

# The Road to Sex Trade: The Buntog Experience

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background and Rationale of the Study**

Prostitution is illegal in many parts of the world including the Philippines. However, despite the legal prohibition, the growing industry still remains attractive to an increasing number of women, men, adolescents and children. The problem of prostitution and trafficking of women and children spreads expansively that it is now being considered as the world's third largest income generating enterprise, following drug trafficking and arm sales.

UNICEF estimates that every year at least 1 million children, most of them girls, become prostitutes. In 1996, the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHR) reported that there are approximately 10 million children and adolescents engaged in prostitution worldwide (Nambu, 1996).

The End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Exploitation (ECPAT), an international organization that works for the elimination of child prostitution, estimated that in 1996 there are approximately 100,000 to 300,000 sexually exploited children through prostitution and pornography in the United States alone. ECPAT's study also asserted that Southeast Asia is facing similar problem. Countries in the region are experiencing the worst forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children particularly Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand. The Children's Rights Protection Center (CRPC) estimates that there are as many as 800,000 prostituted children whose ages range from 12 to 16 in Thailand. Commercial child sex is so common that it can be found not only in the

streets or in brothels, but even also in barbershops, teahouses, hotels, noodle shops, and golf courses as well (Haggarty, 1999).

Here in the Philippines, the prevalence of adolescent prostitutes is alarming. According to government agencies and non-government organizations, the estimated number of prostitutes is continuously increasing. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported a 300% increase in the number of child abuse and child prostitution cases from 1992 to 1995 (ECPAT, July 1996). In 1997, UNICEF reported that the Philippines placed fourth among nine nations with the most number of child prostitutes with 60,000-100,000 children involved. UNICEF further added that the top five areas for child prostitution and sex tourism of the country included Metro Manila, Angeles City, Puerto Galera in the province of Mindoro, Davao and Cebu. The number of child prostitutes in Metro Manila alone reached to at least 20,000 cases (CRC, 1995). While in Davao, 868 prostitutes in 1993 and 1,525 in the first half of 1996 were recorded by Gabriella, a non-government organization. This number is constantly increasing as more teenage girls are forced into prostitution.

In 1997, there were about 3,000 street children accounted in Davao City, some of whom were already engaged in commercial sex work. According to the study of Ms. Liza Maza (as cited in the study of DSWD and UNICEF, 1997) many of these children started as buntogs and eventually graduated as paid sex workers.

Buntogs refers to streets teenagers who are engaging in casual sexual intercourse with friends, strangers and even among themselves in public places such as schools, abandoned lots, cabs and even on the runways of the Davao airport. They have been caught engaging group sex and have no compunction against having relations with strangers. They are called buntogs, a local term that literally means a bird that hops from one nest to another (Tambayan, 2003).

However, according to the National Statistical Coordinating Board (NSCB) in the two surveys conducted by the NGO-Tambayan and City Social Services and Development Office (CSSDO), the term “buntog” does not only refer to prostituted children. Nearly half or 44% of the total respondents were employed in less visible work such as packing, sales & car washing, while the 56% were absorbed into sexually exploitative condition (NSCB XI, 2000). Being young, 56% of their respondents were vulnerable as they went through a period of ambiguous role expectations.

The increasing number of adolescents involved in sex trade remains noticeable despite the Local Government Unit’s (LGU) effort to protect children from sexual exploitation through the passage of the Davao City Children’s Welfare Code, also known as the City Ordinance 2491. How these teenagers were initiated into sex and how some of them got involved in sex trade are very interesting topics to investigate particularly since the risk of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS, may be affected by the age of sexual debut.

An individual who initiates sexual activity at age 15, for example, will have more exposure to conception over the reproductive span than those who initiates sex at age 21. Early childbearing has been linked to higher rates of maternal and child morbidity and mortality, truncated educational opportunities and lower future family income (USAID, 2003). In addition, the problem of adolescent prostitution stresses the need for utmost attention in particular because the increasing number of child and adolescent prostitutes are instigated by the increasing demand of local men (e.g. taxi drivers & laborers), military personnel, businessmen and other foreign sex tourists who believe that sex with juvenile prostitutes is safer than sex with adult prostitutes. (San Juan, 1998)



The identification of the sexual initiation factors that lead adolescent buntogs to be involved in sex trade is remarkably an essential subject to study upon. Hence, this study is conducted.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The review of related literature will cover researches about child and adolescent prostitutes, their common characteristics, behavior and their involvement to sex trade. It will include empirical findings from different countries as well as studies conducted within the country. The following review is divided into the following main topics: Buntog phenomenon and the factors that influenced them to sex trade.

### **“Buntog Phenomenon”**

Adolescents all over the world are sexually active, but the age at which they start having intercourse varies between regions and within a country, between urban and rural settings (Gorgen et.al., 1998).

The “buntog” phenomenon, which is a ritual exchange of sex within a youth peer group is seen either as a result of seeking acceptance among peers or in reaction to family breakdown and stress. It has led girls and boys in cities like Davao and Cebu into exchanging sex for money, shelter, and food (Varga, 2001; Cabigon, 2002).

Buntogs refers to street teenagers engaging in casual sexual intercourse with each other in public places such as schools, abandoned lots, cabs and even on the runway of the Davao airport. They have been caught engaging in group-sex and have no compunction against having relation with strangers. They are called “buntogs”, a local term which means a bird that hops from one nest to another. In addition, the common Dabawenyos defined buntogs as girls who “shine” or

masturbate men particularly public utility drivers for a fee. Majority of these teenagers are victims of sexual abuse, incest and rape (Tambayan, 2003).

In one occasion, a journalist of Reprowatch mentioned that these teenagers are so open and so free. In her interview, she found out that sex can be free and you can get it as often as you wish. In a Davao forum on youth, it was mentioned that the dysfunctional families contributed to the emergence of the “buntog” phenomenon. When the homes can no longer provide the solace, protection and acceptance of children’s needs, buntogs are forced to turn to their peers and gangs where they can find the emotional and material support they need (Reprowatch, 1998). Non-attainment of tertiary education is common among the adolescent buntogs. Majority of them did not finish high school and merely 56% reached this level, while only 42% attained elementary education (NSCB XI, 2000).

Many associate the “buntog” label to a street girl’s sexual behavior. The term may refer to sexually active, dirty or loose girls, girls with multiple sexual partners, or prostitutes. Nevertheless, even if these girls perform sexual acts and at times receive monetary returns, they cannot be considered prostitutes because they do not perform these acts regularly as asserted by Pilgrim Bliss Guasa, a child advocate of Tambayan. Unlike commercial sex workers in the city, buntogs are forced to involve into the sex trade as a survival mechanism (Tambayan, 2003). In two separate surveys conducted by the Tambayan-Center for Abused Children and the City Social Services and Development Office (CSSDO) regarding the “buntogs”, results showed that the term “buntog” does not only necessarily refer to prostitutes. In fact, the Tambayan survey revealed that 44% of the total female buntog respondents were employed in less visible works such as: packing, car washing, sales and others, while the remaining 56% worked in sexually

exploitative conditions. On the other hand, the CSSDO survey accounted only 33% of the female respondents manifested high tendencies of indulging in the usual practices (NSCB XI, 2000).

The article of de Dios entitled “Confronting Trafficking, Prostitution & Sexual Exploitation” contended that there is an increase in the number of girl children involved in prostitution coming from both rural and urban poor families. Researches have shown that sexual exploiters and customers of adult prostitutes are also the same cluster of men who abuse children in prostitution. A small percentage of sexual offenders are pedophiles, while a great majority are ordinary men – business men, sailors, workers, taxi drivers, and migrants who buy sex to reinforce their masculinity and exercise power over the weak and vulnerable. The parents, relatives and friends driven by economic imperatives have also been involved in small time trafficking routes and syndicates (de Dios, 1998).

In many urban areas of the country, street adolescents’ initiation into sexual activities comes at an earlier age. Of the 80 research participants of Tambayan, 91% said that they have had sexual experiences and have been initiated during the early stages of adolescence or from 13 to 16 years old. Most of the boy respondents said their initial sexual experiences happened when they were at the ages 10 to 12. Among the girls, four in ten had their initiation at the ages between 13 and 14 years old. Often, adolescents’ first sexual experiences were with boyfriends or girlfriends. During dates or intimate moments, couples sometimes explore all forms of sexual activities including kissing, necking and petting, to actual sexual intercourse practice, which may or may not have been done with full consent from both parties, not excluding circumstances of abuse. The first sexual encounters usually happened during dates with girlfriend/boyfriends (36%) or on agreement with peers (15%). Some were under the influence of alcohol or drugs (21%) when they had their first sexual experience (Tambayan, 2003).

### **Sexual Initiation factors**

Prostitution is consuming thousands of girls and women and reaping enormous profits for organized crime in almost all countries of the world. Ronald Weitzer, author of the book *Sex for Sale*, identified several types of prostitutes: bar girls, brothels and escort service prostitutes. These persons prostitute themselves when they exchange access to their bodies for material gains such as cash, clothes, apartment, promotions and entertainment (Weitzer, 2000).

There are several reasons identified why buntog adolescents are already involved into the sex trade. Most of them seek it to escape poverty, violence and lack of opportunities. Unpleasant marriages of parents, relationships and violent sexual practices may have psychologically predisposed some of them to self-select themselves into prostitution. In Brazil, the prostitution of girls is the direct consequence of the economic recession and of the low status afforded to women in the country (Haggarty, 1999).

### **Economic benefits of sex**

In a study in Dumaguete City, which involved interviews with 1196 students, 18% were found to be sexually active. Most of these sexually active young people had only one sexual partner, the person with whom they had their first sexual experience. The study found that 3% of all students, and 10% of those sexually active, were involved in prostitution. The main reason given was the high cost of college education (WHO/UNDP/UNFPA, 1997).

However, other than economic reasons, factors such extreme level of poverty, and poor family support system also pushed more girls to go to the streets and prostitute themselves. Journalist Gilberto Dimenstein, who has carried extensive investigation of the lives of street

children, cited that poverty is the principal predisposing factor why most girls are forced to join the prostitution industry.

In his book, “Girls of the Night”, Dimenstein cited that family problems related to poverty may also lead girls to prostitute themselves. He also noted that the majority of the girls he interviewed came from broken homes. These girls faced the dearth of relatives such as the consequences of alcoholism or sexual abuse to the homes. In addition, the traditional social mores may also lead the girls into the streets, especially when girls lose their virginity their families often regenerate them. Many girls view prostitution as a way to freedom from conflict and violence at home. Some girls avoid boring work and see prostitution as a way to earn more money to become more independent.

Pro-prostitution advocates consider prostitution as a typical job similar to clerical work. At the same time, they believe that prostitution fulfills a number of socially useful functions: sex education, sex therapy, or providing sex for persons who would otherwise be deprived of sex. According to the members of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia, prostitution as work is an economic option for women (United Nations Economic and Social Council).

In many parts of Asia, it is common for girls who are far from reaching puberty to already be involved into sex trade. Parents are now eager to welcome the birth of a girl child because they see it as a potential resource to the prostitution industry where they could get money (Haggarty, 1999).

### **Parental Influence**

Poor family relationships, especially with parents, appear to be the most common problem among adolescents. For some adolescents, they experienced over-protection or had overly strict-parents that sometimes provoked them to dissent or to disobey. In the study of

Gastardo-Cosas et. al., results depicted that the youth tend to harbor ill-feelings when reprimanded by their parents. In effect, “sermon from parents” was identified as a problem. The study also posited that parental problems emerged due to parents’ lack of time for their children leading to alienation. Another type of parent-related problem originates from the break-up of the parent’s marriage or the death of a parent. This can aggravate relationships with the remaining parent or with the siblings. Children perceive their parents as insensitive, distant and non-communicative. Adolescents sometimes feel unloved and consequently are “unmotivated to excel” (Gastardo-Cosas, 2003).

The analysis presented by Atty. Adoracion Avisado, a child advocate in Davao City, also supported Gastardo-Cosas’ claims. In her Reprowatch article, she insisted that some adolescents opted to become prostitutes as ramification of the dysfunctional families. Families are unable to provide the children’s need for acceptance, solace and protection, which the latter found in their peers and in youth gangs (Reprowatch, 1998). Adolescents are often confronted with changes and adjustments that are associated with distressing emotions such as tension, confusion and uncertainty. Moreover, adolescents encounter conflicts as they rationalize and redefine their complex relationships with the people around them such as their parents, peers and opposite sex (Ogena, 2001).

On the other hand, Gerry Anigan, in his study on Filipino adolescents, gave different findings. According to Anigan, rebellion against parental authority may not be a cause for sexual promiscuity among Filipino adolescents. Yet, Western modes and manners of thinking may creep into the culture, especially among the wealthy and the “aspiring elite”. The desire to form a family and to shift the pressure for economic support from parents to the husbands may be a goad to adolescent sexual activity and early marriage among the less privileged (Anigan, 1979).

According to McCann Erickson (as cited in Gastardo-Cosas et. al., 2003) whether temporary or permanent, parental absenteeism is a reality that has led the youth to turn to their peers not just for friendship and companionship but for nurturing, intimacy, security and guidance as well.

### **Supportive peer group**

Lanuza (as cited in Gastardo-Cosas et. a.l, 2003) established through her work how the impacts of peer groups affect individual's behavior. She postulated that peer groups reproduce the dominant, adult culture by providing anticipatory socialization to students to learn the values of loyalty, trust, commitment, camaraderie, cooperation and the drive for excellence. This of course, is not to downplay the negative results that might ensue from peer association. Bad habits such as smoking, taking prohibited drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages and sex-related experiences are learned mostly from the peer group (Sebald, 1992).

Many fun activities were done with the company of peers. A male adolescent respondent shared that his peers were his source of inspiration. Information and misinformation were shared freely in the peer group. Experiences were also validated in the group. In a focus group discussion with some Filipino adolescents, both the boys and the girls described older friends as the preferred source of information on sexual matters because they were perceived as being more knowledgeable (than parents and teachers).

These findings were confirmed by a survey conducted by Andrew et. al. (2003). The most important person from whom information regarding sex was obtained was a friend, 72% of the boys and 63% of the girls. But the peer group is also viewed as a potential source of trouble and negative influences. The male groups noted that they cut classes, got involved in rumbles,

and learned smoking, drinking and started watching pornographic films in the company of the “barkada” (Gastardo-Cosas, 2003).

The same finding surfaced in a study of Gerry Anigan on Sex and the Filipino Adolescent. Anigan mentioned that peer pressure abetted by the prevailing “machismo” subculture may push an adolescent to prove his sexual prowess by “doing it”.

Peer interaction was determined to be an important factor because in the absence of traditional sources of information, young people turn to their peers as their principal sources of information on issues related to sexuality (Barker & Rich, 1992). The function of the peer group, also includes bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood, learning to get along with others, testing one’s wits and establishing autonomy from the family (Sebald, 1992).

