



HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

A Baseline Study on the Sexual
Exploitation of Male Masseurs in Metro
Manila

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LOVE146
END CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

A feminist and human rights analysis of trafficking:

Sex industry and its growth is predicated on:

- male-centred ideological assumptions that sex is a male right and entitlement as well as a commodity that should be readily accessible to men;
- women are sexualized commodities functional to that male right;
- trafficking is rooted in this stereotypical constructions of the social roles of women and men

Neglect in Research

- There is predominantly a negative portrayal of masculine identity – thus, there is a corresponding lack of public empathy regarding physical and emotional harm to males.
- Confirmation Bias: “What you look for, you will find”
- In a review of 166 scholarly articles on the global sex industry, 84% exclusively discussed female sex workers and made no mention of males. (Dennis, 2008)
- Often, when studies discuss the sexual exploitation of **children**, they **really mean girls**.

Each culture has similar stereotypes of masculinity and femininity.

Boys are expected to be tough and resilient, while girls are often seen as vulnerable and in need of rescuing.





A Cambodian Proverb says that a girl is like a piece of cloth; if it is stained then it is spoiled for ever but a boy is like a piece of Gold; if it is dropped in the mud then it can easily be washed clean again.

What about boys as victims?

- Men and boys are also sexually exploited but culturally men and boys are not seen as vulnerable.
- The statistics are not as diverse as we might think:
 - 1:4 girls sexually abused
 - 1:6 boys sexually abused

In Sri Lanka, up to 90% of sexual exploitation cases are said to involve male victims.



Why is the sexual exploitation of boys largely ignored?

- Assumption that boys are not victims and they choose to be involved because they are gay or simply have high libido.
- Christian groups don't want to be seen as pro-Gay and secular groups don't want to be seen as anti-Gay
- Men are viewed as having control over their work, their relationships and their bodies.
- Virginity is highly prized in girls by many Asian societies. Boys can't get pregnant and risks of violence, is largely ignored.

What are some of the misconceptions about sexual exploitation of boys?

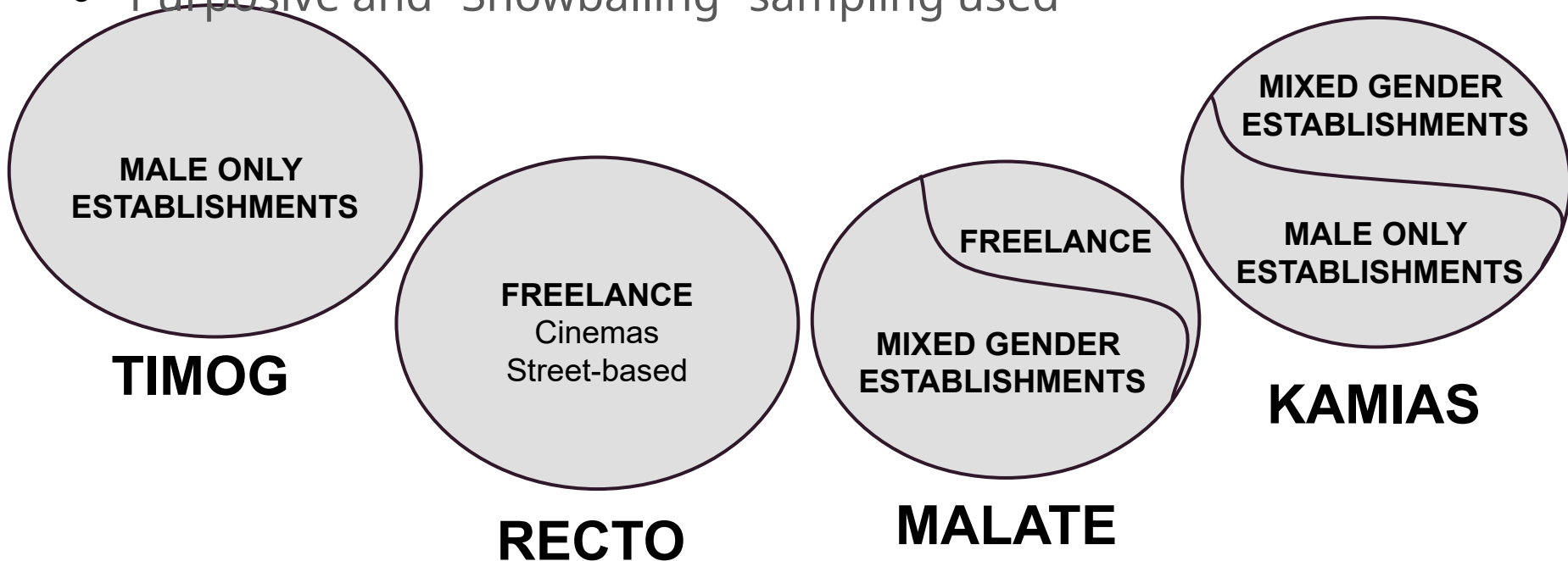
- Boys are not seen as sexual objects and are not targets of sexual exploiters.
- Sexual exploitation of boys is perpetrated only by men of homosexual orientation.
- Exploiters are mostly foreigners.
- Boys consent to have sex with women therefore are not victims when women are buyers.
- Sexual exploitation of boys is limited to more 'open' societies.
- The magnitude of the problem is small.

Love146 Research with Young Males

- **INDIA** - Mumbai with Samabhavana (2010-12)
- **CAMBODIA** - Phnom Penh and Siem Riep in Cambodia with Hard Places Community (2012); Kompong Som with Iris Ministries and M'Lop T'pang (2014)
- **PHILIPPINES** - Manila (2013 and 2014)
- **THAILAND** - Chiang Mai with Urban Light (2013)
- **SRI LANKA** - Colombo (2014)

Methodology / Sampling

- 51 survey interviews with young men from numerous male massage services in four key vicinities within the Metro-Manila area.
- All interviews were conducted in the Tagalog language by two local Filipinos and one expatriate (me).
- Purposive and “Snowballing” sampling used

