SELF-OTHER REPRESENTATION OF SEX WORKERS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Adopting Wodak’s Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak et al., 1999; Wodak, 2001; and Reisigl and Wodak, 2009) as the research framework, this research investigates strategies used in the media representation of people who work in the sex sector alongside the strategies these workers' themselves use in their self-representation. It also looks at the argumentative strategies that both parties use to validate or justify their representations.

The research data analysis derives from two primary sources; The Star Online and data from a focus group interview with people in the sector. 20 news articles from The Star Online; reporting events and stories involving sex workers working in Malaysia; dated from January 2012 to December 2012 and 3 female and 2 transgendered male to female sex workers were selected and interviewed for the purpose of the research analysis.

Findings show that sex workers were represented as either lawbreakers or victims by the media. On the other hand, sex workers (based on interviews), represent themselves more complex ways than in the binary constructed by the media. They construct themselves as victims, heroes, breadwinners to the family, independent individuals and also as criminals. The details of the research findings are discussed more thoroughly in the research dissertation.
ABSTRAK


Analisis data bagi kajian ini di ambil daripada dua sumber utama; The Star Online dan temubual kumpulan fokus dengan pekerja dalam sektor seks sendiri. 20 artikel dari The Star Online; yang melaporkan berita dan kejadian yang melibatkan perkerja-pekerja seks yang bekerja di Malaysia; bertarikh dari Januari 2012 hingga Disember 2012 dipilih dan pekerja seks yang terdiri daripada 3 wanita dan 2 transgender lelaki kepada wanita di temubual untuk tujuan analisis kajian ini.

Hasil daripada penyelidikan menunjukkan pekerja-pekerja seks digambarkan oleh media samada sebagai penjenayah atau mangsa, berbeza dengan gambaran yang di berikan oleh pekerja-pekerja seks sendiri semasa temubual, dimana mereka menggambarkan diri mereka degna cara lebih kompleks daripada binari yang digambarkan di media. Pekerja-pekerja seks yang ditemubual menggambarkan diri mereka sebagai mangsa, hero, pencari nafkah kepada keluarga, individu yang independen dan juga sebagai penjenayah. Hasil kajian dibincangkan dengan lebih menyeluruh di dalam disertasi kajian ini.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This study explores the media representation of sex workers as well as the sex workers’ self-representation. This chapter begins with a brief review on the history and background of sex industry in Malaysia from as early as the nineteenth century up to today. The review is important in order to understand the existing stigmas, prejudice and discrimination against sex workers in the Malaysian society. This chapter also highlights the research problems, significance of the study, research questions, objectives and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

On 2nd June 2011, images of 30 foreign sex workers marked with a ‘tick’ or ‘cross’ over their foreheads and chests were published in a Malaysian Chinese daily, The China Press. The images which were taken during a police raid received attention from lawyers, politicians, activists and were criticized by the public. These pictures also received negative reaction from Malaysian Democratic Action Party (DAP) vice-chairperson, Teresa Kok who lambasted the procedure and claimed it as ‘dehumanizing’ and ‘sickening’. Comparing the strategies used by the police in this raid to ‘cattle-branding’, she urged the police to explain their actions. Her statements on the incident became the headlines in overseas news media such as Sydney Morning Herald, Adelaide Now, Jakarta Post, Belfast Telegraph and Phuket Wan Tourism News and other international news media.
This incident displayed the level of abuse and violence faced by sex workers in Malaysia in their line of work. It is undisputed that Malaysian print media plays a part in constructing, reproducing and deepening social stigmas associated to sex workers. Van Djik (1993) in his work emphasizes the power of media to control and manufacture public opinions.

Dorfman and Schiralidi (2001) study on public’s perceptions on crime in the United States found that three quarters (76%) of the respondents say that they form their opinions about social events from what they see or read in the news. Hence, when the print media chooses to represent sex workers as the negative ‘other’, ‘different’ and ‘threatening’, they were shaping and reinforcing these negative representations to the public. The negative perceptions shared by the public about sex workers create negative effects on sex workers and hinders their rights in Malaysia.

Teh (2008) in his study on transgendered sex workers suggests the lack of positive support, the structure and content of our law, drugs, poverty and social stigma attached to sex work and sex workers all appear to discourage their access to equal protection. To add to this, with inadequate social support and a production and reproduction of social stigma in the print media, more abuse and violence against sex workers in Malaysia continue to grow.

1.1.1 Sex Sector in Malaysia

The sex trade is generally seen as wrong and immoral as many cultures across the world still foster the notion of sexual exclusivity; where one is assumed to provide sexual access to only one person (Bradley and Mindy, 2011, p. 67). People who violate this notion
are seen as ‘wrong’ and ‘immoral’. Sex workers are the telling example of people that transgress this notion. As a result, they are viewed as ‘bad’ or ‘immoral and their ‘immorality’ places them on the side of the deviant and deviant acts have always been controlled by regulation and punishment.

Foucault (1978) in ‘The History of Sexuality’ describes the history of regulation and policing of sexuality from a church ritual known as ‘Christian Pastoral’. In this ritual, one was obliged to confess and admit their sexual activities, fantasies and desires to the church for the purpose of self-examination (Foucalt, 1978, p.21). Over time, this ritual became a police matter and subsequently regulated and supervised by the government (Foucalt, 1978, p.24).

Sex work is not only seen as ‘immoral’, but it also transgresses the definition of ‘normal’ or acceptable sexual activities hence, should be prohibited. This means, the idea of what is normal and what is not in a society can be understood through its legislations. For this reason, it is very important to examine the legislation on sex work in Malaysia from the past until today. The legislation that exists in a country reflects the attitudes and beliefs of its society.

Historically, the existence of sex sector in the Peninsula Malaysia can be traced back as early as 1883. Sex workers were first mentioned in a Malay literary work Hikayat Abdullah; (The Story of Abdullah); an autobiography of the writer itself; Abdullah Bin Abdul Kadir Munshi. Abdullah was a respected and well-travelled teacher during his time. In his book, he described sex workers as ‘loose women’ who approached traders and
seafarers and offer to servicing the men’s sexual needs (Nagaraj, S. and Yahya, 1998, p. 67).

However, documentation of the sex sector in Malaysia during the nineteenth century is more extensively discussed in Purcell’s (1949) work; *The Chinese in Malaya* where he divides the growth of the sex sector in Peninsular Malaysia based on its regulations into three main periods. The categories are shown in Table 1.1:

*Table 1.1: The Development of the Sex Sector in Peninsula Malaysia.*

(Purcell, 1949, p. 175 -6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Regulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1718 – 1927</td>
<td>Brothels and sex workers were allowed to operate freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927 – 1930</td>
<td>Brothels were allowed to operate with restriction on the entrance of sex workers to the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930 onwards</td>
<td>Brothels were deemed illegal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1 (a) The Legislation of the Sex Sector in Peninsula Malaysia during 1718-1927

According to Purcell (1948), the sex sector in Peninsular Malaysia emerged during this period due to the increasing numbers of male migrant workers. This was evident especially between 1839 and 1880’s. It was recorded that there were about 400 Chinese male labourers recruited to work in the mines of Perak and Selangor in 1839 which then increased to more than 230,000 in the 1880’s.
The situation was similar for Indian male labourers who were brought in to work in the plantations. Purcell (1948) in his research reported that the numbers of Indian labourers rose to more than 40% from 30,000 in 1870 to 75,000 in less than a decade. The imbalance numbers of men and women in the population was alarming during this period and based on a report, the sex ratio for the Indians and Chinese by the late 1880’s was at 18 women to 1000 men. The shortage of women in the population at the time brought about a potential demand for sex workers which eventually became an active trade in Peninsular Malaysia at the time.

Warren (1998) however argues that it was poverty and patriarchy that contributed to the thriving trade in sex workers. He asserted that the practice of selling young daughters became very common among Chinese parents in China as a result of poverty and patriarchy in the past. He added that young women were sold to brothels either for money or as ‘pawned’ to their parents debts.

During this period, the earliest regulation on sex can be traced back in the state of Perak. As a state rich in tin mines, Perak had the highest numbers of immigrant miners. The immigrant workers whom were either single or had left their families in China contributed to sex sector becoming an active trade in Perak. As the result of this, the first legislation on sex sector was introduced in 1870 under the Contagious Diseases Ordinance (Warren, 1993).

The legislation was introduced to control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) which had become a threat to the community. Under this regulation, brothels that
were initially allowed to operate freely were required to register and to provide medical inspection and detention of diseased sex workers (Warren, 1993, p. 100). In 1887, Contagious Diseases Ordinance was repealed due to the public pressure in Victorian England against state regulation and legitimization of the sex sector. However, the Act was replaced again in 1888 under the Women and Girls Protection Ordinance which required brothels to continue the registration of their brothels, but no longer required to provide medical inspection to the sex workers.

In 1902, after Perak joined the states of Pahang, Selangor and Negri Sembilan to form the Federated Malay States (FMS), the Women and Girls Protection Enactment No. 7 was introduced by the FMS to control trafficking for sex work and to provide protection to women and girls who were forced into the sector. The protection came in the form of ‘protection ticket’. The ‘protection tickets’ were distributed to all sex workers by the appointed ‘Protector’. The ticket stated the rights of the sex workers to receive protection from the Protector, District Officer or Police Officer for any mistreatments against them. With the introduction of this Act, although operating a brothel was still not an offence, it was reported that many brothels were required to discontinue for breaching the enactment. In 1931, the legislation was revised again and eventually, brothels as well as all related activities were criminalized. As a result of the criminalization, all brothels were compelled to close down and unfortunately, sex workers also lost their rights for protection.

1.1.1 (b) The Current Legislation for the Sex Sector in Malaysia

Today, the legislation concerning sex sector in Malaysia follows the British legal system which does not prohibit prostitution. However, under the Women and Girls
Protection Act (WGPA) 1973, Act 106 Part IV; Sections 16 to 22, it is an offence to sell, hire, procure and detain of women for the purpose of prostitution (D’Cunha, 1992, p.32).

Another law in Malaysia that is used against sex sector is the Penal Code. Although, the provisions in the Penal Code under Section 372 and 373A are similar to that of the WGPA, the maximum punishment under the Penal Code is ten years imprisonment which is doubled of what set under the WGPA.

However, the Penal Code is more ‘popularly’ used against transgender or transsexual sex workers as Section 377A declares ‘sexual connection by the introduction of the penis into the anus or mouth of the person’ as an offence punishable with imprisonment for up to twenty years and whipping. This makes the transgender sex workers more vulnerable to the authorities.

Currently, prostitution is deemed unlawful in Malaysia and it is regulated as Minor Offences Act 1955 (Act 336) Section 27 (b) under Criminal Law. It states that:

Every prostitute behaving in a disorderly or indecent manner in or near any public road or in any place of public resort shall be deemed to be an idle and disorderly person and shall be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred ringgit or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month or to both.

The law can obviously raise a number of questions concerning what or how one determines a ‘disorderly and indecent’ manner. It becomes problematic as it assumes ‘prostitute’ to be easily identifiable which means, anyone gets the power to label any
persons as ‘prostitute’ if he or she fits the stereotypes. In other words, the law seems to support the existing stereotypical images of a ‘prostitute’ and it shows a clear attempt of discrimination as only a person who is deemed ‘prostitute’ is required to control their ‘manner’ and ‘order’ while ‘normal’ citizens are not required so.

However, since Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, the country practices a dual system of law which provides the enforcement of Islamic law known as ‘syariah’; as a state law. Syariah law is only applied to Muslims and it is limited to jurisdiction on personal law matters for instance marriage, inheritance, and offences relating to Islam.

The Syariah law prohibits prostitution and its regulation falls under Section 21 of the Syariah Criminal Offences (Federal Territories) Act 1977 which states:

Any woman who prostitutes herself shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding five thousand ringgit or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to whipping not exceeding six strokes or to any combination thereof.