#### **Pleasant or unpleasant sexual initiation experience**

During adolescence, sexual interests and behavior increase partly as a result of biological changes and social, cultural and historical contexts. Components of both gender identity and sexual orientation are formulated during this period of life. Some adolescents are reticent about sexual behavior, while others are sexually permissive and regularly active in sex play, from petting to intercourse. As a result of sexual experiences, adolescents begin to think of themselves as sexual. Young people learned the art of flirtation, practiced the dance of how to approach and learned the rules of engagement between the sexes, which vary from culture to culture and from cohort to cohort (Newman & Newman, 2003).

According to psychologist John J. Michell, some psychological factors at work push adolescents toward sexual activity. Possibly the most important is the need for intimacy and belongingness. Sexual intercourse for him is a natural extension of intimacy providing direct, though temporary gratification. In almost the same context, Rani et. al. mentioned that the



psychosocial context for adolescents on sexual behavior includes perceived social approval of premarital sex, social pressure to engage in sex, parent-child communication, attitudes about premarital sex and pregnancy, perceived social prejudices and motivations for having premarital sex (Rani et.al, 2003).

According to Sebald the first sexual experience happens because of the influence of books, movies, talks, rumors and promises. From the author's counseling experiences with college students, it appeared that many young persons were disappointed by their initial sexual experience. The failure of sex to be glamorous as expected tends to downgrade the value of sexuality. This disillusionment became crucial when it was combined with the failure to establish a secure human relationship. Inexperienced teenage lovers were left deeply disillusioned with sex as a cure for alienation and loneliness (Sebald, 1992).

However, Bell and Coughney (1980) defined "sex without affection" as sexual intercourse without emotional involvement, without the need for affection. Some people engage in sex because they like to do it and they enjoy it despite the absence of intimacy.

Here in the Philippines, an estimated 1.8 million adolescent males and nearly 700,000 females were sexually active in 2000. Reportedly, only a small proportion of married youth of both sexes (14% among males and 30% among females) reported no sexual experience before marriage. Sexually active, single male adolescents often reported their first premarital partner with a friend or acquaintance while female adolescents mentioned their boyfriends. The typology of youth premarital experiences include committed sex or the sex with the partner who subsequently becomes marital partner; commercial sex and casual sex or the sex with a partner who does not become a marital partner (Xenos and Raymundo, 1999).

Furthermore, street adolescents interviewed by Tambayan referred to having sex as a natural act, associating it with pleasure and happiness. Consistent with their developmental stage of becoming increasingly aware of their budding sexuality, adolescents are imbued with the freedom to explore and discover sex as a phenomenon. As much as they can, many would want to see sexual activities in the context of emotional relationships, associating sex with emotional commitments and love. Participants further indicated that sex has become a coping mechanism, even a survival tool amidst their predicaments. Engaging in sex becomes an indication of affection that many of them find lacking in their home or families. Good sexual performance, that is pleasing a partner, becomes synonymous with a distorted concept of self-worth. Sex also becomes a tool of acceptance, and of belongingness. For some, sex becomes a mechanism for survival, particularly those who feel they have no choice but to go into prostitution. Some girls added that sexual relations become their pitch for shelter and protection (Tambayan, 2003).

On the other hand, DSWD and UNICEF in their situational analysis on commercial sexual exploitation in the Philippines (1998) cited that pre-marital sex or early loss of virginity was the main reason why some children engaged in commercial sex at a younger age. Society's high regard for virginity which is equated with "goodness" and "purity", develops among the non-virgins a low self-esteem or negative self-image.

### **Inadequate knowledge of health risks**

In a population forum sponsored by Johns Hopkins held at San Pablo City, Dr. Romeo Lee stated, "in their search for identity and independence, adolescents tend to take risks without considering the possible negative consequences of their action." The negative consequences of early sexual experience include teenage pregnancy, illegitimate births, young marriages, abortion – seeking behavior, STDS and HIV (Reprowatch, 1998).

Generally, young men usually engage in sexual activity earlier than young women because premarital sex is accepted for males, whereas women are expected to postpone the initiation of intercourse until they marry. Adolescents from Guinea in a study conducted by Gorgen et al., stated that adolescent men and women perceive sex as a normal part of their lives, a sign of modernism. As a result, young women are exposed to the risk of premarital pregnancies and their potentially negative consequences, including unsafe abortions.

Majority of the participants in the same study conducted by Tambayan were open about their sexual activities. They identified their boyfriends and girlfriends as their usual sexual partners. However, there is a strong recognition among boys than girls that they tend to change sweethearts every now and then, and that they do have sex with transitory sweethearts. Although engaging in sex becomes an indication of affection that many of the participants find lacking in home or family lives, this also implies a tacit acceptance that sex may not necessarily be associated with close emotional relations but simply a means to satisfy urges (Tambayan, 2003).

As morbidity and mortality among adolescents increasingly become a focus of research and policy initiatives in developing countries, the problems of teenagers' unprotected sexual activity, low contraceptive use, rising pregnancy rates and reliance on clandestine abortion become apparent (Amazigo et. al., 1997).

One of the stereotypes of adolescence is that it is a stage of risk taking. The age range 16-18 is the peak period for the initiation of smoking, drinking and use of illicit drugs. One study estimated that one in seven adolescent in US has a sexually transmitted disease, 47% of American youth are sexually active and are not using contraceptives (Newman & Newman, 2003).

Adolescents bear an increased risk of exposure to infection with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). It is estimated that half of all HIV infections occur among people younger than 25. As a result, the sexual behavior of youth and the consequences of this behavior are a major public concerns (Gorgen et. al., 1998). Child prostitutes as well as sexually abused children frequently go through periods of high anxiety. They are often nervous and fearful. Many of these children have a hard time sleeping or concentrating. This makes the treatment difficult because these children are generally distrustful of adults and have short attention spans and have constant states of distress (Haggarty, 1999).

In addition, many child prostitutes become chemical abusers because they see this as means of coping with their life. They turn to drugs or alcohol or solvent as a way to numb them against the pain they are experiencing. In Latin America, most of these children like to live in streets and deal with the harshness of their lives by inhaling some glue. Disabling bouts of depression are common among child prostitutes (Sophia, 1999).

An increasing proportion of adolescents in Latin America have engaged in premarital sex that resulted to out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Most of the studies show that pregnancy is a predominant worry among the street girls, a risk they acknowledge. In the U.S., teenagers are responsible for over 40% of the illegitimate births, and their illegitimacy rate has more than doubled over the past few decades. The annual number of children born to mothers under 17 years of age accounted to 500,000 during the late 1980s. The primary reason for the high rate seems to lie with teenager's lack of caution and insufficient information concerning conception and contraceptive methods. Among youth aged 17 or younger when they became sexually active more than 1 in 10 whites and 1 in 5 blacks reported that they either did not think about pregnancy or did not care whether pregnancy would happen. The consequences of premarital

pregnancy can include a hasty and unplanned marriage, putting the baby up for adoption, keeping the baby and being an unwed parent, or having an abortion (Sebald, 1992).

In addition, the WHO (1997) highlighted that in developing countries, maternal mortality in girls at age 18 was two to five times higher than in women whose ages range from 18 to 25. Adolescent women carry more than 10% of all births. Furthermore, of the estimated 333 million new STI patients recorded in the world every year, at least 111 million are young people under 25 and more than half of all new HIV infections are among 15-24 year olds. Here in the Philippines, many Filipino adolescents experience a wide range of reproductive health problems and do not usually seek medical attention for these conditions, even for the more serious symptoms. This is consistent with the very low use of modern contraceptives and use of ineffective methods among sexually active adolescents (Cruz and Berja, 1999).

Evidence regarding abortion among adolescent women is consistent with reported increases in adolescent premarital sexual activity. Few statistics are available on adolescent sexuality and pregnancy in Nigeria, but information on reproductive tract infections and clandestine induced abortion among young women confirm that a serious problem exists. A ministerial inquiry on maternal health in Nigeria reported that an estimated 500,000 clandestine induced abortions occurred in 1980 and that such procedures were the main cause of death among unmarried women between the ages 15 and 24. Several investigators found out that teenagers represent a large proportion of the women admitted to hospitals for complications following clandestine abortions (Amazigo et. al, 1997).

According to a study conducted by Rasch et. al., on adolescent girls with illegally induced abortion, the identified age at which 51 girl respondents had their first intercourse varies from 13 to 16. All the girls had sexual intercourse regularly, one to three times a week. Seven of

the girl respondents have had STIs. Adolescent girls who had induced abortions in Dar es Salaam were not only sexually active at an early age but were having sex regularly with different sexual partners and were frequently dating more than one man at a time.

The risk of HIV infection is especially high if the age difference among sexual partners is large and if individuals have multiple or risky partners or unprotected sex. Numerous studies in developing countries have shown that young people lacked knowledge about contraception and disease prevention, and they often have erroneous ideas about reproduction. The shift to older partners has important implications for STI transmission. Since older men are more likely than younger men to have STI, women increase their risk of becoming infected when they have sexual relationships with older men. If a young woman becomes infected and subsequently had sex with a peer, she may transmit the infection to him, and the victim in turn may transmit it to other young women (Gorgen et. al, 1998).

Millions of young people become infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) each year. Among all age groups in the USA, girls aged 15-19 have the highest incidence of gonorrhea and boys aged 15-19 have the second highest incidence of the disease. Further, at least half-up to six million of the people infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the world are under age 25. The high incidence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) among persons at the age of 20 implies that many contracted HIV before reaching age 20 (WHO/UNDP Progress report, 1997).

The finding of WHO is consistent with Ms. Ogena's finding, in which she articulated that gonorrhea, was the most common STI among children in prostitution. "They drink water a bit with TIDE detergent in a belief that this would prevent gonorrhea" (Ogena, 1997).

***Synthesis:***

The first part deals with the definition and the discussion of the characteristics of an adolescent buntog. The term “buntog” is a vernacular expression referring to a quail that flies from nest to nest. The behavior of the buntog is framed by the image that they are adolescents who are known to provide free sex among young people as well as adults. In Davao City, the proliferation of the buntogs began in the first to the middle part of the 90s, and has grown rapidly since then. The buntog phenomenon in Davao City is not a unique social experience. Other regions of the country and even in other countries have their own terms for youngsters involved in this type of behavior.

The second part presents the interplay of socio-economic and psychological factors and how these factors affected the increasing number of adolescent buntogs in Davao City. The buntog’s impulsive state along with their physiological, psychological and social developments were considered as factors in their decision making process to involve in sex trade.

Several literatures have been written about adolescent prostitutes that are often subsumed either with the adult prostitutes or with the abused children. The common factor emerging in their motives in sex trade is economic need. However, data on the characteristics of adolescents’ show that the absence of parental support may encourage adolescents to seek refuge to peers who may now become the preferred source of information.

Although prostitution has been studied extensively, a thorough investigation on the causes of child prostitution is relatively scanty, thus an interesting study to venture into. Some data on sexual practices, sexual partners, kinds of sexual acts and other sexual behavior of the adolescents are essential to be able to develop interventions appropriate for them.

The literature reviewed were vital since the foregoing studies held very important insights, concepts and discussion that will be useful for this study. One of the major intentions of this study is to document the initiation experiences of these adolescents to be able to show whether or not these will affect the decisions of the vulnerable adolescents to engage in sex trade.

### **Conceptual Framework:**

This study identifies the factors that influenced the involvement of adolescent buntogs in sex trade. Figure 1 presents the variables and outlines the conceptual framework of the study.

The framework utilized in isolating the different factors of involvement in sex trade is the health belief model. According to Rosenstock (as cited by Ruter & Quines, 2000), this theoretical model proposes that the individual's state of mind to act is determined by perception of personal susceptibility or vulnerability, which might affect life.

Adolescence is a time of critical human development, with major changes occurring in the biological, cognitive, psychological, social and environmental processes. Exploratory behavior and experimentation with a wide range of behavior is essential for a normal adolescent development (Bell, 1993). The adolescent buntogs are young people whose familial influence declined and whose friends become the most influential factor in their decision-making and lifestyle choices (Kaugmaon, 2001). Confusions and uncertainties remain a challenge to their minds especially that they have to cope with life's demands with the absence of family support. In the process of dealing with life's changes, the lack of support groups weakens and pressures the buntogs. Adolescents' interaction with their family, peers and the society may produce several elements that could confuse an adolescent mind.

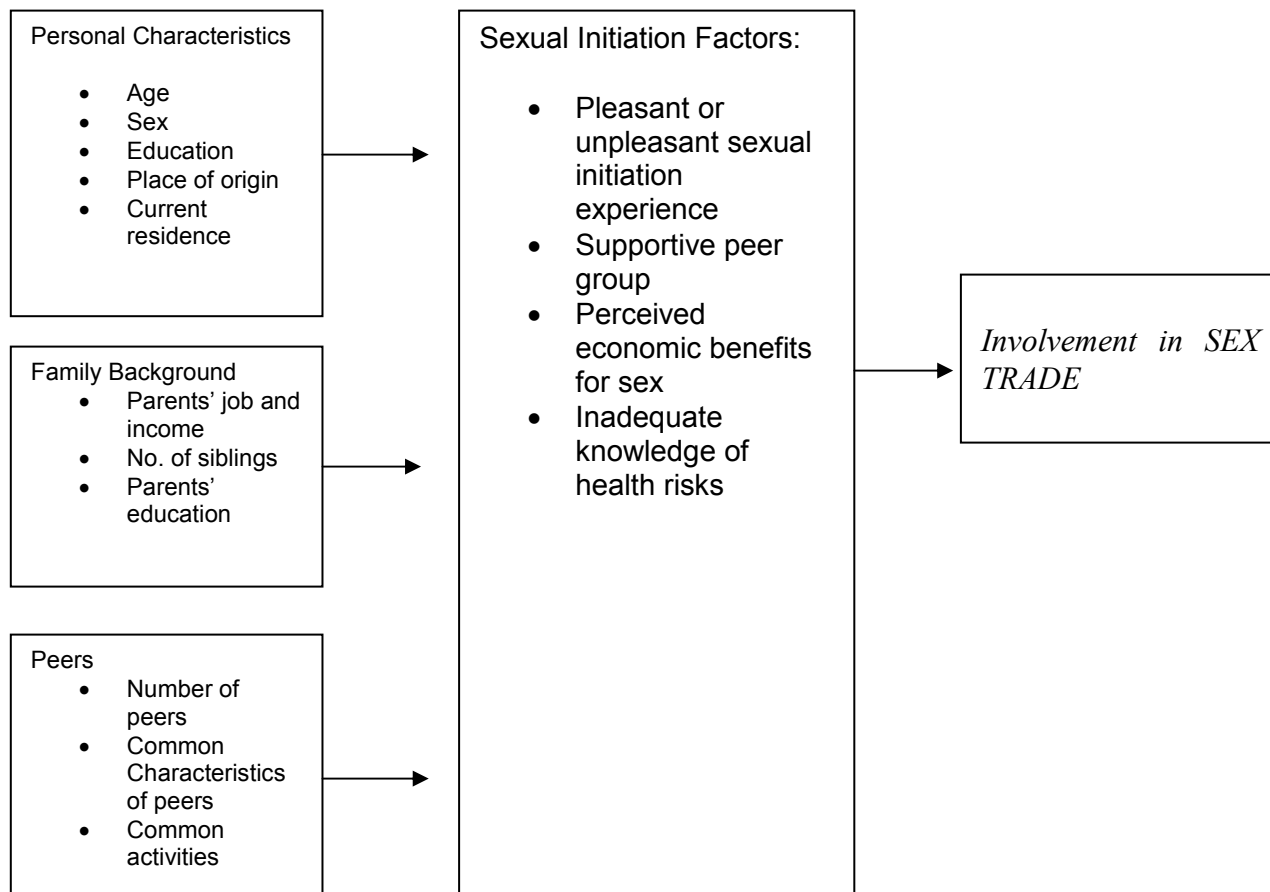


Millions of adolescents worldwide are sexually active and at a risk of unwanted pregnancy and STIs. Early sexual relationships and reproduction can have a profound effect on the health and development of young women and their children (WHO/UNICEF, 1995). Buntogs are adolescents who engaged in casual sexual intercourse with each other as well as with others. The risky sexual practices and sexual experiences of these adolescents make them vulnerable to health problems and to the hazardous sex industry.

