



**South African Post-Graduate Theses on Student Transactional Sex Relationships:  
A Scoping Review**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Nokubonga Chauque**, declare that:

- (i) Unless stated otherwise, the research presented in this dissertation constitutes the original work conducted by the author.
- (ii) The present dissertation has not been previously submitted for any academic degree or examination at any other institution of higher learning.
- (iii) The present dissertation exclusively comprises original data, images, graphs, and information unless explicitly recognised as being obtained from external sources.
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**SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT**

As the candidate's Supervisor, I agree/do not agree to the submission of this dissertation.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: Dr Nontobeko Buthelezi

Date: 03/02/2024

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 02 February 2024

## ABSTRACT

Through a scoping review, this study focused on transactional sexual relationships among university students. Transactional sex is a distinct set of behaviours, labels, and identities which differs from commercial sex work. It is characterised by the exchange of monetary or material support and typically occurs outside the context of marriages or formal sex work. Transactional sexual relationships are a new social phenomenon prevailing in modern society across races, cultures, religions, political affiliations, or economic systems. Transactional sexual relationships have increasingly received the attention of researchers, and the practice seems to be complex and perhaps misunderstood; thus, this study aimed to conduct a systematic scoping review of studies conducted by post-graduate students in South Africa on transactional sexual relationships occurring among university students. The objectives of the study were: to explore how transactional sexual relationships are defined in the post-graduate theses; to determine the different types of transactional sexual relationships within the university context; to explore the samples that have been studied in these theses; and to review the strengths and limitations of these studies on transactional sexual relationships. A scoping review research design was suitable for this study. Firstly, it reviewed and described how post-graduate theses have engaged with transactional sexual relationships in general. Secondly, it determined the findings of these studies about university students and transactional sexual relationships. A matrix table presented the thesis and dissertations from South African universities that met the inclusion criteria which looked at South African university's dissertations from 2010. The results that were presented thematically were: peer pressure, poverty and vulnerability, social norms and gender roles, substance abuse and risk, HIV and AIDS and sexual violence. From the findings and discussion, the researcher recommended awareness designed to educate students to shun transactional sex, the provision of health education through pamphlets and the provision of student grants to help cater for student needs during their stay at university.

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“Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in my life, has seen it to completion: Philippians 1:6.” I reiterate thank you. *Ngiyabonga.*

## DEDICATION

First, and most importantly, I praise and thank the merciful God for giving me the inspiration, wisdom, strength, and endurance to complete this study.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in my life, has seen it to completion: Philippians 1:6.”

I dedicate this work to my lovely family whose constant encouragement fuelled my perseverance during this research journey: my father (John Jabulani Chauque), my mother (Them bani Goodness Chauque), and my uncle (Vusi Ndlovu), who have always been loving, patient, encouraging and supportive of me. They always remembered me in their prayers. Also, I dedicate this work to my sisters (Nomthandazo Chauque, Samukelisiwe Chauque and Thembelihle Chauque), who have continuously supported me throughout my candidature. To my nieces and nephew (Owami Chauque, Ayabonga Nhigo, and Anothile Nhigo), your sweet smiles, across many miles, made the long days worthwhile. I hope I have made you proud and inspired you to grow and reach greater heights. To my best friend and lover, Samkelekile Madakeni, I thank you for being a “blessing” in my life; I will forever be grateful and indebted to you.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency Virus
HLIs	Higher Learning Institutions
HRSBs	High-Risk Sexual Behaviours
MSM	Men having Sex with other Men
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SU	Stellenbosch University
TSR	Transactional Sexual Relationships
UCT	University of Cape Town
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
UW	University of Witwatersrand
UWC	University of Western Cape
WHO	World Health Organization

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Transactional sex is a distinct set of behaviours, labels, and identities that are separate from commercial sex work. It is characterised by the exchange of monetary or material support and typically occurs outside the context of marriages or formal sex work (Miri, 2022). The primary factor distinguishing transactional sexual relationships (TSRs) from other non-marital romantic or sexual relationships is the motivation behind them, which is primarily material exchange. One notable characteristic of transactional sexual relationships (TSRs), as distinguished and evaluated by participants, is that they are morally more acceptable than formal sex work (Seloilwe, 2005). This judgement is primarily rooted in the fact that the transactional sex takes place within the framework of a relationship, regardless of its temporary or ambiguous nature. Nevertheless, trying to delineate between transactional sex, sex work, and romantic or sexual relationships poses a considerable challenge due to the inherent ambiguity surrounding their boundaries.

Intricate sexual economies influence the motivations for participation in transactional sexual relationships (TSR) and extend beyond mere survival or subsistence requirements in impoverished settings. Transactional sex, wherein individuals engage in exchange for material or financial goods from their partners, has been extensively examined in qualitative research (Shefer et al., 2012). This research highlights the deeply ingrained social norms that dictate the necessity of reciprocating material goods with sexual favours. The narrative surrounding transactional sex encompasses the issue of survival, the acquisition of basic needs and the pursuit of social status.

These findings have been documented in previous studies. The anticipation of reciprocation, coupled with the receipt of tangible benefits, amplifies the recipient's susceptibility to transactional sex, consequently constraining their capacity to exercise agency (Shefer et al., 2012). The motivations behind TSR encompass an individual's pursuit of peer validation and a feeling of inclusion, the aspiration for a contemporary way of life as influenced by societal norms and media, and the quest for financial autonomy, prestige, and social status. The occurrence of TSR can be attributed to a combination of structural and psychosocial factors. Although structural factors such as poverty and idealised notions of love and security, also contribute to the phenomenon (Shefer

poverty, gender inequality, and limited access to education are among the drivers of TSR, psychosocial factors, which include societal, familial, and peer pressure, aspirations for social advancement, desire for material possession and idealised notions of love and security, also contribute to the phenomenon (Shefer et al., 2012).

In light of the elusive nature of the definitions and categorisations of transactional sex, transactional relationships, sex work, and romantic or sexual relationships, it is crucial to gain deeper insights into how young individuals in South Africa perceive and conceptualise sexual transactions and relationship dynamics that are influenced by gendered power dynamics and sexual norms (Masvawure et al., 2015; Wamoyi et al., 2019). Most research on people's attitudes towards TSR in South Africa has neglected the need to incorporate the viewpoints of males, thus stimulating a demand for studies that specifically investigate the perspectives and opinions of men and boys regarding the phenomenon (Masvawure et al., 2015; Wamoyi et al., 2019). Furthermore, much of the research on TSR in South Africa has concentrated on a specific geographical region, hence leaving out a lot of people with similar experiences.

Intergenerational TSR are prevalent in tertiary education institutions within Africa and other regions. The prevalence of, and unbalanced power dynamics inherent in, transactional sexual relationships within university settings expose students to a significant risk of contracting sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs). Research conducted by Seloilwe (2005) unveiled the complex association between transactional sexual activities and vulnerability to HIV (Human Immune-deficiency Virus) infection. Academic researchers have depicted and conceptualised the university campus as a milieu conducive to sexual exploration and the contraction of sexually transmitted illnesses (Gukurume, 2022; Seloilwe, 2005). According to Luke and Kurz (2002), age-disparate transactional sex relationships frequently encompass harmful sexual behaviours, such as engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse and casual sexual encounters, while maintaining multiple concurrent sexual partnerships. These behaviours significantly heighten individuals' likelihood of contracting HIV.

Transactional sex relationships often stem from individuals' desire for material benefits, the pursuit of social status, and the craving for consumer goods, such as trendy smart- phones and high-end fashion items, among other commodities (Gukurume, 2011; Masvawure et al., 2015). Nevertheless, this study surpasses the mere focus on the material aspects of transactional sexual relationships and

contributes to an expanding corpus of scholarly work that challenges the conventional dichotomy between transactional and normative relationships. This body of literature does not clearly distinguish between the two types of relationships (Shefer et al., 2012).

Transactional sex exhibits distinct characteristics, with the involved individuals being designated as "girlfriends" and "boyfriends," and the act of exchanging gifts in return for sexual favours is encompassed within a wider range of obligations that may not necessarily entail predetermined monetary transactions (Singh et al., 2019). Transactional sexual relationships have been influenced by various economic, social, and political factors throughout history and academic literature commonly characterise them as being driven by either 'survival' or 'consumption' motivations. In the context of significant gender-based power imbalances, impoverished women are often depicted as victims who engage in "survival sex" as a means of obtaining necessities (Shumba & Matina, 2002).

Recently, a counter-discourse has surfaced, portraying young women of a relatively lower socio-economic status as proactive individuals who actively pursue relationships with men to access consumer goods and embrace a contemporary way of life, while operating within the confines of gendered norms (Singh et al., 2019). The latter discussion arises from cultural and economic phenomena associated with globalisation. Within this context, consumption is a mechanism through which individuals can attain "social power" (Ranganathan et al., 2017). In recent times, scholars have shifted their focus from a binary categorisation of sexual relationships to highlighting the intricacies involved in these sexual interactions. The intricacies include the constraints impeding women's ability to act, and the significance of situating both concepts of survival and consumption within their respective contexts (Majola, 2014).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Transactional sexual relationships are a social phenomenon occurring in modern society regardless of individuals' race, culture, religion, political affiliation, or economic system (Women & UNICEF, 2018). Given that the concept and practice of transactional sexual relationships have received increasing attention in research, and that the practice seems to be complex and perhaps misunderstood, this study aims to conduct a systematic scoping review of studies conducted by post-graduate students in South Africa with a focus on transactional sexual relationships practised by university students within the university context.

The rationale for using postgraduate theses instead of general papers and or publications in this research is:

1. **Depth of Analysis-** Postgraduate theses often offer in-depth analyses of specific topics, providing comprehensive literature reviews, detailed methodologies, and rigorous data analysis. By focusing on theses, I can access a wealth of detailed information and insights that may not be present in general papers or publications.
2. **Contextual Relevance-** Postgraduate theses produced by South African postgraduate students are likely to be contextually relevant to this study. They may offer insights into cultural, social, economic, and political factors that influence transactional sex relationships among university students in South Africa. This contextual specificity can enrich the understanding of and provide nuanced perspectives on the topic.
3. **Accessibility-** Theses are often available through university repositories or databases, making them easily accessible for review. This accessibility facilitates the identification and retrieval of relevant studies, streamlining the scoping review process.
4. **Quality Assurance-** Theses undergo rigorous evaluation by academic supervisors and examination committees, ensuring the quality and validity of the research findings. By focusing on postgraduate theses, I can have confidence in the reliability and credibility of the information synthesized in the scoping review.

The study aims to explore, review, and describe how the post-graduate theses have engaged with transactional sexual relationships amongst students in the South African context. The study aims to explore the findings, complex dynamics, and realities related to the ‘widespread’ transactional sexual relationships occurring within the context of universities. In addition, the study aims to describe the strengths and limitations of the current post- graduate studies and therefore make recommendations for future research and interventions. The recommendations for future research and interventions may give solutions to curbing the prevalence of the transactional sex relationships phenomenon which highly contribute to the spread of sexually transmitted illnesses, high risk behaviours (drug and alcohol consumption), abuse and teenage pregnancy among many other things.

### **1.3 Purpose the study**

The purpose of this study is to review South African postgraduate theses in order to identify how they have studied transactional sexual relationships within the context of South African universities. The first part of the study aims is to review and describe how the post-graduate theses have engaged with transactional sexual relationships while the second part aims to explore the findings relating to students and transactional sexual relationships. The specific objectives of the study are presented in the following section.

### **1.4 Research objectives**

The study aims to review and describe how the postgraduate theses have engaged with transactional sexual relationships. It further aims:

- (i) To explore how transactional sexual relationships are defined in the post-graduate theses.
- (ii) To determine the different types of transactional sexual relationships within the context of universities.
- (iii) To explore what samples have been studied.
- (iv) To review the strengths and limitations of these studies on transactional sexual relationships.

To determine what the postgraduate theses have found about the students and transactional sex relationships. Specifically, the study seeks:

- (i) To explore and analyse what motivates South African university students to engage in transactional sexual relationships.
- (ii) To explore and analyse what South African university students perceive to be the benefits of being in transactional sexual relationships.
- (iii) To explore and analyse what South African university students perceive as the negative outcomes of being in transactional sexual relationships.

### **1.5 Identifying the research questions (Framework stage 1)**

Originally, the researcher intended to review transactional sexual relationships involving university

students. As the literature review progressed, the research question evolved to examine how the South African post-graduate theses have studied transactional sexual relationships. To guide the literature search, the current scoping review focused on the following preliminary research questions:

How have the post-graduate theses engaged with transactional sexual relationships? - (This includes definition and types of transactional relationships, samples which have been studied, as well as the strengths and limitations of the theses).

What are the findings of the post-graduate theses about students and transactional sex relationships?

- *(The focus was on the motivations, perceived benefits, perceived negative outcomes or consequences of transactional sexual relationships).*

### **1.6 Scope and delimitation of the study**

- (i) The study focused on theses from South African universities only.
- (ii) Only the thesis and dissertations were reviewed. Research articles and journal articles were beyond the scope of the research.
- (iii) The scoping review only focused on transactional sex practised by university students and did not pay attention to those who were not in university.

### **1.7 Operational definition of key terms**

**Thesis:** This is a research project written to establish thoughts and arguments especially submitted to complete the requirements for graduate and post-graduate degrees.

**Student:** This is a person who learns or studies a particular subject.

**University student:** This is a student enrolled in a university.

**Transactional sex relationship:** This is a type of sexual intercourse that refers to two individuals engaging in casual and mutually beneficial relationships and intimate activities. In this type of relationship, the partners discuss and agree upon the exchange of goods or money for sexual favours.

**Scoping review:** This refers to a method that allows researchers to review literature broadly and comprehensively.

## **1.8 Summary**

This research highlights the deeply ingrained social norms that dictate the necessity of reciprocating material goods with sexual favours. The narrative surrounding transactional sex encompasses the issue of survival, the acquisition of basic needs and the pursuit of social status. A problem statement was given as well as research aim, objectives, and questions. The chapter further investigated scope and delimitation of the study and definition of key terms.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

There has been a rise in transactional sexual relationships among young South African individuals, including university students (Ntsieni, 2017). Recent research has widely depicted transactional sex as quite common in Southern Africa. The practice has been prevalent even among university students, and it is important to note that engaging in transactional sex can have significant negative implications for public health and society as a whole. Transactional sexual relationships have been identified and practised by individuals of various ages and from different parts of the world, with both men and women engaging in these relationships for a variety of reasons. According to Shefer et al. (2012) the repercussions and implications of these transactional sexual relationships also differ.

According to Glasscoe (2020, p. 9), “transactional sexual interactions are described as a type of relationship where people engage in sexual intercourse in exchange for material items or money”. According to Women and UNICEF (2018), there is a connection between transactional sexual relationships and behaviours that increase the risk of contracting HIV. These behaviours include having multiple sexual partners, experiencing partner violence or abuse, consuming alcohol, and inconsistent condom use.

Based on the findings of Heath et al. (2021), transactional sexual relationships are responsible for a greater number of HIV cases than initially thought because their impact was not fully recognised in earlier studies, which failed to distinguish between casual partnerships, sex work, and transactional sexual relationships. Earlier studies established that transactional sex relationships include all types of sexual exchanges (Wamoyi et al., 2019). Transactional sexual relationships are influenced by various structural factors, such as physical attributes like age, social factors like status, cultural elements, organisational aspects, community dynamics (such as urban-rural or local-foreigner distinctions), economic factors like wealth, and legal or policy considerations. The main underlying factors contributing to these relationships are gender inequality, economic changes, and shifts in social institutions (Women & UNICEF, 2018). According to Women and UNICEF (2018), transactional sexual relationships are a social phenomenon that can be observed in modern society,

regardless of factors such as ethnicity, faith, culture, political affiliation, or the established economic system.

Given that transactional sexual relationships have received increasing attention in research and that the practice seems to be complex and perhaps misunderstood, this study aims to conduct a systematic scoping review of studies conducted by post-graduate students in South Africa based on transactional sexual relationships within the university student contexts. The study aims to explore how transactional sexual relationships have been studied, especially within the context of the sub-Saharan African region. The study aims to explore the complex dynamics and realities surrounding the ‘widespread’ transactional sexual relationships in universities, as depicted in post-graduate research in the sub-Saharan African context. In addition, the study aims to explore and evaluate the knowledge gaps and limitations of the current post-graduate studies regarding transactional sexual relationships within the context of university students to provide a comprehensive (all-inclusive extensive) summary of the findings for consideration in future research and interventions.

## **2.2 Prevalence of transactional sexual relationships**

According to Heath et al. (2021), transactional sexual relationships are more prevalent than sex work. The prevalence of transactional sex among adolescent girls and young women are estimated to be as high as 52% in African countries. According to Choudhry et al. (2014), around 25% of the participants in his study had engaged in transactional sexual relationships. A study conducted in four sub-Saharan African countries (Malawi, Ghana, Uganda, and Kenya) found that transactional sexual relationships are quite prevalent among young individuals. Specifically, more than two-thirds of young women (15.2%) in Malawi, Ghana, and Uganda engage in this practice. Additionally, about one-third (10.1%) of young men in Ghana and Uganda have reported receiving gifts from their most recent sexual partners in exchange for sexual intercourse (Choudhry et al., 2014). Several studies have revealed that the onset of transactional sexual relationships can commence at a young age, during an individual’s primary and secondary school years (Choudhry et al., 2014).

