



Profile of Cuban Women Involved in Sex Tourism—A Financial Perspective

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How to cite this paper: Nandi, A. (2018) Profile of Cuban Women Involved in Sex Tourism—A Financial Perspective. *Open Access Library Journal*, 5: e5073. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105073>

Received: November 26, 2018

Accepted: December 17, 2018

Published: December 20, 2018

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Abstract

With the country's lack of access to financial resources and wages being low in the formal sector of employment, some women in Cuba have devised sex tourism as the way of survival and fulfilling their family and personal needs. This paper identifies the profile of those Cuban women who are involved in the sex tourism in Cuba and examines how this industry is financially benefiting them. This study follows the method of reviewing other research literatures on sex tourism in Cuba, analyzing and differentiating them with one another. The study first discusses Cuba as a tourist destination, the kind of profile the women carries with themselves by being in the sex tourism industry and the existing links of the sex tourism and the local residents in Cuba with its financial impacts. The ways and the aspects in which sex tourism is financially benefitting the local residents especially the women are revealed. The conclusion discusses the importance of sex tourism to Cuba through the association or the local women with the financial impacts of sex tourism and defining the women's nature of engagement, and the need for detailed future research on other broader facets surrounding this study.

Subject Areas

Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, Business Theories, Economic System, Economics, General Business Research, Information Economics, Labor Economics, Operations Management, Philosophy, Social Issues and Public Policy, Welfare Economics

Keywords

Sex Tourism Industry, Women Trafficking, Cuban Economy, Female Sex Worker, Financial Impacts and Benefits

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to identify the profile of the women in Cuba who

are engaged in sex tourism. The main aim of this research is to analyze the financial impacts of sex tourism on the local women in Cuba through which the profile of the Cuban women involved in sex tourism is easy to identify. Parallel to that, the key objective of this research addresses three main topics: First, to identify the meaning of sex tourism in Cuba; second, to define the women in sex tourism in Cuba; third, to explore the association between women engaged in sex tourism and the country's financial benefits. Through these objectives, the main aim of this research is to address these questions, as these are the key aspects to the research topic. Previous studies used primary methods of research that resulted in the findings of the financial impacts. Therefore, this research will follow a system of reviewing the theories and studies stated in previous researches which are written by other academic writers on sex tourism in Cuba, and comparing and analyzing them with one another rather than practical data collection. This will be followed by suitable results and findings to the study. The main rationale is that, by doing so, it will help identify the profile of women engaged in sex tourism and the related financial incentives in Cuba, as well as summarize the existing research in a meaningful way.

There has always been the presence of sex workers in the sex tourism industry in Cuba. Plasencia, 2009 [1] found out that, sex workers have always been an important part of the Cuban society due to the women's role as servants to men in this male-dominating country. The broader focus on sex workers intends to be the lack of finances, which majority of the sex workers face. The research done by Trumbull, 2001 [2] studies the increasing number of sex workers since the late 1980's due to mass economic crisis. However, research is still under indefinite prospective whether the rest of the population in Cuba engages itself into sex tourism due to desperate financial needs focusing on local residents who forms the major part of Cuba. One of the aspects of research done by Wonders and Michalowski, 2001 [3] studied the impacts of production and consumption of sex tourism in Havana. Sinclair, 1997 [4] studied the condition of women workers who are employed in sex tourism. The linkages between the local sex tourism and Cuba as a sex destination (Clancy, 2002) [5], have also been studied in the past. However, previous researches done on sex tourism in Cuba don't talk about the profile of those women who are directly into the sex tourism industry. With regards to the research topic, the research question, which mainly arises from it is—How is sex tourism financially benefitting to the local residents and under what circumstances do they get involved in?

Identifying the Meaning of Sex Tourism in Cuba

The meaning of sex tourism differs from country to country depending upon the attitude of its residents towards the nature of this kind of work, its history and cultural background. This can be observed in the study by Babb, 2010 [6], which states that, sex tourism in Cuba varies according to its cultural history being sexually gazed and the people's perception to get involved into it. It is de-

defined as the form of tourism where local Cubans and the country provide sexual pleasures to foreign tourists for the sake of attaining financial benefits for their families. The impacts of doing sex work on those residents vary from individual to individual depending upon how much they want to earn from it and in what ways the sex work benefit them, looking at the historical prevalence of sex tourism in that country. The understanding of the word “sex work” is thus also dependent on how much and up to what level this job is and has been benefitting the residents in the present times as well as in the history. Is the sex work for the tourists has been bringing in huge cash for those people benefitting them or the extensive amount of expensive gifts and goods they have been receiving from the tourists since historical times until I now is more attractive to them for survival, are the most important factors in understanding the meaning of sex work in Cuban terms.

Defining the Women in Sex Tourism in Cuba

The term defining the “women engaged” is a broader context of a population living in a particular part of the world. As Cabezas, 2004 [7] states, sex tourism operates on the production of women trafficking, hiring local men and women and prostitutes, and the local community varies in type and quantity depending upon country to country. The community comprises local residents including women, commercial industrial establishments in a region, sex workers, etc. Those engaged in sex tourism therefore can be judged differently according to the background of the people involved in the country’s sex tourism, and also by identifying them might help in understanding their motivations and look into the ways in which they can be supported. Consequently, in order to define the local community in Cuba it is very important to understand whether the local community who is involved into the sex work comprises of local women living as residents or is it just the sex workers. All these above aspects play a major role in defining the local community in Cuban sex tourism industry.