The law clearly assumes all sex workers as women. This is obviously contrary to the reality as sex workers include men, women and transgendered people. Adding to this, the law also suggests all individual prostitutes are responsible for prostitution diminishing the possibility of them being forced or victimized to enter the sector.
All in all, it is important to note that the purpose of legislation on sex work does not serve to protect the sex workers. The researcher views the law serves only to either keeping sex workers as invisible as possible or eradicate them as a whole. With this being said, the researcher believes that better understanding on sex work and people involved in the sector can impact public opinion and eventually the policy relating to them.

1.2 Research Problem

One of the biggest hurdles in the research and studies on the sex sector or sex workers is that the research on the subject often overlaps with other related issues prominent with sex work such as trafficking, HIV and AIDS. This is not surprising as sex workers are among the most vulnerable groups to trafficking and HIV/AIDS. This overlapping creates very little room for the researchers to explore other issues concerning sex workers especially issues on their day to day realities.

As such it is imperative that a study is carried out to examine and understand the ways in which sex workers in Malaysia are being marginalized in the media and the ways sex workers respond to the media representation of them and how they represent their own identity.

1.3 Significance of the Study

There is not much linguistic research done on the representation of sex workers in Malaysia especially on the subject of sex workers self-representation. Ditmore, Melissa et.al (2010) in the introductory article of their book ‘Sex Work Matters’ pointed out that stories on sex workers usually focus on the sensational aspect of the industry or sellable
news’. In another research, Wong, Fong et.al (2012) also warned that the focus on sensational news will only strengthen and develop further stigmas and discrimination against sex workers. In this study, the researcher does not only look at how sex workers are represented by the media, but also how the sex workers see and choose to represent themselves.

In this manner, this research firstly, fills the gaps in the study of sex workers in Malaysia and secondly, it provides the answers to how ‘self’ and ‘other’ representations of the sex workers feed into each other. However, the ultimate aim of the study is to bring a better understanding on sex work and sex workers realities.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Considering the above concerns, this research aims to:

1. To examine the representation of sex workers in and by the Malaysian media.
2. To examine the self-representation of sex workers in Malaysia.
3. To analyse the parallels and contrasts between the sex workers’ self-representation and the media’s representation of them.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to achieve the above objectives, the research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How are sex workers represented by the media?
   i. What are the referential and predicational strategies used in and by the media to represent sex workers?
ii. What are the argumentative strategies used in and by the media to justify and legitimize the way they represent sex workers?

2. How do sex workers represent themselves?
   i. What are the referential and predicational strategies used by the sex workers to represent themselves?
   ii. What are the argumentative strategies used by the sex workers to represent themselves and to respond to the media representation of them?

3. What do the parallels and contrasts between these two representations reveal about how sex workers in Malaysia are viewed?

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Sex workers include men, women and transgendered people. However, the respondents that contributed in this research are limited to only biological female and male to female (MTF) transgender sex workers. The limitation is due to the difficulty to get in touch with male sex workers to participate in this research. However, the inclusion of transgender sex workers in the research brings about diversity and reality of people in the sector.

The research also limits its study to the respondents’ representation as sex workers and not their representation according to their gender identity. However, the research does acknowledge that MTF transgender sex worker may or undergo a more severe and complex stigmatization than that of biological females due to their gender struggles. For this reason,
the struggles and discrimination the MTF sex workers revealed are taken into account in this research.

The research also limits itself to study the media representation of sex workers based in Malaysia. Hence, the data used for the research is limited to news reports of events that took place only in Malaysia and the sex workers participated in the interview are all Malaysians. As such, the research does not seek to represent or to mirror the way sex workers in other countries represented in and by their media or by the workers themselves.

In addition to that, the research analysis concentrates only on Referential, Predicational and Argumentative strategies. These strategies play important roles in investigating the strategies that are used to represent a person or a group. Perspectivation strategy is not employed in this study as this research is not looking at writers’ personal point of view or involvement; rather it looks at the media point of view as a whole. Mitigation strategy is also not employed in this research as it is not a contention that sex workers are marginalized and discriminated against.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides information on the background, methodology, approach and significance of the study that explores representation of sex workers in the articles published by and in The Star Online as well as sex workers self-representation. This chapter adds to the existing knowledge about sex work and sex workers especially in Malaysia. It also sheds more light towards sex workers living reality. The next chapter will examine previous literature related to the subject.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter discusses theories and existing literature on sex workers and representation. The chapter begins with a review on the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with specific attention given to Discourse-Historical Approach which is used as the main theoretical framework for the analysis of this research. This chapter also presents a review of existing research on sex workers including sex workers’ representation, stigmas, discrimination and prejudice.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language. CDA investigates language beyond its description or beyond its superficial application (Wodak and Meyer, 2001).

The term 'discourse' in CDA refers to anything from a historical monument, a policy, a political strategy, text, talk, speech and etcetera. CDA views language as a form of social practice and it considers the ‘context of language use’ to be crucial. This implies a dialectical relationship between a discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), that frame it. This is explained clearly by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) in the following quote:

The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and
relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258).

Thus, CDA views discourse as a stable use of language that serves the organization and the structure of our social life. In different word, CDA concerns in essentially producing and conveying critical knowledge that enables people to free and enlighten themselves from forms of domination. This means, the term 'critical' regularly refers to CDA’s aim in revealing structures of power and uncovering ideologies. To sum up, CDA seeks not only to describe and explain the organization and the structure of our social life, but also to root out a particular kind of misconception.

'Power' is another concept that is salient for CDA. Research using CDA’s approaches are interested in the way discourse (re)produces social domination, that is, the power abuse of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively challenge such abuse. In order to know who are in power, who are responsible and who have the means and the opportunity to dominate one over another in a particular society, CDA suggests the study of ‘how the text is positioned or positioning, whose interests are
served by this positioning, whose interests are negated and the consequences of such positioning’. The knowledge on this interest does not only reveal the sources of power, dominance, inequality and prejudice embedded in a particular text or talk, but also shows how they are maintained and reproduced in specific social, political and historical contexts (Wodak and Meyer, 2001).

However, the study and analysis of social problems is too complex and needs to be looked at from various perspectives. Therefore, CDA emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary work. Therefore, CDA research requires various dimensions of fields such as sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology and other disciplines that can help in the understanding of the discursive event in different aspects.

In sum, CDA can be defined as being essentially interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized by language use.

Hence, CDA is an ideal framework to study sex work community. CDA embraces the idea that social inequality and discrimination should be exposed and challenged in order to interpret and understand certain social issues. It also believes that language is not powerful on its own but it is a medium to gain and maintain power used by people of authority which in this research; the media. It is also a suitable framework for this research as one of the approaches to CDA developed by Wodak (2001); Discourse-Historical,
provides methodologies and several analytical categories that are useful in the study of other and self-representation in which this research is interested in.

2.2 The Discourse Historical Approach

Discourse-historical approach was developed by Wodak in her research on anti-Semitic stereotyped image; as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 70). It has been further developed in other studies for example, in a study on racist discrimination against immigrants from Romania, and in a study on the discourse about nation and national identity in Austria (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 71).

DHA integrates historical background in its interpretation. The focus of DHA is on discursive and linguistic elements, social practices and in-depth examination (Krzyżanowski, 2010). The approach is interested in analysing prejudiced utterances and identifying as well as exposing the codes and allusions that are embedded in prejudiced discourse (Wodak, 2011, p. 62).

Wodak and Meyer (2009) explain that one of the most salient distinguishing features of the DHA is its attempt to include a variety of empirical data as well as background information. Depending on the object of investigation, DHA attempts to go beyond the study of linguistic and include more or less historical, political, sociological and psychological dimensions in its analysis and interpretation of discourses and texts.
According to Wodak (2009) the following are the most important characteristics of DHA. First, the approach is interdisciplinary. It is also problem oriented which means it does not focus on specific linguistic items alone. DHA also integrates the theory and the methodology which is helpful in understanding and explaining the object under investigation. Wodak (2009) also highlights the need to constantly go back and forth between theory and empirical data. One more characteristic of DHA, which is also the most important, is it always analyses and includes historical context in its interpretation of discourses and texts.

DHA approach employs the principle of triangulation. As mentioned above, DHA combines various interdisciplinary, methodological and approaches in its investigation of a particular discourse phenomenon. This principle of triangulation extends to the notion of ‘context’. Wodak (2009) explains that ‘context’ takes into account four levels of analysis where the first one is descriptive and the other three levels are part of theories on context. The first level includes the immediate, language or text internal co-text. On the second level, there are intertextual and intercursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses. The third level analyses the extra linguistic social or sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’. Lastly, the fourth level takes into account the broader socio-political and historical contexts, where the discursive practices embedded and connected to the ‘grand theories’ (Wodak and Michael Meyer, 2001).

DHA views discursive construction of Us and Them as the foundation of all prejudice, racist and discriminatory discourses. Based on this theory, it believes that the
construction of differences and sameness in the in-group and out-group are the strategies used to perpetuate power, hierarchies or privilege in the society (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Sex workers are a telling example of community that continues to suffer social marginalization, exclusion, discrimination and unequal treatment from the society. In order to unfold the strategies used in disseminating messages of discrimination and inequality against sex workers in Malaysia, this research employs Wodak’s (2001) DHA approach and employed its practical set of tools called the ‘discursive strategies. These discursive strategies go in the following stages; (i) first, labelling social actors into positive or negative attributes, (ii) next, generalizing this positive or negative attributes, (iii) then, elaborating arguments to justify these negative or positive attributes (Wodak and Meyer, 2011).

2.3 Strategies of Self and Other- Presentation

Positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation are two complementary strategies (Van Dijk, 1993). These two strategies focus on participants as social groups rather than individuals (Van Dijk, 2009). According to Van Djik (2009), positive self-representation or in-group favouritism is a semantic macro-strategy used for the purpose of ‘face keeping’ or ‘impression management’. Negative other-representation is another semantic macro-strategy regarding in-groups and out groups, that is, their division between ‘good’ and ‘bad’, superior and inferior, Us and Them. Van Dijk (2009) introduces these two major strategies in the form of an ‘ideological square’:

1. Express/emphasize information that is „positive” about us.
2. Express/emphasize information that is „negative” about them.
3. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is „positive“ about them.

4. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is „negative“ about us.

Analysis of these strategies reveals not only how writers or speakers categorise Us and Them but also their judgement of Us as good and Them as bad. Similar to Van Dijk, Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p.44) as mentioned above, pays attention to the discursive construction of Us and Them in highlighting the analysis of discursive strategies. These strategies are utilised in the polarisation of Us versus Them which provides the positive portrait to the own in-groups while features negative attributions to the out-groups. The strategies are illustrated in the following figure: (see also 3.2.1)

```
Positive self-presentation
  Reference
  Predication

and negative other-presentation
  Perspectivation and involvement
  Intensification or mitigation
  Argumentation
```

**Figure 2.1: Strategies of Self or Other-Presentation** (Wodak, 2001: 46)

Wagner and Wodak (2006) adopts the self-other presentation schema in their study on how women’s success is represented by others as compare to how these successful women represent themselves. The study reveals the parallels and contrasts in the representation of success from others and from the women’s own ideas of their success. Khosravinik (2010) also uses the same schema in his research on how Iran and the West
positively construct the position of ‘self’ and negatively construct and de-legitimate the position of the ‘other’ in both British and Iran newspapers.

2.4 Media Discourse

The media, which refers to the press, radio, television broadcasting and the Internet play a large part in providing insights and information about the world. The power of media in creating people’s norms and beliefs is described by Foucault (1978) as ‘a modern way of power enforcement’. Fairclough (1995) implies in his study that a media reporter plays a role as an authority figure that holds the facts and the right to tell what happens in the society. He or she decides and selects what is news, whose voices to be included and excluded, how events and people get reported and most importantly for this research; linguistic choices that are used to describe and report a particular event or people (Thornborrow, 2005, p43 – 55). This means, the media is influential in creating, re-creating and sustaining perceptions of the public about people or certain groups in the society.

