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*Transactional Sex and its Gendered Nature Amongst a  
Student Population.*

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Social Sciences degree in  
Research Psychology, School of Applied Human Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
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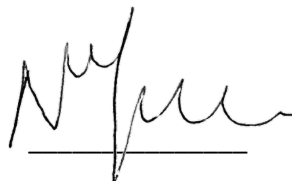
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Nicholas Munro

Name of Supervisor



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Signature

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**Abstract:**

Women between 15 to 24 years of age carry twice the risk of acquiring HIV in comparison to their male counterparts, and a growing body of epidemiological knowledge suggests that the practice of transactional sex (TS) could be a significant contributor to this disparity in burden of disease. Whilst much research in the field includes women's views and experiences on TS, men's views and experiences on the subject are often excluded, thus presenting a gap in this growing body of knowledge on TS. As such the study in question included the implementation of three different FGDs on the subject of TS relationships on the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus) and in the general public, incorporating both male and female university students' views on the subject matter. The study found that regardless of being a beneficiary or benefactor in TS relationships, men often retained the prevailing stereotype of being the provider, and that TS remained more favourable to men than it did to women, regardless of whether they were the beneficiary or the benefactor. Furthermore, this study found that whilst male beneficiaries and benefactors did not specifically share the same role, there was certainly some overlap. Overall, findings suggested that the phenomenon of TS itself was gendered in nature. It is suggested here that future research be more inclusive of both men's views and experiences of TS as either beneficiaries or benefactors, in order to attain a more holistic view of this phenomenon.

## **Abbreviations used in this study:**

AIDS- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ART- Antiretroviral Therapy

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection

PMB- Pietermaritzburg

R1- Researcher one

R2- Researcher two

SSA- sub-Saharan Africa

STI- Sexually Transmitted Infection

TA- Thematic Analysis

TS- Transactional Sex

UKZN- University of KwaZulu-Natal

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1) Introduction**

The opening to this introduction chapter covers both global and local statistics on HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection), and how the phenomenon of transactional sex (TS) is implicated in this epidemic and what TS is defined as. The Chapter will go on to discuss HIV in a South African context, its prevalence among the youth, and the relevance of TS in relation to South African youth. This will lead through to some discussion on the socio-political context of TS, and well as the context of this study.

## **1.2) Defining TS**

TS is a term that has been adopted by researchers and those in public health to distinguish between the formal exchange of sex for money (commonly referred to as commercial sex or prostitution) from the less formal, implicit sex for material benefits exchange embedded in the context of a relationship (Stoebenau et al., 2013). Furthermore, those who engage in TS relationships differentiate themselves from those who engage in commercial sex and therefore do not identify themselves as sex workers (Zembe, Townsend, Thorson & Ekström, 2013). It is thus the informality of this implicit negotiation of sex in exchange for gifts or money in the context of a relationship that is the distinguishing feature of TS that sets it apart from commercial sex work. TS is thought to position young women at heightened risk of HIV acquisition in many ways such as increasing their number of sexual partners, or switching partners in order obtain more goods as well as encouraging multiple-concurrent relationships and its effect on partner choice. TS may in turn might bias young women toward older partners who are more likely to be more resourceful than their younger counterparts, yet however are also more likely to be HIV positive (Ranganathan et al. 2018).

It should be noted that TS is often associated with a lack of condom use and the involvement of multiple concurrent partners, and this therefore makes TS a high risk behaviour due the potential transmission of HIV/AIDS and STIs (Dunkle et al., 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007; Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012; Zembe et al., 2013). In addition to this, Stoebenau et al. (2013) assert that additional designations are used to further characterize TS and these depend on the context, culture and circumstances therein. Terms such as ‘sugar daddies/ sugar mommies’, ‘survival sex’ and ‘sex for consumption’ have been used to characterise TS in both formal

(academic) and informal (everyday discourse) contexts, hence the second objective of this study (see Section 1.6 under Objectives). Such additional characterisations will be further discussed at a later stage in this dissertation in both the findings and discussion chapters (Chapters 4 and 5).

### **1.3) HIV in a South African Context, Youth and the Relevance of TS**

Since 2010, there has been a 34 % global reduction in the number of AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) related deaths, according to a report from UNAIDS (2018). This reduction has been largely driven by the scale up of antiretroviral therapy worldwide, however as it stands this reduction in the number of AIDS related deaths is not great enough to reach the 2030 target to end the AIDS epidemic as a threat to public health as set by the United Nations General Assembly (UNAIDS, 2018).

Globally, reductions in AIDS related deaths have remained higher amongst women than in men, where this discrepancy between gender is most highly contrasted in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (UNAIDS, 2018). In SSA, 56 % of HIV positive people are women (UNAIDS, 2018). However, whilst the highest burden of HIV is placed upon women, men appear to be more susceptible to succumbing to the disease than women, according to UNAIDS (2018). To place this in perspective, in SSA an estimated 300 000 men in 2017 died due to AIDS-related illnesses in comparison to that of 270 000 women (UNAIDS, 2018). What these statistics reflect is a higher uptake of ARTs (Antiretroviral Therapy) amongst women than in men (UNAIDS, 2018). Moreover, 2017 statistics conveyed that 75 % of HIV positive men aged 15 years and older living in eastern and southern Africa were aware of their HIV status, in comparison to an estimated 83 % of HIV positive women of the same age (UNAIDS, 2018). Indeed, according to Stoebenau et al. (2016), young women between 15 to 24 years of age carry more than two times the risk of seroconverting in comparison to their male counterparts. It is suggested that the practice of TS may be making a significant contribution to this particular disparity (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Moreover, HIV acquisition is further driven by gender inequitable masculinities, where men who are more gender inequitable are more likely to engage in multiple sexual relationships, TS (transactional sex), perpetrate intimate partner violence (IPV) as well as substance use (Closson et al. 2019). Whilst essentially there are no health risks posed in the act of receiving goods from a sexual partner, TS often reflects strong gender inequalities as well as economic power imbalances, thus rendering it difficult for one to negotiate the use of condoms during sexual encounters, which hence becomes a driving factor in the widespread acquisition of HIV (Closson et al., 2019;

Fielding-Miller et al., 2016). It is due to these disparities and the above statistics that further investigation into the phenomenon of TS is warranted.

In addition, Mantell et al. (2015) report an HIV prevalence rate of 6.1 % in university students in KwaZulu-Natal, which is allegedly a population that has been largely understudied with regards to HIV and STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection) risk. This is largely due to heterosexual age disparate sex, with the primary means of HIV transmission being unprotected sexual intercourse (Harling et al., 2014; Mantell et al., 2015). In light of the fact that the high HIV prevalence rates remain a major cause for concern, especially for university students, it is imperative that the sexual practices associated with putting young people at risk for HIV are thoroughly understood, hence the researches focus on obtaining the viewpoints and opinions of TS relationships, and thus the origin of the research questions (see Section 1.6).

TS is considered to be an especially high risk sexual behaviour due to related practices regarding multiple-concurrent partners and unprotected sex (Dunkle et al., 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007; Hunter, 2010). Existing literature on TS is consistent on the reported socio-economic factors that are thought to put young women at risk for engaging in TS relationships (Harrison et al. 2015, Harling et al., 2014). However, whilst evidently a wealth of research exists regarding TS and women as the population of interest, there appears to be a scarcity of research on heterosexual perspectives of men as beneficiaries or benefactors in TS relationships (Kamndaya et al., 2016). Yet, it should be explicitly stated here that this dissertation has focused primarily on male-female TS literature in the interest of both keeping the dissertation to a manageable size as well as to extend the said literature. Additionally, it should also be stated that ones' engagement in heterosexual TS may not automatically classify them as heterosexual, they may indeed identify themselves as homosexual, bisexual, transsexual or queer.

Subsequently, the current lack of research on TS behaviour centred on a comparison of perspectives of both genders as the population of interest (as either beneficiaries or benefactors) brings to attention the gendered nature of TS itself. As such TS amongst young people and in particular the differences between genders regarding the driving forces behind it, thus presents itself as a topic requiring further investigation. One of the primary foci of this research project was to subsequently explore and expand upon this gap in current literature, hence the primary objective of this study being to explore students' local knowledge of TS

(see Section 1.6 below for the full listing of research objectives and questions). Furthermore current research exploring the richly qualitative dimensions of the complexity of TS relationships centred on the perspectives of men as either beneficiaries or benefactors is scarce (Kamndaya et al., 2016), hence the fourth research question of this study. In consideration of the above contextual factors, which thus became the impetus for the research reported in this dissertation, the research itself was centred upon university students' (both males and females) local knowledge of TS and their perspectives thereof concerning other university student's roles as either benefactors and or beneficiaries.

#### **1.4) Socio-political and Economical Context of TS**

As Zembe et al. (2013), Stoebenau et al. (2011) and Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi & Bobrova (2016) suggest, the typical structure of TS relationships has largely been shaped by both socio-political and economical contexts. South Africa's political history, encompassing events such as colonization and apartheid have been acknowledged as being among the key agents that have resulted in the widespread economic disenfranchisement of much of the African population, the effects of which are very much evident in our current post-apartheid era.

The events of South Africa's political history as outlined above have furthermore solidified patriarchy as the overarching social and cultural context in which transactional sex occurs (Stoebenau et al., 2011; Zembe et al., 2013). This assertion is backed up by a recent South African labour market report which found that men were more likely to be in paid employment when compared to women, and that the official unemployment rate in the second quarter of 2018 was 29.5 % amongst women and 25.3 % amongst men (STATS SA, 2018). A pervasive culture of patriarchy and women's economic disenfranchisement and/or dependence on men for economic stability has therefore placed women in a vulnerable position where TS is concerned. This vulnerable position could facilitate conditions for women to engage in TS in order to acquire the necessities to survive (Zembe et al., 2013; Stoebenau et al., 2011). Moreover, economically disenfranchised young women are made vulnerable by their economic status which may facilitate exploitative, unequal power balanced relationships and unsafe sexual practices (Shefer et al., 2012). The abovementioned socio-economic vulnerability of women highlights the link between sex, gender and money (Shefer et al., 2012).

Interestingly, where women are dependent on the financial resources of their male partners, women's own personal resources such as sex could become a tool of economic survival through which they become a provider of sorts (Madise, Zulu & Ciera, 2007). Indeed, in spite of the aforementioned pervasive culture of patriarchy and economic disenfranchisement, South Africa's social, political and economic climate is steadily changing (Jackson, 2006; STATS SA, 2018). With more women being employed and placed in managerial positions of authority, South Africa is steadily creating a context wherein women can attain financial independence with relatively more ease than in years past. As such, women with money at their disposal have more autonomy and social power and can thus become sexual benefactors instead of mere powerless beneficiaries (Jackson, 2006; Phaswana-Mafuya et al., 2014).

### **1.5) Study Context**

In the context of this study, a population group that may potentially be privy to such vulnerability are first year students from rural areas. In a study by Shefer et al. (2012), it was posited that first year students, in particular those from rural areas, are more likely to engage in TS due to their relative naiveté and the fact that they are more easily impressed by the ease of access to resources that were previously not made available to them or were otherwise difficult to attain. However, literature regarding this particular population group in relation to TS has been otherwise scarcely documented (Mantell et al, 2015).

In part, this was the reason behind this study's motivation to focus on TS amongst university students. One of the other reasons was that university students represent a sub-set of young women who have both the prospect and the potential of changing existing disempowering gender practices through the fulfilment of their education. Should this sub-set of young women successfully graduate from university, attain employment and therefore earn their own income, they could potentially break the cycle of economic dependence on men, a condition known to facilitate young women's engagement in TS. Men's engagement in TS both as beneficiaries and benefactors will be covered in Chapters 2, 4 and 5 of this dissertation.

### **1.6) Conclusion**

In closing of this Chapter which covered both global and local statistics on HIV and thus the impetus for research regarding TS, Chapter 2 leads into a literature review, encompassing the key concepts such as Stoebenau et al.'s (2016) three paradigms for understanding TS and other literature that both underpinned and informed this dissertation and the subsequent

research that was conducted. The literature in this Chapter and well as the literature to be discussed in Chapter 2 informed the following research objectives and research questions as is listed below.

**1.6.1) Objectives:**

1. To explore students' local knowledge of transactional sex
2. To explore and identify the colloquial terminology that students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it
3. To identify what students consider are the driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students
4. To explore students' local knowledge regarding the role of men in transactional sex
5. To explore students' perspectives on the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary

**1.6.2) Questions:**

1. What local knowledge do participants have of transactional sex?
2. What colloquial terminology do students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it?
3. What do participants consider to be the primary driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students?
4. What local knowledge exists regarding the role of men in transactional sex?
  - a. What local knowledge exists regarding men as benefactors versus men as beneficiaries?
  - b. What local knowledge exists regarding men as benefactors versus men as beneficiaries in a student population?
5. What is the nature of the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

### **2.1) Introduction**

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the context which led to the research encompassed in this dissertation, and included key components of the background to the research problem.

Chapter 2 presents an in-depth review of the key literature on TS and integrates this into a theoretical framework of three paradigms for understanding the phenomenon of TS. The last two sections of the chapter explore gender differentiations as well as the increasing social acceptance of TS relationships. Under the three paradigms, concepts such as gift giving in TS, intergenerational sex and power asymmetries as well as motivations for engaging in TS will be discussed.

### **2.2) Theoretical Framework: Three Paradigms for Understanding TS**

Stoebenau et al. (2016) provide a useful integrative framework for conceptualising and explaining the phenomenon of TS in contemporary society. They refer to three paradigms, namely the sex for basic needs paradigm, the sex for improved social status paradigm, and lastly the sex and material expressions of love paradigm. These three paradigms are critically presented in the next sections in order to provide some in-depth insight into some of the ways in which TS operates, but will also give a critique on some perceived shortfalls of this framework. Furthermore, relevant literature is integrated into the critical discussion of the theoretical framework that guided the study.

#### **2.2.1) Sex for basic needs**

The first paradigm presented by Stoebenau et al. (2016) portrays women as being vulnerable to their gendered circumstances. Specifically, researchers and others who understand TS in terms of the sex for basic needs paradigm conceptualise women as victims of men, who have no alternative options other than to rely on men for money, food and other material goods in order to survive (Albertyn, 2003; McCleary-Sills, Douglas, Rwehumbiza et al., 2013; Wojcicki, 2002). This concept of victimisation of women in TS is said to be a part of gendered economics and social marginalisation, which leads into a key aspect of this paradigm which is poverty, or more so household poverty, and thus women's financial dependence on men (Bajaj, 2009; Hunter, 2002; Stoebenau et al., 2016). Attached to this notion of poverty is the concept of gendered labour markets, where women represent a disproportionate occupation in the low skilled job sector in comparison to that of men, who hold the advantage of more secure, higher paying positions of employment (Hunter, 2010;

Stark, 2013; Stoebenau et al., 2016). With household level poverty being an aspect of gendered labour markets, Stoebenau et al. (2016) and Wamoyi and Wight (2014) found in their synthesis of TS literature that household level poverty can sometimes lead parents to encourage their daughters to engage in TS relationships, either directly or indirectly. This is further asserted by findings in a study by Atwood et al. (2011) regarding TS amongst 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders attending middle school in Monrovia, Liberia, where it was found that TS often occurred between young girls and older more financially secure men to secure money, food, clothing, western commodities and school fees. In echoing the aforementioned assertions made by Stoebenau et al. (2016) and Wamoyi and Wight (2014), findings from Atwood et al. (2011) reported that the young girls experienced pressure from both their parents and peers to engage in TS. Due to the power differentials that arose between the beneficiary and the benefactor, the young girls in the study found it difficult to refuse sexual advances or negotiate condom use (Atwood et al., 2011). Here, sex was viewed as a commodity to be purchased, and once purchased men maintained power and control over sexual encounters (Atwood et al., 2011).