Exploring the Association between the Women Engaged in Sex Tourism and the Financial Benefits in Cuba

The existence of the relationship between the sex workers in Cuba and the financial impacts form a key component for this research, as there are some links that exist between the two, which attract a myriad of Cuban women and men to join the flourishing sex tourism trade. One of the thoughts, which arise from it is that, it is hard to imagine the sex tourism industry of a country performing so well internationally in a global market without the involvement of the sex workers and the government politics in it. This can be explained by Elizalde’s study, which states, the nature of global forces in Cuban sex tourism is so strong that its impacts on the country’s economy and on its people can’t be understood well without the intervention of the government and the local sex workers in it (Wonders and Michalowski, 2001) [3].

Even though it is illegal in the Cuban government's legislation to have sex work flourishing in the country, still sex tourism operates informally in the country due to the prevalence of mass politicization by the political parties. Supporting evidences appear in a study by Patullo that, many government officials in Cuba were caught red handed for having ties with Mexican and other international tour operators who made arrangement of female sex workers for western tourists (Clancy, 2002) [5]. This indicates that despite the claims made by the Cuban government against the idea of supporting sex tourism, sex tourism still continues to operate within a closed environment in politics through which politicians have access to hard currency. Therefore, discovering all the hidden realities behind these questions and exploring the financial reasoning for the existence of sex work, will help to identify the relationship between the sex workers and the financial impacts in Cuba.

There are two main hypotheses, which exist concerning the research topic. As Holan and Phillips, 1997 [8] state, the more sex tourists visit Cuba every year, the more Cuba is financially benefited. Therefore, the first hypothesis being that, there is a straightforward relationship between sex tourism and financial impact. According to Pruitt and LaFont, 1995 [9] research in tourism indicates a clear association of the male tourists with the local women and men. Therefore, the second hypothesis, which forms from it, is that, there is a clear relation between sex tourism and the local residents. Through these two hypotheses, the reasons for the local women engaging themselves in sex work has been identified and how the sex tourism benefits them and helps them to financially recover from poverty, has been understood.

Also, the circumstances of the local residents including women for entering into sex tourism have been known through this. The following sections of this research include the literature review where various relevant research literatures have been discussed in order to get a valuable knowledge about the existing situations in the tourism economy. This is then followed by an empirical methodology which states the kind of research approach this study has undertaken in order to justify its appropriateness to the current research, followed by the results and findings to the research topic which answers the main objectives of the study, which will yield valuable facts to the topic of this research. Lastly, this research states the conclusion and suggesting certain recommendations for the future studies needed in this area of research for further exploration of facts on the profile of the women in Cuban sex tourism.

2. Literature Review

This section of the research discusses the literatures surrounding the sex tourism in Cuba through which it has looked into the financial impacts of sex tourism on the local residents. Firstly, this section of the research looks into Cuba as a tourist destination, which gives an insight into why people love going to Cuba. Secondly, it discusses the profile of the women engaged in sex tourism, which ex-

plains the reasons for which local women and residents get involved in the sex tourism industry, followed by discussing the relationships between sex tourism and financial impacts, which provides valuable information on the kind of financial benefits the local women get through the sex tourism industry. The detailed discussion through the literatures has helped identify what type of studies surrounding the topic has been done until now and what areas those literatures have looked into concerning the financial aspect of the sex tourism. Through this section of the study, it also explains how much the following literatures discussed below has been successful in answering the main research questions related to those literatures, as well as the financial impacts of sex tourism, which is the main focus of this study. Also, where there has been a knowledge gap in those literatures, which fail to answer the objectives of this research and other related aspects identified during the research process, which is crucial to answering the research question.

Cuba as a Tourist Destination

The total number of foreign visitors to Cuba since 2009 has been 2.42 million with tourists from Canada and Europe being the highest (Babb, 2010, p 95) [6]. Cuba (in terms of its economy and trade) follows the policies, which are more orientated towards free market economy and emphasize on doing trade with abroad and foreign businesses to operate in the country, as its economy and trade collapsed after the revolution causing lack of resources to run the country. This is evident from what Cabezas 2004 [7] states with which due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuban government has led a policy of capitalist economy, an approach to mass international exports, allowing incentives to attract foreign resources, privatizing the industries and reformulating their employment system which has brought vulnerable affects to the lives of the local Cubans. The perception of Cuba among the Westerners is that of a charming destination and that is why it is one of the most proclaimed destinations in the world when it comes to tourism. It can be argued that, there must be some kind of factors existing, which surround Cuba as the most chosen destination by foreign travelers. Supporting evidences appear to this statement in a study done by Linden expressing Cuba as a land of natural wonders and interests, which makes Cuba one of the world's rapidly growing tourism industry (Padilla and Mcelroy, 2007) [10].

Cuba has been a booming tourist destination since the post-revolution period with thousands of travelers from the developed nations visiting the islands for leisure purposes. This is evident from a work done by Jayawardena, 2003 [11] which states that, there has been a significant amount of growth in visitor numbers in Cuba since the last decade, which reached to 600,000. This shows us that, Cuba has become the center point of tourism attraction for many tourists. People come to Cuba especially because of the friendly nature of the women who make the tourists feel comfortable, constantly making Cuba a social country which brings the tourists in close contact with the locals through warm interaction (Wonders and Michalowski, 2001) [3]. Studies have showed that, it is an

essential requirement for the positive side of the economy to have an access to foreign money and increase in the trade which can be done by tourism and through this, tourism is the most suitable way to save an economy which lacks financial power (Holan and Phillips, 2007) [8]. This indicates that, the mass availability of tourism in Cuba and the way Cuba is shown to the international travelers has definite purpose and motives behind it.

