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**Online Sex Work Environment:  
Exploring The Security of Working Conditions  
The Case of Vietnam**

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## List of Acronyms

ILO	International Labour Organization
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies
UN	United Nations
VND	Vietnam Dong
VPN	Virtual Private Network

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## **Abstract**

Sex work has long been a controversial issue that is severely forbidden in the specific context of Vietnam, not to mention it lays under the heavy social stigma and discrimination for those who are involved with the term, especially women. For the purpose of earning a living, sex workers are obliged to stay underground in a hidden yet vibrant industry, working in a poor environment with limited working conditions. For these reasons, their work comes along with plenty of risks and insecurities for not being protected by an authentic national legal system. As the world is entering the New Age of technology, it strongly affects all aspects and professions of life, and sex work is not staying out of the circle. “At the level of society and on a global scale we can see that media networks, social networks reach into the farthest corners and edges of the world” as the 21<sup>st</sup> century is possibly called the age of networks (Van Dijk, 1991/2012). Technology, especially digital communication in online platforms, has shifted social interrelations along with social networks, including sex work. The diversity of sex work has been transformed and broadened from original forms of street-based sex work to new models of commercial sex online with the support of recent advances in technological development. Due to the development of information technology, sex workers have more opportunities to make contact directly with clients, thus not depending on the brothel owners and pimps, bringing about sizeable effects among sex workers and their customers.

However, Internet-based platforms have not only facilitated how sexual services are commercially provided but also brought more (new) potential risks and insecurities to sex workers in reality. At the same time, the Government has not ratified any official legal documents with complete statements and fair recognition in terms of regulating offline and online sex work with relevant subjects. Therefore, it exists plenty of gaping loopholes and inequality related to the rights of sex workers, thereby inadequate legal protection for them. This research paper will explore the security of the working conditions of online sex workers in Vietnam and limited capabilities among sex workers themselves due to incomplete legal enforcement and widespread discrimination that are the main contributing factors for sex workers’ agony and silence on their problems.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

One of the main reasons for scholars and researchers to decide pursuing Development Studies starts from personal concerns towards social issues that involve inequality and unfairness. Development Studies itself is also seeking the response for social justice in a better world where every human being can enjoy living with their basic human rights. The act of social exclusion, as well as expulsion of any certain groups by treating them as outsiders, is simply unacceptable on the moral ground. Understanding the true stories of neglected groups of people helps to discover the social problems under different points of view, which will reflect their diversity and complexity, thus gaining more positive perspectives. Sex workers are one of the largest groups who have long been suffering from massive discrimination in not only Vietnam but many countries. This research paper, by taking a more in-depth look into the experience of Vietnamese online sex workers and their work conditions, in particular, contributes to describe the reality and broaden the knowledge of what means a sex worker.

**Keywords**

Prostitution, Online Sex Work, Internet-based Sex Work, Security, Working Conditions, Vietnam

# Chapter 1 | Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Sex workers have always remained a ‘hot’ topic for debates in every country as one of the oldest and most common occupations for millions of women worldwide, often known as ‘prostitution.’ The meanings and values associated with prostitution are mostly socially constructed in which dominant discourses depict sex workers either as helpless victims or as morally and mentally disturbed women<sup>1</sup>, generally called as ‘bad girls,’ “contravening norms of acceptable femininity” (Sanders, T. et al. 2018:2). As Sanders, T. et al. stated, “historical constructions of ‘the prostitute’ in literature, media, political and official discourses have been fascinated with the ‘whore’ image which has dominated the cultural imagination”. The similarities among them must be the social stigma, social exclusion, and reduction of personal safety and privacy, which are “central to the lived experience of sex workers as they have been throughout the documented history of prostitution” (2018:3). However, in specific areas such as Asia, the judgments and stereotypes for them are likely to be stricter and heavier which rooted in the traditional cultural values as well as social habits and customs. Despite legal criminalization, sex work is still growing as a thriving yet hidden industry where a group of women finds possible social and material conditions for their lives, but the customers only have limited choices.

Nevertheless, the rise of an innovative and powerful medium has revolutionized and transformed the operation of sex work market entirely in the past two decades: The Internet. Sex work now is expanding to broader environments of online platforms, where services have gone beyond choices as the number of Internet users has skyrocketed dramatically (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
Statistics on Internet usage in Vietnam 2018



Source: Dammio 2007

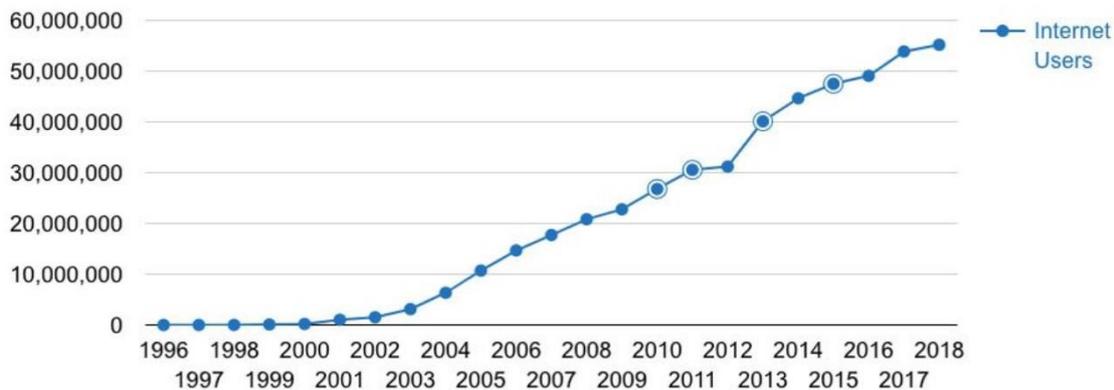
<sup>1</sup> Siegmann, K. A., *Session 8: ‘Sad women’ or ‘mad women’? Moving beyond a binary view of sex work:* Class lecture, Gender and Sexuality as ‘Lenses’ to Engage with Development Policy and Practice, The International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands, May 7, 2019.

According to Dammio (2018), in early 2018, Vietnam had 55 million active users, accounting for 55% of Internet users. Only in social networking site Facebook, Vietnam ranked 7th among the countries with the highest users with 59 million users in July 2018.

Fifty-five million Vietnamese regularly access the Internet with their mobile phones, accounting for half of all Internet users. Although there are only 64 million Internet users, 70 million of the population own mobile phones. This fact shows that a significant number of users own smartphones but do not connect to the global network. This number is thought to come from the elderly group.

**Figure 2**

Statistics on Internet usage in Vietnam since 1996



Source: InternetVietnam 2007

The vast number of Internet usage in Vietnam, which has multiplied more than six times over 23 years (Figure 2), has demonstrated a booming time in the development of the Internet and technology within the country. These data also describe an image of how extensive sex work could expand, develop extra different services, and reach potential customers in any sector, bringing advantages to themselves compared to how they used to work back in the old times.

Undoubtedly, the Internet plays a crucial role as one of the most influential factors in the organization and formulation of the sex industry with the movement to commercial sex online. It is facilitating the market for sex workers, but along with all the benefits and positive changes, the author is posing questions on (new) challenges and dangers that emerge online that sex workers must overcome.

## 1.2 Research objectives and questions

Starting from significant concerns of social stigma and discrimination toward sex workers community and personal curiosity in their security of working conditions on Internet-based environment which the national media and newspapers rarely mention too, the objective of this Research Paper is to study and explore the working experiences and working conditions of online sex workers in the light of current national legal regulations in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The author will focus on answering the main research question:

What are the working experiences and practices of the security of online sex workers on Internet-based sex market in Vietnam?

Sub-questions are as following:

1. How do different types of sex workers use the Internet for their work?
2. What are the benefits and (new) dangers/insecurities that affect online sex workers?
3. How do law enforcement agencies extend their activities to online platforms for monitoring of online sex work?

## 1.3 Methodology

A mixed-methods approach with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative studies to support each other based on their complementary strengths will be the main methodological approaches for this study. This is because the primary purpose of the research is to examine the real working experiences of online sex workers, which proven by different practical types of information and numbers. Qualitative and quantitative approaches in this research are as “the measurement intimately connects how we perceive and think about the social world with what we find in it” (Newman, W. L. 2014: 203).

### 1.3.1 Study Area

The author chose to conduct her research in the city of Hanoi, Vietnam, as the central area of the study for several reasons. Firstly, as it is the capital of the country with high population and fast-growing pace, which takes the lead in national development, the area is one of the biggest markets for sex workers and customers from middle to upper class to connect. Secondly, the author is a native local who was born here. She knows the city well, and she has the contacts of her colleagues who helped her to access the place where participants of the study live, which is a rehabilitation center<sup>2</sup> where they have been put in after being caught by the police while providing their sexual services.

### 1.3.2 Data Collection Methods

#### Face to face in-depth interviews with sex workers

Direct interviews with 15 sex workers were all conducted at the rehabilitation center from July 17 to August 4, 2019 in order to collect the data about their working experiences and personal points of view, using qualitative approaches. The author’s designed list of questions for interviewing aims to cover mainly seven topics:

- The reasons for becoming/used to be a sex worker;
- Job characteristics: how long being sex worker; what sites of sex work; what markets, hours of services, how much to earn, and other side work
- The use of the Internet for sex work; the difference of before/after using the Internet for sex work;
- The experiences in sex working using the Internet;
- Relations with clients;

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<sup>2</sup> The name of the rehabilitation centre is not disclosed here due to the request of the organization to remain anonymous.

- Problems related to personal privacy, safety and security;
- Expectations of supports for sex workers.

Every interviewee took part in the information-collecting process also filled in the form of necessary personal information, which provides key socio-demographic characteristics.

Three other interviews were conducted indirectly through a different medium of communication, which is called Zalo, a common free-to-download messenger application for smart devices in Vietnam. The author was able reaching sex workers by contacting them with the number showed up in the online advertisements that she saw when visiting a customer review forum. Each interview took roughly one hour, and the participants were compensated 500,000 VND (around €19) for their time and participation. The participants were surprised and immediately changed their attitude from excitement to upset that two out of three people were rushing to hang up the phone when the author revealed her identity as a Master's student doing her Research Paper for her study. They only agreed to take part in the interviews after the author offered the compensation benefit and not to reveal their numbers and their identities in the Research Paper. The purpose of the author when doing these online interviews firstly is to ensure the diversity of sex work, and secondly to compare and see the difference between the expression of two groups of sex workers when discussing online and offline.

The list of interviewing questions and the personal information form of socio-demographic characteristics can be found in Appendix C.

### **Online Surveys**

From July 15 to September 22, 2019, another method to collect data for the research is launching an online survey on social platforms and calling for participants to fill out, using the service of the website SurveyMonkey.com. The survey's form is based on the question list from face-to-face interviews with sex workers at the rehab center. Participants had the right to stay anonymous, not reveal their genders and not answer any inappropriate questions.