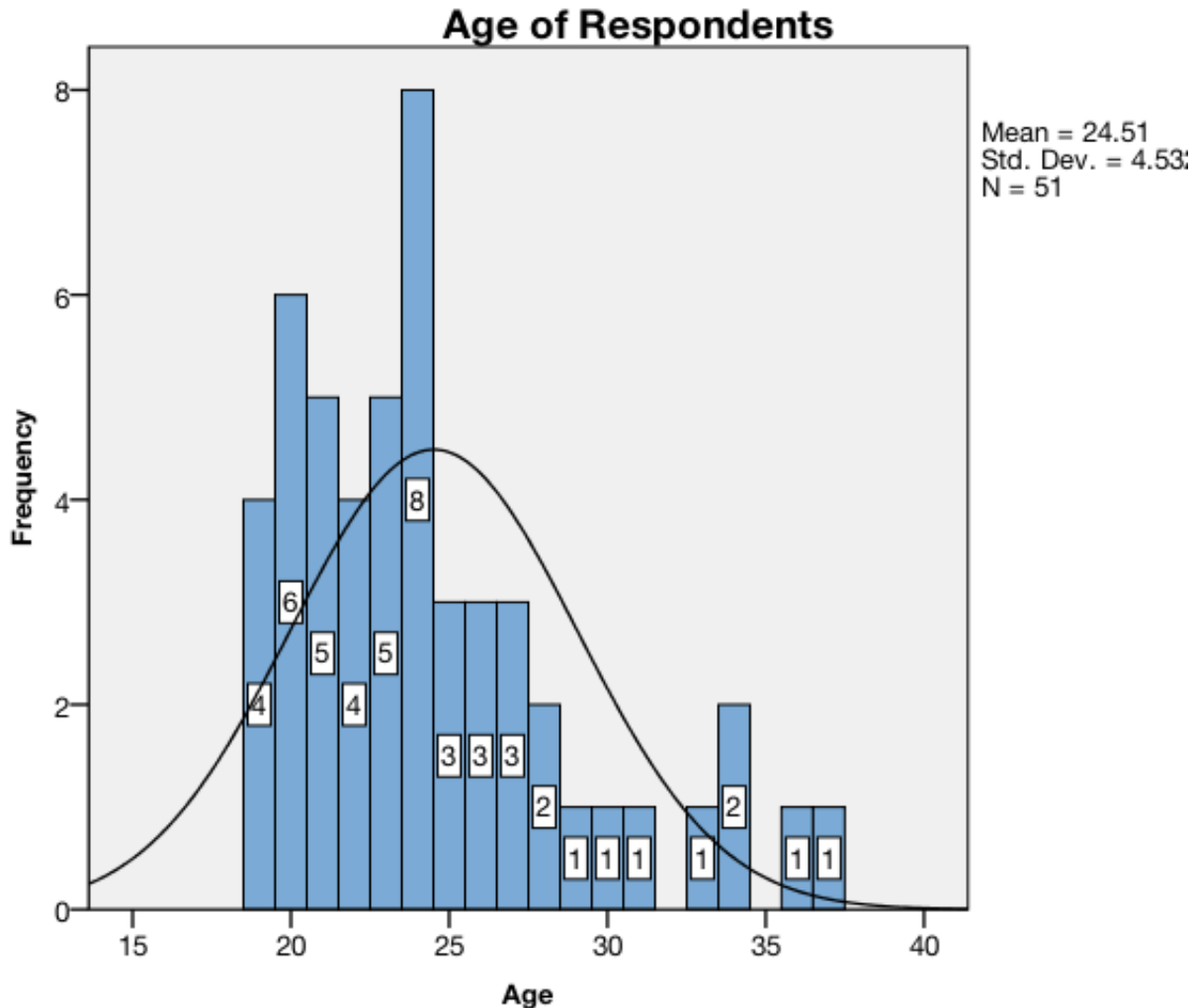


Ethical Considerations

- Interviewers/field researchers were trained using UNIAP “Ethical Guidelines for Human Trafficking Research” (2008).
- References for sexual health, counseling services, and legal aid were made available.
- Respondents could choose to do the survey after explanation of the research’s purposes. During the interview, respondents could skip any question or stop the interview at any time.

Demographics

Age of Respondents



Age Range: 18-37

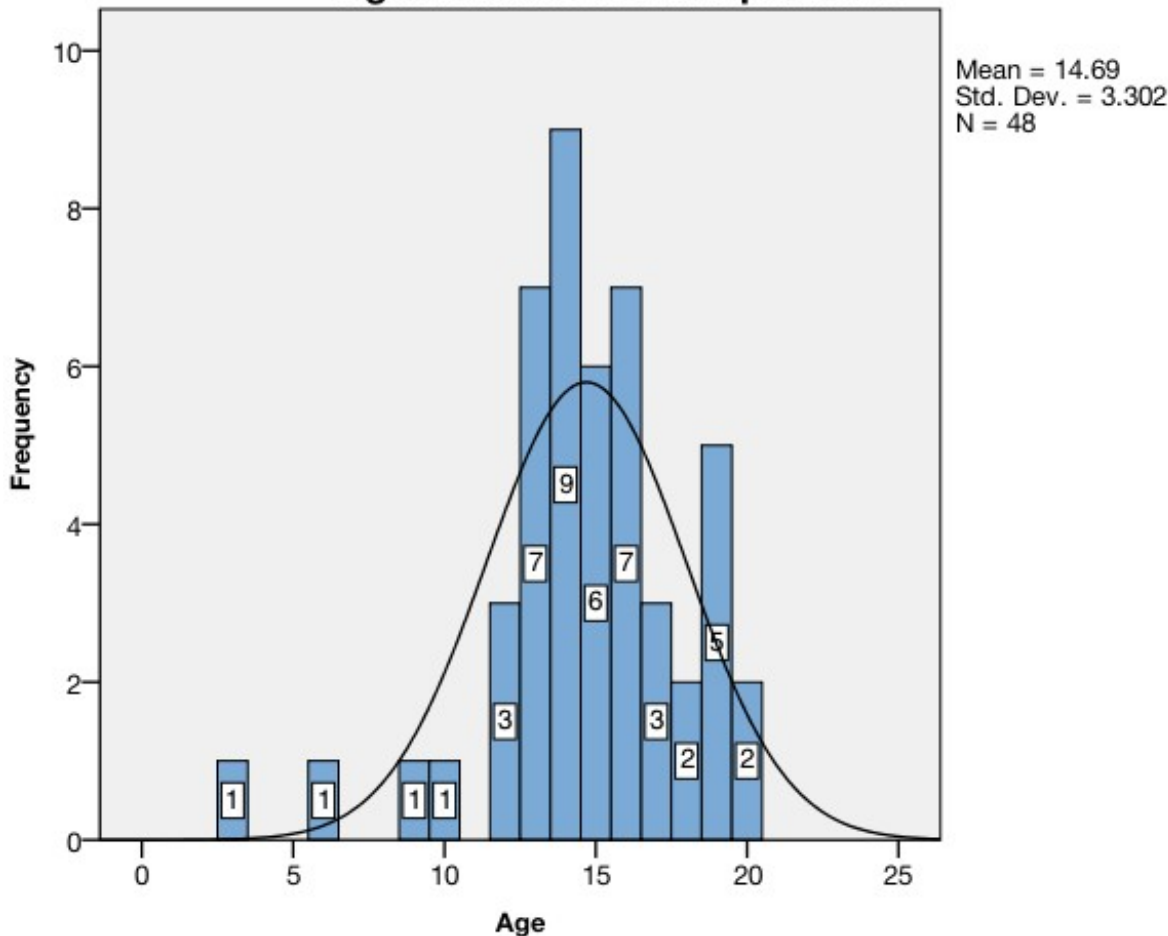
Mean Age: 24.5

63% of respondents fall within UNICEF's definition of youth (15-24 years)