The historical background of Cuba is masculine in nature where men have been dominating the society since earlier ages, and where prostitution had been a fundamental part of the economy (Palsencia, 2009) [1]. Above that, since women have been given more legal rights politically, academically and professionally when Fidel Castro came to power in the late 1950's, sex tourism has led to the boom in tourism mainly due to foreign exploitation of women in Cuba as soon as the revolution ended (Plasencia, 2009) [1]. The tourism regions of high importance are Havana, Varadero, Sierra Mar, Miramar, Santiago and Cayo Largo (Wonders and Michalowski, 2001) [3].

The Cuban government struggles to have access to hard currency in order to create foreign products and services for the increasing tourism numbers to Cuba each year, which has resulted in a poor tourism infrastructure development (Holan and Phillips, 2007) [8]. Tourism in Cuba has high relevance to the economy as the country is fully dependent on its tourism, which creates an increase in employment, for which it accounts for 15% of the GDP (Padilla and McElroy, 2007) [10]. The above studies on Cuba as a tourism destination has given useful insights into the reasons behind it being the most successful and emerging destination of the modern world. However, the above studies have gaps in their research and information. The study done by Jayawardena, 2003 [11] has been unsuccessful in stating the approximate number of tourists arriving to Cuba only for sex purposes or whom we may call as 'potential sex tourists'. The work hasn't indicated any estimation on how many tourists travel to Cuba each year only for sexual services and how many of them travel only for leisure purposes, or for intentions to take a break from busy work life.

Profile of Women Engaged in Sex Tourism

Sex workers have been the part of the human society since thousands of years when the whole world was male dominant and patriarchal in nature where man had extreme powers on deciding a woman's rights. In the same way the role of sex workers in Cuba can be traced back to the pre-revolutionary period long before Fidel Castro came into power, and they were the key part in the Cuban society in those days as they provided the men with sexual services (Plasencia, 2009). [1] Apparently, even though most of the countries in the world has a status of men historically controlling women, other countries are not seeing the similar scenario for the prevalence of sex tourism is because of the nature of sex tourism being illegal and a threat to a country's moral culture, as every country promotes their female population being as par with men (Cabezas, 2004) [7]. It is often said that, in modern Cuba women has more freedom over making deci-

sions for their lives as a result of which more women are becoming sex workers as they do the sex work for the western tourists with a motive to seek financial resources for survival factor, feeding their families and even for further opportunities in life. Garcia, 2010 [12] found out that, the main motives of sex workers in Cuba in regards to providing sex services to the male tourists is mainly because of making their family survive and with a better prospects to marry a westerner in order to open up ways to migrate to the developed nations (Trumbull, 2001) [2] and live a good life.

It has been a long debate as it is said that sex workers in Cuba enter into the business because of their past life, family issues and huge debts. Davidson, 1996 [13] states that, majority of the sex workers in Cuba enter into sex work because of desperation, which is caused by unstable relationships with family the sex workers typically have, and also because they come into huge debts from landlords who provide housing facilities to them. This fact is evident enough to tell that majority of the sex workers in Cuba enter into the sexual services whenever the opportunity arises for them, since most of the sex work in Cuba are independently operated by each sex worker (Davidson, 1996) [13]. Majority of the women involved in the sex work in Cuba belong to the region of Varadero and Camaguey (Trumbull, 2001) [2] and are aged between 20 to 40 years old (Davidson, 1996) [13]. Taylor, 2001 [14] says that, women and men in Cuba mostly belong to economically backward families. This clearly indicates no matter what kind of profession women and men belong to, they still remain poor due to Cuban salaries being so minimal. Though the study done by Davidson, 1996 [13] on the sex work in Cuba has been good enough to identify the motives of the sex workers in Cuba, it still lacks certain information on whether the sex workers involve both men and women or is it only the majority of the women population who do this job. If women are only the sex workers, then what kind of social issues and inequalities are prevailing in the Cuban society against women, which creates unexpected needs for them to become sex workers? This is another factor, which has been not looked into.

Relationship between Sex Tourism and Financial Impacts

Sex tourism in Cuba apparently has a very drawing relationship with the financial gains as providing sexual services to the tourists brings in cash to the sex tourism industry where individuals, the local residents form as sex tourism providers for the tourists. The status of the Cuban economy in the eyes of a western tourist is of a country, which solely runs on the foundations of black market (Garcia, 2010) [12]. The justification of the sex tourism in Cuba and its financial impacts can be considerably made through a research finding where it shows that women residents enter into sexual encounters with tourists for economic benefit, where they exchange cash and goods for sex with the tourists (Taylor, 2001) [14]. The perception of sex tourism in Cuba is like a replacement job to a regular profession (Padilla and McElroy, 2007) [10], which brings in earning to the household income. It can be argued that, there is some kind of connection

between sex tourism in Cuba and its financial impacts on the local population as a huge number of local residents are involved in it. This is evident from a work done on sex tourism in modern Cuba (Plasencia, 2009) [1] which says that, sex tourism is the most benefitting industry for the locals as people in Cuba don't receive adequate salaries due to which sex work has grown since the last decade with 200,000 sex tourists coming to Cuba each year. Also in relation to that, the links between the local residents and the sex tourism is quite obvious from the fact that local population in Cuba do the sex work for tourists in order to receive financial earnings from them. This is pretty much evident from the local residents' views in Cuba, which tells that, many locals who don't get a proper descent job get involved in providing sexual services for the tourists in order to supplement their incomes in order to feed their families (Plasencia, 2009) [1]. This study gives the evidence that, money plays an important role in the sex tourism business as it forms as an important asset for the local residents in Cuba who struggle hard to make ends meet and become a part of this industry for economic survival or in more common aspect, the survival for the fittest.