This conceptual framework considers the fact that the social environment-peers and family- and socio-economic condition of the adolescent affects his/her decision to be part of sex trade.

Figure 1

## Conceptual Framework



**Problem Statement:**

This study aims to investigate the factors that influenced the buntogs' involvement in the sex trade in Davao City. It specifically attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the background characteristics of the buntogs in Davao City?
  - a. What are their personal characteristics?
  - b. What are their socio and economic characteristics?
2. What is the respondents' sexual history?
  - a. How were they initiated into sex?
  - b. What are their sexual practices?
3. What are the factors that influenced their involvement into the sex trade?
4. What are the perceived risks of being involved in sex trade?
5. What are the perceived benefits of involvement in sex trade?

**Definition of terms:**

The following are operational definition of terms used in the study:

1. Buntogs - refers to the teenagers, mostly street girls and boys engaging in casual sexual intercourse (in groups or with a single partner) with each other in public place such as schools, abandoned lots and cabs. They include high school students and "shine girls" (girls who masturbate a man for a fee) who provide sex with or without pay.
2. Adolescent – Filipino youths aged 15-24 years old.
3. Socio-demographic and economic characteristics – refers to their age, religion, educational attainment, school attendance, civil status, size of family or orientation, birth order, parent's educational attainment and occupation and place of origin.

4. Sexual initiation experiences – refers to the coital debut or first sexual experience of the respondent, age of coital debut, where it happened, with whom, whether by force or free willing and circumstances of force sexual intercourse.
5. Premarital sex experiences – refers to the magnitude of sex encounter and experience. It includes the type of sexual partner, the sexual acts, circumstances of sexual intercourse, the use of protection and the place where sex is done.
6. Free sex – sex without exchange of money
7. Perceived risks – is used to measure either personal vulnerability to a specific health threat or a general vulnerability to disease relative to other people. This variable refers to effects of sex such as unplanned pregnancy, abortion, STD & HIV infection and the state of alcohol and drug use.
8. Sexual relations – refers to the buntog's number of customers in a week and type of sexual acts engaged with the customers.
9. Involvement to sex trade - rendering sex for monetary or material returns. It will include, the amount earned, the type of clients, style in attracting clients, whether they can demand the price, what they do to avoid risks, where sex takes place, reasons of involvement, reasons for sex without money.

**Significance of the Study:**

This study intends to contribute theoretical findings to the pool of knowledge in the field of health social science. Millions of adolescent worldwide are sexually active and are at risk of unwanted pregnancy and STIs. Early sexual relationship and reproduction may have a profound effect to the health and development of a young mother and the child (WHO/UNICEF, 1995). Buntogs are adolescents with unique health and information needs. They have been studied upon but there have been limited formal documentation on the factors why these adolescents submit themselves to sex trade.

This descriptive study intends to give attention to risky sexual behavior and practices of this specific group of adolescents with a distinctive attitudinal, behavioral and social characteristics. Documenting their sexual experiences will address the gap on their extent of sexual activity and the lack of empirical findings concerning their issues.

This study will not only contribute to the field of adolescent sexual experiences but also benefit the buntogs as they inform the society especially the local social institutions (e.g. LGU, DSWD, family and schools) on their needs as adolescents that demand immediate attention. The study conducted by Andrew et. al. (2003), mentioned that to be able to meet adolescent health needs it is necessary to come up with strategies for the avoidance and prevention of abuse and violence.

**Scope and Delimitation:**

The study focuses on the adolescent buntogs who have been initiated to sex and who have been involved in sex trade. These adolescents may be in school or out of school youths upon data gathering. They are aged 15-24 years old and are residing in Davao City upon the conduct of the interview. The background characteristics, sexual history, factors that influenced them to sex trade, the perceived risks and the perceived benefits of sex trade were thoroughly discussed in this paper.

## **Chapter 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the research plan used by the study. It describes the research design, population and sampling, instrumentation, field procedure, data analysis and methodological limitation.

#### **The Research Design**

This is a basic type of study, which utilizes a descriptive research design. It is descriptive because much information has been gathered on people who were engaged in high-risk behavior such as the adolescent prostitutes. However, adolescent prostitutes information has often been subsumed under the categories of youth, adult or children. Furthermore, the findings of YAFS 3 and several reports have stipulated that there is still a need to research on sexual initiation issues especially on adolescents and youths. This paper will give attention and seek empirical findings on the sexual experiences of these vulnerable adolescent buntogs in Davao City. This is an attempt to document their understudied initiation experiences and to identify the sexual initiation factors that persuaded them to be involved in sex trading.

The design of the study involved two approaches, the quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative study used survey interview schedule to collect data from the respondents. The survey style of data gathering allowed the researcher to obtain first hand

records of their socio-economic characteristics, sexual experiences, sexual behavior and sexual practices.

On the other hand, the qualitative part used in-depth interview guide to collect qualitative data from the respondents. This conversational style provided the detailed information on the initiation experiences to sex and sex trading. The in-depth interview also permitted the researcher to probe further on the questions that needed clarifications. These were the appropriate methods to be used because the study dealt on sensitive issues and very personal sexual experiences of the buntogs. In addition, the combination of the two designs provided substantial information and allowed cross checking of the responses of the adolescents.

### **Population and Sampling**

Non-probability sampling, particularly the convenient and the snowball techniques were used in this study. The researcher went to the identified hangout areas of buntog adolescents and observed how they interacted with each other. After a week of constant visits, the researcher established good rapport with the respondents after which the pre-test was conducted. The snowball technique was used to interview 30 respondents, 15 males and 15 females for a possible comparison. The respondents referred were selected based on the following criteria: (1) male or female adolescent aged 10-24 years old; (2) single and has experienced premarital sex; (3) sexually active with a single or multiple partners for the past two years; (4) must have been in the sex trade for a year, not necessarily continuous but are currently involved in sex trading.



On the other hand, the respondents of the in-depth interview were chosen from the 30 respondents. To be able to project the effect of knowledge of parents on the involvement of the adolescents to sex trade, two respondents who submitted themselves to prostitution and two respondents whose parents know of their involvement were interviewed. Two males and two females were again chosen for a possible comparison of variables.

### **Instrumentation**

The study used a structured questionnaire for the survey and a semi-structured interview guide for the informants. Majority of the questions were provided with choices but some were open-ended to allow probing of answers especially in the in-depth interview schedule. These were formulated based on the key concepts identified in the problem statement and the conceptual framework. The concepts are divided into blocks with their specific variables as presented below:

Table 1  
Instrument Matrix for the Study

Survey Questionnaire Guide	
Key Concepts	Specific Variables
Socio-demographic and Economic profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Highest educational attainment</li> <li>• School attendance</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Siblings (biological and adopted)</li> <li>• Place of origin</li> <li>• Current residence</li> </ul>
Family Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent's occupation</li> <li>• Highest educational attainment of parents</li> <li>• Financial support from parents and siblings</li> <li>• Average monthly income of parents</li> <li>• Companion at home</li> <li>• Parents live together</li> </ul>
Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with parents and Parent-child communication</li> <li>• Number of peers</li> <li>• Common characteristics with peers</li> <li>• Common activities done with peers</li> <li>• Common topics shared and discussed with peers</li> <li>• Help from the peers</li> </ul>
Intimate Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boyfriends &amp; girlfriends</li> <li>• Dating activities</li> <li>• Number of partners</li> </ul>
Initiation Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coital debut</li> <li>• Place of coital debut</li> <li>• Sexual partner or coital debut</li> <li>• Description of coital debut</li> <li>• Reasons of coital debut</li> <li>• Reason of having sex before marriage</li> <li>• If practice monogamous relationship</li> <li>• Average Number of sexual partners in a week</li> <li>• Use of protection in coital debut and in PMS</li> <li>• Kind of sexual acts</li> </ul>
Involvement to sex trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much they earn from clients</li> <li>• Type of clients</li> <li>• Style in attracting clients</li> <li>• Reasons of involvement to sex trade</li> <li>• Reasons for sex without pay</li> </ul>
Risks and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk practices (drinking, drugs etc)</li> <li>• Effects of sex</li> <li>• Use of protection</li> <li>• Number of sexual partners</li> <li>• Benefits of having sex</li> </ul>
In-depth Interview Guide	

Family History and Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with the family</li> <li>• Whether they are influential in decision making</li> <li>• Description of a friend</li> <li>• Common activities</li> <li>• Whether friends are influential in decision making</li> </ul>
Intimate Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual Experience with boyfriend or girlfriends</li> <li>• Activities with partner</li> <li>• Reasons why have sex with boyfriend</li> </ul>
Involvement to sex trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How they procure daily finances</li> <li>• Who influenced them to sex trade</li> <li>• How were they influenced</li> <li>• Parents knowledge</li> <li>• Effect of Parents knowledge</li> <li>• Advantages and Disadvantages of the support of parents</li> <li>• Effects of Sex trade</li> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages in sex trade</li> <li>• Fears in sex trade</li> </ul>

The survey questionnaire guide and the in-depth interview schedule were pre-tested for face validity to four adolescent buntogs (one male and three females) who qualified to the criteria set by the researcher. Their responses served as guides for modifications and improvement of the instrument. It was drafted in English but was translated to Cebuano and to the “buntog lingo” for easier understanding of the respondents.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Preliminary activities were necessary to facilitate the data collection. It included the sending of communications and personal visits to CSSDO and TAMBAYAN offices

and personnel who were directly working with these “buntogs.” However, the Tambayan Office gracefully rejected the researcher because the kids themselves did not want to be interviewed. On the other hand, the City Social Services Development Office provided seven names of possible respondents. When the researcher visited the potential respondents, they no longer reside in the addresses given. Instead, the researcher employed convenient sampling technique by hanging out in the identified areas where these adolescent buntogs are often seen. After a week of constant visit, the researcher was able to befriend four adolescent buntogs who became the sources of referrals. From the result of the pre-test, some of the questions in the interview guide and survey questionnaire were modified. After the modification and the approval of the revised interview guide and survey questionnaire by the mentor, the data gathering proceeded.

Upon the respondents approval of consent, the interviews proceeded and some interviews were recorded especially the in-depth interviews. They were reassured of the confidentiality and their anonymity. The coding and the processing of quantitative data were done after all the interviews. The transcriptions of the tapes were also prepared immediately after the interviews to be able to identify common patterns and modalities of the responses.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis was employed in the data interpretation. The quantitative data were tabulated, and descriptive statistics was used to determine the mean age, mean number of sex a week and other quantitative data of the

study. Cross tabulation was also used to show whether some variables would corroborate possible existing differences on males' and females' responses.

On the other hand, all the informants' responses were subjected to content analysis to identify trends and patterns of responses for the qualitative analysis. Initial observations were jotted down and the responses were then classified and categorized based on the specific variables of the study. The presentation of data included verbatim accounts and possible direct quotation by the respondents to help substantiate the findings of the study.

### **Methodological Limitation**

This study was limited to at least 30 adolescent "buntogs" (15 males and 15 females) in Davao City with ages between 10 to 24 years old.

There is currently no available statistics on buntogs in Davao City. Government agencies such as the DSWD and the Community Youth Relations Service (CYRS) have no listings of buntogs in Davao. The lack of accurate record on the number of adolescent buntogs in the city, did not allow the researcher to choose the appropriate sampling frame that could be used in the study. Since the study used a non-probability sampling, the generalizations from the findings might not hold true to all adolescent prostitutes. The reliability and accuracy of the responses were also taken at face value.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Results**

This chapter presents the result of the study conducted among the adolescent buntogs in Davao city. It is divided into seven parts namely: locale of the study, socio-economic characteristics, family background, peers, romantic relationship, initiation experiences and involvement in sex trade.

In each section the results of the quantitative survey are presented first and the result of the qualitative interview immediately follows to substantiate the findings.

#### **Locale of the Study**

Davao City, the premiere city of Mindanao, is located in the northeastern part of the province. In terms of land area, Davao City is the world's largest city with a land area of 244,000 hectares. The mighty Davao river runs through the city. Davao is divided into eight political districts: Baguio and Paguibato in the north; Calinan and Tugbok in the central part; Bunawan, Buhangin and Talomo in the east; and Toril in the south.

Davao is the hub of commerce and industry in the Southern Mindanao region. Yet, to this day, Davao City continues to straddle the two worlds - the new and the old. The urban part of they city is characterized by a flourishing metropolis of business districts, mechanized farms and cosmopolitan villages where "instant millionaires" live. While the rural landscape is mostly hilly that roll down into fertile valleys, dominated by the 2,954-meter-high Mount Apo and peopled by the Bagobo, Manobo, Mandaya, Bilaan

and other indigenous communities. Davao is proud of its scenic spots and people. It is considered as one of the tourist destinations in the south. The increasing number of visitors in Davao is matched with an increasing number of entertainment establishments sprouting almost everywhere. The number of these structures rose from 80 to 135 from 1993 to 1996.

Some of the individuals who provide entertainment to visitors are young adolescents who are into prostitution. However, instead of working in establishments, these adolescents hang out in parks, beach clubs, ports and other public spaces. They also congregate in the very famous Magsaysay Park and Victoria Plaza parking lots. Some also look for customers in Sasa Port and Toril International Fish Port. All of the areas mentioned are within the city and are very accessible to visitors, foreigners and even local customers. The Magsaysay Park was used as an entry point by the researcher to gain access to the adolescent prostitutes in the city.

### **Socio-economic characteristics**

#### **Age, Education, Religion and current residence**

The thirty respondents of this study were basically young as depicted in the computed mean age of 16.2, 15.6 for female and 16.8 for male. Furthermore, majority (27 of 30) of them were below the legal age and were supposed to be economically dependent. Only seventeen attended school in 2003, while the thirteen either registered but dropped out or were in school but stopped within the academic year they have enrolled. On the average, the 13 respondents left school at age 14.31.