Sexual History

First Sexual Experiences

Age at First Sexual Experience



Range: 3-20

Mean: 14

Youngest ages for sexual activity of all studies

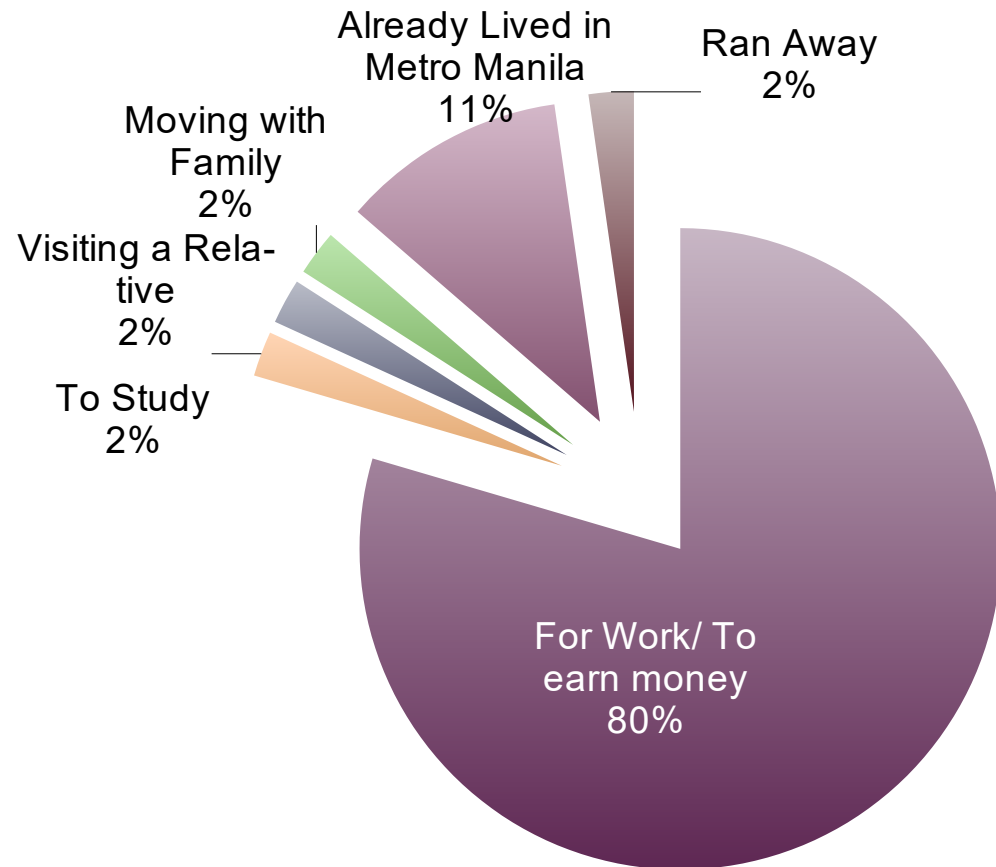
2 respondents indicate their first sexual experience being with a male teacher (12 and 13 years old)

4 respondents indicate that their first experience was forced or coerced (ages 13-17)

Migration

- 4 in 5 respondents had migrated to the Metro Manila area—predominantly from provincial areas.
- Among migrants, **40%** have been there for 24 months or less.

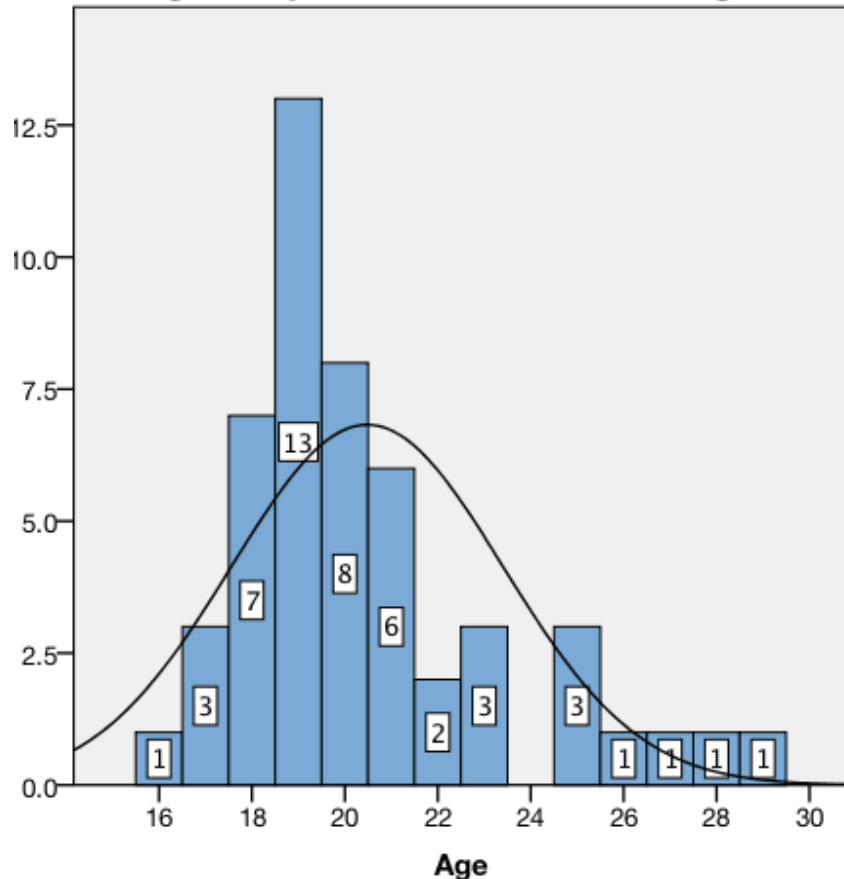
Purpose for Migration



Entrance into Massage

Ages and Modes of Entry

Age Respondent Started Working as Masseur

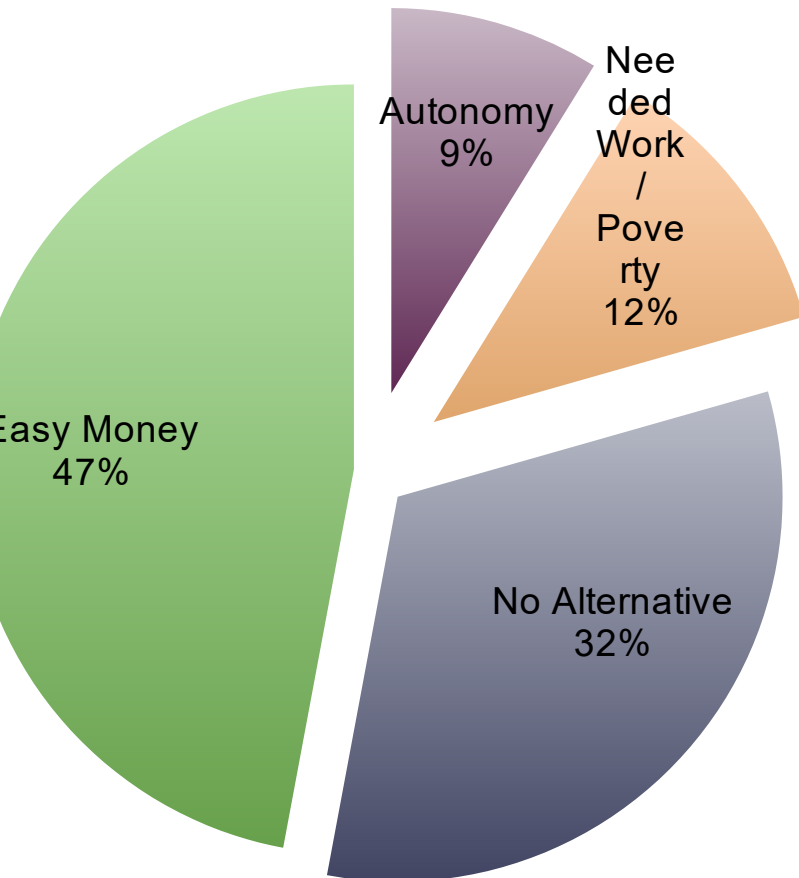


- **Mean age:** 20 years old
- **76%** entered the industry before the age of 21
- **8% (4 people)** admitted to entering prior to the age of 18.
- **87%** of those in mixed gender establishments started between 17 and 21 years old.