In the piloting stage, there were five satisfactory responses from four female and one male sex workers, working in different sectors and markets such as streets, erotic telephone sex lines, webcamming and massage parlour. At the end of the data collecting process, the survey received in total 12 answers with good quality that could be used in the research. The statistics of respondents can be found in Appendix C.

## **1.4 Structure of the Research Paper**

The Research Paper aims to follow the structure as below:

- **Chapter 2** focuses on theoretical concepts and frameworks of the organization and operation of sex work, and how the Internet and technologies have changed the sex market by discussing new characteristics that have appeared along with online sex work.
- **Chapter 3** explores the working practices of online sex workers by taking deeper considerations into the profiles and data collected from sex workers who participated in the author's survey and interviews during the field trip in Vietnam. We are looking to find out why sex workers have chosen the Internet platform and their real-life working experiences in it.
- **Chapter 4** discusses the benefits as well as (new) risks and insecurities which take place in the online sex work environment.

- **Chapter 5** questions the role of legal enforcement/figures of authority in controlling Internet-based sex work, to what extent it has been implemented efficiently for the hope that safety could be ensured in this community.
- **Chapter 6** is to conclude with the author's findings on the research problem and critical messages after researching this topic, as well as thoughts and recommendations for future researches and policies.

## 1.5 Limitations of the study

It exists certain limitations with this study due to the limited availability of human and financial resources for the research as it is at the level of student research. In terms of the parameters of the study, there are some challenges that restrict the range and the results of the Research Paper:

- The author decided not to include the problem of human trafficking and sex slavery/sex exploitation in the scope of the research, even though their characteristics and results end up in the same community of sex work. Researching and being able to collect precise data on sex slavery in commercial sexual services facilitated by the Internet platforms is a complicated and dangerous process which is beyond the reach of the author as a student. It requires not only specific exclusive departments such as criminal police departments, investigators, or analysts, but it is also highly unsafe for the author with no protections to be involved in the field trip which is close with dangerous groups of people such as human traffickers, brothel owners, and pimps.
- The limited range of the research in reaching more groups of sex workers during the interviews and survey is also one of the reasons that affect the result of the Research Paper. The modest number of people taking part in the face-to-face interviews (15 people), online interview (3 people) and the online survey (12 people) were only a small minority that could not reflect the enormous size of the whole community. The research may not be able to reach specific groups of sex workers as they did not see the presence of the survey on social media, or as they might feel reluctant sharing their information in a public survey.
- As the genders of sex workers are really diverse in the sex industry, not just women but also men, transgender and bisexual sex workers, this research can only reach mostly to the group of woman sex workers due to the access of the author to the location where the fieldwork took place, the unavailability of certain groups of sex workers to participate, and to the fact that woman sex workers remain as the majority in sex community that outweigh other groups. This will certainly not be able to describe the real variety of sex work, which is an underrepresentation of a hidden yet vibrant industry.

## Chapter 2 | Concepts and Framework: The organization of the online sex market

### 2.1 Sex workers: who are they exactly?

To start with, as this Research Paper will focus on discussing the specific subject, which is sex workers, it is necessary to clearly define the term of sex workers. Common understandings tend to overuse the term ‘prostitute’ and ‘prostitution’ to call everyone who works in this industry and usually can be found on the streets. As Sanders, T. et al. (2018: 25) stated, “The concentration of knowledge about the sex industry often rests with a very narrow type of commercial sex: ‘prostitution’ and in particular ‘street prostitution’. This is only one aspect of sex work as it refers to a formalized commercial exchange between two people (usually a heterosexual man as the buyer and woman as the seller) rather than studying the broader relationship dynamics between commerce and sex. To assume that all sex workers are similar to one label of ‘prostitutes’ who always stand at the corner of the streets is to attach more with heavy prejudices and stigmas, not to mention weigh down the real image of sex workers in their rich diversity. By concentrating only on the term ‘prostitute’, which is likely to actively connect with the ‘whore’ stigma, common points of view tend to shift the next focus only to one fact that the selling of sex is merely for money.

Narrowing the sex industries to prostitution and, in particular, street prostitution, can only perpetuate stereotypes and feed the concerns from health and criminal justice agencies about ‘risky’ women, rather than examining the broader sex industries that operate in many different parts of society. Not studying the sex industry in its entirety has the effect of producing a false dichotomy between types of sex industries. (Sanders, T. et al. 2018: 25)

A brief definition of ‘sex work’ and ‘prostitution’ could be proposed as following<sup>3</sup>:

- ‘Sex work’ is making oneself available for erotic and sexual services in exchange for remuneration (such as porn actors and phone sex work)
- ‘Prostitute’ is making oneself available for sexual activities with someone in exchange for remuneration (such as brothel workers and streetwalkers)

While avoiding the stigma and reductionism of the term ‘prostitute’, which conflates his/her identity with his/her work, the use of the term ‘sex work’ is political and contested, too. It describes sex work is an occupation and normalizes it as the provision of a service. Even for those who subscribe to this assumption, the term might be problematic, as some workers covered by it – such as porn actors - might not consider themselves sex workers. Besides, one can argue that the normalizing term ‘sex work’ glosses over the most pronounced difference between sex work and other ‘bodywork’ (Cohen et al. 2013), namely, the ‘whore stigma that justifies even extreme forms of violence against sex workers.

According to Barry, K., prostitution encourages the cultural value that men should be supplied with sexual services in any circumstances and situations they want (1979). The reverse was claimed by sex workers themselves:

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<sup>3</sup> Siegmann, K. A., *Session 8: ‘Sad women’ or ‘mad women’? Moving beyond a binary view of sex work*: Class lecture, Gender and Sexuality as ‘Lenses’ to Engage with Development Policy and Practice, The International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands, May 7, 2019.

A central tenet of the prostitution movement is the demand that sex workers be given the right to exchange sexual services on their terms and on their conditions, not on the term of the state, the police, pimps, male managers, or clients. The whore stigma and the constructed ignorance that enshrouds the public's understanding of sex work foster the misconception that prostitution involves no more than a woman "selling her body" to a man, for a certain period, to wantonly do with as he pleases. (McClintock, A. 1993)

## 2.2 The organization of online sex market

### 2.2.1 Sites of sex work

People might think sex work, or prostitution, usually described as a woman, is merely supplying sexual services for the exchange of money or anything with comparable values. Traditionally, the provision of sexual services in exchange for money strongly connects with the 'street'. The classic concept of the 'red light district' with women standing on the streets typically represents the dominant picture of a sex industry, which was popularized through the media (Sanders, T. et al. 2018)

In contrast, the gender of sex workers varies from female, male, transgendered and bisexual, in accordance with the diversity of available sexual services, from romantic or pornographic shows without direct customer physical contact, to unsafe physical sexual intercourse with (many) clients. Sex workers working individually can have full decision in charging a fee/remuneration for their services, or occasionally, accepting the replacement as gifts or benefits, in the amount of time that suitable for them to work more or less full time. Even though they are involved in sexual services, they can consider themselves not working as sex workers. It is because of this flexible characteristic of sexual service provision that contributes to a number of positive effects related to psychological and health problems. However, sex work still typically suffers from social stigma and criminalization.

A typology which describes the broad image of how wide-ranging sex work is was presented by Harcourt, C. and Donovan, B. (2005), which is a list of available different sites of commercial sex. They categorized sex work into two main groups: 'Direct' and 'Indirect' sex work (Appendix A, B), in which 'direct' sex work is a variety of sexual services considered as 'prostitution' and it exists a possibility of detriment during these transactions since sexual activities need the interaction between sex workers and someone else. 'Indirect' sex work, on the other hand, has merely little or no direct contact which causing less sexual health risk.

In the context of online sex work environment, Sanders, T. et al (2017) present a different definition on 'direct' and 'indirect' online sex work based on their research, in which they refer the term 'Internet-based sex work' to "the use of the Internet and communication technologies to facilitate commercial sex transactions":

Direct Internet-based (enabled sex work) refers to commercial sex activities that take place in-person between the sex worker and customer, but that are advertised and arranged online, taking the form of escorting, as well as the provision of BDSM services and sexual massage.

Indirect Internet-based sex work refers to activities that are both facilitated and take place in an online or virtual environment (such as webcamming, instant message and phone sex chat. In webcamming, the models (also known as performers) provide shows, often but not always including nudity or sexual content, in front of their webcams, which are then streamed to customers watching on their own personal devices (computers/tablets/phones).

### 2.2.1 Online sex work environment

The development of the Internet with its innovative technologies has completely changed the way of doing businesses for sex workers. As the diversity of online sex work is discussed above with different sites and multiple types of market, how sex workers utilise and profit from each platform also vary in terms of facilitating commercial sex. Based on the data-collecting process with the participants, the author recognised five main platforms that they took part in<sup>4</sup>. Using the data from the participants along with theoretical arguments, how each platform operates to facilitate and perform online commercial sexual services will be discussed.

#### **Webcamming**

Webcam platform is an easy market to enter which makes good profit and not take a huge amount of time. The webcam model does not need any advance equipment but can easily start with just a smart device such as smartphones, tablets or computers if they have camera, along with high speed Internet connection and webcam hosting site. The moment when the webcam model starts performing the show and interacting with the clients, the webcam site will simultaneously stream it to the clients' device which they use to log in to the webcam platform, watch it, and might pay for it. The benefits of flexible working hours, safe and private working place, and high earnings explain why there are more people enter in the market (The Conversation, 2017).

Some webcam platforms work based on counting 'likes' and 'views', but most of them function based on a business model of 'tip'. The model when interacting with the clients will be in a 'private' room that is 'public' to the clients as many of them can log in to and watch the show with free of charge. If they enjoy the show, they will 'tip' the model using the virtual money called 'tokens', 'diamonds' or 'coins' that they purchase on the site, which can be exchanged into real money. The model is free to choose performing sexual or non-sexual acts by themselves, or also by the requests of the audience. The more they enjoy and satisfy, the more the model can earn. The payment is totally not mandatory. For these reasons, webcamming is profitable for the performer while taking only a low cost to the viewer in terms of pleasure and satisfaction. At the same time, since tipping the model is voluntary, viewers can leave whenever they are no longer interested in and move to the show of other models. This is why this work requires the models to be creative in creating the excitement to keep the audience (PhapLuat, 2017).

Clients can also request a private chatroom with the performer. Unlike the public chatrooms where people can access freely, exclusive performances usually upgrade the service to highly pornographic and revealing. Here the models are paid on their own per-minute rates and the tipping should be higher.

#### **Dating (and Hook-up) Platforms**

Dating and hook-up platforms have increasingly become popular in terms of social and cultural life (Gardner and Davis 2013). Online dating service has only been developed in Vietnam for a few years, but this is expected to be a promising market. According to Nguoiladong (2018), in Vietnam, there are an estimated 100 online dating websites (namely Hentocdo.vn, Henho.org and Docthan.com) and dozens of companies providing dating platforms, particularly in the domestic market, but there are also international markets.