For instance, when the media decides to constantly describe or represent a particular event or people in the same manner, it becomes difficult for the general public to perceive the event or certain group of people different from the already established representation (Thornborrow, 2005, p.56). The implications of this are even greater for the minority or marginalized groups such as sex workers. As a suppressed faction of the society, sex workers have very little or no access to express their resistance or to challenge the stereotypes and negative portrayals disseminated by and in the media about them. What is more, with the community being vulnerable, criminalized and operates illegally in hidden venues, it is almost impossible for public to gain alternative insights about sex workers
except from the ones covered by and in the media. Hence, the media remains as a vital source that is able to influence and shape the wider public’s understanding of people in the minority or marginalized groups.

However, the power of media in controlling the minds of readers of viewers is persuasive and symbolic; not straightforward. This is because readers or audience are not entirely passive consumers. This suggests that mind control by the media can only be effective with the absence of other sources of information. Without alternative sources to counter the information disseminated by the mass media, readers will tend to accept them as the only legitimate or correct ones (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 10-11). Drawing from this belief, this research aims to present alternative information about sex workers from what is usually imparted in and by the media in hope to provide better understanding towards the sex workers’ living realities.

For this reason, the research chose to use newspaper discourse as part of its data source as print media or newspaper is rich with data that mirrors a particular society. The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to show how language is instrumental in constructing views of the public on certain events. In this research, the aim is to use CDA to discover the ways sex workers identity is constructed in and by the media and at the same time to challenge it through the sex workers construction of their own identity.

2.5 Approaches to Sex Work

There have been developments in the legal approach to sex work adopted by different countries all around the world. One of the most significant changes in legislation
to sex work is the shift from prohibition to legalisation and decriminalization. Changes in the approach to sex work have made sex workers more visible and in some parts of the world, these changes provide better opportunities and safer environment for sex workers and people in the industry (Mossman, 2007).

The three existing approaches to sex work are (i) criminalisation, (ii) legalisation and (iii) decriminalisation. Criminalisation is a legal approach that illegalised sex work completely. This means, it is not legally possible to engage in sex work or activities related to sex work namely from soliciting, procuring, pimping to brothel keeping. Any activities related to sex work are viewed as contravening to the law and the offences appear in the criminal code. This approach aims to eliminate sex work completely and it is usually supported by groups or bodies that opposed to sex work based on moral, religious or feminist perspectives. The jurisdictions that criminalised sex work can be classified into two; (i) prohibitionist and (ii) abolitionist. Prohibitionist illegalizes all forms of sex work while abolitionist allows the selling of sex but bans the soliciting, procuring and brothel keeping (Mossman, 2007). Malaysia is an example of a country that adopts abolitionist approach; which is also similar to the UK. This approach focuses more in eliminating or reducing the negative impacts of sex work and it penalizes the act of soliciting sex instead of criminalizing the work itself (Mossman, 2007).

One of the problems with this approach is the tolerant climate. Although the selling of sex is criminalized; and the sex work zones are known by the authorities, prosecutions are rarely made which give rise to sex syndicates. Criminalization also forces the sex syndicates to operate in less visible areas making it more difficult for sex workers who
could be victims of trafficking or violence to come forward and seek protection (Bindel, 2006).

Another approach to sex sector which is currently implemented in countries such as Netherlands, Germany, Iceland, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Greece, Turkey, Senegal, the United State of Nevada, and many Australian states is, the legalization of prostitution (Mossman, 2007). The legalisation approach sees prostitution as a necessity to create a stable social order. Although prostitution is legalised, the sector is still under the police control; in order to protect public order and health (Gangoli and Westmarland, 2006). Legalisation of the sex sector also means that it is controlled by the government and is legal only under specific conditions implemented by them. These can include licensing, registration and mandatory health checks. Without the necessary permit, the brothel owners or the sex workers are subjected to criminal penalties.

Legalisation approach aims to reduce crimes associated with sex work for example, child prostitution, sex trafficking, organised crime and police corruption. However, a research done on the countries that have legalized sex work; for example in some parts of Germany, Australia and the Netherlands; does not show any positive impacts. According to the research, more efforts are spent on regulating the legal aspects of the sector rather than focusing on the perpetrators and the illegal aspects.

Some countries have taken a step further in their legal approach to sex work by decriminalizing it completely. Decriminalisation means all laws against prostitution are repealed or provisions that criminalised all aspects of prostitution are removed. However, it
is important to highlight, that a decriminalised approach makes a distinction between (i) voluntary prostitution and (ii) prostitution involving force or child prostitution, in which the latter remains a criminal offence.

The difference between legalisation and decriminalisation is that, the latter does not impose any specific regulations for the business or the workers. Moreover, decriminalized approach recognises prostitution as a legitimate business and comes under conventional employment and health regulations. This means, sex work is viewed similar to other forms of employment. On the bright side, with decriminalisation of sex work, it helps to protect and make the sex workers’ rights to health, safety and protection from the authorities becoming more visible. Decriminalization of sex work is also a key factor to reduce HIV transmission. Criminalization of sex work creates an unsafe and disempowering environment, which makes it difficult for sex workers to practice safer sex. With sex work criminalisation lifted out, sex workers are provided with secure working conditions where they can negotiate or demand the use of condom (Barnett and Casavant, 2014).

However, proponents of decriminalisation approach argue that the cost of keeping prostitution legal outweighs the profits. They also suggested that prostitution should be seen as a consenting behaviour between adults and not as a legitimate business (Jordan, 2005). They also highlight the double standard in jurisdictions pertaining to sex work whereby, a sex worker can be found guilty of an offence, but not the client, who is often male (Jordan, 2005). Apart from these, it is also important to highlight that decriminalization of sex work does not bring changes to numbers of trafficking nor does it encouraging sex work. A research on the impact in New Zealand’s decision to
decriminalize sex work has shown that the industry has not increased in size or visibility after its decriminalisation (Mensah and Bruckert, 2011). With that being said, making the industry more visible helps in creating safer and accountable working conditions for the sex workers. In contrast, criminalising and arresting people in the industry have been proven to be futile in reducing or eliminating sex work. Instead, it encourages violence, discriminations and stigmas which further disempowered these workers as individuals in a society.

2.6 Existing Studies on Sex Work

The existing research on sex work has been much more about sex and sexual victimization rather than about the workers with focus is given more towards the association between sex work and misery (Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). Furthermore, the research on sex workers under the feminist umbrella focuses more on gender plays, violence, degradation and gender oppression and a view of sex work as “a form of male domination over women” (Weitzer, 2005).

Kesler (2002) in her research asserts that sex work itself is a form of violence and the fundamental idea of ‘buying sex’ reflects a system of heterosexuality and male power ‘the absolute embodiment of patriarchal male privilege’ (Kesler, 2002, p.19). Jeffries (1997) in her work ‘The Idea of Prostitution’ goes beyond violence and declares sex work as a form of sexual slavery and further analyses that:

(Prostitution is) male sexual behaviour characterised by three elements variously combined: barter, promiscuity, and emotional indifference. Any
man is a prostitution abuser who, for the purposes of his sexual satisfaction, habitually or intermittently reduces another human being into a sexual object by the use of money or other mercenary considerations. (Jeffries, 1997, p.4).

Another research by Pateman (1998) echoes this notion and concludes the distinction between sex work and loving sex by stating that;

[the] difference between the reciprocal expression of desire and unilateral subjection to sexual acts with the consolation of payment: it is the difference for women between freedom and subjection (Pateman, 1998, p. 204).

Barry (1995) supports this in her research and notes that sex without genuine human interaction is dehumanizing and thereby a form of male domination against women. The problem in using feminist theory on sex work research is; it establishes the idea that sex work is a form of violation towards women’s human rights and this notion disregards the fact that some sex workers involved in sex work voluntarily.

Kinnon (1993) argues against the feminist point of view of sex work and claims that the selling of sex as oppressive and it violates the notion of freedom or diversity while at the same time ‘sustains the myths and norms of the sex industry, of potent men and submissive women, rather than transforming them’. Due to this, other issues concerning sex work and sex workers that have led to their marginalization and stigmatization are often left out in the existing research.
In addition, most of the existing studies on sex work is funded by international government or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) making them inevitably influenced by the organizations' policies and ideologies. Research studies and evaluations on sex work that are objective and not skewed to befitting certain ideologies and purposes continue to be extremely rare and limited (Kelly, 2005, p. 236). Besides, the research on sex workers is also still largely dominated by works from the West. The work may not be fair narrative to the realities of sex workers in countries that are more conservative or countries where the issue is still considered too controversial and taboo to be explored.

2.7 Representation of Sex Workers in the Media

Media has a knowable effect in shaping and constructing an individual or groups’ identities. This is even more so for marginalized groups such as sex workers. This is due to the lack of alternative representation available to counter the existing ones and limited public interaction with the people in the communities to gain different perspectives. This contributes to the media being one of the most important sources for understanding the construction of sex workers identity in society.

The discourses involving sex workers usually frame sex workers into two diverging roles; as criminals or victims. The media provides the opportunity to perceive the sex workers as criminals and public nuisance by emphasizing the workers' undesirable qualities. Squires and Kantola (2005) in their research on the parliamentary debates on UK prostitution policies found that sex workers were continuously portrayed as criminals in the media. They were labelled as agents of sexually transmitted diseases or drug users who sell themselves to finance their drug habits. The relationship between sex work and HIV and
AIDS were frequently highlighted which contributes public to perceive sex workers negatively as a danger and a threat to the UK society.

Irvine (1999) in her study confirmed this portrayal and added that the sex workers criminalization is further highlighted by focusing on stories related to "socially disfavored groups' such as immigrants, drug users as well as the urban poor. These communities whom usually pushed at the margin of society were made as scapegoats to instill fear for the disease and the transmission of HIV and AIDS. Irvine supported her argument stating that the infection rates of HIV positive among female sex workers and women not in the sector were similar.

The result gathered from King's (1990) in his research on sex workers and HIV transmission also agreed with Irvine's point of view. Based on her research, she suggested that female sex workers were placed on the list of high-risk groups for AIDS and vectors for the virus transmission by the Centre for Disease Control despite the lack of substantial evidence to support this indicator. King argues that sex workers were targeted as sources of transmission of HIV and AIDS due to the pre-established stigma rooted in the society that attached 'impurity or diseases' to sex work and sex workers. She argues that this association places sex workers as vulnerable targets of blame.

Another interesting study on media portrayals of sex workers and sex industry by Hallgrimsdottir, Phillips and Benoit, (2006) also suggests the same representations where sex workers were continuously associated with contagious diseases and untreated health risks which contributed in instilling panic and fear among public. To emphasize these fears,
sex workers were criminalized through their ‘immoral’ conduct, ill-social values and lifestyles.

Brunschat, Sydie and Krull (1999) added that sex workers were also usually portrayed to have association with other criminal activities involving organised crime, addiction, and drug trade. She also said that the existing stigmas which support such association contribute in making it almost natural to place sex workers as the culprits that are responsible for the social problems in the society (Brunschat et. al., 1999, p. 55-56). These recurring portrayals have consequently distanced sex workers from the public (Stenvoll, 2002). To make things worse, Brock (1998) maintains that sex workers were often excluded from the debate or narrative involving them and this allows media to claim legitimacy for their representation of people in the sector.