However, the prevalence of the practice increases rapidly or drastically at university, where the costs of lifestyle are higher, and a lack of parental control and peer pressure urge acquisition of a certain affluent lifestyle (Choudhry et al., 2014). Most of the existing literature, however, suggests that the prevalence of transactional sexual relationships is particularly witnessed in Southern African

universities and is inscribed within unequal power dynamics across urban-rural and local-foreigner divides. Differences in wealth, age and status intersect with gender in multiple complex ways (Shefer et al., 2012). Since then, there has been an exponential rise in publications examining transactional sexual relationships (Stoebenau et al., 2016). The use of the term ‘transactional sex’ arose from the critical analysis of how sexual exchange relationships were being described in Sub-Saharan Africa early during the onset of the HIV pandemic. In the 1990s, the dominant biomedical discourse in HIV and AIDS prevention labelled prostitutes or commercial sex workers as a ‘reservoir of infection’ in sub-Saharan Africa. Social scientists began to criticise what they saw as the careless use of labels ‘prostitution’ and ‘commercial sex work’ to refer to all forms of sexual exchange (Stoebenau et al., 2016).

According to Ige and Solanke (2021), transactional sexual relationships have been widely reported across the world, with research contending that both men and women of all ages in all religions practice transactional sex (Women & UNICEF, 2018) and could act (assume a role of) as both the provider and the beneficiary in transactional sex relationships. Other studies have portrayed women as vulnerable victims of such relationships and men as “sexual predators” (Amo-Adjei et al., 2014). There are other studies that view or describe women as having power and control over men in those transactional sexual relationships regardless of their roles as ‘providers’ or ‘beneficiaries’ (Glasscoe, 2020). Women are depicted as being capable of exploiting men and being “material predators” (Amo-Adjei et al., 2014).

Research further reveals that transactional sexual relationships exist in both heterosexual and homosexual communities (Glasscoe, 2020). There is considerable evidence suggesting that such relationships are linked to several adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes such as STIs, including HIV, induced abortion, secondary infertility, unwanted pregnancy, age-disparate sex and intimate partner violence, gender-based violence and several other socio-economic exploitative practices (Ige & Solanke, 2021). Transactional sexual relationships are said to often co-exist with other risky sexual behaviours like early sexual debut, multiple concurrent sexual partnerships, and inconsistent condom use (Choudhry et al., (2014). However, what is worrisome is that despite all the adversities, the practice of transactional sexual relationships continues (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). Several studies have revealed that transactional sexual relationships can commence at a young age, when adolescents are in their primary and secondary school years (Choudhry et al., 2014). However,

the prevalence of such relationships increases rapidly or drastically when individuals are at university, where lifestyle costs are higher, and where there is a lack of parental control and where peer pressure urges students to attain a certain affluent lifestyle (Choudhry et al., 2015). However, most of the existing literature suggests that the prevalence of transactional sexual relationships is particularly witnessed in the Southern Africa. Some research studies have shown that young people, especially women who have previously been subjected to sexual coercion, are at a higher risk of experiencing self-harm or exhibiting risky sexual behaviours, including involvement in transactional sex, as a coping mechanism.

In contrast, prior research shows that men who may have experienced sexual coercion, particularly in childhood, often experience adverse health and psychosocial consequences, including an increased chance of exhibiting risky sexual behaviours, anxiety about sexual orientation and a masculine identity crisis (Ntsieni, 2017). This study is important because it aims to foster a comprehensive examination and understanding of the postgraduate studies conducted on transactional sexual relationships entered by university students in South Africa. This entailed identifying and analysing the key characteristics of transactional sexual relationships within the context of university students. The research explores how post-graduate contemporary research has defined and understood the motivations, benefits and risks associated with university students being involved in transactional sexual relationships. This research is also relevant in that it identifies knowledge gaps, misconceptions, commonalities, and inconsistencies amongst the post-graduate studies conducted on transactional sexual relationships among university students within the South African context, which in turn can help inform the direction of future research and the development of effective, relevant interventions within the context of the South African universities.

### **2.3 Definition of transactional sexual relationships and their constituents as perceived by university students**

The term transactional sex was coined in the 1990s to correct the mistake of confounding all relationships that involve the exchange of 'formal sex work' within the field of HIV and AIDS (Ranganathan et al., 2017). According to Wamoyi et al. (2019), the conventional conceptualisation of transactional sex classifies all sexual transactions as 'inherently exploitative' and identical to interactions such as forced prostitution, while presenting an idle female role. Wamoyi et al. (2019)

stated that this traditional conceptualisation is congruent with the students' perceptions at the University of Venda, who view transactional sexual relationships as prostitution, immoral, abusive, and material-based (Ntsieni, 2017). On the contrary, a study conducted by Tade and Adekoya (2012) found that students differentiate transactional sex from prostitution by saying, in their eyes, prostitutes ply their trade on the street, they are not educated, not choosy, cheap, and take prostitution as a career.

In contrast, for them, transactional sexual relationships form part of the students' part-time coping strategy that is anticipated to cease after graduation. The different definitions presented by the students from the different universities illustrate the difficulties associated with differentiating and drawing the line that can help distinguish between transactional sex relationships and prostitution (Seloilwe, 2005). This difficulty is further exacerbated by the South African Law Reform Commission, which ambiguously defines prostitution as “the exchange of any financial or another reward, favour or compensation to engage in sexual acts” (Glasscoe, 2020, p. 9). Such a definition of transactional sex is challenged by academics such as Ranganathan et al. (2017), who argue that in sub-Saharan Africa, many non-marital, non-commercial sexual relationships involve the exchange of money or gifts; the most important aspect is that those involved in these sexual relationships do not view them as prostitution or sex work. The reason for this is that in many cultures, the exchange of gifts is an expression of love and is part of a norm or common practice in romantic relationships, including transactional sexual relationships (Ranganathan et al., 2017).

According to Ranganathan et al. (2017), in many diverse cultures worldwide, including South Africa, men are predominantly the providers (economically), and females are the receivers of material benefits. Ranganathan et al. (2017) further state that this expectation is institutionalised through practices such as *lobola* (bride price), *membeso* (a process in the traditional Zulu wedding) and *mabo* (The traditional Zulu wedding always takes place at the family home of the groom), where families exchange gifts to form familial relations before the official wedding ceremony. Bobashev et al. (2009) argue that material exchanges are not trade-offs for sexual acts but rather, they are a support system with multiple meanings. Bobashev et al. (2009) further elaborate on this view by stating that in Malawi (and elsewhere in the sub-Saharan region), the transfer of money or gifts are “as much about the expression of love and commitment as they are about meeting the financial needs of women or the acquisition sex for men”. Evidence from these studies shows that the definition and

conceptualisation of ‘transactional sexual relationships’ still need to be further clarified and that such relationships cannot be viewed in isolation from others if they ought to be understood. As suggested by Dunkle et al. (2007), there is dating (romantic relationships), commercial sex (prostitution/ formal sex-exchange) and then somewhere in between transactional sexual relationships (informal-sex exchange).

**Table 2.1: Differences between prostitution and transactional sexual relationships**

<b>Prostitution</b>	<b>Transactional sexual relationships</b>
1. Call each other ‘clients’ and ‘prostitutes’	Call each other ‘girlfriend’ and ‘boyfriend’
2. Self-identify as sex workers	Do not self-identify as sex workers
3. Little or no emotional intimacy shared	Some shared emotional intimacy exists
4. Exchange of money or goods or upfront and usually happens at the same time as a sex	Exchange of money or goods may ‘implicitly’ occur before or after sex
5. Formal sex exchange	Informal sex exchange

Source: Wamoyi et al. (2019)

### **2.3.1 Terms that are predominantly or commonly used within transactional sexual relationships**

The names that are commonly used within transactional sex relationships include: Runs-girl, Aristo, Sugar-Daddy, Sugar-Mommy, Cougars, Ben10, Bhudhas, Rhazols, Friends- with-Benefits, Pimps, and Minister of Transport or Finance and Promo girls\*.

### **2.3.2 Different types of transactional sexual relationships within the context of university students**

Most studies conducted on transactional sexual relationships tend to focus on the transactional sexual relationships embedded in normative heterosexual relationships, especially in a consumerist,

global materialist context (Shefer et al., 2012). However, transactional relationships within the context of university students take different forms and happen on and off the university campus or premises.

### **2.3.2.1 Same-sex (homosexual, LGBTQI) and opposite-sex (heterosexual) transactional sexual relationships**

Transactional sexual relationships occurring within the context of university students may happen between partners of the opposite sex (heterosexual, that is, male and female) and same genders (homosexual, that is, two males or two females). According to Glasscoe (2020), homosexual relationships may include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer and intersex (LGBTQI). According to Bobashev et al. (2009), males exchange sex for monetary tokens, drugs, food, and shelter. Even though females are usually more likely to sell sex than men, research shows that the rates at which sex is sold and purchased varies among men who have sex with men and among substance users (Bobashev et al., 2009).

### **2.3.2.2 Age-disparate transactional sexual relationships (Intergenerational)**

According to Shefer et al. (2012), transactional sexual relationships usually happen between young women (adolescents) and older men, commonly nick-named sugar daddies, Ministers of Finance or Transport, Blessers and Aristos. The research also reveals that sugar mommies, known as cougars, date younger males which they call “Ben 10s” in South Africa. These relationships are usually said to be exploitative and stem from unequal status and unbalanced power dynamics. The reasons, such relationships prevail overlap and vary (Luke & Kurz, 2002).

### **2.3.2.3 Local and international transactional sexual relationships**

Shefer et al. 2012 stated that transactional relationships usually go beyond the common benefits of sexual exchange for material goods. That their usually based on sexual exchange for academic assistance or academic assistance for provision of security (protection) in the current local climate, where hostility to foreigners has emerged through xenophobic attacks. The students engage in these relationships boost their academic results; female students may engage in sexual relationships with foreign male students. Foreign students are known for their exceptional work ethic and strong academic performance. The foreign students get into these transactional sexual relationships not only for sexual benefits but also for the security seemingly attached to dating a local or South African

female.

#### **2.3.2.4 Seniority, authority, and leadership-based transactional sexual relationships**

Shefer et al. (2012) also indicated that within university contexts students engage in transactional sexual relationships on the basis of power, familiarity, status and authority. For example, female students may engage in transactional sexual relationships with senior students, lecturers, student leadership in the Student Representative Council (SRC) or administrators. The power, status and resources accompanying these positions were desirable commodities that could be traded for sex with women. Students reported that exchanging sex for academic favours or the smooth running of university life (getting accommodation, good academic standing, and funding) was not uncommon; such resources are valuable for social and academic status, confidence, and comfort within the university context.

#### **2.3.2.5 Motivations for and factors contributing to the prevalence of transactional sexual relationships among students within university contexts**

Research shows that transactional sexual relationships are characterised as exchanges formed around various currencies (Shefer et al., 2012). While money is viewed as the leading currency in these transactional sexual relationships, other benefits associated with campus life are also commonly reported. According to Tade and Adekoya (2012), the true meaning of exchange in sexual relationships is intricate and convoluted. Tade and Adekoya (2012) add that such relationships depend on the cultural and social context within which they occur. Transactional sexual relationships are motivated by various things. It must be noted that most previous studies solely focused on women and their motivations for transactional sex (Choudhry et al., 2014). This may imply that only women practise transactional sex. However, a growing body of literature seeks to understand the motivations and determinants of male involvement in transactional sexual relationships (Women & UNICEF, 2018). It is important to note that transactional sexual relationships are practised by two partners (Women & UNICEF, 2018).

In most research studies conducted on transactional sex relationships, women are seen as ‘victims’ and men as active ‘agents’ whose intents or motivations are so obvious that they do not need interpretation (Shefer et al., 2012). Although this is a one-dimensional picture of men’s investment in transactional sex, this is complex. Shefer et al. (2012) argue that there is little acknowledgement that women might engage in transactional sexual relationships out of their own accord and desires to

accrue sexual pleasure and to have fun. According to Ntsieni (2017), the motivations behind transactional sexual relationships are underpinned by two broad perspectives, namely agency and structuration. The agency perspective recognises an individual's power of choice. In contrast, structuration speaks to the structural forces that control an individual's decision-making processes, which might lead to someone making decisions they might normally avoid in certain circumstances (Ntsieni, 2017). According to Heath et al. (2021), the overarching structural factors that shape transactional sexual relationships are the physical, social, cultural, and economic marginalisation of women, legal or policy aspects, the organisation of the community, and influences from family and friends.

## **2.4 Motivations for women's involvement in transactional sexual relationships**

### **2.4.1 New environment**

Research shows that the most vulnerable students are undergraduate first-year students originating from rural, less urban, and under-resourced environments. The new university life in the city, away from their parents, is apparently alien to them. Also, with campus life comes the newly acquired 'freedom'; with all that happening, most students seek comfort and belonging (Tade & Adekoya, 2012) and become naïve, more trusting, and easily impressed, resulting in them making irrational decisions (Shefer et al., 2012).

### **2.4.2 Economic factors**

According to Glasscoe (2020), the biggest motivation for students' involvement in transactional sex can be understood in two ways: sex for 'necessities or basic needs' sex for 'consumption,' materialism or wants. Survival sex can be linked to a lack of economic opportunities and poverty; in this type students are motivated to get into transactional sexual relationships to get money for rent, food, toiletries, and employment opportunities. Whereas consumption of sex is linked to the material benefits and luxuries such as designer clothes, gadgets, cosmetics, drugs, hairstyles, fast foods, and alcohol, usually this motivation comes with wanting a 'flashy campus lifestyle'. Amo-Adjei et al. (2014) coined this motivation a "symbol capital" reflective of a successful modern image and materialism.

### **2.4.3 Social status**

According to Amo-Adjei et al. (2014), the symbol capital syndrome is real in the context of male and female university student who are involved in transactional sexual relationships. There is a huge emphasis on maintaining the appearance of ‘being moneyed,’ even though this is not the case (Shefer et al., 2012). The motivation behind social status is comfort and showing off as a well-connected girl while on campus (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). Those with a greater status maintain a social identity as ‘big girls’/. These relationships also come with enhanced experiences such as “feeling protected, loved, respected, and belonging to a ‘high class’”. They allow the women to travel and continue with their education, thus experiencing the best of both worlds (Ntsieni, 2017). Many older men are usually motivated to take a young woman to high-end functions just to be ‘seen’ with an attractive young woman.

### **2.4.4 Academic**

Prior research has noted that transactional sexual relationships consist of different currencies other than the commonly cited ‘monetary’ benefits (Shefer et al., 2012). According to Shefer et al. (2012), research findings show that students are motivated to engage in transactional sex for ‘educational benefits also. Engaging in a transactional sexual relationship with students who are seniors, in leadership positions, lecturers or foreign students who are known for strong academic work proves to be ‘desirable commodities’ within the context of university students as one could get favours that could make adjusting to campus life easy (sense of belonging and confidence) and boost their academic performance (Shefer et al., 2012). According to Shefer et al. (2012), some students reported that it was not uncommon for sex to be exchanged for assistance with academic work (thesis and assignment writing). However, with foreign students, this symbiotic relationship goes beyond exchanging sex for academic resources, as they are also motivated to date local females to get physical-emotional security and protection, especially considering the xenophobic hostility and attacks that are targeting foreigners in South Africa (Shefer et al., 2012).

### **2.4.5 Peer influence or pressure**

In a study conducted by Amo-Adjei et al. (2014), friends play a significant role in influencing and motivating their peers to engage in transactional sexual relationships. This is done through their discussions on the practice and the affluent lifestyle they display on campus (Amo-Adjei et al.,

2014). Such an observation has often sparked the desire to have the ‘experiences’ that would make them fit into a circle of ‘experienced’ friends who could contribute to discussions on transactional sexual relationships (Amo-Adjei et al., 2014). Another motivation relates to individuals wanting to obtain ‘human capital’ connections to benefit them like their friends do (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). Having ‘human capital’ connections means having someone to solve their academic, financial, and other problems (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). The attractiveness of these relationships lies in their ‘prestige value’ (Glasscoe, 2020).

#### **2.4.6 Norms, culture, social gendered expectations**

Research suggests that most females and males are motivated to engage in transactional sexual relationships to conform to societal norms, culture, values, and gendered expectations. In many South African communities, gift-giving has become common as it symbolises “genuine love” and a girl’s worth; therefore, not receiving such a gift may be ‘offensive’ to a girl (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). Other studies suggest that some women perceive and use gift-giving to gauge the extent to which their men love and value them (Amo-Adjei et al., 2014). Transactional sexual relationships may, in this case, be seen as a ‘derivative’ of the expectations (which may be in cash or kind, material or non-material and other securities) for a meaningful relationship to be maintained (Tade & Adekoya, 2012).

