling for something”.*

Additionally, the participants noted that due to Snapchat's policies against open prostitution, sex workers had to mix their body exhibitions with other services, such as suggestive and seductive clothing sales, to create the impression that they were sex workers. Treviño's conflict theory suggests that prostitution persists despite its illegality because dominant groups desire to maintain cultural hegemony. This is evident in the participants' portrayal of themselves as escorts, as noted in the study. These escorts are often hired by prominent individuals who require companionship for significant social events and offer substantial financial compensation, thereby promoting the participation of poor women in the sex trade. With recent technological advancements, sex workers can interact with clients online without having to meet in person, in line with the Social Information process.

This involves the use of web-based platforms, such as websites, to publish pictures, ages, body postures, prices, phone numbers, and device addresses so that clients can get in touch with prostitutes directly or via pimps. Social networking and user interface are also facilitated through online media, including chat programs, audio, and video discussions.

#### **4.3 RQ3: How do sex workers use Snapchat to communicate their services to clients?**

Effective communication is crucial for sex workers to attract clients, and their advertising strategies play a significant role in their business success. On social media platforms, including Snapchat, sex workers often use suggestive material to advertise their services. Such advertising initiatives frequently feature images with sexual overtones. The two emerging themes in this study were video updates and sexting

##### **4.3.1 Video updates**

Walther's (2008) Social Information Processing Theory asserts that computer-mediated communication allows individuals to establish and maintain relationships online without the use of nonverbal cues. This unique communication opportunity has led to the emergence of video updates and sexting, particularly in social media platforms like Snapchat. Green-Hamann et al. (2011) highlighted the novelty of developing online relationships with people who are far away and how video updates have become a popular tool among sex workers to attract clients.

Findings from the study revealed that these sex workers keep a list of subscribers and classify them into promotional and premium accounts to ensure they can maintain contact with them. One participant stated that she posts only censored or clothed content

on her public Snapchat story, while her private story is only available to those she has added back. These practices support the first assumption of the Social Information Processing Theory and the role of computer-mediated communication that humans always want to affiliate and seek social benefit. A participant confirmed this assumption when she said:

*“Clients who have paid to view my premium ads are added back and we communicate from there. We chat and one or two have become my friends,”*  
(Participant 2).

She also uses her public story to post live show announcements, sneak peeks, and behind-the-scenes.

*“I add everyone who requests me, as well as other model accounts on occasion. New contacts are promptly asked if they are adults and interested in paying a one-time price to read my private tale.”*

Nonverbal communication using Snapchat primarily consists of visual cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures, that are communicated through photos and videos. Research has shown that nonverbal communication plays a significant role in social interactions on Snapchat particularly among young people. This has been found to enhance the emotional expression and engagement of visual communication on the platform (Zhao et al., 2019). The use of emojis and text overlays can also convey nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice and emotions (Sumter et al., 2017). Thus given another approach is selling a compilation of short videos. Short videos range from one minute to two minutes. And it includes a variety of services that the sex workers offer including sex, blowjobs, escorts, cams, and video calls. The clients can watch a variety of videos and decide on the kind of services to opt for. A participant said:



*“Okay...sometimes I do some videos and compile them and then put the prizes of the services attached to it so while it is playing, you will be seeing all that”* (Participant 6).

Another added: *“I post nude videos and other porn videos...yeah that’s how I get their attention and sometimes I just take a picture of myself naked not fully naked but a part of me* (Participant 4).

#### **4.3.2 Sexting**

Walther’s (2008) third assumption of the social information processes theory posits that given enough time and messages, online relationships can become as intimate as those formed face to face. During the interaction with the sex workers it came to light that they usually send direct messages to client. Once it seems to have been mutually consented that the clients are comfortable, then sexting commences. They also revealed that they use these three approaches with clients - chats, videos, and saved pictures from the camera roll. So during conversation with clients all they both do is to just type in what they want to say and press send. Once they both exit the chat, the conversation is erased. Sexting is used by sex workers on Snapchat for a variety of purposes, including self-expression, boosting self-esteem, increasing sex chemistry, and starting, maintaining, and managing sexual relationships with clients. This was confirmed by a participant who stated that:

*Sometimes we chat, you can also send somebody voice note. If the person is interested, he will be sending messages to you on snap that this is what I want to see so I send you my Momo number, you pay, then we are good to go* (Participant 6).

#### **4.3.3 Direct post**

The findings from this study also highlight that sex workers also promote their services through direct posts on their snaps. In these posts, they advertise their services and

encourage interested individuals to send them direct messages for pricing information.

Over the course of nearly a year, I noted direct posts like the following:

*“VC (Video call) available until you cum, inbox with your money ready.”*

Other recurrent posts are:

*“Available for sex video”*

*“DM for video call”*

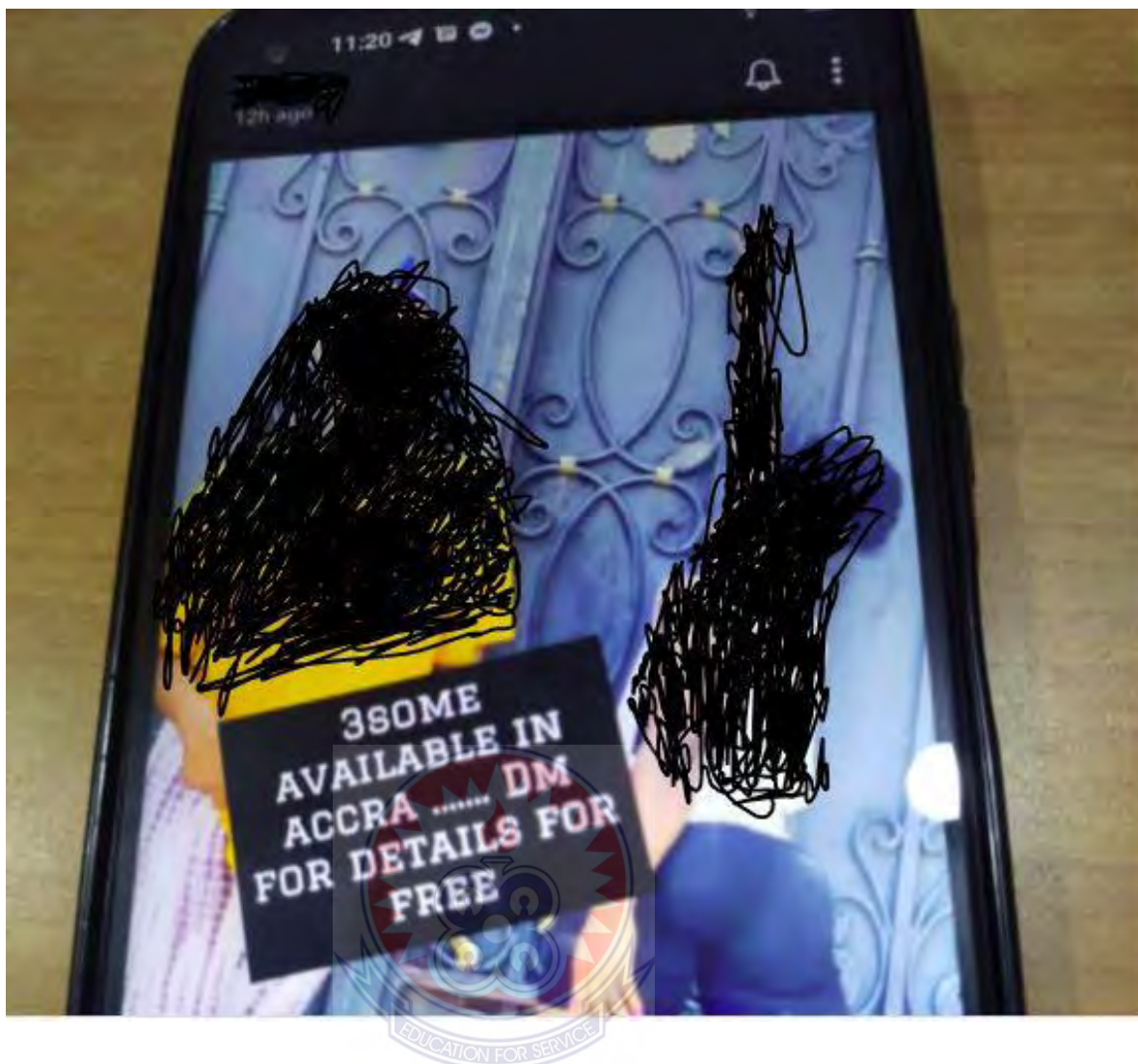
*“I’m selling my sex videos and nudes DM for price”*