This notion of intergenerational sex and the inherent power asymmetries that are attached to it certainly fit within Stoebenau et al.'s (2016) sex for basic needs paradigm. In a review of related literature regarding TS, substantial age differentiations between partners and the power asymmetries that were inherent in such relationships was an element that was consistently mentioned throughout. As has been typically documented in existing literature on the subject, TS relationships often take place between a younger woman and an older, more financially resourceful and often married man commonly referred to as a 'sugar daddy' (Atwood et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2011; Stoebenau et al., 2013; Zembe et al., 2013). Naturally in sexual interactions where one partner may be considerably older and more financially secure in contrast with their younger, typically financially insecure partner there are bound to be power asymmetries. In such exchanges women often lose the ability to negotiate safe sex practices and run the risk of being subjected to male perpetrated intimate partner violence (Zembe et al., 2013).

Women's powerlessness within heterosexual relationships is part of this sex for basic needs paradigm as it feeds into the concept of victimhood (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Much literature on TS has described women who participate in TS to be victims of coercion, exploitation or abuse by men (Hope, 2007; Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira et al., 2003; Lungu and Husken, 2010; Neema, Moore & Kibombo, 2007; Stoebenau et al., 2016; United Nations Secretary-

General's Task Force on Women, 2004). This notion of victimhood brings to the point the concept of emphasised femininity, which is said to uphold the phenomenon of hegemonic masculinity (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Namely what this particular paradigm emphasizes is the fact that women's options are severely limited by gendered poverty, thus forcing many women into the practice of TS as a means of survival, whilst men enjoy privileged status (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Whilst one could argue that it is often the case that this issue of gendered poverty allegedly victimizes women and forces them into relationships where they have to barter sex to access the means to survive, it could be further argued (as findings [See Chapters 4 and 5] in this dissertation will show) that this may be dependent on socio-economical background. Moreover, there is strong evidence to show that this narrative of vulnerability and victimization is giving way to an alternative narrative of agency in TS relationships, where the substance of the exchange goes beyond mere basic needs, as the following section conveys. Indeed, research conveys that motivations driving young women's engagement in TS is more complex in nature than previously thought. It is the fulfilment of psycho-social needs, such as belonging to a peer group, that are important factors to be considered that underpin young women's needs or wants to secure certain types of goods that gain them access to certain peer groups, and thus social status, through engagement in TS (Ranganathan et al., 2018).

In consideration of this paradigm proposed by Stoebenau et al. (2016) as well as literature around TS in general, no indication is given as to whether similar dynamics apply to TS relationships involving young men as the beneficiaries and older women as the providers', particularly in SSA, thus resulting in a considerable gap in knowledge about TS. It should be noted here in this critique of these three paradigms, in Stoebenau et al.'s (2016) overview of literature, literature surrounding the topic of female benefactors (Gukurume, 2011; Kuate-Defo, 2004; Luke et al., 2011) was only briefly mentioned, however it was stated by Stoebenau et al. (2016) that since most studies focus on male benefactors and female beneficiaries on the topic of TS, they did as well. However, Stoebenau et al. (2016) had aimed to provide a holistic understanding of TS, and it is suggested here that this cannot be accomplished if the phenomenon of male beneficiaries are not taken into consideration. This further emphasizes a need for research that may develop this scarce area of knowledge.

### **2.2.2) Sex for improved social status**

In contrast to the unidimensional way in which women in TS relationships are portrayed in the sex for basic needs paradigm, some studies (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003) in the early 2000's began to present a more complex and dimensional picture of TS. Stoebenau et al. (2016) characterise the growing questioning of TS as a unidimensional phenomenon in the form of the sex for improved social status paradigm. The idea for this second paradigm stemmed from the realization that TS was not a practice that was exclusive to destitute women, and that the essence of the exchange also extended beyond what is needed for basic survival (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Findings from studies such as Silberschmidt & Rasch, (2001) and Leclerc-Madlala (2003) further maintained that most women in TS relationships had some degree of agency, and were not merely passive victims of circumstance as was previously thought (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

What this second paradigm suggests instead is that participation in TS is not always borne out of destitution as the first paradigm suggests, but can be a result of relative deprivation within the realm of increasing economic inequality as well as the rising value being placed on consumer goods (Stoebenau et al., 2016). With the ever increasing visibility of and value placed upon consumer goods, some studies (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Zembe, Townsend, Thorson et al., 2013) have suggested that this is accompanied by equally increasing peer pressure, felt especially by those who cannot afford such consumer goods (Stoebenau et al., 2016). TS has therefore within the context of this paradigm been described as a way in which young women may gain access to consumer goods associated with a desired modern lifestyle in order to improve their social status (Stoebenau et al., 2016). The exchange itself is not limited to basic consumer goods, but may also extend to commodities of modernity, things that are associated with fashion and cosmopolitan youth culture such as expensive weaves, brand name clothing, makeup, upgraded cell phones and other such fashion accessories (Stoebenau et al., 2016). In the pursuit of such commodities, it would seem that impoverished young people aim to present themselves as having attained a middle class status, thus differentiating themselves from their equally impoverished rural based peers and in turn associating themselves with their desired peer networks (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Stoebenau et al., 2016). Through access to new social networks, young people and in particular young women create for themselves social mobility and therefore power (Stoebenau et al., 2016). As much as survival is a motive for engaging in TS as current literature has reiterated, this counter discourse has emerged that posits that consumerism is as much a motive as survival

(Zembe et al., 2013; Stoebenau et al., 2011). Literature has thus dichotomized TS motives into sex for ‘necessities’ as well as sex for ‘luxuries’ (Roth, Rosenberger, Reece & Van Der Pol., 2013; Zembe et al., 2013; Stoebenau et al., 2011). With the emergence of this counter discourse women are being portrayed more frequently not as poor disenfranchised victims who have to resort to ‘survival sex’, but rather as active agents who enter into TS relationships in order to access consumer goods and to facilitate a more modern lifestyle (Stoebenau et al., 2011). Emerging from the cultural and economic processes of globalization, ‘consumer sex’ has thus become a means of access to social power (Stoebenau et al., 2011).

This issue of social power leads to findings from Moore et al. (2007) that state that in particular women’s financial interests can be divided into three categories. The first of these three categories is economic survival (i.e. the sex for basic needs paradigm), whereby young women are pressured (either actively or passively) by their parents to gain the financial resources from their partner in order to secure goods needed for the household (Moore et al., 2007). Moore et al. (2007) assert that economic survival is the most coercive reason to enter into a TS relationship and results in stronger financial dependence on the benefactor. The second financial interest is to increase longer term life chances, which generally encompass the beneficiary using their partner to attain finances to pay for school fees or to increase their social status (Moore et al., 2007). The third category that Moore et al. (2007) list is that of increasing ones status amongst peers. Here it is thought that the ability to attain boyfriends may convey to a woman’s peers that she is both sexually attractive and sexually active, and that she has money at her disposal (Moore et al., 2007). The last of these two categories of course fit well within this second paradigm by Stoebenau et al. (2016).

Under this paradigm, essentially women who engage in TS are regarded as active agents of power in TS relationships, a stark contrast to how women are generally described as being under the first paradigm (Stoebenau et al., 2016). However, some research has highlighted the fact that there may be some restrictions on the limits of women’s power in TS relationships (Stoebenau et al., 2016). For example, whilst women may have power over whom they choose to be their partner, it has been suggested that once they have made the choice to engage in the relationship, their power over when sex takes place and whether condoms are used or not diminishes significantly (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

In conclusion of this section, with literature thus indicating that women are more commonly motivated to engage in TS relationships by consumerism than previously thought, what literature does not indicate however is whether both women and men are more motivated to engage in TS relationships by either necessities or luxuries. This point further highlights the scarcity of TS literature regarding men's experiences of TS, and therefore provides further justification for this dissertation's focus on not only female student's perceptions of TS but also that of male students in order to attain a clearer understanding of the complex dynamics of TS.

### **2.2.3) Sex and material expressions of love**

Considering the above two paradigms, what appears to be evident is the fact that researchers often fail to address is the concept of transaction within the context of emotionally intimate relationships, hence the third and last paradigm of sex and material expressions of love (Stoebenau et al., 2016). The neglect of this concept of sex and material expressions of love is due to the fact that TS is often framed within a HIV biomedical framework since the sexual risk associated with the practice of TS is high (Stoebenau et al., 2016). This resurgence of attention to concepts of love and desire, and thus the changing conceptualizations of what is meant by 'modern' relationships, have been led by critical social science (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hunter, 2010; Stoebenau et al., 2016). The idea of companionate relationships, associated with romance and deep emotional bonds between two mutually exclusive partners, has become the globalized ideal of what is meant by 'modern' relationships (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

This paradigm brings attention to the concept of gift exchange in such relationships where there is said to be a gendered flow of exchange from men to women within the context of ideals such as love, emotional bonding and romance (Stoebenau et al., 2016). This particular paradigm contributes to the way in which TS can be understood in two ways. Firstly, what is introduced is the idea that romantic relationships as well as TS relationships are inextricably bound by things such as love and money (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Secondly, the paradigm emphasizes and upholds the widely held belief that men are the providers of material support and that a woman's role is to reproduce within the context of a heterosexual relationship (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Many studies have emphasized the degree to which love and money are intertwined, and it would seem that across many contexts including SSA, money is

considered to be the way in which love is voiced (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Groes-Green, 2013; Hunter, 2010; Stoebenau et al., 2016). In making mention of TS in SSA contexts, brings about the conceptualization of TS in the context of cultural norms in SSA, as will be discussed in the following subsection.

### **2.2.3.1) Gift Giving in Sexual Relationships: Cultural Norms Regarding Transactional Sex in sub-Saharan Africa**

The exchanging of gifts or money between partners has long been considered as a normative practice in sexual relationships in most African communities, hence highlighting the importance of understanding TS in a cultural context (Zembe et al., 2013). However, it should be noted that according to Ranganathan et al. (2017), the exchange of gifts is common across most cultures, yet state that it is an especially common practice in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Zembe et al. (2013), this is a norm driven by the cultural notion that self-respecting women should not stay in sexual relationships without a material recompense of some sort. This cultural notion is further supported by the assertion made by Moore et al. (2012) and Ranganathan et al. (2017), positing that the rationale behind many young African women's engagement in TS is that gifts have become a symbol of a woman's worth as well as an indication of a man's interest. As such the absence of gift giving in sexual relationships may be perceived as personally offensive by a woman (Moore et al., 2012). Furthermore, Moore et al. (2012) assert that men in rural Tanzania perceive women to be more motivated to engage in sexual intercourse when gift giving is involved.

It should thus be noted that in this context the receiving of gifts is not experienced as disempowering by women, but rather as a validation of their personal worth from their partner (Moore et al., 2007; Ranganathan et al., 2017). This hence introduces the double edged notion of how TS relationships can either serve to empower or disempower the beneficiary in question. For the most part, existing literature on TS has had an almost exclusive focus on the disempowering effects of TS relationships without giving much consideration as to how culture can alter the experience of TS relationships into one of empowerment. This thus comes back around to the assertion that such a phenomenon cannot be considered outside the context of culture.

In contrast to what Moore et al. (2007) and Ranganathan et al. (2017) assert, it would still appear that the connection between love and money is perhaps more present in relationships

that are more instrumental or exploitative than relationships in which both partners regard each other as equals. An example of an instrumental or exploitative relationships would be an intergenerational relationships where the term ‘sugar daddy’ is often used (Stoebenau et al., 2016). For the most part and across most contexts, especially in SSA, both men and women enter relationships with a set of culturally prescribed beliefs (Stoebenau et al., 2016). What these beliefs mostly dictate is adherence to a set of gender norms that state that women provide sex and men provide material support within heterosexual relationships (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009; Stoebenau et al., 2016). The concept of being a provider is central to the construct of masculinity, as well as young people’s expectations of relationships irrelevant of the woman’s income (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2016; Wamoyi et al., 2011). With the surge of economic re-structuring, living up to the role as the provider is proving difficult for men (Hunter, 2007; Stoebenau et al., 2016). In the face of this increasing economic uncertainty, it has been suggested that men are beginning to question whether the interest women express is interest in them, or their money (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

Aside from the fact that men are generally expected to provide material support in most relationships, this paradigm pushes forward the idea that men are also expected to provide some level of intimacy, thus setting it apart from the previous two paradigms (Stoebenau et al., 2016). This provision of intimacy may in fact further contribute to the sense of validation of a woman’s worth similar to when she receives gifts from her partner, and could thus be experienced as empowering, the notion of which was not mentioned by Stoebenau et al. (2016) or by any of the literature they synthesized. Nevertheless, what should be taken into consideration and what this paradigm emphasizes is the importance of addressing gendered norms that dictate that women must be sexually subordinate to male partners who provide for them (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

### **2.3) Gender Differentiations**

Overall, it would seem that research on the topic of TS has focused strongly on women as beneficiaries of TS, due to the fact that women are thought to be more vulnerable to the ramifications of this practice due to higher rates of intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions as well as the increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and STI’s (Moore et al., 2007; Moore et al., 2012; Dunkle et al., 2007;). In a report by STATS SA (2018), it was reported that the total number of HIV positive people in South Africa had increased from an initially estimated 4.25 million in 2002

to an approximate 7.52 million in 2018. In 2018, STATS SA (2018) estimated that a total of 13.1% of the South African population are currently living with HIV. More concerning was findings in this recent report stated that an approximate one-fifth of South African women aged 15 to 49 years are HIV positive. However, whilst the HIV prevalence rate amongst youth aged 15 to 24 years of age has reportedly declined from 6.7% in 2002 to 5.5% in 2018, these current estimates remain relatively high (STATS SA, 2018).

The above statistics clearly demonstrate the impetus for the dominant focus on women as the population of interest in TS research. However, what is apparent in the focus on women as the population of interest in TS research is the scarcity of existing knowledge on whether men similarly engage in TS in the role of the beneficiary as well as what their motivations and experiences of TS relationships are in general (Phaswana-Mafuya et al., 2014).

Regarding research that has not dealt with this question in-depth, it has been suggested that men engage in TS relationships as the benefactor in order to gain affirmation from their peers by securing multiple female partners, as well as a sense of sexual conquest (Shefer et al., 2012; Dunkle et al., 2007; Campbell, 2003). Furthermore, Dunkle et al. (2007) assert that men who exhibited controlling and aggressive behaviour were more likely to engage in TS relationships in the role of the benefactor as an opportunity to exert control over their female counterparts. Dunkle et al. (2007) went on to report that such behaviour was associated with higher socio economic standing as well as childhood oppression. In a situation where such men may feel generally disempowered, perhaps through prior experiences of childhood oppression, they may be more likely to exert control through violence over their partners in order to regain a sense of control (Dunkle et al., 2007). As such, it is thought that men who reported traumatic childhood experiences may prefer transactional sex for its impersonal nature as opposed to relationships with women requiring emotional involvement (Knight & Sims-Knight, 2003; Malamuth, 2003).

In order to attain a clearer, fuller understanding of the phenomenon of TS, TS needs to be considered with regards to the context of gender and more specifically the gendered norms surrounding TS that make the assumption that men always engage in TS relationships in the role of the benefactor. To allow such assumptions to remain unaddressed is hazardous to research as this lays ignorance to multiple variables that intersect with gender (e.g., socio-economic status, race, culture, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality and disability), all of which could also potentially be sources of power or inequality in TS relationships (Peacock, Stemple, Sawires & Coates, 2010).