The media also provides the second option of perceiving the prostitute as victim. Gordon (1996) in his study identifies that sex workers' victimization is portrayed in two ways. Firstly, the sex workers were often portrayed as victims who were responsible for the violence they experience. She suggests that this was done by portraying the sex workers as 'bad-girl"; by emphasizing the elements on the workers’ provocative clothing, the workers’ physical attractiveness, and details alluding to behaviour deviating from a role of ‘a good girl’ , damaging the credibility of the victims and subsequently placed them responsible for violence committed against them (Gordon, 1996, p.68). The second portrayal based on Gordon's analysis is the way media simplified the context and content of cases involving sex workers by focusing on what the workers did or did not do to prevent the assault against them.
In contrast, Kantola and Squires (2004) in their research that examines the representations of sex workers in the UK debates about prostitution and trafficking, found that sex workers were represented as innocent victims who were exploited and manipulated and trapped in sexual trades. Their vulnerability and victimhood were further highlighted by focusing on minors or asylum seekers; forced and incapable to save themselves and in need of protection or sympathy from the authority or public. However, the topic on sex workers trafficking focuses more on children and not women or sex workers themselves. Prostitution is still portrayed as a threatening phenomenon and violation of international human rights.

Similarly, Brunschot, Sydie and Krull (1999) on his systematic analysis of from five major newspapers in Canadian cities concluded that:

Overall the general claim was that sympathy and rescue was required for the victims - the child prostitute - and regulation and control for the deviant, apparently drug addicted, adrift prostitute who represents the diseased underbelly of the metropolis (Brunschot, Sydie and Krull, 1999, p. 67).

He also suggests that media portrayals of sex workers and sex work throughout the period he studied were overall consistent and homogeneous. This is despite the changes in the legal contexts concerning sex workers in the country.

In sum, sex work and people involved in the sector have always been represented and perceived negatively by the media as either victims or criminals. Public is given only
one way of perceiving sex workers which is either as victims or as offenders. These negative representations have placed sex workers as the ‘out-group’ and “them” which further detach them from ‘us’; the public. Consequently, when a particular event and people in the society are constantly described or represented by the media in the same manner, it becomes difficult for people to perceive them differently from the already established representation.

This also proves that the media is a powerful source in making sense of the world, hence should not be taken for granted. However, it is very unfortunate that there seems to be a paucity of CDA based research on sex workers especially in Malaysia. In Levy and Willman (2010) article ‘Beyond the Sex and Sex Work’ they mentioned their desperation for different kind of research in the field of sex work. They found that researchers often find that funding opportunities on the studying of sex workers limited to themes related to HIV/AIDS and ‘trafficking’ and this research aims to fill in that gap particularly in Malaysia.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is a fact that sex workers face violence and discrimination in their line of work. Unfortunately, it is also a fact that they are often left unprotected from the violence and discrimination against them due to the existing social stigmas and the legal restrictions surrounding their occupation. With the media constantly portrays them as the ‘other’, or the ‘transgressor’ of the moral norms, the general public continues to push sex workers to the margins. It is impossible for sex workers to liberate themselves from the stigmas and stereotypes associated to them, unless they are given the opportunity to resist.
and voice out what often misinterpreted in and by the media. This research believes that self-representation is one of the first steps towards sex workers’ liberation and therefore includes their self-representation as one of its primary sources. A more detailed description on the methodology employed in this research is explained in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This is a qualitative research that studies the representation of sex workers in a leading English-language newspaper published online in Malaysia namely, *The Star Online* and the sex workers’ own self-representation. The interest of this study is to first, investigate how sex workers are referentially and predicationally represented in and by *The Star Online* and the argumentative strategies it uses to justify and legitimize their representation of the community. Secondly, the research aims to examine referential and predicational strategies used by sex workers in representing themselves, and in responding to the media representation of them.

With the parallels and contrasts between the two representations exposed and outlined, the research explained not only the underlying myths, stigmas and stereotypes surrounding sex workers in Malaysia but it also offers new understanding about sex workers from what commonly imparted in and by the media.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Conceptual Framework

Since this research is interested to investigate how sex workers represent themselves and how the workers are represented by the media, there is a need to firstly understand the meaning of representation, how representation works, how representation interlinks with identity and how identity is constructed.
Representation can be created through language use. The language that is used to represent an issue or a particular group of people reflects the speakers or the writers’ ideology. However, this process is not straightforward as language choice and the speakers or writers’ understanding of a certain issue are not decided by the speakers or the writers alone. Instead, they are prompted by the existing linguistic rules, norms and cultural codes in society. This means, things have meanings in themselves prior to our representation of them through language (Hall, 1997). It shows that identity and meaning are closely connected. As Jenkins (1996) puts it; ‘meanings are the outcome of agreement or disagreement, always a matter of contention, to some extent shared and always negotiable’. Hence, it is important to recognize the power of representations as the ways in which certain group of people in the society for instance sex workers; are represented. This is because, the way they are represented affects their lives, rights and position in a society (Hall, 1997).

The next question that needs to be clarified is the relation between identity and representation. Identity according to Woodward (1997) refers to ‘an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live. Identity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share the same traits, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not’. Representation in contrast refers to an interpretation of the said identities, either by the person themselves or by others (Breakwell, 1993). This suggests that identity and representation does not only interlink with each other but they are constructed through and against each other.
One way to study representation is offered by critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. The goal of CDA is to point out the “more or less overt relations of social struggle and conflict” (Wodak and Busch, 2004: 10) fits well with the objectives of this research. Hence, CDA is the most sensible framework for this research of which aims to investigate the self and other representation of sex workers in Malaysia.

Adopting Wodak’s Discourse Historical Approach as a discourse-analytical tool; this research follows five questions as guidelines for the data analysis namely; (i) How are persons named and referred to linguistically? (ii) What characteristics are attributed to these persons? (iii) By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do social groups attempt to justify and legitimise the exclusion, discrimination, and suppression, and exploitation of others? (iv) From what perspectives are these labels, attributions and arguments expressed. (v) Are the respective utterances enunciated clearly? And are they intensified or mitigated? These five questions bring about five types of discursive strategies. Starting with the examination of how sex workers linguistically named and referred in and by the media or by themselves (referential); the analysis continues with the investigation of negative or positive characteristics and the qualities or features attributed in and by the media or and by sex workers (predicational). Moving on, the analysis continues with the investigation of (argumentation) strategies used to justify the references and predications made about sex workers in and by the media and by themselves. These strategies are discussed thoroughly in the next chapter. The following Figure 2.2 visualizes the conceptual framework of this study.
Sex Workers Representation in Malaysia

Representation by Others

Collection of news articles on sex workers from *The Star Online*.

Sex Workers Self-Representation

Focus group interview with five sex workers in Malaysia.

Analysis of news articles and the interview from the focus group. The data is analysed using Wodak's Five discursive strategies.

1) Analyse the referential strategies used by and in the news articles.
2) Analyse the predicative strategies used by and in the news articles.
3) Analyse the argumentative strategies used by and in the news articles to justify and legitimize their representation of sex workers.

1) Analyse the referential strategies in representing themselves.
2) Analyse the predicative strategies in representing themselves.
3) Analyse the argumentative strategies used to justify and legitimize their self-representation.

Analyse the parallels and contrasts between the media representation of sex workers with the sex workers self-representation.

**Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework**
Overall, it is noted that the CDA framework is considered for this research in order to explain the underlying myths, stigmas and stereotypes surrounding sex workers in Malaysia while at the same time offers new understanding about them.

3.2 Data Description

This chapter includes the data description, research questions, methodology used and conclusion.

3.2.1 Choice of Data

The data selected for the purpose of this research is obtained from two primary sources; a mainstream online newspaper; *The Star Online* and a focus group interview. *The Star Online* is chosen firstly due to its accessibility which makes it practical for the research. The website also provides practicality with its extensive and easy to use news archives. Apart from this, *The Star Online* represents the discourse of dominant about sex workers which the research is interested in, firstly because it is the leading English language newspaper with the most readerships in Malaysia which also means larger audience and broader dissemination of news to masses. For these reasons, *The Star Online* becomes an obvious source for the research data, compare to other available newspapers in Malaysia.

The second source of data for this research is attained from a focus group interview. This interview is a joined effort between the researcher and a Malaysian non-governmental organization (NGO); Pink Triangle (PT) Foundation. Founded in 1987, PT Foundation has the reputation of being the largest community-based organization in Malaysia for people
living with AIDS/HIV and other marginalized communities. It is known to have run, developed and maintained various programs that serve the marginalized communities and this includes sex workers. The organization also provides legal consultations for sex workers to address their concerns and discriminations against them. The interview was held at PT Foundation’s premise located in Kuala Lumpur and was administered by one of the PT Foundation’s volunteers.

The interview was administered for 1-hour and it involves the researcher as a moderator, the PT Foundation volunteer as an observer whose name is not mentioned due to the individual’s preference and five sex workers as respondents. The sex workers who took part in the interview are three females and two transgendered male-to-female (MTF). The number of respondents is limited to only five considering that five to six people is the average number of participants recommended for a focus group interview (Kruger & Casey, 2008). The smaller number also makes it easier for moderator to control the interview and at the same creates and provides a more meaningful interaction and in depth discussion with and among the participants. Besides this, the moderator also purposely chooses to include three females and two transgender male-to-female sex workers as the respondents; to firstly offer diversification of views and experience from people in the sex industry and secondly, to provide a reality of people in sex work sector of which largely constitutes of females and transgender people. The background information of the respondents attained from the focus group interview is tabulated below.
3.2.1 (a) The Interviewees

All the five interviewees are Malaysians and their ages ranged from 35-65 years old. In the analysis, they are referred to using pseudonyms that they had chosen for themselves. The pseudonyms and their background information are as follows:

(1) Katherine is 58 years old from Kuala Perlis, Perlis. She is married and has a daughter who is also married and now lives with her husband. She moved to Kuala Lumpur forty years ago when her mother passed away. She has been a sex worker for approximately 38 years.

(2) Ayu is a 39 years old transgender male to female, from Sandakan Sabah. She moved to West Malaysia specifically Pahang in 1992. She came to Pahang to work with her aunt but moved to Kuala Lumpur thereafter. She started doing sex work in 1998. She is currently homeless and comes to PT Foundation premise from time to time for shelter and food.

(3) Angah is a 55 years old widow who once had two children who later passed away. She is originally from Kuala Terengganu but came to Kuala Lumpur in 1990. She has been a sex worker for 30 years. Similar to Ayu, she is homeless and sometimes relies on PT Foundation for shelter and food.

(4) Shalu is 48 years old transgender male to female widow born in Penang but grew up in Kuala Lumpur. According to Shalu, she has been a sex worker for almost 20 years and most of her sex work experience is in Chow Kit. She is also
homeless like Angah and Ayu.

(5) **Habibah** is 64 years old and the oldest among others. She was married and has a daughter. Her daughter is married and lives with her husband. Her daughter’s husband doesn’t allow Habibah to see her daughter, so she has not seeing her daughter for a long time. She is originally from Ipoh, Perak but moved to Kuala Lumpur in 1972. She has been a sex worker for forty years and like the rest, she is homeless.

Making the practices of sex workers visible can create danger and risk to the respondents involved, especially in a country such as Malaysia where soliciting money for sex is illegal. Hence, sex workers will want to remain invisible to protect themselves from the authority and public.

For this reason, pseudonyms were used throughout the study to assure the respondents that their identity would not be disclosed. A letter of consent was also prepared for each respondent that explains about the research and their rights to exit the research at any time if they feel uncomfortable. It is also needed to be mentioned that this research does not seek to be the representative of sex workers in Malaysia, rather it aims to create better understanding towards the work and the people in the sector. Hence, the respondents for this research do not represent all sex workers in Malaysia and the selection may be biased towards the more cooperative and accessible ones.
3.2.2 Data Collection

3.2.2 (a) Selecting and Preparing Data from The Star Online

The process of collecting data from The Star Online newspaper begins by browsing through the newspaper's extensive online archive at http://www.thestar.com.my/Archives/. Keywords such as "prostitute, prostitution, sex workers and sex work" were used to narrow down and filter the articles and to employ only relevant data for the research. The articles collected from the searching were then downsized to 20. The articles are dated between January 2012 and December 2012. The number was kept at 20 considering the estimated amount of time to analyse the data. Besides the time consideration, the articles were also chosen based on two criteria; they are news report and they contain events or stories referring or reporting sex workers that took place only in Malaysia.