The local residents in Cuba act as sex partners and acquaintances to the tourists from western countries in order to procure US dollars, which is known to them as the currency of globalization (Wonders and Michalowski, 2001) [3]. This statement is indicative of the fact that financial gains in exchange of sexual services is involved at a global level, as US dollars is considered as a standard monetary currency for international businesses around the world and that the local residents involved in sex tourism want their financial earnings at an international level (Clancy, 2002) [5] which can be compared to rest of the world, thus creating a global sex tourism trade in Cuba. The discussion, which the above study has ignored is, how the acquirement of those US dollars as financial earning, impacts the financial stability of the local residential women in Cuba. It in fact doesn't states what kind of difference it brings in to the financial standards of those women and what difference it makes to their financial standing, which according to them is extremely difficult without such kind of earnings from the sex tourism.

Relationship between Sex Tourism and the Local Residents

A study done by Davidson, 1996 [13] states that, hard currency and the foreign exchange in Cuba can only be accessed from the tourists and from black marketers to stabilize the local economy, as a result of which sale of sexual services takes place to solve the issues of poverty and unavailability of proper education and creating employment opportunities for women. The outcome of the study is much apparent to prove that, some local residents in Cuba are involved in sex tourism because of the desperate economic situations prevailing in their local region where tourism is a must for survival. Apart from that, also the local community in Cuba is more patriarchal in nature because of which its sex tourism industry attracts more male tourists into the region where local women are

looking for western men. Taylor, 2006 [15] says that, the local women are desperate to have western boyfriends to fulfill their sexual fantasies due to a stereotypical image of a western man being wealthy who brings in lots of future opportunities for life to the Cuban women. This study draws a clear focus on the status of western men among the local residents, which attracts them, especially the women to indulge in sex work with the foreign male tourists.

This section of the research does answers the aim of this research topic in general suggesting that, there is some sort of financial impact on the local women in Cuba because of which their profile of being involved in the sex tourism industry is of high importance. Through the literature review, it has helped to answer that the meaning of sex tourism for the local women and men in Cuba has high significance in their lives, as this sex tourism industry is considered as the bread winner for their families. Apart from that, it also answers that there is an association between the women engaged in sex tourism and the financial benefits as this section suggests that, the women in Cuba are financially benefiting through sex tourism and that's why they don't hesitate to join this industry as they earn a good amount of money in this job. However, it gives rise to a question that whether Cuban people and the government are not under fear and threat to their country's moral values being hampered because of the Cuba's image being a place where female bodies are exploited at the cost of improving economic situation of the people in the country. Another question being that, whether or not the local government is worried about Cuba's sexually gazed stereotype image and whether does it wants to bring the Cuban society back to the era of Fidel Castro.

3. Empirical Methodology

There are different research methodologies, which exist to the study of sex tourism, mainly the primary research, exploratory research, explanatory research and inferential research. This project uses a descriptive research approach for the study into the financial impacts of sex tourism on the local residents who are involved into it. The descriptive method has been put into application through secondary data collection procedures which includes reviewing of other literatures written by previous authors on the matters of sex tourism in Cuba and analyzing specific information and theories relevant to the chosen topic for this research. That specific information collected from other literatures has been considered as secondary data, which has then been critically analyzed and observed in detail in order to state suitable findings to the topic.

The prime motive for conducting this research through descriptive method has been due to time limitations and ethics surrounding this topic, which restricts the primary investigation, mainly due to lack of financial resources to travel to the country in concern and unavailability of appropriate research grants. Also, due to absence of the prime location of the study, which is Cuba, has led to the non-availability of suitable participants and interviewees availa-

ble to generate suitable findings to the topic and research question as a whole. So this research has tried to highlight on the existing scenarios surrounding sex tourism in Cuba as much as possible, through a detailed analysis of other literatures, which collected primary data from the sex tourism hotspots in Cuba. Apart from that, there is a lack of descriptive approach to the research focusing on the financial impacts of sex tourism on the local residents in Cuba until now, but at the same time researches on sex tourism in Cuba using descriptive research methods cannot be disregarded. Examples of the publications which have used this descriptive approach in the past includes a study on sex tourism by Oppermann, 1999 [16], “a political economy of Asian sex tourism” (Leheny, 1995) [17] and “Sex, tourism and sex tourism fulfilling similar needs?” (Kinder and Ryan, 1996) [18]. As this project is more theoretical rather than practical data collection, it has not used any kind of sample as such specific to the study due to the method of research being descriptive and the use of secondary data being in the form of secondary information from previous research papers on sex tourism in Cuba.