The findings from this study could potentially contribute to TS literature in a way that furthers knowledge on areas of scarcity (such as men's perspectives) regarding TS, thus aiding in the potential design and application of future research and interventions.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology:**

### **3.1) Aims and Rationale:**

In order to gain a clearer understanding about the local knowledge that students studying on UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus may have had regarding the phenomenon of TS relationships and their perspectives and understandings thereof, FGDs (Focus Group Discussions) were initiated to carry out this research. The location of the study (UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus) was convenient for the researcher as it provided the desired sample (young female and male tertiary education students). The aim of this study overall was to identify what motivates students' engagement in TS relationships, the same question extending to differences across gender and possible methods of intervention, all to be answered through the data generated by the three different FGDs that were facilitated. It was of interest to obtain other students impressions and consensus opinions about what motivates students to engage in TS relationships due to the fact that it would have otherwise been of difficulty obtaining first-hand accounts of those involved in TS relationships due to the sensitive nature of the topic. It was thought that data that was also rich in detail and that perhaps held a broader perspective on the topic of TS could be generated by conducting FGDs as opposed to one on one interviews. It should be noted here that data collected for this study was undertaken by the first researcher (i.e. the author of this dissertation) and another researcher (who was an honours student at the time of data collection). Whilst all three FGDs were facilitated by both researchers, joint collaboration was only performed on the analysis on the data generated from the all-male FGD, however for the data generated by other two FGDs, the analysis was performed by the first researcher only. The set of objectives that informed the direction of the study, relative to the literature on TS as discussed above in Chapter 2, are given below under objectives (see Section 3.2). Furthermore, the rationale behind using FGDs as a method of research inquiry was that it was considered to be the most appropriate method because it would facilitate open discussion where participants could explore the topic of TS through open discussion that would generate rich, detailed data.

### **3.2) Objectives:**

The objectives that informed the direction of the study relative to the above stated literature (see Chapter 2: Literature Review), where as follows:

6. To explore students' local knowledge of transactional sex
7. To explore and identify the colloquial terminology that students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it
8. To identify what students consider are the driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students
9. To explore students' local knowledge regarding the role of men in transactional sex
10. To explore students' perspectives on the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary

### **3.3) Questions:**

To further add to the research objectives, this study aimed to answer a set of questions about TS through the collection of the data through the FGDs and subsequently through the analysis of the data. The research questions were:

5. What local knowledge do participants have of transactional sex?
6. What colloquial terminology do students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it?
7. What do participants consider to be the primary driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students?
8. What local knowledge exists regarding the role of men in transactional sex?
  - a. What local knowledge exists regarding men as benefactors versus men as beneficiaries?
  - b. What local knowledge exists regarding men as benefactors versus men as beneficiaries in a student population?
5. What is the nature of the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary?

### **3.4) Research design**

This qualitative study was of an exploratory nature and was embedded in a socio-constructivist approach, which is a worldview in which individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live through interaction with others (Creswell, 2007). In their search for meaning, individuals thus develop multiple and varied subjective meanings of their

experiences (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), the meaning which is constantly sought after is directed towards certain objects and things. Due to the multiple and varied nature of these meanings, the researcher is led to search for the complexities that reside within these views (Creswell, 2007). Where socio-constructivism is concerned, the goal of the research is to then rely on participants' viewpoints of the phenomenon under investigation as much as possible (Creswell, 2007). It is for this reason that FGDs (to be discussed in Section 3.5 below) were employed in the investigation of the topic of TS on campus, as it was the most appropriate method to apply in an effort to gain data (which was attained through the views, opinions and local knowledge of the participants through their interaction with one another) that is thick with description and local knowledge about TS, which aided in answering the aforementioned research questions (see Section 3.3) (Babbie & Mouton, 2005; Terreblanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

Initially, other means of obtaining the data were deliberated upon, such as opting for one on one in-depth interviews. However, it would have been improbable that students who were actually engaged in TS relationships themselves would have been forthcoming, since TS itself is generally not viewed in a positive light by others. Therefore the next best option was to conduct FGDs with participants who had second hand knowledge of TS. However it was not known to the researcher or co-facilitator as to whether any of the participants spoke from first-hand experience on the topic, as participants were not encouraged (yet they were not explicitly discouraged) to disclose as to whether they themselves were in or had ever been in a TS relationship themselves. Whilst the FGDs did yield rich, descriptive data, perhaps one on one in-depth interviews could have brought the researcher closer to the true emic perspective of those engaged in TS. Hence, yielding etic (but partially emic, see section 3.7.1 for a more in-depth discussion) perspectives on TS was the trade-off so to speak in opting for FGDs with participants with presumably second hand knowledge of TS.

The FGDs took on three different formats, namely two single sex FGDs of each gender, as well as one mixed sex FGD. The three different FGD formats allowed for the observation of the gender dynamics at play within each FGD, thereby conveying how gender may affect the extent of disclosure, flow of discussion as well as the types of discourse and terminologies that emerged around the discussion of TS.

### **3.5) Participants**

The aforementioned participants in this study included both males and females from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus, all of whom were between 19 and 35 years of age. All participants were registered for different disciplines of study and ranged from their first year of study to master's degree level. Demographically, the FGDs consisted of 20 African students, two white students and one student under the race category of 'other'. In a further demographic breakdown of the FGDs, FGD A (all male) consisted of eight participants, six of whom were African, two of whom were white. FGD B (all female), consisted of only of eight Africans. Lastly, FGD C (mixed gender) comprised of six Africans, and one participant who identified their race as 'other'. What should be noted here is that the inclusion of the oldest participant (aged 35) in FGD B (all female) may have caused the younger participants within this FGD to be quiet due to cultural norms around appropriate topics, deference and respect, although this was not really observable. Coloured, Indian and Asian races were underrepresented in this study.

### **3.6) Sampling**

Using non probability convenience sampling in order to gain a more representative sample, participants were recruited from various sites on the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. All participants were above 18 years of age and variation of the sample was ensured through approaching students of different race, gender, age, and ethnicity, year of study and field of study. Several efforts were employed to recruit students to the study. Researchers requested permission from lecturers to talk to classes about participation, which included a brief description of the study, and how they may benefit from their participation in the way of incentives and awareness. Information about the study was shared on Facebook in an effort to reach a wider network of students from UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus. Furthermore, the researcher and co-facilitator positioned themselves at various venues on campus and approached students with information about the study and asked whether they would like to participate. Willing participants were given a formal invitation stating the time and venue of the FGDs (see Appendix 5.). Furthermore participants were asked to give their contact details so that they may be contacted a day in advance to remind them of the FGD, and for them to confirm their participation (See Appendix 6).

With regards to the sampling of the participants, it should be acknowledged here that saturation of the data could not have been reached through one of each FGD per participant

type (gender). There were both advantages and disadvantages in having each FGD stratified by gender. The first advantage was that in stratifying the FGDs by gender was that it kept the project to a manageable size, and secondly that it allowed for an observation of the comparison of different gender dynamics that influenced both the flow and content of each discussion. However, the primary disadvantage of stratifying by single gender (FGD A and FGD B), was that the discussions therein may have produced one-sided views. Additionally, women or men in the mixed gender FGD (FGD C) may not have felt free to disclose their thoughts due to the presence of the opposing gender and the opposing thoughts or viewpoints they may have had. However, the advantage of stratifying the FGDs by single gender may reside in the fact that they may have felt more comfortable to talk freely on the matter of gender specific issues. Moreover, an advantage of the mixed gender FGD (FGD C) was that it enabled both men and women to discuss with one another, hence potentially generating richer data that has been co-constructed through this interaction between men and women.

### **3.7) Data Collection:**

Each of the three FGD sessions took place in the Psychology Laboratory (PsycLab) in the Psychology Building on the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. The all-male FGD (FGD A) took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, the all-female FGD (FGD B) on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 and lastly the mixed sex FGD (FGD C) took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2014. The FGDs were moderated by two researchers at a time, and before the commencement of each session participants were required to read the information sheet, sign the consent form and complete a demographics form (see Appendix 1, 2 & 3). Each group was seated around a circular table with the assumption that it would facilitate an open, relaxed atmosphere which would be conducive to the facilitating an open discussion.

The PsycLab was equipped with high quality microphones suspended from the ceiling that recorded each discussion in its entirety. After each FGD ended, the audio file of the discussion as recorded on the PsycLab's hard drive was saved to both of the researcher's computers and USB, and was then deleted off the labs hard drive in order to ensure that the audio file would not be made accessible to anyone else. The researchers used a pre-set list of open ended questions to guide each FGD (see Appendix 4). This list of pre-set questions was halved between the two researchers so that each researcher could take turns facilitating the discussions. However, these questions were simply set as a guideline that was subject to change as the discussion progressed depending on the emergent content.

Furthermore, the researchers took written notes on any statements made by the participants during each discussion that stood out as either important or unusual to researchers. In the case of this study, as it is with most qualitative research, it should be noted that the researchers were the primary tool used in the collection and analysis of the data (Silverman, 2013; Terreblanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This is because it was the researchers who actively ran the FGDs and then manually analysed the data through the application of thematic analysis (TA).

Confidentiality and anonymity of responses as well as the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point was stressed to participants before the commencement of each FGD. Participants were required to appoint themselves pseudonyms in order to further protect their anonymity. Furthermore, participants were advised not to disclose any personal information in the FGDs as there was no way to guarantee that confidentiality between participants could be kept outside the FGDs. Rather, participants were asked to discuss what knowledge and opinions they had on TS. With regards to the duration of the FGDs, Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) assert that most FGDs run over the course of an hour to two hours. However a minimum time frame of 45 minutes was set and participants were asked if they could stay on longer should the FGD C (mixed gender) continue past the 45 minute mark. Furthermore, the exact time for which each FGD in this study ran was flexible due to the fact that the timeframe depended on how long the participants kept the discussion going, until they felt that the topic had reached the point of saturation. However no session was less than 45 minutes long.

Each FGD was conducted in one language format, namely English since it was the home language of the researchers and with participants being tertiary education level students who are being educated in English, it could be safely assumed that all participants would be able to speak, understand, receive instruction as well as express themselves in English. However in identifying terminology associated with TS, terms used in all languages were explored and documented.

In accordance with what was discussed in Section 3.4 above, given the socio-constructivist approach to this research, and therefore the need for the researcher to rely as much as possible on the viewpoints of the participants, FGDs were considered to be the best method of inquiry into this dissertation's phenomenon of interest. In this study the researcher considered it imperative that participants understood the difference between TS and commercial sex work at

every stage of the research as confusing these two behavioural phenomena as being one in the same would have obscured the emergent data gained from the study.

Being a qualitative study and exploratory in nature, FGDs were deemed to be the most suitable method of inquiry. According to Kitzinger (1995), the use of FGDs can prove extremely advantageous, since it may encourage group participation from those who may feel reluctant to engage in a face to face interview to, especially if they feel they have nothing to say about the topic at hand (Kitzinger, 1995).

The way in which this data was generated was through the interaction between the participants within the setting of three separate FGDs. The interaction between participants in question involved participants actively engaging with the topic at hand, by talking to one another, asking questions and exchanging anecdotes, as well as sharing each other's experiences and making commentary on what experiences have been shared, as well as giving and exchanging and sometimes challenging each other's viewpoints (Kitzinger, 1995).

The method of FGDs is not only useful for exploring people's experiences and the local knowledge they may possess. Kitzinger (1995) further speculates that FGDs have also proven useful not only in examining what people think, but also the way in which they think and why they think that way. FGDs are therefore a way in which the group process as a whole offers researchers access to participants' views through exploration and clarification, which would otherwise be inaccessible through face to face interviews (Kitzinger, 1995).

Historically, FGDs were initially used mainly in market research and 'mainstream groups', revolving around what Overlien, Aronsson and Hyden (2005) have termed low involvement topics (i.e. preferred brand of toothpaste). Overlien et.al (2005) challenge the commonplace belief that FGDs as a method are only suitable for low involvement topics, and assert that FGDs can indeed work well for high involvement topics, such as sexual identity. In this specific research project, the topic of TS amongst students on UKZN PMB campus and its engendered nature would be deemed a high involvement topic, since it transcends peoples mere opinions based on their preferences for any given consumer good, and instead focuses on participants perspectives, opinions and local knowledge on TS, a particularly prevalent social phenomenon that is somewhat controversial and sensitive in nature (Overlien et.al, 2005).

### **3.7.1) Emic and Etic Perspectives**

In discussion of FGDs, it is important that emic and etic perspectives be discussed here. An emic perspective is said to represent the “internal language and meanings of a defined culture” (Olive, 2014). In relation to the FGDs, the participants’ views, knowledge and opinions that were expressed in these FGDs can be regarded as the emic perspective. The emic perspective is generally perceived to be the more relevant perspective in the interpretation of cultural experiences within a particular cultural group (Olive, 2014).

In contrast to the emic perspective, the etic perspective encompasses an outsiders’ interpretation and views on meanings, language and events (Olive, 2014). An etic perspective can be regarded as useful when comparing differing cultures and populations, thus enabling the researcher to develop more cross cultural themes and concepts (Olive, 2014). Within the context of this research, the researchers’ perspective is regarded as the etic perspective and the research itself was conducted largely from an etic perspective.

However, it should be noted that whilst participants in a way held the emic perspective, their perspectives could be considered be etic as well, since on one hand they were part of the student culture on campus and can therefore be regarded as insiders, yet they were not reporting on first-hand knowledge of TS, but rather what they knew of it from what they had heard and seen around campus relating to students and TS.

### **3.7.2) Reflexivity**

In tandem with the above discussion on emic and etic perspectives, the researchers’ positionality in relation to the FGD participants calls for some discussion. Reflexivity may be defined as the process of a “continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher’s positionality”, in addition to the explicit acknowledgement and recognition that the researchers’ position may affect the outcome of the research itself (Berger, 2015). As white, English speaking females, the position of the researcher and co-facilitator may have had some impact on the FGDs flow of discussion on a sexualized topic such as TS with predominantly black African students. The full extent of disclosure on what the participants knew about TS relationships’ on campus and their views and opinions thereof may have been stunted somewhat by race relations. Due to the issue of participants and researchers stemming from differing racial groups and by extension cultural backgrounds, participants may not have felt as comfortable disclosing their knowledge and expressing their views and opinions

on TS as they might have been with researchers who were of the same race and/ or gender (where the matter of gender relations apply).

Additionally, the issue of power is a point of contention to be discussed. Some consideration should be given to the possibility that participants, regardless of race or gender, may have viewed the researchers as being authoritative figures, perhaps holding more power than the participants themselves. This certainly would've impacted the flow of discussion and extent of disclosure if the participants felt that there was some disparity in equality between themselves and the researchers. Lastly is the issue of gender, where there may have been the possibility of some contention between the positions of the researchers being female especially in the case of FGD A (all male). This potential point of contention may have been amplified by the fact that the topic of discussion was sexual in nature, and thus may have further impacted the flow of discussion and extent of disclosure of participants' knowledge, views and opinions on TS. Nothing could be done to mitigate the issue of the researcher and co-facilitators gender where it was applicable, except to approach the FGDs and what might be said in them by participants with a very open mind-set.

### **3.8) Data Analysis:**

This study employed thematic analysis on the transcribed data attained from the FGD sessions. Thematic analysis was chosen as it was deemed the most appropriate method of analysis regarding the nature and intentions of this study. TA, as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2012) refers to a method whereby patterns across a dataset (also known as themes) are systematically identified and organized in a way that offers the researcher insight and meaning into the dataset. Thus, thematic analysis aided researchers in identifying significant patterns of themes embedded in the transcribed data that served to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). Furthermore the application of this particular analytic technique further helped the researchers to identify how participants created meaning through their experiences regarding the phenomenon of TS (i.e. how local knowledge was created through exposure) through FGDs, which ultimately served to answer the aforementioned research questions and to further enlighten researchers on the topic (Creswell, 2007). Once the FGD recordings were transcribed and double checked against the audio recordings to ensure accuracy, the transcripts were analysed by researchers in order to identify codes and themes. Analysis on the first set of data (that of which was collected from the all-male FGD) involved a collaborative effort between both researchers, which allowed for critical discussion regarding potential themes, subthemes and codes, as well as the

minimization of human error. Thereafter, the second (all female FGD) and third (mixed gender FGD) sets of data were analysed by the first researcher. The collaboration on the first dataset was due to the fact that the second researcher used that data as part of their honours research project, but did not need the second and third sets of data as these were not relevant to the focus of their honours research project, however the second researcher was present for the conduction of all three FGDs. Once the codes were identified, themes and subthemes identified by the researcher and were repeatedly reviewed in order to ensure that there was no overlap between the themes and that the themes in question were clear and accurate. Thereafter the transcripts and field notes were reanalysed in order to source quotes from participants that supported both the themes and the subthemes. Validity and reliability was increased on the all-male dataset through each researcher double checking each other's work at every phase of analysis.