*“I’m horny and ready to cum, if you’re interested DM, free room available”.*

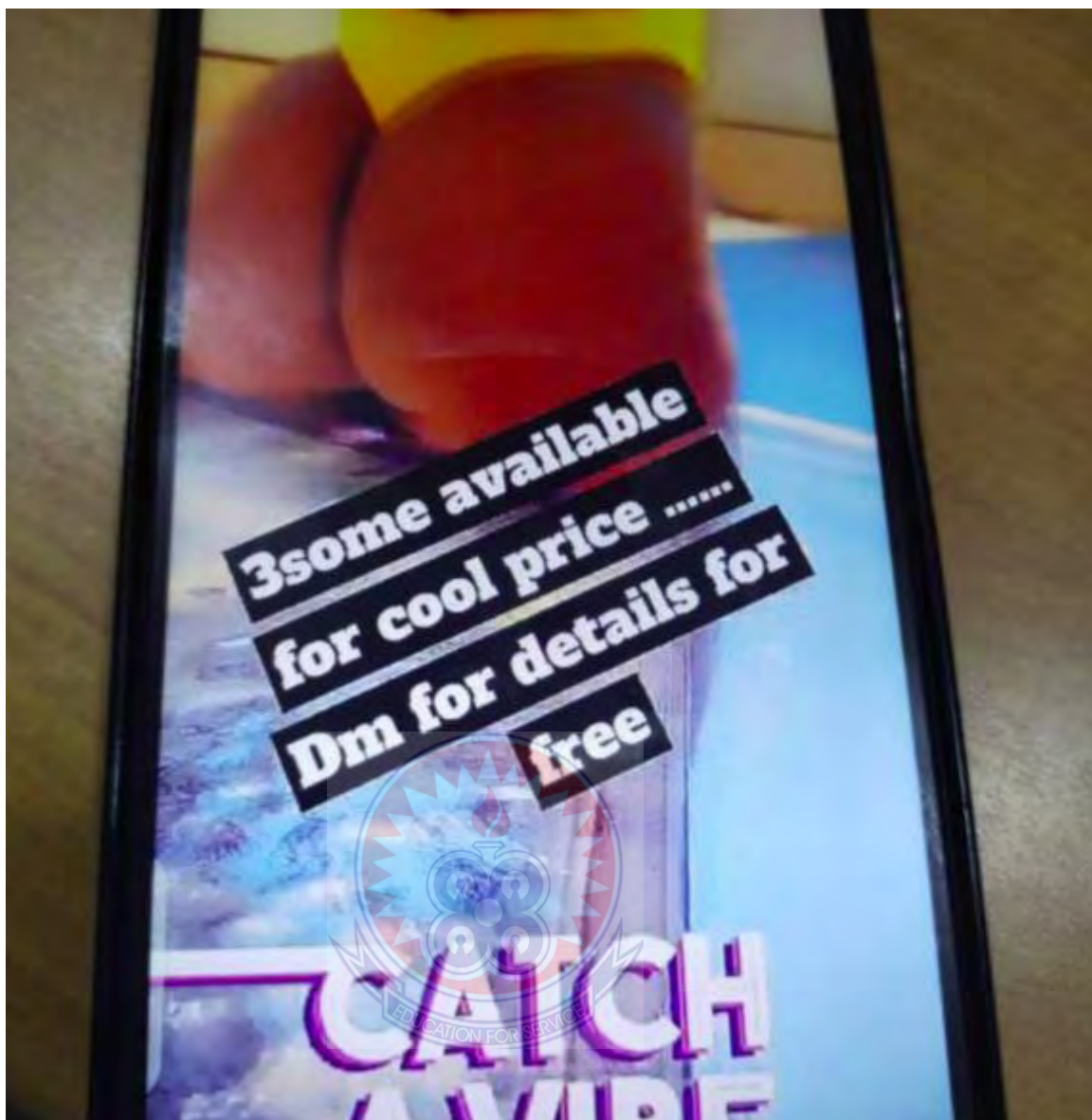
*“Threesome with me and my girl; DM if interested”*

Below are some pictorial evidence of their direct posts to communicate who they are and what they do:

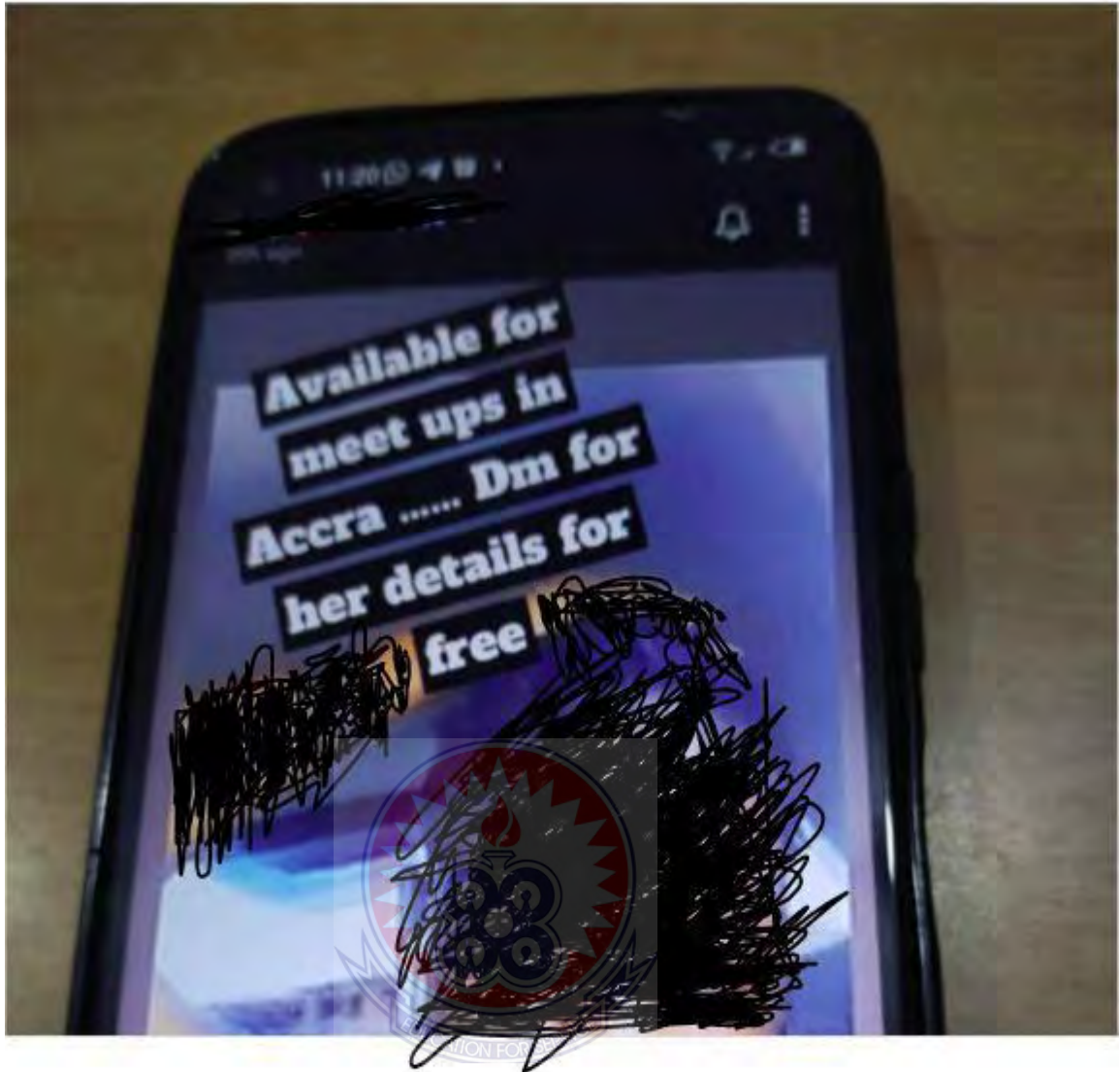




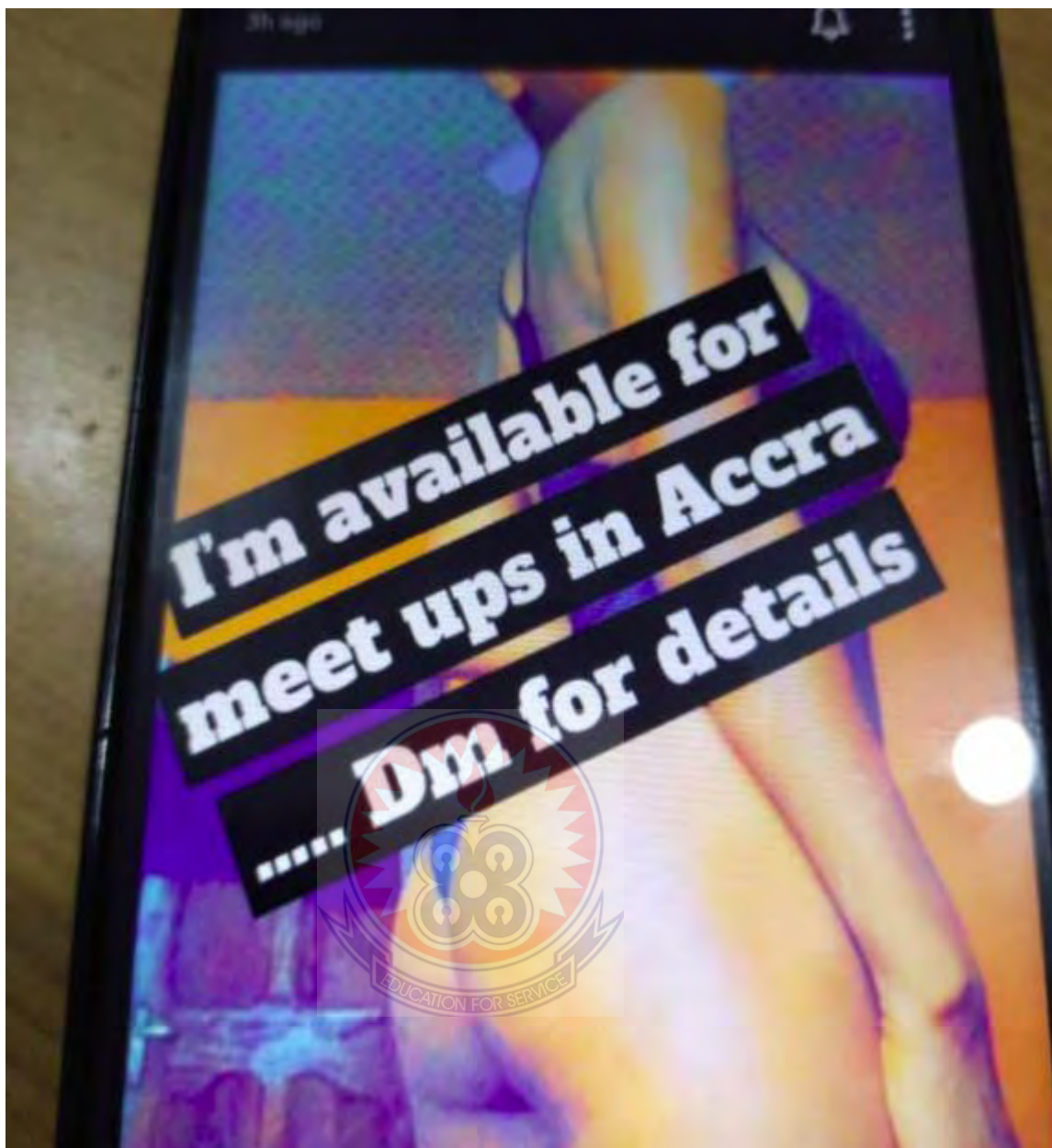
*Image 1: A post from participant 1*



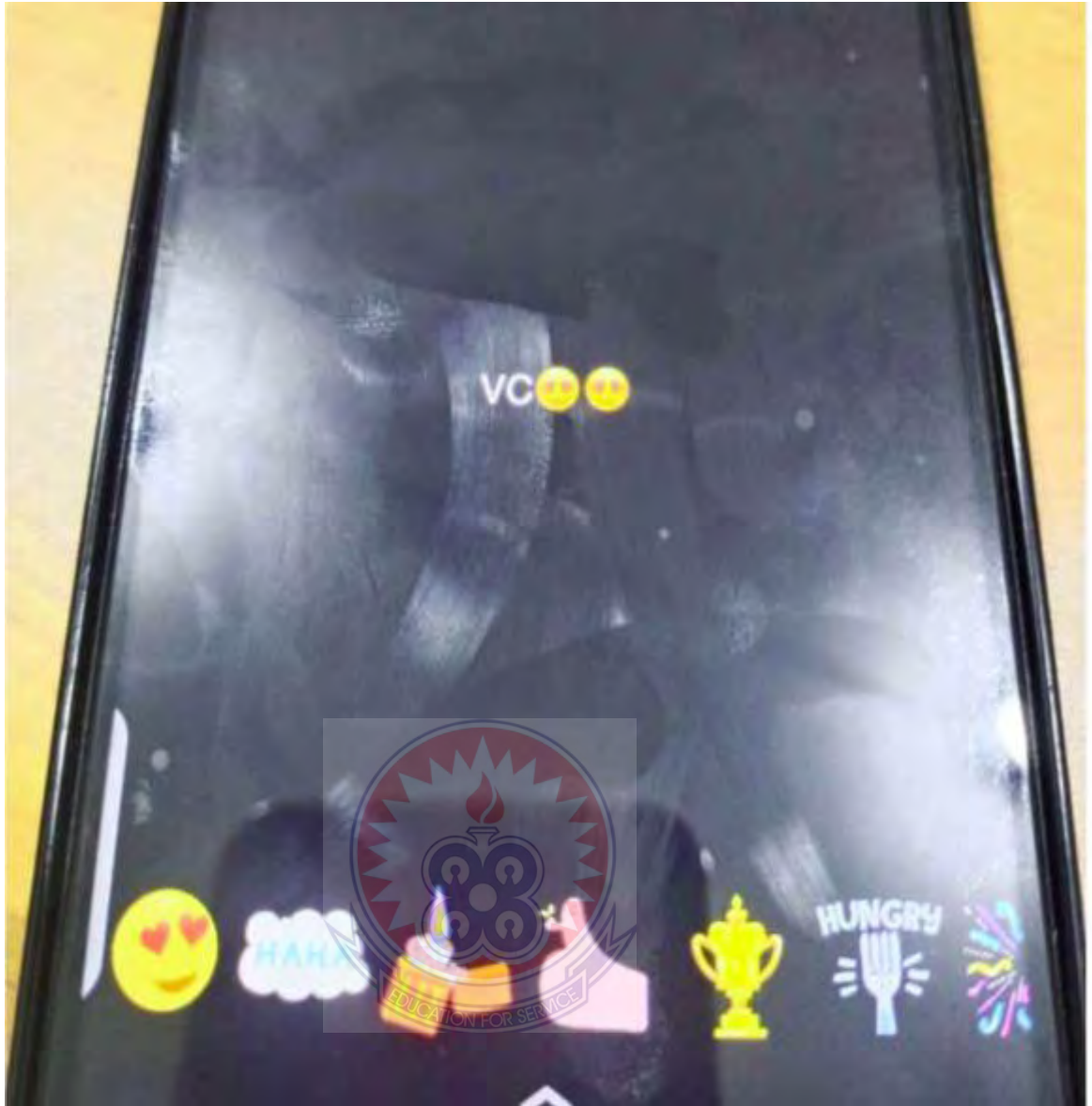
*Image 2: Another post from participant 1*