The examples of the research used for this project includes, “The state regulation of bodies and sex work in Cuba” by Garcia, 2010 [12], “Sex tourism in modern Cuba: an outgrowth of the tourism industry’s focus on free market capitalism” by Plasencia, 2009 [1], “Female sex tourism: a contradiction in terms?” by Taylor, 2006 [15], “Bodies, borders and sex tourism in a globalized world: A tale of two cities—Amsterdam and Havana” by Wonders and Michalowski, 2001 [3], “Dollars are a girl’s best friend? Female tourists’ sexual behavior in the Caribbean” by Taylor, 2001 [14] and lastly “Sex tourism in Cuba” by Davidson, 1996 [13]. As a part of the secondary data, information from the above examples of articles on sex tourism in Cuba has been used and on the basis of those, appropriate understandings on the financial impacts of sex tourism on the local residents who are directly involved in sex tourism industry have been made, thoroughly analyzed and discussed. The data sets include, for instance, the aspect of materialistic benefits in exchange of sex has been taken into consideration from the research done by Plasencia, 2009 [1], for establishing the relationship between financial impacts and the local residents who do sex work for the tourists. The aspect of why and how the exchange of cash and goods from the tourists is an important factor for the local residents which doesn’t makes them feel guilty to sell their bodies to the tourists in the study of Taylor, 2001 [14].

Descriptive research is beneficial to this study, as the meaning of financial impacts in Cuban sense has been explored by keeping other research articles related to sex tourism studies in Cuba as a base for the findings. Consequently, detailed secondary analysis and account has also been made on the meaning of financial impacts in Cuba throughout the results section of this research. In this case, attention has been drawn to carefully investigate the attitude of the local residents in Cuba towards financial benefits in their lives. In order to this, the

level of economic hardship faced by the local residents in Cuba due to political and economic forces, and the insufficiency of the Cuban wages for living a decent life, has been examined critically through the literature written by Davidson, 1996 [13] to understand what the financial income in dollars mean to the local residents in Cuba. From this secondary data analysis, a keen attempt has also been made to fill in the missing aspect of the study by Wonders and Michalowski, 2001 [3] which doesn't justifies how obtaining US dollars bring changes in the financial standing and financial stability of the local residents in Cuba. Therefore through this, a particular and definite meaning of financial impacts according to how the Cuban residents see it for them has been discovered.

Secondary information, which has been gathered from other research articles has been used to identify the attitude of the local residents towards sex tourism in their region and through this an attempt has been made to define the local community. In concern to this, the local Cuban resident's stereotypical image for a western sex tourist has been taken into thorough account from a work done by Enloe and Jeffreys (Taylor, 2006) [15] and has been evaluated into deep in order to recognize the attitude of local residents in Cuba towards sex tourism. In parallel to this, the involvement of prostitutes in sex work with the western male and the reasons of such involvement have also been deeply observed alongside. By doing this, an understanding has been made on the reasons behind the likeness for the western sex tourists among the local residents and the reasons for such an obsession to engage in sex work with them. Subsequently, the local residents views about sex work being an important economic value against their poverty and exclusion from the society, has also been investigated from a study done by Kempadoo (Taylor, 2006) [15]. From this, the level of desperation for the local residents to enter into sex tourism has been known and discussed.

Even though the descriptive research used for this study has been predicted to have high success rate for producing valuable findings to the topic, it does have certain disadvantages, though it hasn't affected the research to lose its meaning and degrade its importance to the topic. First, the secondary data collected from the literatures is based on the authors view on the focus of study, which is also different from one author to another. This has made the data to vary and not being analyzed according to the local residents perspective or according to the local people in Cuba. Second, it lacks trust as majority of the literatures written on sex tourism indicates the same information and issues giving it an exaggeration on the topic of sex tourism in Cuba. Finally, as the data from those literatures has not been analyzed and observed by actually being in the location, it is very uncertain to come out with the appropriateness of those data.

4. Empirical Results

This research has come up with very valuable and insightful findings to the topic of identifying the profile of the Cuban women involved in sex tourism. This section first outlines the findings for the meaning of sex work for the women in

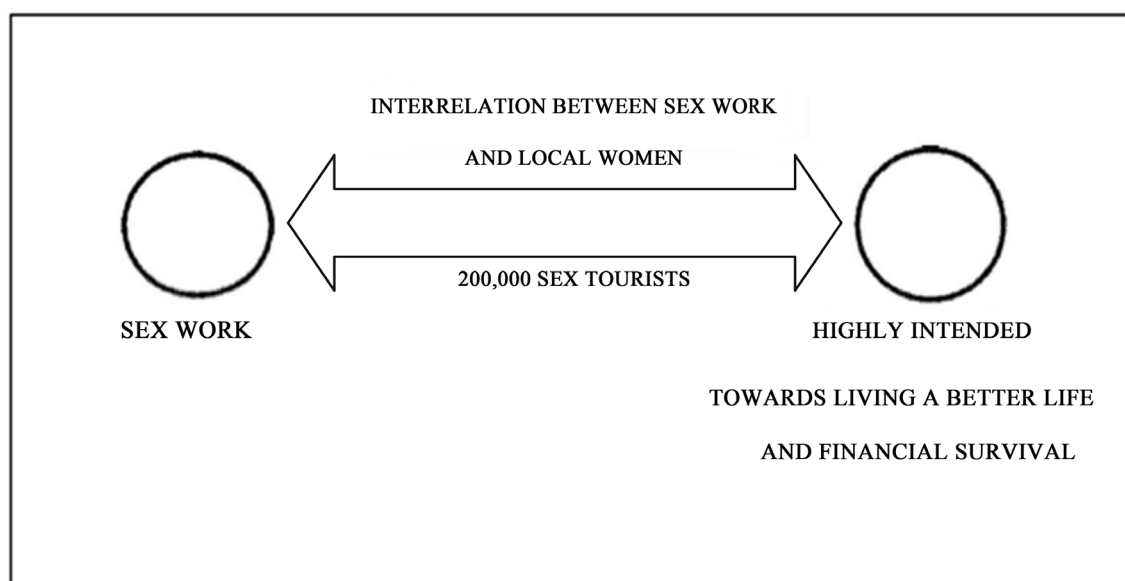
Cuba followed by understanding the facts related to the women engaged in sex tourism, and finally extensive results on exploring the relationship between sex workers and financial impacts. The sections underneath explain what the sex work means for the local women in Cuba and its importance in a Cuban woman's life. Further, it provides with the figures on the amount of women and men and sex workers involved in the sex tourism followed by the number of sex tourists visiting the local women and the sex workers for sexual services in a given year, and the countries supplying sex tourists.