Given that the FGDs were stratified by gender, there was some attempt at a comparison made of how gender affected the flow of discussion, but no notably obvious differentiations emerged. Within the FGDs, there were also no obvious counter-examples of themes that did not fit the dominant discourse, however particularly within FGD A, participants often contradicted themselves when asserting their opinions that women in TS had power, but also at the same time asserted that some women in TS were also vulnerable. In a sense, this dichotomy presented itself to be a counter-example.

### **3.9) Ethical Considerations:**

The study strictly adhered to ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, non-maleficence, and beneficence. Each participant received an information and consent sheet (see Appendix 1) informing them of who the researchers involved in this study were, as well as the details of what their participation would involve and the exact nature of the study. Through reading all of the relevant details enclosed in the information and consent form, participants were able to make a fully informed decision regarding their participation in the study.

Participants were well informed of the fact that they may have chosen to withdraw from the research at any stage, without incurring any negative consequences should they have chosen to do so. Participation and responses of participants were entirely protected and confidential, as no personal information that could potentially reveal their identity was used. This was further ensured through participant's use of pseudonyms. Participants were advised to not

disclose any personal information regarding their own activities during FGDs, as confidentiality between participants outside of the FGD settings could not be guaranteed. To ensure ongoing respect for dignity, all data will be stored securely in the possession of the researcher and research supervisor for the next five years. Audio recordings of the FGD sessions were deleted after transcription, and the paper printed transcripts that were used during analysis were shredded thereafter before the submission of this thesis. Only excerpts from the transcripts are featured in the appendices of this thesis (see Appendix 10). These steps were taken to ensure to the fullest possible extent the anonymity, confidentiality and ongoing respect for dignity of the participants at all stages of the research process were protected.

In the unlikely event that participation caused any of the participants any personal discomfort or distress, referral confirmation was sought to ensure that such participants would be referred to the CFC for counselling by the psychologists or intern psychologists based there (see Appendix 7). However, no such incidents occurred in the context of this study.

### **3.9.1) Permission Obtained:**

Permission to conduct the research for this project was sought from the various relevant authorities involved. Firstly, the research proposal was reviewed by the researchers former research supervisor Mr Vernon Solomon and was then reviewed and approved by the relevant School higher degrees committee School. Thereafter, the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) reviewed and approved the proposal (see Appendix 8). Furthermore, permission to conduct research on the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus grounds with university students was obtained from Mr Baloyi, the University Registrar (see Appendix 9). All of the participants recruited to participate in the FGDs were 18 years of age or older, therefore negating the need to consult with any authority figures such as parents or legal guardians in order to obtain permission for the students to participate in the study. On their own accord participants provided written informed consent (see Appendix 1 for the information and informed consent sheet) to participate in the FGDs and for their participation to be documented and analysed. Lastly, in the event that any of the participants experienced distress as a result of their participation in the FGDs and required counselling, a referral confirmation was obtained from the Discipline of Psychology's Child and Family Centre (CFC) based on the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus (see Appendix 7). In the event of any of the participants experiencing distress as a result of their participation, they would then be

referred by the researchers to the CFC for counselling by the psychologists or intern psychologists based there.

### **3.9.2) Informed Consent:**

Before the commencement of each FGD, participants were given an information sheet, an informed consent sheet as well as a demographics form (see Appendix 3) to read, sign and fill in. The information sheet described the purpose of the study as well as what the data generated through their participation would be used for. After having read the information sheet and having had researchers explain to them what the FGD procedure would involve, participants were required to sign the consent form to indicate that they had agreed not only participate in the FGD, but to also have their participation audio recorded. The purpose of the demographics form was to allow for the analysis of the differences across race, gender and age between the three FGDs. At the end of each FGD participants were requested to sign for a HSSREC approved incentive of R20.

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses as well as the freedom to withdraw at any stage of the study without the incurrance of any negative consequences was stressed to participants both in written and verbal form. Before the commencement of each FGD researchers requested each participant to appoint themselves a pseudonym to be written on a nametag in order to further protect their anonymity. Participants were advised to not disclose any personal details to the group that could lead to the discovery of their true identities as there was no guarantee of confidentiality between participants outside of the FGD settings.

### **3.9.3) Confidentiality and Anonymity:**

The data that arose from subject participation was audio recorded, transcribed and later analysed using TA. This was used to identify student's perceptions of other students' motivations for engaging in TS relationships as well as other related discourses of interest, thus allowing for a comparison across gender. As has been previously mentioned, during the FGDs participants were asked to appoint themselves pseudonyms to further protect their anonymity. Within the final write up of this thesis, the only personal information provided by participants that has been featured is the demographics of the sample population, which encompasses age, race and gender. However, the use of such information in such a condensed format will not make it possible for the identities of the participants to be revealed, as was assured to the participants in the consent forms provided. Therefore even though the data from this study may also be published or presented at conferences, the confidentiality and

anonymity of the participants will remain firmly intact. Furthermore, in this final write up of the project, only excerpts have been featured in the appendices and not the full set of transcripts.

However, even though participants appointed themselves pseudonyms and did not refer to each other by their real names, they did not refer to each other's pseudonyms either so there are in fact no names to be featured in this thesis at all, furthermore ensuring that participants identities remain anonymous to the fullest extent possible.

#### **3.9.4) Storage of Data:**

Physical data in the form of audio recordings and researchers notes on the FGDs were destroyed after electronic data entry. The data in question is kept electronically on a password protected database for five years in the hands of the former project supervisor, Mr Vernon Solomon.

#### **3.9.5) Funding:**

All funding required to conduct this research project, including money needed for incentives and snacks, was provided by the researcher's former research supervisor, Mr Vernon Solomon.

### **3.10) Validity and Reliability**

#### **3.10.1) Validity:**

According to Silverman (2013) validity is concerned with the question of whether the inferences made by the researcher are actually supported by the data thereof. In the context of this study, validity was assessed according to both the richness and relevance of the emergent data. Additionally, the way in which the questions were asked during the FGDs was thought to increase the levels of truthful disclosure, since researchers did not request participants to disclose their own sexual activities or whether they themselves had engaged in TS relationships themselves. Rather, researchers stressed to participants that they need not disclose such sensitive behaviour (which would likely result in high levels of social desirability bias), only the local knowledge (i.e. what the participants had seen, heard and thus learned about TS on campus through social interaction, general observation and exposure to media) and the opinions they possessed on the subject of TS relationships.

Additionally subjective bias in this study was carefully controlled for, since as was previously mentioned the researcher is the primary research instrument in a qualitative study (Silverman, 2013; Terreblanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This meant that due to the collaborative

effort on the analysis on some of the data, human error and subjectivity could be controlled for. Where analysis on some sections of the data was only performed by one researcher, subjectivity was controlled for through close supervision of the process of analysis, formerly by the previous research supervisor, Mr Vernon Solomon, and then by the current research supervisor, Dr Nicholas Munro. Through collaborative effort on analysis of the data between the two researchers, this allowed for the intersect of different points of view and debate.

### **3.10.2) Reliability:**

According to Silverman (2013) reliability refers to the measure of consistency when instances that are grouped within the same category by different participants or the same participant occur on several different occasions. As suggested by Silverman (2013) as a means of improving the reliability of qualitative research, this study made use of low-inference descriptors (a solid record of observations) in the form of FGD transcripts that had been transcribed verbatim from the audio recordings. Excerpts from these transcripts underwent a double check against the audio recordings after transcription in order to ensure that they were fully accurate. Reliability in this study was thus dependent on the researcher to meticulously document the entire procedure as well as to demonstrate the consistent use of categories (Silverman, 2013).

The ability to generalise results from the context of one study to the context of another is a strong indicator of reliability (Silverman, 2013). However the ability to generalise was hindered by the generally small sample size of 23 participants that the data was attained from, as well as any human error on behalf of the participants or researchers (Silverman, 2013). However, results emerging from the data that has been obtained from a small sample size can gain transferability, the ability to provide answers in other contexts (Babbie & Mouton, 2005; Terreblanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Therefore in spite of this study's incapacity to generalise its results, the results in questions may be highly transferrable to similar contexts, such as other universities in South Africa.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion: Themes 1 and 2**

### **4.1) Introduction**

Several themes were identified by the researcher through data analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted by firstly becoming familiar with the transcribed data, then identifying preliminary codes by hand, then identifying themes from the codes, double checking the themes with a research partner, then defining and naming these themes, and lastly producing this final discussion of those themes.

As per recommendations by Braun and Clarke (2012) and for the purposes of this dissertation, six themes were selected for presentation in Chapters 4 and 5. The six final themes that were selected out of several potential themes best fit the ultimate criterion of which themes were most relevant to answering the research questions. It should be noted here that whilst the sixth theme (named “unexpected findings”) does not answer any question in particular as outlined in this report, its subthemes were prominent findings within the data set and were what participants evidently felt was pertinent to the subject of TS. Chapters 4 and 5 present and discuss the findings from each of the six themes. A decision was taken by the researcher to split the Findings Chapter into Chapters 4 and 5 to aid with the clarity of the discussion and presentation of the findings.

The discussion links the findings to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.2; Theoretical Framework: Three Paradigms for Understanding TS) by Stoebenu et al. (2016). The findings from each theme are presented alongside selected excerpts from the data set. As stated in Chapter 1, this dissertation has focused primarily on male-female TS literature in the interest of both keeping the dissertation to a manageable size as well as to extend the said literature, hence resulting in a heterosexual bias, which is acknowledged here.

### **4.2) Theme 1: The Paradox of Agency versus Vulnerability**

The first theme, ‘The Paradox of Agency versus Vulnerability’ is supported by two subthemes, namely ‘The Vagina as an Agentic Tool of Power’ and ‘Vulnerability’. Presented under each subtheme are relevant data extracts. These data extracts are further organized into the relevant FGDs from which they came. Overall, the following themes presented in Chapters 4 and 5 seek to answer objective and question one, (what local knowledge do participants have of transactional sex?), including Theme 1 presented below. Moreover, Theme 1 also links to objective 5 (To explore students’ perspectives on the relationship

between benefactor and beneficiary) and seeks to answer question 5 (What is the nature of the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary?).

#### **4.2.1) Sub theme 1.1: The Vagina as an Agentic Tool of Power**

Subtheme 1.1, 'The Vagina as an Agentic Tool of Power' gives reference to how both young female students and older women who engage in TS relationships identified a sense of agency in TS relationships. Even though their roles in TS relationships were regarded as differing (i.e. younger women as beneficiaries and older women as providers) these two groups of women reportedly found a sense of agency through these relationships according to the FGD participants. Overall it was found that this recurring theme of agency was linked to both the sense of control and power in TS relationships that the participants thought that some women had over their male counterparts. This was often because sex was reportedly used as a tool with which women could bargain and manipulate TS relationships to work in their favour over and above the will and position of their male counterparts.

This finding which highlights agency amongst women who engage in TS, was identified as significant by the researcher because the finding stood in stark contrast to what is often reported in literature on the subject of TS (Shefer et al., 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2011; Stoebenau et al., 2016; Zembe et al., 2013). Typically, women, and particularly young women, are often portrayed as being both powerless in and victimized by the practice of TS, due to the fact that because these women often have a considerably lower socioeconomic status in comparison to their often older and more financially secure male counterparts (Shefer et al., 2012; Stoebenau et al., 2011; Stoebenau et al., 2016; Zembe et al., 2013).

When this recurring theme of agency that was identified across all three FGDs (and more specifically the vagina as being a tool of power) is compared to what is often said about women who engage in TS, what stands out is the possibility that there may be a prevailing misconception about such women, in that they have no resources with which to negotiate the terms and conditions of the TS relationships in which they engage. According to the participants that were involved in the three FGDs it would seem that women who engage in TS were regarded as having some negotiating power. In these three FGDs, the participants often gave reference to women using sex, or more specifically allowing or disallowing their male counter parts access to their vaginas. This control over access to their vaginas was

further seen as being a source from which they could negotiate the terms of a relationship in order to benefit and derive control and power in the context of TS.

The following extracts, one selected from each of the three FGDs, convey how the researcher came to name and identify this theme of agency, and how this theme filtered down into the subtheme of ‘The Vagina as an Agentic Tool of Power’. Although it was initially in FGD A (all male) where the researcher identified this recurring theme of agency, the extract that best conveys this particular notion is presented as follows, from FGD C (comprised of both male and female participants):

- *Researcher 1: “Where do you think that power comes from?”*
- *Participant 1 (male): “I don’t want to be crude”*
- *Researcher 1: “ Say it, say it”*
- *Participant 1: “The vagina”*
- *(Laughter)*
- *Participant 2 (male): “Yeah”*
- *Researcher 1: “Okay so simply put you would say that the vagina is a tool of power”*
- *Participant 2: “Yeah”*
- *Participant 1: “Great power”*
- *Researcher 1: “Great power?”*
- *Participant 1: “Great power, if yielded properly” (Page 32)*

What this particular extract conveys is that women who engage in TS relationships were perceived to be powerful, as reiterated in extracts selected from both FGD A (all male) and another from FGD C (mixed gender) to follow. Although the researcher introduced the phrase, “the vagina as a tool of power” in FGD C (mixed gender), it was in response to the participants identifying the vagina as the very source of power that women may have over men. Furthermore the way in which these participants conveyed these opinions on the position of women in TS relationships was quite clear. The following extract selected from FGD A (all male) is as follows, where the link between the vagina and power are strongly alluded to:

- *Researcher 1: “Okay so we’re going to kick the discussion off with, um, a pretty central question, um and I’m going to pose it to you guys, what do you guys understand transactional sex to be?”*
- *(Long pause)*
- *(Indecipherable talking)*
- *Researcher 2: “This is the part where you guys tell us what you think”*
- *(Laughter)*
- *Participant 1: “Um, I think its uh, sex sexual intercourse or sexual relations in exchange for gifts, ja”*
- *(Pause)*
- *Researcher 1: “Okay”*
- *Participant 1: “It might not be gifts but uh, you benefitting somehow, so it’s something you’ll benefit from and you using that sex as...”*
- *(Pause)*
- *Participant 2: “It’s bartering”*
- *Participant 1: “Yeah its-“*
- *(Laughter)*
- *Participant 1: “-don’t say that it’s-“*
- *(Laughter)*
- *Participant 2: “Ja”*
- *Participant 1: “Ja ja that’s what you hold valuable as the woman [the vagina], knowing that’s what guys want so you can gain something out of it, so they use it to their advantage” (page 1)*

As can be seen from the above extracts, for the participants of FGDs A and C, their prevailing opinion about women who practiced TS appeared to be that such women were in fact at an advantage, and at times had the ‘upper hand’, simply because their vaginas were seen as a commodity and a tool with which they could negotiate better terms within the context of a TS relationship. The notion of women who practice TS as being at an advantage because of the way they reportedly manipulate the situation by allowing or disallowing their male counterpart’s access to their vaginas is alluded to and further reiterated in the following extract from FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 2 (Male): “...girls have this thing where no sex on the first date type thing, so apparently I have to spend more money until I actually get to have sex with you type thing” (page 1)*

This notion of the vagina being an agentic tool of power is consistent with Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) second paradigm for understanding TS as sex for improved social status. Whilst the findings under this particular theme do not relate to having sex specifically to improve one’s social status, links to this paradigm can be made where Stoebenau et al. (2016) discuss the way in which women in this paradigm are considered to be active, powerful agents within the context of TS. This creates a stark contrast to the way in which a lot of literature on TS portrays women as being vulnerable victims (Hope, 2007; Leach et al., 2003; Stoebenau et al., 2016; United Nations Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, 2004). Under this paradigm of sex for improved social status, Stoebenau et al. (2016) discuss the concept of ‘erotic power’, which is said to be used by women to entice resourceful men, and in doing so gain access to both social and economic power. The term ‘erotic power’ alludes to the idea of feminine sex appeal, and is relatable to the notion of the vagina itself as being an agentic tool of power. However, Stoebenau et al. (2016) and other related literature (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012; Luke, 2003; Stoebenau et al., 2011) suggest that there are limits to the power that women in TS relationships possess, which can be observed by the way in which such women lose grounds to negotiate when sex happens, and whether condoms are used or not regardless of the power they hold in choosing a partner. This is a point that participants across the three FGDs did not raise in discussion of concepts of women’s power and agency within TS relationships.