Ige and Solanke (2021) argue that gendered expectations commonly held in societies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, may be drivers of the prevailing transactional sexual relationships. According to Ige and Solanke (2021), men are expected to assume the role of the providers of economic resources, a role that comes with ‘sexual entitlement’. Furthermore, women must reciprocate by giving sex and domestic services (Andall, 2017). Evidently, this phenomenon has a ripple effect in different contexts, including universities, where these relationships thrive because of the same expectation. Masculine norms also play a huge role in promoting transactional sexual relationships through having multiple female sexual partners (Choudhry et al., 2014).

Also, structural inequalities, such as gender inequality, men getting better and more paying jobs and extreme power differentials, motivate women to engage in transactional sexual relationships (Amo-Adjei et al., 2014). Another structural issue is the ‘marriage culture’, where older men are urged to marry younger wives and younger women to date and fall pregnant for older men, who are already well established. According to Tade and Adekoya (2012), mothers have sometimes directly or

indirectly warned their daughters not to get pregnant by poor young boys. In African cultures, some people use sex as a bargain for marriage or as a way of proving their fertility as a precondition (Tade & Adekoya, 2012).

Some women engage in these transactional relationships to get the love and affection they did not get from their parents in 'broken families' (Amo-Adjei et al., 2014). Students who have claimed to come from rich homes where parents do provide for basic needs; their motivation for engagement in transactional sexual relationships is rooted in wanting more of a busy lifestyle (greed), social life and the freedom and to get sexual pleasure or fulfillment (Tade & Adekoya, 2012).

#### **2.4.7 Substance abuse (alcohol and drugs)**

According to Choudhry et al. (2015), heavy episodic alcohol consumption within the context of university students has led to students engaging in transactional sexual relationships and accepting it as a form of reimbursement for sex. Due to this fact, most young people, particularly males, use bars as venues to search for potential sexual partners using free alcoholic drinks as bait. Glasscoe (2020) adds that to get their 'next fix' and cater to their substance addiction, both males and females were found to engage in transactional sex.

#### **2.4.8 Abuse, violence, mental health**

According to Glasscoe (2020), a history of childhood sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, depression as well as sexual compulsivity, homelessness, and bisexual behaviour have been associated with individuals engaging in transactional sex. A study done in Uganda found that childhood experiences of sexual and physical violence may curtail one's ability to establish intimate relationships which require emotional investment and commitment (Choudhry et al., 2014). As a result, such people normally choose to engage in sexual coercion and what Choudhry et al. (2014) coined 'impersonal transactional sex'. Victims of coercion have been shown to have high levels of alcohol and drug use. Choudhry et al. (2014) argue that men and women who have been abused or violated physically or emotionally are more likely to engage in transactional sexual relationships of poor mental health status. This may increase 'adverse health and psychosocial consequences that include risky sexual behaviours, anxiety about sexual orientation, depression, and a crisis of masculine identity (Choudhry et al., 2014). Such people engage in transactional sexual relationships to acquire a 'coping mechanism'.

### 2.4.9 Social media

According to Abdullahi and Abdulquadri (2018), apart from the positive impacts of social media on the personal development of adolescents, the new internet-based applications which are accessible through smart-phones and other devices like laptops have content which motivates students to engage in antisocial and risky sexual behaviours, including transactional sexual relationships. Landry et al. (2017) documented a correlation between excessive technology use among teens and increased risky health behaviours. According to Landry et al. (2017), social media provides a context in which adolescents, who may require social approval and gratification and still develop self-regulation skills, may find themselves vulnerable to pressures or unanticipated risk opportunities. Landry et al. (2017) further substantiate the notion that social media has the potential to increase and amplify existing peer relationships, which are well-reported as influencing risky behaviours. Social media may also provide increased access to more experienced partners like ‘Sugar Daddies’, ‘Sugar Mommies’ and ‘Aristos’ (Landry et al., 2017, p. 41).

Landry et al. (2017) further stated that this may result in increased communication about sex because of the perceived privacy of social media. According to the authors, it is evident that those individuals who are more active on social media platforms may be more likely to partake in riskier behaviours because of access to a larger peer network that influences their attitudes and social norms. The commonly utilised applications include, but are not limited to, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter or (now X), LinkedIn, Instagram, Blogs, YouTube, Snapchat, and MySpace (Abdullahi & Abdulquadri, 2018). Abdullahi and Abdulquadri (2018) argue that the modern ‘primary socialisation agents’ have shaped and influenced adolescents’ behaviours and thought processes in sub-Saharan Africa. The fast-developing digital technology and the emerging social trends have resulted in adolescents learning and practising certain social behaviours, including sexual ones, through observation and imitation (Abdullahi & Abdulquadri, 2018).

In sub-Saharan Africa, sexuality and reproductive matters are kept concealed and not openly discussed (Abdullahi & Abdulquadri, 2018). The authors further stated that adolescents are constantly exposed to rapidly changing sexual activities and orientations. Thus, having families subscribing to conservative and secretive cultural and religious practices is what gives social media more power, influence and effect over adolescents’ motivations and behaviours (Abdullahi & Abdulquadri, 2018). According to these authors, contemporary studies have discovered that

adolescents who have access to online, unrestricted pornographic materials are more likely to report permissive sexual attitudes (acceptance of casual or premarital sex) and to have virginal-oral sex than those with limited or no exposure to these materials. Abdullahi and Abdulquadri (2018) argue that inherently, exposure to the Internet-based pornography is related to entertaining multiple-sex partners and alcohol and drug use.

Studies indicate that most research conducted on transactional sexual relationships has focused on women's motivations rather than on those of both genders (Choudhry et al., 2015). According to Choudhry et al. (2015), men are both instigators and victims in these relationships, though they are mostly viewed as active agents with a predictable intent to victimize the females. According to Shefer et al. (2012), few studies acknowledge that women might desire sex for sexual pleasure or fun. The authors further argue that little or no attempt was made by both male and female students to critically think about why men might engage in transactional sex. They consistently state that studies have hinted that motivations for transactional sexual relationships are more complex and multi-dimensional than what is currently being portrayed. Contemporary studies show that a growing body of research addresses the determinants and motivations for men's engagement in transactional sex, including improved social status, assertions of masculinity and gendered social obligations to provide and support female partners, alongside access to sex. However, this data is still limited, thus necessitating the need for more research on the phenomenon (Women & UNICEF, 2018).

## **2.5 The implications, benefits, and risks of being involved in a transactional sexual relationship within the context of a university student**

### **2.5.1 Benefits of engaging in transactional sexual relationships**

According to Tade and Adekoya (2012), being in transactional sex relationships has many economic, social, academic, political, labour-related, and emotional benefits. The authors stated that those involved in these relationships benefit financially, as they get money for survival, basic needs, and materialistic wants. Purchase of material goods (gadgets, designer clothes, hairstyles, Western foods, and etcetera), getting the favours, job opportunity connections, seeing places through travel (unlimited leisure), and getting a regular supply of alcohol and drugs (if one is an addict) are all part of the perks obtained from transactional sexual relationships (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). They also go as far as getting academic favours and assistance, where they 'lobby' lecturers or senior students for

academic favours (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). Research has shown that most students who engage in transactional sexual relationships date multiple partners (to cope with the demands of different contexts); this does not disadvantage them as can be anticipated; instead, marital prospects are enhanced (Wamoyi et al., 2019).

According to Tade and Adekoya (2012), older men prefer dating young and attractive university students, which they perceive to be better and less risky to have sexual relations with than prostitutes. In a study conducted in Nigeria, respondents also mentioned the desire for recreation and sexual pleasure as part and parcel of the benefits obtained from transactional sexual relationships (Tade & Adekoya, 2012). On the other hand, in another study conducted by Ntsieni (2017), respondents recounted the feelings of love, affection, protection and respect they got in transactional relationships as a replacement for parental love, which was a benefit. In their study, Stoebenau et al. (2016) further extended on Ntsieni's (2017) findings by stating that transactional sexual relationships are nurturing and associated with deepening emotional intimacy.

### **2.5.2 Disadvantages or negative consequences of engaging in transactional sexual relationships**

One of the most commonly cited disadvantages of transactional sex relationships is the risk of contracting HIV (UNAIDS/WHO, 2015). Studies show that in sub-Saharan Africa, 50% of adolescents and young women who have been exposed to transactional sex relationships are more likely to be living with HIV than those who have never engaged in it (UNAIDS/WHO, 2015). To varying degrees, transactional sexual relationships are associated with risky behaviours such as having sex with multiple sexual partners and other determinants of HIV risk, including intimate partner violence (physical or sexual violence), abuse (including sexual coercion, and emotional and physical abuse), alcohol consumption, and varying levels of condom use (UNAIDS/WHO, 2015). According to Shefer et al. (2012), most students who engage in transactional sexual relationships are disadvantaged and controlled by gender roles, power relations, lack of knowledge, means to access protection, and the will power to negotiate condom use with sexual partners.

Ige and Solanke (2021) argue that transactional sexual relationships are a harmful practice that violates the sexual and reproductive rights of the young girls involved in it; such relationships deprive the girls of a voice and the ability to negotiate for what is good for them. According to Shefer et al. (2012), men in transactional sexual relationships do not only assume the ‘provider’ role but also want to ‘control’ those partners they provide for (UNAIDS/WHO, 2015). Shefer et al. (2012) further argues that students involved in transactional sexual relationships usually become dependent on these relationships to the extent of even tolerating gender-based violence due to the fear of losing their social status and material possessions.

According to Tade and Adekoya (2012), the consequences of transactional sex among students are detrimental to the personal, moral, and health development of the students involved in it. One of the consequences of such relationships is the ‘stigma’ from society, family, and friends, thus blighting individual students’ future marriage prospects (Ntsieni, 2017). Usually, with such relationships come the risk of early sexual debut, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions which could lead to infertility in future, and poor academic performance (Choudhry et al., 2015). According to Glasscoe (2020), transactional sexual relationships may pose emotional dangers and relationship-morality issues such as divorce, betrayal, deceit, emotional blackmail, and dependency. Glasscoe (2020) and Bobashev et al. (2009) agree that the involvement of students in transactional sexual relationships may expose them to a huge danger of experiencing psychological distress (depression, anxiety, et cetera), death or murder.

## **2.6 Implications**

Studies have established that receiving gifts and money is not as disempowering as it is habitually thought to be instead, such is a practice of urgency (Ntsieni, 2017). In their study, Stoebenau et al. (2016) concur that students, particularly females, who engage in transactional sexual relationships call it a deliberate action, such is substantiated by expressions documented in different parts of South Africa, where women are recorded describing their ability to extract resources from their male partners, for example they utilise expressions such as, ‘milking the cow’, ‘skinning the goat’, ‘detothing’, ‘tearing open the pockets’, and ‘plucking the chicken’ among others.

In a study conducted in Tanzania, Amo-Adjei et al. (2014) stated that young women described themselves as lucky to be women as they could use their sexuality for attaining both pleasure and

material benefits. Amo-Adjei et al. (2014) further stated that the women who participated in their study referred to men who engaged in transactional sexual relationships as “old rich fools” who are too stupid to pay for the goods (vagas) they could not take away. According to Ntsieni (2017), transactional sexual relationships may be viewed as a strategy used for challenging and dismantling existing discrepancies in gender and economic relations and in the exertion of power. While the Western adage would implicitly state it by saying, “money pollutes pure love, but buys it anyway,” in Sub-Saharan Africa, it would be explicitly said that “money is indeed the language of love”.

## **2.7 Summary**

Transactional sexual relationships have been identified and practised by individuals of various ages and from different parts of the world, with both men and women engaging in these relationships for a variety of reasons. Transactional sexual relationships are said to often co-exist with other risky sexual behaviours like early sexual debut, multiple concurrent sexual partnerships and inconsistent condom use which may lead to some health problems. The chapter differentiated transactional sexual relationships and prostitution as the study is focused on transactional sexual relationships not prostitution. Motivations for women’s involvement in transactional sexual relationships were also discussed. The following chapter will look into research methodology.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and data collection methods utilised in the present study. The chapter explores the various techniques employed in the data collection, processing, and analysis processes. The scoping review conducted in this study followed the methodological framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The authors suggested a five-stage approach, which was followed step by step. First, the researcher identified the research question that she wanted to answer. Then, the researcher searched for relevant studies that could yield the information needed to address the research questions. After that, the researcher carefully selected the studies that were most relevant to the research question. Next, the data were systematically organised and recorded. Finally, all the collected data were brought together, and summarised, and therefore the findings were reported. Recommendations from other researchers further supported the approach. The framework for the current study was carefully selected and designed to ensure that the research is conducted transparently and rigorously, allowing for potential replication.

#### 3.2 Research design

A systematic scoping review was used to collect data for this study. According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), a scoping review is a method that allows researchers to review extant literature broadly and comprehensively. This is done to “map the key concepts/definitions rapidly” in a line of interest, considering the primary research's size, relevance, and attribute (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, p. 5). A scoping review is relevant to the study of complex topics that have not been comprehensively researched (Tricco et al., 2016). According to Colquhoun et al. (2016, p. 5), a scoping review is a “knowledge synthesis that addresses an exploratory research question”. According to Munn et al. (2018), scoping reviews are conducted for various purposes, which include: illuminating key concepts in the literature, exploring how research is conducted on a certain topic or field, identifying, and analysing knowledge gaps, and establishing key characteristics or factors related to a concept under study. Firstly, a scoping review was suitable for this study as it sought to review and describe how post-graduate theses have engaged with transactional sexual relationships in general; and, secondly, it sought to determine what these studies have found regarding students' experiences

of transactional sexual relationships.

Presently, there is a lack of a universally accepted definition of the scoping review as an emerging methodology. Nevertheless, it has been widely agreed upon by scholars that certain shared traits can be attributed to scoping reviews, as outlined by Tricco et al. (2016). In the past, scoping reviews did not typically involve an evaluation of the quality of the available evidence. This approach has raised concerns among researchers who stress the importance of assessing the quality of the literature under review. They argue that by appraising the literature, the findings can be shared practically with practitioners, policymakers, and other reviewers (Tricco et al., 2016). This review presents a compilation of theses without evaluating the quality of each document to avoid excluding other relevant theses. By clearly explaining and connecting the purpose of the scoping review to the research question, researchers can enhance the effectiveness and excellence of future research syntheses (Tricco et al., 2016).

Therefore, the scoping review approach allowed this research paper to provide an overview of the literature and explore the South African post-graduate theses that focused on the transactional sexual relationships involving university students in South Africa. This approach was conducted through the desktop method; therefore, it does not require the researcher to collect primary or first-hand data from human participants but allows for a review of publicly available post-graduate theses. Given the study's strict timeframe, a scoping review was the best method for ensuring the accessibility of inexpensive information (Wilson, 2014). A scoping review is a type of research method implemented through a step-by-step process. It involves interpreting and analysing evidence to determine its importance rather than just combining different research methods. This approach emphasises the validity, contribution, and relevance of the evidence being analysed (de Kock & Hauptfleisch, 2018). Therefore, scoping reviews have gained popularity, which is rooted in their ability to synthesise research, collect, evaluate, and present existing research findings.

As stated earlier, there is a lack of clear definitions of a scoping review in the extant literature (de Kock & Hauptfleisch, 2018). However, literature highlights a specific methodological framework that is noteworthy. This framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) has significantly gained traction in the academic community. Since its publication, this structure has been numerous.

cited (3780 times) in books and academic articles. Researchers have utilised this framework to conduct scoping reviews, which help interpret and comprehend academic research on diverse topics (de Kock & Hauptfleisch, 2018). Arksey and O'Malley (2005) have developed the preferred and recommended method of conducting most studies, for they conclude that scoping review studies require methodological standardisation.

The scoping review was used for this study as it tends to address broader topics which are less likely to seek to address very specific research questions or assess the quality of the included studies. Identifying the research questions was beneficial in setting a precedent for the successive stages. This required a clear definition and articulation of certain aspects of the research questions, which would directly impact the search strategies (deKock & Hauptfleisch, 2018). A rapid literature review was initially conducted to conceptualise the research question and purpose. For this scoping review, the process of question specification was seen as iterative, and for that reason, the questions were developed to suit the purpose of the study as mentioned above. The PCC (purpose, population, and concepts) framework was utilised to refine the research question(s) and purpose(s) [Population (Students), Concepts (Transactional sex relationships), and Context (South African universities)] were used to formulate the preliminary research questions. The research questions were articulated together with the purpose of the research.

### **3.3 Sampling or identifying relevant studies (Framework Stage 2)**

Comprehensiveness, flexibility, reflexivity, and breadth is imperative in the search for the relevant studies. Therefore, at this stage of the scoping review, the researchers had to identify the pertinent studies and devise a strategy of conducting the search. To conduct effective research, it was crucial to carefully select the search terms and the sources to be utilised (de Kock & Hauptfleisch, 2018). Due to the limited availability of the researcher, three months were designated for the collection of data for the scoping review. This decision was made based on the pressing deadline-related constraints.