These selections are fair as the study is only interested to investigate the representation of sex workers working or living in Malaysia. Thus, news reports on sex workers occurred in other countries are not relevant with the research objective. Additionally, this limitation is also practical to dismiss biases as sex workers outside Malaysia may not share the same representation as they may also be facing different social stigmas, discrimination and stereotypes derive from the policies or social issues in their domain.

In addition to that, editorials, columns or letters from readers were not taken into account as the nature of the writing represents opinions and personal stances of specific individuals or journalists and not by and large The Star Online's. The following table tabulates the headlines of and dates of the selected articles.
Table 3.1: The Headlines of Selected Texts in *The Star Online*

<table>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 30, 2012</td>
<td>Foreign Workers Get Satisfactory Sex Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 31, 2012</td>
<td>Undergrads Netting Tourists for Sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 31, 2012</td>
<td>Cheap Motels Add to Growth of Prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 9, 2012</td>
<td>Prostitutes Now Making House Calls to Avoid Detection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 11, 2012</td>
<td>Sex Dished Out to Restaurant Customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 13, 2012</td>
<td>Women from China Pay RM10,000 to Work as Prostitutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 14, 2012</td>
<td>Cheap Flights Bringing in Chinese Prostitutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>February 20, 2012</td>
<td>Visa Restrictions Help Curb Prostitution Involving Foreign Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>February 20, 2012</td>
<td>Cops Nab 10 in Brothel Raid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 3, 2012</td>
<td>Poverty Drives 15-year-old to Prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 6, 2012</td>
<td>Woman Asks For ‘Quickie’ and Gets Handcuffed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>March 9, 2012</td>
<td>Girl Pimped by Mum and Stepbrother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>March 18, 2012</td>
<td>Prostitutes Engineer Robbery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>March 24, 2012</td>
<td>Cops Rescue Viet Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>March 26, 2012</td>
<td>Bogus Job Offer Lures Woman into Sex Slavery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>July 7, 2012</td>
<td>Young Prostitutes Front for Gang of Thieves in KK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>July 8, 2012</td>
<td>13-year-old Among Prostitutes-Cum-Thieves Arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>October 8, 2012</td>
<td>Ladies’ Shoes Lead Officers to Uncover Vice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>October 15, 2012</td>
<td>Get an Escort via ‘Drive-Thru’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>December 8, 2012</td>
<td>14-year-old Call Girl Held</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2 (b) Selecting and Preparing Data from Focus Group Interview

Upon completing the downsizing process, the research continues with the articles analysis. The findings gathered from the analysis are later utilized to develop questions for the focus group interview. This interview includes the researcher as a moderator, a PT Foundation volunteer as an observer and five sex workers as respondents. The sex workers that took part in the interview are 3 females and 2 transgendered male-to-female (MTF). Overview of the interview procedure is as indicated in Table 2.

Table 3.2: The Interview Process (Krzyzanowski, 2009: 161)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Ice-breaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The first phase allows moderator and participants to get to know each other and enables identification of characteristics that the participants have in common. This is also the phase where the respondents are required to create their pseudonym. The pseudonym is used consistently to refer to them both in the interview and data analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Introductory question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The second phase began with the introduction of the general topic of discussion by the moderator. Then, it continued with questions on their personal backgrounds and experience as sex workers.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Key question 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selected quotes that indicated clear representation of sex workers were explained to them. They were then asked if the text represents them and their responses towards what were written about them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>Key question 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Considering data from Phase 3, participants were further asked to discuss how they represent themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 5</th>
<th>Closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 3 to 5 minutes, key questions and main ideas emerged from Phase 1-4 were briefly summarized and explained by the moderator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Research Design

This research employs the method of analysis based on Critical Discourse Analysis specifically applying an approach developed by Wodak (2009); the Discourse-Historical Approach.
3.3.1 Method of Analysis

The framework used in this study is based on the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak et al., 1999; Wodak, 2001; and Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). The DHA views discursive construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or known as positive self-representation and negative other-representation as the foundation of all prejudice, racist and discriminatory discourses.

In our modern society, explicit discriminatory talks or texts are taboo or legally outlawed or censured. Despite the restrictions, it is evident that discrimination and inequality are still rife in our society. Sex workers are the example of group that continues to suffer social marginalization, exclusion, discrimination and unequal treatment from and in our modern society. In order to reveal how messages of discrimination and inequality on sex workers are disseminated, the DHA suggests answering the following 5 questions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 93).

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes, and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they intensified or mitigated?
Drawing from these questions, the DHA developed the 5 types of discursive strategies as summarized in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: The Five Discursive Strategies (Wodak et al., 1999; Wodak, 2001; and Reisigl and Wodak, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Devices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referential/Nomination</td>
<td>Construction of in-groups and out-groups</td>
<td>• Membership categorization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors, metonymies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Synecdoches (pars pro toto, tatum pro pars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implicit and explicit predicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predication</td>
<td>Labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively.</td>
<td>Topoi used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination or preferential treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td>Justification of positive or negative attributions</td>
<td>Reporting, description, narration or quotation of (discriminatory) events and utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectivation, framing,</td>
<td>Expressing involvement, positioning speakers’ point of view.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensification, mitigation</td>
<td>Modifying the epistemic status of proposition</td>
<td>Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of (discriminatory) utterances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, this research is primarily oriented on three discursive strategies; referential, predication and argumentative strategies. These three strategies were selected due to their relevance in the study of representation (Wodak, 1999; Wodak, 2001; and Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). Based on these three aspects, this study focuses firstly; on how the media portrays, describes and refers to sex workers and how these are different from how sex workers portrays, describes and refers to themselves. Secondly, the research aims to investigate the argumentation strategies or topos applied by and in the media and the sex workers themselves; to legitimize or justify their representations.

The first and second questions of this research aim to find the answers to how sex workers as a marginalized sanction in the society are attributed and referred to by the media in events or stories involving them and how the sex workers talk about themselves and their respond to the media representation of them (see table 3.3). In finding answers to these questions, DHA (Wodak, 1999; Wodak, 2001; and Reisigl and Wodak, 2009) suggested that the researcher studies the referential and predicational strategies that were used in and by both the media and the sex workers. The strategies which are partly based on Van Leeuwen's analytical categories (Leeuwen, 1996) suggest that social actors are referred and talked about in either positive or negative manner in order create two splitting groups of ‘in group’ or ‘out group’. Some linguistics devices used in dividing the ‘in-group’ from the ‘out-group’ are for instance; membership categorization, metaphors and metonymies and synecdoche.

These questions also aim to investigate the argumentative strategies used in both the media and the sex workers to justify and legitimize the self and other representations.
Arguments refer to goal oriented strategies that are used to persuade and to influence readers in adopting, fixing or changing their perception, attitudes and views on persons, objects or ideas (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001, p. 69-70). Within argumentation theory is topoi. Topoi are regarded as "parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. They are the content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim. As such, they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion” (Meyer and Wodak, 2001).

There are several numbers of topoi which are commonly used for the purpose of justifying or legitimizing when writing or talking about ‘others’ or self. Some examples are topoi of usefulness or advantage, topoi of uselessness or disadvantage, topoi of danger and threat, topoi of justice, topoi of responsibility, topoi of finances, topoi of numbers, topoi of law and right and topoi of abuse. (Wodak, 2006, p.74)

This study does not only look at topoi but also studies the use of rhetorical devices particularly ‘metaphor’ in both the self and other representations of sex workers. Metaphor is one of the important linguistic devices in DHA and it is commonly used in writing and talk about self and others. Van Djik (1995) suggests that expressions of racism and prejudices are demonstrated not only through explicit derogatory lexical items but also through metaphors. Metaphors is often used in creating in-group and out-group and the investigation of metaphorical in self- and other representation of sex workers can reveal the underlying myths, stigmas and stereotypes surrounding sex workers in Malaysia and offers new understanding about them.
Upon uncovering representation of sex workers from both the media and the sex workers themselves, the last research question aims to analyse and discuss the parallels and contrasts found between both representations. With both representations outlined and exposed, the research hopes to provide a more objective representation of sex workers in Malaysia and challenged the existing stigmas surrounding them.

3.4 Conclusion

The data selected, methodology and analytical tools employed in the study are set to find answers for the three research questions. Ultimately, the results garnered from this research highlight the parallels and contrasts between the identities that the sex workers project and perceived with the identities portrayed and given by and in the media.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents findings of the main analysis on the referential, predicational and argumentative strategies which are found in the selected news reports from The Star Online and the focus group interview with five sex workers who volunteered for the purpose of this research. The investigation of these strategies exposes and outlines the similarities and differences between both representations and subsequently reveals the existing stigma, myth, stereotypes and discrimination against sex workers in our country.

4.1 Strategies Used to Represent Sex Workers

The researcher looks at three discursive strategies as suggested by Wodak in analysing the news articles published in The Star Online. The strategies utilized in this research are referential, predicational and argumentative strategies. Each strategy is explained and discussed in the following section.

4.1.1 Referential and Predicative Strategies

Referential and predicative strategies are important in the study of representation as it exposes the stereotypically positive and negative features expressed in the linguistic form. In order to answer the question of how persons are represented, one needs to investigate devices that are referred and predicated to them. A person or a group may be referred to or labelled in terms of their nationalities, ethnic, cultural, economic, gender or other evaluative terms. These two strategies according to Wodak (2001) often overlaps hence should be analysed together to prevent redundancy (see 3.3). These strategies are
found in both the news articles and the focus group interview with the sex workers. The following section presents the analysis and the detailed findings of referential and predicative strategies from these two sources.

4.2 Representation of Sex Workers in The Star Online.

Sex workers were found to be represented consistently in all the 20 articles selected from The Star Online in two ways; as lawbreakers or as victims.

4.2.1 Sex Workers Represented as Lawbreakers

The investigation of referential and predicational strategies used by the media in their reporting of sex workers found that sex workers were negatively referred to andpredicated in the selected articles as either lawbreakers or the accomplice to sex syndicates and as an individual working and predating for clients on her own.

However, as an individual or as accomplice, sex workers were represented as unspecified individuals or groups which according to Wodak (2009) is a strategy of indetermination. In the articles, sex workers were referred to by the media according to their nationalities, age and price of their sex service. This is illustrated in the following Extract 1:

Extract 1:

1. A 21-year old student from Ipoh is one such undergraduate. (Article 2, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.110).
2. The clients are largely from Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and Myanmar, and the women providing them the sexual service are said to be Indonesians. (Article 1, Jan 30, 2012, Appendix 1, p.109).

3. According to the SMS sent out by the syndicates, the prostitutes were aged between 18 and 25 from various countries including China, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines. (Article 4, Feb 9, 2012, Appendix 1, p.113).

4. The newspaper claimed that local college students charged the highest with their rates going for RM250 per hour or RM500 for three hours. (Article 4, Feb 9, 2012, Appendix 1, p.113).

5. Women from China pay RM100, 000 to work as prostitutes. (Article 6, Feb 13, 2012, Appendix 1, p.114).

6. Police in their ongoing Ops Noda, nabbed nine Indonesian and an Indian women during a surprise raid on Saturday. (Article 9, Feb 20, 2012, Appendix 1, p.116).