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<sup>4</sup> Despite the acknowledgement of how diverse sexual platforms can take place, the limited access of the author in reaching available sex workers taking part in a complete range of sexual platforms results in the impossibility to explore every platform. Therefore, the author used the data collected from the interviews and surveys on available platforms to analyse in this Research Paper.

Nearly 10 million singles are considered a potential resource for dating platforms, but also a promising market for sex workers to expand their connections with customers who are seeking for intimacy or having sexual services interests.

Sharing the experience and knowledge on clients who visit this kind of platform, Doan (28 years old, providing massage services) said that for clients, it was like visiting 'adult entertainment' websites:

In front of their eyes it is thousands of girls who are online, they are real people who put real pictures. They are beautiful, polite and extremely sexy. This makes it difficult for men to stop the conversation and cannot refuse to enter the application the next day. Gentlemen have no reason to refuse to "this flower garden". Their first purpose could be searching for a date or a partner but be able to connect to sexual services is most of the time unexpected. Some of my long-term clients are from this platform as they are single, and they have needs for sexual services, so they contact me.

None of these dating platforms permit and show public advertising for commercial sex on their sites because of the policies that allow them to run, but the offline conversations between participants are not under the supervision of the sites. Sex workers and clients can only find the connections through the sites and move to other platforms or communicate by different ways after exchanging their contacts. The majority of these platforms will have regulations upon Privacy and Safety Policy, that 'sexual acts violate the Rule and Regulations which will be strictly rejected', however, many people believe that it is difficult to distinguish which relationship is the sex trade or the right relationship. Commercial sex is simply what happens during the dating process.

#### **Customer Review Forums**

A customer review forum offers an online space in which clients can post information about their experiences (usually in person) in sexual services, including their reviews on actual sex workers that they have interacted or used sexual services. In Vietnam, there is not yet any official sites launched on this platform but mostly it uses the platform of common social media such as Facebook Page or secret group where there are numerous users with easy access; or combines with agency websites as a specific section.

#### **Agency Websites**

With just one click, an appointment is made for the guests to immediately provide professional services. Fast and always available in terms of 'sexual resources', that is how agency website platforms growing in Vietnamese sex industry.

Taking responsibilities to run and manage these platforms are third party agencies that act as mediators among sex workers and clients, who will connect both groups and provide direct services for them. The display of the agency websites will be used for the advertisement of current sex workers working for the agency. It attracts the attention of clients with a series of revealing and sexy photos on the homepage, especially a series of eye-catching nudity that "introduce" the list of beautiful ladies ready to serve clients.

According to NguoiViet (2014), X – a popular agency website, introduce itself as a professional forum for 'cool players', in addition to a collection of nude photos, there is also a reportage focusing on the story of sex workers. The website is extremely large and diverse, dividing two main areas for the North, the South and regional areas. The broadest range of sexual services situate in Hanoi and Saigon with the list of sex workers (mainly prostitutes) in detail according to each district with a huge supply.

The service price here is listed from VND 400,000 (€15) to VND 1.5 million (€60) depending on the 'hot' level of the sex workers. To confirm the professionalism, this website divides prostitutes into different levels according to the price bracket across the country.

There is an exclusive category of "beautiful high-class goods" with the slogan "Trendy ladies and lovely women for rich man". Pictures of teenage girls are regularly updated, displaying with promising offers. Some people were also introduced as models or well-known hot girls who are entering showbiz.

The lower segment of 'low-cost' services is the most vibrant area, which, according to the introduction, is "a gathering place for commercial and low-cost aircrafts"<sup>5</sup> for older sex workers with the listed price from 300,000-400,000 VND, bringing together more than 50 call girls. Each girl has a complete profile of sexually suggestive images and meticulous measurements. One participant described how the agency advertise her profile and her colleagues':

Sometimes it's so funny how they put on captions under our photos for the advertisements. One photo of a girl who works with me is displayed with the caption "When a girl is lost". She is a woman over 30 years old, laying on the screen, frantically with her naked body, face covered with flowers and only a smiling mouth. We all really become super models in this work. (Lien, 27, agency-sex worker)

Another told about how she was described by the marketer in detail with the body scoreboard:

Face: pretty, very good-looking, looks quite obscene. I am about 1m58 tall, white, clean, sweet, fleshy but not fat. I quite like this body. I love to dress nice, especially with bikinis. Waist: 7.5 points, no excess fat. Butt: 7.5 points, beautiful and soft. It's like they describe someone else but not me. But I have to say those numbers sometimes give me more confidence. (Hoa, 29, agency-sex worker)

Not only describing the body measurement of sex workers in seducing language, the broker also set up a section of "signing up for service check" to introduce the experience with sex workers to stimulate clients. Particularly, in addition to sex encounter, there are other accompanying services that are listed in English-language abbreviation, often used by young people. The list of services includes many items, including a special one called bold WC which is likely to be very popular.

WC means doing it while filming. It is an extremely stimulating service that makes agency websites popular. Not many girls dare to serve the filming, so it is a real 'jackpot' for clients to be able to find an available one. (Thanh, 37, agency-sex worker)

In this website, there is also a specific section of "hang treo" (Vietnamese term for bad goods and services) which, according to experienced players, is an area where sex workers are downgraded due to incomplete guest service, reflected by the clients. In particular, this website also provides a service "some" for guests who want to enjoy with multiple partners at the same time. This could be considered as customer review forums as mentioned above, where clients' feedbacks and recommendations on sexual services and sex workers take place.

According to the research participants, this kind of platforms has been operating for nearly more than three years and gradually become more trending, completely public without being examined by the authorities and legal enforcements, to the point that viewers and followers keep dramatically increase.

One of the most professional websites is best known in this industry that must be mentioned is lauxanhxxx. The reason is because when visiting this website, it contains every-up-to-the-minute information on sexual services in all three regions of the North, the

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<sup>5</sup> Vietnamese slang for 'old ladies', means sex workers who are older than the clients

Central and the South, the address of biggest gatherings in the provinces across the country and even overseas. Here, visitors can fully know the tricks of sex work from karaoke bars, erotic massage, sex chat, list of motels and hotels. However, the attractive part is that members of this website will exchange lists, phone numbers of sex workers. Experiences with sex workers will be photographed and reported, accompanied by comments on this sex worker. Finally, there is a sharing the profile of that sex worker with other members of the website to all examine. VIP members (who pay for Premium account) will be given priority to update the new list of prostitutes every month. It is because of these factors that this website has become one of the most vibrant places to advertise and advertise sex worker publicly on the Internet.

Taking advantage of the fact that members of the websites can share and exchange information about good provider, many sex workers have established themselves their own accounts then join the forum. Disguising as users, they play the role of 'players' by posting erotic images with information about the price, places and phone numbers (which is actually advertising themselves to find customers). In this way, many sex workers can find and control the "source" of their clients by carefully screening them.

Besides, as an advertising website of public commercial sex on the Internet, these forums includes multiple nicknames which are online broker who play the role of examiners. These men and women are often members who have participated in the forum for a long time, have high credibility and have many 'achievements' in confirming sexual services' quality. Sex workers when introduced by these managers will surely earn good reputation on the forum and become more desirable. Certainly, in order to be 'promoted', sex workers also must pay these men and women a considerable amount of 'fee'.

### **Social Media Platforms/Apps**

In the dizzying development of the current technological age, social media and applications appear to help connecting the community and bring people closer together. The usefulness of these platforms is demonstrated by the increasing multiplication of users. This is also a high-potential market for sex workers to present their services. Currently in Vietnam, there are hundreds of social media applications running on the same algorithm, namely Facebook, Zalo, Tinder, YMeetMe, Badoo, Two, Paktor, Lovoo and HotorNot. Just by using the feature 'Search around here', a function to find friends in close range, on the app will appear countless user nicknames with profile images of sexy, hot, revealing girls and even not wearing anything. These nicknames also set a status of greetings such as "call me", "happy to find me by number" or a public offer "welcome clients" (Giaothong, 2017). It is not too difficult to draw a clear distinction between normal girls and sex workers. When detecting that the nickname has an invitation, users just press it to make friends and quickly will receive consent with provocative feedback. In contrast, making friends is much harder with normal girls. During the researching process, the author tried to make a new account on Zalo, make friends and contact with some random Zalo accounts. A long line of advertisements which seems to be automatic answer was immediately sent to the author, according to which it will provide sex worker's information such as name, phone number, prices, hotel or motel that the client needs to come, available services and payment options.

Sex workers will usually have minimum five to seven applications in their mobile, as it works similarly and free of charge for downloading, so they can maximise their opportunities with the clients. Dao, 29, independent sex worker, shared her thoughts and experience related to this platform:

I have five dating apps on my phone, Facebook, Tinder, Badoo, Zalo and Gapo, but Tinder is my top favorite. Tinder has a dedicated feature called 'Tinder Passport' which allows travellers to provide the time ahead of when they will arrive at their expected destination. I

swipe to the right<sup>6</sup> with everyone. In the busiest time, I can get up to 18 customers, all via Tinder. I charge a different fee for each customer, but prices usually range from 500.000 VND to 3 million VND (€19 to €115) for a quick transaction.

Dao said she started moving to Internet-based environment two years ago, after her friends used it and recommended it for her. Before Tinder, she worked mostly at night-clubs and bars. The working conditions were very difficult and tiring.

Every night, I must bribe a lot of people, club manager, security guards, bartenders, even waiters, just to get access to and approach the most potential customers in those nightclubs. I used to have one 'personal guardian' to help me with it and I must pay him. At the end of the day, I don't get much. Some days there is nothing. I always fear that the police will arrest me on the way and send me to jail. This app truly simplifies sexual services provision.

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<sup>6</sup> In the Tinder dating app, when the user is interested in another user, he/she swipes to the right of the touch screen using the 'like' feature.

## Chapter 3 | Analysis: The working practices of online sex workers

Scholars have conducted several earlier researches about various groups of sex workers involving the Internet in performing their sexual services with interesting findings on their characteristics and working experiences (Koken, J.A. et al. 2004; Cunningham, S. and Kendall, T.D. 2011; Jones, A. 2015). These studies inspire the author with a sample to examine on her research area in terms of gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity and so on. This research at individual level surely can only reflect a minor part the broad diversity of online sex work (Jones, A. 2015).

The data collecting process was taking place during the field trip of the author with the result of 15 people in face-to-face interviews, 3 people in online interviews and 12 people in online survey. Gender data in this process illustrates the dominant feminisation of sex labour, with 27 out of 30 people are female.

Among 27 female interview participants, the majority of them (18 people – 67%) claim themselves as heterosexual since they only have interests in providing sexual services for man and never have the intention with female clients. More than half of the remaining participants identified as lesbian with 6 people (22%) and only three lesbians (11%). The diversity of sexuality factor of sex workers is mentioned in previous findings of researchers on female indoor-based sex workers (Perkins and Lovejoy 2007; Koken 2012).