*Image 3: A post from participant 2*



*Image 4: Another post from participant 2*

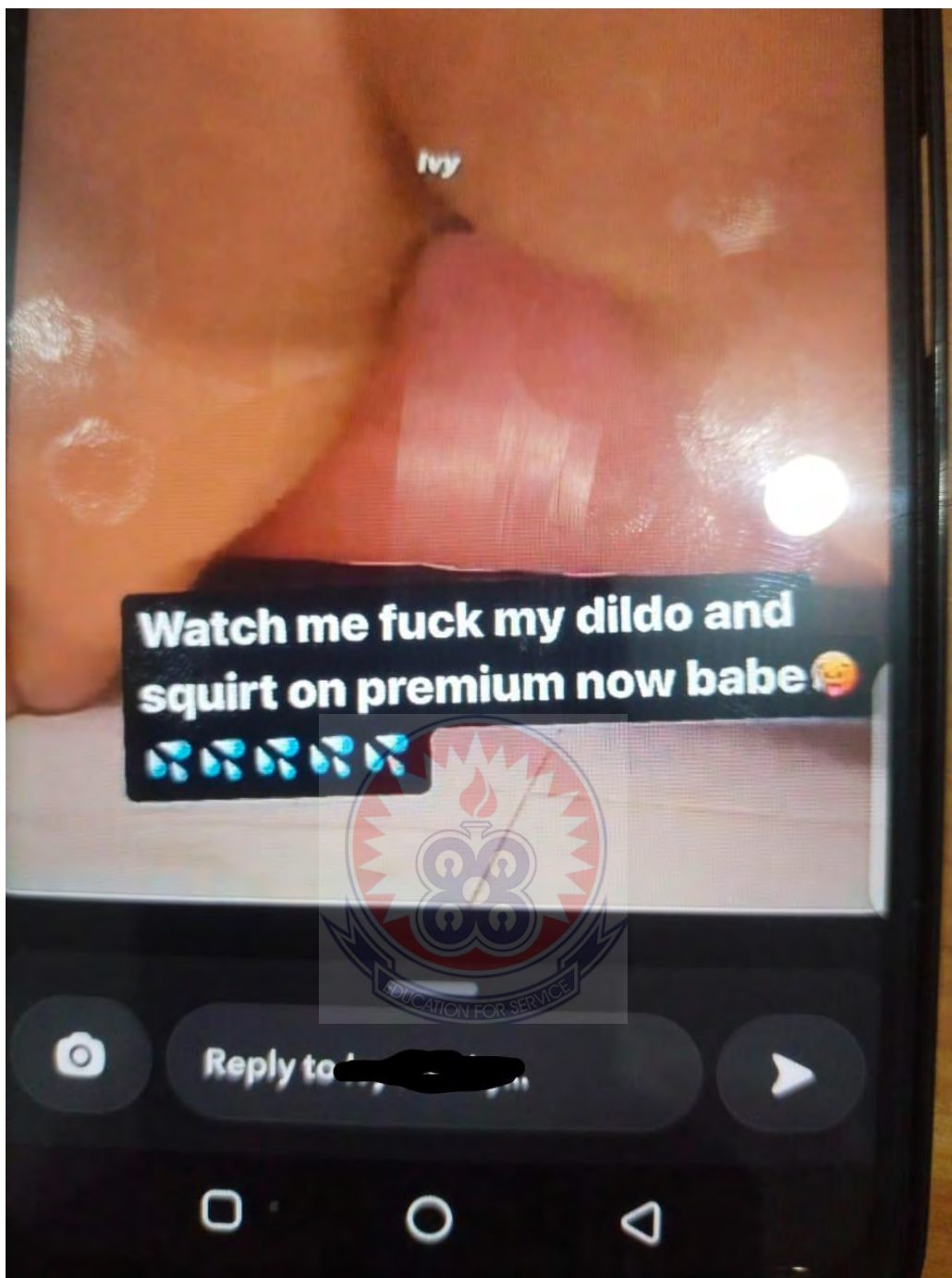


*Image 5: A post from participant 3*



*Image 6: Another post from participant 3*