#### **4.2.2) Subtheme 1.2: Vulnerability**

The subtheme 1.2 (Vulnerability) is presented in contrast to Subtheme 1.1 (The Vagina as an Agentic Tool of Power). Even though the participants across FGDs A (all male), B (all female) and C (mixed gender) generally thought that women who practice TS had some sort of power, and therefore agency, they were also regarded as being vulnerable. This notion of vulnerability was often linked to participants opinions that women who came from a rural background were more susceptible to being more vulnerable than their urban counterparts, due to the fact that they were new to the customs of modern city life. Participants were of the

opinion that such women might feel pressurised to conform to a more modern and urban lifestyle and aspire to obtain the material goods that accompany such a lifestyle. Furthermore these women were seen to be even more vulnerable due to coming from an impoverished background and that they lived far from home and away from their support structures. In addition to this, participants perceived women who came from rural areas to be more naïve to a modern lifestyle than their urban counterparts, and therefore more vulnerable to the complications that entail such a lifestyle, namely the immense pressure by both peers and popular media to attain commodities of modernity in order to adhere to a socially desirable image. It should be noted here however, that in mens' discussion of the issue of vulnerability of women and TS, none of them identified themselves as rural, nor was it made explicit to the researcher that any of the participants were speaking from first-hand experience. What therefore emerged from these discussions may have been the participants' impressions that may have been stereotypical in nature. The same would be true further on in this chapter of womens' views of TS, it was not made explicit to the researcher as to whether any of the female participants were speaking from first-hand experience.

The following extracts, one from FGDs A (all male), B (all female) and C (mixed gender) convey participants' beliefs of vulnerability being linked to women who came from rural areas into university.

FGD A (all male):

- *Participant 3: "So yeah like on one hand, girls are vulnerable, you know rural, but on the other, they learn the tricks of the trade very quickly" (page 17)*

FGD B (all female):

- *Participant 2: "...sometimes has something to do with where you come from because take for example when you um come from rural areas and are vulnerable to city life and then you ended up doing things you didn't plan on doing..." (page 8)*

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 1 (female): "So in that way everybody is vulnerable, like when they come from rural areas into this new, big (pause), it's more of wanting to fit in and not be...not be seen as a social outcast" (page 18)*

What can be surmised from the above extract under FGD A (all male), was that even though some women came to university from rural backgrounds, they allegedly adapted very quickly to an urban lifestyle in spite of their initial naivety and subsequent vulnerability. Learning the “tricks of the trade” in the context of FGD A (all male) referred to these women becoming involved in TS relationships and learning how to navigate them. The reoccurring theme of vulnerability was further reiterated in the above extract under FGD B (all female), which suggested that “city life” could possibly be very difficult and complicated for rural women entering university to navigate. This was further supplemented by the above extract under FGD C (mixed gender), which suggested that such women may feel pressurised to engage in TS relationships due to the inadvertent pressure that they may experience with entering into a new and unfamiliar urban environment. According to the participants of these FGDs, expectations which would be placed upon them by their peers would entail conforming to certain standards set out by modern living, such as wearing expensive clothes and weaves and makeup. Section 4.3 (Theme 2: Maintaining Status: The Pressures of Modernity) below elaborates on the standards set out by modern living in more detail.

In linking Subtheme 1.2 (Vulnerability) to Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) theoretical framework, this particular notion of vulnerability in TS is aligned to the first paradigm of sex for basic needs. Within this paradigm, women who engage in TS relationships are seen as being vulnerable victims of this practice, who have neither power nor agency and therefore no other real options other than to exchange sex for material and financial support (Hope, 2007; Leach et al., 2003; Stoebenau et al., 2016; United Nations Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, 2004). Poverty is a key feature of the paradigm of sex for basic needs, or more specifically, women’s financial dependence on men (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Whilst participants in FGDs A (all male), B (all female) and C (mixed gender) inadvertently asserted that women who came from rural or impoverished backgrounds and engaged in TS were the ones who were vulnerable (as opposed to their urban background counterparts who were not thought to be vulnerable), the concept of survival sex (i.e. the exchange of sex for basic goods such as food, clothing and shelter needed to in order survive) which is a key component of this paradigm did not feature in discussion around this theme of vulnerability. As one participant from FGD A (all male) put it, women from rural backgrounds entering into urban environments such as university “learn the tricks of the trade very quickly”, which thus brings forth the fact that

Sub-theme 1.2 is also partly aligned to the second paradigm of sex for improved social status (Stoebenau et al., 2016). The statement made by one participant in FGD C (mixed gender) about students from rural backgrounds not wanting to be “seen as a social outcast” echoes Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) statements about the vast amount of peer pressure young people experience with the rise of a consumerist culture where much value is placed upon commodities of modernity that are associated with a middle class lifestyle (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Stoebenau et al., 2016).

In summary, Theme 1 points to the possibility that women (in this case both female students and women in general) who engage in TS relationships are regarded as being both powerful and vulnerable, hence the theme being named the paradox of agency versus vulnerability. However, what is noteworthy of these findings for this particular theme is that participants from these FGDs appeared to be of the opinion that women who engaged in TS relationships were only vulnerable if they came from a rural background.

Therefore, it can be presumed that by whom participants considered to be vulnerable and thus disempowered (i.e. women from rural backgrounds), is that women who engage in TS relationships who are from urban backgrounds are not considered to be vulnerable, but are in fact considered to be agents of power.

### **4.3) Theme 2: Maintaining Status: The Pressures of Modernity.**

This second theme presented here under Chapter 4 relates to students trying to both gain and maintain social status amongst their peers. This need for improved social status appears to be through the pressure these students face that seems to come with the expectations set upon them by modern living, as well as exposure to what social media advocates or ‘glamourises’. The theme of the pressures of modernity specifically relates to how TS relationships are further fueled by the social pressure students face. This social pressure is in accordance with living up to the expectations that a modern lifestyle appears to place upon them. This particular theme is linked to objective 3 (To identify what students consider are the driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students) and question 3 (What do participants consider to be the primary driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students?).

Much of what the participants were referring to across FGDs A, B and C related to an apparent sense of pressure that students, both male and female, experience either from their

own peers or the media in terms of maintaining social status in accordance with the expectations of modernity.

From what the participants reported in the FGDs, some students who engage in TS relationships, especially women, had a certain criteria that a potential partner had to meet, such as owning an expensive car. The following extracts from FGD A (all male) convey this particular notion.

- *Participant 5: “Okay yeah, they even have a choice of men, that if, like girls say, “I only date those guys who drive VW cars (extenuated), Lambo’s (extenuated), stuff, ja” (page 12)*
- *Participant 6: “...she’s gonna wanna see what he can possibly produce, so by him coming into the, driving into the club with a Land Rover or something a Lamborghini or whatever, like that’s how he can be like “I’m here” when all a girl needs to do is walk into the club and people know there she is” (page 21)*

Participant 2 from FGD A (all male) referred to female students having expectations that they put upon themselves in terms of the clothes they wear and the particular weave they have.

- *Participant 2: “They see what it takes to be cool, to check what we wear whatever I’m supposed to have this weave, I can’t be like wearing this kind of top cos it’s from- (indecipherable talk)- then they end up like, how am I going to get this stuff, I run out of money obviously you know”(page 8)*

What can be inferred from the extracts from FGD A (all male) above, is that in order to be considered an acceptable partner by a woman, a man had to fit the image of the successful modern man by having an expensive car, which would thus give the impression of a certain level of social status. In turn, it was inferred that women in TS relationships who choose to only associate themselves with men of a perceived higher social standing would themselves gain a certain level of social status. It should be noted that in this instance, whilst the study was specific to university students and TS, participants often referred to women in general in their discussion on TS and female beneficiaries.

The following extract from FGD B (all female) further reiterates the last extract from FGD A (all male) presented above about the certain pressure that students feel about maintaining an acceptable level of social status. Reportedly, one would both attain and maintain social status by possessing the ‘right’ material goods that fit in accordance to living a high end modern lifestyle.

- *Participant 3: “...like the way you look, the hair, the bag and the phone is is a huge thing if you don’t have these things then...” (page 14)*

What can further be inferred from the above extract, is that these certain material possessions that convey the impression that one is has a certain level of social status and thus lives the certain lifestyle that most students would deem desirable, is that such notions are fed through to youth through what the media advocates. This can be seen in the following extract again from FGD B (all female).

- *Participant 6: “And the media as well I think is a contributor as a factor of it, because I mean the way they are glamorising things that are not supposed to be glamorised I mean I think the media as well plays a huge part in-”*
- *Researcher 2: “In motivating the girls”*
- *(murmurs of agreement)*
- *Participant 6: “Of course” (page 7)*

This extract above further links to what one of the participants stated in an extract presented below from FGD C (mixed gender), again in relation to media and how it contributed to the social pressure that students experience in relation to TS.

- *Participant 1(female): “And the girls just want to fit the persona of the music video (murmurs of agreement) so that’s how they behave, in real life so that the money...if you think about Nicki Minaj she talks about getting stuff from guys in exchange for sex in most if I think about it in most of her songs” (page 14)*

According to the participants in FGDs B and C, the pressure that students reportedly experience goes beyond peer pressure, but is in fact contributed to what media ‘glamorises’. This would appear to be a valid argument if one thinks about what popular media advocates, and the images and messages society passively receives via the media on a daily basis. What really stands out in the findings, was that it is often through association with certain people and objects that conveyed the impression of living up to a certain level of social standing as set out by the expectations of modern society and media, that students themselves attained social status.

Certainly, in relation to Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) theoretical framework, this particular theme can be linked to the second paradigm for understanding TS, sex for improved social status. What is obvious in the above extracts through what participants in the FGDs had said on the topic, is the ever increasing value placed upon commodities of modernity and the peer

pressure associated with this, which is precisely what Stoebenau et al. (2016) state under their discussion of this paradigm. This can further be linked to what was discussed in Section 4.2 on the topic of vulnerability, where a participant mentioned that a possible motivation for students from rural backgrounds (and the nature of their background allegedly being what made them vulnerable) to engage in TS was the dread as potentially being “seen as a social outcast”. Note however that under this theme participants did not specifically make reference to students from rural backgrounds, and what could possibly be implied by the absence of this particular reference is that all young people regardless of economic and social standing are subject to pressure by peers and popular media to maintain a certain lifestyle that entails commodities of modernity such as fashion, technology and cars. Whilst Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) three paradigms only include women in its framework, it would seem that by some of the statements made by participants on the subject of owning the ‘right’ car that male benefactors of TS experience the same peer pressure to possess certain commodities of modernity, in order to portray the desired high end lifestyle women are also said to pursue through TS, as asserted by Stoebenau et al. (2016). The exclusion of males from these three paradigms for understanding TS, whether as benefactors or beneficiaries, is perhaps a shortcoming of this theoretical framework by Stoebenau et al. (2016), if a more holistic understanding of TS is to be attained. More on this particular point will be made in the next section of this chapter as well as the section following the next, where male beneficiaries, or ‘Ben Tens’ as they are referred to, enter the discussion.

#### **4.4) Conclusion**

In conclusion, Chapter 4 firstly discussed ‘The Paradox of Agency versus Vulnerability’, where there appeared to be a stark contrast where participants viewed some women to have a considerable amount of power in TS relationships (where the power itself was said to come from the vagina), versus the viewpoints of other participants that women were also vulnerable, but predominantly only if they came from a rural background. In the second half of Chapter 4, the theme of ‘Maintaining Status: The Pressures of Modernity’ was discussed, whereby it appeared that many students and young people in general choosing to engage in TS relationships are under an immense amount of pressure to maintain a certain level of social status through attaining ‘commodities of modernity’ (i.e. luxury cars, the best weaves, makeup, brand name clothing etcetera). This pressure was said to stem from both peers and popular media. All of the above were included in Chapter 4 as these were findings that spoke

to integral dynamics of TS itself, and were therefore considered to be important to the researcher. Chapter 5, the next findings and discussion chapter to follow, will cover the remaining four themes.

## **Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion: Themes 3, 4, 5 and 6**

### **5.1) Introduction**

The themes to follow as they appear in order of discussion, are: Theme 3: The Motivations and Driving Forces behind Student's Engagement in TS: Materialism versus Poverty (Section 5.2), Theme 4: The Role of Men in TS: Beneficiaries versus Benefactors (Section 5.3), Theme 5: Colloquial Terminology in TS (Section 5.4), Theme 6: Unexpected Findings: TS as 'Laziness' and the Normalisation of TS (Section 5.5). These themes stood out as important to the researcher, due to the fact that they were both relevant and significant, particularly to the dynamics of TS.

### **5.2) Theme 3: The Motivations and Driving Forces behind Student's Engagement in TS: Materialism versus Poverty.**

Throughout the discussions that were had in FGDs A, B and C, much talk arose between the participants about what they considered to be the motivations and driving forces behind students' engagement in TS. This particular theme links directly to objective 3 (To identify what students consider are the driving forces and motivations for the practice of transactional sex amongst students).

What was identified in these discussions in relation to the above mentioned topic, was a contrast of both materialism and poverty. Overall, most of the discussion on this topic between participants often related to the money or goods they thought students obtained through engagement in TS. Although this is obvious in relation to TS, participants made a distinct differentiation between those who engaged in TS and the money or goods gained thereof into two groupings. The first group included those who wanted the money or goods for materialistic purposes, and those who needed the money or goods to either survive or pay for their education.

Examples for those students who engage in TS for material purposes can be seen in the following three extracts, each from FGDs A, B and C.

FGD A (all male):

- *Participant 2: "...she knew exactly what she was doing, and she knew how to work it, you know, like doing it in such a way, like, thirty grands a salary" (page 13).*

FGD B (all female):

- *Participant 5: "...ja poverty contributes to it but also its high taste because the same people you see them you know them so the whole money doesn't just go to school fees it also goes to what they wear..." (page 19).*

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 2 (male): "I heard that sometimes guys get benefits, um they would drive the car during the day or something like that or get money during the weekends so they can go party with their friends, all you have to do is have sex with the woman" (page 22)*

In the above extracts, the participants seemed to be talking about students engaging in TS for material gain. In these instances, participants were not talking about students who engage in TS because they needed the money or goods to survive, but because they wanted the money or goods so that they could live a better lifestyle. Furthermore, what should also be taken note of in the extract for FGD C (mixed gender), is that participants did not limit their discussion of TS as being exclusive to female beneficiaries, but also made mention of male beneficiaries. These male beneficiaries are what participants across FGDs A, B and C referred to as 'Ben Tens'. The topic of male beneficiaries or 'Ben Tens' as they were referred to by participants will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter (see Section 5.3).

As previously stated, participants differentiated between those who engage in TS simply because these students want the money or goods to achieve a better standard of living (to which there is more a social status aspect attached to this) and those who needed the money for survival purposes or to pay for their education. The following extracts, each from FGD A (all male), B and C are examples of the former.