Entrance into Massage

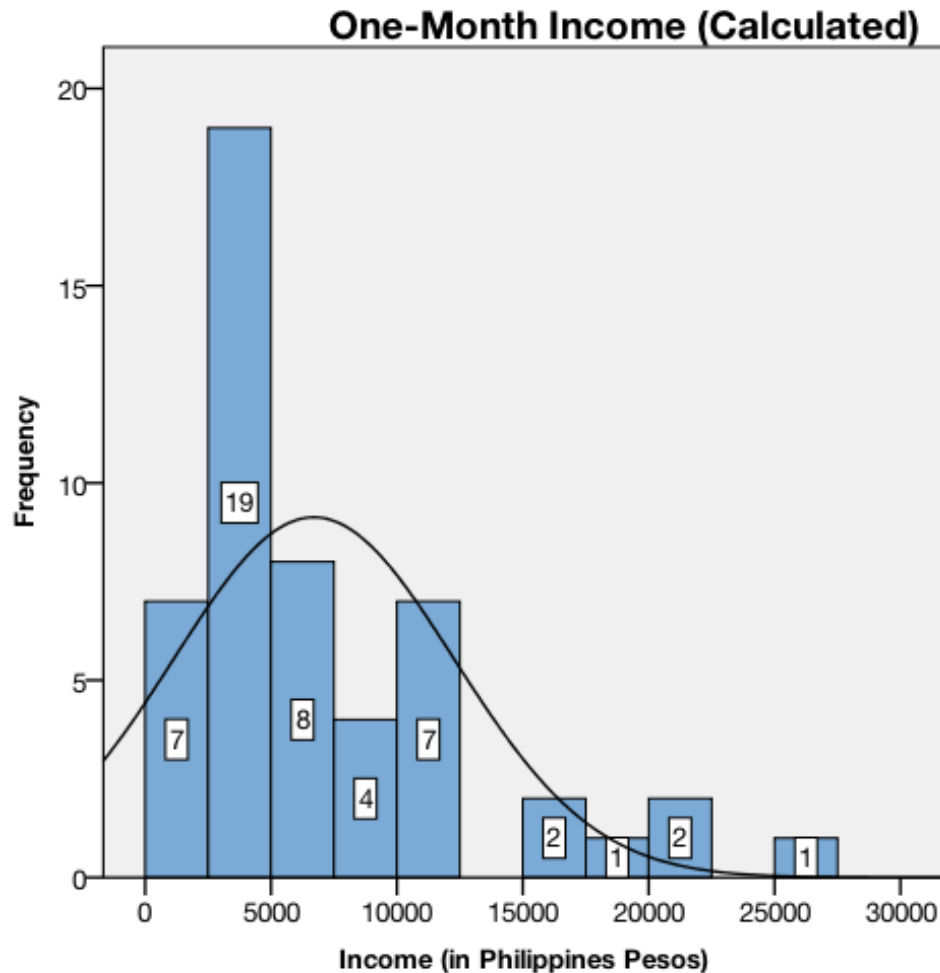
Reasons for Entering Massage (Open-Ended)

Reason for Entering Massage



- **52%** reported having more than 5 siblings (mean 4.3)
- **40%** indicated that they were recruited by a family member.
- **43%** report recruitment via recruiters and acquaintances

Finances

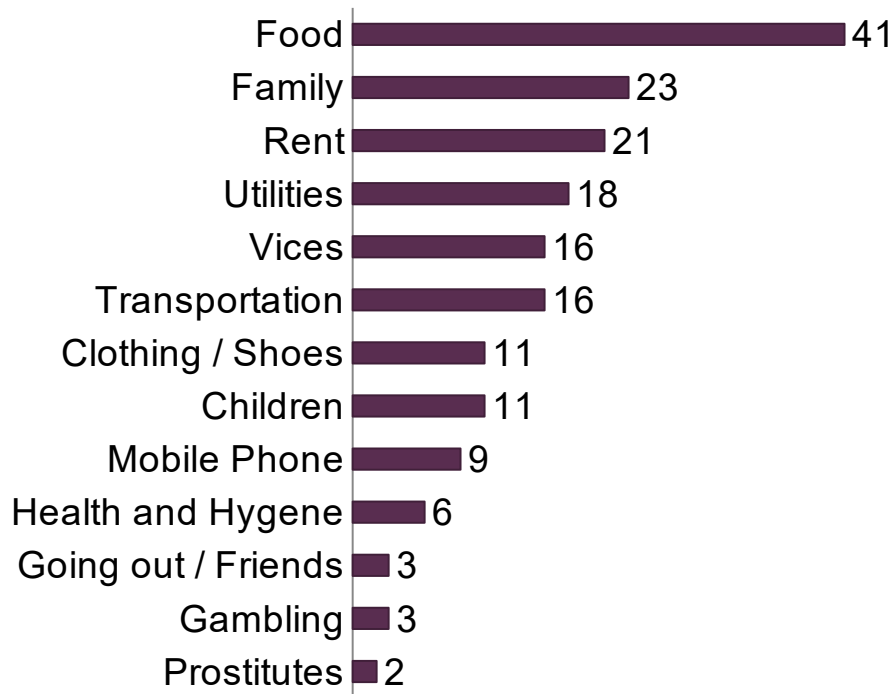


Male Only	21,238 PHP (160 USD)
Mixed Gender	17,571 PHP (130 USD)
Independent	30,273 PHP (225 USD)
Total	22,283 PHP (165 USD)

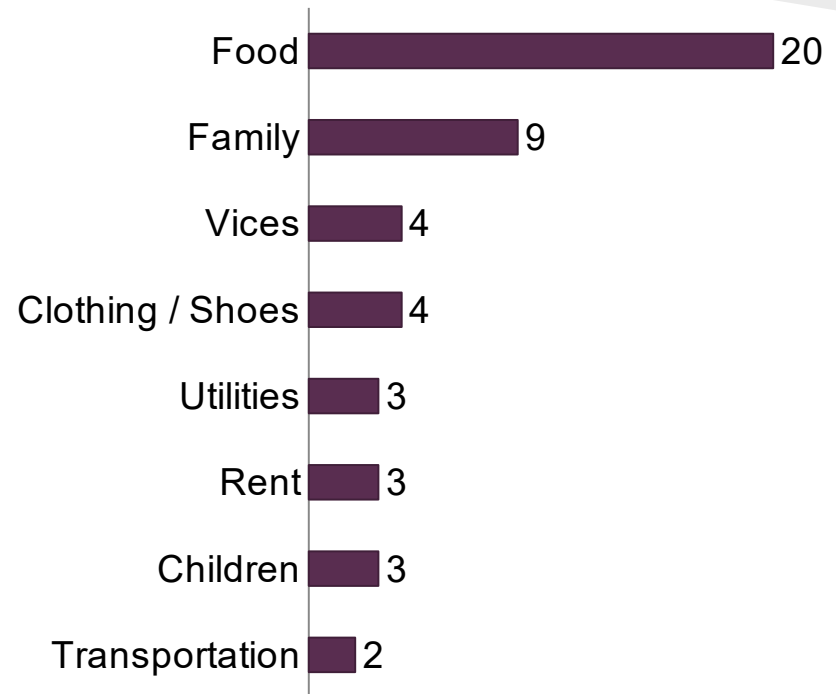
49% earning less than 4000PHP (90USD) a month

