

Navigating the Journey to Victimization: The Process Analysis of Prostitution in Iran

Majid Fouladiyan & Atefeh Kaboli

To cite this article: Majid Fouladiyan & Atefeh Kaboli (27 Apr 2025): Navigating the Journey to Victimization: The Process Analysis of Prostitution in Iran, Women & Criminal Justice, DOI: [10.1080/08974454.2025.2496293](https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2025.2496293)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2025.2496293>



Published online: 27 Apr 2025.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 17



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Navigating the Journey to Victimization: The Process Analysis of Prostitution in Iran

Majid Fouladiyan  and Atefeh Kaboli 

Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

ABSTRACT

Given the importance of examining the process of women's entry into prostitution¹ in Iran, this study used a qualitative approach and narrative analysis method to explore, describe, and explain in detail the processes leading to women's involvement in prostitution in the city of Mashhad. Using purposive sampling, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with women engaged in prostitution from October 2022 to March 2023. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached (N = 27). The results revealed that women become involved in prostitution through a series of step-by-step processes: weakening of social control, the presence of a mother engaged in prostitution, acquaintance with pseudo-prostitute women, and lack of support systems. Each of these processes leads to prostitution through various sub-processes. According to the findings, in contemporary Iranian society, many women engage in pseudo-prostitutional activities before fully entering the profession of prostitution. After familiarizing themselves with the path, they transition into professional prostitution.

KEYWORDS

Iran; Process; Prostitution; Sexuality; women

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution has a historical background in Iran; it has been prevalent from the time of the Achaemenians to the present day. Throughout most historical periods, prostitution has been considered an undesirable and illegal act (Floor, 2010). Historical documents indicate that until the late Qajar period, there was no designated place for the settlement of prostitution (Shahri, 1990); until the late Qajar period, a legal location for prostitution, called 'Shahr-Now,' was considered (Dezhamkhooy & Papoli-Yazdi, 2020). Based on the statistics from 1947, an estimate suggested that around 12,600 prostitute women resided in Iran, excluding the city of Tehran (the capital), as well as about 4,000 prostitute women in "Shahr-Now" and its vicinity near Tehran (Floor, 2010, p. 229). According to the reports of the authorities (1968), the number of prostitutes in "Shahr-Now" was 1,548 individuals. During this period, for the first time, prostitution was recognized as an occupational category, and they were provided with health services and facilities (Najmabadi, 1987, pp. 9–10). Significant changes occurred in cultural and social domains after the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of a military with an Islamic ideology. This ideology

CONTACT Majid Fouladiyan  Fouladiyan@um.ac.ir  Department of Social Sciences Research, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, PO Box: 9177948878, Mashhad, Iran

¹In Iran, beyond the common perception that equates women's involvement in sex work with prostitution, many women do not enter this profession voluntarily or independently. Accordingly, this study uses the term "prostitute" in line with the definition provided by Hansen and Johansson (2023). From their perspective, the term "prostitute" carries a heavily negative connotation and is associated with immorality, exploitation, and victimization.

led to the destruction of “Shahr-Now,” where many of its residents were imprisoned, and some were even executed (Batmanghelichi, 2020, p. 62).

In the new constitution, prostitution in Iran was criminalized, and severe penalties were imposed on those involved.² The condemned and illegal nature of prostitution led to this phenomenon transitioning from an official and overt state to an unofficial and covert one. The consequence of this shift resulted in the loss of citizenship rights for female prostitutes, and they were marginalized as deviants (Dezhamkhooy & Papoli-Yazdi, 2020). Access to precise information about “hidden” and at-risk populations such as prostitutes is challenging due to the illegal and covert nature of their activities (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Therefore, there is no accurate and official data on their numbers and status in Iran (Dezhamkhooy & Papoli-Yazdi, 2020), and the Islamic Republic system usually denies and refutes this phenomenon (Mohebbi, 2005). However, public health policymakers have made estimations about the number of prostitutes for the implementation of disease control policies (Karami et al., 2017). For instance, Sharifi et al. (2017) conducted a study in 2015, estimating the number of female sex workers with 95% confidence to be 130,800 in 31 centers in Iran and 228,700 for all urban areas in Iran. In other words, at least one out of 70 Iranian women (15 to 49 years old) had experienced sexual relations for money, goods, or gifts in 2015. Additionally, unofficial statistics indicate a decrease in the age of prostitution in Iran and suggest that approximately 10 to 12 percent of prostitutes are married women (Eghtesad Mihaan News Agency, 2019).

The city of Mashhad, the capital of Razavi Khorasan Province, is the most important religious city in Iran; it is ranked at the forefront in terms of the number of prostitute women accepted in welfare centers (Fouladiyan et al., 2015; Fouladiyan & Kaboli, 2022). Due to the taboo nature of the phenomenon of prostitution in Iran, there have been few research studies conducted on this topic. These studies have mostly taken the form of qualitative interviews to understand the reasons behind prostitution or have been superficial surveys to assess the situation of prostitutes quickly. So far, no study has delved into providing step-by-step processes that lead individuals to engage in prostitution. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following questions: By what process do women and girls enter the profession of prostitution? What factors drive them to become prostitutes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are various pathways through which individuals become involved in sex work, and their experiences are shaped by cultural, social, and individual responses to these conditions (Benoit et al., 2017; McCarthy et al., 2014). However, process-oriented studies examining these pathways are either non-existent or outdated (Kinsey, 1971). A review of the existing research indicates that different individual and structural factors contribute to women’s entry into prostitution, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Poverty is one of the most significant factors contributing to entry into sex work. Research indicates that most sex work is economically driven and serves as a primary source of income for sex workers and those associated with the trade, such as brokers, managers, and auxiliary workers (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005). Nkhoma and Charnley (2018) note that many young girls cite poverty and parental death as key factors in their initial engagement in sex work. However, Madani Qahfarkhi (2012) emphasizes that poverty alone is not a determinant of prostitution; social and economic deprivation may be directly or indirectly related to it, as the number of women living in poverty does not equate to the number of women engaged in sex

²The term “prostitution” not only is not defined in Iran’s penal laws, including the Islamic Penal Code, but the punishment for these individuals is also not specified in the law, and judges in such cases enforce the provisions related to “adultery” and “crimes against chastity and public morality” (Falahati, 2003).

work. Furthermore, Karamouzian et al. (2016) found that some women initially believed they could leave sex work after meeting their financial needs, but in reality, complexities such as the lack of alternative opportunities and adverse economic conditions made it difficult or impossible. On the other hand, some women reported non-economic motivations for remaining in the trade, including access to luxury goods and a sense of power (Karamouzian et al., 2016). Widowed women with poor economic backgrounds and without family support, especially in Iranian society, are particularly vulnerable. These women often face a cycle of poverty, abuse, and hopelessness, which exacerbates their vulnerability. Additionally, they typically earn lower wages and have limited autonomy in job selection. Some Iranian women are also involved in commercial sex work abroad, particularly in the United Arab Emirates and the city of Dubai. Key factors driving this migration include poor economic conditions in Iran, Dubai's reputation as a global and glamorous city, its role as a transit point for migration to Europe, ease of obtaining visas, and the desire to escape social and political restrictions (Mahdavi, 2010). However, scientific evidence and official data on sex trafficking in Iran remain extremely limited.