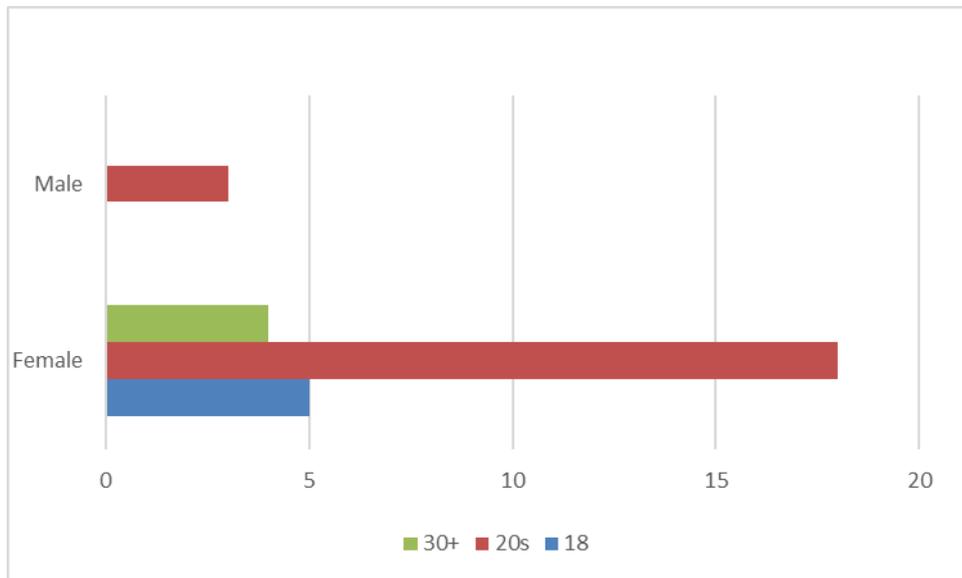
In terms of male sex workers, there are three people in total, straight sexuality outweighs with two people, while the one remaining is gay. Research studies of some other scholars noted that gay male sex workers compose the majority group within sex work community (Bimbi 2007; Whowell and Gaffney 2009, Sanders, T. 2017) This Research Paper unluckily has not had the opportunity of full resources to examine in a wider range to be able to confirm these findings of previous researchers, although the author personally is acknowledge that the number of male sex workers is increasingly rising in recent years. This tendency is confirmed by social workers and doctors working in the field of public health who have spent years to study and work with this specific group in Vietnam (BBC Vietnam, 2013). According to Colby, D. (as in BBC Vietnam 2013), a doctor with three-year experience of researching male sex workers in Vietnam, there is a serious lack of involving male sex workers in the daily talk as well as in legal regulations, despite the presence of this group is gradually spreading wider:

In most Asian countries, including Vietnam, sex work is illegalized in national regulations, but these laws target only female sex workers and male clients. People have not thought of male sex workers and their clients, even if it includes both men and women. Male sex workers, which are some young men who can make money selling sex, is a relatively new social trend in Vietnam. We must mention the indispensable role of the internet in reshaping the commercial sex, where sex workers and clients can find each other via the Internet, instead of going to dark streets at night or to brothels. It amazingly helps reduce barriers to sexual services and makes it easier than before. This also explains why Vietnamese are more open-minded and freer in terms of sex.

Related to the age of sex workers when they entered sex work, a large proportion of interview and survey respondents started their work in their early 20 (70% - 21 people). Only a mere of 5 people (16%) were 18, the remaining group is less than one person when they were aged 30 and above (13%) (Figure 3). This corresponds with prior studies on in-

door sex work in terms of their starting age (Sanders, T. 2006; Jeal, N. and Salisbury, C. 2007).

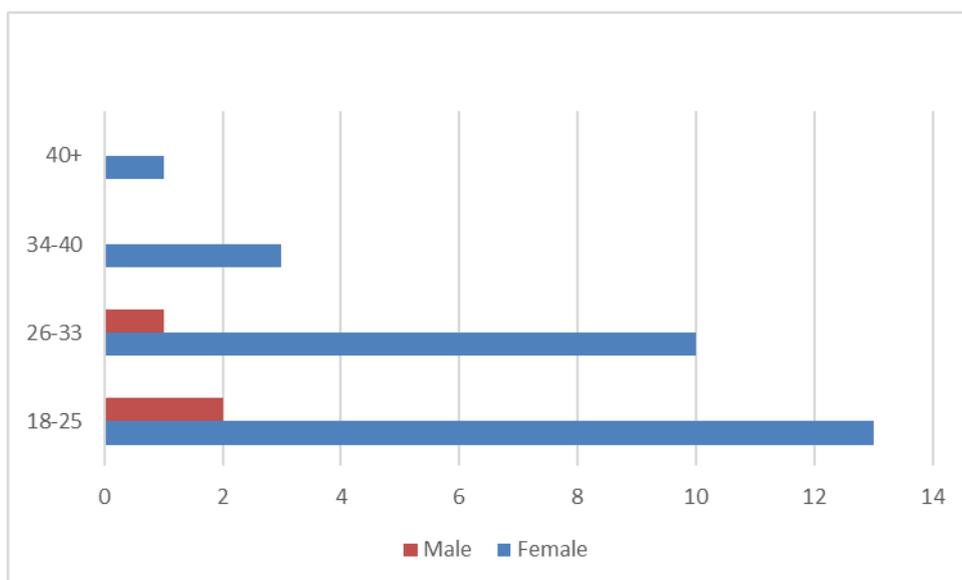
**Figure 3**  
Participants' age group by gender when first starting sex work



Source: Author's fieldwork 2019

It also exists a diversity in terms of current age among sex workers taking part in the research (Figure 4). Half of them are in the current age between 18 and 25 (50% - 15 people). All male sex workers stay in the range of young adults from two groups, 18 to 25 (2 people) and 26 to 33 (1 person), while their female counterparts spread across four different age groups. This results in 37% (11 people) of them are in the group of 26 to 30, while 10% are older than 30. Only a mere 3% among them aged 40. The highest number of sex workers from two genders concentrates in the younger age group from 18 to 33, which corresponds to the observation of Dantri (2011).

**Figure 4**  
Participants' current age group by gender



Source: Author's fieldwork 2019

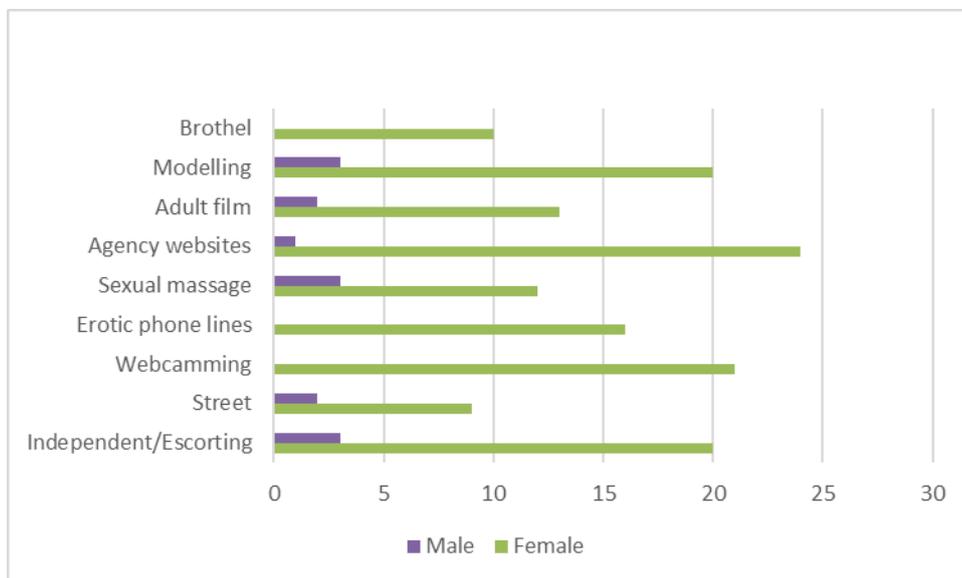
It is interesting to note that the participants were fairly highly educated as 40% of them (12 people) are enrolling in university level, 26% (8 people) are thinking of attaining a higher degree level in the future, 23% (7 people) dropped out from high school and 10% (3 people) graduated from high school degree. People oftentimes assume that sex workers are under-educated, that they lack knowledge and any sort of educational sense. The reality is that a high number of them are very well-educated individuals that have very strong educational backgrounds. Prior studies of Jenkins (2009) and Walby (2012) have demonstrated this argument.

The vast majority of 90% participants (27 people) were not involving in having financial responsibilities with any dependents (80% of females with 24 people and 10% of males). Even though dependents of financial resources could include children and old people, this data points out the difference between online sex workers and street with indoor sex workers who are subjects in the documentation of Sanders, T. (2005) and Jeal, N., and Salisbury, C. (2007).

There is a crossover in terms of working sectors since each sex workers did not solely participate in one single type of sex work but many at the same time (Figure 5). The convenience of the Internet allows sex workers to easily move between various sectors that they find suitable to match clients' interest. Flexibility is one of the most beneficial bonuses as sex workers can actively decide their own working schedules by themselves in accordance with their living habits, priorities and private lives (Sanders, T. et al. 2018). It is the advantages of the Internet in facilitating how people can access to unlimited connections beyond their living areas in fastest ways just by sitting at one place, that have facilitated the commercial sex provision in advertise their services, connect and screen clients and manage appointments (Ray, A. 2007; Cunningham, S., and Kendall, T.D. 2011).

**Figure 5**

Types of sex work taking part



Source: Author's fieldwork 2019

As it can be seen from Figure 5, the majority of participants worked in the platform of agency websites, following by webcamming, modelling and escorting. Many male sex workers also provide sexual massage services. The number of female sex work was much greater than for male in terms of agency websites with 24 people compared to only one person for men. Agency male sex workers, in contrast, was the smallest group within the research.

Women are more likely to be involved in every sector, while none of men work in brothel, erotic phone lines and webcamming. Interesting though, women experienced commercial sex conducted in online platforms tend to outweigh direct sector of brothel, sexual massage and street, emphasizing the changes that the Internet has created in restructured the working pattern of sex workers. It is also necessary to acknowledge that there is also a diversity of age difference across these sectors as sex workers in webcamming and agency websites have the tendency to age younger than their street and brothel counterparts. 96% of people working for agency websites and 80% of those webcamming were between 18 to 33, compared with 42% of those working in street and 38% in brothel.

Talking about the characteristics of clients whom they focus in providing their services, Nam (24, independent sex worker) shared his experience:

Female sex workers mostly provide services for clients with opposite gender, and people think that we are the same. But not like that. Our clients are mainly men of the same sex and only a few of us are with both sexes. Those with only female clients usually work independently, they go looking for clients at bars and dance clubs. Their customers are middle-aged wealthy women. The remuneration of this sex worker group is usually the highest, could be 800,000 - 2,500,000 VND each time, not including gifts and tips if they become 'close customer'. Men who engage in gay and bisexual sex work often have lower remuneration (100,000 - 150,000 VND / time). Bisexual male sex workers often operate independently, they "sold" their services to anybody having needs, while same-sex men often have two ways of working: independently waiting for clients in public and with direct or indirect management, or staying and providing services at the residence or at the request of the client.