Personal Spending

Top Five Personal Expenses



Top Personal Expense



Sex Work

Prevalence and Frequency

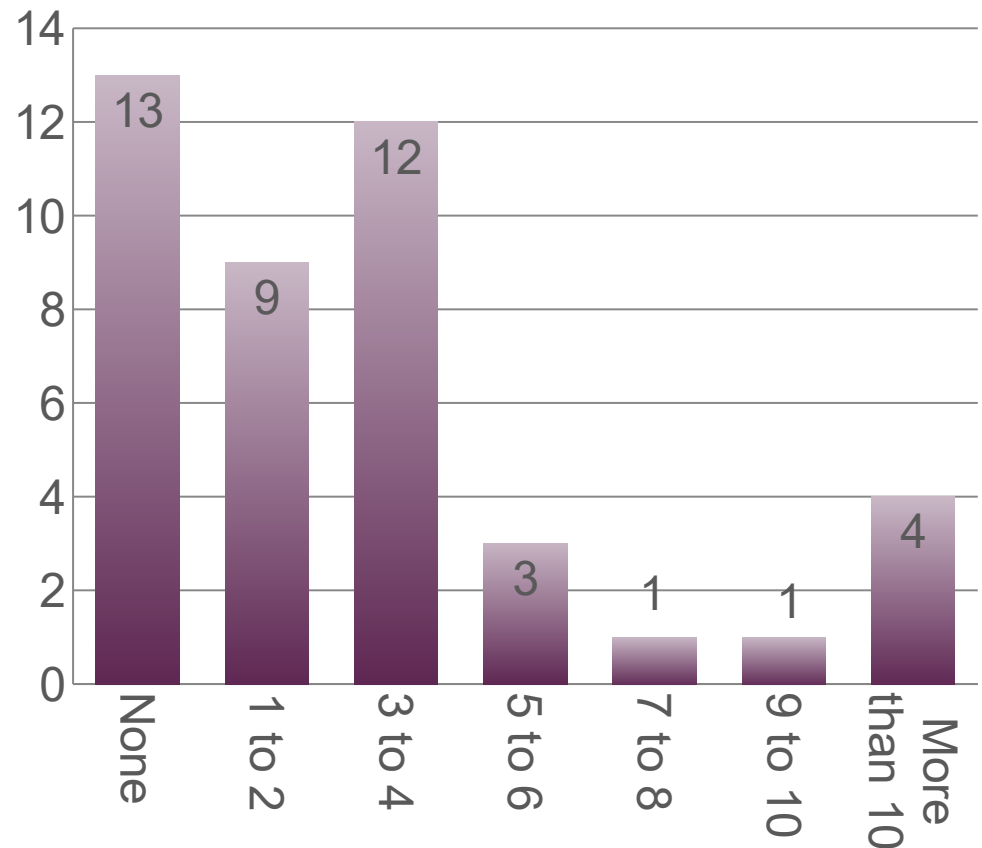
	Clients Sex Yesterday	Client Sex Last Week
Male Only	47%	79%
Mixed Gender	0%	36%
Independent	69%	85%

6 clients met for sex (average) in the past week.

1 in 4 (23%) have been used for pornography

Only 7% of clients were perceived to be foreign.

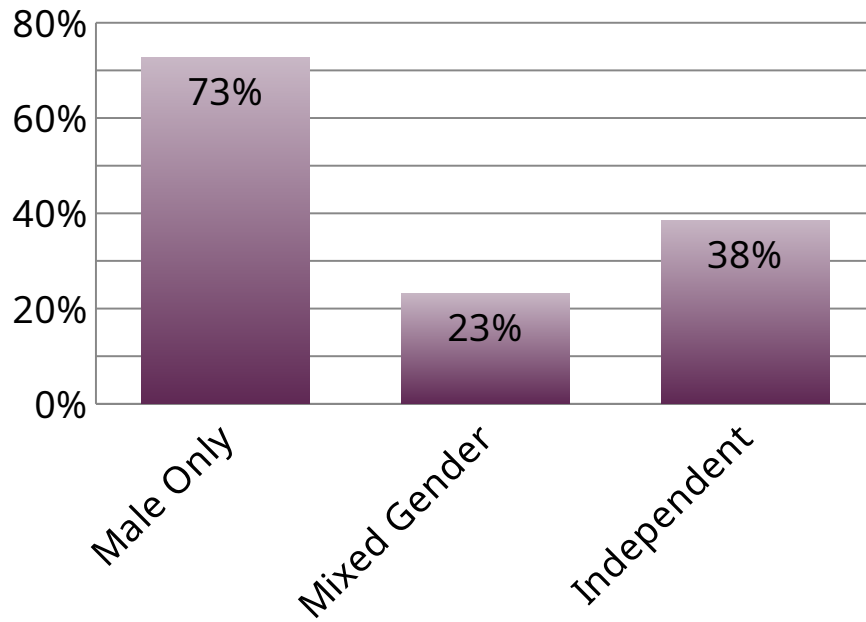
Frequency of Meeting Clients for Sex (Past Week)