Coming from dysfunctional families is another significant factor contributing to women's involvement in prostitution. Dysfunctional families are characterized by a lack of financial and emotional support, divorce, parental separation, and the absence of close relationships between family members (Allahqoli & Rahmani, 2017; Rostamzadeh et al., 2016). Social control theory emphasizes that strong social bonds can deter deviant behavior. For instance, as a key institution, the family can effectively prevent deviance through emotional support and appropriate supervision. However, the breakdown of this institution or the rejection of an individual by their family increases the risk of involvement in prostitution (Hirschi, 1969; Najmabadi, 2005). Additionally, weak social welfare policies and limited job opportunities negatively impact this issue. Violence and sexual abuse are other significant factors in women's entry into sex work, especially during childhood. Experiences of abuse, ranging from verbal violence to sexual assault, can lead to learned sexual behaviors and heightened vulnerability (Bagley & Young, 1987; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Slim et al., 2020). In conservative societies like Iran, women involved in sex work are often stigmatized and labeled as a "social evil".

Low educational attainment and school dropout are directly linked to an increased risk of engaging in prostitution. Family economic difficulties and a lack of access to proper educational opportunities are significant contributing factors (Chattopadhyay et al., 1994; Jatmikowati, 2015). These issues can lead to girls running away from home and associating with undesirable individuals, thereby paving the way for entry into sex work (Rostamzadeh et al., 2016). Personality traits also play a crucial role in deviant behaviors. Curiosity, the desire to earn money, and sexual dissatisfaction are among individual characteristics that may lead to involvement in sex work (Benoit et al., 2017; Rostamzadeh et al., 2016). Additionally, consumerism and dysfunctional personalities are other influential individual factors (Yoosefi Lebni et al., 2021). Drug addiction is recognized as a key factor in entering the sex trade. Globally, coercion into sex work is often facilitated by drug dependency. Studies show that individuals who use drugs themselves or have partners who do are more likely to face financial hardships and greater vulnerability (Karamouzian et al., 2016).

As noted, the taboo nature of prostitution in Iran has led to a limited and outdated body of research on the subject. Since a precise description of the issue is a necessary precursor to its scientific explanation, this study seeks to bridge the existing knowledge gaps by conducting in-depth narrative interviews. The research aims to explore the diverse pathways leading to women's involvement in prostitution, with a particular focus on the city of Mashhad, and to present a comprehensive understanding of the individual, social, and structural factors influencing this phenomenon.

METHOD

Procedure

In this research, a narrative analysis method was used to uncover the processes³ leading to women's involvement in sex work among the available qualitative approaches. The narrative begins with an initial situation (i.e., where did the story begin?), followed by events relevant to the narrative being selected from many experiences and presented as a coherent set of circumstances (how did the events unfold one after the other?). Finally, the situation at the end of the events is depicted (what has happened?) (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995, p. 183). In narrative analysis, the researcher collects descriptions of events or incidents. Then, they present them as a plot using a storyline (Tolu'i & Khalegh-Panah, 2008, p. 45). This analysis helps identify the background of these women's lives and the factors that have led to their involvement in sex work. Ultimately, a model of the process of participation in sex work is extracted.

To achieve the processes of prostitution (the aim of this research), interviews commenced with a narrative of childhood and family members of participants. These interviews continued until they reached the stage of sex work involvement. During the interviews, questions were asked to the participants regarding topics such as the nature of relationships with family members and friends, the timing and primary reason for forming relationships with the opposite gender, criteria for choosing partners (girls and boys) in adolescent years, skills, personality traits, and more.

Researchers tried to record the observed details of interviewees' behaviors during the interviews, as this would ensure the reliability and credibility of the collected interview data. Therefore, the following considerations were adhered to: enhancing the quality of interview recordings, documenting the interviews as text and implementing their word-for-word transcription, recording details related to the conduct of interviews, relying on the participants' constructions in the interviews rather than researchers' constructions. Furthermore, following Creswell (2012), the following strategies were utilized in the present study: (1) Descriptive with Low Inference (using quotations in findings), (2) Researcher Positioning: exchange of experiences between the researcher and the instructor, engagement with external auditors, coding and comparison of interviews conducted by the researcher, (3) Long-term researcher involvement in the research space and continuous observations in the research environment, including building trust with the interviewees.

Participants

The studied population in this research comprised all female prostitutes in the city of Mashhad, for whom official statistics were not available. This study used a theoretical sampling method to collect the data. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation of the data was achieved for the research investigator. Access to sex workers/prostitutes in Iran is accompanied by significant challenges due to social and legal restrictions. Nevertheless, the researchers conducted 27 in-depth interviews in this study, reaching theoretical saturation after the 23rd interview. In other words, subsequent interviews (numbers 24 and 25) did not add new data to the research, indicating the sufficiency of the data for analysis and model development.

The interviews in this research were conducted with women who, in terms of social backgrounds (such as age, educational status, family's social and economic status, etc.), had the most significant differences with each other. The interviews were conducted from October 2022 to

³The process means sequences of action or interaction that are related to a phenomenon, formed and expanded over time (Strauss & Corbin, 2012, p. 145). The process can be seen as a progressive chain of action or interaction that changes over time and space, sometimes in response to the situation or context, and sometimes remains constant. This action or interaction may be regular, discontinuous, sequential or coordinated and in some cases chaotic. What constitutes the process of action or interaction is its progressive nature and its various forms and the advancement of all related components towards a single goal (Strauss & Corbin, 2012, p. 185).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants in the research.

Participants	Age	Marital status	Education	Parent's education	Addiction	Parent's occupation
Participant 1	14	Single	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	Traditional & industrial drugs ^a	Tutor
Participant 2	14	Single	Sixth grade	Fifth grade	Traditional & industrial drugs	Unemployed
Participant 3	17	Syghih ^b	Third high school	Fifth grade	–	Retired
Participant 4	18	Divorced	Seventh grade	Fifth grade	–	Worker
Participant 5	23	Syghih	High school	Fifth grade	Traditional & industrial drugs	Worker
Participant 6	24	Single	High school	Fifth grade	–	Self-employment
Participant 7	24	Single	Third high school	High school	Traditional & industrial drugs	Teacher
Participant 8	25	Divorced	Associate degree	Fifth grade	–	Self-employment
Participant 9	25	Single	High school	Fifth grade	Traditional drugs	Worker
Participant 10	26	Single	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	–	Worker
Participant 11	26	Divorced	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	Industrial drugs	Self-employment
Participant 12	27	Single	Third high school	Fifth grade	Traditional & industrial drugs	Prisoner
Participant 13	30	Divorced	High school	Fifth grade	Industrial drugs	Farmer
Participant 14	32	Divorced	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	Traditional & industrial drugs	Self-employment
Participant 15	33	Divorced	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	Industrial drugs	Employee
Participant 16	34	Divorced	Associate degree	Fifth grade	–	Self-employment
Participant 17	35	Divorced	High school	High school	Traditional drugs	Retired
Participant 18	35	Married	High school	High school	Industrial drugs	Retired
Participant 19	38	Divorced	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	Traditional & industrial drugs	Carpet weaver
Participant 20	38	Divorced	High school	Fifth grade	–	Carpet weaver
Participant 21	38	Divorced	High school	Fifth grade	–	Self-employment
Participant 22	39	Divorced	High school	Fifth grade	–	Carpet weaver
Participant 23	40	Divorced	MA degree	Fifth grade	–	Retired
Participant 24	43	Divorced	BA degree	BA degree	–	Engineer
Participant 25	44	Divorced	High school	Fifth grade	–	Self-employment
Participant 26	47	Divorced	Fifth grade	Fifth grade	–	Farmer
Participant 27	49	Divorced	High school	BA degree	–	Deceased

Reference: extracted from the data.