7. When police raided the restaurant, they found several customers having sex with women from China in a partitioned section of the premise. (Article 5, Feb 11, 2012, Appendix 1, p.113).
8. *A 13 year old girl* is among six prostitutes arrested here for helping a gang of thieves steal their client wallets and other personal belongings. *(Article 16, July 7, 2012, Appendix 1, p.122).*


As can be seen from the extract, the sex workers were identified according to their age, nationalities and ranges of price. They are referred to as ‘Indonesians’, ‘women from China’, ‘prostitutes between 18-25’ and ‘prices ranges from RM180 to RM400’. Since they were indeterminate in the article, they were usually referred to collectively as ‘women’, ‘prostitutes’ or ‘girls’. It is unsurprising that media labelled the sex workers based on their nationalities in the reports as it is evident that the sex workers were usually separated into two categories; as locals and as foreigners. This distinction is created as a part of the sex workers’ identity to separate the in group and out group among sex workers. The instances can be seen in Extract 2.

**Extract 2:**

1. “There are motel owners involved in prostitution and *most of them focus on foreign women as they are paid much less* and the *owners make two to three times more than if they were to use local women*” he said. *(Article 3, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.112).*

2. Besides locals, foreigners also prefer them (Chinese sex workers) due to *low*
Based on Extract 2, it can be seen that foreign sex workers were portrayed more negatively than the way local sex workers were. The local sex workers were described as being more expensive compared to the foreign sex workers. In this sense, it creates a somewhat positive representation of local sex workers as a group of a higher value in comparison to the non-local sex workers who were inferred to as cheap and low charged. Judging from a pricing strategy theory where pricing signals quality; the local sex workers were represented as a group of sex workers from a higher ‘quality’, hence expensive compared to foreign sex workers who were paid cheaper. The use of price to refer to the sex workers also implies their objectification. They are regarded as products of consumption that vary in prices depending on their quality of which are determined based on the countries they are from or their age.

The distinction between local and foreign sex workers goes further when the article often differentiates the Chinese sex workers from sex workers from other countries. In creating this distinction, they were aggregated as numbers or statistics. An instance can be seen in line “Chinese women were the largest group out of the total 11,832 arrested”, “Chinese women topped the list of foreign prostitutes detained last year” and “influx of Chinese women”.

In terms of role allocation, the sex workers were often activated or placed as the agents for the activities of prostituting or the selling of sex. This is even more prominent in
the activities involving an individual sex worker who is operating on her own. The extract below illustrates the mentioned observation.

Extract 3:


2. The business has been around for a while but thanks to the Internet and social network, it is now easier for undergraduates to prostitute themselves to holidaying foreigners. (Article 2, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.110).

3. The student, who calls herself “Dark Angel”, confessed that she attracted clients by posting photograph of herself in revealing outfits in a website which offered escort services. (Article 2, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.110).

4. “We went for a shopping spree and he treated me to an expensive meal, she said. Then we went to a luxury hotel and I had sex with the man who was about 40 years older than me.” (Article 2, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.110-111).

5. Prostitutes now making house calls to avoid detection. (Article 4, Feb 9, 2012, Appendix 1, p.112).

6. These cheap motels were used as a base by the prostitutes to carry out their activities. (Article 3, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.111).
7. Women from China pay RM10 000 to work as prostitutes. (Article 6, Feb 13, 2012, Appendix 1, p.114).

8. Women from China have been paying an average of RM 10,000 to syndicates to help them get jobs as prostitutes (Article 6, Feb 13, 2012, Appendix 1, p. 114).

9. The women had misused their visa by overstaying and working as prostitutes (Article 5, Feb 11, 2012, Appendix 1, p.113).

10. A 13 year old girl is among six prostitutes arrested here for helping a gang of thieves steal their clients’ wallets and other personal belongings. (Article 16, July 7, 2012, Appendix 1, p.122).

11. The prostitutes would lure their clients to a specially modified room after offering their service. (Article 17, July 8, 2012, Appendix 1, p.123).

From the extract, it can also be seen that the article placed the sex workers as the ones preying on their clients to their sex service. For instance in the phrase; “Dark Angel confessed that she attracted clients by posting photograph of herself in revealing outfits in a website which offered escort services”; the sex worker (Dark Angel) is placed as the doer to the activities of ‘prostituting’, ‘attracting’ and ‘posting’. She is also the beneficiary of all these activities and it is realized through the use of reflexive pronoun ‘herself’. By placing her as the agent and beneficiary of her actions, it contributes in making her actions as purposeful or self-directed rather than induced by other circumstances. Thus, this places
the sex worker as a willing participant in breaking the law and pulls the blame away from the individual who is responsible for the existence of the website in the first place. It is also interesting to highlight the use of the verb ‘confessed’ in the sentence. In this line, the verb ‘confessed’ implies guiltiness hence, the need for her to confess for her wrongdoings.

In another example that reads ‘Prostitutes now making house calls to avoid detection’ is written in active voice with ‘Prostitutes’ activated as the agent for activity of ‘making house call’. By putting sex workers as the agent, it helps in confirming their direct involvement in the reported con jobs. It is also interesting to highlight that, although the media refers to the culprits as ‘the syndicates’, there are no other members of ‘the syndicates’ mentioned anywhere else in the text except for the sex workers. This exclusion encourages the readers to quickly judge sex workers as the active participants and the ones responsible for all negative actions mentioned in the article.

In the line “Women from China pay RM10 000 to work as prostitutes” the women from China are given agentive role for the process of paying but the article did not reveal or exclude the recipient of the money. This exclusion placed the sex workers as the only target of blame for the illegal money exchange. However, later in the text, the article mentioned that the money was paid to syndicates as can be seen in this line; “Due to the high demand for sexual services, women from China have been paying an average of RM10 000 to syndicates to help them get jobs as prostitutes”. The sex workers were also activated in this sentence where they are the agent for the process of paying. It is also interesting to highlight the choice of word that the writer uses in referring to sex work. In this line “…women from China have been paying an average of RM10 000 to syndicates to help
them get jobs as prostitutes.” the writer describes the concept of sex work as a ‘job’ rather than its usual representation as a crime or vice. This assertion does not only suggest sex work as a real work but it also validates sex work as a profession.

However, in line ‘due to the high demand for sexual services’ it can be seen that the agent who demands for the service is left abstract and is never mentioned anywhere else in the text.

4.2.2 Sex Workers Represented as Victims

Apart from their representation as lawbreakers, sex workers were also represented as victims in the selected articles. They were represented as two types of victims; (i) victims of trafficking or (ii) victims of poverty. Similar to their representation as lawbreakers, the sex workers who were reported as victims were impersonalized where their identities were kept anonymous. They were referred to and predicated as ‘victims’, ‘the woman’ and most often through their age. This is illustrated in the Extract below.

Extract 4:

1. The victims, aged between 17 and 23, were rescued after police stormed.. (Article 14, Mar 24, 2012, Appendix 1, p.120)

2. “The local syndicate would take the victims and lock them up in the units before forcing them into prostitution” (Article 14, Mar 24, 2012, Appendix 1, p.120).
3. A **15-year old student** who was detained for prostitution here last week…With a broken family and little money, a **15-year old student** here began prostituting herself with her 22-year old stepbrother as her pimp. *(Article 10, Mar 3, 2012, Appendix 1, p.117).*

4. A 25 year old woman has been **traumatised** after an offer of a high-paying job in a restaurant turned out to be an attempt to **rope** her into prostitution….the woman was **raped** by the man several times while **imprisoned** in a house in Kepong…….. The man also **hit** her when she refused to prostitute herself *(Article 15, Mar 26, 2012, Appendix 1, p.121-122).*

From the extract it can be seen that the sex workers’ age is prominently emphasized in the text. The age that is reported in the articles ranging from an underage of **15 to 23** and this signifies how young the victims are. In terms of role of allocation, the sex workers were always passivated and this is done to achieve article’s objective in highlighting their victimization. As for example, in the headline that reads **“Bogus job offer lures woman into sex slavery”**, it is written in a passive voice where the sex worker ‘woman’ falls in the grammatical category of object and goal of the action ‘**luring**’ and recipient of ‘**sex slavery**’. The same strategy is used in the line that reads; **“Cops rescue Viet women”**. In this example, the sentence is written in active voice with ‘**cops**’ as the doer of the activity of rescuing while the ‘**Viet women**’ falls under the category of object or goal and beneficiary of the rescue. By constructing sentence using passive voice the article emphasized what are being done to these women and as a result highlights their victimization.
In addition to that, the article also employed strong lexical items that reinforced the sex workers victimization and helplessness. Some of the examples are; ‘the victims were lured’, ‘locked up’, ‘imprisoned’, ‘hit’, and ‘forced into prostitution’. However, it is important to highlight the used of word ‘rape’ in the line ‘the woman was raped by the man several times’ as it does not only imply victimization and helplessness but also gives a new identity to the sex workers as victims of sexual assaults and the trafficker as sex offender. By representing the sex workers as rape victims, it reaffirms their vulnerability and reemphasizes that the sex was unwanted and without consent. Similarly, the word ‘rape’ also has further portrayed the traffickers more negatively. They are portrayed not only as criminals, but as dangerous men with uncontrolled sexual drive and sexually abusive.

The sex workers victimization is also emphasized with the presence of their saviour. As for example in the line: "Police acted swiftly to rescue eight Vietnamese women from a human trafficking syndicate within four hours after receiving a tip-off from the embassy” the police were portrayed with admirable qualities using words for instance; ‘swiftly’, ‘rescue’ and ‘within four hours’. These lexical choices suggest the cops’ competency and speed in carrying out their duty. Besides, it can also be seen that in terms of structure. The sentence is written in active voice with the cops as agent and doer of all these positive actions.
4.3 Argumentative Strategies

It is important to investigate the argumentation strategies employed in the article to justify and legitimate its representation of sex workers. The findings of argumentation strategies used in the articles selected for this research are discussed as follows.

4.3.1 Topos

Topos or topoi in plural is a common argumentation strategy used in text and talks through which positive and negative portrayals and attributions are justified and legitimized. According to Wodak (2001) topoi refer to part of the argumentation associated with the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. The findings of topoi used in The Star Online articles in justifying and legitimizing the representation of sex workers are discussed in the following section:

4.3.1 (a) Topos of Numbers

In order to further demonstrate the growing numbers of sex work community, the article used topos of numbers as illustrated in the following phrases; ‘..many of her varsity mates were also doing this’ and ‘a rising number of undergraduates offering their services’ and ‘largely’. These references of numbers are vague and perpetuated without statistical proof. The terms indicate the rising numbers of sex workers and although this claim was made without proof, the terms gave an impression that it was a fact that the numbers of sex workers are growing, hence any actions taken against them are justified.

The topos of numbers was also greatly used in emphasizing the sex workers age. For instance in the following phrases; ‘a 21-year old student’, ‘prostitutes were aged
between 18 and 25’, and ‘a 13-year old girl’. By portraying the sex workers as young and underage, it highlights the sex workers’ innocence, helplessness and immaturity in making decisions. Additionally, the article also used topoi of number in the following phrase; ‘Women from China pay RM10 000 to work as prostitutes.’ By revealing a large amount of money that was said to have been paid by the sex workers to secure a job in the sex sector, it convinces the readers that the sex workers’ involvement in sex work is voluntary and sex work itself is an active and lucrative work sector to the extent that the sex workers are willing to spend a huge amount of money to secure the job.

4.3.1 (b) Topos of Blame

There are also instances where topoi of blame are used to justify the sex workers’ representation as lawbreakers. This can be seen in the phrase where the article quotes a statement of a sociologist, Prof Dr. Fatimah Daud from International Islamic University Malaysia who directly quoted saying; “Many foreigners had left their wives in their homeland to work here and operators of such dens exploit these men who need to have their sexual needs met”. This shows a blatant example of topoi of blame where the operators were blamed for their customers’ decision in buying the sex service they offered. The speaker also used the word ‘exploit’ which signifies the clients’ innocence while at the same time, placed sex workers as the ones taking advantage of their clients’ sexual needs with their sex offering.