Table 2  
Actual age of respondents

Actual age of respondents	Sex		Total n=30
	Male	Female	
14	2	2	4
15	2	6	8
16	4	5	9
17	2		2
18	2	2	4
19	1		1
20	1		1
21	1		1
Minimum	14	14	
Maximum	21	18	
Mean	16.8	15.6	

Two-thirds (20) of the respondents were in their secondary level while the rest were still elementary school students. There were more males (12) who reached high school compared to females (8). On the other hand, more than two-thirds (23 of 30) were Roman Catholics, three were Iglesia ni Kristo and another three were Muslims.



Table 3  
Religion and Education of Respondents

Variables	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
Religion			
• Roman Catholic	13	10	23
• Iglesia ni Cristo	1	2	3
• Islam	1	2	3
• Don't Know		1	1
Attended school last year			
• Yes	8	9	17
• No	7	6	13
Highest Grade completed			
• Elementary	3	7	10
• High School	12	8	20

Although only 7 of the 30 respondents were born outside of Davao City, the in-migration within the city was evident as depicted in the mean number of years (9.23) they have stayed in their current residence. Table 4 shows that more than half (17) did not live with their families, and surprisingly 11 of them were females. There were several reasons cited why they left their families. To live with their relatives (4) and family misunderstanding (4) were the top two reasons shared. According to one respondent *“nagbulag man ang akong mama ug papa, nasuko ko kay nangabit si papa.”* (My parents separated, I was disappointed because my father had a lover.)

#### **Companion at home and the person who have raised them**

Many (8 of 17) mentioned that their relatives were their companions at their place of residence, four admitted sharing their spaces with friends, two lived with their partners and three named other companions. However, even if they did not live with their families, 11 of 30 respondents commended their mothers for raising them, eight cited

both parents and four acknowledged their relatives. When further asked why these persons were the ones raising them, more than one third (14) articulated that the separation of their parents was the reason. Others commented that their mom/dad died (3), two shared that their dad/mom work far away from home and three cited other reasons. One male respondent whose parents were separated shared “*nagdako ko sa akong lolo kay bag-o pa lang ko gipanganak gibilin nako sa akong mama kang lolo*” (I grew up with my grandfather, after my mother gave birth she left me to the custody of my grandfather.).

Table 4  
Information on the Companions of the respondents while growing up

Variables	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
Whether living with the family			
• Yes	9	4	13
• No	6	11	17
Companion at current residence			
• Friends	1	3	4
• Relatives	4	4	8
• Partner	1	1	2
• Not applicable	9	4	13
• Others		3	3
Person who raised them			
• Father		2	2
• Mother	7	4	11
• Both	3	5	8
• Grandparents	2	1	3
• Relatives	3	1	4
• Others		2	2
Reasons why raised by _____			
• Mom/dad died	3		3
• Parents separated	7	7	14
• Dad/mom work away		2	2
• Not applicable	3	5	8
• Others	2	1	3

**Family Background****Biological and adopted/step brothers and sisters**

The number of biological brothers & sisters was almost the same with the number of stepbrothers and stepsisters as shown in their computed means 4.33 and 4.00 respectively. The result is very much related to the data cited earlier that a number of respondents had parents who were separated and were having families of their own.

**Educational attainment of parents**

The educational attainment of the parents was almost on a par with the respondents' educational status. One third (10) of their fathers reached elementary level, eight (8) made it to the secondary level, two (2) were at their tertiary level and only one graduated from college. Noticeably, mothers of the respondents achieved a higher level of education compared to the fathers. More than one third or 14 of their mothers attained high school education, only seven (7) were in the elementary years and only one-sixth (5) managed to be in the college level. On the contrary, many of the respondents did not know their fathers' (9) and mothers' (4) educational achievements. The failure of the respondents to know the educational statuses of their parents could be attributed to the absence of parents as well as the departure of the respondents from their homes.

Table 5  
Educational background of parents

Educational Attainment	Father	Mother
• Elementary	10	7
• High School	8	14
• College Level	2	5
• College graduate	1	
• Don't know	9	4
Total	30	30

### Occupation of parents

The sources of living of the parents vary. Six (6) of the respondents' father were construction workers, some were small time businessmen (2), carpenters (2), one driver and one police officer. Five of the respondents did not know the occupation of their fathers who have left them. Except for those with deceased fathers (2), only two had fathers who did not have any job at all. A higher number of mothers did not have any job than being a housewife (6). However, nearly one-third (9) were vendors, five (5) were *labandera* and the rest had sources of income other than those mentioned.

The respondents were also asked to give the exact amount of monthly income of their parents, eight of thirty did not know. However, more than half (16) estimated that their parents were earning 1001-5000 a month, and three said their parents were generating more than 5,000 a month.

Four of thirty respondents confessed that both parents provided the financial support for the family. Nearly one-third (9) answered that their fathers were the sole providers, six (6) mentioned their mothers, three (3) acknowledged their relatives, and

two (2) cited their siblings. Two of the respondents assumed the responsibility of producing monetary supply for their families. More than two-thirds (22) of the respondents admitted that their parents have lived separately and this affected the financial source of the family. When further asked why their parents separated, three mentioned the presence of other families.

The state of the family is very vital to an adolescent because the family is a venue of growth and a source of support. However, many of the respondents in the study belonged to broken families and the absence of their parents while they were growing up spawned their lack of affection towards them. One male respondent who belonged to a broken family narrated:

Ginakulata ni papa si mama mao nga nagbulag sila. Gibilin ko ni mama kang auntie og bale si auntie na ang nagpadako sa akoo. Naa nay laing pamilya ang akong mama karon, usahay close mi usahay dili...pero dili mi close sa akong mga half na igsoon.

(My father physically abused my mother that caused to their separation. My mother left me to my aunt who has nurtured me since I was young. My mother has a different family now, I am close to her at times and sometimes I am not. I am not close to my stepbrothers and stepsisters).

However, all the respondents also revealed that their parents did not influence them in their decision. They preferred telling problems to their friends and to the person who have been responsible in raising them while they were growing up. One male respondent who has not been living with his family shared *“wala na ko maanad nga duolan sila (parents) sa akong problema, sukad onse anyos ko wala na ko magsalig sa*

*ilaha*” (I was not used to approach them in times of problems, since I was 11 years old I have not been depending on them).

Table 6  
Occupation and Income of the Family

Variables	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
<b>Father's Occupation</b>			
• None	2		2
• Driver		1	1
• Smalltime businessman		2	2
• Carpenter	1	1	2
• Construction worker	2	4	6
• Others	2		2
• Not applicable	5	5	10
• Don't know	3	2	5
<b>Mother's Occupation</b>			
• None	6		6
• Vendor	4	5	9
• Labandera	2	3	5
• Others	3	6	9
• Don't Know		1	1
<b>Monthly income of parents</b>			
• 1-1000		1	1
• 1001-5000	9	7	16
• 5001-10000	1	1	2
• 10001-15000	2		2
• 15001-up		1	1
• Don't know	3	5	8
<b>Provider of financial support</b>			
• Father	4	5	9
• Mother	3	3	6
• Relatives	3		3
• Siblings	2		2
• Both parents		4	4
• Self	1	1	2
• Others	2	2	4
<b>Whether parents still live together</b>			
• Yes	3	5	8
• No	12	10	22

## Peers

### Number of peers and the characteristics of their peers

The peers or the “barkadas” were the common refuge of the respondents. All of the thirty respondents confirmed that they have peers until today. They started their contact with their *barkada* at a young age, two (2) of them started having their peers as young as eight and the computed mean of 12 signifies that respondent’s peers have been their companion in their adolescent growth. Although on the average the number of set of peers was only at 4.93, the maximum number of female friends reached as high as 50 while the maximum number of male friends was 60.

The respondents looked at their friends as the source of support when their family failed to provide one. Table 7 summarizes their definition of friends who were influential to their decision-making processes. A person was a friend when he or she was around in times of need even if the other did not have money and when he/she considers companionship as a treasure.



Table 7  
Characteristics of their friends

	Female	Male
Respondent's description of their friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful (when sick they bought food and medicines for me)</li> <li>• Happy and gay (we laugh a lot even if we do not have money)</li> <li>• Close to me (we go together even when we earn money)</li> <li>• Good listener (I tell them when I have problems)</li> <li>• Companion (we go together wherever we want to go)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful (they taught me how to earn money)</li> <li>• Good listener (I share to them when I have problems)</li> <li>• Confidant (they give me advice)</li> <li>• Close (we go together even in earning money)</li> <li>• Loyal</li> </ul>

### Activities with peers

There were numerous activities usually done by the respondents together with their peers. Sniffing rugby (19) was the first of the top five activities they have done with their friends. Drinking liquor (18) followed, then taking shabu and marijuana (17), strolling & hanging out with friends (16) and lastly going to disco, videoke and malls (13). Most of these activities were done together with male & female friends. This result shows that many of the respondents were drug and solvent addicts, which puts their health at risks.

Table 8  
Activities with peers

Activities usually done with the barkada	Companions in doing the activity			Total
	Mostly males	Mostly females	Both	
1. Drinking	3	1	14	18
2. Sniffing Rugby	4	2	13	19
3. Taking Drugs (marijuana & Shabu)	5	2	10	17
4. Steal to earn	4			4
5. Sex or gerger	1	2	3	6
6. Disco, videoke & mallng		2	11	13
7. Stroll & hangout with friends	1	4	11	16
8. Smoke	2	1	2	5
9. Riot	2	4	4	10
10. Chat with friends	1	1	9	11
11. Shine		1		1
12. Others	10	2	3	15

They did not deny that their friends were also the reason why they have enemies and sometimes haunted by authorities. Nevertheless, they were thankful that their friends helped them to survive especially when they ran away from home. A 15 years old male respondent who started having peers at a young age shared:

*Otso pa ciguro ko ato...gitudloan ko kanang sa okay okay gani nga isulod lang diri (front portion of the short) ang mga senina...unya kay bata pa ko mao nga dili mailhan...barkada man ang nagtudlo sa ako.*

(I was eight when my friend taught me on how to steal surplus goods in the market. I was told to insert the clothes in the front portion of my shorts and since I was young they will not suspect me.)

### Help from friends

Among the 30 respondents, sixteen (16) cited that they also shared their problems with their peers. Almost all of the females (12) did this but only four (4) of the males admitted that they have tried opening up their problems with their friends. The findings also reported that 22 of 30 respondents received help from peers even if they did not confide their problems. There were seven kinds of help extended to the respondents by their friends, 14 of 22 shared that the advice was the common form of help, followed by “resbak” a local term for revenge through riot which they usually do against their offenders.

Table 9  
Respondent’s relationship with their peers

Variables	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
Whether they share their problems to their peers			
• Yes	4	12	16
• No	11	3	14
Whether they get help from friends			
• Yes	9	13	22
• No	6	2	8

### Romantic relationships

#### Dating

Dating was the usual activity of the 29 respondents, they started dating at an early age. Nearly two-thirds (19 of 30) started dating even below 15 years old. Holding hands in the first date was necessary according to all males and ten of the females. The 19 respondents gave almost the same idea when asked whether they kissed during their first

date. However, petting according to 19 of the thirty and going all the way (21) were not part of the first date yet. One respondent shared “*maulaw ulaw pa man ko ato kay first time pa man nako og date, dili pa ko kabalo*” (I was timid during the first date, I don’t know what to do).

However, the propensity of engaging to intimate behavior rises in succeeding dates. The output from table 10 depicts a higher number of respondents holding hands, kissing, petting and going all the way especially among the females.

Table 10  
Acts while Dating

Acts while dating	First date		Latest date	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Holding hands				
• Yes	15	10	15	12
• No		5		3
Kiss				
• Yes	11	8	14	12
• No	4	7	1	3
Petting				
• Yes	6	5	11	11
• No	9	10	4	4
Went all the way (gerger)				
• Yes	6	3	11	12
• No	9	12	4	3

The respondents shared that they have other activities with their current partners. Besides dating, about three-fourths of them (22 of 30) hangout with friends usually at their “tambayan site”, some went out with their friends (15), some just stayed in their

house with their partners and four admitted having sex as a common activity they did with their partners.

Table 11  
Activities done with current partner

<b>Activites (multipler esponse)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
• Date	18
• Stay in the house	7
• Go out with friends	15
• Hangout	22
• Sex	4
• Watch movies	1
• Others	6

### **Girlfriend and boyfriend Relationship**

The close interaction with their peers has been the venue of the respondents in looking for their potential partners or girlfriends/boyfriends. All the respondents (30) admitted that they have experienced having a partner. Many (15 of 30) of the respondents have partners who were members of their peer groups, eight (8) have partners who were their neighbors and six (6) mentioned different venues where they met their current partners. Four (4) males and three (3) females shared that their partners were not aware of the activities they have been doing together with their peers. Yet, more than half (17) believed that their partners approved of their activities with their peers.

Table 12  
Boyfriend and Girlfriend relationship

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Male n = 15</b>	<b>Female n = 15</b>	<b>Total n=30</b>
Whether they have experienced having a gf/bf			
• Yes	15	15	30
• No			
How they met their current partner			
• Peer/barkada	9	6	15
• Neighbor	3	5	8
• Classmate	1		1
• Others	2	4	6
Whether their partners are aware of their activities with their peers			
• Yes	11	12	23
• No	4	3	7
Whether their partners approved their activities with their peers			
• Yes	8	9	17
• No	7	6	13

### **Number of boyfriend and girlfriends**

It is important to note that although the respondents were young, the number of girlfriends/boyfriends they have had so far was high, with the median of 9 for males and 10 for females. One male respondent mentioned that he started having a girlfriend as young as eight years old. However, on the average many of the respondents had girlfriends or boyfriends at the age of 13. It is alarming to note that both the males and the females practiced multiple partners in their relationship and they did not have any inhibitions in this practice. In fact most of the males were proud to relay their intimate stories, a 17-year-old male respondent who had experienced multiple partners relayed:

*Daghan uyab kay klase-klase man, usahay lagi magkita ng tulo kabook...usahay pa gyud magkasabay og anha sa balay. Ang uban man gud pampalipas oras lang...pero naa sab gi-respeto labi na kung in love ka ba...pero naa sab pang consumo lang ...iyotonon...kung wala ang pampalipas oras ang kadtong consumo ang imong gamiton.*

(There are different kinds of girlfriends that I have, sometimes they see each other especially when they visit me at home...there are girls that are for pastime, some for consumption but there are also others whom I respect...the ones I have feelings for. If one is absent then you could have the other one).