^aTraditional materials mean, opium and its derivatives and industrial materials mean, crystal, crack, heroin, etc.

^bIt is a type of marriage in the Shia religion that is concluded between a man and a woman for a certain and limited period with a certain dowry. At the end of the period, the marriage relationship expires by itself. Legally, this type of marriage does not entail any serious commitment between man and woman.

March 2023 in Welfare Quarantine centers and the Ministry of Health centers. Each interview lasted between two to four hours. The interviews were conducted in a separate room, in a calm environment, without any officials or cameras. Initially, researchers attracted participants' trust by explaining the research topic and then obtained their informed verbal consent. To comply with the research ethics, at the beginning of the interview, permission was obtained from the participants to record the audio. After implementing the interviews, it was destroyed. In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, numbers were used to identify them during data analysis.

Descriptive Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants, including age, marital status, education, and addiction, as well as the education and occupation of their parents.

RESULTS

Initially, a process model was drawn for each participant in the findings analysis section. Subsequently, the similarities and differences in the process of prostitution were examined. After integrating similar models, four causal⁴ process patterns were extracted from 27 models.

⁴The authors refer to the causal process, the facilitating cause, which Daniel Little discusses in his book *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*. This type of causality occurs when an agent does not directly cause an event but creates or facilitates the conditions necessary for its occurrence. This concept is typically addressed within the framework of multi-causal analysis, where different factors interact, with some playing a facilitating role.

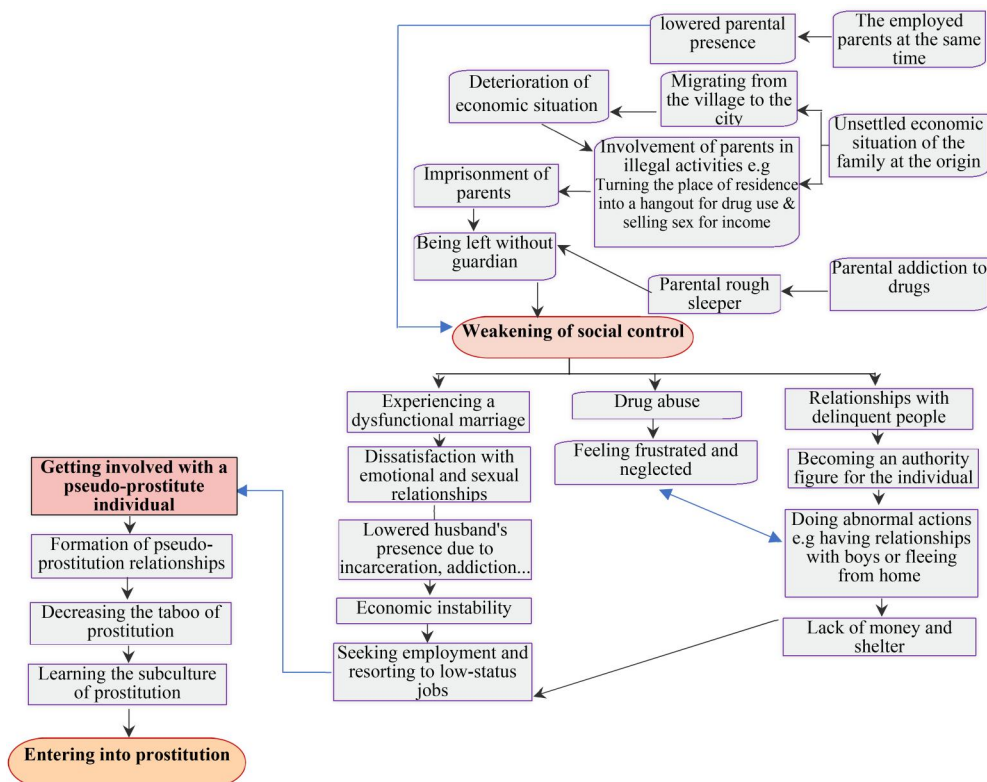


Figure 1. The model of weakness of social control.

Furthermore, these models were presented as four narrative process stories using similar plots. It is important to note that Some variables, due to their high significance in the phenomenon under study, play different roles under varying conditions. For instance, the weakening of social control is presented as the main causal factor in Model 1, while in Model 3, it appears as a background factor. This difference arises from the specific context and conditions that each model addresses. In fact, these variables, due to their high importance, can function both as causal factors and as background factors in different situations. This reflects the dynamism and complexity of the phenomenon under study and does not necessarily indicate a weakness in the conceptual distinction between the models.

The Model of Weakness of Social Control

Regarding Figure 1, there are various contextual factors among the families of sex workers that, through different mechanisms, lead to a reduction in the control and supervision parents have over their children. One such factor is the simultaneous employment of both parents. This situation results in limited parental presence at home and neglect of the children. In some cases, children live with relatives, and parental responsibilities are divided among family members, which weakens the control and supervision over the children.

Participant 21: “Both mom and dad were going to work. From that time, my mom started sewing seriously to improve our lives. At that time, we did not have a house, and it was difficult for us to rent a house. For this reason, we lived in my grandfather’s house.”

Another contextual factor could be the family’s unstable economic situation. In weak economic conditions, parents may be forced to migrate to larger cities (such as Mashhad), leading to

marginalization and its negative consequences, or engage in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, which can result in their arrest and imprisonment. This situation leads to the orphaning of children and reduces the level of supervision over them.

Participant 11: “When I was about five years old, my father and mother were in prison for drug trafficking. My grandmother took custody of us and took us from kindergarten. My uncle used to beat us there. I lived with my grandmother in Tehran. When I was with my grandmother, I worked in the brick kiln since I was seven years old.”

Parental addiction to drugs can be a contextual factor that reduces control and supervision over children. Severe addiction increases living costs and disrupts the family’s economic stability. In such cases, parents may become homeless, leading to a significant reduction in supervision and care for their children.

Participant 12: “Our house was both a hangout for people with a substance use disorder and a haunt for sex. There were those with whom my mother had sex. That is, when my father was there, no one came to our house for sex, and they came and went like guests, but when my father was not there, people with whom my mother was in a relationship came to our house for sex. After some time, my mother switched to heroin use. She used Heroin and Crystal meth at the same time; Because of this, the beauty of her face has disappeared. My mother had not come home for a week.”

Reducing control and supervision by the family over their children leads to consequences that facilitate the process of women’s entry into prostitution.

The Facilitating Causal Processes

(1) Reducing family control and supervision over children can lead children to become acquainted with deviant friends. These relationships may cause the deviant friend to become a role model for the daughters, leading them to conform to their behaviors. In such cases, this may result in deviant actions such as associating with different boys or running away from home. In this situation, to fulfill basic needs such as food and shelter, they may resort to low-status professions, eventually leading them toward pseudo-prostitution⁵ activities.

Participant 2: “At school, I was only close with one person whose father and mother were divorced and had addictions, and she lived with her father. She used to talk about her boyfriends at school. She used to say that when my father slept at night, I left the house. My friend suggested I go out too. I liked her very much. Since she saw that I had problems in our house, she said let’s flee and have fun. Then, I decided to flee from home. I lived in their house for several weeks. After some time, her mother, who was a prostitute and addict, suggested that I should have sex with the men she sent. Because I have to pay the cost of staying in their house and the cost of his drugs, I had to accept.”