4.3.2 Fallacy

Arguments can be reasonable or fallacious. Arguments are labelled as fallacies when 'the freedom of arguing, the obligation to give reasons, the correct reference to the
previous discourse, the obligation to 'matter-of-factness', the correct reference to implicit premises, the respect of shared starting points, the use of plausible arguments and schemes of argumentation, logical validity, the acceptance of the discussion's results and the clarity of expression and correct interpretation are flouted' (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p.110). Fallacies are created in number of ways, including fallacies of relevance, fallacies of presumption and fallacies of ambiguity.

In the selected articles, some of the arguments that the media used to legitimize and justify their representation of sex workers are deemed fallacious as they are inaccurate or weak in reasoning. The fallacious arguments found in the articles were analysed and the analysis is illustrated below.

**4.3.2 (a) Fallacy of Presumption**

It is found in the articles that the media also used fallacy of presumption in their arguments. This is done through hasty generalization where sex workers were hastily categorized into three types based on their reasons in doing sex works. These categories were concluded without any presence of evidence or consideration towards other possible variables. The examples can be seen in the direct quotations lifted from the speaker which the writer personalized as Bukit Aman CID; Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Zinin. The examples are illustrated in the following Extract:

**Extract 5**

1. ‘…currency exchange and socio-economic conditions of the prostitutes' countries of origin were also among the reasons why the women end up in vice
Based on his claim, sex workers engaged in the sex industry due to the poor socio-economic of their originating countries suggesting that all foreign sex workers are from lower social economic backgrounds and poverty as the only reason why they turn into sex sector. The article also creates a splitting line between local sex workers and foreign sex workers based on their reasons of involvement in sex work. The locals were described as either been deceived by their partners or husbands or voluntarily involved in sex work due to lust. Although this claim is merely a generalization and not supported by evidence, the personalization of the speaker as CID Director, helps in giving credence and legitimizing his point of view. In effect, it blinds the readers to accept his claim as a fact rather than a prediction or his personal opinion.

4.3.2 (b) Fallacy of Authority

Apart from hasty generalization, another common fallacy that was found to be used in the media to justify and legitimize their portrayals of sex workers is fallacy of authority. Fallacy of authority refers to claims or arguments that are made by experts without adequate or valid evidence. In this manner, the media usually emphasized titles, positions or credentials of the speakers. Since readers and people in general have a tendency to believe speakers with authority or positions in the society, it is easy for readers to believe
claims and arguments made by them. The examples of fallacy of authority in the articles can be seen in the following Extract.

Extract 6

1. *Mallaca Anti-Vice and Gambling task force chief Datuk* K. Basil said *most girls needed the money to maintain their lavish lifestyle.* (Article 2, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.110-111).

2. *Kuala Lumpur Social Development, Crime Prevention and Anti-Drugs Voluntary Organisation President,* Jeevan S. Ramamurthy said *it was possible that motels with cheap rates gained their basic profits from the oldest form of human trafficking.* (Article 3, Jan 31, 2012, Appendix 1, p.111).

3. *Federal Criminal Investigation Department principal assistant director (anti-vice and gaming) SAC Datuk* Abdul Jalil Hassan said the *police had received numerous complaints on the SMS offers since last year.* (Article 4, Feb 9, 2012, Appendix 1, p.112-113).

4. *OCPD Assistant Commissioner* Ahmad Sofi said *the girl was driven into vice as a means to earn money as she came from a poor and broken family.* (Article 12, Mar 9, 2012, Appendix 1, p.119).

Based on the extracts, it can be seen that the article emphasized the speakers' titles and credentials before asserting their arguments or claims. In one of the phrases in Extract
6, the article includes the speaker's position in his line of work as well as in the society with the title ship 'Datuk' which implies the speaker's authority not only professionally but also in a societal context. This is similar in other examples where the speakers were referred to; based on their positions, titles or credentials as for instance; 'president', 'principal assistant director' and 'Assistant Commissioner'.

For the readers, this information justifies and validates the claims and arguments asserted by the speakers. Information of the speakers' positions creates a sense of trust towards the speakers as they are assumed to be an expert with an 'expert knowledge' in relation to the subject discussed. As a result, even with the absence of evidence to support their claims for instance in Extract 6; sex workers were claimed by the speakers to involve in sex work because they 'needed the money to maintain their lavish lifestyle' or 'to earn money as she came from a poor and broken family'; readers have no reason to doubt or question the accuracy of these claims especially when they know very little if not at all, the living realities of sex work community.

4.3.2 Metaphor

Besides topoi and fallacy, the media also legitimizes and justifies its representation of sex workers through metaphor. According to Van Djik (1995), expressions of racism and prejudices are demonstrated not only through explicit derogatory lexical items but also through metaphors. In this manner, metaphors serve to marginalize or dehumanize people or minorities.
For example, in the article that reports a story of a local undergraduate referred to as ‘Dark Angel’, the headline reads; ‘Undergrads netting tourist for sex’. This headline offers the first glimpse of the article’s view on sex work and sex workers. In the headline, the undergraduates were described negatively using a metaphor that compares sex work to the process of ‘fishing’. This is done so through the choice of the word ‘netting’ which figuratively refers to sex workers ‘fishing their customers’ for their sex service. They were also placed in the agentive role for the process of ‘netting’ which implies that they are the ones throwing the ‘bait’ and the ones using the bait to lure the ‘tourist’ and eventually capturing them. In contrast, the tourists who fall in the category of goal or recipient of the action of netting is seen as victims as they are merely ‘fish’ who are ‘lured’ and ‘caught’ by the sex workers.

In another example, the article chose to refer to the sex workers site as ‘den’. This word does not only suggest the dehumanization of sex workers but also equalizing them to animals. This dehumanization continues in the later phrase when the sex service site is referred to as ‘prostitution factory’ insinuating the sex workers as manufactured objects or products. Other metaphorical expressions that were found in the articles implying a similar objectification are as follows; ‘get an escort via drive thru’, ‘type of escorts’, ‘special dishes’ and ‘attractions’.

4.4 Summary

In sum, as the results suggest, referential and predicational strategies are used by the media in their representation of sex workers in Malaysia as either lawbreakers or victims to prostitution. This representation matches with the existing representation of sex
workers gathered from the previous studies and literature on the same subject. The sex workers were represented as lawbreakers by placing them as the accomplice to the sex syndicates, scammers or an individual who engaged in sex work in pursuit of money. This representation is achieved by activating the sex workers as agents or doers in the processes of selling of sex and pursuing for clients or customers. The indication of their direct involvement with the illegal scammers and sex syndicates in Malaysia also helps in positioning sex workers as criminals and deserving of legal punishment carried upon them. Consequently, this leads readers to believe that actions taken against them, regardless of how discriminative or derogatory they are or were; as reasonable.

The sex workers in Malaysia were also represented as victims in the media. They are either victims of trafficking in which focused on foreign sex workers or victims of poverty. They were narrated as passive participants of the misery befallen upon them and recipient of harmful and negative processes which also helps to accentuate their victimization. However, even as victims, the sex workers were never referred to as specific individuals. Their anonymity is achieved by referring them as a collective group or according to their age, gender and countries of origin.

4.5 Sex Workers Representation from Focus Group Interview

The following section expounds and clarifies referential, predicational as well as argumentative strategies used by the sex workers in their self-representation during one hour focus group interview with the researcher. A detailed analysis of the strategies is illustrated below.
4.5.1 Sex Workers Self-Representation as Victims

Sex workers represent themselves as and positively, their victimization works on their favour as it implies their innocence. The instances are shown in Extract 7 below.

Extract 7

Angah: *Maybe because I was young and pretty. I was young, I was in my 20’s. Maybe I was pretty. He took me to a place in Kuantan. Maybe..maybe because I was pretty. I was younger back then, in my 20s ..maybe I was pretty then. Angah: . I was stupid, I didn’t know anybody because I just came.*

Extract 7 shows the responses given by the sex workers during the interview when they were asked about how they got involved in sex work. When answering the question, they described themselves as ‘young’, ‘pretty’ ‘in my 20’s’, ‘a widow’, ‘stupid’ and ‘didn’t know anybody’, which were the reasons to be taken advantage of. These words have positive effect on their representation because they imply not only their innocence and naivety but also suggest their helplessness in the situations that happened to them. Using their innocence and naivety to reason their engagement in sex work, they are assumed not responsible for their trajectory in sex work instead; the blame is shifted to the people who took advantage of them. These people were described by the sex workers as someone whom they had close relationship with such as; ‘husband’, ‘uncle’, ‘brother’ and a ‘good friend’. The intimacy they shared with the traffickers helps to further highlighting their innocence and naivety as they were victimized and betrayed by people whom they supposedly could trust.
On the other hand, the traffickers were portrayed negatively as irresponsible spouse for instance; ‘a husband who didn’t support (them) financially’, matching with their aggressive and abusive actions for example; ‘kidnapped’ ‘hitting’ and ‘forced’. Apart from lexical items, the same portrayals were also expressed in terms of their sentence construction. In retelling their stories as victims, they constructed themselves as passive participants. Some of the instances can be seen in the following Extract.

Extract 8

1. *His wife’s cousin kidnapped me. He took me to* a place in Kuantan. Maybe because I was pretty then. I was younger back then, in my 20s…maybe I was pretty then. I was already widow at that time. There…so…there…I just can’t...he *forced me. He ‘ate’ me, he hit me.* When I got the money, *he took all of them*. I was *stupid, I didn’t know anybody* because I just came.

2. But after a while, I *became a little smarter and started enjoying the work,* because the money keeps coming in. So, *I was happy working like that. I didn’t care what people say* because I was making money. You can’t leave the job because the money was good. *I was happy with the money.*

In this instance, the man who *kidnapped* and *forced* her into prostitution is always given an active role. He is constructed as the subject or agent of the negative processes such as *kidnapped, forced, hit and he took all of them (the money)* the sex worker; represented with the pronoun ‘me’ remains as an object or recipient of these aggressive actions. These aggressive actions ‘*kidnapped* ‘*forced*’ and ‘*hit*’ also projected the sex workers as
unwilling victims who are helpless in the hands of their traffickers who were portrayed stronger and in control of the sex workers.

However, it is interesting to note that as the stories shifted to the part where she stayed in the job based on her own choice; the presence of this man also disappears and descriptions of her characters also changed. From being a stupid, young, pretty widow victimized and trapped into prostitution, her character shifted to becoming an independent woman who is in control of her life and choices. This is evident when she was quoted to refer to herself of being ‘a little smarter’ and ‘happy’ as compare to how she described herself as a victim. This is also evident in the sentence level where her role is activated, and the use of pronoun ‘I’ which underline her self-pride; is used consistently for instance:

I became a little smarter and started enjoying the work, because the money keeps coming in. So, I was happy working like that. I didn’t care what people say because I was making money. You can’t leave the job because the money was good. I was happy with the money.

The same trend of representation is expressed by the other sex workers as well. As for instance, Ayu when retelling her experience as sex worker, she described sex work as a job that ‘made me happy’ and better than ‘working a permanent job’. Their positive representation is also expressed by depicting themselves as sole breadwinners to their families. The following Extract illustrated this representation.
The image portrayed by the sex workers for themselves placed them as heroes who become sex workers as a mean to take care of their loved ones and escape from the economic difficulties as evident in Extract 8. In contrast, the men or the husbands were depicted negatively as unreliable and irresponsible partner to their family.

However, not all of the sex workers referred their engagement in sex work as a way to support their families. Instead of describing herself as a victim, one of the sex workers who called herself Shalu represented herself and the job positively as her own choice and decision. She described ‘drugs, money and a little bit of enjoyment’ to be the reasons for her choice to be a sex worker. Although this representation implies self-pride and confidence, due to the existing stigmas and the view of sex work in the society, Shalu’s self-representation places her negatively as someone who uses sex work for an easy way out and pleasure.