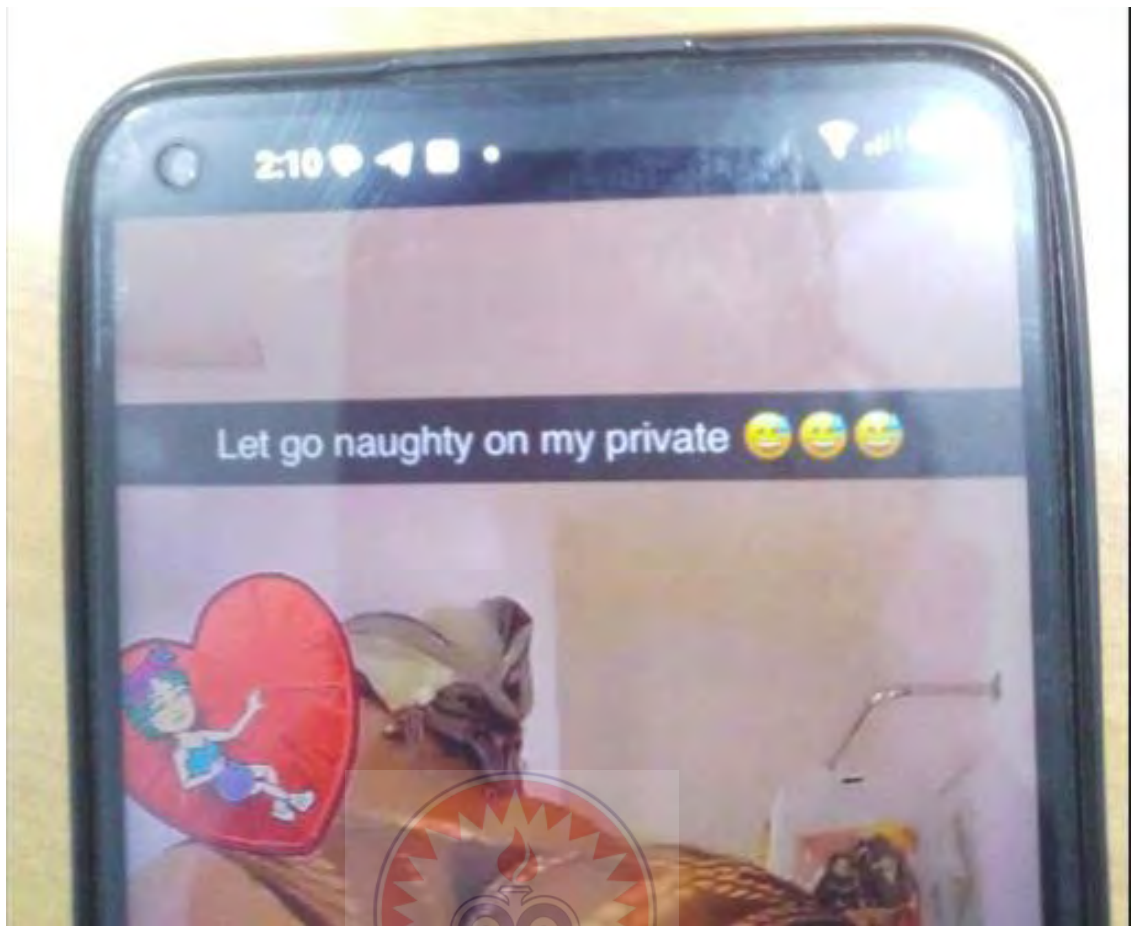




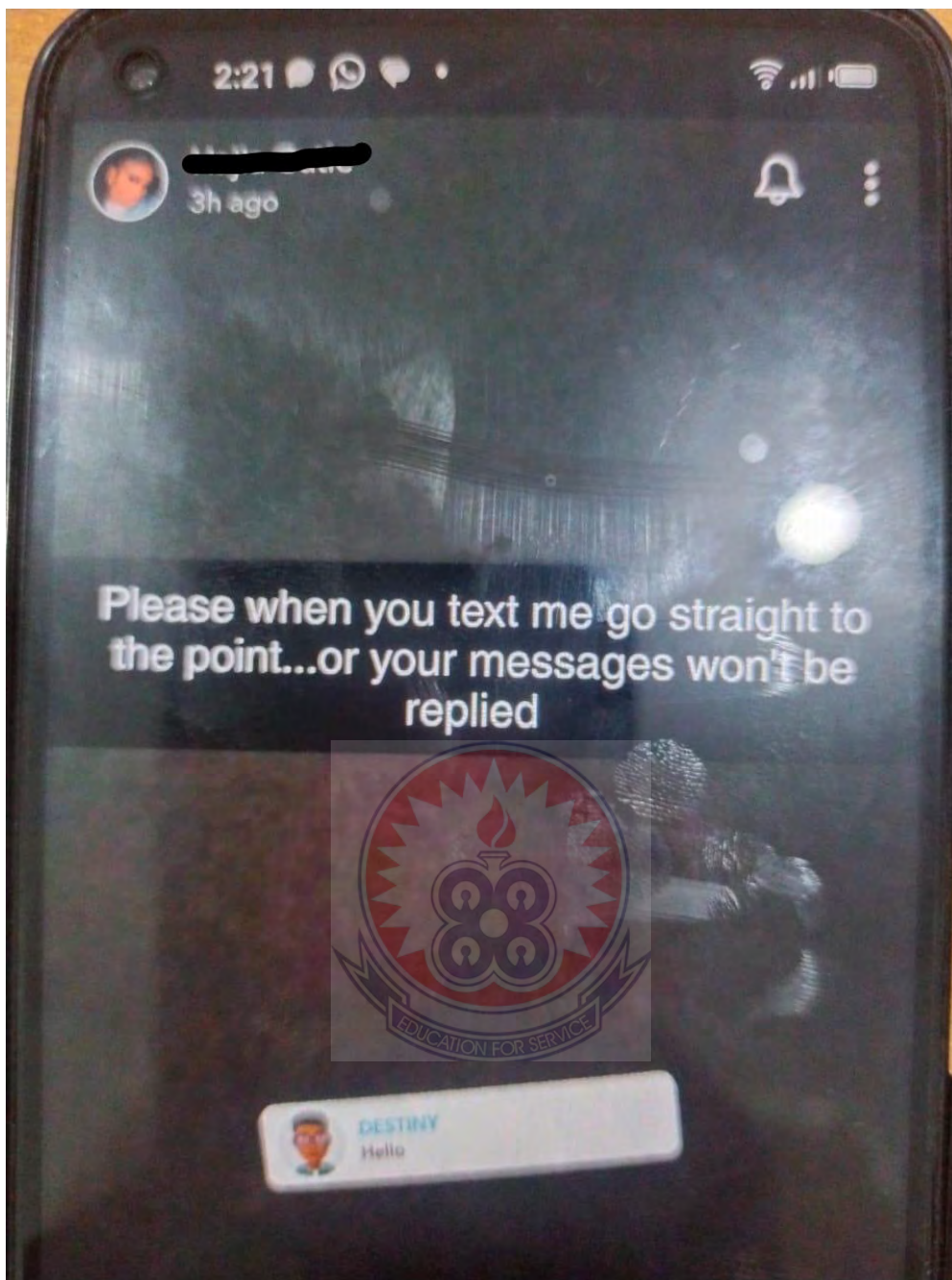
*Image 7: A post from participant 4*



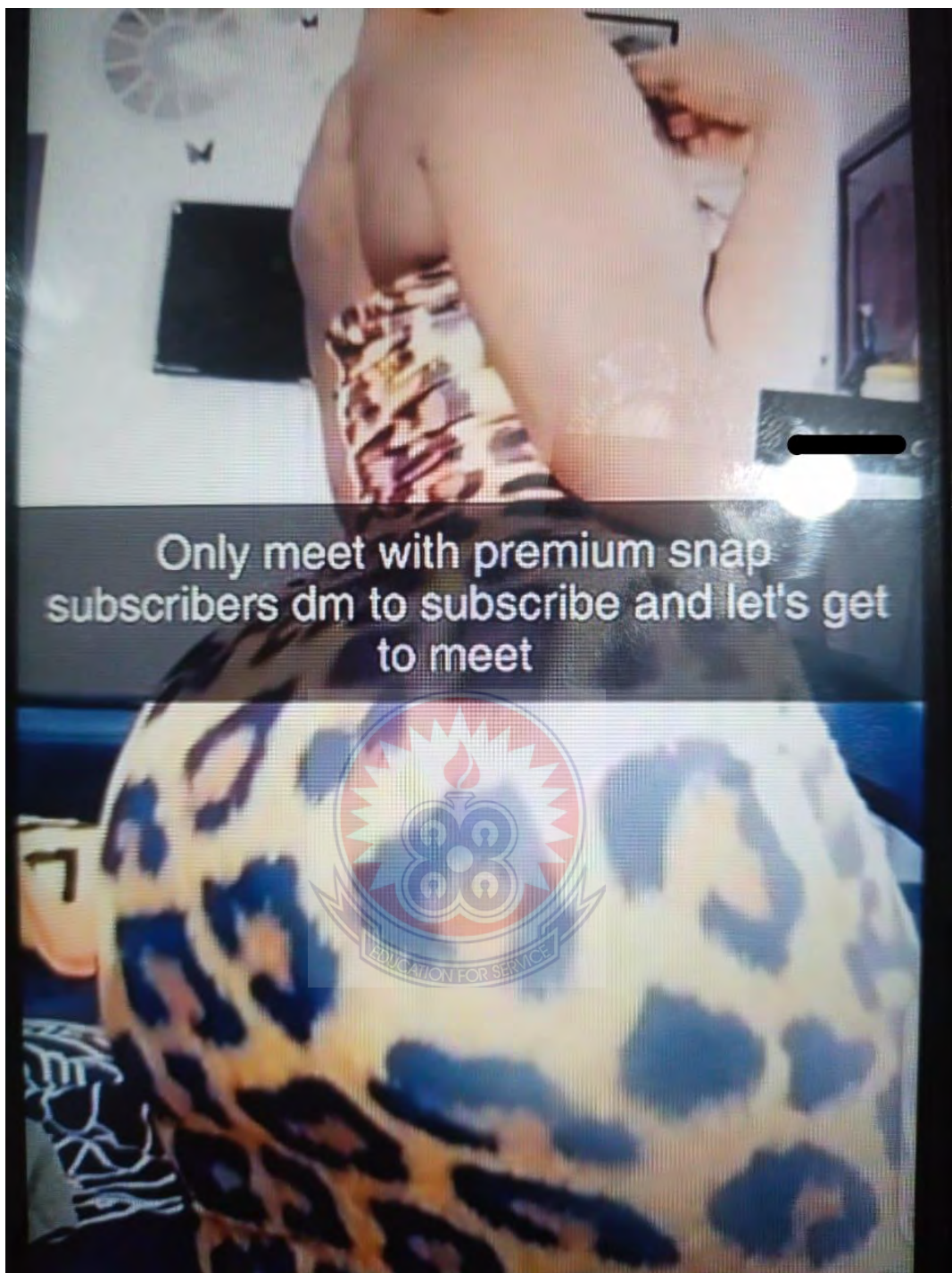
*Image 8: Another post from participant 4*