The number of working hours in accordance with how much they can earn is one of top priorities of every sex workers when joining the sex industry and any sectors. Good earnings mean fewer working hours (Pitcher 2015b) with less pressures and possible times for private life. This also allows them to manage their own working schedule if they want to pursue personal goals in other work or study with a more relaxing intensity (Roberts, R. et al. 2007; Scambler, G. 2007).

**Figure 6**  
Average working hours per week of sex work participants



Source: Author's fieldwork 2019

In Figure 6, the majority 33% of sex workers in this research spent approximately 11 to 15 hours providing sexual services to clients, while 30% among them spent only one to five hours for other tasks related to their work. Working hours also vary in terms of age. More than half of people worked from 11 to 20 hours per week aged between 22 to 29 and only 10% aged older than 30. The figure also shows that the most common working intensity to provide sexual services to clients is from 11 to 15 hours, while sex workers take generally only one to five hours for relevant tasks of service provision, which describes the fast movement in the working routine of sex workers.

Working long hours is not uncommon in Vietnam, and closely linked to the lower wage than living wage, particularly in low skilled labour and the informal economy. In fact, sex workers highlighted one of the advantages of working in the sex industry was having fewer and more flexible work hours; freeing them to fulfil other responsibilities. While flexible, and better than other options available to them, full time workers regularly worked between ten and twelve hours each day. Part-time workers fit sex work around other work, education and life commitments. Venue owners, managers and procurers felt that the long hours were acceptable and did not regard the time spent at work waiting for clients as work. (ILO 2016)

In accordance with regular working hours, sex workers also must take into consideration of correspondent average earning (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Average monthly earnings of sex work participants

**Unit: million VND<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Female sex workers</b>	<b>Male sex workers</b>
5 - 9,9	5	1
10 - 19,9	9	2
20 - 29,9	4	
30 - 39,9	4	
40 - 49,9	2	
Prefer not to say	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Author's fieldwork 2019

A considerable proportion 30% of female sex workers earn approximately 10 to 20 million VND (€384 to €769) on average each month, while there is only 6% of male sex workers in this category. Among women participants, only the monthly earnings of three sex workers exceed the average level with nearly 50 million VND (€1.923). None of male respondents has achieved this level in the study.

Previous study has shown that most sex workers earned more than the minimum wage in providing sexual services to clients and also more than the estimated living wage for daily life (ILO 2016):

Freelance workers take leave and rest breaks at will, while venue-based workers were able to take leave from work with permission – usually between one and three days at a time. While

<sup>7</sup> €1 ≈ 26,000 VND (Author's estimation)

on leave, almost none of the workers received pay or other entitlements. Two venue-based workers reported having to pay their employer in order to take leave - in compensation to the venue for its loss of their income. Leave taken without permission often resulted in wage penalties, fines or dismissal.

Venue based workers had the most clients per day, with women providing sexual services to between 6 and 10 clients on an average day and as many as 30 during busy periods, while men serviced between 3 and 5 clients per day, and up to 10 on busy days. Freelance and street-based workers regularly service up to 5 clients per day.

Indirect female sex workers tended to report higher rates per client compared to direct sex workers, however their monthly income was similar. Street based workers reported earning lower total month incomes.

This also explains why there are considerably more sex workers move their working platforms to the Internet-based environment.

According to researcher of the above ILO survey (TintucOnline 2016), female sex workers who work part-time may charge clients higher than full-time sex workers. However, their total monthly income is almost the same, while street-based sex workers earn less than 20 million VND each month. For male sex workers, those in the brothels earn about 5-20 million VND. The highest amount that a male sex worker can earn could be up to 30 million VND. Male sex workers and street sex workers have slightly lower incomes than their male brothel counterparts. Especially, it is interesting to note that transgendered sex workers could have an income of about 100,000 - 300,000 VND each short transaction with their clients. Particularly, sex workers in higher class with good profile can even occasionally offer the price from minimum one million VND for Vietnamese guests and approximately 150-200 USD for foreign visitors.

Jones, A. (2015) has pointed out five main benefits of online sex work that increasingly attract more sex workers to participate: the decrease of their risk of bodily harm and physical violence; better income; efficient results in advertising, screening and searching; less interaction with law enforcement and political benefits.

Talking about the possible effects of becoming sex workers, half of the participants were all aware of what they must overcome. However, when asked about their long-term plans for about two years, the percentage of sex workers who want to continue their work is 34.9%, because according to them, this is a stable job with lucrative income. This factor is the main answer of more than half of people (53.3%) when being asked why decided to enter sex work. ILO's survey (2016) has shown that the average monthly income of sex working is roughly 8.6 million VND, of which it is 10.6 million VND for women and 6.55 million VND for men. This income is much higher than the average income of common labour in Vietnam, not to mention about 45.6% of these people have income from other jobs, especially about 5% of the respondents have a sex work income of 20 million or more. 49.7% of female sex workers said that sex working to earn money to support their family and save up for future goals are also their main reasons. Meanwhile, male sex workers engage in this industry due to personal factors including high income temptation. In addition, they engage in sex work for the reason of their sexual needs and also for the thought that this is suitable to their biological characteristics and abilities.

## Chapter 4 | Safety and security on the working environment

While some scholars only focused on positive changes of the Internet to the sex industry (Jonsson et al. 2014; Chin Phua and Caras 2008; Minichiello et al. 2013) and some have conducted many researches demonstrating violent risks that sex workers might face (Deering, K. et al. 2014; Kinnell, H. 2008), it still exists little acknowledgement on the experiences of online sex workers with their working conditions in the Internet-based sex work environment which could contain considerable risks related to their safety and security (Moorman and Harrison 2016). Studies by Sanders, T. et al (2016) and Jones, A. (2015) have found out several possible insecurities that happened to online sex workers. This section will discuss about those arguments in consideration with findings and notes from the research participants' sharing.

More than half of our participants (86% - 26 people) shared that they used to experience at least one act of crime in their work during the period in the past three years, especially when they first started providing their services, in which a high percentage among them (73% - 22 people) had been through at least a same one. There were in total three different categories of crime collected from all the participants (Table 2).

- Sexual assault: 80% - 21 people
- Threatening: 69% - 18 people
- Physical assault: 76% - 20 people

**Table 2**  
Statistics on crimes experienced by sex workers

	Female	Male
Threatening or harassing texts, calls, emails and social media	13	3
Verbal abuse	8	2
Persistent or repeated unwanted contact or attempts to contact in person or stalking	6	1
Sexual assault	18	2
Physical assault	17	3
Threats of violence	7	1
Non-payment or attempts to underpay for services	14	2
Use of your personal information without your consent	15	3

**TOTAL:** 26 people

*Source:* Author's fieldwork 2019 (Elaborated from Sanders, T. et al. 2017)

As Sanders, T. et al. (2016) have found in their preceding research on the same topic, the most common insecurity that usually takes place is the act of persistently threatening and harassing using text messages, spamming calls, sending emails and verbal abusing with an obscene language. This was proven in the sharing of the research participants since 61%

(16 people) and 38% (10 people) respectively were victims of these behaviours in the last two years. It is also important to note that, there were particularly 30% (8 people) of the participants who had to overcome both these types with difficulties. New finding from the research is 19% (5 people) among the participants had to deal at least one time with pornographic photos and videos sending by the attacker.

There was no exception in terms of gender when it comes to cyber crimes in sex work environment, but female sex workers with 76% (23 people) tend to receive more harassing contents than their male counterparts (10% - 3 people). Similarly, a higher proportion of female than male sex workers experienced sexual assault (85% - 18 people compared to 14% - 3 people) and physical assault (85% - 17 people compared to 15% - 3 people). This could be explained by what scholars have documented that online environment offers more safeties than street-based sectors for male sex workers (Aggleton and Parker 2015) as it provides a 'less stigmatizing environment with lower risks of violence, with a higher level of safety' (Argeneto et al. 2016: 9).

It seriously traumatized me at that moment as it scared me every time I heard the notifications from my phone. He was one of my visitors when I performed on the webcam. At first, he started giving me much more 'tokens' than any other viewers, then he requested a private room. It happened regularly until he became obsessed and demanded me to show him more. I was scared so I blocked him. But he continued to text me and spam my mobile at midnight. He even opened more accounts to review me as 'bad service'. (Mai, 25, webcammer)

Existing literature has mentioned multiple benefits that the Internet-based environment could bring up to sex workers in order to facilitate their work and show efficient results in the advertisement, the screening of clients and better ways of communication with them. In fact, it emphasizes the significant role of 'privacy' sector that is available to be found in online sex work, especially when it allows sex workers to have their own space and be able to keep an enough distance with clients to somehow protect themselves. This valuable 'privacy' means even more for those who were struggling to deal with heavy social stigma and discrimination that glued to sex workers on street-based platforms. However, new dangers will come along with all the benefits, and sex workers have to continue finding new ways to deal with them.

Jones, A. (2015) has pointed out several dangers that could possibly happen to sex workers in the online environment in terms of certain platforms, for example, webcamming. According to her, camgirls (or models/performers) have a serious high risk of dealing with difficult and dangerous situation related to their privacy on the Internet, namely capping and doxing.

Capping is the unwanted filming and sharing of their erotic performances. Customers may only use these recordings for personal use, but these "capped" videos are also posted on pornographic websites and can be sold without the performer's consent or the ability to negotiate compensation for further distribution of the recording.

Doxing is when clients use research and/or hacking to acquire information about camgirls and then share that information with other clients and/or use the information to stalk them.

From the author's point of view, there are many women who have been monitored, recognized by relatives, friends and neighbours when they show their face and their body publicly while providing sexual services through online platforms. A lot of them are young mothers who want to earn money and have time to take care of their children at the same time, or students with financial debts for their study. They must provide images and identities for confirmation when registering to any site. However, it seems unfair that sex work-

ers, particularly women, must work in an environment full of stigma but at the same time must provide their true identities.