The Meaning of Sex Work for the Women in Cuba

The local attitude of the local residents in Cuba towards sex work has been identified as being more open and crucial factor in their lives, as providing sexual services to the foreign tourists brings a source of income in order to face the economic crisis in their families which has been going since the pre-revolutionary period, and has become the part of the Cuban culture. The sex work in Cuba has been found out to have variations as there are certain local residents in Cuba who have been receiving meals and gifts from foreign tourists in exchange of sex for over 60 years now, which has personal benefits in itself as it benefits to the person individually (Taylor, 2001) [14] where they use this exchange of materialistic goods to fulfill their personal needs such as shopping, partying in the clubs etc. in present day too.

Moreover, it has been understood that, this kind of earning has positive impacts on a local resident in Cuba who is single and having no family responsibilities. Those women from the local residential population with family responsibilities are found out to do sexual deals with the foreign tourists in exchange of cash. They earn as much as \$10 at a time with one male client (Davidson, 1996) [13] which in Cuban family life is far more than the local residents can ever imagine to receive in any other form of employment in the tourism sector, where \$12 - \$24 per month is impossible to run family responsibilities (Plasencia, 2009) [1]. Evidences found during this project tell that, there are 200,000 sex tourists visiting Cuba each year among which 58.3% (Trumbull, 2001) [2] are the male sex tourists in majority as compared to 400,000 leisure tourists which makes us realize that how much the sex work keeps importance in the lives of the local residents in Cuba. This figure also answers to the remaining gaps in the study by Jayawardena, 2003 [11], which was unsuccessful in stating the separate figures for visiting numbers of sex tourists and leisure tourists.

Therefore, in regards to the financial gains in the form of materialistic goods and cash tell us what the sex work in the lives of local residents in Cuba means to them. The financial returns are thus considered purely for fulfilling their needs and as well as for obtaining a good quality of life (Babb, 2010) [6]. For a better understanding of how important sex work is for the local women in Cuba, can be seen in **Figure 1**, which indicates that the sex work has a close relation



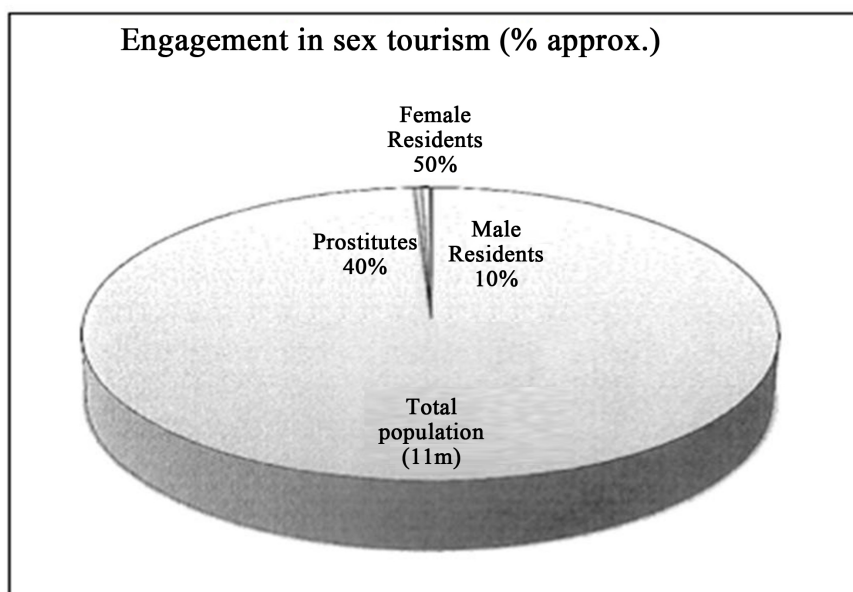
SOURCE: Charles Trumbull, ASCE CUBA 2001.

Figure 1. Displaying the Importance of Sex Work for the Local Men and Women in Cuba Indicating It as a High Survival Fact.

ship with the local women as through sex work the men and women in Cuba can be financially better off than living in poverty. The following figure indicates sex work on the left to be impacting positively towards financial survival on the right, meaning through sex tourism, the local men and women live off better lives than those who are not involved in providing sexual services to the tourists.