## **Initiation experiences**

### **Coital debut**

The coital debut experiences of the respondents were very interesting to know. A little more than two-thirds (21) confessed that their coital debut took place within a committed relationship. However, only eight males and three females admitted that their coital debut was something they wanted to happen. It is significant to note that even if many (20 of 30) of the respondents claimed that their first sex were with consent, ten of thirty said otherwise. Yet, more than two-thirds preferred keeping it to themselves while seven (7) males and two (2) females preferred sharing it with friends (7) and relatives (2). It is sad to know that five of thirty respondents were initiated to sex through rape and among the five respondents, nobody attempted to report to the authorities. A female rape victim confessed:

*Magsumbong man tana ko kang mama kadtong nakit-an niya akong short nga naay dugo, pero abi niya nga gidugo na ko pagsulti nako nga gihilabtan ko ni papa gikasuk-an ko niya kay bakakon daw ko.*

(I attempted to tell my mother that I was raped but when she saw the blood stain on my shorts she just thought I had menarche. When I started telling her that father raped me, she got angry and called me a liar).

Table 13  
Coital Debut Experiences

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Male n = 15</b>	<b>Female n = 15</b>	<b>Total n=30</b>
Coital debut was in a committed relationship			
• Yes	12	9	21
• No	3	6	9
First contact was...			
• Something you wanted to happen	8	3	11
• Something you did not want to happen	4	5	9
• Something you did not plan to happen but happened	3	2	5
• Something against your will		5	5
Whether the first sex was with consent			
• Yes	14	6	20
• No	1	9	10
Whether they share the experience to somebody			
• Yes	2	7	9
• No	13	8	21
To whom did they share the incident (n = 9)			
• Close friends	1	6	7
• Relatives	1	1	2

### **Quality of first sex**

The respondents were asked to recall their feelings in their first sex, 21 of 30 shared that their first sex was in a committed relationship. More than half (18) found their first encounter unforgettable and memorable. Almost the same number (17) felt that it was a pleasant at the same time an enjoyable experience. However, five rape victims did not want to reminisce their experience which they considered as shameful experience. All of them mentioned that their first encounter with sex was something against their will because they were forced by threats and intimidation. Two admitted that their



perpetrators used physical force to them while another victim confessed she was being terrorized with a weapon. A 15-year old female rape victim stated:

*Si mama gipalakaw ni papa, gitagaan niya og kwarta para mag-shopping daw. Wala ko kahibalo nga naa na diay buhaton si papa sa ako. Bata pa man gud ko ato, gitawag ko ni papa sa kwarto unya gihiktan akong kamot og tiil, gi ingnan ko nga kung magsumbong ko patayon niya si mama.*

(My mother was given by my father money to shop and to leave the house. I did not know that he had plans of raping me. He asked me to go to the bedroom and he tied my hands and feet. He threatened me that he will kill my mother if I will report what happened)

Table14  
Quality of first sex

Variable	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
Whether coital debut was unforgettable & memorable	11	7	18
• Yes	4	8	12
• No			
Whether coital debut was a pleasant experience			
• Yes	13	4	17
• No	2	11	13
Whether coital debut was enjoyable			
• Yes	13	4	17
• No	2	11	13

On the other hand, the majority who were initiated by their first girlfriend/boyfriend admitted that they enjoyed their coital debut with their first sexual partner. One female respondent whose first sex encounter was with the first boyfriend revealed:

*Lami ang una nakong eksperyensya, kay Boboy man to nahitabo. Barkada siya sa akong classmate unya nagka-uyab mi. birthday man gud to sa akong barkada unya bali nahubog ming duha mao to nga nakuha ko*

*niya...pero napugos ko ato niya pero nalipay ko. Didto ko niya nakuha sa ilang balay*

(The first experience was pleasurable it was with Boboy. He is a friend of my classmate and we became lovers. During the birthday celebration of my classmate we got drunk that was why something happened...I was forced but I enjoyed it. We did it at their house.)

Some of the male respondents believed that their initiation experiences were funny and humiliating because they were the ones guided by their partners on what and how to do it. One male respondent whose first girlfriend was older than him and whom he met upon leaving home admitted:

*Pangit man tong pirmero kay siya pa ang nagtudlo sa akoo kay dili man ko kabalo...loodan gani ko ato og kiss...mas nindot ang ikaduha. Ang una kay mas magulang man to sa akoo, ako 11 siya 17. Bale nilayas man gud ko ato sa una...unya diha ko mipuyo sa namaligya og rugby sa una...unya kay daghan man diha mga buntog buntog dinha dapit gani...mao siya ang nagtudlo sa ako.*

(The first experience was a disaster because she was the one who taught me on what to do...I did not know how, I even dreaded a kiss...the second experience was better. The first was older than me, I was 11 and she was 17. When I stowed away from home I stayed in the house of a rugby seller where many adolescent buntogs (girls) also hang out in the area as well so I got to know her and she taught me.)

Another male respondent confessed:

*Katawanan ang eksperyensya, sa una ato...nag date date mi ...Ako 11 siya 15...unya nagkauyab ming duha. Diri mi nag date, nag init man mi...ako kay wala pay eksperyensya...siya kay nakuha naman siya unya wala pa*

*koy eksperyensya ato. Mao to nga nagkasinabot mi...unya nisugot man sad siya unya nagkasinabot mi nga buhaton namo nga malipay ko og malipay sab siya...mao nga niadto mi sa balay sa akong barkada kanang abandoned place naman to...didto mi. Unya kay nanglakaw man ang mga barkada nam, mao nga kadtong kaming duha na langnabilin...nabuhat namo to. Sa una kay wala pa may boot murag lingaw lingaw lang...unya murag balewala lang unsay mahitabo gani sa imoha ba pataka lang og dasmag ba...mao to pagkahuman ato nagkita na sad mi. Pero kadtong una mikurog ang akong tuhod kay una pa man...gipangutana pa gani ko niya nganong nangluspod ko, gisultihan nako siya nga una pa to nakong kuan ato. Wala pa gani misulod...nagawasan naman gani ko ato. Na-usban pa gani to. Dili to nako malimtan kay pinakakatawanan nako nga eksperyensya.*

(It was really a funny experience. At first we were dating, I was 11 and she was 15. While dating we were aroused and since I was a virgin at that time, we agreed to do it together so that both of us will be happy. We went to the house of a friend. It was an abandoned house. Our friend left us that was why we did it. At first it was just for fun and enjoyment, I did not have any inhibition on what will happen and that incident was followed. But it was in the first sex when I trembled and I was very nervous. She even asked me why. I had a premature ejaculation in the first encounter that was why it was unforgettable and a memorable experience.)

### **Reasons why they tried sex the first time**

There were several reasons mentioned by the respondents on why they engaged in sex for the first time. Some (6 of 30) were curious to experience sex while one-fifth of thirty (6) believed that it was a means of expressing love to their partners. Others (4) tried sex due to peer pressure and influence of drugs and alcohol. Four (4) replied that their partners wanted to have sex while five (5) confessed that their coital debut was a forceful one because they were raped.

In an extreme case however, one of the five respondents who was raped disclosed that she was raped two times yet she enjoyed the third encounter with the offender. She articulated:

*Nwebe man siguro ko ato...ako man tong parente. Kuan...wala man to ang akong papa, unya nag-inum inum man to sila akong mga parente. Nilingkod ko ato unya nangatulog na man tong akong mga igsoon. Unya lain kaayo iya panan-aw sa akoo.... Pero kabalo ko nga nag-inum sila diha unya nakatulog ko human gi-alsa ko niya sa laing balay nga walay tao unya mingaw kaayo human iya kong gihubuan ato...nakamalay na man ko ato kadtong paghubo gyud niya sa ako ko nagkamalay unya gihiktan niya akong kamot unya iya kong gihadlok na kong motug-an daw ko iyang ku-anon ang parents nako...o kong kinsa sa amo iyang makuha...*

(I was nine then, he was a relative of mine. My father was not around and my relatives were drinking in our house. I sat with them because my brothers and sisters were already asleep but then he was looking at me maliciously. When I fall asleep he transferred me to an abandoned house, he undress me and tied my hands, he threatened to kill my parents or anyone of us if I will report the incident.)

*Sa ikatulo medyo giganahan nako... Tinan-away man mi ato...kaming duha nagtinan-away..unya natingala ko nga sa pagkagabii wala ko matulog og siya sad wala matulog...murag naghulatay mi kung kinsay moduol sa among duha. Unya gitawag ko niya...mao nga niduol ko gud...murag kagustohan na nako gud...unya nangutana siya sa akoo...ingon siya nga atong ibalik to...human mitando gani ko...nag una-una ko og tando mao tong nabalik ang ikatulo.*

(The third encounter it was different, I liked it. We were staring at each other and I was mystified why I was not able to sleep and he also felt the same. It seems that we were just waiting for each other on who will make the first move. He then called me and I approached him without reservations and he asked me whether we could do it again and I gave him a nod. That was why the third circumstance with him happened.)

Table 15  
Reasons for having sex after the first time

Reasons (multiple response)	Frequency
• Make up for a misunderstanding	1
• Relieve sexual arousal	2
• Partner wants to have sex	4
• To express love	6
• To experience it/curiosity	6
• Peer pressure	4
• Influence of drugs or alcohol	3
• Trip lang, for fun & enjoyment	4
• I was raped	5
• Others	4

#### **Respondent and Partner's age at first sex**

The median age of respondents upon coital debut was 13 years for males and 11 years for females, while the median age of their partners was 15 for the males and 18 for females. This output implies that the females were initiated younger than the males to older partners.

Almost all of the respondents (29) relayed that the first sex was with someone else and not with their current partners. One-third of them admitted it happened at home and another ten shared it happened at their partner's home. According to 19 of the 30 respondents it was often the male who initiated and made the first move because females have inhibitions in showing their emotions. It was alarming to know that almost all (28) of the respondents did not use protection in their coital debut. However, after the first experience two-thirds of the respondents, ten males and ten females, admitted that there

have been succeeding sexual encounters with the same partner even among the rape victims.

Table 16  
Quality of coital debut experience

Variable	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
Partner during the coital debut			
• Current partner	1		1
• Someone else	14	15	29
Whether there were succeeding sexual experiences with the first sex partner			
• Yes	10	10	20
• No	5	5	10
Who initiates sex			
• Myself	7	1	8
• Partner	7	12	19
• both	1	2	3
Place of coital debut			
• At home	7	3	10
• Partner's home	2	8	10
• Friend's home	1		1
• Beach/park	2		2
• Others	3	4	7
Use protection during the first sex			
• Yes	1	1	2
• No	14	14	28

### **Involvement in sex trade**

#### **Reasons for having sex with others**

All the respondents admitted that they had experienced sex with someone else other than their first sexual partners. When the respondents were asked on the reasons why they had sex with others, they gave several answers. Money was the dominant reason of nearly half (14) of the respondents. Other than that nearly one-third (8) did it

simply for fun and enjoyment, one-fifth admitted they liked the feeling of having sex while five mentioned that they had sex because it was in another relationship. The promiscuity of these adolescent respondents as well as their active sexual lifestyle was depicted on the number of sex partner they have had other than the first. Some have reached a 30 headcount of sex partners while the computed mean was 8.97.

Table 17  
Reasons for having sex

<b>Reasons for having sex other than the first sexual partner (Multiple response)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
• Money	
• Acceptance of peers	14
• Sign of beauty and power	1
• For fun and enjoyment	1
• Likes the feeling of having sex	8
• Another bf/gf	6
• Drunk or into drugs	5
• Others	3
	9

### **Characteristics of Sexual Partner**

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents, ten (10) males and eight (8) females shared that at present they have a steady sexual partner. The characteristics of these individuals vary. A little more than half (17) were their friends who usually belonged to their circle, twelve cited that these partners were their new boyfriends or girlfriends. One-fifth replied that they have had rich individuals as their sexual partners.

Table 18  
Characteristics of sex partner

Characteristics of sexual partner (Multiple response)	Frequency
• Rich	6
• Friends	17
• Handsome/beautiful	2
• My new boyfriend/girlfriend	12
• Others	12

### Kinds of Sexual Acts

The respondents gave positive descriptions on how they felt while having sex, according to them sex was “*lami*” (great), “*gilok*” (titillating), “*ganahan ka*” (pleasurable), “*pangitaonon*” (something you will crave), “*lingaw*” (fun), “*makalipay*” (enjoyable), “*og murag naa sa heaven*” (heavenly).

A 17-year old male respondent admitted that a much fulfilling feeling is expected if they are the first sexual partners of a virgin female.

*Ang akoy labi na kung akoy maka una sa iya mora gyud ko nakadaog og lotto...murag pwede..pang hadlok ba...kung bastoson ka niya...pwede nimong ingnan nga ikaw wala kay nakuha sa akoy...pero ako ang nakauna sa imoha....bisag unsaon pa ko og insulto...ako may naka una sa imo...kanang imong uyab karon nagtila lang na og salin...labi na kay ang kasagaran sa amoa...kusog manginsulto*

(In my own opinion, if I am the first encounter of the girl the experience is comparable to the prize of a lotto game. It can be used as a means to threaten the girl so that she will not say something bad against you especially since insult among us is very common. I can say that the girl has nothing to boast because I have been through her.)



The respondents have also identified four kinds of sexual acts that they have done and which their clients' have demanded from them. Almost everybody (29) admitted providing vaginal intercourse, a little more than one-third (11) have experienced providing oral sex, nine (9) have tried “shine services” and six (6) males declared they have rendered anal sex to gay sex partners. The mean of the number of times per week they have done sex was 2.4.

The different kinds of sexual act done while having sex was an added delight according to a male respondent. This 17-year-old male respondent who admitted having tried different sexual acts with different sexual partners shared:

*Kuan...ang uban mga babae mag blow job sab...unya ang bayot pareho sila mag blowjob sab...mura lagi kag nakadaog og lotto...labi na kung may mga hitsura.*

(Some girls perform blowjob some gays do the same. It is like winning lotto especially if your partners are good looking.)

Table 19  
Kinds of sexual act done

<b>Sexual acts (multiple response)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
• Oral	11
• Anal	6
• Vaginal intercourse	29
• Shine	9

### **How the respondent joined sex trade**

Prior to the interview, the respondents have made it clear that they have tried receiving monetary remuneration in exchange for sex. Almost all (29) of the respondents

shared that someone encouraged them to be involved in sex trade. Majority (27) of them said the promoters of sex trade were their friends. This was not difficult to believe because they have attested that they have friends who have experienced sex and some were even involved in sex trading. Aside from their friends many have stated that certain circumstances related to family problems such as finances pushed them to be in the industry. One respondent whose initiation to sex trade was influenced by his peers relayed.

Barkada nako galawgaw kaayo to kay naa siyay contact nga bayot...ang cellphone sa una kay Motorola pa man.... sigurista ang bayot...500 ang ulo unya gusto niya kami duha...dako pa man ko og lawas sa una...unya limpyo kay naatiman ang akong lawas ato...mao nga natypan ko sa bayot. Ang una niyang tan-aw sa akoa kay gipahubo pa ko unya gipatalikod ko. Wala pa ko kasabot ato. Blind pa ko kaayo ato. Kuan pa man ko ato 13, tapos gihikap ko sa bayot...kay gusto man sa bayot nga balhiboon ang lawas mao nga nagustohan ko sa bayot. Gisingnan ko niya nga cute daw ko og nga sa iya daw ko ato ngagabii. Shock ko...kaatrason ko ato. Unya kay gisultihan ko sa akong barkada nga...ingani lang ang pagbuhat o, ako ang unahon...tanawa mi sa kwarto silipa mi para mahibalo ka..bali una siya gipatan-aw ko tapos ako na dayon kay naniguro man ang bayot ato. Gitan-aw nako sila sa kwarto. G-blowjob siya sa bayot...gitagaan siya og condom tapos gipatira siya sa lobot sa bayot...wala pa man makontento ang bayot.mao to ako na sad.