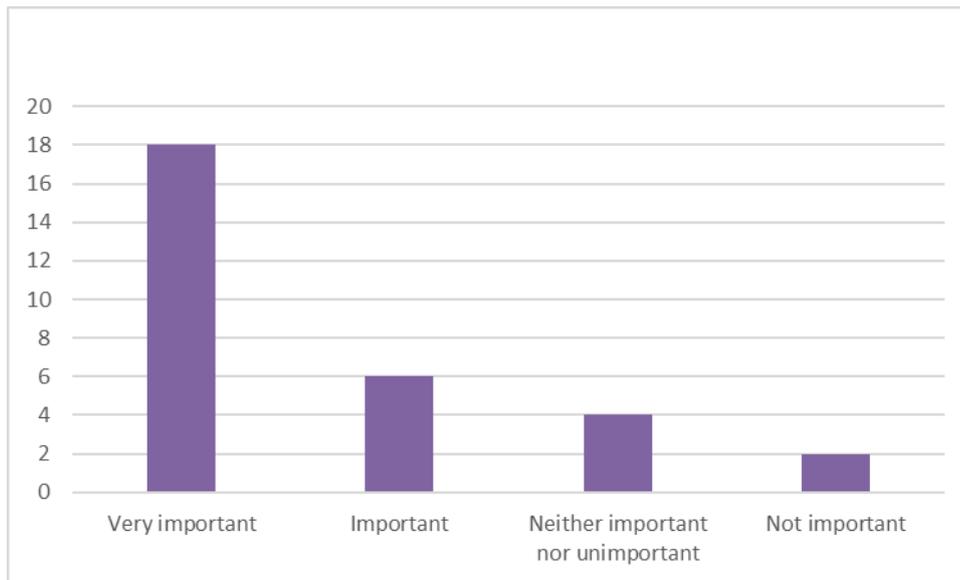
Jones, A. (2015) also noticed in her studies about the possibility that law enforcement will gradually expand their range of control to the online space. As mentioned above, one of the most significant benefits of the Internet to the sex work community is that it helps reducing the frequency of sex workers facing police departments. Currently, law enforcement is likely to remain their focuses mainly on direct sex work which is more visible and recognizable. However, the researcher has predicted that, since there are increasingly more sex workers participate in online platforms, it is easy for figures of authority to eventually detect and pay more attentions on a such promising market like online sex work. According to early evidence, law enforcement is fairly having a certainty in operating to take online sex market as the main target (Ashford 2009). From the perspective of online sex workers and in the context of Vietnam, this tendency would cause detrimental harms and disadvantages for them since sex working has not been legalized. Further researches should explore how law enforcement agencies approach online sex work to restructure their policies and legal systems, as well as how they use the Internet to facilitate their control over online sexual platforms and sex workers' activities. Holt and Blevins (2007) suggest that police officers could utilise these online platforms to secretly track on the hidden activities and transactions related to human trafficking, or might use the beneficial utility of the Internet in having access to a wide network of connection among sex workers as useful references.

Researches on the possibilities of violence that could take place in sex work have found a key finding that dangerous situations and crime committed against sex workers are mostly not reported to the police department (Kinnell 2006, 2008; Church et al. 2001). The same pattern similarly formed in online sex work environment when 76% (20 people) did not inform the police when they first experienced the cybercrime as "I really wanted to, but they (the police) will arrest us immediately and charge us for a penalty if they find out that we are sex working illegally, so keeping it quiet somehow helps us avoiding troubles with the police. It's part of the job, so we can't do nothing but learn to accept it" (Ly, 24, camgirl). The other group of 15% (4 people) did not even have the intention to report the crime to the police. A serious lack of confidence to call for help from the police is recognized, as what Sanders, T. et al. (2016) documented. The rest of 7% (2 people) expressed their serious disappointment and inhibition after reporting to the police. They did not help solving the problem but laugh at them as "it's your fault because you're sexy, what do you expect, you're a sex worker" (Mai, 25, agency sex worker).

Being aware of available cyber crime against sex workers is also an important step in giving possible methods of control towards governing sex work. Potential safety strategies will be discussed as following.

The Internet certainly has brought significant changes in creating huge differences in working practices and working conditions of sex workers, especially in terms of their 'privacy'. To be able to ensure the highest safety for online sex workers, steps that need to be taken must also change in accordance with their new working environment. A large proportion 60% (18 people) of the participants confirmed the crucial role of the Internet in helping their safety at work, 13% did not find it useful nor useless while 6% claimed that it did not help them at all (Figure 7)

**Figure 7**  
The role of the Internet related to the working safety



Source: Author's fieldwork 2019

Most of the participants described the Internet as helpful and really fast on the screening process for potential clients or to refuse inappropriate subjects. It is also an indispensable tool in communicating while still keeping an enough distance with new clients who sex workers have not had any information, as they have a moment before replying to clients by textings, unlike direct sex works when they must be face-to-face with clients as it occasionally causes insecurity and awkwardness.

However, others concern about the risk that their family and friends will recognize them through the advertisements across multiple sites and suggestions in mobile applications, due to the broad connection of the Internet that can reach everywhere. In addition, sex workers also worried about the potential of their personal data and sexual contents being hacked by those who are at high level with professional skills planning to blackmail them. The Internet also spread comments and feedbacks at the fastest way, so public reputation is also a problem for sex workers.

It is mentioned above that new working environment requires new steps of safety procedures, but it does not mean practical direct safety methods are excluded from the discussion since sex workers who work in the sector of direct online sex work must eventually meet the clients in person. It is common for sex workers to combine both screening process with streets-based methods to maximise their safety, as noted by Moorman and Harrison (2016). During the data collecting process, participants were asked what techniques they would use if they must face cyber crime online and dangerous clients offline. More than half of the participants (53% - 16 people) were very flexible in using both traditional offline methods and online methods to increase their safety, 20% were recognised with slow reaction in deciding what methods best fit to take, and the remaining of 26% showed little interests in these methods as they claimed they did not work in direct sector since they mostly proving sexual services through webcamming, erotic phone lines and messaging. When asked about which methods are the most practical that participants experienced or heard, the most frequent answers were 'never leave your drinking glass' and 'always bring the sprayer along' with 86% overall.

In terms of potential clients that sex workers have never met before, Sanders, T. et al. (2017) also listed a range of applicable strategies:

- Not make a booking without having spoken to a customer over the phone: this was important for the majority of sex workers offering in person services;
- Not making a booking if a withheld number is used;
- Not accepting bookings with people whom they had previously blocked;
- Googling clients to find out more about them including utilising professional networking sites and searching social media;
- Checking the IP address of a potential client;
- Checking forums/ugly mugs schemes/advertising platforms to see if the individual has any warnings or negative feedback about their behaviours;
- Checking own personal 'bad clients'/ugly mugs list, data base or stored numbers;
- Taking credit card details or deposit into an account so there was digital footprint related to bank details was a method connected to safety for some sex workers.

While noting that these above methods could be a useful referencing sources to adopt new options and it is crucial to prepare a personal screening which supported by additional methods to ensure the best safety, Hausbeck et al. (2017) pointed out that it is necessary to include at least these three must-have results in the checklist of each sex workers: "avoiding law enforcement, avoiding time wasters and ensuring safety.

Sanders, T. et al. (2017) also suggests sex workers to try the 'buddying systems' which is also a very smart idea in keeping sex workers safe at work The operation of it is that sex workers find someone else to be their buddies, could be their colleagues, friends or a person from outside of the industry. 'Checking in' before the session starts and 'checking out' after it is over is a simple yet super-efficient procedure for those who usually doing callouts with clients. These steps must and should be done in front of clients so they can keep in mind that there is at least one person knowing where to find the sex workers and the clients are the last contact on sex workers' number. If sex workers' buddies do not receive enough two calls, they will know that something wrong happens and immediately feel suspicious.

On smart devices, there are also a market of available free-to-download applications. Another practical way to ensure sex workers' safety is by using location tracking applications. Google Maps and Zenly are two among most common options, which allow you to share your current location to your friends. The app will update your newest location to those you share it with every time the phone is turned on, telling exactly where you are. However, it also exists some drawbacks in this method. Firstly, updates can only be done with the availability of Internet connection. Secondly, sex workers must always have their mobiles, if the phone was lost or out of reach, the data will misunderstand and cannot give specific information.

Even though every sex workers all shares the same intention of prioritizing their privacy by using professional security maintenance and safety, their biggest concern was the risk of having their personal real identities being revealed because of the close connection between personal profiles on social media and business profile that can be found easily across the Internet. Sex workers worried of the overlap in the linkage between professional work accounts and personal accounts. The security of online sex work platforms and the stability of those security in securing sex workers' data when dealing with hackers are also a big question. Along with the concern of personal information being revealed, the violation of sex workers' own business properties (such as photos, videos and content ideas) for others' profit without their consent. This is no longer the problem of violating individuals' privacy

but also their copyrights. Most of the participants seriously do not want their personal information to be found by family, friends, neighbours and employers, for their own sake in the future if they will no longer continue working in this industry. Causing dangerous to their own family and friends and to placing them at risk were the biggest concerns of sex workers, particularly for those who also have children to take care. There were concerns that people could blackmail them easier if they found out about sex workers' private life once their information was exposed. This is seriously dangerous because once it happened, the victims would barely have any solutions to stop their data spreading across social media.

Sharing sex workers' content to other sites and platforms without their consent happened for the reason that some clients prefer to have free access to sexual contents instead of paying to have access to them on regular official sites. They have needs, so others supply. This is why sex workers often find their content on free sharing sites.

Clients tend to have more advantages in exposing sex workers' information since they can rate bad quality for sex workers if they do not do what clients want. Talking about blackmailing experience with clients, Kim (27, webcamming, agency sex worker) said:

That guy wanted more inclusive content from me, but I refused it. He then sent me a short clip of me providing him with sexual intercourse. He told me that he has evidence of our encounter and he will upload it online on every site that he knows if I do not obey him. I was really scared. I had no idea that he did set up the camera from the beginning and if he uploaded or shared it with anybody else.

Another also shared his experience with private information exposure:

A guy in the University found an advertisement with my face on it, he first only shared it with his friends then gradually people started spreading with each other. I just simply cannot stop it, word of mouth was not too powerful and I cannot do anything against it. I was embarrassed, distraught and angry. But I chose to stay quiet. Eventually, people talked less about it, but I know they still whisper about it every time they see me. (Khang, 23, independent sex worker)

In terms of suggestive strategies for sex workers to protect their safety on the Internet, Sanders, T. et al. (2017) mentioned several options. Using a pseudonym is the first choice of multiple sex workers with an exceeding percentage 91.5% among sex work respondents in their research. Not linking work profile and personal profile are secondly recommended with 87.6% and the remaining of 76.5% choose not to share personal information with untrusting clients. These high results again demonstrate the tendency of combining both digital methods with traditional street-based methods to secure the safety at its best. Further security strategies are 'obscuring sex workers' face and hide visible marks for identification.

A virtual private network (VPN) is another common security tool. It works based on the addition of security insurance to public and private networks in accordance with personal IP address of the user. This will help increase considerably the level of security in terms of individuals by using exclusive IP address assigned for each individual computer and smart devices. It is important to keep in mind double checking and deleting all transactions and activities in the browser history and cookies sections, this is highly necessary when using public computers or the ones that is not personal properties to access to foreign sites and personal social media. Participants from Sanders' research (2017) even advised to prepare fake ID, different phone with different SIM card, always back up personal data on private hard drive with unpredictable passwords which is hard to remember.