Women Engaged in Sex tourism in Cuba

There is a huge amount of involvement of the local population in the sex tourism in Cuba. The findings of this research shows that, sex workers and the local men and women from the residential areas, and as well people working in industrial establishments all are involved in the flourished trade of sex tourism in Cuba. Out of a total population of 11 million in Cuba, there are 100,000 sex workers involved comprising of 40,000 prostitutes and rest being local women who account for 50,000 and men for 10,000 approximately from the residential areas (Mckinley, 2004) [19], who are also engaged in other professions like in hospitality, healthcare and education sectors, do sex work in case of financial necessity. For a better understanding, **Figure 2** on the next page displays the division in percentage of women and men involved in the sex tourism out of the total population of Cuba. The figures are nearly close to each other when compared to other countries, for instance Thailand rates at 200,00 sex workers and Jamaica's figure for sex workers being 70,000 with only a difference that, in Jamaica and Thailand none of the sex workers have any educational background and sex work being their only job (Clancy, 2002) [5]. Majority of the sex work for the tourists in Cuba has been found to be part



SOURCE: Mckinley 2004.

Figure 2. Percentage division of the category of people among the local Cuban community who are engaged in sex tourism out of the total Cuban population.

time out of the legal profession. The local women in Cuba who are involved in sex tourism does this who belong to good educated families and is very common to be found among the local residents (Trumbull, 2001) [2], which also mostly happens due to the local residential areas being a heavy tourist visiting place.

Consequently, it has also helped in answering the missing gaps in the Davidson, 1996 [13] study that doesn't indicate the percentage of both local women and men in the residential areas involved in sex tourism. It also found out in relation to the unavailable information in the Davidson, 1996 [13] study that, majority of the Cuban women in the local residential areas are mistreated by their male partners which brings in social inequality to them and therefore force them to indulge themselves into sex with western tourists with an opportunity to have social independence from a hard life (Plasencia, 2009) [1]. Local women engaged in sex tourism come from the regions of Santiago, Camaguey and Santa Clara (Davidson, 1996) [13] and belong to the age group of 18-40 year olds in university education and in professions like architecture and nursing (Trumbull, 2001) [2]. **Figure 3** displays the map of Cuba, indicating the regions from where the women come from who are involved in sex tourism.

Due to lack of evidence, the family characteristics of the women couldn't be identified. Apart from that, it is also been identified that there are many local residential families with older family members in Cuba who supply their own girls to the western tourists. Due to unavailability of proper statistics, the percentages of such kind of families involved in supplying prostitutes for sex work couldn't be estimated.



SOURCE: <http://www.thecubanhistory.com/>.

Figure 3. Map of Cuba indicating regional origin of women engaged in sex tourism.

The Relationship between the Sex Workers and the Financial Impacts

There are quite a bit of linkages, which exist between the sex workers in Cuba and the financial impacts according to the findings for this study, which gives a financial reasoning to the existence of sex work in Cuba. In parallel to that, the local government also shares the relationship pertaining to the financial impacts. Due to the aftershocks at the end of the revolution, which brought huge economic crisis reducing 14.8% of the government's economy, the local government in Cuba has been making efforts to promote tourism, which has led to state projects with international tourism companies. While sex tourism is not promoted on an official basis, international state collaborated tourism projects are still operated within the political context which facilitates 12% growth in sex tourism which has become a global market in Cuba contributing \$1.8 billion each year (Clancy, 2002) [5] to the Cuban government in order to put the economy back to its feet same as it used to be 30 years back.

The sex workers in Cuba are involved with the sexual fantasies of the European and North American tourists who account for 40% from Canada, 15% from Western Europe and 12% from USA (Wonders and Michalowski, 2001) [3], which makes them accessible to the global market of the business of sex work with puddles of foreign tourists on a daily basis. Apart from that, there are connections of many brokers in Cuba who work along with the tour operators in foreign countries (Clancy, 2002) [5] to provide foreign tourists with sex workers for sexual services. This has been found to be a significant aspect towards the involvement of the sex workers in the globalized sex tourism industry where they make deals for their bodies for receiving explicit cash in foreign value (Taylor, 2006) [15], for a socio economic livelihood. The dollars which the sex

Table 1. Origination and population of sex tourists in Cuba¹.

Country Supplying Sex Tourists	Average Number of Sex Tourists in a Given Year
Canada	440,000
Western Europe	165,000
U.S.A.	132,000
Latin America	165,000
Others	198,000

¹SOURCE: By Nancy Wonders and Raymond Michalowski, Social Problems 2001.

Note: Population of Sex Tourists (In Millions).

workers in Cuba acquire from the tourists brings in personal prospects for them to earn money and send it back to their hometown (Trumbull, 2001) [2] which can help to feed their whole family for many weeks, and as well as it gives them an opportunity to increase their lifestyle and standards by going for clubbing, having dinner in posh restaurants and shop for elegant clothing. Through this, the income has increased to 18.6% for the Cuban people until 2001 (Trumbull, 2001) [2]. Thus from this, it can be justified that the kind of relationship which exists between sex workers and the finances is that, by sharing personal relationships with foreign tourists, sex workers can become financially stable due to the amount of money and business sex work brings to them which ultimately signifies the existence of such kind of association between the two (Cabezas, 2010) [7]. **Table 1** shows countries from where sex tourists originate and their numbers in Cuba among the 11 million population. This also covers up the missing information in the study of Wonders & Michalowski, 2001 [3] where it failed to explain the impacts on the financial stability of the people in Cuba due to the access to US Dollars.