*Image 9: A post from participant 5*



*Image 10: Another post from participant 5*



*Image 11: A post from participant 6*



*Image 12: Another post from participant 6*

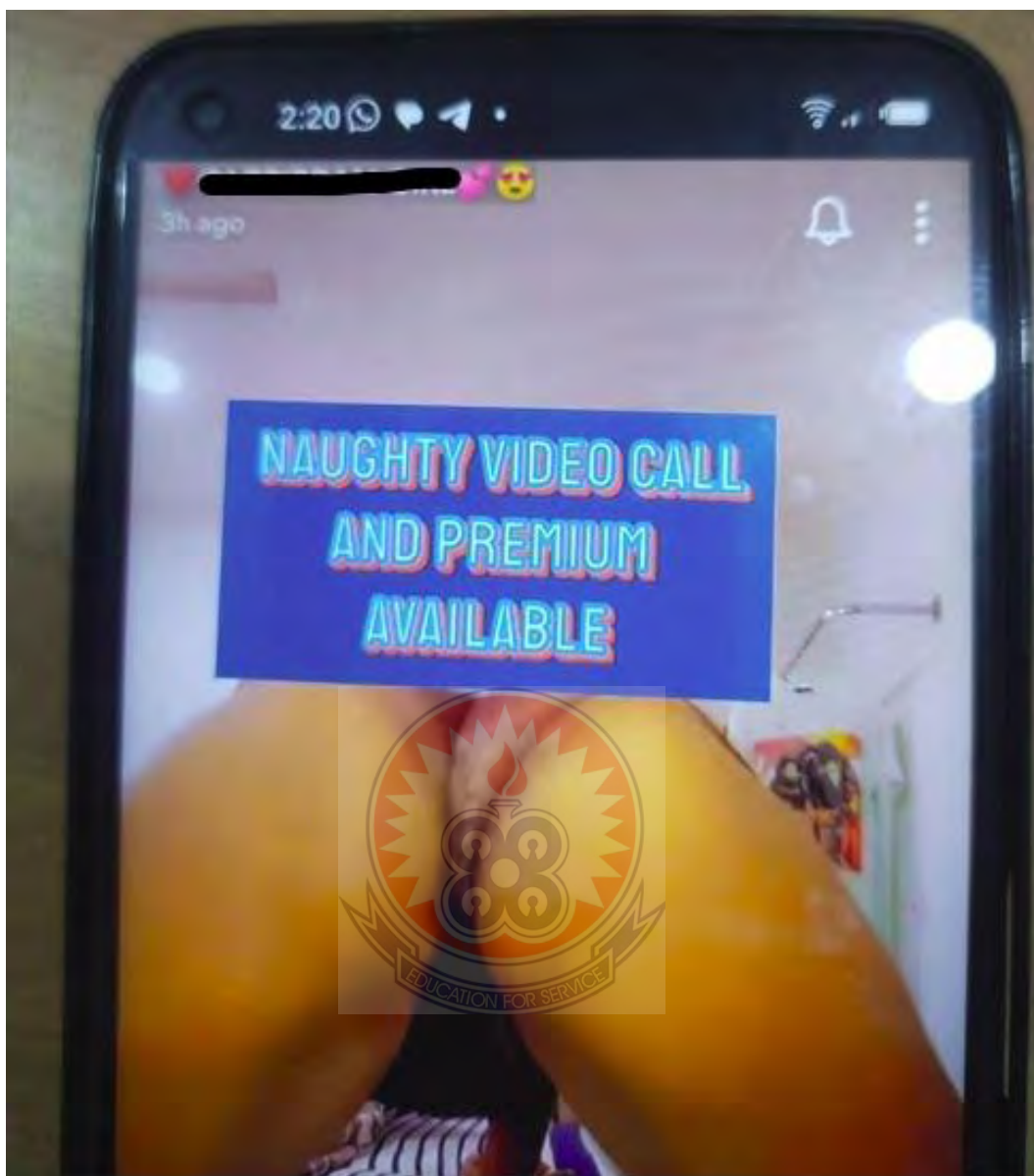


*Image 13: Post from participant 1*

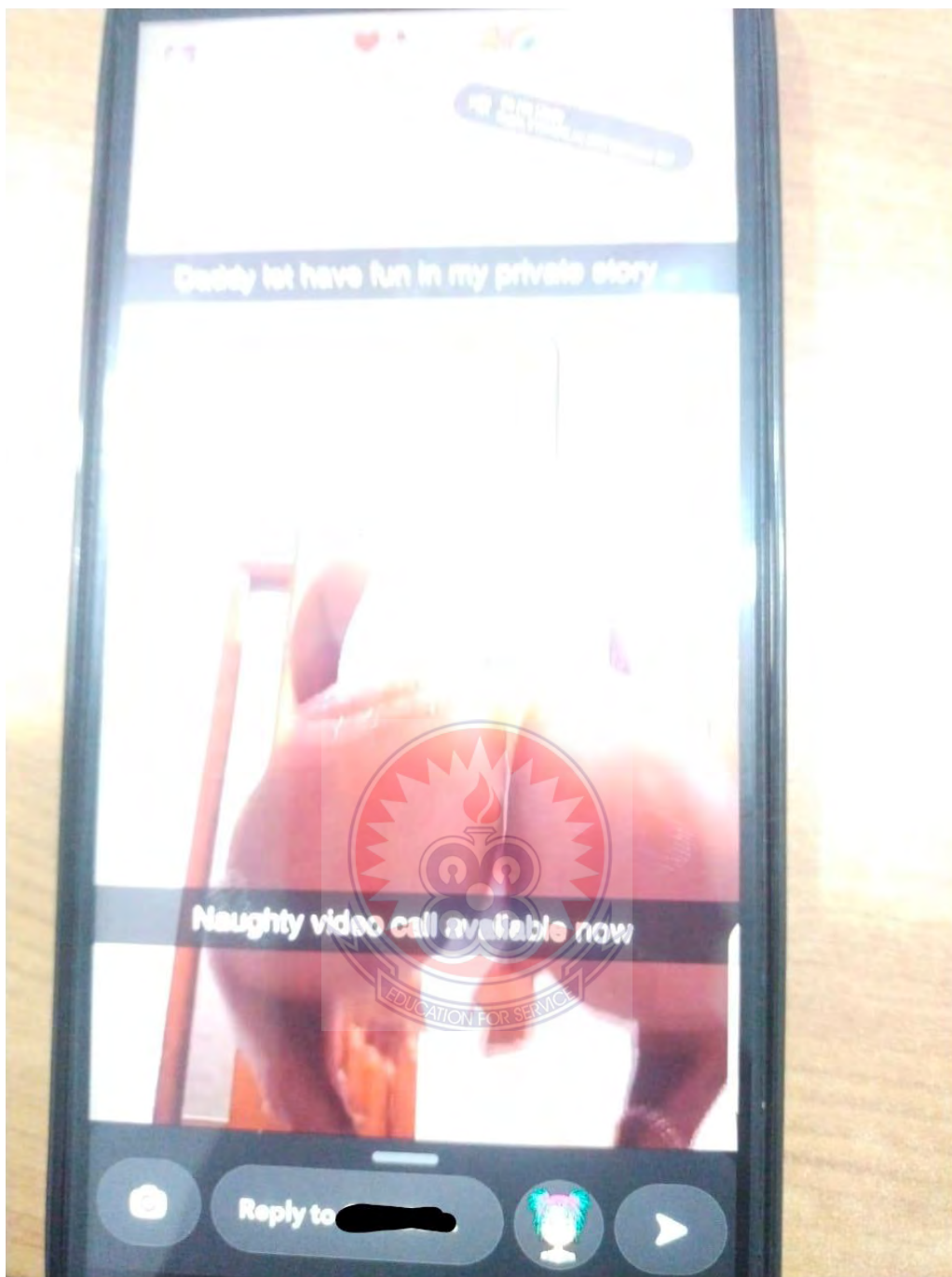


*Image 14: A post from participant 2*





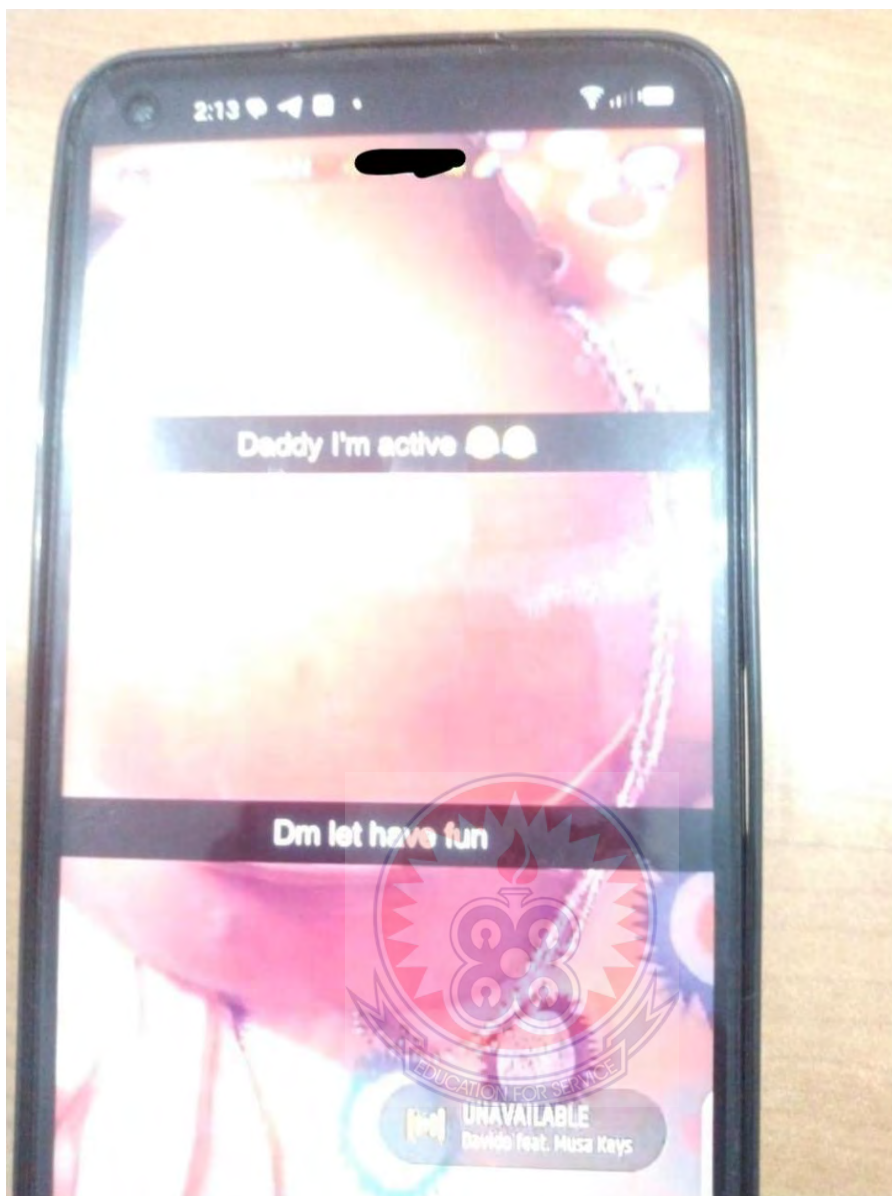
*Image 15: A post from participant 3*



*Image 16: A post from participant 4*



*Image 17: A post from participant 5*



*Image 18: A post from participant 6*

Unlike other social media platforms that retain posts indefinitely, posts made by Snapchat prostitutes disappear after 24 hours. Facebook and other platforms often save posts on their servers and may remind users of past posts. Due to frequent police raids on the physical locations of sex workers, Samarinda and Arsanti (2017) suggest that social media is now a common avenue for commercial sex work. Sex workers see it as an effective means of promoting their services, especially with the decline in other forms of advertising. Some have even stated that they would not be able to continue

working if they were limited to traditional forms of sex work, such as street and brothel work.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents the analyzed data and the key findings of the study on digital prostitution, which were then discussed in relation to past literature. The findings revealed that individuals engage in online prostitution due to security, convenience, and pleasure. Online sex workers use suggestive pictures and videos to attract potential clients. The study also found that sexting, direct posts and video updates were commonly used by digital sex workers to signal their availability for business.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

As an age-long practice and considered as the oldest profession the world over, prostitution, just like any other profession or society, continues to evolve as new trends develops. Today, not only do people portray themselves on the streets to engage in the act of trading their bodies for money, but with the rapid growth in technologies, people have resorted to the information technology devices and applications for the business of prostitution. The goal of this study was, therefore, to examine the phenomenon of digital prostitution in Ghana through the use of Snapchat, a multimedia instant messaging app and service. In order to achieve this, the study explored existing literature to put the current research into perspective and gathered new data to understand digital prostitution in Ghana. This final chapter serves as the concluding chapter where the findings are summarized and recommendations made for further studies, while pointing out the limitations of the study to shape future research.