Internet environment certainly benefits and improves sex workers' working conditions with the privilege of having a private space for themselves. Sex workers in this research and precedent studies have taken serious practical actions and measures to protect themselves,

which they learn and adopt gradually from their working experiences and their own findings, some acquires from their colleagues and friends. However, when it comes to security, it is also the privacy itself that has the highest risk of experiencing cyber crime and social media violation. It is a personal thing to keep, yet vulnerable to share. Maintaining personal privacy has become a daily concern of sex workers along with their work. Severe social stigma and discrimination that have long time injured sex workers' confidence, causing detrimental effects on their daily lives. Therefore, it is understandable when they have more serious concerns about the wide impacts of their work on their close connections. Sex workers facing the safety concern are considered living two or even many lives at the same time which could seriously stress them (Sanders, T. 2005; Mai 2009). For the vast majority of sex workers, both offline and online, in terms of their identity security and total privacy, it is compulsory for researchers and political maker to take serious approaches for further improvements. Practical strategies should be built upon the diversity and complexity of intersectionality of sex work community, both offline and online, at its broadest range, namely "people's preferences, knowledge, level of digital literacy and access to technology, working methods, circumstances and decision making about how they manage the public/private nature of their sex work in both online and in person relationships and networks. As with safety strategies, sex workers blended online technology approaches with offline practices to protect privacy" (Sanders, T. et al. 2017).

## Chapter 5 | Policing Internet-based sex work

According to Hammond and Attwood (2015), it is important to link the cultural and political aspect together when studying the commercial sex work. The policy implementations will result at its best when seriously considering the intersectionality of sex work at cultural level. Sanders, T. et al. (2018) also state that:

By referring to the cultural context of the sex industry it is inferred that the whole of the sex industry needs to be examined in relation to the everyday lives of individuals, businesses and relationships. The socio-cultural context of the sex industry determines what selling and buying sex means, resulting in many different values and interpretations based on a localised context.

It is the broad intersectionality in the social context of sex work that decides the process, the organization and the experience of the individuals who get involved in sex markets. Certain primary effects that bring great impact on sex markets have been identified by Harcourt et al. (2005: 201):

Typically social and legal sanctions against sex workers merely succeed in displacing the activity into other localities or into a different kind of working arrangement. Every country, and every region with those countries, has a different composition to its sex industry – shaped by history, social and economic factors, legal framework, and policing practices.

Studies have shown an increasingly visible evidence on the fast movement of sex workers to the online platforms (Peppet 2013; Cunningham and Kendall 2011). However, current national law system still mostly focuses on the forms of sex work that are visible and can be detected publicly. In accordance with the growing trend of sex workers in the age of technology with more advances, many questions and concern have not yet answered since the voices of online sex workers remain unheard while their community is growing strongly. At the same time, legal enforcement agencies should adapt new policies to really listen to sex workers' needs then approach them with practical methods. As Jones, A. (2015) questioned:

Given that law enforcement focuses on visible street-based sex work, if there is a “great migration” of sex workers into Internet-mediated private spaces, how are law enforcement agencies transforming their tactics and policies? Are law enforcement agencies, too, now using the Internet to monitor and surveil sex workers?

### **Legal and Policy Context**

Sex working is currently illegalized and criminalized in the context of the Vietnamese Government's legal approach. According to Ordinance No. 10 on Prostitution Prevention and Combat (2003), it is stated that:

#### **Article 4. Prohibited acts**

The following acts are strictly prohibited:

1. Buying sex;
2. Prostitution;
3. Containing prostitution;
4. Organizing prostitution activities;
5. Forced prostitution;

6. Brokerage of prostitution;
7. Prostitution of prostitutes;
8. Abusing business services to engage in prostitution;
9. Other acts related to prostitution as prescribed by law.

It is also regulated in Decree No. 167 (2013) that:

**Article 22. Acts of buying sex**

1. A fine of between VND 500,000 and 1,000,000 for acts of buying sex.
2. A fine of between VND 2,000,000 and 5,000,000 in case of buying many prostitutes at once.
3. A fine of between VND 5,000,000 and VND 10,000,000 for acts of inducing or forcing other people to buy sex.

**Article 23. Acts of prostitution**

1. Warning or a fine of between VND 100,000 and 300,000 for acts of prostitution.
2. A fine of 300,000 to 500,000 VND in case of selling prostitution to many people at the same time.
3. Foreigners who commit administrative violations specified in Clauses 1 and 2 of this Article, depending on the seriousness of their violations, may be subject to the sanction of expulsion from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Vietnamese law punishes severely the brokers, but is unresponsive to sex workers and sex workers. Brokers face criminal sentences and imprisonment for many years but buying and selling sex is only subjected to administrative sanctions of several hundred thousand VND. The fact that Vietnamese law only heavily punishes brokers who deal with sex trafficking causes anti-prostitution a lack of deterrence and ineffective prevention.

Recently, there have been suggestions from politics and scholars that Vietnam should consider legalizing sex work as it is a business line. However, these ideas violated the Constitution (2013), in which Clause 2, Article 36 stipulates that “The State protects marriage and family”, Clause 3, Article 60 stipulates that “The State and society create a construction environment”.

Legal enforcement agencies in Vietnam consider legalizing sex work also violates Article 1 of the International Human Rights Convention (1949):

**Article 1**

The Parties to the present Convention agree to punish any person who, to gratify the passions of another:

- (1) Procures, entices or leads away, for purposes of prostitution, another person, even with the consent of that person;
- (2) Exploits the prostitution of another person, even with the consent of that person.

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Lap, Director of the Department of Social Evils Prevention, affirmed that Vietnam needs to respect the International Constitution and Conventions on Human Rights, accordingly to which, it is impossible to consider sex work as legal, but to remove the forms of organizing prostitution from social life, especially to prevent the trafficking of women and children to serve prostitution (TiengChuong 2018).

At the National Conference on Tourism Development which held in Hoi An on August 9, 2016, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc affirmed that Vietnam would not accept sex work to be considered legal for the sake of immediate benefits and to avoid possible consequences that might affect long-term social values: “Vietnam will not have a red light district and no rampant casino. We do not develop in that direction”. (PhanHoiChinhSach 2016).

According to Cyber Security Law (2018), Vietnamese Government also implements regulations related to online sex work but with vague instructions and certainly cannot cover the broad diversity and complexity of online sex markets:

**Article 8. Prohibited acts on network security**

1. Using cyberspace to perform the following acts:

d) Prostitution, social evils, human trafficking; posting obscene, depraved, crimes information; undermining the nation's fine customs and traditions, social morality and community health;

According to Hanoi Police Department (2019), not every cases of commercial sex on the Internet can be criminally handled. In order to handle criminal matters, it is necessary to clarify acts of brokerage and organization. In cases where sex workers advertise themselves to provide sexual services, only administrative sanctions may be imposed. Meanwhile, the administrative sanctions against sex workers are currently not enough to deter. In addition, information about the abolition of regulations on bringing sex workers into medical facilities in the future will also cause certain difficulties in dealing with and eliminating these services. With this provision, female sex workers who do not need a broker after being administratively sanctioned will continue to "work online" and find clients, which is not difficult to notice.

How to deal with websites specializing in sex work activities as mentioned above is also very difficult because these websites have servers located in foreign countries, so after being blocked, they will change to other domain names while keeping current content and existing members. In addition, administrators who operate these websites are not in Vietnam.

Along with traditional approaches against sex workers, there are also different recommendations in terms of the political approaches to online sex work. According to Dr. Ngo Duc Thinh, even though sex working is not consistent with Vietnamese custom, but in terms of freedom, everyone all has personal needs to be met in daily life (Sputnik 2018). He said that buying - selling sex has existed for a long time, right from the time when mankind got married, therefore, it cannot disappear just because anybody does not like it.

Legalization or recognition, I think, should not be. Acknowledging or not, in my opinion, does not mean anything because it has been happening up to now. Can legal workforce really control it? Moreover, current control measures are very vague. If it's illegalized but still going on, then what is legalization for? Sometimes people mistakenly think that having a law will make it clear but actually, it is very difficult. In my opinion, it is best not to create laws. (Dr. Tran Duc Thinh, Sputnik, 2018).

From the perspectives of those who work in social health sector, legalization of sex work is a political and legal decision and the biggest goal in public health is to approach those who work in this industry and help them with reducing harms and risks in sexual and reproductive health.

We do not want to criminalize an act like that because in doing so, we push it to underground, not public activities. As a public health practitioner, it will be more difficult for us to

reach out to people who have these behaviours and provide them with the services that they need to improve health and protection at the risk of HIV / Aids infection. So, in terms of harm reduction, we wish that if it does not criminalize such behaviours and realize that there is a group of people who are at risk of infection such as HIV and STDs (sexually transmitted infections). They really need us to reach out and educate them so that they understand how the disease is transmitted and give them the means to protect themselves like condoms, or tests to detect the disease and then be able to cure diseases. (Dr. Colby, D., BBC Vietnam 2013)

In relevant to male sex workers, most of the laws are designed to address the case of female sex workers because people tend to misunderstand that sex workers have always been women; thus, they have always referred to sex workers as women. This happens even in the social security system itself. In Vietnam, there used to be Social Labour Education and Training centers for sex workers but these centers only allowed women and male sex workers cannot enter here. So when police arrested female sex workers, there is an education and training system available to them. The Vietnamese National Assembly has currently changed the law on the handling of female sex workers that they are no longer sent to these centers. Although criminalization of prostitution has not been abolished, changes to the law, at least for female sex workers, such as not being detained against their will in these centers for up to 6 months, are now amended to only administrative punished. This means that Vietnamese government has been relieved to address this issue related to these specific community.

From my experience working with male sex workers, the police know that they are male sex workers, but the system has not been established to deal with male sex workers, there is no Center for Education and Social Labour for men to send them there. Therefore, instead of dealing with them for prostitution, if they were convicted, the police would not know where to send them, so they charge them with an administrative fine. Certainly, there is a difference in the mechanism for male and female sex workers in Viet Nam. However, I do not think it is deliberately discriminatory, but only because of the way in which the mechanism was created. It is because there is no mechanism, so they don't know what to do with male sex workers. (Dr. Colby, D., BBC Vietnam 2013)

## Chapter 6 | Conclusions and Recommendations

After this research was conducted, the author validates the current lack of completed awareness over online sex markets as a considerable growing group within the sex industry. Law enforcement agencies remain mainly focused on street-based and indoor sectors, that are gradually moving to another more advanced platforms with the ease of the Internet. National legal system also has not shifted enough attention in taking deeper consideration into new forms of sexual services provision, as well as the diversity and complexity of online sex work at the broadest range.

Political activists, women's rights activists and social prejudices are likely to all see sex workers (mostly women) as victims, as sexual slavery for the pleasure of men and exhort against prostitution for feminist protection. Voting against the sex work, accusing them of losing their dignity, deepening the gap between them and society and attaching to the social bad prejudices about this specific profession, the author must question whether there are humanities in terms of women's rights and human rights.

In terms of efficient systematic changes to help combat stigma and not push sex work into the underground, it certainly takes time to change the law or change the way in which law enforcement departments respond to and view this specific community in a wider vision. When we understand how sex work operate in its broadest variety and intersectionality, and if we truly want to help both sex workers and their clients in proper ways with good results, then focusing on their education, safety and privacy protection is the most important priority.