(It was my friend who had a contact with a gay, we used celphones before to contact his gay friend. His gay friend liked me and find me attractive. He told each of us will be given P500. When the gay scrutinized me he asked me to turn around and he caressed my chest. I did not know why he was doing it I was so blind to understand what he was doing. The gay told me that I was cute and that I will be his possession that night. I was stunned and I wanted to run but my friend told me to stay and look at them. The gay took my friend first and I was asked to look at them while they were having anal sex. The gay was not contented yet that was why he also took me.)

Almost the same approach was used by the friends of the female respondents in introducing the respondents to sex trade. A female respondent who was encouraged by her friend to render sexual services confessed:

*Ttulo mi kabook naglakaw, gihunongan mi og taxi driver na si Nick, kaila sa akong kauban. Na-tripingan man ko, gi-ingnan ko sa akong barkada kong gusto ko mangwarta, mag-shine daw ko. Dili ko gusto pero gipugos ko sa akong barkada. Tungod sa barkada gyud, ingon siya mag-shine mi para makakwarta of makapalit og Islander na tsinelas. Gidala ko sa taxi driver sa Cabantian para mag-shine human gibayaran ko.*

(Three of us were walking when a taxi driver named Nick stopped and picked us up. One of my friends knew him. Nick told my friend that he like me, my friend asked me whether I want to earn. She told me I will just “shine” or masturbate and I could earn money. It was because of my friends. Then the taxi driver took me to Cabantian and paid me after.)

Table 20  
Respondent's entry to sex trade

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Male n = 15</b>	<b>Female n = 15</b>	<b>Total n=30</b>
Tried receiving money as payment for sex			
• Yes	15	15	30
• No			
Whether somebody encourage them to sex trade			
• Yes	14	15	29
• No	1		1

Who encouraged them to sex trade			
• Friends	13	14	27
• Others	2	1	3

### Reasons why in sex trade

The respondents have identified other circumstances that thrust them to sex trade.

The 17 respondents who have tried living away from home admitted that they lacked the basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter while living away from their families.

When they were asked where they got their expenditure for the day, their common response was from the money generated in sex with pay. One male respondent who has tried leaving home and who was encouraged to submit himself to prostitution imparted:

*Tungod man gud usahay...kay naka agi man sab ko og laywas layas sa una...mao na nga walay kapuy-an...ikaduha walay tarung kaon...walay tarung nga sinina...dili makaligo...mao nga sabay sabay ko sa akong barkada...adto mi og Ilustre, claveria....unya manghiram ko sa ila og gamit...baro..unya pagbalik nako...alisdan ra nako...pero ang uban muhatag man sab sa ako...kay makasabot man sa ako...kay kung sila mulayas dili man sab ko makatalikod sa ila...kadtong makakwarta ko...murag pista lagi...bangka ko og inum....samot na kadtong paglayas nako...gisabay ko sa akong barkada.....pero maka realize sab kong hugaw na kaayo ko...mura ko og trapo..nga mipatol ko sa matrona og sa bayot.*

(I experienced living away from home, no place to stay, no food to eat, no proper dress to wear and no water to bathe my self. It was due to all these that I was tempted to go with my friends and post at Ilustre or claveria streets. I borrowed dress and things from my friends and replace all of these when I return from my work. Others even gave their things to me because they understood my need because when they were the ones in need I also helped them. When I earned money I treated my friends to a drinking spree. But while working I also realized that I am dirty because I cater to gays and old women.)

### Payment

The payment often was not fix and it depends on what you were asked to do. According to a 16 year-old female respondent *“Nalipay ko atong gitagaan ko og 1,500 sa Amerikano. Gipa blowjob ko....bisag unsay gipabuhat nila gibuhat nako”* (I was happy when when an American paid me P1,500. He asked me to have oral sex with him and I did. I did what they told me to do). However, 17 of the 30 respondents said that it is often between P101-500, seven claimed receiving 100 and below and only two have experienced receiving above 500. The earnings that they got were often used to purchase personal necessities according to the 23 respondents. The most common possession they wanted to own was a pair of Islander slippers. This was a prized possession to some because there was an attached symbolic status if they were wearing it. Other than the personal needs a little more than half (16) replied that they used the money for their gimmicks with their friends. Only two admitted saving a portion of it and another two confessed giving it to their parents.

When further asked what they felt upon receiving the monetary pay after sex, the respondents gave two opposing responses *“nalipay ko kay nakakwarta ko pero hugaw ang akong huna-huna kay ang pagkakuha sa kwarta hugaw man gihapon.”* (I was glad I earned but I felt dirty because the means used to earn was dirty). A 17-year-old male respondent shared *“nalipay ko kay nakakwarta ko pero paggawas nako nahuna hunaan nako unsa ang gibuhat sa amoa...gilood ko”* (I was glad I earned but when I left I realized what he did to me and I felt throwing up.)

An interesting point however was that while they saw it as a means of solving their financial problems they did not totally acknowledged prostitution as a job that could sustain their needs. According to an 18-year-old female respondent *“dili ni siya trabaho ang trabaho pinaghaguan nimo dili pareha ani nga bikad ka lang kwarta na”* (This is not a job because a job demands hardwork, here you do not have to. You simply spread your legs and you could earn).

Almost all or 25 of the 30 respondents thought that their parents did not know that they were involved in sex trade. Only three males and two females opened up that their

parents knew. Most of the males shared that their parents scolded them once when they were caught taking girls at home. But according to them this was acceptable because they were males.

Table 21

## Payment received and what to do with the money earned

Characteristics	Male n = 15	Female n = 15	Total n=30
Payment every sex			
• 100 and below	5	2	7
• 101-500	9	8	17
• 501 and above		2	2
• it depends	1	3	4
Whether their parents know of their job			
• Yes	3	2	5
• No	12	13	25
What they do with the money they earned	Multiple response		
• Save	2		
• Give to parents & siblings	2		
• Buy personal necessities	23		
• Use for gimmicks with friends	16		
• Others	7		

**Parent's Knowledge**

Five of the thirty respondents admitted that their parents knew that they were involved in sex trade. They were asked on the reactions of their parents upon knowing their means of earning money. One female respondent who left home and was found by the parents staying in a lodge relayed that when her parents knew, it was a fearful experience.

*Kadtong paglayas nako ato...unya nipuyo ko sa akong barkada...nahibalo man siya nga nagapangwarta ko sa joggers...giadto ko nila og nakit-an ko nila sa joggers didto sa lodge natulog...gikulata ko nila didto...layas layas daw ko og payat na daw ko ingon akong mama...unya didto wala nako nangwarta sa isa kabulan pero nibalik gihapon ko ato kay kinahanglanon man namo ang kwarta.*

(When I left home, I stayed with my friends. When my parents knew that I was working at Joggers Lodge, they took me. They hurt me physically

upon seeing me. They even scolded me and told me how thin I was. After that incident I stopped working for a month but I resumed working when the family needed the money).

When further asked what their parents did to them they shared that anger and disappointment were the initial reaction of the parents upon knowing that their daughters were into prostitution. However, this did not last long according to an 18 year old female respondent who was caught with her friends while waiting for customers. She relayed how her parents punished her:

*Kadtong nahibal-an nila, gikulata ko nila og gipaluhod ko nila og mongos. Ingon sa akong pamilya nga mag-undang ko ana kay lain daw kaayo na labi na kung mahibal-an kay lain daw na kay muslim lagi daw. Pero wala nako gi-undangan, tuloy tuloy ko hangtod sa misugot ang akong pamilya ato...pero misugot sila pero pilit.*

(Upon knowing, they hurt me physically, they even asked me to kneel on mongo seeds. According to my family, I have to stop because it is not good that others will know, especially that I am a Muslim. But I did not stop until they accepted me, although they were simply forced to accept my job).

Table 22 outlines the effects of parents' knowledge on the involvement of the respondents in sex trade. The relief from fear that the parents will know was the only advantage mentioned by the respondents. The knowledge of the parents on their involvement in sex trade was also taken as an approval by the respondents to continue their work. A 16 year old female respondent articulated "*dili na ko mahadlok magtrabaho, sa una mahadlok ko kay basig makabalo sila, karon pasagdan na lang ko nila*" (I am not afraid anymore to work, before they knew it I was afraid that they will have an idea but today they do not mind me working at all).



However, the parents' relationship towards them became stale. One respondent shared that her parents are now indifferent towards her "*murag okay sa ila magtagad saa laing tao pero kung ako ang moduol sa ila murag lain ilang panan-aw.*" (They accommodate other people who approach them while they loathe my presence).

Anger was only the first reaction of the parents upon knowing their involvement. The stories of the five respondents implied that when anger subsided the expectation as well as the demand of the parents to give their earnings to them surfaced. One female respondent confessed "*mangayo og kwarta ang akong papa unya hatagan nako, pero usahay magyawayaw kong walay dala nako nga kwarta*" (When my father will ask money from me I give him and if I fail to give I will hear a lot of scolding from him).

Table 22

Reaction and effects of parent's knowledge on the respondent's involvement to sex trade

<b>Reaction of parents</b>	<b>Advantage</b>	<b>Disadvantage</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scolded</li> <li>• Asked to kneel on mungo seeds</li> <li>• Hurt physically</li> <li>• Humiliated verbally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not afraid to work anymore</li> <li>• My mother opened up financial problems at home</li> <li>• They gave advice that I take ginseng capsules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They scold me if I spend my money with my friends</li> <li>• Parents demands that I give my earnings to them</li> <li>• Parents are now dependent on their children</li> </ul>

Their parents even discouraged the respondents of sharing their earnings to other friends, one female respondent admitted:

*Usahay kasuk-an ko kay ang akong kwarta gi-inum lang daw nako sa barkada. Usahay yawyawan ko nga kung magkasakit ka ayaw og dagan diri sa amoa, adto ka sa imong barkada kay ang imong kwarta padulong sa imong barkada og dili sa amoa.*

(Sometimes my parents will scold me because I share my money with my friends. They even told me that if ever I will get sick I should not run to them but instead seek help from my friends because that is where my money go).

In these reactions of the parents, the respondents realized that the responsibility of economic support is now on their hands, according to a female respondent “*ana ko murag ako na lang gisaligan kay kung wala silay kwarta sa ako man mangayo. Hatagan sab nako kay malooy man ko labi na kong mohilak si mama*” (I told myself it seems they are now depending on me because if they do not have money they ask support from me. I give them my earnings because I pity them especially when my mother cries).

When further asked how they felt on the attitude of their parents, the respondents implied that they now consider this as a form of help to their parents. Furthermore, they also believed that it is now their responsibility to serve their parents. According to a 16 year old female respondent: “*Kay sila humana man mitabang sa akua ako na sab ang motabang sa ila bisag sakit sa ako ang akong ginabuhay*”. (They were through helping me grow, now it is my turn to help them).

On the other hand, the respondents were able to identify advantages on their parent’s knowledge of their involvement in sex trade. The respondents shared that their

parents have been giving them advice every now and then. A Muslim-female respondent shared that her parents asked her to stop because it is not good if other Muslims will know.

### **Common Sex Partner**

The adolescent respondents had different groups of clients. Nearly half or 12 of 30 respondents replied that they had gay clients who usually work in beauty parlors. Some have rendered sexual favors to taxi drivers (10), office employees (9) and even their friends (6). In addition, four (4) named students as another group of clientele and only two (2) have tried sexual partners who were construction workers.

Table 23  
Common sex partners

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
• Taxi drivers	10
• Friends	6
• Students	4
• Gays	12
• Construction workers	2
• Office employees	9
• Bystanders	1
• Others	8

### **Benefits of Sex with pay**

The respondents have identified two major benefits of sex with pay. The first was the opportunity to earn money (26) and the second was the fun and enjoyment (17) they got from sex. However, four (4) thought that there was no benefit gained in sex trade. When further asked on the long run benefit of sex trade, 18 of 30 still claimed monetary

gains as the primary attractor. However, it is worthy to note that the number of individuals who believed that there was no benefit in sex trade in the long run increased to 11.

A male respondent whose parents were knowledgeable of his involvement to sex trade relayed how his job helped him and his family to purchase their needs:

*Makatabang ka sa imong pamilya...makahatag ka bisag asa pa man na gikan...makapalit ka og gamit nimo...kanang kasagaran man gud pareho nako studyante...ang makatabang man gud na pangproject....pambayad sa eskwelahan...pambisyo bisyo...pamalit og gamit...mao ra na ang reason namo.*

(It helps my family buy the basic needs. Whatever the means of earning was, still the money can help you buy things. Just like me, I am a student it helps me buy school requirements and pay tuition fees at the same time it will allow me to enjoy with my friends.)

Table 24  
Benefits of Sex Trade

Variables (multiple response)	Frequency
Benefit of sex with pay	
• None	4
• Money	26
• Comfort and care	1
• Acceptance of peers	1
• Fun & enjoyment	17
• Sign of masculinity	1
• Others	4
Long run benefit of sex with pay	
• None	11
• More money	18
• More friends	2
• Others	1

Aside from the money the male respondents gave a psychological benefit of sex. A 16-year-old male respondent admitted:

*Naay kaayohan, parti anang sa lawas nako...bisag dili ko maka gerger kinahanglan man gyud nga ang lalaki malabasan...kay sympre alangan man pirmi na lang kamot ang gamiton para malabasan lang....kay kung dili ka malabasan unya makakita ka og bata diri...maglain imo huna huna kay kuan na kaayo ka...kinahanglan gyud ka malabasan...mao na ang kaayohan.*

(There is benefit in sex. My body demands to secrete my fluids because if you will not produce it and you will see a little girl you might do something. It is necessary for me to squirt it out. That is the advantage).

### **Fears encountered in Sex Trade**

The respondents did not only identify the benefits of sex trade they have identified negative effects of sex trade as well and they admitted that this was not a prominent job. They were aware of the societal stigma attached to it. One respondent articulated “*pangit ni nga trabaho, mura kag nagbaligya og onod nimo o karne nga gi prisyonhan...paminaw nimo sa imong sarili hugaw kaayo ka kay bisag kinsa lang ang gamiton nimo*” (This is not a luxurious job, you are selling your flesh just like meat in the market you have an attached price. You will feel dirty because you have sex with anyone). Furthermore, table 25 presents a number of fears that come with the involvement in sex trade that the respondents shared, among it were: the probability of being infected with STD, the possibility that their parents will know and the chance that they will be stigmatized by the society.