(2) The lack of social control and supervision may facilitate the child’s addiction, leading to various consequences such as academic decline. Parental neglect and indifference toward the child’s academic struggles can create feelings of unimportance and dissatisfaction. These emotions may drive the child to run away from home and engage in pseudo-prostitute activities.

Participant 7: “I think the influence factors that impacted my addiction were the neglect of my parents, especially my mom, having a working mom, and a large number of children. Maybe we would be treated better if we were two sisters instead of four children. Interestingly, my GPA was 19.76 in the second year, which reached 13, but no one asked why I dropped so much. After some time, I ran away from home because of stubbornness with my father. When I escaped, I took refuge in the streets and looked for a drug butler. One day, I was in the park when I met a lady. We talked little by little. She was telling me about his job, which was prostitution, and she praised the income and money he had earned in this way. She

⁵What we mean by this term is a person engages in actions in which he receives rewards for having sex with different people. These rewards are like having a luxury life experience. On the other hand, not only are they not aware of their act of prostitution, but they also do not consider themselves prostitutes. In other words, they are in the pre-prostitute stage and fall into not yet fully prostituted.

understood that I fled from home and did not have a place, so I accompanied her and went to her house. Little by little, I learned the steps of prostitution from her to cover my expenses and entered this job.”

(3) Dysfunctional marriage⁶: The reduction in parental control and supervision over children can lead to dysfunctional marriages (many of the married interviewees had traditional marriages and lacked affection for their spouses). In a dysfunctional marriage, the woman is dissatisfied with her emotional and sexual relationship with her husband. For various reasons, the absence of a husband compels the woman to work in low-status jobs, such as in agencies, restaurants, salons, etc., to help with family expenses. Frustrations from marital life, working in low-status jobs, and the lack of control and supervision may create the conditions for meeting women involved in activities resembling prostitution and ultimately lead to engaging in such activities.

Participant 20: “I married my cousin when I was sixteen. I thought he was the one I loved, but I was wrong. In general, I did not have good marital and sexual relations with him. We lived together for thirteen years. He did not show much interest in me. After my son was born, our financial situation was not very good. He also did not pay much attention to me. I decided to go to work. I worked in several places, such as a hairdressing salon where I met a woman who had relationships with men. She used to talk about the parties and the expenses she used to spend. I also became curious and wanted to experience it.

For this reason, I went for an Oto⁷ with my friends. I became friends with a gentleman during these Otos. I established a relationship with him, and I felt good. Little by little, my relationships with men increased, and I was able to earn more money.”

Following acquaintance with these women and engagement in pseudo-prostitute activities, taboos for sexual relationships with men gradually diminish. Hence, the individual develops a positive attitude toward this relationship and lifestyle. Consociation and association with pseudo-prostitutes lead the individual to learn the stages of commercialization and gain awareness for quick income through these means. Ultimately, these processes result in prostitution.

The Model of Having a Pseudo-Prostitute or Prostitute Mother

Turning to Figure 2, one of the factors that accelerates the process of falling into a prostitute is the engaging of a family member in pseudo-prostitution relationships or the prostitution market. The involvement of a family member, particularly the mother, in the profession of prostitution, alongside the turmoil of the mother’s relationships with the father (incredibly emotional and sexual relationships), weakness of social control by the parents, and their addiction leads the individual to socialization in the subculture of the pseudo-prostitution. This socialization leads to a positive attitude toward this phenomenon and social learning. Ultimately, it leads to the fading of the taboo of prostitution. Moreover, awareness of the mother’s sexual relationship or accompanying the mother in her sex dating⁸ contributes to the development of curiosity in girls, ultimately leading to premature sexual maturity. She may expedite the stages of entering the prostitution market. An individual who has been socialized in such a subculture and has learned the steps of this profession, in addition to the fading of the taboo of prostitution, may enter the prostitution market through three causal processes.

⁶A dysfunctional marriage is one where the girl’s family does not conduct any research about the boy based on the prevailing societal norms for marriage. In such a marriage, the girl either marries the boy due to her own affection and family opposition, or her family forces her to marry the boy they have chosen.

⁷It means that women and girls standing on the side of the street and riding in luxe cars to just have fun. Usually, these types of relationships do not end in sex.

⁸It means the appointment of prostitutes with their clients, which is aimed at having sex.

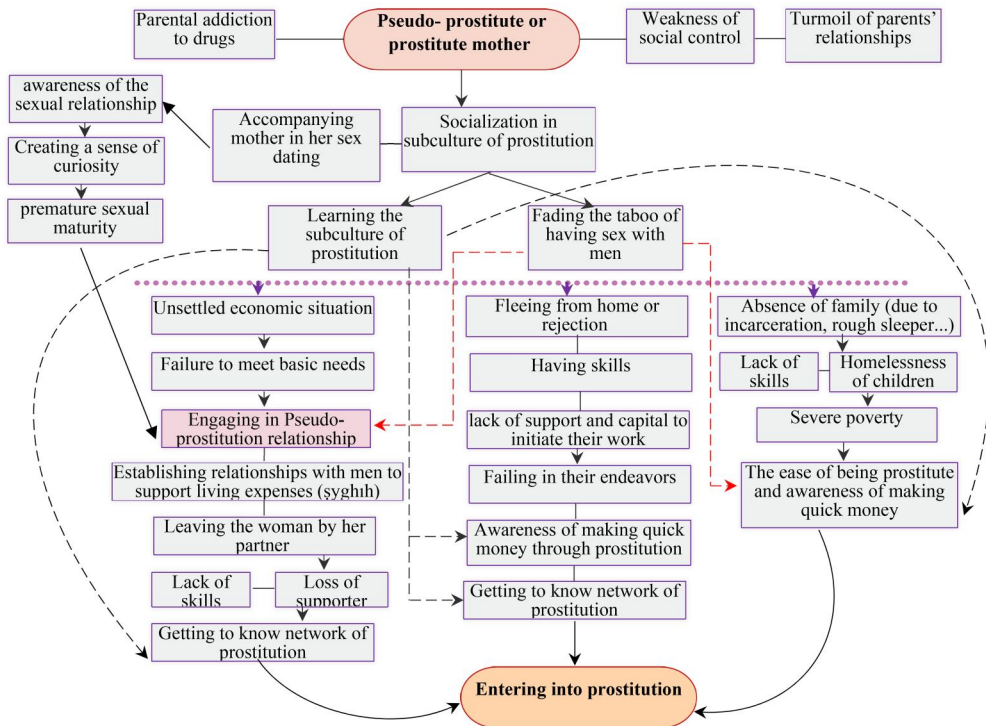


Figure 2. The model of having a pseudo-prostitute or prostitute mother.

The Facilitating Causal Processes

(1) In the first process, an individual who has been socialized within the subculture of prostitution and has learned the stages of prostitution, if their parents are not present at home for various reasons (including Being in prison, fleeing from home, being a rough sleeper, etc.), this leads to the homelessness of children; as a result, the daughter may be compelled to take care of younger siblings and provide for their basic needs. On the other hand, the lack of skills to earn money and homelessness lead to severe poverty. On the one hand, the individual's socialization within the subculture of prostitution and their acquaintance with the prostitution market, and on the other hand, their awareness of making quick money through prostitution leads them to enter the prostitution market.

Participant 26: "My mom had sex with many men, including Arabs, and earned money from it. After some time, my mom became a rough sleeper due to her addiction. My father was not home at all. I stayed with the children and had no job to earn money. Our house was rented, and I didn't have the money for the rent. Because of this, we were homeless. After a while, I was also able to rent a small house in a slum and live in it in return for having sex with a man."