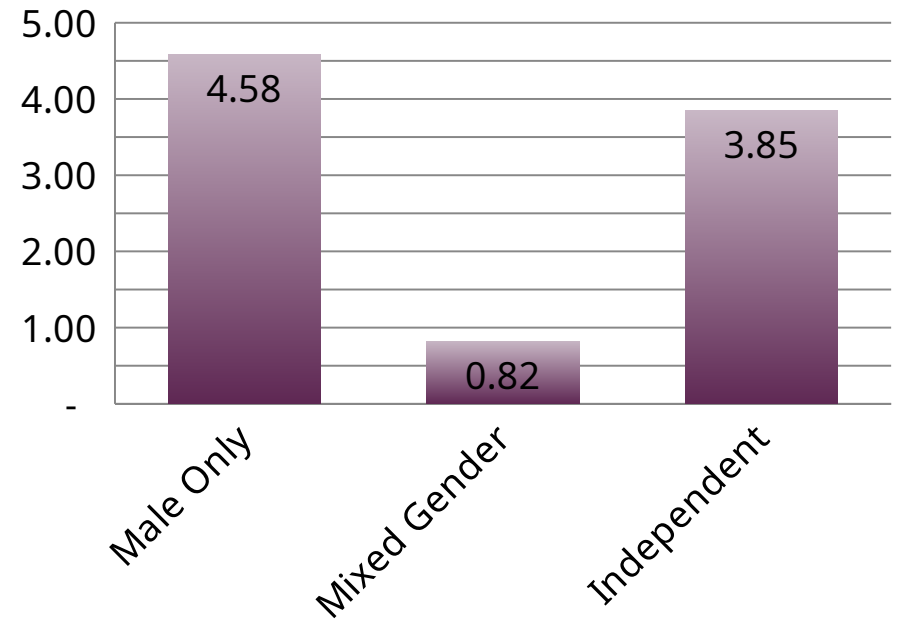
Sex Work

Reliance on Tips

Percent of Group Relying on Tips as Sole Source of Income



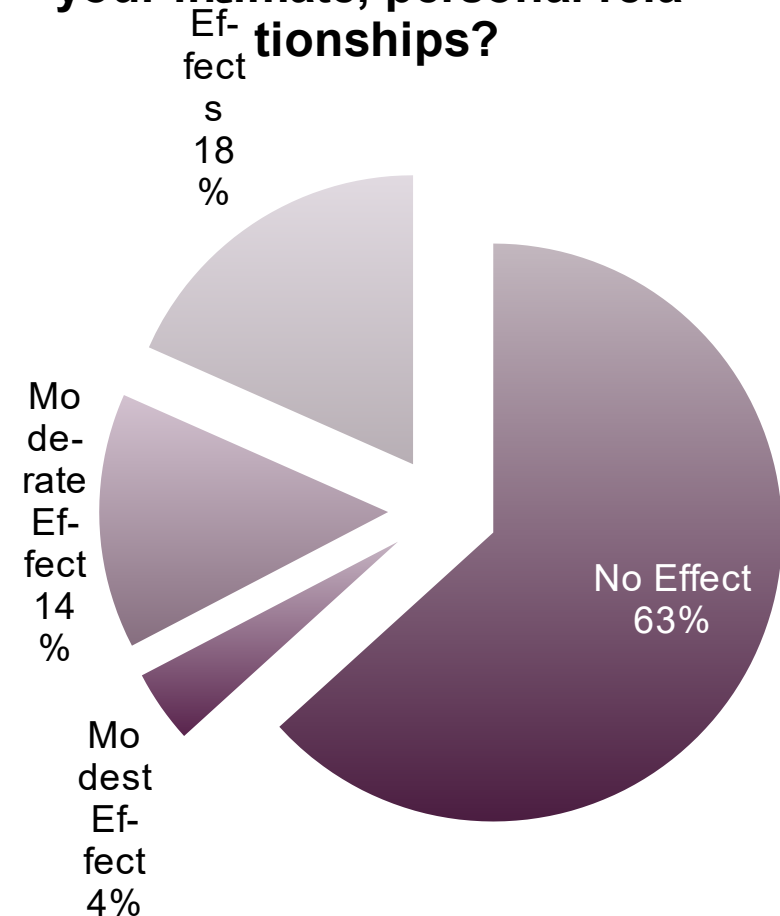
Weekly Frequency of Meeting Clients for Sex (Average)



Relationships

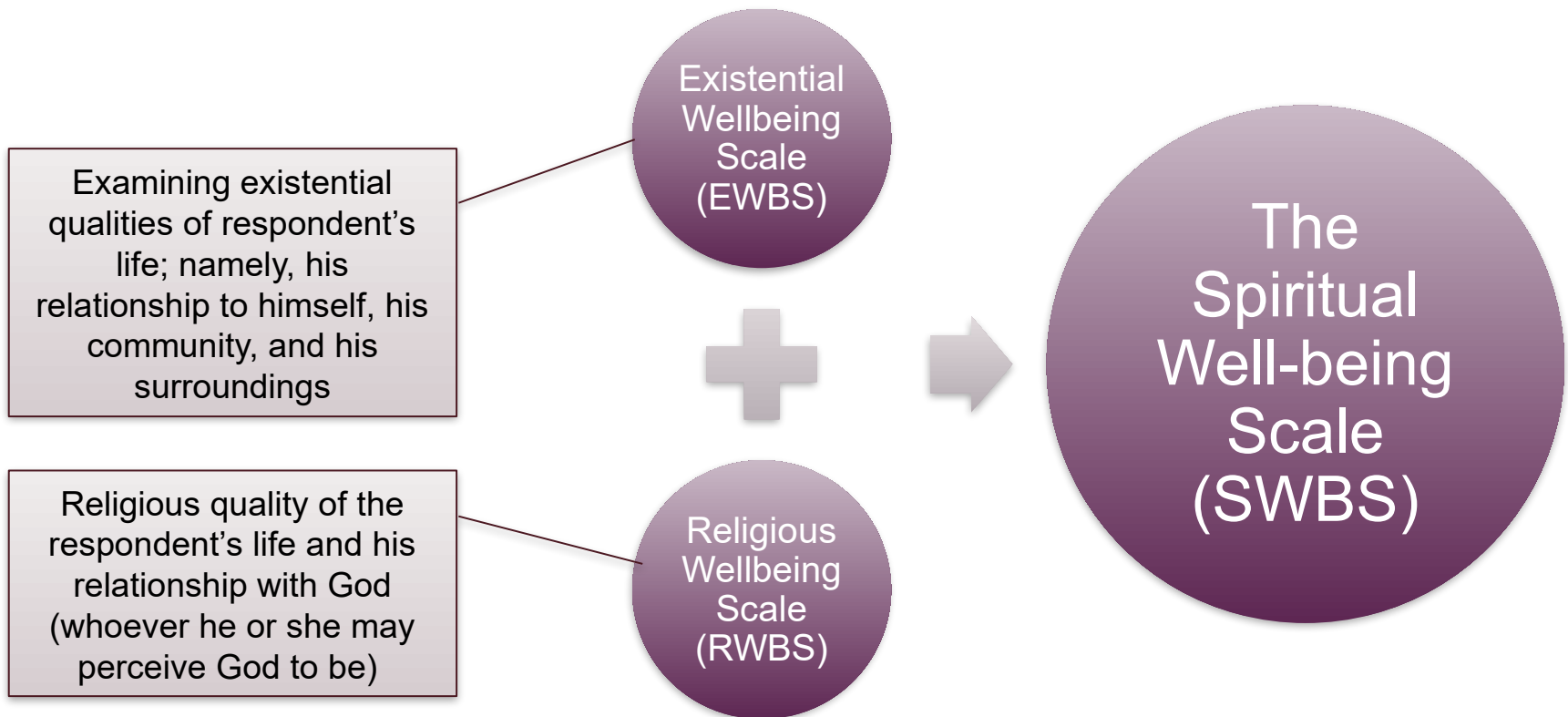
- **37%** indicate that massage work has a negative effect on their intimate personal relationships.
 - **55%** of this group mention family troubles (esp. Jealousy, time)
 - **36%** indicate shame/stigma associated with career
 - **9%** cite unstable/unpredictable income
- **1 in 3** indicate hiding their work from their families.
 - **75%** of cite that this is due to shame

Does being a masseur effect your intimate, personal relationships?



Spiritual Wellbeing

- Likert-type, 20-question scale measuring the subjective qualities of one's life.
- Used for more than twenty years and validated across numerous religions.



- Relatively high scores overall on all scales
 - Highest scores in Religious well being (over 50% scoring highly, the rest scoring moderately)
 - Moderately-high scores in spiritual wellbeing (31% scoring highly, the rest scoring moderately)
 - Lowest scores in existential wellbeing (27% scoring highly, the rest scoring moderately)
- Scores compared with global data over the past 20 years
 - Near Statistical match to mixed gender group of sexually-abused outpatients in the United States.