Based on precedent literature in terms of the cultural context of commercial sex, undoubtedly, there is an urgency in adopting new and innovative directions with creative approaches in understanding how sex market works and for finding suitable future policy and studies:

- Macro-analysis of the context of sex markets, regulation and informal/formal economies;
- The role of the Internet and the communication technologies and the organization of the sex industry;
- Women as consumers of male sexual services and adult entertainment products and services;
- Male sex work: migrants, sexuality and customers;
- Transgendered sex work: participants, buyers and the place of the markets;
- Globalization and the sex industries.

(Sanders, T. et al. 2018)

It is not necessary to consider sex work as a profession, but it is completely manageable by allowing it to take place in certain areas. Why not pilot this experimental model to see to what extent does it work in the context of Vietnam, instead of picking up, putting it down so many times and causing controversy? In many countries with a strong legal and ethical background, especially those where religion plays an important role, prostitution still exists in one form or another and is governed, even when it is not legal. Sex work in Thailand has never been considered legal, but it still exists and operates broadly in certain areas. That model minimizes many negative aspects of the problem: practitioners are provided with medical treatment, protected from violence, and limiting the spread of disease to society.

Countries that allow prostitution to exist also strictly manage it through specific regulations such as not to be mixed with residential areas, schools, cultural and artistic establishments and public authorities along with strict regulations on time, insurance, inspection, tax payment, health care, business to minimize human trafficking and exploitation after prostitution. Sample sex work models are all available across the world and Vietnamese officials have also done many visits in many countries, but the idea so far has not been realized. The main reason is the traditional view of sex work in relevant to traditional custom. Under careful analysis, sex work will serve sexual needs on the basis of exchange and agreement. People who have no family, no chance to get married with sexual needs should be met and protected by law. If the need is not satisfied, it can lead to raping, sexual violence and physical assault.

Prostitution management is about dealing with such issues, rather than allowing sex to serve anyone. There are people who worry about prostitution destroying family happiness, married women tend to get jealous and be afraid of losing her husband over a sex worker. From author's point of view, this is not reasonable. Vietnam also have the Law on Marriage and Family, people having relationships outside of marriage should be punished according to the Law. In addition, the sex worker does not come to the door to knock and invite anyone using their sexual services. The marriage of a married person must be considered the family's problem, not the sex work. If they insist to please their sexual needs and there are no sex workers, they would continuously find other people. Prostitution management is also to ensure that its existence is not harmful just because it is not recognized. What if you did not know if the place you were going to bring your family and children to, was one of sex workers' markets?

In the process of integration, the emergence and increase of prostitution in developed tourist areas and large cities are indispensable. Many countries around the world have considered it as a normal tourism product. In Vietnam, sex work remains as a major cultural and moral barrier, and many people see it as a cause of marriage breakup or breakdown. Under these conditions, Vietnam should not allow sex work in everywhere or as a tourism product, but should consider it a conditional business, refer to the management model in the countries that have worked. Particularly for special economic zones, if necessary and sufficient conditions are successfully met, sex workers should be allowed to operate in a manner similar to casinos or dance clubs. This also means that sex work is only formed in a few areas, limited streets, only serving foreign visitors, tourists, not locals. It would ensure controlling business activities, security and order, and more importantly protecting sex workers from violence and exploitation. Giving the exclusive districts the freedom could be an approach. It is important that the management agencies have a legal framework and monitoring mechanisms for special zones to strictly manage and control this specific industry.

# Appendices

## Appendix A. A typology of ‘direct’ sex work (Harcourt, C. and Donovan, B. 2005)

Type	Characteristics	Geographic distribution
Street	Clients solicited on the street, park or other public places. Serviced in side streets, vehicles, or short stay premises	Widespread, particularly if alternative work sites are unavailable (United States, Europe, United Kingdom, Australasia) and/or there is socioeconomic breakdown (eastern Europe, parts of Africa, south and South East Asia, and Latin America)
Brothel	Premises explicitly dedicated to providing sex. Better security than street. Often licensed by authorities	Preferred where sex work is decriminalised, or brothels are “tolerated.” (Australia, New Zealand, South East Asia, India, Europe, Latin America)
Escort	Client contacts sex worker by phone or via hotel staff. Most covert form of sex work. Relatively expensive because of low client turnover. Service provided at client’s home or hotel room	Ubiquitous. In the United States escorts and private workers contacted by phone and working from a “call book” are known as “call girls” or “call men”
Private	Client contacts sex worker by phone. Similar to escorts except services provided in sex worker’s premises. A variant in London and other big cities is “flat” prostitution—high cost services in rented, serviced, inner city units	United Kingdom, Europe, United States, and Australia. Sometimes doorway (see below) and street sex workers bring clients home
Window or doorway	Brothels with sex workers on public display. Windows preferred in cold climates, doorways in warmer places	Window prostitution almost unique to Amsterdam and Hamburg. Doorway prostitution found in less affluent areas of European cities and in African and other developing countries
Club, pub, bar, karaoke bar, dance hall	Clients solicited in alcohol vending venues and serviced on site or elsewhere	Ubiquitous depending on types of male club available
Other all-male venues	Clients solicited in all-male venues such as barbershops, bathhouses, saunas, and mining camps. Serviced on site or elsewhere	Ubiquitous
Door knock or hotel	Unattached males are approached in their hotel rooms or boarding houses	Hotels worldwide and wherever large numbers of unaccompanied males reside
Transport (ship, truck, train)	Sex workers may board vehicles to service the crew or passengers or pick up clients at stations and terminals	Ubiquitous
CB radio	Sex workers drive along highways using CB radio to exchange (jargon) messages with potential truck driver clients. Serviced at truck stops or parking areas	United States
Other methods of solicitation	Through various media including notice-	Ubiquitous, but internet and

tion	board and newspaper advertisements, “sex worker catalogues” with mobile phone numbers, the internet via virtual brothels, etc. Services are delivered mostly in brothels and other indoor venues	mobile phone services are mostly confined to large cities in developed countries—particularly the United Kingdom and Sweden where legislation limits other forms of advertising
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### Appendix B. A typology of ‘indirect’ sex work (Harcourt, C. and Donovan, B. 2005)

Type	Characteristics	Geographic distribution
Bondage and discipline	Sexual fantasy through role play. May involve the inflicting of pain, but genital contact is not routine	Apparently unique to wealthier countries
Lap dancing	A recent development involving erotic dancing at close quarters without sexual contact	Predominantly wealthier countries—often takes place in hotels and clubs
Massage parlour	Premises ostensibly dedicated to providing massage, but a range of sexual services may be provided. In South East Asia similar arrangements may apply in barbershops	Europe, South East Asia, and Australia
Travelling entertainers	Actors, dancers and others involved in entertainment may also provide sexual services	South East Asia
Beer girls	Young women hired by major companies to promote and sell products in bars and clubs. Sexual services sold to supplement income	Cambodia, Uganda, other developing countries
Street vendors and traders	Ostensibly marketing rural produce or other goods but supplementing income with sexual services	Widespread in developing countries
Opportunistic	A person approached in a social venue may occasionally choose to charge for sexual favours if the client appears wealthy enough	Ubiquitous
Femme libre	Women, usually single or divorced, who exchange sexual services for gifts. The gifts are then converted to cash	Central Africa
Individual arrangements	The single mother who may have sex with her landlord in place of rent. Older sex workers who only deal with a small number of regular clients, by appointment. “Kept” women or men. Concubines. The number of possible arrangements is vast	Ubiquitous
Swingers clubs	Some swingers or couples sex clubs employ (undisclosed) sex workers if there is a shortage of female guests	Predominantly wealthier countries
Geisha	Women engaged primarily to provide social company, but sex may ensue	Japanese cities
“Sex for drugs”	Women providing fellatio for crack cocaine in crack houses. Young homosexual men in Western countries may provide	Crack houses are unique to the United States

	opportunistic sexual services paid with drugs	
Beachboys, bumsters, and gigolos	Men and boys engaged by women ostensibly for social purposes but sex is often involved. Some beachboys are under aged and many also service male clients	Resorts, particularly in developing countries
Survival sex	A matter of degree, where starvation or other serious deprivation is imminent, particularly for dependants. Food or security may be the currency, rather than money	Refugee camps anywhere

## Appendix C. Interviews with Sex Workers: Basic Socio-Demographic Characteristics

### Background

No.	Name	Age	Age started sex work	Place of origin	Marital status	Educational level
1	Ly	20	24	Hanoi	Single	University
2	Dao	22	29	Hanoi	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
3	Thanh	18	37	-	Single	Secondary School
4	Hoa	20	29	Quang Ninh	Single	Secondary School
5	Lien	21	27	Hai Phong	Single	Secondary School
6	Doan	21	28	Quang Ninh	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
7	Linh	20	21	Hanoi	Single	University
8	Nguyen	32	40	-	Divorced	High School
9	Quynh	22	24	Hanoi	Single	University
10	Lan	21	27	Quang Binh	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
11	Van	18	18	Quang Binh	Single	High School
12	Mai	24	25	Thanh Hoa	Single	University
13	Oanh	20	25	Hai Phong	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
14	Ha	30	35	-	Married	Considering

						Higher Degree Level
15	Minh	18	20	Quang Ninh	Single	University
16	Giang	23	26	Thanh Hoa	Single	Secondary School
17	Trang	21	24	Thai Nguyen	Single	University
18	Nhung	20	23	Hanoi	Single	University
19	Thao	23	28	Thai Nguyen	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
20	Anh	18	26	-	Single	Secondary School
21	Phuong	20	23	Hoa Binh	Single	University
22	Thu	21	22	Hanoi	Single	University
23	Quyen	20	26	Nam Dinh	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
24	Tien	18	18	Thai Binh	Single	Secondary School
25	Chi	31	34	-	Divorced	High School
26	Hanh	22	25	Thanh Hoa	Single	Considering Higher Degree Level
27	Tuyet	30	31	-	Single	Secondary School
28	Nam	23	24	Hanoi	Single	University
29	Khang	23	23	-	Single	University
30	Duy	24	26	Hanoi	Single	University

### Gender

Female	27
Male	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

### Sexuality

	Straight	Bisexual	Lesbian/Gay
Female	18	6	3
Male	2		1

### Other jobs

Student	16
Housework	5
Activist	4
Receptionist	7
Model	3
Freelancer	9

#### **Appendix D. Interviews Guide Questions with Sex Workers**

1. Background Information (Name, Age, Gender, Sexuality, Marital Status, Place of Origin, Educational Level)
2. How old were you when you started your work?
3. How did you move to the Internet-based environment?
4. What is your current working platform?
5. Do you do any other jobs?
6. How many hours do you work per week?
7. How many clients that you usually provide your services?
8. How much can you earn monthly? Do you have any financial dependents?
9. What is the difference in your previous and current working experiences?
10. Did you have any difficulties when you first moved to Internet-based environment?
11. What are the advantages/disadvantages of working in online platforms that you recognize?
12. Have you experienced acts of crime in the past three years? What did you do to overcome it?
13. What is the positivity of your work based on your perspective?
14. What is your future plan?
15. What is your expectation in terms of policing sex work?

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