(2) In this process, an individual may have the situation of the first process and decide to flee from home but except that they have skills such as makeup artistry; therefore, they can use their skills to support themselves, but due to the lack of support and capital to initiate their work, they fail in their professional endeavors. Consequently, socialization within the subculture of prostitution and learning it leads them to gain awareness of obtaining quick money through prostitution. Subsequently, they enter the prostitution market by engaging with the prostitution network⁹.

⁹A prostitution network is a network of prostitutes or pseudo-prostitutes with whom a person is in contact. She enters the prostitution market through them. This network may be a family member, relative or friend.

Participant 10: “I used to do eyelash transplants and such things with my cousin. After the spread of the coronavirus, our market was disrupted. Also, I didn’t have money to buy eyelash, lift, and laminate materials. My stepfather did not financially support me. I knew my aunt was a prostitute, and she made good money that way. She introduced me to several people who paid me good money for sex.”

(3) In The third process, two factors contribute to an individual’s involvement in pseudo-prostitution relationships: on the one hand, the family’s unsettled economic circumstances and unmet primary needs of the children and the diminishing taboo of prostitution due to socialization within the subculture of pseudo-prostitution activities. On the other hand, they attempt to seek entertainment and adventure, possess attractive clothing, and gain more attention. At this stage, a girl can enter into a relationship with a boy (Syghih) she is interested in, but after some time, her partner leaves her for various reasons. In this scenario, due to the lack of stability in the woman’s life, loss of support, and lack of any skills, the socialized woman in the subculture of pseudo-prostitution becomes acquainted with the pseudo-prostitution network. Subsequently, she falls into the prostitution market.

Participant 5: “My mother did not spend for us and did not give us pocket money. She bought us clothes once a year for the New Year. One of my aunts was a prostitute. I saw that she had a lot of money. I liked to buy things that I liked. For this reason, I became friends with a boy through my aunt Because that boy was wealthy, and his financial situation was good. He spent money on me and supported me. After a while, that boy left me. So, through my aunt, I would be friends with different men and get paid in exchange for the sex. Money was significant to me.”

Model of Getting to Know Pseudo-Prostitute or Prostitute

Regarding Figure 3, one of the significant factors contributing to the process of prostitution is familiarity and interaction with prostitutes or delinquent women. Through three methods, women engage in working in low-status occupations. There, they become acquainted with and connect with pseudo-prostitute women. Subsequently, following this familiarity, they enter the prostitution market through the process. Further elaboration on these minor processes is provided in the following.

The Facilitating Causal Processes

(1) The first process shows that the unsettled economic situation of the family, troubled parent-child relationships, and weak social control by the parent’s result in the unmet primary and secondary needs of the children. Subsequently, the child (in this case, the daughter) may develop inclinations such as desiring a better life, financial prosperity, and uniqueness. Lacking specific skills, she decides to engage in low-status jobs, such as working in restaurants, women’s taxi agencies, hair salons, and more, to address her secondary needs. In these environments, the individual may encounter pseudo-prostitute women who possess different attitudes or lead contrasting lifestyles, attitudes, and lifestyles that the individual had not previously experienced or was prohibited for her. The individual compares herself with them and consequently experiences a sense of injustice, failure, and inequality. Such an individual, burdened with the turmoil arising from the disordered economic circumstances, develops feelings of excitement and curiosity within. She succumbs to the temptation of seeking amusement, adventure, beautiful clothing, being the center of attention, and attaining freedom in the wider world. Thus, the inclination to conform to pseudo-prostitute women takes shape within her, leading to eventual conformity with these individuals after a period. Then, it leads to a change in attitude toward life and learning pseudo-prostitution relationships. These relationships bring about a sense of contentment and satisfaction in the individual. By understanding the process of prostitution, the individual becomes

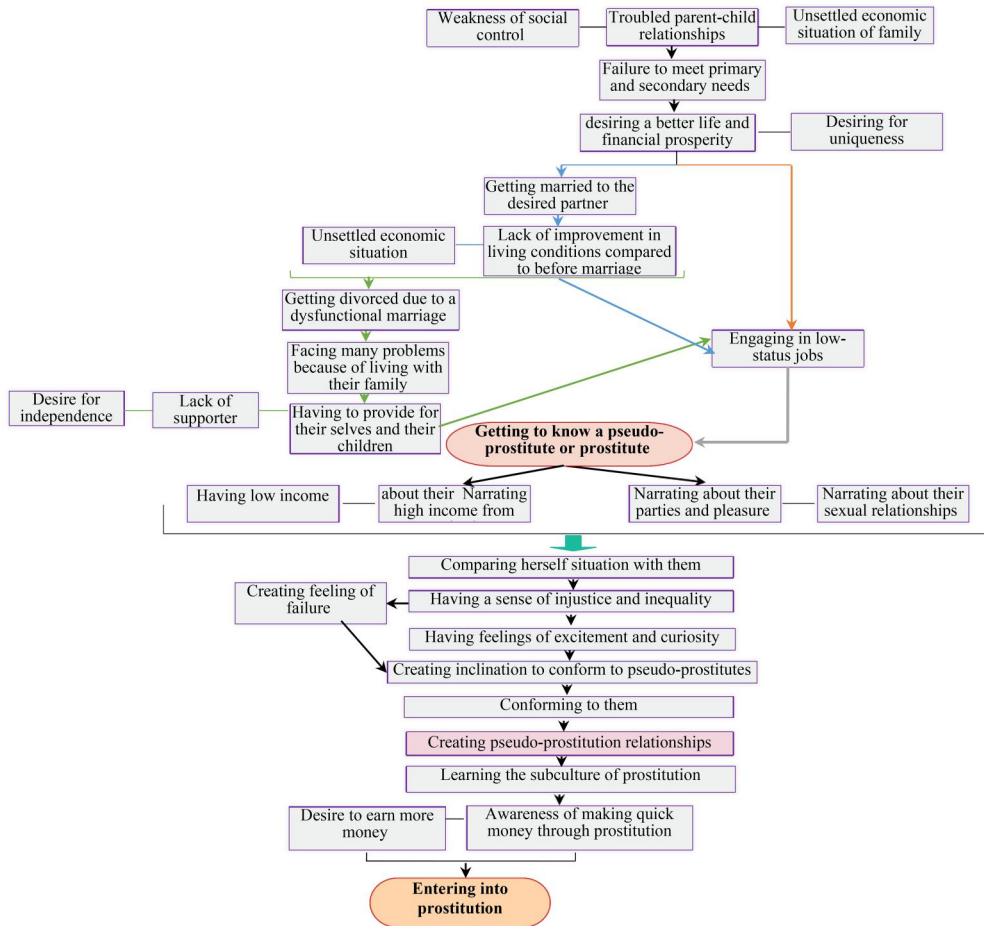


Figure 3. Model of getting to know pseudo-prostitute or prostitute.

aware of the swift attainment of money through these relationships. This awareness fuels her inclination toward higher income, ultimately leading her to enter the prostitution market.

Participant 6: "Money was more important to me. My mother and brother supported me by giving me money, but I wanted it to be more. They just provided for my essential needs. For this reason, I learned hairdressing. In my workplace, I had friends, two or three of whom were divorced, and two were single like me. They said we are going to a party and have fun. I had never been to these parties before. I was inquisitive and wanted to experiment. Their parties were mixed. They talked about their sexual relationships with men. They said that you have fun and get money. I did this because of my curiosity."