Furthermore, exclusion and inclusion criteria were developed and utilised to select the post-graduate theses according to their relevance. This did not come without challenges, as time constraints were the major factor. Also, while identifying the relevant studies, language not included in the exclusion and inclusion criteria became an issue as the researcher identified the relevant theses written in Afrikaans; hence, the inclusion and exclusion criteria had to be readjusted to accommodate this

concern.

To accommodate breadth, the researcher engaged with each step reflexively using scoping review, such that the searches were limited to theses from South Africa and journals, reports, and manuscripts from different African universities. This was done to collect a broad range of literature. The scoping review was conducted to assemble sufficient information to ensure an extensive examination of existing sources focusing on transactional sexual relationships. A systematic search for scholarly and grey literature was conducted to elicit the relevant information. At the same time, a limited list of keywords was initially used. This changed as the search progressed, and the researcher started utilising a broad list of keyword combinations and phrases after realising the various conceptualisations of transactional sexual relationships and the different terms assigned to the phenomenon by different individuals and countries. Also, considering the ambiguity and controversy embedded in this phenomenon, for example, while others view these relationships as akin to prostitution (business transaction), others view them as part of normal romantic relationships and an expression of love and affection. While some call these relationships transactional relationships, others call them the ‘sugar daddy and sugar mommy syndrome’.

In contrast, other people refer to transactional relationships as age-disparate relationships, and still others in African countries like Ghana refer to them as the ‘Aristotle phenomenon’. At the same time, in Venda, they are viewed as ‘Prostitution’ or ‘Blessor’ and ‘Blessee’ relationships (De Beer, 2020). The limiting factors had to be identified before they might impact the search.

### **3.3.1 Search engines**

Most of the searched databases were accessed through the University of KwaZulu-Natal online library. The following databases were searched using the three-step process recommended for scoping reviews: 1. Search by title, 2. Search by abstract, 3. Search for full text. These steps ensure that the data selection process is done systematically, comprehensively, and rigorously. The final selection was based on the study objectives. Initially, the researcher searched for each of the 10 university library repositories and searched for their theses and dissertations in different disciplines, using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. For the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN ResearchSpace) the majority of the theses and dissertations were found in the school), University of Pretoria (UPSpace), University of Johannesburg (UJ IR Institutional Repository), University of Cape

Town (OpenUCT), University of Witwatersrand (WIReDSpace Electronic Theses and Dissertations ETD.), Stellenbosch University (SUNScholar), Northwest University (DSpace ETD), University of Free State (Kovsie Scholar), University of Western Cape (UWC ETD), and the University of South Africa (UnisaIR ETD).

After conducting an individual search, the researcher struggled to access some of the theses from other universities and was also not pleased with the amount of the yielded results or theses found; hence, the researcher decided to broaden the search to reach saturation by searching other databases which had South African or African theses and dissertations using the UKZN library access as a registered student there. These search engines were namely: Google scholar (advanced features), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, Sabinet Dissertations and Theses, Union catalogue of South African Theses and Dissertations and, Nexus-NRF, National ETD Portal (NRF). After searching these databases, the researcher proceeded to examine the list of references of articles that were included in the scoping review, as recommended by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The authors emphasised the importance of checking the reference lists of studies, particularly in systematic scoping reviews, to guarantee their inclusion. The professional consultation with the UKZN librarian helped guide the search strategy by facilitating and making the search faster and more efficient.

The researcher also searched other repositories of South African universities, which were initially excluded from checking for the number of theses that could be found on the topic of the current scoping review. This excluded universities of technology, which are more technology-based and emphasise practical skills, while traditional universities are more theoretical and may have the relevant research theses and dissertations. The other universities that were included were Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Walter Sisulu University, University of Limpopo, University of Zululand, University of Fort Hare, University of Venda, Rhodes University, University of Mpumalanga, and Sol Plaatjie University.

### **3.3.1 Keywords for searching databases**

The key terms initially used for the search were:

In this scoping review, the key search terms that were used to conduct the scoping review are: 'transactional sexual relationships', 'transactional sex', 'university students', 'sexual exchange', 'sex for money', 'sex for basic needs', 'informal relationships', 'pre-marital sex', 'age-disparate

relationships’, ‘sugar daddies and sugar mommies’ syndrome’, and ‘sex for consumption’.

During the search, more search terms were added to improve the comprehensiveness and feasibility of the study and to ensure that the keywords were broad enough to include any relevant post-graduate theses and dissertations. Furthermore, it was inclusive and exhaustive of all possible available theses on: ‘prostitution student’, ‘transgenerational sex’, ‘student agency’, ‘sex work students’, ‘benefits of student transactional sex’, and harms of student transactional sex’. Further, the researcher found that searching using the phrases “transactional sex amongst university students” and “risky sexual behaviours” did yield good results. The researcher also explored the topic using the scoping review objectives and questions to search, for example, the “consequences of transactional sex”, “benefits of student transactional sex”, “motivations for transactional sex relationships”, and etcetera. However, these phrases did not yield meaningful results. The researcher then attempted using the “Boolean Operators”, ‘AND, OR, and NOT’. The purpose of using this search technique was to connect the search terms in order to expand or narrow down the search, particularly when there are multiple search terms that are relevant to a topic, as previously discussed in relation to transactional sex relationships (de Kock & Hauptfleisch, 2018).

Before data could be collected, familiarisation with available research and the content of those accessible studies was done to assist in developing and deciding on the final inclusion and exclusion criteria. This is further discussed in Framework Stage 3 below.

### **3.4 Data collection/Study selection (Framework Stage 3)**

The third stage of the Arksey and O’Malley Framework refers to selecting studies for the scoping review. Scoping studies differ from systematic reviews in that their format is more iterative than linear, making it more difficult to capture them clearly (Westphaln et al., 2021). Recommendations were adopted from the literature to enhance the transparency and reproducibility of study selection for scoping reviews (Westphaln et al., 2021). The study selection involved both the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The criteria were established or derived from the research questions and were found by reading through studies to understand their subject matter. For this scoping review, the study selection process was broken into four phases: 1. Search according to the title using keywords, 2. Abstract reading if relevant, 3. Full-text reading, and finally, 4. According to study objectives. This was done to ensure that the study selection process was done thoroughly, systematically and in a time-efficient manner to ensure all relevant post-graduate theses met the inclusion criteria (de

Kock & Hauptfleisch, 2018).

However, the initial inclusion and exclusion criteria were noted to be evolving as the review process progressed and required some adjustments. Some of the adjustments including and selecting theses written in English, excluding those written in other languages. This was implemented because some languages the researcher was not fluent in, and some were foreign to the researcher and would be time-consuming to translate. However, they might have had information relevant to the research questions; some of the theses were written in Afrikaans, including those from NWU, UWC, and other universities. As recommended by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), the inclusion and exclusion criteria were established at the beginning of the review to yield the relevant data and clarify the research concept of transactional sexual relationships within student contexts. Postgraduate theses and dissertations which were not submitted to the South African universities were included during the initial stages of the study selection to compare the prevalence of the types of transactional sex relationships in other African countries in the context of students and to assess, compare and understand available literature or research based on the topic being currently researched from different perspectives and contexts; this led to the searching of not only theses and dissertations but also of journal articles, governmental reports and manuscripts, and not only having students as the only study sample. However, as the research progressed, and for the current scoping review, only post-graduate theses and dissertations were selected and utilised, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria were strictly adhered to, thus ensuring that only the relevant studies were selected.

### **3.4.1 Inclusion criteria**

The inclusion criteria were outlined as follows:

1. Theses submitted to South African universities by master's and, or doctoral students exploring transactional sexual relationships within student contexts and were available on the university library website.
2. Theses with South African students as the study sample. Theses which were published from 2010 to 2022. The twelve-year period will allow for an analysis of trends in research on transactional sexual relationships and still be within the parameters of a mini dissertation for a master's degree.

3. Post-graduate theses addressing the main review objectives and research questions, the definition, motivations, benefits, and negative outcomes of transactional sexual relationships as perceived by the students.
4. Post-graduate theses written in English.

#### **3.4.2 Exclusion criteria**

1. Theses not submitted to a South African university by a master's and, or a doctoral post-graduate student and not available on the university library website,
2. Post-graduate theses that do not relate to transactional sexual relationships within the context of university students.
3. Theses that do not have South African students as their study samples.
4. Theses which were published before the year 2010.
5. Post-graduate theses that do not address the main review objectives, research questions, definition, motivations, benefits, and negative outcomes of transactional sexual relationships as perceived by the students.
6. Postgraduate theses written in other languages besides English.

#### **3.5 Theses storage and data collection**

The researcher created a folder on how to organise and store the post-graduate theses and dissertations. Full-text post-graduate theses and dissertations review and data extraction or collection can easily become a challenge when scoping reviews involve multiple studies or theses and dissertations. Before selecting the post-graduate theses, a plan was established. The search strategy and article selection process were reported using a PRISMA flowchart.

#### **3.6 Data analysis (Framework Stage 4)**

Data analysis is similar to what Arksey and O'Malley (2005, p. 15) call "charting data" in their PCC framework. Arksey and O'Malley (2005, p. 15) further describe charting as "combining and logically organising data and interpreting data by sifting and sorting material according to key themes and issues". The data analysis process for this study comprised two parts. Firstly, the data were sorted

using a matrix table. Secondly, the data were analysed thematically. Each of these processes will be discussed below.

All the post-graduate studies meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria were entered into Endnote. Furthermore, the collected post-graduate theses had specific information extracted from them. To organise data, a spreadsheet or data charting form was created, where data could be charted. This was done to enable the comparison between the information and to ensure that a uniform approach was used. The extracted data had key features which included specific and general information, such as: the database, university repositories, thesis title, publication year, author, discipline under which the study is conducted, doctoral or master's theses, study subjects or sample, methodology, type of study (for example, quantitative or qualitative), study questions or objectives, major findings, and study location interventions.

### **3.6.1 The Synthesis Matrix Table**

After the data collection process had occurred, 16 relevant post-graduate theses were identified. The data from these 16 post-graduate theses were filtered, and the relevant information needed for this study was extracted. A table was created, including each postgraduate thesis or dissertation and its extracted data. The matrix table (4.1) was used to lay out the data collected from the relevant post-graduate theses and dissertations in a meaningful manner that spoke to the current scoping review research questions and objectives. The table is advantageous as it allows the researcher to record, sort, and categorise the extracted data.

Furthermore, the table allowed for the organisation of extracted data, while providing a visual representation of the main ideas in the literature and identifying overlapping or contrasting ideas between the authors. The matrix table enabled the researcher to work systematically, ensuring that no extracted data would be repeated in the study. Once all post-graduate theses were read and the relevant data extracted and put into the matrix table, the data were critically synthesised, with the theses and dissertations being assessed and compared. The matrix table was relevant to this study as it guided and formed a basis for the thematic analysis of the current scoping review. It also allowed for the identification and development of common themes and patterns, thus permitting identification of gaps and limitations to be addressed and the conclusions to be made when reviewing the literature.

### **3.6.2 Reflexive thematic analysis**

According to Byrne (2022), reflexive thematic analysis is a theoretically flexible interpretative approach researchers use to systematically identify, organise, analyse and offer insight into patterns of meanings (themes) across a dataset. Thematic analysis will be used to examine the findings in the included theses. According to Oppong-Nuako et al. (2015), thematic analysis entails classifying data into themes or categories by finding and evaluating similar patterns in the data. The thematic analysis then follows the process of preparing data, specifically the findings section of each thesis, finding the information related to the study's research questions, and using the gathered information to generate codes and themes.

The theses and dissertations were organised and filtered according to the categories on the matrix table to address the study's objectives. The researcher had read through the theses and dissertations, and important data were highlighted and extracted. The data were then analysed according to the scoping review questions addressing the findings of the postgraduate studies (specifically how students define transactional sexual relationships, the different types of transactional sexual relationships, the students' motivations for engaging in transactional sex relationships, and the benefits and disadvantages of transactional sex relationships). It also examined how the post-graduate theses have studied transactional sexual relationships and the strengths and limitations of these studies. The thematic analysis procedure included preparing data, identifying items of potential interest, and generating codes; the researcher then reviewed the initial themes, and named and defined the final themes. The thematic analysis revealed differences and similarities in the collected data. The data were synthesised according to research questions defined in Framework Stage 1. The identified themes are demonstrated and represented graphically using a table to describe the characteristics of the study. These characteristics included motivations, benefits, and negative consequences of transactional sexual relationships.

### **3.7 Issues of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability**

Some authors have expressed concerns regarding the level of inflexibility in scoping reviews. Therefore, several steps were taken to enhance the thoroughness of the scoping review. Firstly, the decisions regarding which studies to be included in and excluded from the study were made right at the start of the scoping review process. Secondly, the search strategy was adjusted in accordance with the abstracts that were obtained from the initial search. Lastly, due to the unique dynamic

between a supervisor and a graduate student, the supervisor and the researcher had to hold frequent meetings throughout the review process. During the abstract review process, the supervisor and the researcher had a consultative discussion on any challenges or uncertainties being encountered during the selection process. During the peer-checking session, the supervisor gave feedback regarding the documents that were included and excluded. In order to address intrinsic biases, certain steps were conducted including learning about the different types of biases, practicing self-awareness to identify my own biases and identifying my assumptions, goals, and hypotheses in my research plan. In addition, the trustworthiness and quality criteria assessed the rigour of the study. This involved assessing the accuracy, relevance, and strength of the research findings.

The four categories of trustworthiness are credibility, which is how believable and rich the data gathered is; confirmability, which refers to information grounded in the collected data and awareness of research bias; and dependability, which refers to whether or not the research's repeated findings are consistent. Transferability refers to whether findings are being transferred to similar contexts. Validity uses measurement tools like statistical analysis to study human behaviour (Drost, 2011). Internal validity is the degree to which a study consistently demonstrates a cause-and-effect relationship in a study. This has ensured the generalisability of the findings. The keywords used allowed all the collected information to relate to the study and the findings. The degree to which measurements can be repeated is referred to as reliability. "The process should be sufficiently documented to enable the replication of the study by other researchers. This straightforward approach increases the reliability of the findings and responds to any criticism suggesting that the study lacks methodological rigour (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2019). In this scoping review, reliability was guaranteed by having the eligibility criteria, which guided the researchers and ensured consistency (GROUP H 7RP).

The post-graduate theses were sourced from the library repositories of the ten South African universities. The chosen universities were ranked amongst the top universities, globally and nationally, and this ranking was based on the quality of staff members the university has, the university's academic performance, research reputation, and number of master's and doctorate graduates produced yearly. This ensured that highly rated academics reviewed the post-graduate theses used and were credible and of high quality. The post-graduate theses were systematically and rigorously sourced from all the 10 universities by purposefully and specifically searching the disciplines with comprehensive data on transactional sexual relationships, using particular

keywords. This ensured maximisation of time and sufficient data were collected for the scoping review.

The methodological framework, originally established by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and later revised by Levac et al. (2010), was utilised to ensure that the data gathering, and the subsequent evaluation processes followed the guidelines set by these authors for conducting scoping reviews. This was done to ensure the applicability of the findings to different contexts. The research's dependability was achieved by providing a thorough and detailed explanation of the research methodology. Additionally, the available literature and previous studies were independently analysed and clearly presented. The study's processes were also clearly described, and no steps were left unarticulated. A data specialist at the library of the University of KwaZulu-Natal provided the much-needed assistance. This specialist was able to access studies that were not publicly available.

Additionally, the researcher's supervisor also played a supportive role. Confirmability relates to the idea that researchers can have an impact on their research findings. It is about how much the researcher's study results match the collected data and the extent to which the results are not influenced by the researcher's bias, motivations, or preferences. In order to maintain consistency and clarity, the researcher has included tables containing the complete information utilised for creating charts, as well as the comprehensive coding used to support the findings of the study. The data were analysed by utilising the matrix table and the thematic analysis method in order to improve confirmability.

In addition, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered for the present scoping review. By ensuring data saturation, enough information was gathered for the current study. This ensured a representative sample of findings that could be contrasted and compared with other studies that focused on the same topic. In instances where personal influences may have impacted the research, these potential biases were acknowledged and documented as limitations of the study.

### **3.8 Ethical issues**

This scoping review provided an overview of the existing literature. Therefore, the study did not require ethical approval, as no human participants were involved in it. However, the ethical exemption was obtained from the ethics review with the reference (00018358) being provided. Furthermore, various ethical rules were followed when conducting secondary research. For example, the research discussed in

this theses review is based solely on publicly available information or that made available through legislative or regulatory frameworks. As a result, this did not require ethical approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This thesis examines South African postgraduate theses that focus on transactional sexual relationships involving university students. A scoping review does not need ethical approval because the information used is readily accessible to the public and therefore is protected by law.

Additionally, the information used in a scoping review is publicly available, and no confidentiality is expected since the resources are freely accessible on the Internet. The research focuses on literature that is available through the University of KwaZulu-Natal Library records and resources, as well as publications that can be accessed in the public domain either in the print or electronic format. This includes official publications as well. In order to prevent plagiarism, the scoping review was uploaded to Turnitin. The thesis also contains in-text citations and a reference list properly acknowledging the original authors' contributions.