FGD A (all male):

- *Participant 3: "So it's not always like a bad kind of reason like they just want to party (indecipherable talk) sometimes they put in a position where, how else are they going to pay for their education" (page 3).*

FGD B (all female):

- *Participant 2: “I’d say for some its poverty (murmurs of agreement) like I think its common in rural areas simply because sometimes they have to provide for the family and the only way they can (pause) survive is by doing all these things so I’d say poverty is a real um contributor to it” (page 4-5).*

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 1(female): “If you become financially dependent on this person and he gets over you, or you do something wrong and he gets over you and now he’s gone and now oh there’s no one to pay my school fee’s” (page 31).*

In reference to the above examples, it should be noted that in the FGDs in which instances of students engaging in TS for either survival or for the money to pay school fees, participants seemed more likely to be sympathetic towards such students. In contrast, throughout FGDs A, B and C, it was apparent that participants did not advocate TS, especially in instances where students engaged in TS for material gain. Instead, they tended to view instances of students who engage in TS as a means of survival or to pay for their own education as being a more of an ‘acceptable’ reason for engaging in TS.

The issue of poverty versus materialism relates directly to paradigms one and two respectively, as set out by Stoebenau et al. (2016) in their theoretical proposition of the three paradigms for understanding TS. The first paradigm, sex for basic needs asserts that women are both vulnerable to and victimized by the practice of TS, and in their impoverished position often have little choice other than to trade sex in exchange for money, basic goods and food needed in order to survive (Stoebenau et al., 2016). According to some participants, poverty was said to be a driving force behind student’s engagement in TS. As one participant from FGD B (all female) stated, students often engaged in TS “simply because sometimes they have to provide for the family”. This certainly could be a reality for many students attending university, coming from rural areas and impoverished backgrounds, where they may essentially be carrying the burden of being the bread winner of their families back home. On the subject of poverty and reports that many students engage in TS as a means to fund

their tertiary education, it should be noted that whilst having a tertiary level qualification does not exactly classify under the first paradigm since it is not a basic need, it is however a means of potentially breaking the cycle of poverty (Ranganathan et al. (2017). Through tertiary education, one might stand a better chance of attaining a more secure employment, and therefore a steadier income. What this means for women who are vulnerable to such an exchange is that they may become more self-sufficient and independent of men.

The issue of materialism fits squarely within Stoebenau et al.'s (2016) second paradigm of sex for improved social status. In discussion on this topic, what participants were reporting was that many students who engaged in TS do so for materialistic reasons, such as fashion and "benefits", such as access to cars and money for partying. All of the aforementioned would be what Stoebenau et al. (2016) term as "commodities of modernity", which portrays a certain type of desirable lifestyle (i.e. middle class and modern). As one participant from FGD B (all female) termed it, a possible driving force behind student's engagement in TS was their "high taste", which could be equated to what Stoebenau et al. (2016) term as "consumer culture". In addition, TS was not limited to female students, but also extended to male students in the role as the beneficiary during the discussion on materialism. What is also relevant is that the role of female beneficiaries and male beneficiaries is the same (i.e., to provide sex) and that their motives for engaging in TS relationships were the same (i.e., the pursuit of materialistic goods associated with a modern lifestyle). This is a matter that will be discussed more in depth in Section 5.3. However, it is important to note that the exclusion of men as beneficiaries from Stoebenau et al.'s (2016) theoretical framework on the three paradigms for understanding TS places limitations upon the holistic understanding of TS that Stoebenau et al. (2016) strive to achieve.

In closing of this discussion, what was obvious was that for FGD A (all male), participants had a lot more to say on the subject of materialism as opposed to FGD B (all female), who had more to say on the subject of poverty. Why this difference is noteworthy, is that this difference could perhaps be due to the fact that differences in gender possibly influenced the way in which participants perceived this particular subject. It could be perhaps that female participants empathized more with the plight of their own gender at times where poverty was concerned, whereas male participants were quite familiar with the pressure young men apparently face to provide certain material goods to their partners which they often did not have the means to do, being a young student with no income .

### **5.3) Theme 4: The Role of Men in TS: Beneficiaries versus Benefactors**

Throughout the FGDs that were held, the researcher identified a reoccurring theme regarding certain roles men played in the practice of TS. More specifically, there were two roles that men apparently played in TS as was identified by the researcher and participants. Here, some men were described either as being beneficiaries (or ‘Ben Tens’) or benefactors (commonly known as ‘sugar daddies’). The participants’ local knowledge on this particular topic essentially encompassed the nature of the relationship between the beneficiary (either male or female) and the benefactor (either male or female). In general, what was voiced by participants on this topic was said in the context of TS as it applies to a student population. Theme 4 in question links to objective 4 of this study (To explore students’ local knowledge regarding the role of men in transactional sex) and sought to answer question 4 (What local knowledge exists regarding the role of men in transactional sex?).

In discussion of men as beneficiaries in TS, the term ‘Ben Ten’ was consistently mentioned throughout FGDs A, B and C. This term was used by participants to describe young men who were in sexual relationships with older women in exchange for money, goods, or certain perks such as driving the older woman’s car. These older women were commonly referred to by participants as ‘cougars’. Albeit that these were terms that the participants used in the FGDs, these were also terms that are commonly used in public discourse in relation to discussion of TS (Bougard & Matsi-Madolo, 2017; Mbeve, 2017; Selepe et al., 2017; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A283xhq-cLU>). More on terminology will be discussed later on in this chapter.

In reference to the roles male beneficiaries played, the FGD participants did not make any distinction between the role of male beneficiaries from that of female beneficiaries. What was said by some participants when asked about a ‘Ben Ten’ or male beneficiary is presented in the below extracts.

FGD B (all female):

- *Participant 4: “Well they just, they just play the same role as girls play with guys-” (page 9).*

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 1(female): “A Ben Ten is basically a guy that is servicing an older woman, like a sugar daddy but opposite” (page 9).*
- *Participant 2 (male): “I heard that sometimes guys get benefit’s, um they would drive the car during the day or something like that or get money during the weekends so they can go party with their friends, all you have to do is have sex with the woman” (page 22).*

In reference to the above extracts, the first extract is a brief but apt summary of the role male beneficiaries play in contrast with their female counterparts, in that there was no apparent difference. By what could be identified by the researcher from what the participants had said on this particular subject, it seemed that a male beneficiary played the same role as a female beneficiary would in TS relationships.

The second extract above went into a bit more detail than the former, in that it basically just stated what a ‘Ben Ten’ was. What should be taken note of in this extract is the term the participant chose to use, ‘servicing’. Which thus brings to the point the role of beneficiaries in TS relationships in general (since difference in gender does not seem to affect the role), which essentially is what they are expected to produce, which was sex. The last extract presented above sums up what exactly is meant by the term ‘servicing’ and precisely what is expected of beneficiaries by their benefactors regardless of gender. What is expected of male beneficiaries (as well as female beneficiaries) in TS relationships is to perform sex acts as and when required by the benefactor in exchange for either money or goods.

The only difference identified by the researcher is that there may be some difference between gender when it comes to the matter of cars. The perceived difference is that (again looking at the last extract presented above and from what was discussed in former themes under the topic of materialism) is that a male beneficiary may want to drive the older woman’s car, whilst a female beneficiary may want to be driven around and be seen in the expensive or ‘fancy’ car of her male benefactor.

This thus brings forth the subject of male benefactors and the roles that they play in contrast to the roles male beneficiaries play. Presented below are the selected extracts that describe the role of a male benefactor.

FGD A (all male):

- *Participant 8: “Okay women are looking for money the men are responsible for providing the money in exchange for, ja (laughter)” (page 10).*

- *Participant 1: “And then the girls themselves, how you identify this, they have a guy for each occasion, so there’s a guy that goes to the club and buys bottles, then there’s a guy that can bring pizza and lunch for them right now, then there’s the guy that will shop, who will take them shopping, so for them it’s like, who should I call tonight, oh let’s get pizza.” (page 23).*

FGD B (all female):

- *Participant 5: “Because each one provide in different things, ministers for transport can drive them around to take them to the mall or to wherever they want to be, and those ministers for information normally buy them airtime, and ministers for finances give them money so they have to pinch from-” (page 4).*

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 2(male): “...like I know a certain guy who’s quite wealthy and bought um (pause) side chick who happens to be way younger a car, you know so” (page 15).*

What was identified by the researcher on what participants mentioned throughout FGD A, B and C, some of which is presented in the above extracts, is that the role of male benefactors was quite simple, in that their role was merely to provide whatever it might be that the beneficiary required. The first extract from FGD A (all male) presented above encapsulated, plainly yet aptly, what the role of a male benefactor was, and that was to provide for the beneficiary. The second abstract presented above for FGD A (all male) and below that the extract under FGD B (all female) and FGD C (mixed gender) go into more detail about the ways in which male benefactors provide. With regards to the aforementioned extracts, it would seem that often the male benefactor provides more than what is simply required for the beneficiaries’ survival. These extracts imply that male benefactors do more than just provide goods and money. What was identified by the researcher was that through the provision of money and certain types of goods in TS, what male benefactors often implicitly provide to beneficiaries is social status.

Whilst Stoebenau et al. (2016) do not include males as beneficiaries in their three paradigms for understanding TS, since what both genders provide in the role of beneficiaries is the same (they both provide sex), it could be said that due to this, what Stoebenau et al. (2016) say

about female beneficiaries can somewhat be applied to male beneficiaries. The former is stated cautiously however, as it would seem that it is the very nature of the role between male and female beneficiaries that differs at times. For instance, in discussion of male beneficiaries, or ‘Ben Tens’, what was most notable was that male beneficiaries were not considered to be vulnerable, victimized or at risk of any sort of major issue (except for the cougar’s husband finding out about the affair with the Ben Ten) such as abuse. What can be gathered from the above extract from FGD C (mixed gender) was that the nature of the exchange with a female benefactor was very simple for a male beneficiary, and in the way it was phrased (“...all you have to do is have sex with the woman”) conveyed the impression that it was not only easy, but probably an added bonus to the “benefits” they already receive in the exchange. In accordance with Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) first paradigm, the experience for a ‘Ben Ten’ is nowhere near as pleasurable or easy for female beneficiaries. Instances of men engaging with female or male benefactors in TS out of sex in exchange for basic goods, or sex in exchange for funding university fees was not mentioned by the participants. It may be untrue to say that such instances do not happen, but from what can be deduced in what participants otherwise said or omitted on the subject of male beneficiaries, it may be closer to the truth in stating that an exchange between a male beneficiary and a female benefactor of that nature does not happen very often, perhaps because men whether they be beneficiaries or benefactors are simply not as vulnerable as women. This could be due to the way society and the economy have structured itself in such a way that men generally have more power over women.

In reference to the matter of male benefactors, or “sugar daddies” as they have been popularly referred to, Stoebenau et al. (2016) discusses the second paradigm, sex for improved social status. Going back to what was said earlier on in this particular section, was that often male benefactors provided more to their female beneficiaries than just the basic goods necessary to survive, such as “commodities of modernity”, which depending on what they were thus lent social status to the beneficiary. Things such as buying “bottles” (alcohol) in a social setting such as a nightclub, or being seen in certain cars, wearing certain clothes, and even eating certain food are all things that the FGD participants mentioned, which the researcher identified as providing social status. In consideration of all of the above, it can be said that male beneficiaries and male benefactors share the same role, in that both social groups provide to their counterparts. What sets these two social groups apart however is the way in which they provide. Simply put, the role of the male beneficiary (and by extension a female

beneficiary) is to provide sex, and in conjunction the role of the male benefactor is to provide goods, money, and at times (through the types of goods provided) social status.

In conclusion of this section, this notion of production and provision in TS brings forth the idea of a provide, produce and perform triad. With regards to provision, it would seem that both parties, beneficiaries and benefactors, provide their respective counterparts with something, whether it be sex, money, commodities of modernity, or indeed social status. Moreover, it is expected that both beneficiaries and benefactors produce the aforementioned things, in order for an exchange to take place. There is therefore some overlap between the issues of provide and produce. However, it is only the beneficiaries, whether they be male or female that are expected to perform the sex acts on demand of the benefactor.

#### **5.4) Theme 5: Colloquial Terminology in TS.**

Throughout the discussions that were had in FGDs A, B and C, the researcher identified colloquial terminology that was used by participants when talking about TS. More specifically, the colloquial terminology that was used throughout all FGDs were separated by the researcher into two groups. Either, the colloquial terminology used by participants was used to describe TS itself, or (for the most part), those who engage in TS relationships. Here, it was found by the researcher that many of the terms used by participants to describe female beneficiaries and benefactors versus that of male beneficiaries and benefactors often conveyed discrimination against females who engaged in TS. This brings forth the notion of TS and its gendered nature, which was the reason this particular section on terminology was included in this chapter. Theme 5 is linked to objective 2 (To explore and identify the colloquial terminology that students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it) and question 2 of this study (What colloquial terminology do students use to describe transactional sex and those who engage in it?)

The term ‘sugar daddy’ was used by participants many times throughout FGDs A, B and C in relation to discussion about male benefactors. However, whilst that may have been the most common term used to refer to a male benefactor, participants did use terms other than ‘sugar daddy’ to refer to male benefactors in TS relationships. Below are some extracts containing other such terms.

FGD A (all male):

- *Participant 1: “...you know you know some keepers of Benz’s are like coming there...” (page 18)*
- *Participant 3: “Ja, so like he’s not old but like a ‘Buddha’ a ‘Razol’” (page 25)*

FGD B (all female):

- *Participant 4: “Ministers of finance” (page 4)*

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 2 (male): “Some some girls call guys, that’s my ‘ATM’” (page 26)*

All of the above extracts feature other colloquial terms used by participants to refer to male benefactors in TS relationships. What should be noted in the above extracts (with the exception of the second extract) is that terms such as ‘keepers of the Benz’s’, ‘ministers of finance’ and ‘ATM’ all make reference to the financial or material resources male benefactors provide. To clarify, according to the participants, ‘keepers of the Benz’s’ refer to male benefactors who are owners of Mercedes Benz vehicles. The role of the luxury vehicles male benefactors were reportedly said to own, and how in turn that lent social status to beneficiaries was discussed earlier in this chapter. Furthermore what should be noted about the second extract under FGD A (all male) is that these were terms (“Buddha” or “Razol”) that exclusively applied to younger male benefactors who were not as old as their ‘sugar daddy’ counterparts. This was an extract that stood out to the researcher as such terms did not feature in scientific peer reviewed literature about TS. This particular extract conveys the fact that male benefactors did not all fit into one simple category, even though both social groups provided the same things to their beneficiaries. This particular dynamic seemed to not apply to younger female benefactors, or at least there was no term that the participants used for it.

Throughout discussions in FGDs A, B and C, the researcher also identified many colloquial terms that the participants used to refer to beneficiaries, whether they were male or female. Below are some extracts that contain some of these terms.

FGD C (mixed gender):

- *Participant 1 (female): “So you call it a ‘Ben Ten’ because many young boys like watching ‘Ben Ten’ on Cartoon Network” (page 9)*
- *Participant 3 (female): “Squeezer” (page 24)*
- *Participant 2 (male): “Side chick” (page 24)*

- *Participant 2(male): “Mistress” (page 25)*
- *Participant 2(male): “Well then I guess they’re sophisticated sluts” (page 29)*
- *Participant 1(female): “That’s where the term ‘homewrecker’ comes from” (page 31)*

Throughout the FGDs, there were many colloquial terms used for female beneficiaries of TS relationships. It is important to note that some of these terms featured in the above extracts could be considered derogatory (note the last two extracts), however there was no term used for a male beneficiary by participants that could be considered derogatory. This may very well be due to certain social dynamics wherein women may be judged more harshly by society than men may be regarding the issue of sexuality. Throughout the FGDs, the only term used by participants to describe a male beneficiary was the term ‘Ben Ten’, as can be seen in the first extract above. It strikes a stark contrast, in that there were many terms used to describe female beneficiaries, yet only one term to describe a male beneficiary, the nature of which speaks to the reason why this section on terminology was included in this chapter by the researcher. Lastly, below are two extracts that can be considered colloquial terms participants used to describe TS.