(2) In this process, a woman who desires a better life chooses a different path instead of taking up employment. She decides to form a relationship with a man with relatively good financial status to improve her life circumstances, and finally, she marries him. But after marriage, different conditions arise for a woman, leading to her feeling of dissatisfaction and eventually feeling a sense of failure. Furthermore, the unstable economic conditions prompt her to engage in low-status occupations, such as working in restaurants, women's taxi agencies, hair salons, and more, to meet her and her children's basic needs. Women in her workplace may encounter other women with different clothing styles and lifestyles. These women, due to their low income and high cost of living, and the lack of improvement in their married life, seeing the differences between themselves and prostitutes and their explanation of their lifestyle, parties, and pleasures, they compare their situation with them which ultimately leads to a feeling of injustice, failure, and inequality.

These differences lead married women, dissatisfied with their marital life and experiencing disdain and physical harassment, to develop feelings of excitement and liberation within themselves; hence, they create a desire to conform with prostitute women. This conformity brings about a change in attitude toward life and the learning of pseudo-prostitution relationships (such as *Oto*, *Taxi Merci*¹⁰, extramarital relationships, etc.). Besides imparting a sense of pleasure and contentment to the individual, these relationships lead to the learning of the process of becoming a prostitute and awareness of rapid money acquisition. Ultimately, the individual enters the prostitution market.

Participant 25: "I wanted him to be the husband of my dreams and lead me to my dreams (happiness, credit, money, etc.,) but my dreams were shattered after marriage. We did not have a good life financially and in terms of my husband's immorality. After 18 years of living with him, because we were in a very bad financial situation for the first time, I worked in a taxi service that was especially women. After a while, I realized what a world it is! How well they live! And how they have fun. I told myself I have two daughters and did not save money for their future! ... The women there were working, but they were happy. They used to travel and spend more time in the party at night. They were together until morning and had sex with whoever they wanted. They were out as long as they wanted."

(3) In addition to the economic instability, the lack of improvement in living conditions compared to before marriage leads to the woman seeking a divorce. In such a situation, the individual is compelled to live separately from her family due to insufficient financial status and housing. Since most interviewees were divorced and had children, they were forced to provide for themselves and their children. Additionally, they faced difficulties living separately from their families. This group of women generally enter low-status occupations to provide for their expenses and become independent from their families. Apart from the problems within their families, due to their divorced status, they face issues such as physical and sexual harassment at their workplace. These women, desiring a high level of independence, cannot live apart from their families due to low income and lack of financial support. Therefore, by becoming acquainted with prostitute women, comparing their life situations with them, and becoming aware of the potential to earn money quickly, they develop a desire to form sexual relationships with men. Ultimately, after learning the process of prostitution, they enter the prostitution market.

Participant 16: "When I divorced, I met a girl at work. She asked me why you are bothering you so much and working. Let's go so I can introduce you to someone who earns as much as your current job for a few days. I was surprised; That's why I told her with surprise?! She said yes! I will find clients for you so that each of them will give you, for example, that much. At that moment, I thought of more money to progress and unmet my secondary needs."

Model of Being Alone and Lack of a Supporter

Regarding [Figure 4](#), through various processes, different factors, such as family dysfunction, lead to loneliness and loss of support. This dysfunction can result from divorce, the death of a parent, addiction, or the lack of emotional connection between family members. Family instability contributes to loneliness in three ways: reduced parental supervision, leading to rejection or runaway behavior; severe parental addiction, which may cause homelessness and absence from the home; and marriage as an escape from unfavorable conditions, resulting in divorce and further loneliness. This isolation and lack of support, through three causal sub-processes, expose individuals to connections with prostitutes, eventually leading them into the prostitution market.

¹⁰Women and girls use their feminine features to get a taxi without paying. They get into the cars and establish a close relationship and interaction with the driver. They reach their destination without paying the fare for joking and laughing with the driver. This model usually does not end with sex.

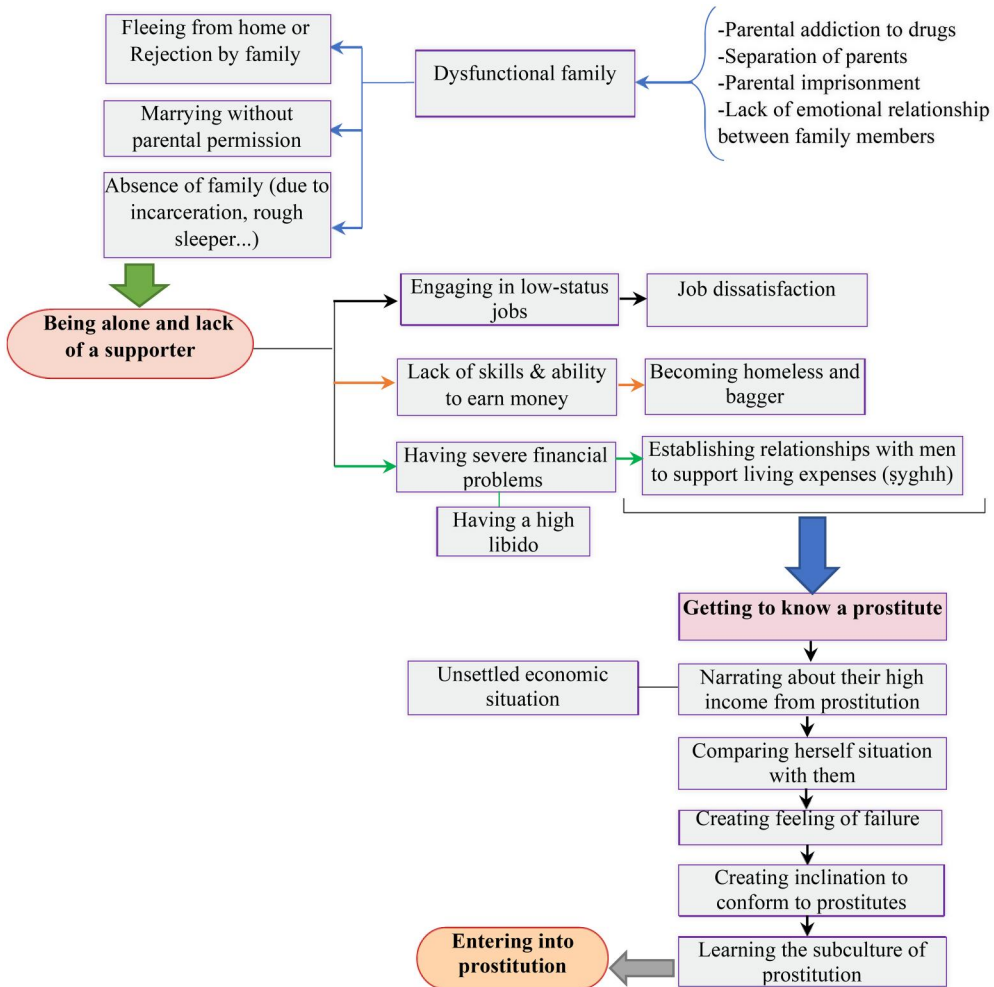


Figure 4. Model of being alone and lack of a supporter.

The Facilitating Causal Processes

(1) After finding themselves without support, women are compelled to work in low-paying, low-status jobs. Due to their low income and high living expenses, they are dissatisfied with their careers; therefore, they may become acquainted with individuals in their workplace who have higher incomes and a different lifestyle. Since wealth is considered a cultural and social goal in our society, and the underprivileged do not have access to it, their social goal and the means to achieve it do not align. These women desire the goal but lack access. They attempt various methods for social adaptation; consequently, they feel unjust and compare their situation with pseudo-prostitute women. With an understanding of these women's problems, pseudo-prostitute women define prostitution as a lucrative income source. These women, who, on the one hand, have economic instability and, on the other hand, seek independence or more prosperity, are encouraged to assimilate with pseudo-prostitute women. Following their first experience, which yields considerable rewards compared to the time spent, they feel satisfied; hence, they enter the prostitution market.