#### 5.1 Summary and key findings of the Study

The first chapter introduced and set the tone for the study by giving the overview of what the study entailed. It discussed the background of the study which created the setting of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, and the research questions. The second chapter reviews literature of other research materials that are related to the topic and its objectives. This was done to help contextualize the study to fit into the arguments of other related studies. The chapter also explored various theoretical underpinnings of the study - Social Information Processing Theory, Conflict Theory of Prostitution and the Functionalist Theory of Prostitution.

The third chapter talked about the methodology used in the collection of data. It was established that due to the nature of the research, it would be appropriate to solicit the views of people who are engaged in online prostitution in Ghana to compliment the scores of literature on the subject. The study applied a qualitative research approach and used a phenomenological design as the grounds outlining the various methodological contours for data collection and analysis. Although (Kuzel, 1992) recommends a sample size of 11 to 21 participants for a qualitative study, the sensitive nature of the study and the difficulty in getting the participants, led to the use of a sample size of six for the study after having reached saturation.

In the fourth chapter, the data collected was analyzed to make meaning out of them. Since the study was qualitative, codes were derived from the transcribed and reviewed data out of which, themes were developed for the purposes of analysis. The findings were then discussed in tune with the three broad research objectives that formed the basis for this study.

The first objective of the study was to examine the reasons people engage in prostitution on Snapchat. The study found that people engaged in online prostitution for several reasons, predominantly, people engaged in online prostitution on snapchat for three reasons - security, convenience and fun. Through the use of Snapchat, prostitutes were able to reach out to more customers and notify them of their terms of engagement even before actual meeting. For those who engaged in the use of Snapchat for prostitution, it was observed that the app ensured privacy for online sex workers so they can keep in touch with their customers and kept their anonymity.

The study also found that people engaged in prostitution online with the help of Snapchat because it afforded them the convenience to do the business. Thus, with the app, they do not have to worry about their busy schedules, as it makes them schedule their free periods and make those who patronize their services know their times of availability. Also, the Snapchat photo and video features, enable filters and edit photos and videos without going to studios to spend huge sums of money for such, thereby, saves them time and money.

The online community, Snapchat, also enable people to access uncountable pictures and short videos. This function, do not only make the people who use it for prostitution to advertise themselves and their services, but to also have fun. It was observed that the reels, which lasted 24 hours on Snapchat served as an avenue for the online prostitutes to also have fun as they watch a number of playful videos.

The study also sought to examine how digital prostitutes portrayed themselves to clients. The study, therefore, sought from the users of Snapchat for digital prostitution various ways through which they presented themselves on the app. The study found that primarily, the digital prostitutes used bodily advertisement to attract people who got in touch with them online. They showed parts of their body in a seductive manner using pictures and videos to whet the appetite of those who sought for their services. In so doing, they wore bikini and other dresses that showed their bodies in a seductive manner, while others used twerking (dancing by shaking their buttocks) to make their bodies appealing to clients.

The third goal of the study was to examine how sex workers use Snapchat to communicate that they are sex workers (digital prostitutes). The study found two dominant ways through which online sex workers (digital prostitutes) communicated



that they are engaged in the act and were available for business - sexting and video updates. In addition, through observation on Snapchat, it was noted that others used direct post to communicate that they are sex workers.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Study**

The study failed to use a larger sample size due mainly to the unwillingness of people to be part of the study as well as financial and time constraints.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

Commercial sex work (prostitution) is illegal in many countries and legal in some but in Ghana, however, the law is silent on its legality, although it criminalizes child prostitution. Due to this silence, people continue to engage in the act, even in the open amid periodic ambush and arrest by the Police. With the emergence of technology and its associated online applications, the business of prostitution has seen its presence online – known in this study as digital prostitution. This study has established that the advancement in information and communication technology, which has spurred growth in the use of digital devices and applications including Snapchat, has led to some sex workers doing their trade online. Through the use of Snapchat, commercial sex workers are able to reach out to clients by directly and indirectly portraying themselves as sex workers. In doing so, they expose their bodies seductively through pictures and short videos as well as direct messages to attract clients. Engaging in such acts on the app, the study established that it provided security to users due to a premium functionality of Snapchat that provided anonymity. Again, it was established that the use of Snapchat for commercial sex afforded some convenience, particularly, time and made users saved some money. This is because users are able to use Snapchat to take pictures and edit them rather than engaging the services of professional photographers and

videographers, which was time consuming and costly. Apart from the commercial sex online, Snapchat also served as avenue to have fun by watching short videos that were entertaining.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study sought to examine from the perspective of online sex workers, the phenomenon of digital prostitution in Ghana, using Snapchat. Key findings from this research showed that the various objectives which this research sought to fulfil have been achieved. Thus, the study found out the reasons people engaged in digital prostitution using Snapchat - security, convenience and fun. The study also met the second goal which was to understand how prostitutes portray themselves on Snapchat, as was established that seductive body advertisement was the way through which digital prostitutes portrayed themselves to clients. Similarly, the third goal of the study, which was to know how digital sex workers communicated their various services to their clients on Snapchat was also achieved and it was established that sexting (sending any sexual material such as images, messages, and voice memos) and video updates for self-expression, increase sex chemistry, and start, maintain, and manage sexual relationships with clients were used as the mode of communication in digital prostitution. They also used direct post to tell clients who they are.

From the result of the study, the following recommendations are made:

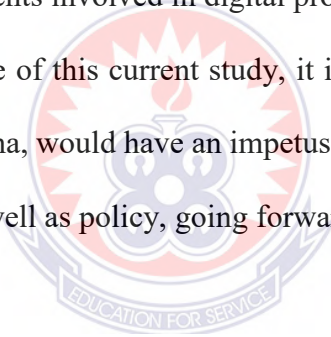
- The Ministry of Communication should regulate social media applications like Snapchat that is not strict on nudity. The ministry must in collaboration with the developers come to an agreement to limit the sexual freedoms the app provide its users or government bans snapchat totally just as China which does not permit social media apps from Europe and America to reduce this social cancer.

- A constitutional review where the laws against prostitution be it online or in person should be clearly stated with its punitive measures rather than the law remaining silent on it.
- Government must address the issue of youth unemployment as the quest for survival or to make ends meet drives some of these girls who are educated but unemployed into this business.

For academic purposes, the following have been suggested.

- i. It is recommended that future studies should explore the dangers associated with digital prostitution.
- ii. It is also recommended that future studies should explore the financial and material commitments involved in digital prostitution.

As a result of the outcome of this current study, it is envisaged that future studies on digital prostitution in Ghana, would have an impetus and also contribute to shaping the debate on prostitution as well as policy, going forward.



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