5. Conclusions

This research has been successful in providing useful facts into discussing the profile of the Cuban women in sex tourism and the ways in which it benefits them financially. The aims and the objectives of this study have been a significant factor through which the research question has been answered as accurately as possible. Apparently, it has helped to understand the financial impacts of the sex tourism on the women in a bigger outlook focusing only on the finance side of the sex tourism industry in Cuba. From this descriptive research, the author firmly recognizes the fact that sex tourism has been positively a contributing factor in the lives of the local Cuban population in the country. It has by far helped the country to economically grow since the fall of the Fidel Castro's government, but on the other hand, has also created a vast level of exploitation of the local impoverished communities in the country. It should perhaps be stated or rather be remembered that economical advancement in a nation does come with a price where common man suffers its brunt.

This section of the study discusses what this research has looked into so far and what all it has talked about, by first having a look into what really the sex tourism means to the people of Cuba and why sex tourism is so important in their lives. Second, it discusses how the local women's engagement in sex tourism in Cuba can be termed, followed by the kind of associations which exist between the Cuban women in sex tourism and its financial impacts.

What does sex tourism mean to Cuba?

The above findings have already suggested that sex tourism does financially benefit the local residents, mainly because of the 1980's post revolution issues, which led to the downturn in the economy. Apart from that, this research has made a desirable attempt to fulfill the objectives of the study. The findings have helped to answer the research question which states that, sex work is an important part of surviving the financial crisis for the residents since the historical time leading up until the present day, helping them to earn money for their families through the mode of sex tourism. The process of money making and enjoying materialistic goods through sex work has helped to understand its meaning in the lives of local residents of Cuba, which is an opportunity for them to enjoy luxurious lifestyle what they can't do while in regular jobs. However, there has been a contradiction to this as women in the residential areas are believed to be driven towards earning hard cash, while on the other hand residents who are single are more towards receiving expensive gifts and other goods through sex work. According to a research by Taylor, 2006 [15], it urges the need for exploring the differential factors of making choices when it comes to financial wellbeing. Therefore, future research should focus on exploring the reasons behind such differentiation in the financial choices of the two sets of residents. One time sex work makes them have access to dollars, which is enough to feed their families for a month. [10] (Padilla and McElroy, 2007) suggests that, the financial benefits of sex tourism should be understood well in terms of a sex worker's perspective. Detailed research in the future on sex work should reveal its meaning for the sex workers in contemporary Cuba.

How are women defined in the context of sex tourism in Cuba?

This research has given detailed information on the research topic, which indicates a significant amount of engagement by the sex workers and local residents in the sex tourism industry out of their regular employment for higher financial stability in their lives, although male residents providing sexual services to the tourists tend to be least in percentage figures. Supporting evidences can be found in a study by Smith and Padula stating that, the minimal involvement of men in the Cuban sex industry has to be understood in a much broader aspect of sex tourism (Trumbull, 2001) [2]. This trend of lesser participation of the male community among the residents needs to be focused into deep in the future studies surrounding the current research topic, in order to analyze the reasons behind such tendency. It can be realistic to say that, excluding the sex workers and

the prostitutes, the engagement of the residents into sex tourism can be described mostly as a part time rather than full time work mainly because of their involvement in other professions. The reason behind this phenomenon can be said due to the heavy commercialization of tourism in the local residential areas. Mistreatment of the females in the family has been identified as a major circumstance for them going into sex tourism for self-freedom in life with financial independence. Above that, third party involvement of few of the residents in supplying women for the tourists cannot be disregarded as a crucial aspect.

However, one of the drawbacks in studying this aspect in detail has been the lack of access to sufficient evidential statistics to justify its existence. Though majority of the sex work in Cuba is independent, Davidson, 1996 [13] suggests a serious requirement to collect more future information on the role of third parties in supplying girls and the critical understanding of how the procedure works. Primary approach to research in the future on the role of elderly people in the residential families providing access to the tourists with young girls in Cuba, would produce substantial statistics in studying this aspect more critically.

What associations do the local women in sex tourism share with its financial impacts?

The women in Cuba can be said to have association with the financial impacts of sex tourism particularly due to the aftermath of the revolution causing them to have sexual relationships with western tourists, bringing in a globalized market to them, which works on the concepts of capitalism. Government's role of campaigning for tourism with industries abroad can be said to have created a gradually developing association with the financial impacts, even though it doesn't promote sex tourism in a legalized form to the rest of the world. This can mainly be seen as an alternative procedure to recover the state economy by the government, which brings in financial profit. It can be optimistic to consider the personal satisfaction of the Cuban politicians as another motive behind supporting the growth of sex tourism from backdoor, though future research is needed to study deep into looking at such kinds of relationships between the government and the financial impacts on them. This can be supported by what Pettman, 1997 [20] says, that more focus needs to be drawn in knowing the financial factors involved among the government authorities to have peculiar involvement in sex tourism which it truly opposes in the Cuban society. The relationship with the financial impacts of sex tourism can also be said to exist in a hierarchical form in which women are linked to brokers who have contacts with overseas travel companies and they all share equal profits coming out of sale of bodies for foreign cash, leading to elegant lifestyles and as well as providing money back home. This kind of practice can be said to have raised the financial standards of the people in Cuba.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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