Participant 8: "I got married by mistake. Our financial situation and my husband's behavior were not good either. When I went to work, one of my colleagues said you work so much, and then you earn so much?! Then she introduced me to a pimp. When I met this girl, I noticed what misery I was living with, but my

husband did not make any effort to live. After some time, I divorced my husband and met a pimp through my colleague, and entered the prostitution market. In this way, I could rent a house and become independent.”

(2) Women and girls who, due to reasons such as fleeing from home, rejection by their family, or losing parental support (due to factors like death or imprisonment), find themselves homeless due to lacking the necessary skills and qualifications to engage in employment. These homeless women wander the streets and may resort to begging or sleeping rough. Most of these women either have addiction issues or become addicted while on the roads. In the next step, these individuals, in an effort to secure shelter and address their basic needs, may either engage in prostitution or come into contact with pseudo-prostitute women and subsequently enter the prostitution market through them.

Participant 18: “Since I had no place to live and no one to support me, I had sex with them in exchange for going to their house or getting food. Because I had no room, I had to sleep rough.”

(3) Divorced women who lose their support, alongside facing financial difficulties, exhibit a strong sexual desire; hence, they befriend men to fulfill their economic and sexual needs or engage in temporary marriages with them. These women enter pseudo-prostitution relationships. Most men entering temporary marriages with these women lack substantial commitment and terminate their relationship with these women after a period (often less than three years). The establishment of a stable situation and the formation of pseudo-prostitution relationships diminish the taboo associated with sexual relationships with men. In addition to the factors mentioned above, becoming acquainted and forming connections with pseudo-prostitute women leads to conformity and similarity with them; consequently, these women gradually fall into prostitution.

Participant 22: “I am now at an age where I need the opposite sex. I’m tired of being alone all these years. I want to get out of loneliness anyway. Another reason I want a partner is to support me financially. Because I have varicose, arthritis, and a lot of diseases that I cannot go to work. I had to get into this business to make ends meet.”

DISCUSSION

Prostitution is one of the crucial social issues in Iran. Unofficial statistics indicate an increasing trend of this social issue in Iran, to the extent that the age of involvement in prostitution has decreased to 13 years. On the other hand, due to the taboo nature of this issue, only a few studies have been conducted in this field. So, to explain and adequately understand prostitution in Iran, this study tried to investigate the processes that lead women or girls to prostitution. Women and girls are driven into prostitution through four process models, including the weakness of social control, having a prostitute mother, association with pseudo-prostitutes, and being alone and lacking support. These factors are not the leading cause of prostitution; instead, they represent pivotal points in their lives that lead them toward prostitution through various pathways.

The decrease in social control and supervision is the first process model referenced in this study. Most of the time, women and girls involved in prostitution are born into and raised in dysfunctional families (Allahqoli & Rahmani, 2017; Chattopadhyay et al., 1994), and usually, their parents, for various reasons such as addiction, being occupied, being in prison, etc., do not have a strong presence in the family. The diminished presence of parents leads to decreased supervision and control over the children. The reduced control and management of children lead the child (in this case, a daughter) to pursue various pathways, such as associating with delinquent friends, engaging in unsuccessful marriages resulting in significant dissatisfaction with life, or falling into addiction due to parental addiction and drug availability. Each of these pathways ends in familiarity with pseudo-prostitutes and engaging in pseudo-prostitution activities, ultimately leading to the internalization of the subculture of prostitution and becoming involved in prostitution.

The presence of a mother or another family member engaged in prostitution represents the next process model. In this model, the daughter, who in most cases accompanies her mother's sex dating, becomes socialized into the subculture of prostitution, and the taboo of this act diminishes for the child. In this case, the daughter may, for various reasons such as the absence of parents at home, parental addiction and homelessness, fleeing from home, taking responsibility for raising other siblings, extreme financial hardship, etc., find herself in a difficult situation. Consequently, due to her socialization within the subculture of prostitution, she considers selling her body as the first means to meet her needs and solve her problems. Initially, she begins with pseudo-prostitution activities, which ultimately leads to her involvement in prostitution.

The absence of a supporter is another significant factor in the prostitution process (Allahqoli & Rahmani, 2017; Rostamzadeh et al., 2016). In this model, the lack of parental support, fleeing from home, and unsuccessful marriage result in an individual being left alone without any support. In this situation, the individual lacks the skills to sustain life or engages in low-paying and low-status jobs. In both cases, due to the inability to meet their basic needs, the individual resorts to engaging in pseudo-prostitution activities, ultimately leading to their involvement in prostitution.

What has been indicated in this current study, not mentioned in other research, is that there are different contextual variables in all the mentioned process models. The presence of these different contextual variables drives individuals toward prostitution. Generally, there are three essential mechanisms in the process of women's falling into prostitution:

1. In the first mechanism, there are women who, due to the presence of a mother involved in prostitution within the family and being socialized into the subculture of prostitution, learn this phenomenon. They enter into prostitution without going through the stage of pseudo-prostitution, gradually entering the process of prostitution.
2. The second mechanism, containing two categories, pertains to women who become familiar with pseudo-prostitutes and engage in pseudo-prostitution activities: a. The first category includes women with urgent financial needs. Their involvement in prostitution happens quickly, and they swiftly enter the prostitution market. These individuals pass through the stage of pseudo-prostitution, but their process of involvement in prostitution occurs very rapidly. b. The second category includes women from the middle strata of society. They engage in pseudo-prostitution activities to meet their secondary needs and bridge the gap between their desires and possessions.

CONCLUSIONS

Presently, Iranian society is transitioning from tradition to modernity. Consequently, individuals, for various reasons such as exposure to diverse cultures, use of social media networks, watching various films from different cultures, and more, aspire to a luxurious and modern lifestyle, such as dining in upscale restaurants, purchasing branded clothing, attending mixed gender night parties, and so on. On the other hand, due to stagflation and the unstable economic conditions in society, individuals have been unable to meet their desires. Essentially, a gap has emerged between their aspirations and their possessions. These women consider themselves worthy of a high-quality life, but due to the lack of foundational variables such as higher education, diverse skills, supporter families, etc. They are unable to attain it through legal and customary means.

Consequently, they engage in pseudo-prostitution activities such as *Oto*, *Taxi Merci*, and more. They form relationships with individuals experienced in this lifestyle and gradually begin learning this process. Along this path, they become acquainted with men from the upper strata of society and enter into relationships. In these relationships, men from the upper echelons, in

exchange for receiving sexual services, albeit for a short period, provide women with a taste of a luxurious lifestyle. This stage, not only from the women's perspective but also from the viewpoint of the researchers of this study, is not considered prostitution because no money is exchanged for sexual services; instead, it is viewed as a form of indulgence, experiencing a new and luxurious lifestyle. However, after a period, they learn the workings and realize they can sell their sexual services at a higher price. At this stage, after the first transaction of sexual services, they gradually enter into this path and step-by-step approach pseudo-prostitution. After shedding the stigma associated with these actions, to fulfill their primary and secondary needs, they are compelled to form relationships with multiple men, ultimately leading to prostitution.