FGD A (all male):

- *Participant 4: “Then in Xhosa there’s a term called ‘ukumuda’, it simply means a girl who only dates only for money” (page 10)*
- *Participant 7: “I’d say, oh there’s a saying ‘Isistwasa’ which is saying (pause) simply meaning, ‘an old bucket, sleeps the young’, so so it’s normal, a girl is gonna do what she has to do” (page 21)*

The above extracts are examples of African terminology describing TS. The second extract was found by the researcher to be both quite apt and unique in its description of TS. Though it should be noted here that in consultation between the researcher, one isiZulu translator (fluent in both isiZulu and English) and one Xhosa translator (fluent in both Xhosa and English), that the terms “Isistwasa” and “ukumuda” could not be translated. Upon discussion, both translators speculated that these terms may be the participants own slang, or was at least rural isiZulu or Xhosa not familiar to commonly spoken isiZulu or Xhosa. Whilst participants across FGDs A, B and C used many colloquial terms to describe those who engaged in TS, participants did not mention many colloquial terms used to describe TS itself.

One of Lev Vygotsky's contributions to the theory of socio-constructivism, was that of the centrality of language. It is important to revisit this contribution when considering the issue of colloquial terminology in TS since language is said to be made up of the 'cumulative social constructions' of communities, thereby lending power to language since it carries information, values and world-views (Donald et al., 2010). An example where language demonstrates its power in the context of TS would be through terms such as "sophisticated sluts" and "Ben Tens". The derogatory term "sophisticated sluts" used to describe women who engage in TS versus the term "Ben Tens", which could be considered jovial and comical given its cartoon origin brings to light the gendered nature of TS. The term "sophisticated sluts" immediately conveys a lot about what one thinks of women who engage in TS, firstly being that they have 'loose' morals and are promiscuous, and as such shame and judgement is attached to this. Moreover, when one uses the term "sophisticated sluts", or "homewrecker" to describe women who engage in TS, it also conveys their personal stance and views on the matter, in this instance taking the 'moral high ground'. Through discussion with participants on their sentiments about women as well as men who engage in TS, as can be seen in the extracts above, female beneficiaries were not highly thought of, especially if their reasons for engaging in TS relationships were reportedly for material gain. However, on the subject of male beneficiaries or "Ben Tens" as they were referred to, across all three FGDs in every instance this term was raised, there was a notable lack of moral judgement, even though male beneficiaries often engaged in TS relationships for materialistic gain and social status. Whilst both social groups were pursuing what Stoebenau et al. (2016) termed the "commodities of modernity" in order to secure a desirable lifestyle, only female beneficiaries were judged for doing so. It is suggested that this could be due to the way in which the ideals of gender are constructed by society, in that the ideal women is submissive and conservative, and that the ideal male is both masculine and powerful. Under discussion on the second paradigm by Stoebenau et al. (2016), sex for improved social status, it is stated that women who engage in TS under this paradigm are powerful agents, and are often shamed for being so by their communities (Fielding-Miller et al., 2016; Stoebenau et al., 2011). Stoebenau et al. (2016) also comment on the issue of emphasized femininity and hegemonic masculinity, the latter of which is said to reproduce and enhance gender inequality as well as to suppress alternative ways of being a man (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hunter 2010; Jewkes and Morrell, 2012). On the subject of hegemonic masculinities, Christofides et al. (2018) comment on the fact that there appears to be a growing consensus that gender constructs of this nature lead to harmful health behaviours, including TS and violence against women. Furthermore, research appears

to suggest that men who strictly adhere to more dominant norms of masculinity in the forms of “toughness, virility and power” are more likely to be perpetrators of violence against women (Christofides et al. 2018).

Overall, what Stoebenau et al. (2016) highlight in discussion of this second paradigm is the issue of sexuality as well as its complexities and issues, as does the matter of colloquial terminology as it is discussed here through the terms participants in the FGDs used and what they subsequently imply. In closing, it should be stated that all of the above were common colloquial terms used in TS, however, terms commonly used now such as ‘blesser’ and ‘slay queen’ did not feature in literature on TS in 2014, thus demonstrating how when certain aspects of a social phenomenon such as TS evolve, as does the terminology around it.

### **5.5) Theme 6: Unexpected Findings: TS as ‘Laziness’ and the Normalisation of TS.**

One of the themes presented in this chapter is the concept of TS as ‘Laziness’, which was a topic of discussion that featured mainly in FGDs A and B. In these two FGDs, there appeared to be an undertone of judgement regarding the motivations for young women engaging in TS relationships, which was at times subtle and at times it was not. Whilst this particular theme did not answer any of the research objectives or questions of this study, these findings presented here were identified as being significant to the researcher as they were recurrent in the dataset. Below are extracts from FGDs A and B regarding TS as ‘Laziness’.

FGD A (all male):

*Participant 2: “Because these girls are lazy, they just they just lazy” (page 4)*

*Participant 2: “... like, figure something out like I don’t know I understand” (page 4)*

*Participant 1: “Like get a job, a part time job” (page 4)*

*Participant 2: “Ja that’s just lazy uti [she/he says] okay this thing actually you know a ching ching (indecipherable)” (page 4)*

FGD B (all female):

*Participant 2: “... I think it’s the culture that we have now especially with our generation of being lazy that okay it should be done because I’m my mom fought for it therefore it must be done for me cos it’s my right” (page 19)*

In reference to the above extracts under FGD A (all male), a few participants voiced their opinion’s relatively early on in the discussion that young women who engaged in TS relationships were “just lazy”. The second and third extracts convey a certain intolerance to young women engaging in TS, regardless of their motivations. What these two extracts and the fourth extract also convey is an underlying opinion that women who engage in TS do so as an ‘easy way’ out. This being said, it was also interesting to note that FGD A (all male), comprised of male participants only, did not sympathise or empathise with young women who engage in TS, even in cases where their motivations were to escape poverty or to pay for their education. In contrast participants in FGDs B and C empathised with women who engage in TS much more than those in FGD A, and this may be due to gender dynamics within each FGD. These dynamics, may have had an effect on certain viewpoints on particular topics of discussion, or participants’ level of comfort with verbalising their viewpoints.

The extract under FGD B (all female) is an example of how this reported laziness of those who engage in TS could be attributed to a broader reason, in this case societal, as opposed to the extracts under FGD A (all male) where no reasons or explanations were provided regarding this theme of laziness. This extract made a generalisation about youth in South Africa, and the general attitudes that the youth reportedly had in determining what they had a “right” to, due to the fact that their parents had apparently “fought for” the rights of black South Africans during Apartheid. It should be noted that there were a few politically charged statements in some of the FGDs, but this did not occur often. This extract was also unique due to the fact that a broader explanation behind this reported laziness was given, whereas in FGD A no explanation was given.

Another theme presented in this chapter is the normalisation of TS. Throughout each of the three FGDs, the researcher identified that the normalisation of TS was important to highlight, because it was manifest in the discussions quite often. The reason why this particular theme was ‘unexpected’, was due to the fact that TS was previously thought to be considered a taboo phenomenon amongst the general public, even though research indicated that TS was highly prevalent. However participants in the FGDs made it clear that TS both in and out of

campus was not only ‘common’, but that it was in fact ‘normal’ and has become ‘socially acceptable’. In relation to this theme, presented below are some of the extracts from FGDs A, B and C.

FGD A (all male):

*Participant 4: “And now that’s a lifestyle, if you don’t do that, ja you not living, ja it’s not normal” (page 2)*

*Participant 4: “Ja I’ve got a, a friend so to say, uh this guy always organizes uh girls every weekend, he organizes girls and then he’s got these friends who are loaded financially and he takes these guys and these girls to these guys and then it happens like that, so guys they do promote this in a way (pause) because for them it’s only a matter of getting alcohol or something and then these girls they know what to do” (page 10)*

*Participant 7: “I’d say, oh there’s a saying “Isistwasa” which is saying (pause) simply meaning, “an old bucket, sleeps the young”, so so it’s normal, a girl is gonna do what she has to do” (page 21)*

FGD B (all female):

*Participant 2: “Because it’s become normal now, or common” (page 14)*

*Participant 5: “There’s even web pages where you can go and google and-” (page 14)*

FGD C (mixed gender):

*Participant 2(male): “There’s a diluted form of prostitution-” (page 4)*

*Participant 4(female): “Like the most socially acceptable version” (page 4)*

*Participant 4(female): “Ja I think as times change, it’s becoming more socially acceptable (murmurs of agreement)” (page 12)*

The above extracts under each FGD C (mixed gender) convey how participants agreed that TS had become “normal”, “common” and “socially acceptable”. However, the first extract under FGD B (all female), and the third extract under FGD C (mixed gender) both include words and phrases such as “become” and “as times change” suggesting that TS was previously neither considered to be “normal” nor “socially acceptable”. This brings about the question as to what has changed about TS that it is now a phenomenon that is both normal

and socially acceptable. One reason for this may be that, as participants have said, TS has become a common occurrence, which would indicate that more people are engaging in TS relationships than in previous years prior to 2014. In section 4.3, theme 2 of chapter 4, when the researcher identified the media as playing a role in TS, this too may play a role in making TS more socially acceptable through the promotion of TS in songs by popular music artists and social media platforms. Having said this, TS may have become more ‘popular’ because of the high end lifestyle it potentially offers to beneficiaries, with attractive offers such as jewellery, handbags, brand clothes and being seen in the best restaurants and popular nightclubs with luxury cars in exchange for sex. It is thus suspected that this may be driven by the pressure young women and men experience to keep up with a particular kind of lifestyle.

This issue of normalisation of TS would more than likely fall into Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) second paradigm of sex for improved social status, where the substance of exchange in TS relationships under this paradigm goes beyond the basic needs spoken about in the first paradigm, where women are viewed as being vulnerable victims. However, what was quite evident through what participants said in the FGDs as can be seen in the extracts thereof presented in both chapters 4 and 5, is that firstly many young women (and men) are pursuing TS relationships to gain access to commodities of modernity in order to live a better lifestyle. In doing so, they gain access to new social networks, thus differentiating themselves from their rural peers and at the same time attaining social status (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Stoebenau et al., 2016). With the rise of the consumer culture and the peer pressure that accompanies this phenomenon which presents itself through both social interaction and social media, it is little wonder why so many young people opt to engage in TS relationships as a means of attaining what society places so much value upon. What was deduced by the researcher through what was discussed in the FGDs was that TS on campus was regarded by the participants as quite common, more often driven by the aforementioned reasons, and through this it could be said that this is in part why TS has become more socially acceptable, or “normal”.

In closing of this chapter, Stoebenau et al.’s (2016) third paradigm, sex and material expressions of love which speaks about exchange in emotionally intimate relationships, was not made mention of in the FGDs. This could be perhaps because the nature of TS, however common, normal or socially acceptable it has become, is generally not viewed in a positive light, and therefore positive emotions such as love are not commonly attached to it.

Furthermore, this third paradigm perhaps did not arise due to the fact that those who have not engaged in TS themselves could be unaware of the affective dimensions of TS and therefore only have negative assumptions. Additionally, it could also be that because the FG discussion guide did not explicitly invite participants to reflect on how those in TS relationships might feel about each other and so the subject did not arise.

## **Conclusion:**

### **6.1) Key Contributions of the Study:**

The first key finding of this study was the link between male beneficiaries and male benefactors, in that there appears to be some overlap between both parties sharing similar roles, since both *provide* to their relative counterparts, even if what the two parties provide is different. Therefore, in a sense it can be said that whether a male is a beneficiary or a benefactor in a TS relationship, they retain the typical stereotype of the male being the provider in heterosexual relationships, which is something Stoebenau et al. (2016) touch upon.

On the issue of provision, it would appear that whether one is a beneficiary or a benefactor, both parties provide their respective counterparts with something the other deems to be of value, whether that be sex, money, commodities of modernity (such as expensive weaves and clothes), or with things that attribute to social status (such as being seen in a luxury car, or at a popular nightclub drinking the most expensive alcohol). Therefore, in order for any exchange to take place, expectations are placed upon both beneficiaries and benefactors to produce such things. However in light of all of the above, the notion of “perform” remains exclusive to beneficiaries in TS relationships, whether they be male or female, since they are expected to perform sex acts as and when the benefactor demands it (Stoebenau et al., 2016; Wamoyi et al., 2019).

Another key finding of this study pertains to gender and terminology differences. It was found by the researcher that throughout all three FGDs, many colloquial terms were given to describe female beneficiaries of TS relationships, many (if not most) of them being derogatory in nature. In contrast, there was only one colloquial term (“Ben Ten”) used by participants to describe a male beneficiary. It should be noted that the term “Ben Ten” is somewhat comical in nature, given its origin from the popular children’s cartoon, “Ben Ten”. Given that there was no derogatory terms used to describe male beneficiaries in TS, yet there were many used to describe female beneficiaries, it brought to light the issue of gender inequality, whereby it may very well be the case that women are judged more harshly by society than men in cases, such as TS, where they fall outside societal ideals regarding the issue of sexuality (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

The last theme presented in the fifth chapter of this dissertation brings about another key finding of this study, whereby TS appears to be a phenomenon that is becoming more normalised and socially acceptable than previously thought. Whilst participants indicated that it was common, it is also thought that popular media has played a role in both normalising TS and promoting it. With popular music artists conveying in both their lyrics and music videos that by engaging in TS one may attain a high end lifestyle and all that it entails such as jewellery, expensive weaves and clothes, dining at the finest restaurants and being seen in popular nightclubs and in luxury cars, all in exchange for sex. It could also be argued that sex itself has become more casual over time, which is again certainly what popular media both portrays and advocates. Overall, what is clearly evident is that young people are subjected to ever increasing pressure to attain and keep up with what popular media portrays as desirable, namely possessing the commodities of modernity that are associated with a high end lifestyle, and therefore social status (Stoebenau et al. 2016).

Lastly is the matter of the link between HIV and TS, which interestingly did not emerge from the FGDs. This is somewhat surprising given the many HIV prevention efforts and awareness campaigns targeted at students as well as treatment services offered to them through the campus clinic. It could perhaps be that the issue of HIV never emerged in the FGDs as a consequence of TS because the FGD guide never invited that particular avenue of thought, or that the participants themselves were relatively naïve around the issue of HIV and its link to TS. Regardless, there still remains much to be done around stigma reduction of HIV on university campuses.

It is suggested here that research findings on TS and HIV be used to inform the design of HIV stigma reduction campaigns targeted at this particular demographic. Likewise, the risks TS relationships present particularly to women should be made known to university students, also through awareness campaigns. This being said, it is suggested here that one of the key findings from this dissertation, the gendered nature of TS which lends itself to be more favourable to men than to women, the next finding to be presented in this chapter, be used to inform a TS awareness campaign, particularly highlighting the risks TS presents to women as well as the strong link (as supported by literature) between TS and HIV.

Additionally, findings from this dissertation could be used to structure and implement open discussions between both men and women on campus, so that firstly both genders can hear their counterparts' point of views, knowledge, opinions and perhaps even experiences of TS which would, secondly, raise awareness around TS and bring about further clarity on topic.

Thirdly, whatever would emerge from such open discussions could be further used to better inform awareness campaigns and prevention efforts.