### **3.9 Summary**

The scoping review conducted in this study has generated research findings that exhibit transparency, replicability, and verifiability. Transparency was achieved by engaging in a comprehensive conversation about the various procedures employed in undertaking this study. By utilising a well-established scoping review method, the quality of this research project was also ensured. The request for undertaking this study was sent to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to obtain ethical clearance, even though no human participants were involved in the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the findings emerging from the scoping review. The researcher reviewed 16 theses conducted on transactional sexual relationships among South African university students. Data were presented through scoping review matrix tables and themes were developed from the findings.

## 4.2 Matrix table

The Matrix table is going to look at research papers that were reviewed by the researcher, it will make listings of the author and date, title of the research, the research's definition of transactional sex/ motivation or influence into transactional sex, types of transactional sex, research approach used in the research and sampling method, negative outcomes of the research and research findings.

**Table 4.1: Matrix table**

References and theses number	Title	Definition of transactional sex	Motivation or influence into transactional Sex	Types of transactional sex	Research Approach and Sampling	Negative outcomes	Findings
Karen Christison (2014)  <i>Thesis 1</i>	Exploring sexuality and risk among Coloured high schoolgirls in the era of HIV and AIDS	Risky sexual behaviour makes one vulnerable to contracting infections such as HIV and AIDS.  Examples of risky behaviour, among others, may be engaging in sexual activities	Drug and alcohol abuse, peer pressure	Risky sexual behaviour	The qualitative study used a sample of 16 girls using purposive sampling.	Vulnerability to HIV infection, school drop-out, and adolescent pregnancy	The use of drugs to enhance mental and academic performance can cause addiction, leading to risky behaviour. Risky behaviour has consequences such as contracting HIV and AIDS and other STIs. Although teenagers are exposed to programmes on HIV and AIDS, for some reason or other,

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		without the use of protection, the use of drugs and alcohol, having several sexual encounters, and not being faithful to one partner.					they do not respond to these messages, thereby placing themselves at risk of infection.
Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya, Dunkle, and Penn- Kekana (2012a)  <i>Thesis 2</i>	Men, Prostitution and the Provider Role: Understanding the Intersections of Economic Exchange, Sex, Crime and Violence in South Africa	The proposed definition of 'prostitution' developed by the South African Law Reform Commission is the exchange of any financial or another reward, favour or compensation to engage in a sexual act.	Joblessness, bullying of girls and poverty	Prostitution	Quantitative representative sample for all ethnic groups in South Africa	Drug abuse and involvement in theft or robbery	Provider role relationships (or sex) are normative for low-income men, but not having sex with a woman in prostitution. Men who do the latter operate extensively outside the law, and their violence poses a substantial threat to women. Those drafting legislation and policy on the sex industry in South Africa need to distinguish between these two groups to avoid criminalising the

							normal and consider measures to protect women.
Brink (2012)  <i>Thesis 3</i>	An investigation of risky sexual behaviours, basic HIV knowledge and intention to use condoms among a sample of men who have sex with men in a student community	self-reported sexual risk behaviour is the cornerstone of reproductive health when assessing the acquisition of sexually transmitted infections and HIV.	Hostile social environments, high levels of stigma and national regulations	Men-to-men sex	Quantitative approach convenience sampling, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), was used to do all statistical procedures.	Using alcohol or drugs during sexual encounters and having multiple sexual partners, and increased vulnerability to HIV	The major risks have psychological, social and behavioural components, which include having anal sex without a condom, high partner turnover, the presence of sexually transmitted infections (STI), unknown HIV serostatus, complacency about risk, men who have other men (MSM) who are HIV positive, the Internet, social discrimination, the presence of female sexual partners and substance abuse.
Jewkes (2012)	Transactional relationships and sex with a woman in prostitution:	The definition may be rendered easily into items that can be asked of	Material gains, such as money	prostitution, sex work and transactional sex	Mixed-methods representative sampling drawn by Statistics South Africa		The notion of 'transactional sex' developed through research with women does not translate easily

<p><i>Thesis 4</i></p>	<p>prevalence and patterns in a representative sample of South African men</p>	<p>those receiving the goods (usually women.</p>					<p>to men. Many men perceive expectations that they fulfil a provider role, with quid pro quo entitlement to sex. Men distinguished these circumstances of sex from having sex with a woman in prostitution. Whilst there may be similarities, when viewed relationally, these are quite distinct practices. Conflating them is sociologically inappropriate. Efforts to work with men to reduce transactional sex should focus on addressing sexual entitlement and promoting gender equity.</p>
<p>Mahlatsi (2018)</p> <p><i>Thesis 5</i></p>	<p>An Investigation into the Effects of Local</p>	<p>As a “dialogue-intensive” genre, soap operas have</p>	<p>Learning new ideas in a relationship</p>	<p>Heterogeneous sex</p>	<p>Qualitative approach; convenience, purposive and snowballing</p>	<p>Multiple relationship partners and peer pressure</p>	<p>Participants indicated that they sometimes identified with characters on screen, while some showed that they learned</p>

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	<p>Television SOAP OPERAS on Romantic Relationships Among the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Undergraduate Students on the Pietermaritzburg Campus</p>	<p>even been recognised as a valued asset in therapy, as they give rich substance from which to distinguish feelings, comprehend relational connections and sentimental connections and foresee characters' activities</p>			<p>procedures were adopted to select 30 participants.</p>		<p>about different cultures from viewing SOAP OPERAS. They also learned about how different cultures handle relationships, how television has huge social implications, and how the habit of television viewing cannot happen in a vacuum, resistant to the world outside.</p>
<p>Njawala (2016)  <i>Thesis 6</i></p>	<p>Gender and HIV/AIDS: Examining HIV/AIDS Communication among Black students in heterosexual Relationships</p>	<p>HIV and AIDS is one of the most devastating diseases on the globe. Heterosexual relationships denote the sexual Relationships</p>	<p>Students are in Their developmental stage, and the university setting puts them nearer to no supervision.</p>	<p>Heterosexual relationships</p>	<p>Qualitative approach; 16 students were selected using snowballing sampling.</p>	<p>HIV and AIDS-Infected Students</p>	<p>The study found that lack of communication, and the existence of this gendered communication among heterosexual partners may put partners at risk of contracting the HIV and AIDS infection. The study also shows that</p>

	at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus	between males and females.					there is little understanding of the gender concept. This suggests that enough knowledge on gender and HIV and AIDS communication based on gender equality among students in heterosexual relationships is an imperative stimulus to HIV and AIDS preventive practices.
Anderson (2011)  <i>Thesis 7</i>	Students who have sex with teachers: A youth perspective from the Western Cape education region	The student-teacher sexual relationship refers to behaviours included under 'student-teacher sex', sexual harassment, sexual assault, and 'student-teacher sexual activity, non-specified.	Teachers take advantage of students' needs.	Sexual assault, oral sex, anal sex, virginal sex	Mixed-methods approach; Convenience sampling was used.	HIV and AIDS and school dropout	Terms were coded under "Capital", where they expressly referenced agency on the part of students in negotiating sexual relationships for grades and money.

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<p>Masvaure (2011)</p> <p><i>Thesis 8</i></p>	<p>‘Low-risk youth?’ : students, campus life and HIV at a university in Zimbabwe</p>	<p>For many students, ‘college life’ is about having ‘fun’, and universities are places where they will initiate and acquire sexual experience.</p>	<p>Looking for marriage partners, economic security, and good grades</p>	<p>Transactional sex, romantic sexual relationships</p>	<p>Qualitative approach; Randomsampling was usedto select 40 students.</p>	<p>HIV and AIDS- infected students (girls) and immoral behaviour</p>	<p>Male students at the University of Zimbabwe face tremendous pressure to prove their masculinity through sexual encounters. This explains why most of the relationships that they establish have sex as their end goal, rather than romance and other non-sexual forms of intimacy.</p>
<p>Potgieter et al. (2012)</p> <p><i>Thesis 9</i></p>	<p>Taxi ‘sugar daddies’ and taxi queens: male taxi driver attitudes regarding transactional relationships in the Western Cape, South Africa</p>	<p>Transactional sex is neither sex work in the traditional sense, nor only an outcome of poverty, but is also fuelled By the consumerist pressure to acquire goods and social status, as well</p>	<p>Poverty, alcohol, influenced behaviour</p>	<p>Transactional sex</p>	<p>Quantitative approach; Surveys were used on 225 people using random sampling.</p>	<p>Stigmatisation, HIV and AIDS, and alcohol and drug abuse</p>	<p>Most taxi drivers in this study regarded the relationship between taxi drivers and the young girls who travelwith them as providing status for both the girlsand drivers. Thus, investments in both partners in this relationship mirror the findings and arguments of</p>

		as linked with culturally-based notions of gender, love and exchange.					others on the exchange value of transactional relationships for both men and women.
(Hoss & Blokland, 2018)  <i>Thesis 10</i>	Sugar daddies and blessers: a contextual study of transactional sexual interactions among young girls and older men	In South Africa, there has recently been growing public concern about the phenomenon of 'blessers', a local term referring to 'sugar daddies'. Both of these terms refer to transactional sex or relationships. Sugar daddies are defined as men who exchange money, material favours, or	Money is still considered to be the main motivation for meeting basic needs or being able to support their families to live a desired lifestyle.	Heterogeneous sex in exchange for benefits	A mixed-method approach used with 32 participants selected through random sampling.	High levels of teenage pregnancy or HIV infection	Contextual factors and social norms influence decisions and experiences in these interactions. The study concludes that these relationships form part of the girls' daily experiences of structural violence as well as gender inequality and can be regarded as a symptom of broader societal structures and norms.

		<p>gifts for sexual favours with girls who are below the age of 18 and are significantly younger (in most cases at least 15 years younger) than they are.</p>					
<p>Frieslaar (2019)</p> <p><i>Thesis 11</i></p>	<p>The blesser-blessee relationship: A pastoral challenge</p>	<p>Blesser: A modern-day “sugar daddy” who blesses a young woman, usually a University student, with material needs. Blessee: This is the young woman who is the recipient of blessings.</p>	<p>Peer pressure, gender norms, intergenerational relationships, poverty.</p>	<p>Transactional sex</p>	<p>Qualitative approach</p>	<p>Sexual violence and female genital mutilation</p>	<p>Women experience violence, abuse and exploitation due to being involved in ‘Blesser-Blessee’ relationships. The living conditions of the women were characterised by crime, violence and lack of safety.</p>

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<p>Sheferet al.(2012)</p> <p><i>Thesis 12</i></p>	<p>Narratives of transactional sex on a university campus</p>	<p>Transactional sex is a common practice that contributes to unsafe and inequitable sexual practices.</p>	<p>Material exchange, poverty.</p>	<p>Sex for money</p>	<p>A qualitative approach; convenience sampling was used</p>	<p>Student pregnancies and HIV and AIDS</p>	<p>The narratives of both female and male students mainly focused on transactional sexual relationships occurring on campus, which revolved around class and gender. This discussion revolves around the financial vulnerability of young women and how it affects their access to economic resources and unmet material desires. It suggests that poverty is the main factor leading female students to engage in transactional sexual interactions.</p>
<p>Ntsieni (2017)</p> <p><i>Thesis 13</i></p>	<p>Perceptions of students regarding transactional sex and its effect on health at a</p>	<p>Transactional sex involves the exchange of sex for money, gifts, services or other favours.</p>	<p>Social norms, poverty, peer influence, academic achievement, desire for status above</p>	<p>Economically driven sex</p>	<p>A qualitative approach was used together with qualitative sampling</p>	<p>HIV infection, STIs and pregnancy</p>	<p>In this study, four perceived causes of transactional sex were identified as:  a) Socio-economic status  b) Social classes</p>

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	selected university in South Africa.	Transactional sex, also known as “sugar daddy” relationships, refer to sexual relationships between older partners and younger partners, including adolescents.	subsistenceliving				c) Behaviour and d) Peer pressure
Kelly (2010)  <i>Thesis 14</i>	University of the Western Cape students’ perception of alcohol use as a risk factor for HIV infection.	Risky sexual behaviours can be defined as sexual behaviours that put people at a higher risk of contracting HIV, including practising unprotected sex, casual sex, multiple sex partners, and	For fun, relieving stress	unprotected sex, casual sex, transactional sex	Quantitative approach; 240 students were selected using convenience sampling.	Sexual debut and a higher risk of HIV infection	

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		Transactional sex.					
Huysamen (2017)  <i>Thesis 15</i>	A Critical Analysis of Men's Constructions of Paying for Sex: Doing Gender, Doing Race in the Interview Context	Sex work is the act of attending to the sexual desires of a particular individual (or individuals) with bodily acts in exchange for payment in the form of money.	Satisfied sexual urges, variety of sexual partners, new sexual experiences	Heterogeneous sex	Qualitative approach used on 43 men	Sexual exploitation for women, men contracting HIV and AIDS, social stigma for both men and women	Even though men who paid for sex could present themselves as wealthy, they also had to face the long-standing social stigma attached to sex work. This stigma would always be connected to their identities as men who paid for sex. Throughout history, the bodies of women who engage in the sale of sexual services have been portrayed and perceived as unclean and afflicted with various illnesses.
Van Schoor (2022a)  <i>Thesis 16</i>	Predicting Sexual Risk Behaviour (SRB) among late adolescents:	SRB is defined by the increased risk of negative outcomes, following two distinct routes:	Self-efficacy, peer pressure, perceived costs and benefits, interactions with adults	Heterogeneous sex	Quantitative research approach; Study used convenience sampling and 1600 students participated.	HIV infection and adolescent pregnancies	The study discovered a connection between feminine characteristics, ideology and sexual experience. This suggests that women

	<p>The role of attitudes and ideology</p>	<p>firstly, an increased chance of contracting or transmitting sexually transmitted disease (STD), including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); and secondly, an increased risk of unplanned pregnancy.</p>					<p>who believe in traditional femininity norms due to societal and cultural beliefs are less likely to express their sexual desires and are more likely to participate in unwanted sexual behaviours.</p>
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4.3 PRISMA flow diagram

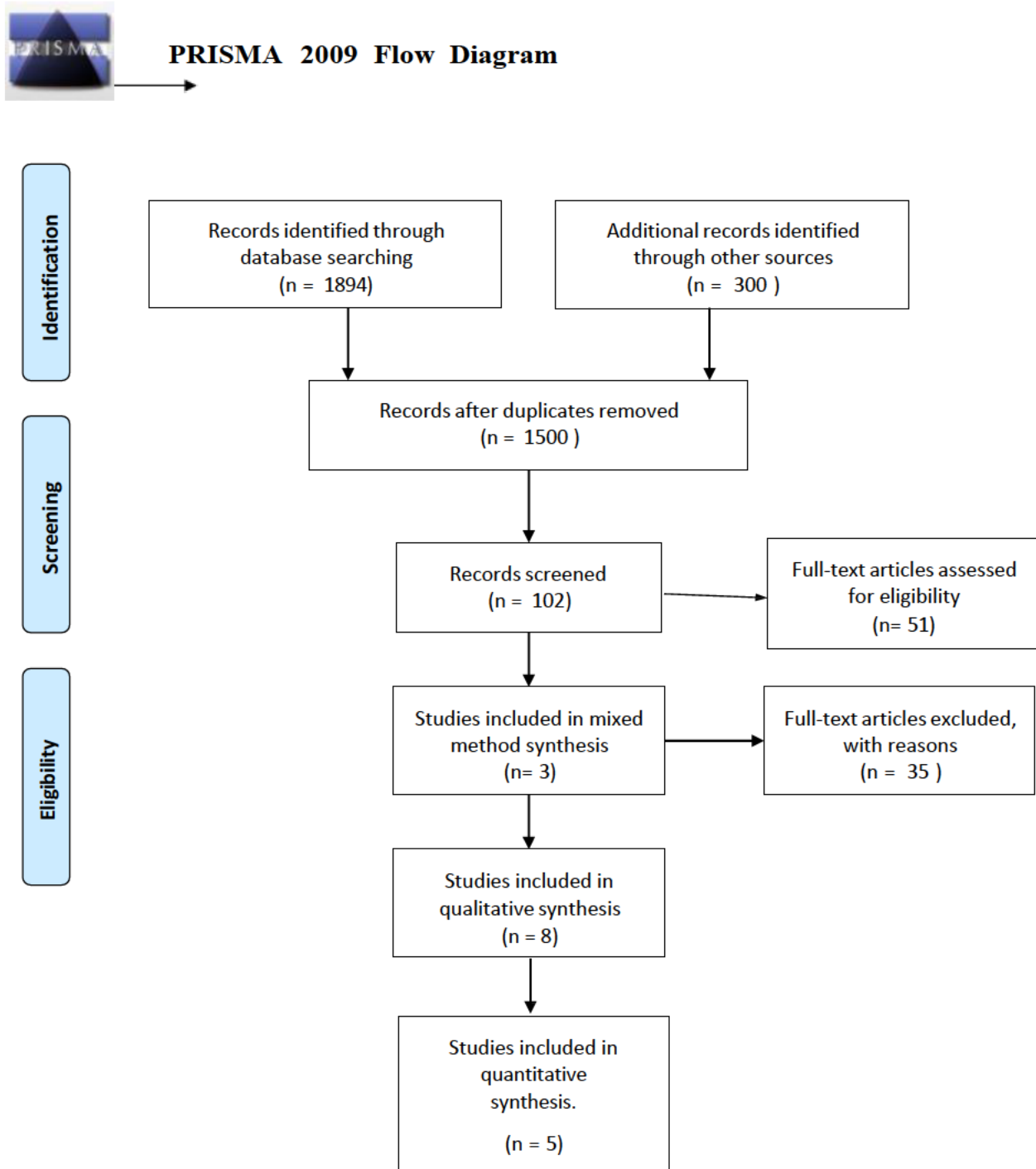


Figure 4.1: PRISMA flow chart

#### **4.4 Presentation of results**

Several themes were drawn from theses collected during the scoping review. These themes were connected to the research topic: "Transactional sex among university students." The presentation of the results is clustered in the themes. The following themes emerged from the collected data.