Overall, as noted, numerous researchers have addressed the influential factors in the formation of the phenomenon of prostitution. However, none have considered these factors within a network of processes; instead, they have referred to them causally. In the view of the authors of this study, a precise description and explanation of the phenomenon of prostitution can only be provided when the factors within the processes and steps taken by a woman to engage in prostitution are examined in detail.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

These ethical considerations were observed for the participants in this research: receiving their verbal informed consent, informing the participants of the research objectives, maintaining their health and safety, emphasizing the secrecy and confidentiality of the personal information of the participants, respecting their privacy, their freedom to attend and withdrawing from research; not registering their names and surnames and using numbers to identify them when analyzing data; Obtaining permission to record the voice at the beginning of the interview from the participants and destroying the voice after the implementation of the interviews.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the paper.

FUNDING

This research was done at the authors' personal expense and without any organization's support.

ORCID

Majid Fouladiyan  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7787-6006>

Atefeh Kaboli  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6288-2331>

REFERENCES

- Allahqoli, L., & Rahmani, A. (2017). Social determinants of sex work among female sex workers in Tehran. *Health Education and Health Promotion*, 5(1), 5–17.
- Atkinson, R., & Flint, J. (2001). Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies. *Social Research Update*, 33(1), 1–4.
- Bagley, C., & Young, L. (1987). Juvenile prostitution and child sexual abuse: A controlled study. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, 6(1), 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.7870/cjcmh-1987-0001>
- Batmanghelichi, K. S. (2020). *Revolutionary bodies: Technologies of gender, sex, and self in contemporary Iran*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Benoit, C., Ouellet, N., Jansson, M., Magnus, S., & Smith, M. (2017). Would you think about doing sex for money? Structure and agency in deciding to sell sex in Canada. *Work, Employment and Society*, 31(5), 731–747. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017016679331>

- Chattopadhyay, M., Bandyopadhyay, S., & Duttagupta, C. (1994). Biosocial factors influencing women to become prostitutes in India. *Social Biology*, 41(3–4), 252–259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19485565.1994.9988876>
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (H. Danaeefard & H. Kazemi, Trans.). Negah-e Danesh. (Persian)
- Dezhamkhooy, M., & Papoli-Yazdi, L. (2020). Flowers in the garbage: Transformations of prostitution in Iran in the late nineteenth-twenty-first centuries in Iran. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 24(3), 728–750. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-020-00541-z>
- Eghtesad Mihaan News Agency (2019). *Painful statistics of prostitution in Iran*. <http://eghtesadmihan.ir/fa/news/71908> (Persian)
- Falahati, A. (2003). Prostitution and heavy silence of the law. *Strategic Studies of Women*, 6(22), 11–66.
- Farley, M., & Barkan, H. E. (1998). Prostitution, violence, and posttraumatic stress disorder. *Women & Health*, 27(3), 37–49. https://doi.org/10.1300/J013v27n03_03
- Floor, W. (2010). *Social history of sexual relations in Iran* (M. Minookherad, Trans.). Ferdowsi Publication. (Persian)
- Fouladiyan, M., & Kaboli, A. (2022). Typology of prostitution patterns. *Strategic Research on Social Problems in Iran*, 11(4), 49–68. <https://doi.org/10.22108/srsp.2023.134545.1829> (Persian)
- Fouladiyan, M., Mirabi, S., Fatemi Amin, S. Z., Esmaili, F., Rezayi Bahrabad, H., & Tousufar, J. (2015). *Investigating the phenomenon of injured street women and the social conditions affecting it*. Sokhan-Gostar Publication. (Persian)
- Hansen, M. A., & Johansson, I. (2023). Asking about “prostitution”, “sex work” and “transactional sex”: Question wording and attitudes toward trading sexual services. *Journal of Sex Research*, 60(1), 153–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2022.2130859>
- Harcourt, C., & Donovan, B. (2005). The many faces of sex work. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 81(3), 201–206. <https://doi.org/10.1136/sti.2004.012468>
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Hermans-Jansen, E. (1995). *Self-narratives: The construction of meaning in psychotherapy*. The Guilford Press.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. University of California Press.
- Jatmikowati, S. H. (2015). Driving factors and their characteristics of prostitutes in Indonesia: A phenomenology approach. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(6 S1), 554–560. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n6s1p554>
- Karami, M., Khazaei, S., Poorolajal, J., Soltanian, A., & Sajadipoor, M. (2017). Estimating the population size of female sex worker population in Tehran, Iran: Application of direct capture-recapture method. *AIDS and Behavior*, 21(8), 2394–2400. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-017-1803-9>
- Karamouzian, M., Foroozanfar, Z., Ahmadi, A., Haghdoost, A. A., Vogel, J., & Zolala, F. (2016). How sex work becomes an option: Experiences of female sex workers in Kerman, Iran. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18(1), 58–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2015.1059487>
- Kinsey, D. (1971). Sexual behavior. In R. K. Merton & R. Nisbet (Eds.), *Contemporary social problems* (3rd ed., pp. 313–360). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Madani Qahfarkhi, S. (2012). *Investigating the social harm of prostitution*. Yadavaran. (Persian)
- Mahdavi, P. (2010). The “trafficking” of Persians: Labor, migration, and traffic in Dubai. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 30(3), 533–546. <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-2010-032>
- McCarthy, B., Benoit, C., & Jansson, M. (2014). Sex work: A comparative study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 43(7), 1379–1390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0281-7>
- Mohebbi, M. (2005). Female sex workers and fear of stigmatisation. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 81(2), 180–181. <https://doi.org/10.1136/sti.2004.010512>
- Najmabadi, A. (1987). Iran’s turn to Islam: From modernism to a moral order. *Middle East Journal*, 41(2), 202–217.
- Najmabadi, A. (2005). *Women with mustaches and men without beards: Gender and sexual anxieties of Iranian modernity*. University of California Press.
- Nkhoma, P., & Charnley, H. (2018). Child protection and social inequality: Understanding child prostitution in Malawi. *Social Sciences*, 7(10), 185. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7100185>
- Rostamzadeh, E., Mohseni, F., & Rohani, A. R. (2016). Social perspective and causal factors influencing women prostitution in Iran. *Asian Social Science*, 12(10), 106–116. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n10p106>
- Shahri, J. (1990). *Social history of Tehran in the 13th century*. Rasa Cultural Services Institute. (Persian)
- Sharifi, H., Karamouzian, M., Baneshi, M. R., Shokoohi, M., Haghdoost, A. A., McFarland, W., & Mirzazadeh, A. (2017). Population size estimation of female sex workers in Iran: Synthesis of methods and results. *PloS One*, 12(8), e0182755. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0182755>
- Slim, M., Haddad, C., Sfeir, E., Rahme, C., Hallit, S., & Obeid, S. (2020). Factors influencing women’s sex work in a Lebanese sample: Results of a case-control study. *BMC Women’s Health*, 20(1), 193. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-020-01062-x>

- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2012). *Fundamentals of qualitative research (techniques and stages of generating grounded theory)* (A. Afshar, Trans.). Ney Publication.
- Tolu'i, V., & Khalegh-Panah, K. (2008). Narratology and narrative analysis. *Reading Journal*, 9(52), 14–45.
- Yoosefi Lebni, J., Irandoost, S. F., Dehghan, A. A., Ziapour, A., Khosravi, B., & Mehedi, N. (2021). Exploring the reasons for women to engage in sex work in Tehran, Iran: A qualitative study. *Heliyon*, 7(12), e08512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e08512>