Male Masseurs in Metro Manila (N=51)

RWB - Mean: 46.54; SD: 12.28

EWB - Mean: 40.62; SD: 11.85

SWB - Mean: 87.17; SD: 23.41

Sexually-Abused Outpatients (N=50)

RWB - Mean: 46.46; SD: 11.48

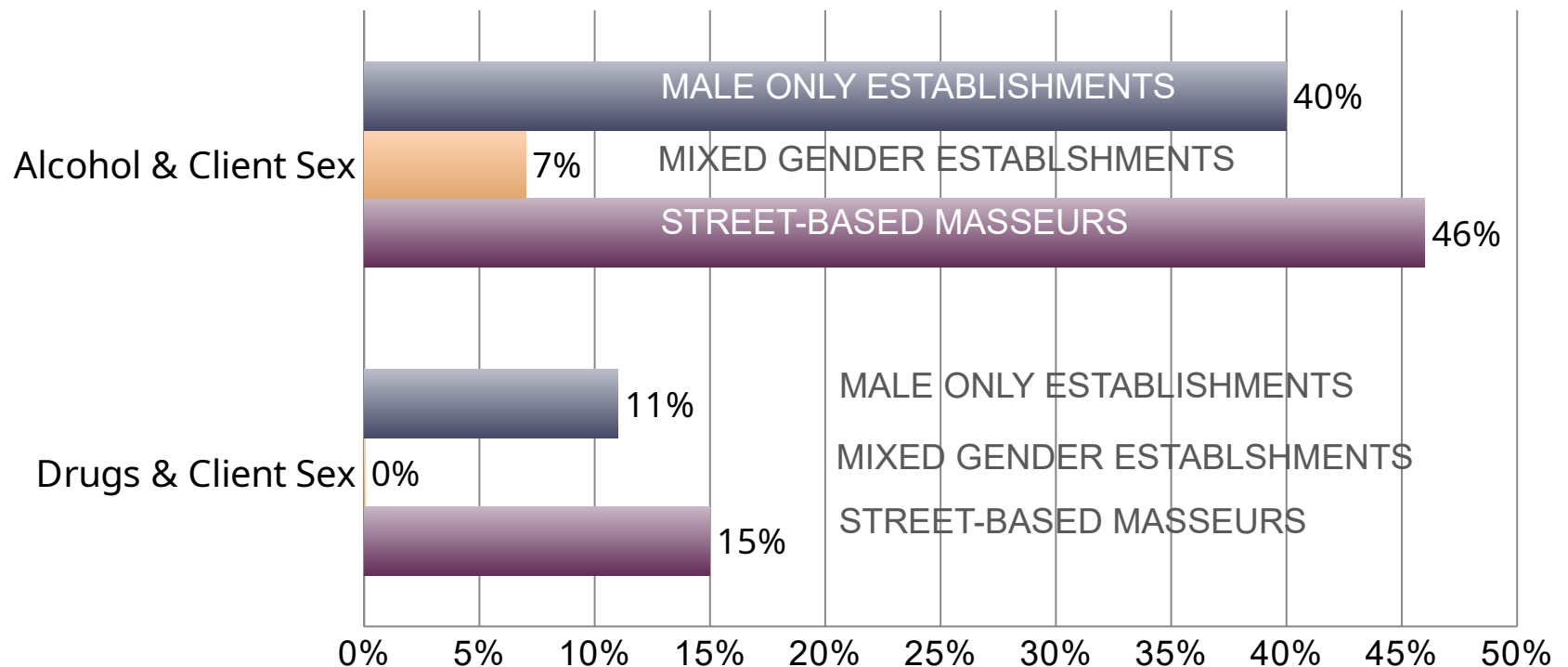
EWB - Mean: 39.26; SD: 10.5

SWB - Mean: 85.82; SD: 19.61

Substance Abuse

- 42% indicate usage of illegal drugs (Crack and Marijuana)

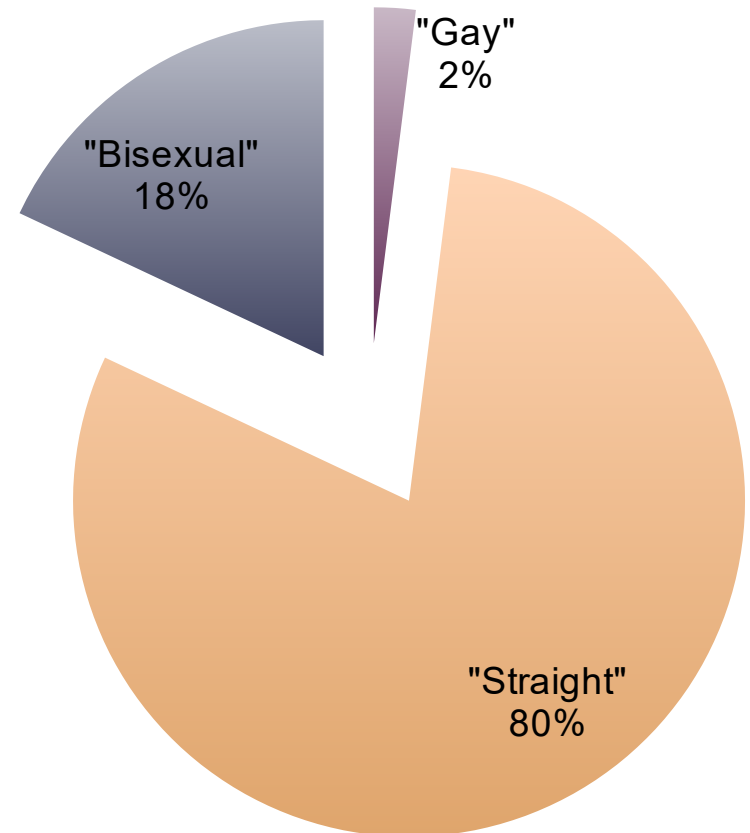
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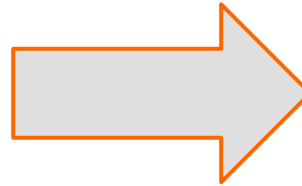
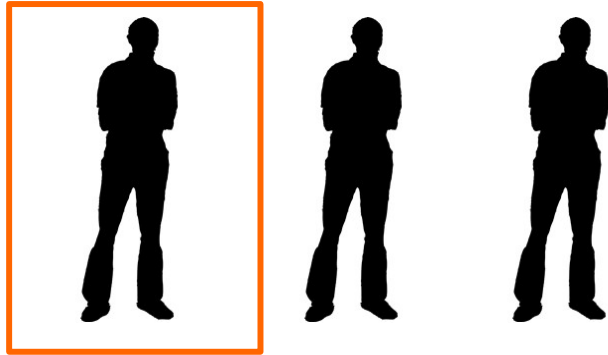
Sexual Orientation

- Respondents were asked to identify as one of the following:
 - “Man who likes to have sex with other men”
 - “Man who likes to have sex with women”
 - “Man who likes to have sex with both genders”

Sexual Orientation

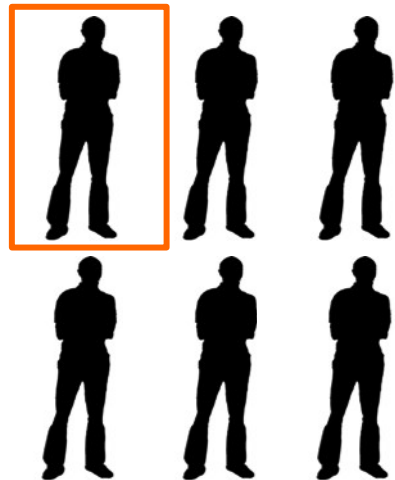


Violence & Sexual Abuse

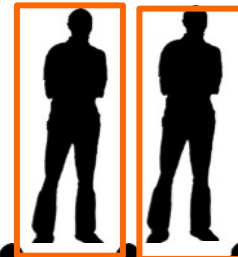


More than 1 in 3 (38%)* being forced to have sex against their wishes (by clients).

* Nearly 1 in 2 respondents from Mixed Gender Establishments report the same.



1 in 6** (18%) cite violence from clients within the past 3 months.



Nearly 2 in 5 (42%) street-based masseurs cite violence from police in past 3 months.