##### **4.4.1 Peer pressure**

Christison's study in 2014 indicated that the comments were diverse in this regard. Participants shared their own experiences as well as group perspectives. Peer pressure was one of the explanations given, as these young ladies reportedly wanted to join in with the "in crowd." Another reason was that they were followers rather than leaders; several participants wanted to emulate the behaviours of their risk-taking peers. Several young women in low-income households believed that since some of the requirements could not be supplied, and as long as they entered situations where those needs could be met, risky sexual behaviours were acceptable. They engaged in transactional sexual behaviours, in which sex is traded for money or material things. In these situations, young women frequently engaged in intergenerational sex by dating older men, also known as "sugar daddies". The young women out of fear may struggle to exert agency in these relationships, so dangerous behaviour is the result. These young women are at risk because the men they date tend to be controlling and frequently have a history of having several sexual partners.

This is further supported by Ntsieni (2017), who noted that transactional sex was prevalent at the University of Venda for several reasons, including peer pressure and a dearth of recreational opportunities. It is speculated that the students' behaviours are impacted by their peers. Students reportedly turned to transactional sex to spend their time because they had nowhere else to go. Choudhry et al. (2014) reported that young people give in to the peer pressure to engage in sex in exchange for money. Young people today are under intense peer pressure to acquire "luxury products," including the latest designer threads, jewellery, hairdos, and cosmetics. Peer-group pressure is an expanding push factor thrusting both girls and boys into intergenerational sex in Kampala (Choudhry et al. (2014), in addition to economic and societal reasons. Even if they have everything they need, some young girls and young men still want to engage in relationships with adults because they see it as a way towards obtaining 'luxury' items, ranging from cosmetics to clothing that they could not afford on their own.

#### **4.4.2 Poverty and vulnerability**

According to Hoss and Blokland (2018), after dating boys, the girls saw their experiences with older men as a positive next step. During this time, the girls felt a significant social pressure to date older men due to the actions and expectations of their peers and the overall societal judgment. The girls' susceptibility and agency in the specific setting that determines their daily life and social position must be considered while analysing their function. The high rates of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination against women characterise the lives of girls in South Africa's most disadvantaged communities. The girls' struggle to find their place, amid unequal societal power systems that disadvantage them in various ways, are reflected in their ongoing reevaluation of their interactions with older males and in their varied perspectives and behaviours regarding the phenomena of sugar daddies. Being a symptom of larger societal structures and conventions, the 'sugar-daddy' problem is an everyday element of the girls' experiences of structural violence and gender inequality (Mesko et al., 2024). All over the world women have tapped into the economic possibilities of their sexuality, but this is often fuelled by the need to engage in "transactional sex" to support themselves and their families. Along with this view, Shafer et al. (2012) found that both male and female students emphasised the importance of class and gender in determining the nature of their transactional sexual interactions on campus. Poverty is portrayed as the primary cause of female students' participation in transactional sexual interactions, with a focus on women's limited access to economic resources or unfulfilled material aspirations. According to Njawala (2016) in contrast, men are often portrayed as economically affluent (or acting as though they are), part of a larger discourse in which successful masculinity is predicated on access to and control over money and material resources, a style of masculinity that labels "provider masculinity." Although participants view transactional sex as unavoidable and even glamorous (as shown by the impressive and high-sounding title of "Minister of Finance"), they also 'other' it and frame it via a moralistic lens.

#### **4.4.3 Substance abuse and risk**

Christison's (2014) study presented young women as participating in dangerous behaviours for various reasons, occasionally under the influence of substance misuse. This may include having several or casual relationships, drinking alcohol was substantially associated with the choice to participate in risky sexual behaviours. Risky sexual behaviours often involved the use of drugs. The discussion lacks any narratives that give a realistic and positive portrayal of female sexuality and desire, and this has also been noted as a challenge in the broader context of the studies conducted on

those who identify as heterosexuals. In other words, by arising from isolated places where female sexuality has occurred historically and culturally, how sex is built, these learners are (predictably) re-registering. Heterosexuality and sexism are the hegemonic discourses denying every business arrangement the potential to be fair or non-exploitative. However, supporting the results from (Masvawure,2011) study, there are tell-tale signals in the accounts of the study participants that, sexual transactions occurring on university campuses are about more than just expenditures of not just monetary but also material and emotional dealings that can be advantageous to both sexes.

In these transactional sexual interactions, women are not always helpless bystanders. They may consciously and aggressively pursue such ties, as revealed in a research study conducted on Zimbabwean university campuses by Gukurume (2011). However, some of the female students show signs of knowing that women, too, experience sexual desires and can feel sexual desires even though they know it is dangerous to openly admit this reality. Specifically notable are the stories students tell which show that sexual relationships exist throughout a spectrum. The lines between a business partnership and a regular romantic relationship are murky. The extent of the distinction between fair and unequal interactions is crucial and still needs to be determined. Transactional relationships that feature overlapping axes of power allow for the possibility of either spouse being exploited or abused. More evidence suggests men are more likely to be involved in transactional sexual relationships, a phenomenon that requires additional investigation (Ntsieni, 2017). In the aggregate, masculine and female student's perspectives on males and sexual interactions are constrained by a gendered framework that privileges men and their sexuality as well as the "dominant male sexual drive discourse", which perpetuates a one-dimensional and causal interpretation of sexuality and masculinity. However, even in this case, indications are that several students have concluded that the discourse is more complicated than imagined.

#### **4.4.4 Social norms and gender roles**

Jewkes et al. (2012a) found that 66% of men from various social classes had experienced and accepted the dominating connection of sexual or provider role. A traditional male concept implies that men should "provide" for women financially, which is interpreted as a justification for having sex with them. Barely 15% of the males, or one-fourth of men in provider relationships, had also paid for sexual encounters with prostitutes, while engaging in transactional sex relationships simultaneously

One-fourth of the cohort had no provider relationships. Though having a provider connection was the norm, not every man had one before. Most men (31%) neither had sex with a prostitute nor a connection with a supplier, thus they possibly saw themselves as suppliers (Jewkes et al., 2012a). These male groupings were diverse in terms of age, education, colour, income, and marital status. Their education was superior, and more people of Coloured or of Indian descent worked and made more money (the majority of the people had extremely low incomes). They were the most sexist or patriarchal cohort, being more gendered-inequality and possessing misogynistic sentiments that are antagonistic to the females, thus expressing rape myths. However, all men with "provider relationships" were conservative in their social views. On attitude scales, they received much worse gender equity scores in comparison with males who did not have a provider relationship or had never had sex with a prostitute. The men in provider relationships and those with only gender equity were not affected by having sex with a prostitute.

According to Jewkes et al. (2012a), it is difficult for men to fulfil the provider position. Behaviour that is typical and consistent with what women expect notions of reciprocity. The provider role is frequently (but not always) connected to the idea of sexual entitlement. This behaviour fits into a traditional, provider-focused masculine that dominates South Africa. This is in contrast to having sex with women while engaged in prostitution, which is a minority practice of men. The definition of "prostitution" excludes the normative 'sex' or 'being in relationships' in which one plays the provider role. The majority of men who have had intercourse with women they are in a relationship with, are also clients to prostitutes (Makhakhe, 2017). They are all more likely to have taken part in a variety of unlawful activities like prostitution which is currently illegal in South Africa. In addition, most of these males, who had also engaged in sexual activity or relationships where they played the position of provider, portrayed a purely selfish but useful masculinity. They had the strongest attitudes and psychological traits that suggested ruthlessness in interpersonal interactions with other people. Also, they were far more likely to have participated in various gender-based violent behaviours. Resultantly, they represent a serious threat to prostitutes.

In contrast, Jewkes et al. (2012a) present an alternative perspective on social norms and roles for women. According to the findings of the current study, a significant majority of the men (66%) have been involved in what can be referred to as a transactional sexual relationship. This type of relationship is based on the expectation that something should be provided, regardless of whether that expectation will be met or not. It is worth noting that this percentage is much higher compared to

the eighteen per cent of men who reported having had sex with a person they identified as a "prostitute." The current study demonstrates that the majority of the men who reported having gone through these relationships had similar experiences with their main partners. Data were gathered by inquiring about transactional sexual relationships or sexual encounters with various partners, excluding wives. Surprisingly, the study found an insignificant variation in terms of the expectation of being a provider across the different partner types.

It should be acknowledged that the manner in which the researcher formulated the research questions involved men speculating about their partners' intentions. However, this approach enabled an assessment of the men's perspectives on the situation. This evidence suggests that a considerable number of South African men hold the belief that they must financially support their partners in a romantic relationship. The findings also indicate that the men may face exclusion from such sexual partnerships if they are unable to square up to this expectation. The concept that men believe they have a right to engage in sexual activity with their partner (meaning that the woman is obligated to comply) is most evident when it comes to transactional sex with casual partners. However, this belief is also implied in other situations where men mentioned having sexual relationships with different women. The results of the measurement and the study on transactional relationships and sex can be interpreted as reflective of traditional male gender roles in relationships. From this perspective, it can be noted that men are expected to provide, while women are expected to be sexually available in return. This phenomenon has been extensively studied in African qualitative research, which has offered a comprehensive analysis of the same. All the examined social groups held this belief, although the extent to which they hold it may differ. However, it is worth noting that Black African or Coloured, low-income individuals with lower levels of education are especially prone to holding this perspective. This paper presented a discussion around the concepts of "transactional sex" and "transactional relationships."

While it is true that Black African men tend to have lower incomes, it is equally important to note that there are ethnic differences within this group. Interestingly, a significantly smaller proportion of Black African males reported engaging in sexual activities with women involved in prostitution compared to Coloured and Indian men. The occurrence of transactional sex and engaging with women in prostitution differed greatly depending on the men's income brackets, with the biggest difference having been observed for the latter. Fewer unemployed males experienced this compared to those who earned a monthly income amounting to R 500 or more. Collected data suggest that transactional

sex is present among individuals from different income brackets.

Interestingly, the difference in the occurrence of transactional sex between black men and coloured men is not significantly large. This suggests that income does not play a significant role in shaping women's expectations regarding men's provider role. Global perspectives on the sex industry suggest that individuals with lower incomes may allocate a larger portion of their earnings towards casual relationships. Similarly, the current study discovered that males with very low incomes had engaged in transactional relationships involving payment for sexual services. The findings of the current study suggest that research on women's encounters with sex commodities in Southern Africa may not directly apply to investigations on men's involvement. Some men perceive their role as providers and believe that, in return for their efforts, women are obligated to provide them with sexual favours and submission. The observation was made among individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, with a particular prevalence among males of Black African and Coloured descent. This finding has important implications for intervention strategies. This implies that efforts meant to address transactional sex among men should focus on shifting their self-perception rather than simply attempting to eliminate the practice. While there may be similarities between engaging in sexual activities with a woman involved in prostitution and other encounters where men are involved, most men tend to establish a distinct boundary between the two. Based on the current research, it appears that having sexual relations with a prostitute may appear to be comparable to participating in a one-time transactional sexual relationship or engaging in casual sex. However, it is important to note that these two scenarios differ significantly when considering the aspect of building and maintaining relationships.

A study conducted by Potgieter et al. (2012) found that most of the surveyed taxi drivers perceived the strong connection between themselves and the young women they transported as a positive social advantage for both groups. Both partners have exerted effort, in line with the extensive research and ongoing discussions regarding the financial value of transactional relationships from both genders. As discussed in previous sections, there is an increasing amount of evidence indicating that males experience the pressure to uphold an active sexual life and showcase their sexual abilities through engaging in multiple partnerships.

For instance, a recent study conducted among urban men in South Africa indicated that engaging in sex with multiple sexual partners was seen as a sign of masculine strength. Studies involving local

teenagers have confirmed this view. Also, female taxi passengers often discuss the social benefits they receive from their partners' occupations. The advantages of a 'taxi queen' for taxi drivers may not only lie in the convenience of having a sexual companion readily available but also in the chance to demonstrate their masculinity.

#### **4.4.5 Risky behaviour**

From Brink (2012) perspective, having anal sex without using a condom, frequent partner changes, the prevalence of STIs, not knowing your HIV status, apathy regarding risk, men having sex with other men (MSM) who are HIV positive, the internet, social discrimination, the existence of female sexual partners, and substance misuse are some of the primary dangers of risky behaviour. Male students who engage in male-to-male intercourse at Stellenbosch University have a basic understanding of HIV. Nevertheless, it is crucial to consistently develop fundamental yet important HIV-related knowledge levels among MSM and the rest of the students at higher education institutions. Greater levels of knowledge about HIV may encourage individuals to pursue health-seeking behaviours, and if effective treatment is taken into consideration, it may contribute to the prevention of HIV transmission.

In a South African higher education institution, students who engage in sex with male partners participate in sexual behaviour that increases their chance of contracting HIV and other STIs. Infections spread through sexual contact. Recognising risky sexual behaviours in students such as MSM uncovered in this study could result in the creation and use of evidence-based HIV preventative programmes developed to meet the requirements of the most vulnerable communities in terms of sexual health, thus decreasing potential channels for HIV and STI transmission in the South African student community, including MSM. Understanding views about condom use also observed social norms; according to this study, condom usage expectation and perceived behavioural control elements are beneficial to our understanding of planned behaviour, which has to be studied more thoroughly. Awareness of the purposes behind condom use and the TPB's synthetic truth should be upgraded. Additional research into condom use is necessary because it was discovered to have a negative correlation with practicing safe sex (Brink, 2012). In addition, perceived behavioural control was not a factor discovered to have a strong correlation with the intention to use condoms.

#### 4.4.5.1 HIV and AIDS

In her research on gender and HIV and AIDS, Njawala (2016) specifically examines how communication on HIV and AIDS is carried out among Black students who are in heterosexual relationships at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus. The study found that there could be a higher chance of HIV and AIDS transmission among heterosexual partners when there is a lack of interaction or when the communication is influenced by gender. The research also shows that many people have a misunderstanding about the concept of gender and what it truly means. This suggests that students' knowledge and communication about gender and HIV and AIDS, based on equal gender roles in heterosexual relationships, serve as significant motivations for implementing preventive measures against HIV and AIDS. The likelihood of partners not discussing issues around HIV and AIDS is increased due to the patriarchal nature of heterosexual relationships.

Gender inequality is perpetuated through various means, such as religion, culture, and economic inequalities. Consequently, men frequently hold the belief that they are superior to women in sexual matters and therefore engage in unsafe sexual practices despite being aware of the potential health risks to which they expose themselves and their partners. Most university students claim that they engage in conversations about HIV and AIDS with their partners, but regrettably, this is not always the case. In many instances, it has been observed that conversations regarding HIV and AIDS and safer sex practices are predominantly initiated by men. The study's findings also showed that when people engage in health programmes when women are empowered, when gender socialisation is considered, and when males are involved in HIV and AIDS prevention programmes, it can result in positive changes. The steps mentioned above are important with respect to putting an end to discrimination against women and enhancing HIV and AIDS-related communication between sexual partners.

Findings from Anderson (2011) study also indicate that some students may be engaging in oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with their teachers. However, many more are believed to be engaging in less extreme forms of sexualised relationships with their instructors; such relationships include dating, kissing, sharing nude photos with, and being touched sexually by, teachers. It seems some students are doing it for romantic reasons, while others are doing it for financial gain. However, between 2% and 7% of the students reported experiencing some form of sexual violence at the hands of a teacher. This violence includes rape, attempted rape, and being physically forced to engage in a sexual activity. According to Masvawure (2011), male students at the University of Zimbabwe are under intense

pressure to engage in sexual activity to establish and assert their manhood. Because of this reason, sex is the primary focus of most of their interactions and not platonic or other types of connection. These actions expose students to contracting HIV infection as they are pressured to prove their manhood through sex and competing with the ‘blessers.

#### **4.4.5.2 Sexual violence**

In their study, Potgieter et al. (2012) found that the relationship between taxi drivers and ‘taxi queens’ was mostly transactional, with drivers exchanging money and their social standing for sexual favours. It is concerning that over 40% of the respondents believed that a female could not decline having sex with a taxi driver if he gave her a gift. In other words, while the participants appeared to have internalised aspects of the present human rights discourse, including knowledge of women's rights and the need for males to oppose a violent identity, they did not question the conditions underpinning the transaction. Some local reports concluded that the common belief that a gift is the same as having sex indicates the widespread acceptance of unequal transactional relationships within the transportation business. This socially expected function of presents has the potential to normalise and legitimate undesirable, unsafe, or coercive sexual behaviours.