In conclusion, it is evident that TS itself is very much gendered in nature, when one considers gender differences in both roles and terminology, hence the title of this dissertation. Overall, TS appears to be a practice that lends itself to be more favourable to men than it does to women, even if in some instances there is evidence of women deriving power and agency from their sexuality in TS relationships, which is the very opposite of what much of the literature on TS portrays (Closson et al., 2019; Fielding-Miller et al., 2016). Moreover, it is the notable lack of comparison of views and experiences regarding TS of both genders that makes the both the practice and study of TS so gendered in nature.

## **6.2) Study Limitations**

The sampling method of convenience sampling has been known to be subject to certain biases as opposed to more random methods of sampling (Loewenthal, 2001). The sample population for this particular study was attained on the basis of students who happened to be on campus on the day of recruitment as well as those who were willing to participate. Therefore, this sample does not encompass students who happen to not be present on campus on the day of recruitment, or similarly did not receive word that the study was being conducted and was seeking willing participants. However, Terre Blanche et al. (2006) assert that non-probability sampling may be preferable for qualitative research purposes. In order to remedy this limitation, perhaps an email could have been sent out by the university about the study to students in its daily notifications email, wherein a wider sample of students could have been reached.

Due to the sensitive nature of the study potential participants may have felt reluctant to participate. Therefore, this may have been a limitation that may have presented itself as an obstacle to recruitment. However, this was not a major obstacle due to the fact that the sample size was relatively small, consisting of only 23 participants. Furthermore, it was stressed to participants that they were not required to discuss their own sexual activities or to admit to whether they have engaged in TS relationships or not, but rather that the researcher was interested in the knowledge and opinions they possessed on the subject of TS.

Furthermore, during each of the FGDs, there were generally one or two participants who dominated each of the discussions, whilst there were one or two participants who did not engage very much at all. This may have been due to the fact that the participants who

engaged to a far lesser degree felt that they did not have anything important to add especially when one or two other participants may have dominated that discussion. This phenomenon is juxtaposed to what Kitzinger (1995) says about the use of FGDs in that they can prove advantageous as they may encourage group participation from those who may feel reluctant to engage in a face to face interview to, especially if they feel they have nothing to say about the topic at hand. It would seem that in the case of the three FGDs that were ran as a part of this study that this sort of reluctance to participate extends into situations of group participation such as an FGD. To a certain extent, it would not be a stretch to suppose that such participants may have been primarily if not solely motivated by the monetary reimbursement and were therefore not very interested in engaging with the topic at hand. However, this did not present itself to be a major limitation to the study at all, since the majority of participants (if not all) had some contribution to make to the FGDs, only some more than others, and one or two participants to a considerably lesser extent which raised itself as a slight concern. Yet, the fact that some participants were quieter than others needs to be explained beyond the mere notion of interest in the incentive. Some participants may have spoken a lot less than the other participants due to the facilitators of the FGDs being novices, or additionally it could have been due to power relations within the FGDs due to the race, age and gender of the facilitators.

One of the most prominent limitations of the study was the matter of saturation of the data, where the data could not have reached this point due to the small sample size of only three FGDs. Saturation of the data would've perhaps been reached with two of each type of FGD being carried out, however in the interest of keeping the project to a manageable size, only three FGDs were conducted. Yet another limitation of the study was the primary focus on heterosexual TS literature. This was done also in the interests of keeping the project to a manageable size, but also to extend the said literature, however this resulted in a heterosexual bias in the literature review. Lastly was the issue of reflexivity within the FGDs. The race (white), gender (female) and home language (English) of the researcher and co-facilitator could have impacted the flow and extent of discussion with participants who were predominantly African and isiZulu speaking. Although this did not appear to be an issue, it should be taken into consideration that perhaps if the researcher and co-facilitator were African and spoke isiZulu, that more would have come out of the FGDs because participants may have felt more comfortable.

Lastly, a key limitation of this study was the fact that the link between HIV and TS as highlighted in the Literature Review did not emerge from the FGDs, perhaps as a consequence of the FGD guide not making room for discussion on the link between HIV and TS, thus creating an absence of this key issue in the data.

### **6.3) Future Recommendations**

For future research similar to the research performed as part of this dissertation, some recommendations are suggested. Firstly, where participation in FGDs are concerned, the researcher should take extra measures to ensure adequate participation from all participants involved in the FGD. This would include moderate probing of inactive participants for their views when necessary so as to create a more inclusive atmosphere, as well as adequate mediation over participants that clearly dominate the discussion.

Secondly, whilst there is a plethora of literature on the subject of TS inclusive only of women's views and experiences of TS, it is strongly recommended that future research in this field be inclusive of men's views and experiences of TS too, since this appears to be a barrier to holistic research on TS. Research on TS cannot claim to portray a 'holistic' view on the matter if men's views and experiences are not accounted for, especially where the issue of male beneficiaries presents itself.

Thirdly is the issue of reflexivity and how the researchers and co-facilitators race, age and gender might have impacted the FGDs flow of discussion. In order to remedy this for future research, it is suggested here that in addition to the researcher and co-facilitator who were white and female, having an additional third African male co-facilitator for FGD A (all male) and an additional African female co-facilitator for FGD B (all female), and both for FGD C (mixed gender), in order to mitigate this issue of race relations with participants.

Fourthly, FGD guides should be structured to be more open ended in their line of questioning, so as to invite broader discussion, which was a limitation of this study, particularly where the issue of HIV and its link to TS did not emerge from the FGDs, where this link was discussed in the literature review.

Lastly, future research similar to the research presented in this dissertation should include a greater number of FGDs so as to reach saturation of the data. These additional FGDs could be stratified by gender depending on whether the researcher wants to observe gender differentiations across the FGDs, but should bear in mind the drawbacks in doing so.

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## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1: Information Sheet and Informed Consent**

#### **Information and Consent for participation in the study**

##### **Who we are and what we are doing.**

Hello, we are a group of Psychology Honours and Masters students involved in a study investigating the 'local' or general knowledge associated with the practice of transactional sex amongst university students. This study is designed to help inform researchers to identify variables that motivate this risky sexual behaviour in an attempt to further diagnose behaviours that are escalating the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. This information can be used to improve research on these issues as well contribute towards designing intervention and prevention programmes to address them.

The research will be conducted through the use of interactive FGDs comprised of individuals from different ethnicities, genders and age. During these FGDs, the researchers will facilitate discussion around the practice of transactional sex in order to ascertain the discourse associated with the behaviour as well as various other differentiating variables such as differences in demographic variables such as gender, race and age.

##### **Invitation to participate and implications of participation**

We invite you to participate in this FGD study where the topic will be openly discussed in a group of 10 – 12 individuals. We will be asking leading questions pertaining to the topic but the core nature of the FGD will be you as participants to produce a discussion around the topic. Please note that we are not requesting that you disclose any personal details about your own sexual behaviour, but rather your understanding and knowledge about the topic.

There are no direct benefits for your participation in this part of the study but as a token of our appreciation for your participation and for the sacrifice of your time, you will receive a sum of R20. Furthermore, refreshments will be offered to you after the FGD sessions.

Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence.

Anything you say in the FGD's will remain completely anonymous and confidential. Although these discussions will be audio recorded, it will not be possible to link your responses to your personal identity, as you will be requested not use your real names, but to use a 'fake' name instead. Before the commencement of the FGD you will be asked to sign a consent form indicating your informed consent to participate as well as to complete the attached demographics form which will encompass details such as your age, race, gender and year of study. The FGD session should last no more than 45 minutes.

### **How your data will be used**

During the course of the FGD, the entire discussion will be audio recorded. Thereafter, the recordings will be transcribed and analysed. This will be used to identify and analyse the above mentioned differences and tendencies associated with transactional sex. The data may also be presented at conferences or be published. The data will also be written up as part of an Honours and Masters dissertations by the participating researchers.

### **How you are protected.**

It will not be possible to identify personal details of any participant so your participation and your responses will be entirely protected and confidential. This will be achieved by allocating each participant with a pseudonym throughout the research process, from the discussion in the FGD to the analysed transcription. The audio recordings will be permanently deleted after transcription. The transcribed documents will be safely secured by our supervisor for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

You may withdraw at any time without any consequence.

In the unlikely event that participation causes you any personal discomfort or distress, you may contact any of the researchers (listed below) for a referral to the counselling service of your College or to our School's Child and Family Centre. All these contact details are provided below.

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

### Consent

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

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

### Researchers and Contact Details for concerns and questions

Course	Name	Email	Cell:
Honours:	Anne Glasscoe	<a href="mailto:anneglasscoe@gmail.com">anneglasscoe@gmail.com</a>	071 485 2800
Masters:	Ashleigh De Beer	<a href="mailto:210525436@stu.ukzn.ac.za">210525436@stu.ukzn.ac.za</a>	0832611843
PhD supervisor	Vernon Solomon	<a href="mailto:Solomon@ukzn.ac.za">Solomon@ukzn.ac.za</a>	033 2605680
Secretary	Ms. P. Ximba	<a href="mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za">ximbap@ukzn.ac.za</a>	-----

## Appendix 2: Declaration of Informed Consent

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

**Also, I hereby consent / do not consent to have the FGD discussion recorded.**

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

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT ..... Date: .....**

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

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

**I wish to be contacted by:**

**Email:\_\_\_\_\_**

**SMS – cellphone number:\_\_\_\_\_**

### **Appendix 3: Demographics**

Please circle what is applicable:

Age (please write): \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male†          Female

†

Year of study at university: 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>

What population group/race would you describe yourself as?

Black† Coloured† Indian† White† Other†

## **Appendix 4: FGD interview schedule**

### **Welcoming:**

- Good morning/good afternoon everyone and thank you for coming here today and for your interest in this study. My name is.....and I am a UKZN Psychology Honours/Masters student, and I'll be facilitating today's FGD.
- Please note that whilst we genuinely appreciate your willingness to participate in this study, please be aware that you are fully within your rights to withdraw from the FGD A (all male)t any stage.
- That being said, please also know that your participation is fully confidential and every measure will be taken to ensure your anonymity to the fullest extent.

### **Breakdown of the FGD procedure:**

- What you'll be participating in today is a FGD, or more simply a 'group discussion' on the topic of transactional sex.
- To clarify our topic, when we speak about the term 'transactional sex' in the discussion, we are referring to an informal, implicit sexual interaction in exchange for material benefits. This may sound like prostitution but the difference is that in the case of transactional sex, the exchange is negotiated within an intimate and personal relationship and not simply a formal business transaction.
- So for example, your boyfriend/girlfriend/sugardaddy/sugarmommy/or a friend or acquaintance who isn't your regular partner may give you gifts, money or things that you need and has the expectation of sex in return for the material or monetary benefits he or she has given you.
- Please note that we will not be asking you to disclose personal information about your own sexual activities. We are not asking you to tell us whether you have engaged in transactional sex relationships or not. We simply want to know about the local knowledge you have on the subject of transactional sex as a student here at UKZN. In other words, we want to know what your understandings of this practice are, what terminology is used to describe it, what stories you have heard

and what are the common characteristics of the practice and of those who are involved in it.

- However if you don't mind disclosing personal details about your own experiences, then of course you are free to do so.
- If you don't understand the topic, please feel free to ask for clarification at this point.
- Now before we commence with the FGD lets lay down a few ground rules first.
- Firstly, you need to read your information sheet which you would've received when you came in, and if you understand what you have read and you still want to participate, please sign the consent form as well as complete the demographics form attached.
- The demographics form does not need to have any identifying information like your student number or name. We ask for your demographic details so that we can identify if there are any differences across gender, race or age when we start to analyze the material from each group.
- Once you've done this, hand your forms to the researcher for safekeeping.
- After you have done this, we request that you put a fake name of your choice on the nametag you have been given.
- During the interview when speaking to each other, please use each other's fake names, and not your real names.
- We ask that you do this, because we want your identities to remain anonymous.
- Please note that this FGD discussion will be audio recorded for purposes of transcription and analysis at a later stage.
- Please feel free to speak openly about what you know. This is a judgment free zone, and we should agree that what is said in the FGD stays in the FGD.
- Let's respect each other's opinions, and speak one person at a time.
- As the moderators of this FGD, our role is mainly to listen and ask a few questions, but the direction of the discussion and the content thereof will depend on what you deem to be important and relevant to the topic.
- The duration of the FGD is flexible, but it should not exceed 45 minutes.
- After the FGD, you will receive your R20, as well as the refreshments provided mid way through the FGD.

- There will also be time for questions after the FGD, however if you have any questions now, please feel free to ask them.

**FGD discussion questions:**

- 1.1) Have you heard about transactional sex relationships before?
- 1.2) What have you heard about transactional sex relationships on campus?
- 3) Would you say transactional sex relationships on campus are a common occurrence?
- 4) Are there any slang/local words that you know of that are used to describe such relationships or those who engage in them?
- 5.1) Why would you say people engage in such relationships?
- 5.2) What factors do you think play a role in making someone vulnerable to engaging in transactional sex relationships? Examples: student funding crisis, urbanization (students moving from a rural environment to a more urban one), xenophobia (foreign student's desire to fit in, be accepted or protected).
- 6) What role do you think women play in transactional sex relationships and in contrast what role would you say men play in such relationships?
- 7.1) Who are usually the beneficiaries and what do you think the 'typical' characteristics that define them?
- 7.2) Who are usually the providers and what do you think the 'typical' characteristics that define them?
- 8.1) Have you heard about guys on campus being involved with older women who give them material benefits in exchange for sex?
- 8.2) Would you say this is a common occurrence?
- 9.1) What are your perceptions/opinions of such relationships?
- 9.2) Do you perceive them to be a 'good' or 'bad' and why?
- 9.3) Are there any current trends or stigmas associated with such relationships?
- 10) What risks would you say such relationships carry?

## **Appendix 5: Formal Invitation**

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

The following is a reminder of where to go and when. You will be contacted once you have been randomly assigned to a set group.

- A Group
  - ❖ Date:
  - ❖ Time:
  - ❖ Venue: Psychology Lab.

We look forward to seeing you.

## **Appendix 6: Participant information prior to FGD**

Thank you for being willing to participate in our study. Please provide us with the following information so that we can contact you one day in advance of the FGD to confirm your participation.

**Name:**

**Student Number:**

**Cell Phone:**

**Email:**

**Gender:**

Please be advised that this personal information will be in no way connected to any discussion during the FGD. These details will be permanently discarded before transcription.

## Appendix 7: CFC Referral Letter

2014 March 12



**To whom it may concern**

This letter serves to provide the assurance that should any interviewee require psychological assistance as a result of any distress arising from the approved research process for a study on ....it will be provided by psychologists and intern psychologists at the UKZN Child and Family Centre. This project is conducted by a research team of Honours and Masters' students at the School of Applied Human Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus.

Yours sincerely,



Nontobeko Buthelezi

Child and Family Centre Director

## Appendix 8: REC Letter of Ethical Approval



5 June 2014

Ms Ashleigh de Beer 210525436  
School of Applied Human Sciences  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms De Beer

Protocol reference number: HSS/0464/014M  
Project title: Transactional sex and its gendered nature amongst a student population

**Full Approval – Expedited**

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above has now been granted **Full Approval**

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project; Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully

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

/pm

cc Supervisor: Mr Veron Solomon  
cc Academic Leader: Professor DP McCracken  
cc School Admin: Mr Sbonelo Duma

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3887/8360/4657 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [shmsap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:shmsap@ukzn.ac.za) / [shmsadm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:shmsadm@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



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## Appendix 9: Gatekeepers Permission Letter to Conduct Research



23 May 2014

Ms Ashleigh de Beer  
School of Applied Human Sciences  
College of Humanities  
Pietermaritzburg Campus  
UKZN  
Email: [210525436@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:210525436@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Dear Ms de Beer

### RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

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

*"Transactional Sex and its gendered nature amongst a student population".*

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by approaching students to participate in focus group study on the Pietermaritzburg Campus.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

**MR MC BALOYI**  
**REGISTRAR**

---

#### Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: [registrar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:registrar@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



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## Appendix 10: Turnitin Report

### A de Beer masters dissertation

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