Table 25  
Respondent's Fears upon involvement to sex trade

Male	Female
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STD</li> <li>• To be gay</li> <li>• No cure of STD</li> <li>• Stigma of the society</li> <li>• Parents or relatives will know</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If partner has a large penis</li> <li>• STD</li> <li>• Pregnant</li> <li>• Stigma of the society</li> <li>• If customer will not pay</li> <li>• If parents will know (felt before the parents learned about their job)</li> </ul>

### Free sex

One of the distinct characteristics of the adolescent buntogs is their capacity to offer sex for free to others. Notably only half of the total number, ten (10) males and five (5) females, admitted of doing this. Twelve (12) of the 15 confessed that they were doing it with their friends while two respondents said they did it with their crushes.

Table 26  
Whether respondents have sex for free

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Male n = 15</b>	<b>Female n = 15</b>	<b>Total n=30</b>
Whether they have sex for free other than their bf/gf			
• Yes	10	5	15
• No	5	10	15
To whom they offer sex without pay (n=15)			
• Friends	9	3	12
• Crush		2	2
• Others	1		1

### Use of contraception

It is alarming to know that about three-fourth (28) of the respondents did not use contraceptive in their first sex. During their latest sex, 10 males and eight females did not use any protection too. As a consequence, more than half (11 males and 5 females) has acquired sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the past years. Most of those affected referred it as “tulo” a local term for gonorrhoea. According to them, one has tulo if there is pass on her/his sexual organ when he/she feel feverish and if he/she has difficulty of urinating.

Surprisingly, they did not fear tulo or STI, some have experienced it more than three times and yet majority of them (23) still do not use protection every time they have sex. One male respondent confessed “*Kung masakit ko walay problema ana basta kay matambalan na nasakit...ang problema lang kung dili na matambalan*” (when I get sick its not a problem for as long as you know the cure, once you find no cure then that is the time that you could consider it as a problem). He further said “*dili man na siya angay katagman kay ginatuyo man nimo na...kung wala na nako ginatuyo mutaggam ko..pero*

*kay tinuyoan man dili ko dapat mataggam.”* (If you will be sick you should not be remorseful because you intended it to happen. You did it on purpose so there should be no regrets).

One male respondent shared how he cured the STI he acquired in the past.

*“Nagpalit ko og Pembrityn og doxycyclin...inggon man akong barkada....unya nagtambal sab ko og botong. Initon ang botong....tapos gergeron ang botong, bale five minutes gikan nimo siya gi ahon sa init kay bukal na man na....kung tamatama na ang kainit...mao na nimo gergeron...botangan man og tambal...doxycyclin og doxyphelin. Bale duah ang inumon og duha sab ang ibutang sa botong....tapos ang pembretin kada gabiii nimo inumon. Kaisa lang ka maggerger sa butong...pero dugay dugay na ba kay wala man kay Makita....hangtud gyud na nga magawasan ka...kay mao man na ang mosoyup sa kagaw....sa nana...ang kainit og tambal ang mosoyop...paggawas sa imoha...naa may mosoyop ang masoyop tambal na man to para molimpyo sa kagaw.”*

(I bought pembrityn and doxycyclin because my friend told me how. You have to heat a young coconut and put two capsules in it, allow it to boil. When the heat is tolerable, masturbate on the hole of the coconut and try to secrete fluid in it. It may take sometime because you do not have a face to look at. Once you have a release the liquid in the coconut will absorb the bacteria and the medicine will enter into the penis to cure. The other two medicines will be taken every night.)

Table 27  
Use of protection

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Male n = 15</b>	<b>Female n = 15</b>	<b>Total n=30</b>
Whether they used protection in their latest sex			
• Yes	5	7	12
• No	10	8	18
Whether they use protection everytime they have sex			
• Yes	1	6	7
• No	14	9	23
Whether they have acquired STD in the past year			
• Yes	11	5	16
• No	4	10	14



### Pregnancy

While they have little fear on STI, many or 25 of the 30 respondents however agreed that it is dangerous for a girl who is below twenty years old to be pregnant. According to them the incapacity of the adolescent to grow her child makes this circumstance difficult and not the capability of delivering a healthy baby. Furthermore, 13 males and nine (9) females have a misconception that girls cannot get pregnant in their coital debut. A female respondent articulated “*depende man na sa iyaha, pero dapat katulo sa magkuan og depende sa na siya sa semilya sa lalaki*” (It depends on the circumstance, but actually sex should be done three times before the girl gets pregnant and it also depends on the semen of the male).

Table 28  
Respondent’s knowledge on pregnancy

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Male n = 15</b>	<b>Female n = 15</b>	<b>Total n=30</b>
Can a girl get pregnant in her coital debut			
• Yes	2	6	8
• No	13	9	22
Is it dangerous for a girl below twenty to be pregnant			
• Yes	13	12	25
• No	2	3	5
Whether gratified with sex			
• Yes	12	8	20
• No	3	7	10

In an extreme case, two female respondents confessed having experienced pregnancy. However, they aborted all their pregnancies. Both admitted that they were not ready to be a mother that was why they aborted their babies. One 15-year-old female respondent relayed how she aborted her pregnancy.

*Kanang pagmata sa buntag usa ka mokaon inum ka og duha ka cortal unya pop cola nga eight ounce ang bale tubig nimo. Abtan og pila lang ka oras duguon na dayon ka.*

(Upon waking up and before eating breakfast, you drink two cortal tablet and follwed with pop cola. After how many hours you will bleed).

### **Possible effects of Sex**

Aside from the monetary gain cited earlier, table 29 shows that the respondents have identified a number of possible effects of sex. A little more than three-fourth, 24 of 30 respondents believed that STI is a possible effect of sex, half of the total number of respondents shared that the pleasure one feels while having sex is another effect of sex. Only 13 of 30 recognized the possibility of unplanned pregnancy. One relayed the fear factor that the parents will know that they are involved in sex trade as another effect of sex.

Table 29  
Possible effects of Sex

<b>Effects (multiple response)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
• Unplanned pregnancy	13
• More money	8
• STD/AIDs/HIV	24
• Pleasure	15
• Fear	1
• Others	7

### **Effects of Sex**

When they were further asked to identify the physical effects of sex that they have experienced, 27 replied that often they were physically drained after sex. Eight of thirty

admitted that the titillating sensation they felt during sex was another effect of sex. Aside from these, four (4) female respondents also said that they thought their breasts become fuller after sex. Two shared that they got pregnant and another two were satiated with sex.

Consistent with their replies, the respondents again cited monetary gain as an effect of sex when they were asked what are the other effects of sex than the ones they have experienced physically. However, one third felt proud that others have to pay them to have sex. Five believed they felt like a real woman now and four (4) admitted that they were afraid that others would know and stigmatize them. Surprisingly, three have experienced fears of becoming lesbians or gays latter on since they have been indulging with homosexuals.

While some have fears with the effects of sex, 20 of the respondents disclosed that they were gratified with sex especially if it was with somebody they liked. One female respondent shared *“basta type og crush nako ang lalaki ganahan gyud ko, enjoy kaayo kay bisag dili pa siya kabalo ako ang modala sa iyaha”* (If I like the guy I would really enjoy sex and even if he doesn't know I will guide him).

Table 30  
Effects of Sex that they have experienced

Variables	Total
Physical effects of sex in them	
• Got pregnant	2
• Breast become fuller	4
• Like masturbating myself	1
• Physically drained	27
• Titillating	8
• Satiated	2
• Others	11
Effects of sex other than the physical ones	
• None	3
• Feels like a real woman	5
• Feel beautiful or handsome	3
• Feels accepted	1
• Feels powerful over the partner	2
• Richer	4
• Proud	10
• Afraid to be gay or lesbian	3
• Fear	4
• others	11

### Realization in Sex trade

In their involvement in sex trade, respondents asserted that there were several realizations that they have learned from the experience. One confessed, “*ang akong nakat-onan, nakahibalo lang ko mag lips to lips og mag gerger*” (I learned how to kiss and how to have sex). Another one said “*wala man koy nakat onan...pangit kay nakaig kuan ko sa kapwa lalaki.*” (I did not learn anything; it was a bad experience because I had sex with gays).

In their plight in this industry 12 of the respondents thought that sex trade was a profiting job and four (4) believed this was a venue for them to forget their problems.

Some also acknowledged that in this job they were prone to STI, and to societal discrimination.

When further asked if they will stop if asked to quit, all of them admitted that they were willing to stop, however they were afraid of the consequences if they will stop. As one female respondent whose family knew of her involvement in sex trade shared: “*undang ko, undang sab mi og kaon*” (I stop then we also stop eating).

Table 31  
Realization in their involvement to sex trade

<b>Realization in Sex trading (Multiple responses)</b>	<b>Total</b>
• Profiting job	12
• Feels like a real man/woman	1
• Venue to forget problems	4
• This job is prone to STD	4
• Society discriminates us	4
• Others	14

## Chapter Four Discussion

*Sa kapobre, unya kanang palahubog ang papa unya sugarol ang mama...unya palayason ka. Ang una gyud makatesting kanang gipalayas, mapasubo na lang gyud ka. Magpagamit kay walay bisti...walay kaon, walay tsinelas....usahay sa barkada kung magselos ka...matingala ka kung asa gikan ang iyang kwarta. Unya kung makahibalo ka kung unsa ang ilang buhaton mapasubo na lang sab ka...makaingon ka nga mosundog na lang ko sa ilang trabaho...hangtod nga maanad ka, hangtod nga mailado ka...*  
Male, 17 y.o

(It is the life of being poor. If your father is a drunkard and your mother is a gambler...then you will be asked to leave the house. The first person to try sex trade will be the ones who left their homes. You will submit yourself because you do not have food, no slippers. Sometimes you get jealous of your friends, you will wonder where their money came from. Upon knowing what they do to earn money you will be wondering what if you will try to do the same and you will be encouraged to do it, until you will get used to it and be known by clients).

The quotation above was taken from the in depth interview conducted to one of the adolescents. This typical case of an adolescent buntog enumerates the usual reasons why many of the adolescent buntogs are into sex trade. These narrations carry profound meaning on the kind of environment and the quality of life they have. The data of the survey and the in-depth interviews shows that the early entry of the adolescents to sex industry was not a unilateral relationship. Education, friends & peers, society and family were involved directly or indirectly in the sexual health issues of the adolescents.

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study and relating it to other studies on adolescent and sex trade. Then it proceeds to the identification of the key factors that may contribute to the continuation of adolescent buntogs to sex trade. The

discussion will start with the role of the family, the peers, beneficial aspects of sex trade and ignorance of health risks.

### **Role of the family**

The results revealed that the respondents admitted having experienced sex with pay at a young age. In the survey, 17 of the 30 respondents disclosed that they were not residing with their parents anymore, although they articulated that they still visit and contact their family sometimes. The interview results also showed that the departure of these respondents from home was not caused by poverty. More than poverty and the lack of food, they chose to leave their families because they can no longer bear the abuse as well as the negligence of their parents at home. Aside from this, the increasing number of family members brought about by the raising number of other families gave the respondents the feeling of being left alone. The computed mean of the number of biological brothers and sisters (4.33) as well as the average number of half/step brothers and sisters (4.00) depicted an increasing number of family members that demanded parental attention at home. Their departure from home might be one mouth less to feed to a family of eight earning within 1001-5000 a month. However, the absence of the family promotes pressure to the adolescent respondent and detached his/her emotional attachment to the family.

The separation of the parents of the respondents aggravated the situation. The interviews showed that the absence of parents resulted to the weak parental influence on the decision making of the respondents. As one respondent shared “*wala na ko maanad duolan sila sa akong problema*” (I am not used to share to them my problems anymore).

Furthermore, the absence of biological parents decreased the quality of comfort the family provides. To be able to escape, respondents left home to find refuge and while away from home they were forced to assume responsibility of looking into their personal welfare. The essential needs once provided by their family are now left on themselves to provide.

In the book of Paul S. Kaplan entitled “The Human Odyssey” (1998) he mentioned that adolescents who described their family lives as troubled and the adolescents who were alienated from their family are more frequent users of drugs. He added that parents who were cold, forbidding or neglectful tend to produce children who act out and who are aggressive. These findings are true in this study. In-depth interview results proved that the type of nurturing used by the parents of the respondents predisposed these adolescents to sex trade. In addition, parent’s negligence was not only one of the reasons why they succumbed to prostitution.

In-depth interview results also described that the acceptance of the parents is possible to the extent that the adolescents were encouraged by their parents to continue their job. The decision to shift the pressure for economic support from parents to the adolescent was felt by these respondents. One respondent relayed *“nasuko si papa kadtong nasakpan ko nila natulog sa Joggers Lodge, gipa-undang ko pero wala man ko patoo ana na lang si papa bahalag molaag daw ko ug gabii basta naay kwarta dala pag-uli”* (My father was angry when he caught me sleeping at Joggers Lodge. He asked me to stop but I was hardheaded. He just told me it is okay that I stay out late for as long as I have money when I get back home). Aside from verbal approval the adolescents assumed



that a mere acceptance of the money by the parents is in itself a consent given by their parents. The respondents took the openness of their parents to ask financial needs from them an encouragement at the same time a release from fear.

The book entitled *Uncharted Passage* by Menasch et, al, (1999), argued that many girls do not really decide for themselves about their sexual relations with men but their families. This finding indirectly applies to the adolescent buntogs. The separation of the family brought about by mobility and separation pushed the adolescents to strive on his/her own until he/she submits himself/herself to sex trade.

However, this study does not concur with the findings of Gerry Anigan in his study on Filipino Adolescents, which cited that parental authority might not be a cause for sexual activity among Filipino adolescents. There may be no direct link between the lack of parental guidance and the intimate relationship of the respondents but it is understood that adolescents are often confronted with changes and adjustments that are often distressing emotions that could be resolved with the presence of support groups such as the peers.

### **Peers**

According to McCann Erickson (as cited in Gastardo-Cosas et, al, 2003) whether temporary or permanent, parental absenteeism is a reality that has led the youth to turn to their peers not just for friendship and companionship but also for nurturing, intimacy, security and guidance. The peer groups provided the adolescent buntogs the source of social activities and support as well as an easy entry into opposite sex friendship.

According to Batangan (2003), the peer groups serve the following functions: 1) control aggressive and sexual impulses; 2) encourage independence; 3) improve social skills; 4) develop reasoning abilities; and 5) form attitudes toward sexuality and sexual behavior. The same observation was depicted in the survey and the interview data of the respondents. More than half confessed that they shared their problems to their peers and more than two-thirds were reciprocated with support and multiple help from friends. One respondent relayed “*ginasulti nako sa akong bestfriend ang akong problema unya tambagan ko niya*” (I tell my problems to my bestfriend and she gives me advice). The help extended however, does not assure the appropriate means of solving the problems.

Instead of attending classes the respondents preferred doing the common activities: drinking, taking drugs, strolling with friends, disco and chatting with their friends outside school. The survey result divulged that majority (27) of the respondents were encouraged by their friends to join these activities because the need to conform to the peers was necessary. The friends now served as their model in decision making while away from the families and even in their choice to join sex trade. The in-depth interview results also manifested that some of the friends even served as pimps. This implies that the peers also reinforced the aggressive behaviors of the adolescent buntogs.