Interestingly, most participants rejected the use of overt aggression by a taxi driver if the ‘taxi queen’ did not want to have sex with him. However, the accounts of the ‘taxi queens’ contradicted this view (Potgieter et al., 2012). This assumption is undermined by the common place association of gifts with sexual encounters, which inadvertently creates the expectation of a proprietorial right to the recipient's body and may justify a punitive and/or coercive response in the event of resistance. Thus, the fact that nearly half of the participants thought that parents were too afraid to intervene in the relationship may be further illustrative of the power that the taxi driver commands, not only in relation to his ‘taxi queen’ but also within the broader community, as was also found in an earlier local study among ‘taxi queens’. As a result, it appears that taxi drivers themselves were aware of and contributed to the public's portrayal of them as a sexual threat. The normative terms of the transactional relationship undoubtedly play a role in this kind of power imbalance. However, one must also consider the impact of different factors on this matter. For instance, the influence of taxi owners or drivers in impoverished communities can be significant due to their access to higher income and assets. Additionally, their connections to larger power systems, such as organised crime, can further shape the situation.

Although respondents agreed that the sexual connection benefited both parties, the taxi driver also

appeared to reap the benefits of social capital in terms of increased prestige and influence within the community. The stigmatisation of girls who ride with taxi drivers is exemplified by the widespread belief that ‘taxi queens’ engage in sexual activity with their drivers. The taxi drivers and the public had a decidedly unfavourable impression of the taxi queen. Most respondents averred that taxi drivers with taxi queens were respected, but only a small minority agreed that the taxi queens were a good career choice for young women (Potgieter et al., 2012). By painting the young woman as the problematic partner while being the younger and weaker of the two, the taxi-driver participants seemed to lend credence to the widespread stigmatisation of the ‘taxi queen’. This result is consistent with what has been found in other studies focusing on taxi drivers.

#### **4.5 Summary**

In this chapter, data collected from the scoping review was presented. A matrix table presented the thesis and dissertations selected from South African universities and that met the inclusion criteria. The results that were presented thematically were: peer pressure, poverty and vulnerability, social norms and gender roles, substance abuse and risk, HIV and AIDS and sexual violence.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of data elicited from the scoping review. The discussion seeks to answer the two research questions: How have the post-graduate theses engaged with transactional sexual relationships (definition, types of transactional relationships, samples which have been studied, strengths and limitations)? What are the findings of the post-graduate theses about the students and transactional sex relationships (motivations, perceived benefits, perceived negative outcomes or consequences)? More importantly, data is discussed in line with the themes presented in the research study.

Transactional sexual interactions are greatly influenced by the socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts in which they occur. Several qualitative research studies have testified that young people frequently engage in transactional sex when courting, dating, and having fun (Christison's, 2014). Inequalities in gender and economic statuses and periodic financial needs all have an impact on transactional sex. Lack of government funding, families' incapacity to support their children and unstable employment markets are a few more reasons why students enter the transactional sex industry, and some young women are inclined towards dating guys who can attend to their financial needs and buy them expensive gifts.

#### 5.2 Discussion

##### 5.2.1 Peer-pressure

Christison's (2014) study shows participants' diverse comments. Participants shared their own experiences as well as group perspectives. Peer pressure was one of the explanations given, as these young ladies wanted to join in with the "in the crowd." Another reason was that they were followers rather than leaders; several participants wanted to emulate the behaviour of their risk-taking peers. Peer pressure is defined by Miri (2023) as the process by which members of society shape an individual's opinions or life goals. According to Moldes et al. (2019), peer pressure is the want to fit in and feel like a group member. Direct peer influence is peer pressure. By modifying their

opinions and behaviours to reflect the influence of the group or individual, people might be persuaded to follow their peers. Most of the time, the family influences children's behaviour; therefore, the family structure plays an important role in building a fellow member. In this case, financial support can influence students to engage in transactional sex.

Social media is primarily responsible for initiating peer pressure and is heavily impacted by Western economic accomplishments. Social media demonstrates the pleasure of being prosperous, attractive, and youthful. The 'sugar daddies' then go out with younger women to make themselves feel younger. To impress their peers with the popular blessed lifestyle, young women post photographs of their lavish lifestyles on social media, which frequently pressures other women to change who they are and undergo certain changes. The majority of impacted women are female university students whose parents or other adult guardians are not monitoring them.

According to Miri (2023), peer pressure is a force that may be exceedingly challenging to manage, particularly during a person's first year of college. It can occasionally benefit a person's life, though it can do more harm than good. Young women and men who participate in transactional sex are influenced by peer pressure and even parental pressure. This is due to adolescents' propensity to adopt standards set forth by society and supported by their peers. A thorough qualitative study carried out in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Sierra Leone, as well as Cameroon found that the majority of young people who engaged in transactional sex did so because of the peer-pressure to purchase luxury items like jewellery and expensive clothing (Miri, 2023).

This is further substantiated by findings from Ntsieni's scoping review which established that transactional sex was prevalent at the University of Venda for several reasons, including peer pressure and a shortage of recreational opportunities (Ntsieni, 2017). It is assumed that peers affect students because they have turned most likely to what their friends do.

### **5.2.2 Poverty and vulnerability**

After moving on from dating boys, the girls saw their experiences with older guys as a positive next step (Hoss & Blokland, 2018). The girls felt significant social pressure to date older men due to the flamboyant actions and expectations of their peers and overall societal judgement. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination against women characterise the girls' lives in South

Africa's most disadvantaged communities.

Poverty is just one of the commonest reasons why young women, typically among the most disadvantaged elements of society, engage in transactional sex. According to Moldes et al. (2019), poverty is a situation when a person's basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, are not provided. In South Africa, poverty manifests itself through a lack of access to employment, higher learning, and money, and women are more likely to experience this phenomenon. This is the main reason why women from various backgrounds find it difficult to support themselves and eventually turn to transactional sex. To survive poverty, students participate in sex to get money to meet their basic needs. The struggle to meet one's necessities, such as clothing, food, and shelter, has frequently been seen as the main factor influencing transactional sex. As a result, vulnerable women are compelled to engage in what has been termed "survival sex". Most adolescent girls in Uganda perceived poverty as the main incentive for engaging in transactional sex (Choudhry et al., 2015).

Evidence presented by Choudhry et al. (2015) demonstrates that the possibility of exchanging sex for a gift becomes extremely high in communities where socio-economic disparities and uncertainties are common. Arguably, persons who engage in transactional sex seem to be hailing from some of the planet's poorest regions. This claim has been supported by numerous studies, particularly those conducted in Africa and some regions of Asia (Campbell 2017). For Campbell (2017), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are designed to end world hunger and promote development for all people. Although financial issues can be resolved through transactional sexual relationships, this is not a long-term solution; once a relationship is ended by the "sugar mommy" or "sugar daddy," the advantages also vanish. Along with this view, another review conducted by Shefer et al. (2012) found that both male and female students emphasised the importance of class and gender in determining the nature of their transactional sexual interactions on the university campus. Poverty is portrayed as the primary cause for female students' participation in transactional sexual interactions, with a focus on women's limited access to economic resources and unfulfilled material aspirations.

According to South African Statistics (Stats (2020), with unemployment remaining high at about 30%, nearly half of the young people in South Africa have no employment and are enrolled in training institutions or attending school. The groups that are most vulnerable to poverty are women and young people, especially Black Africans (Stats, 2020). Young ladies resorting to older men as

sexual partners often called "blessers" or "sugar daddies", is one response to this economic reality. These guys supply tangible goods that the ladies cannot purchase independently. According to Hoss and Blokland (2018), this can happen as young women attempt to sustain committed relationships with males who are closer to them in terms of age. When the age difference between partners ranges between five and nine years, the relationship is typically viewed as age disparate. When the age difference is 10 years or greater, the relationship is considered intergenerational.

Transactional sex is frequently used by young women with limited access to resources to help them find jobs, improve their schooling, obtain respect from their peers, and take advantage of business opportunities. According to Campbell (2017), Shefer et al. (2011) and Van Schoor (2022), young women often accept presents or financial aid from males in exchange for sexual favours; this often occurs frequently and is usually done without use of condoms. According to Jewkes et al. (2012a), men sometimes physically assault and rape women in these transactional sexual relationships and because these relationships provide income, the women frequently endure the sexual or physical abuse.

Material resources and the exchange of sex for money have diverse connotations in various sexual partnerships. In various South African cultural situations, secondary and casual sexual relationships appear to be more motivated by transactional benefits than primary ones. Economic and financial power distribution may influence the dynamics of sexual decision-making within primary partnerships. These conversations inevitably influence far more complicated social conversations like having children, trust, affection, and commitment (Jewkes et al., 2012b).

### **5.2.3 Social norms and gender roles**

In many cultures, women's sexuality is revered and used as a source of power, transactional sex then becomes a tool for using this power as stated by Njawala (2016) also found that women in Ghana are expected to engage in transactional sexual relationships to advance their social position and obtain men's approval. The gender stereotype that views women's sexuality as a good that can be exchanged for favours replicates this line of thinking. This position serves as a driving force for the practice itself. However, an opposing viewpoint claims that women engaging in transactional sex lessen their ability to negotiate and this has negative outcomes, such as subpar academic performance.

One factor contributing to some young people's decision to engage in transactional sexual relationships is a desire to attain social advancement. Anderson (2011) asserts that research shows that around 18% of female university students in Nigeria looked forward to receiving sexual favours to satisfy their social pressure. In Ghana, the lack of feasible economic prospects for women is another factor influencing their decisions to engage in transactional sexual activities. Young, financially stable women also used transactional sex to buy opulent goods and boost their social standing by joining exclusive social networks. In sub-Saharan African countries today, the need for modernity is mostly financed by transactional sex, often called consumer sex.

According to a second comprehensive inquiry conducted by (Masvawure, 2010), 'sugar daddies' provided students at the University of Zimbabwe with off-campus meals, technology, fashionable apparel, and beauty treatments. A review conducted by Jewkes et al. (2012b) found that 66% of the men from various social classes had experienced and accepted the dominating connection of sexual or provider relationships, a traditional male concept that men should "provide" for women and interpreted this as a justification for having sex. Barely 15% of the males, or one-fourth of the men in provider relationships, had also paid for sexual encounters with prostitutes, that is, the men who performed both engaging in transactional sex and engaging with prostitutes. Most of the men had had relationships with prostitution-related women. One-fourth of the cohort had no provider relationships. This behaviour fits well into a traditional, provider-focused masculine tradition that dominates South Africa. This contrasts sharply with having sex with women, while engaging in prostitution, a practice known to the minority of the men.

However, the scoping review from Jewkes et al. (2012b) gives a different view of social norms and gender roles; 66 % of the men had engaged in what can be referred to as a transactional sexual interaction, in which they believed that the relationship or sexual activity was predicated on provider anticipation (whether fulfilled or not), more significantly, more than 18% of whom have had sex with a person they identified as "a prostitute." Even though most Black African men earn less than the average income, there were ethnic differences, with a fewer proportion of Black African men reporting having engaged in a sexual activity with a prostitution-client than Coloured and Indian men. The discrepancy was highest for the latter, even though the prevalence of both transactional sex and sex with a woman engaged in prostitution varied significantly across the men's income levels.

#### 5.2.4 HIV and AIDS

Njawala (2016) examined the link between gender and HIV and AIDS among Black students involved in heterosexual relationships at the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study indicated that there may be an increased risk of HIV and AIDS transmission between heterosexual partners if there is a lack of gendered communication. The research also demonstrates that the notion of gender and its meaning are widely misunderstood. This indicates that a strong stimulus for HIV and AIDS preventive measures is the students' familiarity with gender and HIV and AIDS communication, and this is founded on gender equality in heterosexual partnerships. The patriarchal nature of heterosexual relationships makes it more improbable that partners will discuss issues around HIV and AIDS. Transactional sex has become a significant health issue in sub-Saharan Africa. It is one of the most dangerous sexual conduct patterns that young people exhibit. Young people frequently engage in transactional sex, which is directly related to gender-based violence, drug misuse, and HIV. The money, gifts, and favours are frequently given or received in exchange for sexual favours. Prostitution or sex work, which is instant sex for money, differs from transactional sex. Scholars from all over the world have differing opinions on what exactly qualifies as transactional sex. According to Choudhry et al. (2015), transactional sex is frequently referred to as the trade-in of cash or tangible presents for sexual favours. Other scholars have defined it differently, perceiving it as trading drugs and alcohol for sex.

The need to trade goods and money for sex drives transactional sexual relationships in sub-Saharan Africa as well. These connections are recognised as impacting the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to Brink (2012), the potential for receiving something positive in return drives this type of sexual interaction, which is frequently referred to as transactional sex. Transactional sex has been identified as the primary reason for women's vulnerability to sexual exploitation and gender-based abuse in circumstances where they might otherwise have abstained from such a practice.

One of the biggest health dangers in the world today is HIV infection. It is estimated that 33% of all the new HIV infections in 2013 were contracted by females aged between 15 and 24 years. The statistics depict young women as being twice as likely to be impacted by the condition as young males (Choudhry et al., 2015). Women are more susceptible to developing infections. One of the main factors contributing to the spread of HIV and AIDS has been identified as transactional sex. The majority of the "sugar daddies" have several sexual partners, which increases their risk of getting infected by the virus and their propensity towards spreading it to others. Malaria, HIV and

AIDS, and other illnesses are the emphasis of SDG 6 (Campbell, 2017). Students are not concerned about contracting the virus; they only care about getting rich soon and leading a luxurious lifestyle.

Young women find it a challenge to demand safe sex because of the power dynamics playing out in transactional sexual relationships. The women who are self-sufficient rely less on men, which reduces the frequency of their engagement in dangerous sexual conduct. Additionally, such women have much freedom to decide whom to have sex with and how they want to have it. However, poverty-stricken young women commonly find themselves in abusive circumstances due to the 'sugar daddy' disproportionate power playing out in the power system. Krisch et al. (2019) also indicated that some students may engage in oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with their teachers for better marks. Still, many more female students engage in less extreme sexualised relationships with their instructors, such as dating, kissing, sharing nude photos, and being touched sexually by lectures.

### **5.2.5 Educational achievement**

Intergenerational transactional relationships are a common feature due to the prevalence of transactional relationships and the unequal power dynamics existing at universities, and students are at a significant risk of developing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Transactional sex and the chance of contracting HIV are intricately linked (Miri,2023). Scholars have portrayed the university campus as a hotbed for STIs and a place where individuals explore their sexuality. In age-diverse transactional relationships, toxic sexual activities, such as non-condom use and casual sex with concurrent sexual connections, are frequent and increase the risk of contracting HIV.

The urge to acquire consumer items like the most recent smart-phones and designer clothes and the need for financial gain, prestige attainment, and other motivations drive many transactional relationships (Masvawure, 2010; Masvawure, 2011; Shefer et al., 2012). However, this investigation's scope goes beyond the materiality of transactional interactions. This draws on a growing body of research that challenges the idea that relationships are either transactional or normative. Literature suggests that the lines between the two types of connections are blurred. ction Aid in 2015 emphasised that "sex-for-grades" or transactional sex was common in Liberian universities. The study reiterated that female students' requests for sex are a common feature in the Liberian educational system. These relationships occasionally entail lecturers manipulating female

students through actual or perceived compulsion. Indeed, sexual harassment is among many universities' most pervasive social ills even outside of South Africa. For example, Van Schoor (2022b) noted that most female students fail their exams due to victimisation after declining their male lecturers' sexual advances during classes. A British Broadcasting Cooperation in 2019 investigative documentary film from the same year also exposed the prevalence of "sex for grades" connections at West African universities (Moldes et al.,2019). This also replicates itself in Zimbabwe, where many students struggled to survive as the country's economic crisis grew, leading to an environment where transactional relationships were started and carried out (Masvawure, 2011).

Shefer et al. (2011) defined sexual harassment as any unwanted sexual advances, immoral intimacy, and any other physical or verbal behaviour of a sexual nature; however, the term seems imprecise and open to several interpretations. Sexual harassment was explained as unwelcome sexual advances or expectations for sexual favours, as well as other physical or verbal attitudes of a sexual nature (Choudhry et al., 2015). Sex for grades is categorised as intermediate on the continuum of volition created by Save the Children to understand the reasons for students' participation in transactional sex (Masvawure, 2010). This range was referred to by Save the Children as "economically rational sex." The line separating transactional sex from forced sex is blurred by sexuality within this spectrum.

Female students engage in these sexual interactions by exerting their agency through their desired sexuality and the need to acquire "erotic capital" (Frieslaar, 2019), which is essential for obtaining high grades. Female students are exercising their tactical agency by employing transactional sex to achieve lucrative grades, and this has assisted them navigate the constrictive university learning environments. Most female students participate in transactional relationships to increase their chances of receiving high grades in exams, assignments, and class tests. Moldes et al. (2019) discovered that many female students who date their male lecturers are likely to pass their exams with extremely good grades, thus confirming this observation.