** More than 1 in 4 (27%) from Mixed Gender Establishments report the same.

Sex Education & Services

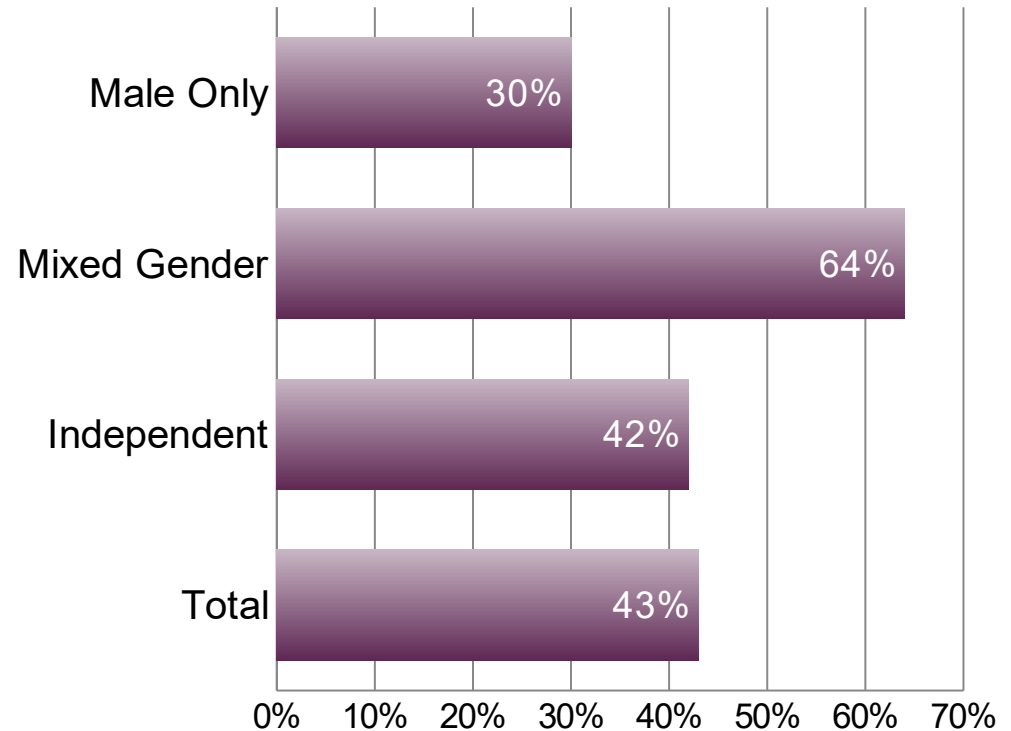
1 in 5

Indicate that they have never used a condom*.

41%

Were unable to identify “sex” as a means of HIV transmission.

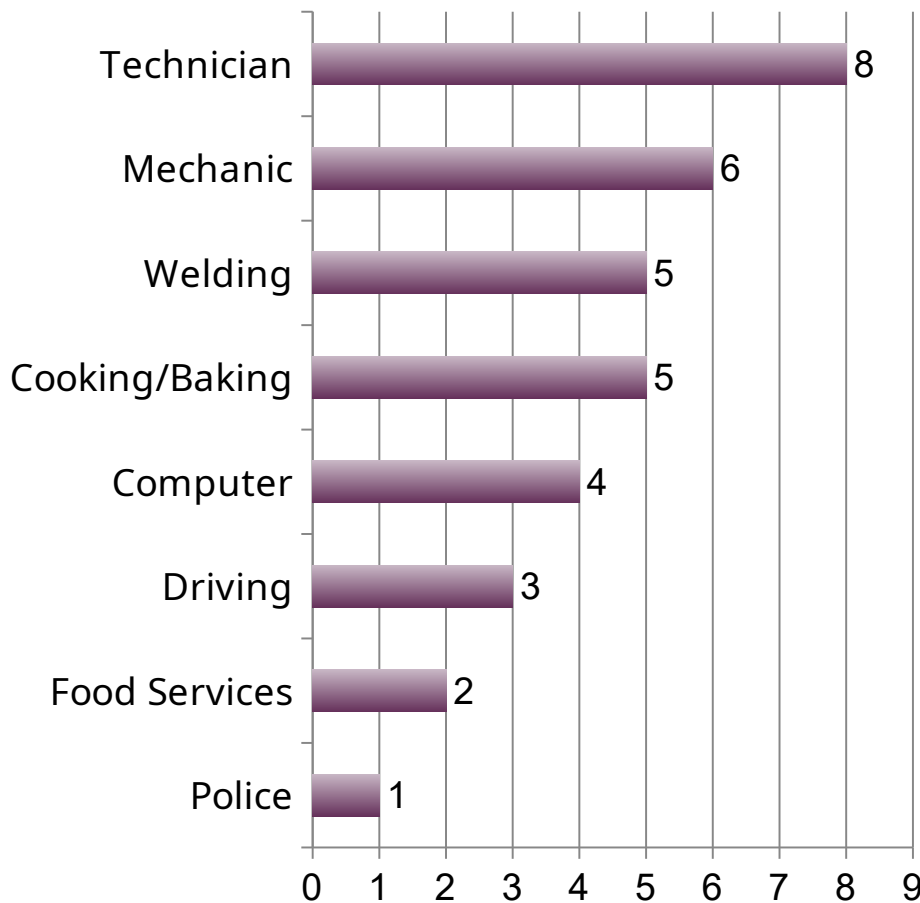
Percent Not Receiving Sexual Health Services (by group)



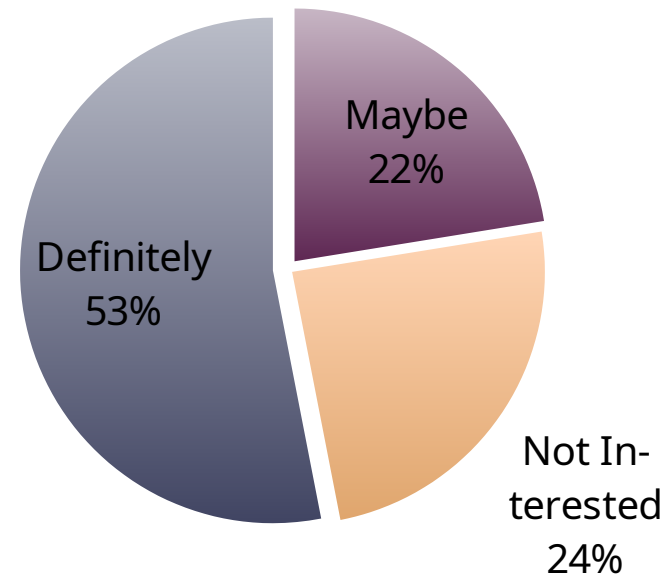
*40% among mixed gender; 14% among male only; 8% among street-based masseurs.

Future Goals

Desired Skills



Would you take a job offering 6,000PHP a month as an alternative?



- Recognition from government, UN, and NGOs, and donors that sexual exploitation of males is an issue -- and larger than what most people may think.
- Resources and information needs to be made available for boys – specifically geared to sexual abuse and emotional health, sexual health, alternative work, and legal help.
- Assistance to young males and their families in securing alternative employment
- Further research, particularly qualitative, on younger boys (under 18)

- There is a strong need for the Philippine Government to be more realistic about the sexual practices of their citizens.
- Condoms, proper sexual health education, as well as information about available health clinics and sexual health services are needed for masseurs and sex workers.

Discussion