In the study “Filipino Adolescent in Changing Times”, it was stipulated that the peer groups was also viewed as a potential source of trouble and a negative influence (Gastardo-Cosas et. al, 2003) This finding is applicable in this study because the adolescents were affected with the activities which they see around them and which are being practiced by their friends. The constant interaction with their friends developed

bonding among them that intensifies the influence of their friends in their decisions. The kinds of activities they usually do and the quality of topics they discuss with their peers encouraged the respondents to abide with the rules of their peers.

The respondent's description and definition of their friends gave an idea on the quality of friends they have which greatly affects their decisions. The kind of friends they mingle with was a reason why they yielded to prostitution.

### **Beneficial Aspects of Commercial Sex**

According to Psychologist John J. Michell, some psychological factors at work push adolescent towards sexual activity. Possibly the most important is the need for intimacy and belongingness. Sexual intercourse for him is a natural extension of intimacy providing direct, though temporary gratification. This finding of Michell is related to the adolescent buntogs. The respondent's involvement to sex trade was not caused by one factor but three factors that made them believed that sex with pay is beneficial, namely: personal satisfaction, psychological reward and economic benefit.

Personal Satisfaction. The respondents considered sex with partners as a source of experience, fun and enjoyment. The same finding was generated in the interviews and FGDs of Tan (1996) to Filipino adolescent males. It is interesting to note that a much higher number of males find their coital experience memorable, pleasant and enjoyable compared to the females. However, the females were initiated to sex younger (11 years old) while the males had their first sex at 13 years old. The females were also higher in the number of sex partners that they had at 9.2 while the males at 8.8. Although more

than two-thirds of the respondent had their coital debut in a committed relationship only 11 of 30 planned their first contact to happen. The pain experienced and felt during the coital debut was the dominant reason why some of the females did not enjoy their first sex. Nevertheless, two-thirds admitted that there were succeeding sexual encounters after the first experience with the same sexual partner. The male's satisfaction of sex depends more on their physical experiences while the female's satisfaction depends on their emotional relationship with their partner.

The in depth interview output demonstrated that the males felt more sexual satisfaction and more enjoyment with partners who were learned and who were willing to perform different sexual acts with them. Even if all the respondents confessed that they were physically drained after sex, the pleasure, fun, enjoyment and titillating feeling were only few of the reasons why the number of sex a week by the respondents was high. However, the in depth interviews showed that the sexual satisfaction also depended on whether they have an emotional relationship with their partners. According to Bell and Coughney (as cited in *Sexuality and Sexual Health*, 2003) sex without affection characterizes people having sexual intercourse without emotional involvement, without the need for affection. They engaged in sex for sex sake because they liked it, enjoyed it and did so without strings attached.

Psychological. The in-depth interview results showed that males also experienced a different level of satisfaction with their virgin partners. According to the male respondents the advantage of being the first sexual partner to a virgin female was the

possibility to control their partners and the opportunity to boast to their peers. The same finding surfaced in the study of Gerry Anigan, he articulated that peer pressure abetted by the prevailing “machismo” subculture might push an adolescent to prove his sexual prowess. The traditional value and importance attached to virginity did not hold true among the buntogs. The fun, enjoyment and experience super impose these traditional beliefs at the same time implies that there could be no emotional attachment between partners when having sex.

It was also found out that a higher number of males were gratified with sex compared to the females. The in-depth interview result among the male respondents illustrated that the psychological effect of sex to men made the male appreciate sex more than the females. According to the male respondents sex with pay was like heating two birds with one stone, you get a release and you earn. This understanding on sex as a means of satisfying psychological needs encouraged active sexual lifestyle among the male respondents.

Economic. Adolescence is characterized by a strong desire for independence. Being independent increases the chances of an adolescent to gain greater social acceptance and this does not apply among the male respondents alone but also among the females. According to Tambayan, children with irregular contact with their families have less perceived economic problems compared with those who maintained regular contact with their families.

The findings of Tambayan concur with the results of this study. The independence the respondents gained while funding their personal needs and purchasing personal items from the income they earned implies that the idea of giving it to the parents was secondary. Self-satisfaction was the first priority before the family; this could be attributed to the fact that there exist a gap between the parents and the respondents. Furthermore, unless they felt that they were valued while at home, the law of reciprocity may apply.

Adolescent value their acceptance and belongingness to their peer groups because this gives them the opportunity to mingle with others. However, their membership to peer groups requires them to conform to the subculture of the buntogs. The chance to earn and the ability to purchase clothes as well as things is the perceived economic benefit of the respondents. The survey output shows that the money earned from sex trade is either used to purchase personal needs or to contribute for the peers' gig and activities.

### **Ignorance of risks**

With the on set of maturational changes occurring in adolescent stage, risk-taking behavior emerges as a component of normal adolescent (Bell, 1993). The survey data impart that the respondents were aware that other than pleasure and money, STI/AIDS/HIV as well as unplanned pregnancy were possible effects of sex. Yet, there was a low rate of fear among the respondents. In the in-depth interviews, the respondents have low inhibition on sex because they know how to cure the STI that they have acquired. Even among the females, the low rate on fear of pregnancy is due to their personal knowledge on how to abort a baby.

The assumption of the respondents that STI and pregnancy are unworthy issues of apprehension is alarming. Furthermore, more than two-thirds of the respondents did not believe that a girl could get pregnant in her coital debut. A respondent articulated “*dapat katulo sa, og depende na siya sa semilya sa lalaki*” (Sex should done thrice, it also depends on the quantity of the semen of the partner). The numerous misconceptions acquired by the respondents from their peers puts them into a high health risk.

However, many admitted that it is dangerous for a girl below twenty to be pregnant. But the reason given was the financial incapacity of the mother to sustain her child and not the biological impediments of the young girl. In addition, the average number of sex a week (2.4) and the computed mean of the number of sex partners (8.97) implies that the respondents are sexually active and are susceptible to STI and other negative effects of sex. In all these data, it implies that adolescent buntogs are more vulnerable than the normal adolescent.

### **Synthesis:**

The prevalence of adolescent buntogs in Davao city is not only instigated by one causative factor alone. The increasing number of buntogs can be attributed and explained by other contributing factors in which this study was able to probe. The succeeding paragraphs will discuss them in detail.

The conceptual framework of the study illustrated that the personal characteristics of the respondents, their family and their peers may have contributed to their involvement

to sex trade. The interplay of these variables served as the predisposing, attracting and precipitating factors that caused them to enter to prostitution.

The vulnerable adolescents needed parental guidance in their developmental growth, however the absence of family rearing detaches the respondents from their family. The erosion of the family and social support tend to lead the respondents to available networks. These networks may also be adolescents who seek the same comfort and who are also vulnerable.

Living outside the comfort of home disposes the adolescent to purchase her immediate needs on her own. However, the special roles of peers provide a substitute to the family support. At the same they are the source of social activities and intimate friendships. But this demands the respondents to conform to the norms of the group.

The intimate relationship provided by the partners and the peers made the respondent feel wanted, secured and happy. The encouragement of the peers was the pressing reason why the respondents joined sex trade. The influence of the peers and the need of the adolescent to belong did not make the entry to sex trade difficult.

Aside from the peers, the initiation experiences of the adolescents made them more susceptible to sex trade. Although this is the secondary reason after the financial benefit, the sexual gratification felt by the respondents during sex is a reason why some involved themselves to sex at a young age. This further implies that the younger the coital debut the higher is the chance to be involved in sex trade.

The younger the entry to sex trade by the buntogs, the more prone they will be in acquiring STI or getting pregnant. Furthermore, the misconceptions of the respondents on



how to cure STI and on how to abort a baby could also be a reason why these respondents have little inhibition on the effects of sex.

The findings of the study also showed that some of the respondents seemed to feel independent upon earning money. The feeling to buy things on their own from their own earned money seems to provide satisfaction to the respondents.

All the findings of this research imply that there are complex and numerous reasons why adolescents join the sex trade. This study further showed that indeed there are several factors that would contribute to the submission of the adolescent to the flesh industry and these factors might also be contributing to longer stay in the sex business.

## **Chapter Five**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

The study primarily aimed to investigate and identify the factors that influenced the adolescent buntogs involvement in sex trade. The respondent's personal characteristics as to their socio-economic profile, family background, peers and sexual initiation factors particularly – the quality of initiation experiences, perceived economic benefits of sex and the inadequate knowledge of health risks were thoroughly discussed.

To be able to answer the research questions, thirty referred adolescent buntogs, 15 males and 15 females were asked to answer survey questionnaires. Aside from this, two females and two males were selected for an in depth interview. The interviews gave way to a deeper understanding on the sexual activities and practices of the adolescent.

The survey results showed that the adolescent females were younger than the males, and 20 of respondents were still in their secondary level. Yet, more than half (17) of there number did not live with their families anymore, instead they reside either with their relatives or friends. Almost half of the total number of respondents came from broken families, thus instigated some of the respondents to depart from their homes. This also consequently resulted to a weak influence of parents on the decision making process of the adolescent buntogs.

Most of the respondents were under a family of more than five members, with parents earning only within 1001-5000 a month income bracket. The sources of income

of the parents vary but most of them earn their living from blue-collar jobs brought about by the low educational attainment of the parents.

In the absence of parental support, the respondents seek refuge to their peers. This influential group was the source of information and the promoter of activities that put the respondents at risk. The peers provided the adolescents a source of social activities that paved way for their easy entry to opposite sex friendships.

The adolescents started their romantic relationships at a young age (mean=13.77) and yet, this did not hinder them to have intimate relations with their partners. The age of the females in coital debut was younger compared with the males, some females were initiated below ten years old. However, triggered by curiosity and the pressure of the partner to have sex, persuaded the buntogs to try sex for the first time.

The sexual practices of the respondents were very alarming. In addition to that, the numbers of sex partners the respondents have had imply that they are active and have no compunction on the possible effects of sex. Some of the respondents admitted to have acquired STI. However, the threats that the respondents experienced only slowed them down but had not encouraged them to stop engaging in sex trade.

The absence of family support and the peer pressure pushed the young adolescents to engage in prostitution. The lack of economic sources while away from home was the ultimate reason why they indulged in sex trade. The opportunities to be able to purchase personal needs and to gain the acceptance of peers were two of the benefits that the respondents implied in the in-depth interviews. However, it could not be

denied that the pleasure attached to sex as well as the fun and enjoyment may have encouraged these adolescents to be in sex trade as well

Even if the respondents have identified monetary gain as the top benefit of sex, some of the respondents did not fail to consider the possibility of acquiring STI in the future. Nearly half of the respondents realized that sex trade is a profiting job because it helped them purchase their needs. However, they think that there is no positive effect of sex trade in the long run.

The interview results showed that some of the respondents abhorred and thought of themselves as dirty for being in this job. However, they also said that they are involved in sex trade because they thought that this is the only way they can earn considering their limitations.

**Conclusion:**

Adolescents are confronted with changes and adjustments that are often associated with distressing emotions such as tension, confusion and uncertainty. They encounter conflicts as they rationalize and redefine their complex relationships with the people around them such as their parents, peers and opposite sex (Ogena, 2001). This is true and evident among the adolescent buntogs. In the course of their developmental growth they were facing a lot of adjustments that gave them pressure in their decision-making while relating with people. Just like other adolescents they were going through a period of ambiguous role expectations that gave them confusion. This confusion and uncertainty was eliminated as they clung to their peers and rely on their age mates. However, they were not like other ordinary adolescents who had familial support and parental help. In their development they did not have a warm and a supportive family that could have helped them cope with the demands of adolescent life. The separation of their parents and the presence of other families as well as the distant parent-child relationship pushed them to turn to their peers as their principal source of information and advice. Furthermore, the promiscuity of their parents, as proven in the raising number of other families and multiple partners, could have been a factor why the respondents were sexually active and were involved in sex trade at an early age.

However, unlike other prostitutes who were in brothels, recruitment agencies and hotels the respondents were not connected in establishments that required everyday services from them. They can be classified as one of the streetwalkers who meet their clients through friends and along the streets. Unlike other prostitutes who joined sex

industry for monetary reasons, the respondents submitted themselves to prostitution to appease the neglect of their parents, to conform to their peers and to satisfy their personal needs. However, the number of sex a week implies that they did not do it regularly.

In the study on child prostitution by Haggarty (1999), he acknowledged that there are several reasons why adolescents joined sex trade. He implied that prostitution was a means of escape of these adolescents from poverty, violence, lack of opportunities, unpleasant marriages of parents, relationships and violent sexual practices that may have psychologically predisposed them to prostitution. He cited the case of adolescent prostitution in Brazil that was the direct consequence of the economic recession and the low status of women in the country. On the other hand, in the study on women entertainers in Angeles and Olongapo city here in the Philippines, the same analysis surfaced. It mentioned that the young prostitutes were traced from poor families and because of their poorness they have either been sold by their families to brothel owners or were deceived by recruiters. In these studies, the authors did not directly connect the negligence of parents and the influence of peers as the dominant factors why adolescents joined prostitution.

In another study on adolescents, psychologist and author Sebald stated that the first sexual experiences of adolescents happened because of sexually superhuman promises that sooner led to frustration and disappointment. He further mentioned that it also lead teenagers to disillusionment that sex is a cure for alienation and loneliness. This finding was depicted among the respondents, as they escaped their family's neglect they seek comfort to their partners and friends considering sex as a means of forgetting their

problems. The psychological effect of sex as a means of helping them solve their personal needs was a reason why they thrived in this industry and their ignorance on the effects of their early involvement in sex and in sex trade is another explanation why their number is increasing and why they continue to be in the industry.

The respondents were not totally different from the general adolescents who undergo tension and uncertainty while growing up. However, this study illustrated that the buntogs are more vulnerable because they got involved in sex at an early age, indulged in risky sexual practices and submitted themselves to prostitution.

**Recommendations:**

- Replicating this study in other areas of the country may cross check the output of this study. More substantial data could help identify other factors and may contribute to theoretical findings on sex trade.
- The study showed that the involvement of the parents to the adolescents' decision to be involved in sex trade is a big factor. To be able to identify the factors that encouraged these parents to influence their children to sex trade is an interesting topic to study upon. The identification of the factors may help the government and the non-government organizations in identifying programs appropriate for these parents.
- The prevalence of STI and the vulnerability of the respondents to acquire STI in the future is very evident. An investigative study on their sexual health practices and coping mechanisms may enlighten us why these adolescent buntogs have less fear of being pregnant and of acquiring STD. Furthermore, it will help GO's and NGO's identify appropriate health programs that could address this need.

- The community awareness is necessary to be able to provide support to these troubled adolescents. Massive sex education campaign might be helpful in preventing them from other risky behaviors.
- The results of the study depicted a possible relationship of promiscuity and sex trade. A study linking these two variables will be interesting and could further substantiate the findings of this study.
- The foregoing findings could be used by the NGOs-GOs in drafting programs that could address the sexual and health needs of these adolescents.



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