In order to obtain lucrative grades, female students are using transactional sex to exercise their tactical agency. This has helped them navigate restrictive learning environments at universities. Most female students engage in transactional relationships to improve their chances of passing examinations, assignments, and in-class tests. This observation was supported by Moldes et al. (2019), who found that many female students who dated their male lecturers were likely to achieve

excellent grades in their examinations.

### **5.2.6 Structural forces to transactional sex relationships**

Structuration and agency are the two major concepts that have had a conservative influence on discourses on transactional sex. Structuration refers to structural factors that affect human decision-making and compel people to make decisions they might otherwise be expected to avoid. On the other hand, agency recognises a person's ability to make decisions (Huysamen & Boonzaier, 2018). According to the agency approach, young women are logical beings who can exploit their sexuality to manipulate affluent older men to their financial and material advantage. For instance, research in Tanzanian has revealed that young women believed that it was a blessing that they were born female since their femininity allowed them to use their sexuality to gain pleasure and financial benefit. Shefer et al. (2011) thought that males demonstrated 'stupidity' for paying for goods (vagas or sex) that they could not take away.

A quantitative study conducted by Wusu and Amoo (2014) on students at Lagos State University in Nigeria revealed that undergraduate students frequently engaged in heterosexual behaviours. The study demonstrated the prevalence of transactional sex, underscoring that women were likelier than males to partake in it. The interviews revealed that poverty, dysfunctional families, and the need to make quick money were to blame for the high occurrence of risky sexual behaviours. Transactional sex hardly ever involves the use of condoms or other safety measures. The respondents who claimed to have done so were nearly double as likely to engage in transactional intercourse as those who never had unprotected sex. Students renting homes without families had a higher probability of having sex than those living with families.

A different qualitative study conducted in Ghana found that female university students said that they were not just victims of transactional sex as they had made difficult, deliberate decisions that led to their partnerships. They said they did not want to get married and were only in short-term relationships with their partners just for financial gain. Despite this reality, they stayed away from discussing these relationships with their families or most of their friends out of concern that it would harm their chances of entering marriage later in life. Although they frequently thought their spouses were empathetic, they often used gift-givers to avoid being emotionally attached and, occasionally, as a substitute for parental affection. Thanks to the ties, including clothing, fast food, and electronics, they could purchase the accoutrements of a wealthy culture. To fulfil "wants" rather than "needs"

for survival, their motivation was primarily economic. They were also motivated by the more fulfilling experiences these partnerships allowed them to have, such as the ability to travel and pursue their education and the sense of security, respect, and "upperclass" that come with being a part of a daring group of elite women (Gukurume, 2011).

### **5.2.7 Substance abuse and risky behaviour**

Christison's (2014) study noted that young women participate in dangerous behaviour for various reasons; occasionally, they do it under the influence of substance misuse. Like having several or casual relationships, drinking alcohol was substantially associated with the choice to participate in risky sexual behaviour, which often involves the use of drugs (Christison, 2014). The discussion lacks any narratives that give a realistic and positive portrayal of the female sexuality and desire; in the broader context, this has also been noted as a challenge. In other words, by arising from isolated places where the female sexuality has occurred historically and culturally, how sex is inbuilt (and how female transactional sex is unfavourable), these learners are (predictably) re-registering heterosexuality and sexism as the hegemonic discourses that deny every business arrangement the potential to be fair or non-exploitative. However, supporting these results, Masvawure (2011) indicated that there are tell-tale signals in the accounts of study participants of sexual transactions on campus are about more than just expenditures of not just monetary tokens, but also material and emotional dealings that can be advantageous to both sexes.

In these sexual interactions, women are not always helpless bystanders. They may consciously and aggressively pursue such ties. Research conducted by Gukurume (2011) focused on a university campus in Zimbabwe, where some female students showed signs of knowing that women, too, feel and experience sexual desire and even know it is not dangerous to openly admit this reality. Specifically notable are the stories students tell to show how relationships exist throughout a spectrum. The lines between a business partnership and a friendship or a regular romantic relationship are murky. The extent to which the distinction between fair and unequal interactions is crucial ought to be established. Transactional relationships that feature overlapping axes of power allow for the possibility of either spouse being exploited or abused. More evidence suggests that men are more likely to be involved in transactional relationships, phenomenon that requires additional investigation.

Students who engage in high-risk sexual behaviours (HRSBs) risk contracting STIs, including HIV, and experiencing unintended pregnancy. The 15-24-years age range has been highlighted by the World Health Organization as having a higher risk of contracting STIs (Taylor et al., 2022). Since they are not under their parents' immediate supervision, are part of a migratory population that moves around frequently and are likely to be in their years of prime sexual activity, students at higher learning institutions (HLIs) may bear a higher risk of contracting STIs. According to reports, young adults are engaging in HRSBs but do not seriously take the risk this poses to their health. Unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, frequent partner changes, transactional sex, alcohol and substance abuse, sex while intoxicated, and in rare cases, forced sexual experiences, are among the HRSBs that young adults reportedly experienced. Because of inadequate sexual health education and restricted access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care, risk perception may be low despite using HRSBs (Smit et al., 2006). Unwanted pregnancies, an increased chance of unsafe abortions, an increased risk of contracting STIs (Christison), many of which have long-term repercussions, and a higher risk of contracting HIV, are among the short-term and long-term impacts of HRSBs among young adults.

Higher learning institution (HLI) students may be experiencing a higher risk of developing HRSBs than other young adults. For secondary school students, campus life is "free" from immediate parental monitoring or control by teachers. Many students at HLIs have access to student financing and/or grants, thus enabling them to be financially independent of their guardians and parents and to be free from control by parents and teachers (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & tesfay Asgedom, 2016). Students in HLIs are particularly experimental with sex, alcohol, and other drugs as they attempt to establish their independence and a sense of the self. Students in higher education institutions are aged between 18 and 25 years, where substance use is thought to be at its highest point, and research has shown that behaviours picked up in childhood impact behaviour during adulthood (Mcharo et al., 2021).

Alcoholism and the use of other drugs may be influenced by older peers who have already adopted this conduct or in transgenerational or transactional relationships, and these are the older partners, especially men. Students are particularly vulnerable to excessive drinking since they might not have had the freedom to do so when they were living with parents, and they may also be vulnerable to "peer pressure" compelling them to fit in and be noticed by peers (Gukurume, 2011).

Several studies have reported HRSBs in college students. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of HRSBs among HLIs students was observed to be ranging from 40% to 75.2% for multiple sexual partners, from 29.2% to 62% for unprotected sex, and from 58.5% for sexual activity, as opposed to 10% to 15% reported in North America, China, and Europe (Mcharo et al., 2021). Male and female students in Sub-Saharan Africa experience more STIs and unintended pregnancies than their counterparts in other regions due to not practicing safe sex. Several studies on sexual practice among students still show low levels of necessary preventive behaviours, such as regular use of condoms, delayed sexual debut, reduced sexual partners, testing for STIs or HIV, and refraining from substance abuse (Mcharo et al., 2021).

### **5.3 Summary of the study**

This study reviewed South African post-graduate theses and analysed how they have studied transactional sexual relationships within the context of South African university students. The first part of the study reviewed and described how the post-graduate theses have engaged with transactional sexual relationships, while the second part explored the findings of the theses regarding transactional sexual relationships involving university students. The specific objectives of the study were: To explore how transactional sexual relationships are defined in the post-graduate theses; to determine the different types of transactional sexual relationships involving students within the context of universities; to explore the samples that have been studied; to review the strengths and limitations of these studies conducted on transactional sexual relationships; to explore and analyse what motivates South African university students to practice transactional sexual relationships; to explore and analyse what South African university students perceive to be the benefits of being in transactional sexual relationships; and to explore and analyse what South African university students perceive as the negative outcomes of being in transactional sexual relationships.

The methodology chapter provided a detailed explanation of the methodology and methods employed in the execution of the present study. The chapter explored the various techniques employed in the execution of the data collection, processing, and analysis exercises. The scoping review that underpinned this study followed the methodological framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) who suggested a five-stage approach which guided the entire study. These stages include identifying the research question, finding the relevant studies, selecting the

appropriate studies, organising and summarising the data, and finally, compiling, summarising, and reporting the results. Recommendations from other researchers further complemented the approach. The framework of the current study was chosen and designed to ensure that the research is conducted transparently and rigorously and can be replicated.

A systematic scoping review was implemented to collect data for this study. Therefore, this approach allowed this research paper to provide an overview of the literature and explore the South African post-graduate theses that focused on student transactional sexual relationships. This approach was conducted through the desktop method; therefore, it does not require the researcher to collect primary or first-hand data, thus allowing a review of publicly available post-graduate theses. Exclusion and inclusion criteria were utilised to select the post-graduate theses.

#### **5.4 Implications of the study**

The findings from the study demonstrate that limited resources, combined with increasing student enrollment, drive many individuals, particularly female students, to engage in the campus-based "transactional sexual relationships" as a coping and survival strategy. Within a framework of scarcity and prolonged economic turmoil, students are susceptible to engaging in transactional sex to obtain the limited resources, including favourable academic performance, housing, and educational materials. Hence, the presence of a campus-based sexual economy allows students to strategically navigate the existential dilemmas characterising the campus environment (Gukurume, 2011). The present analysis posits that the transactional sex characterising campus life is sired by intricate and gender-specific dynamics, encompassing the construction, perceptions, and lived experiences of the individuals involved. Transactional sexual relationships often stem from individuals seeking material benefits, striving for social status, and desiring consumer goods such as contemporary mobile phones and high-end fashion items, among other examples (Masvawure, 2008; Shefer et al., 2012).

While sexual harassment may be subject to varying interpretations, Shumba and Matina (2002) have defined it as encompassing unsolicited sexual advances, inappropriate intimacy, and other forms of violent verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature. According to Shumba and Matina (2002), sexual harassment is a concept that encompasses unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other forms of verbal or physical behaviour that embody sexual connotations. Similarly, the concept of transactional sex was formulated by Luke and Kurz (2002) to describe a

sexual relationship that entails a reciprocal arrangement, often involving the exchange of material possessions and a monetary compensation or gift. The existing body of literature detailing transactional sexual relationships in Africa stresses the importance of sexual activity and financial transactions within these relationships (Gukurume, 2022; Luke & Kurz, 2002). Within the context of this scholarship, it is widely believed that the primary forces driving sexual transactions are monetary gain and sexual gratification.

However, Masvawure et al. (2015) posit that transactional sexual relationships encompass a broader scope beyond a simple exchange of sexual services for monetary compensation between the involved parties. The dichotomy between sex and money in transactional sex insufficiently explains the various other types of benefits exchanged by the parties involved in sexual transactions (Masvawure, 2010). This essentialist argument oversimplifies the intricate nature of transactional sexual relationships within university settings.

### **5.5 Recommendations for policy and practice**

1. Awareness campaigns should be implemented to educate students about the dangers of engaging in transactional sex. Also, health talks should be provided through the printing of pamphlets that communicate messages that censure transactional sex.
2. Universities should consider providing more easily accessible student grants to all students to help cater for student needs during their stay at university.
3. Psychological services should be accessible to students to help them deal with the pressures and psychosocial stressors that may come with varsity life.

### **5.6 Limitations of the study**

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this scoping review and reflect on how they might have influenced the outcome of this study. The sample used in this study was restricted to students, theses, and dissertations from 10 South African universities. Only theses published after 2010 were included. The study excluded journals, reports, or other types of information that were published before that time. The purpose of including theses and dissertations from reputable South African universities in this scoping review was to enhance the credibility and relevance of the outcome. By specifically selecting universities known for producing high-quality research that is recognised worldwide, the researcher ensured the reliability and significance of the findings. However, it is important to mention that there might be other universities and sources, such as journals, which

could have conducted research and discovered findings that could contribute valuable insights into our understanding of transactional sex relationships involving university students. In their study, Arksey and O'Malley (2005) highlighted the limitations of scoping review studies. For instance, they highlighted that the number of sources generated can be substantial, which poses a challenge in deciding the extent of data to be incorporated and the level of depth or detail required for the analysis. The reason for this research study being a mini dissertation is that it is part of the researcher's requirements for the conferment of a master's degree. As a result, the time frame for the research was limited. The researcher narrowed down the inclusion criteria to make the study more manageable. However, had the research topic been a product of collaborative effort, additional sources of information could have been included, thus allowing for a longer period needed to complete the project.

The researcher needed to strike a balance between extracting detailed data and working within a limited timeframe. The limitations of this research were due to the researcher being single, which means that there were constraints on both the time available for the research and the breadth of the study. These limitations could potentially impact the researcher's overall understanding of the topic and the extent to which it would be possible to review the existing literature. Additionally, determining the appropriate amount of data to be included proved to be difficult and challenging. This was similar to the difficulty associated with integrating qualitative and quantitative data.

The keywords used for searching the databases were perceived to be inclusive of all the relevant data. However, finding the information was a challenge due to the unclear and disputed nature of transactional sexual relationships. The scoping review was based only on students as samples, whereas transactional sex relationships can occur at any age. Limited studies on students particularly in the South African context were found and the majority of the studies which were accessed focused particularly on females rather than males. The theses and dissertations published before the year 2010 were excluded; this was done to ensure that only relevant data were collected for the current scoping review. The scoping review only included studies that were published in English because translating the theses and dissertations into other languages would be taxing in terms of time and money. This means that important research conducted in other languages might have been excluded. Due to the language bias, this paper only analysed studies that are predominantly written in English. The other limitation of this study is that the researcher was unable to determine if the findings could be generalised to different situations.

It is recommended that scoping reviews be evaluated by a minimum of two researchers who should review them independently at the start, middle, and end of the abstract review process.

### **5.7 Recommendations for further research**

1. Future research should pay attention to students outside the university set-up, for example, high schools.
2. Research should be conducted on lecturers' views concerning transactional sex for high grades or marks.
3. Prospective research should look at the community's views on transactional sexual relationships involving students.
4. Future research should focus on research that will examine the perspective of males on transactional sexual relationships.
5. Thorough research should focus on understanding transactional sex relationships phenomenon in depth and how those involved in these relationships can be best assisted economically, physically (health wise), psychologically and socially considering the South African climate and context.

### **5.8 Summary**

The final chapter gave a discussion to the research findings. Peer pressure was one of the explanations given, as these young ladies wanted to join in with the "in crowd." Another reason was that they were followers rather than leaders; several participants wanted to emulate the behaviour of their risk-taking peers. Poverty was the main reason why women from various backgrounds find it difficult to support themselves and eventually turn to transactional sex. Social norms and gender roles also influenced transactional sexual relationships, in many cultures, women's sexuality is revered and used as a source of power, transactional sex then becomes a tool for using this power. Young people frequently engage in transactional sex, which is directly related to gender-based violence, drug misuse, and HIV. A summary of the study was also given. From the implications of the study analysis posits that the transactional sex characterising campus life is sired by intricate and gender-specific dynamics, encompassing the construction, perceptions, and lived experiences of the individuals involved. On policy recommendations the study recommended awareness campaigns and considering student grants. The study was limited as documents reviewed were from 2010 to current and from South African universities only. The study excluded journals, reports, or other

types of information that were published before that time. Further research should investigate youths outside university set up and also consider the views of the community on transactional sexual relationships. Furthermore, research should focus on finding solutions which are specific to the climate and context of South Africa if they are to curb the risk and the prevalence of the transactional sexual relationships amongst young people.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Ethical clearance



09-09-2022  
Miss Nokubonga Charlot Chauque (217001116)  
School Of Applied Human Sc  
Pietermaritzburg

Dear Miss Nokubonga Charlot Chauque,

**Original application number:** 00018358  
**Project title:** South African postgraduate theses on student transactional sex relationships: A scoping review

#### Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on 06 August 2022, your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,



**Prof Johanna Hendrina Buitendach**  
**Academic Leader Research**  
**School Of Applied Human Sc**

## Appendix B: Editors Letter



Mufasa Research Consultancy **SERVING WITH DISTINCTION**

27 December 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

**Re: Editor's Letter**

**SOUTH AFRICAN POST-GRADUATE THESES ON STUDENT TRANSACTIONAL SEX RELATIONSHIPS: A SCOPING REVIEW**

Below is the scope considered during language editing of the above titled doctoral thesis:

- Grammar check
- Sentence construction
- Spelling check
- Punctuation
- In-text referencing
- Formatting/ document layout

As a professional editor, I pledge that the above aspects of the doctoral thesis were, to the best of my knowledge, meticulously and correctly done at the time the work was sent to the candidate. However, I am not responsible for any corrections that were made after the editing process finalised.

Yours faithfully,

Kemist Shumba (PhD)

PhD in Health Promotion: University of Mpumalanga (UKZN)  
Master of Social Science in Health Promotion (Cox Lead): UKZN  
Bachelor of Social Science Honours in Cultural & Media Studies: UKZN  
Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Great Zimbabwe University  
Bachelor of Arts (English): University of Zimbabwe

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## Appendix C: Turnitin Report

## Dissertation Submission (Transactional Sex Relationships)

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