4.5.2 Sex Workers’ Self-Representation as Lawbreakers

The sex workers also evidently agreed with their criminalization. They described getting arrested as ‘our game’ and rationalized punishment exercised upon them by saying that ‘we deserve the punishment’ as seen in Extract 10.
Extract 10:

Angah: *Getting arrested is a common thing. It’s our game.*

Angah: *We are doing a bad thing. There’s always a punishment for it. Because we are bad people,* one of our legs always in the prison and another one outside.

Ayu: *We are always ready.*

Angah: Sometimes we got arrested because we were scared. When we saw the police, we would naturally run. So, when the police saw us running, they arrested us. But, *this is what we deserve. We are doing a bad thing, we deserve the punishment.*

The word ‘deserve’ does not only implies their agreement with the punishment, stigmas and viewpoints of the society against them and their job, but it also suggests their consent; their consent over the violence and the discrimination against them. The word ‘deserve’ also implies the giving in of their individual ‘power’ to the in-charge authority, it implies unworthiness, and that the job, even though a choice that is made by them consciously, is eventually a ‘wrong’ choice. They also referred themselves as ‘bad people’ who are ‘always ready’ with consequences that come along with their line of work. This suggests that they are aware of the stigma associated with their job and how it contradicts what deemed as good values in the society. In this way, they represent their involvement in the selling of sex as a battle between what is right and wrong and the need to support their families and the very fact that the job provides them easy financial rewards.

The sex workers who were interviewed also portrayed themselves based on their vulnerability towards the authority and illnesses. They admitted that they ‘were scared and
would naturally run when seeing the police’ and ‘afraid of getting sick’ and ‘afraid of the illness.’ The fears and struggles that were revealed in the interview shows that the sex workers are aware of the risks that come along with the job which also means that they are aware of their own vulnerabilities.

The sex workers also were always collectivizing themselves as a homogenous group. They create the sense of collectivity through the expression of pronouns we, our and us. For example, in the following phrases; ‘Sometimes we get a lot, sometimes a few’, ‘most of us are drug addicts’, ‘getting arrested is a common thing. It’s our game’, ‘we are doing a bad thing’ and ‘We are bad people’. The first person pronoun ‘I’ is only used when they were telling their personal experience or stories. This shows that they see themselves as part of a collective whole. This group solidarity can be translated in two ways; it’s either a way of legitimizing what they are doing or to avoid personal blame.

Similar to the media, the sex workers interviewed for this research also separated themselves from the foreign sex workers and the examples can be seen in Extract 11.

Extract 11:
Shalu: … Especially foreigners.
Angah: Or those from the village. They came because they were promised a job here. It turned out to be prostitution.
Shalu: A lot of them promised high paying jobs. We think of only one thing, to help our family. Some others trust their boyfriend, husband when in fact these men are fox in sheep clothing!
Shalu: True. Even thousand. But they entertain people of high status.

Angah: They also dressed differently from us.

Shalu: They usually in….what do we call….night life….night clubs..

The distinction can be seen in the following phrases when they refer to the foreign sex workers as ‘foreigners’ and consistently mentioning them using expressions of ‘they were promised a job here’, ‘same others trust their boyfriend, husband’. This differentiation is also extended to sex workers that they referred to as ‘high class’ people. These sex workers were referred by them as group of those who entertain people of high status, they dressed differently and working in night clubs.

It is also interesting to highlight the way the sex workers described the foreign sex workers. Foreign sex workers were described by the sex workers as victims which is similar to the media portrayals. For instance, when asked about bogus jobs which lead to sex work, Shalu quickly replies “especially foreigners”. Her statement was affirmed by Angah who described the foreign sex workers as victims of trafficking. This can be seen in this extract:

‘...those from the village. They came because they were promised a job here. It turned out to be prostitution’

The sample also shows a clear example of ‘us’ and ‘them’ where the foreign sex workers were referred to using pronoun such as ‘those’ and ‘them’. However, this differentiation foreign was blurred or removed when Shalu was quoted using ‘we’ which
implied that she included herself in the event in "We think of only one thing, to help our family".

4.6 Argumentative Strategies

4.5.1 Topos of Responsibility

Topos of responsibility is circulated by the sex workers from time to time to justify their engagement in sex work. Based on the interview, there seems to be recurrent themes that are used by the sex workers to justify their trajectory in sex work and the reasons for staying in the job. Their plight of having irresponsible husbands who didn’t support them financially or having a family and children to support and take care of were constantly used to reason their circumstances. For example, Angah implies the responsibility that she has to carry due to her irresponsible husband; 'My husband didn't work at all, depending on me solely.' Shalu also used the same argument but expand her argument to include the whole sex workers community with the pronoun 'We' when she said; "We think of only one thing, to help our family"

4.5.2 Topos of Finance

The sex workers also used the topos of finance or financial reward gained from sex work for their decision to stay in the sector. Money is described as an appealing factor due to firstly, it’s rewarding and secondly it is easy to get. To illustrate this point, a few examples have been selected below:
Extract 12

1. I didn’t care about what people say because I was making money. You can’t leave the job because the money is good.

2. Working like that I can see money coming in every day… working a permanent job, you only get your pay at the end of the month.

3. Sometimes I can earn a thousand in a day…. It’s a lot isn’t it? Imagine earning one thousand a day, in 30 days you can get 30 thousands!

4. There’s nothing to think about when you get a lot of money.

3) Topos of Fear

Apart from what mentioned above, there are also evidences of topos of fear used by the sex workers when justifying their decision to do sex work. This fear comes in many forms. Katherine for example stays in the job due to her uncle whom she feared would hit her if she leaves; ‘I couldn’t run because he would hit me’. Angah described her fear for her safety if she is not able to pay the money she borrowed from a loan shark; ‘if you don’t pay the loan shark, you are a dead meat. The loan shark will hit you. They hit you with helmet’. Meanwhile, Ayu and Habibah expressed their fear of sexual related sickness and illnesses; ‘Not only afraid of getting arrested, but afraid of getting sick’, ‘I’m most afraid of the illness. That’s what I’m mostly afraid of’. 
4.7 Summary

In summary, the sex workers who were interviewed for the purpose of this research also represented themselves as victims. However, their victimization works in their favor as it accentuates their innocence and naivety. Describing themselves as young, pretty and stupid who were manipulated and tricked into prostitution by their own family members; it further highlights them in a positive manner. The victimization of sex workers in the media was also constructed with the presence of a savior who was portrayed with positive attributes and lifted up as heroes who helped the helpless, victimized sex workers. In contrast, in the interview with the sex workers they represent themselves as the heroes who managed to take themselves and their entire families out of misery, irresponsible partners or husbands and their economic difficulties. They made a point that they are not passive participants in their plights rather they are the active agents who took initiative to escape from their unfortunate circumstances and made their own choices to stay in the job. This representation is achieved through their role as active participants as well as positive lexical items they choose to represent themselves.

4.8 The Parallels and Contrasts between Self and Other Representations of Sex Workers

1. Victims

One of the similarities between media representation of sex workers and sex workers self-representation is; both are depicted and depicted themselves as victims. The media narrated the sex workers victimization in their writing using subjects of trafficking and poverty. These subjects were used to reason the sex workers
trajectory in sex work. These subjects help to reinforce the image of sex workers as innocent and unwilling participants.

The media also uses topoi of age to further accentuate the sex workers victimization. This strategy is used consistently in all articles under research and the sex workers were labelled as underage teenagers to young adults in their early 20’s. This argument implies the sex workers’ immaturity. Since they are young and immature, they are assumed to be ignorant and easily manipulated.

Similarly, the sex workers who were interviewed for the purpose of this research also represented themselves as victims. However, their victimization works in their favour as it emphasizes their innocence and naivety. They were evident to have described themselves as young, pretty and stupid which made them the targets of manipulation. This is even so manifolds when they described that they were tricked into prostitution by their own family members which further highlights their victimization in a positive manner. This is because, their victimization is represented through their vulnerability which translates to their innocence.

2. Homogenous Group

As victims, the sex workers were never referred to as specific individuals by the media. Their anonymity is achieved by referring them as a collective group or according to their age, gender and countries of origin. This anonymity can be interpreted in two ways, firstly it prevents public shaming the sex workers involved which signals sex work as a dishonourable job, but at the same time, the anonymity
keeps the sex workers invisible. The invisibility of the sex workers personal identities results in the invisibility of their voices too. In addition to that, the lack of personalization of the sex workers has further distant them from receiving sympathy and understanding from the readers.

Similarly, the sex workers who were interviewed for this research also referred themselves as homogeneous group. During the interview, although the questions were directed at their personal experiences and opinions, the sex workers tend to use plurality which is evident by the use of pronouns we, our and us. For example, in the following example; ‘Sometimes we get a lot, sometimes a few’, ‘most of us are drug addicts’, ‘getting arrested is a common thing, It’s our game’, ‘we are doing a bad thing’ and ‘We are bad people’. The use of first person pronoun ‘I’ was used not as frequently as plural pronouns and was used only when they were telling their personal stories. This can be understood in two ways. The tendency of sex workers to collectivize themselves can be a way to indicate solidarity or at the same time to pull away the blame on themselves.

3. Lawbreakers

Another similarity in the representation of sex workers by the media and by themselves is; both depicted sex workers or themselves as lawbreakers. The sex workers were negatively portrayed as either the accomplice to sex syndicates or as an individual working and predating for clients on her own.

As accomplices to the sex syndicates or as individuals offering sex service independently; the sex workers were represented as lawbreakers through their role
as active participants of the selling of sex and predating for clients. They were given the agentive role or the doers’ role which place to be directly involved with the syndicates. They were also in some examples written by the media as beneficiaries of the sex service they offered. This was formed by the writer through the use of reflexive pronouns. As agents and beneficiaries of the service, the writer creates an idea that the sex workers trajectory to sex work as purposeful or self-directed rather than induced by other possibilities. Apart from this, the depiction of sex workers as lawbreakers is justified by the media also through topoi of blame. Topos of blame is used to criminalize the sex workers; for instance, the sex workers were blamed for offering their service of sex to men who are victimized due to their inevitable sexual needs.

Comparably, the sex workers in the focus group interview also referred themselves as lawbreakers. However, instead of linking themselves to the sex syndicates as presented by the media, their representation as lawbreakers stems from their sense of guilt. Their involvement in sex service is represented as a battle between what the society’s view of sex work and their need to support their families and the financial reward that comes with the job.

4. Foreign versus Local Sex Workers

Another similarity that is found between sex workers self-representation and the media’s representation of sex workers is; the differentiation made between foreign sex workers and local sex workers. The media described foreign sex workers as people originating from poor socio-economic countries suggesting that
all foreign sex workers are from lower social economic backgrounds. This is contrary to how sex workers described the foreign sex workers. Although they separate themselves from the foreign sex workers, they also revealed that there are groups of foreign sex workers who are ‘high class’ giving service to people from high status.

5. Saviours and Heroes

The media also depicted sex workers as passive participants who is traumatically silenced and sexually exploited by their traffickers. They were again described as unwilling participants who are in need of help. Hence, in some of the articles, there is a trend of including saviours of the sex workers. The saviours are represented by police officers for instance in:

“The victims aged between 17 and 23 were rescued after the police stormed into the two flat units…”

The saviour was portrayed with positive attributes and lifted up as heroes who helped the helpless, victimized sex workers.

In contrast to media representation that constructed the presence of saviour or heroes whom are responsible in bringing the sex workers out from their unfortunate situation, the interview with the sex workers revealed that the sex workers see themselves as their own heroes. They portrayed themselves as the sole breadwinners and responsible mothers and children to their families. They also
made a point that they managed to take themselves and their entire families out of misery and economic difficulties despite having irresponsible partners or husbands. This reveals their confidence in the job which also at the same time, changes their representation from victims to independent, self-reliant individuals.

Besides this, unlike media representation, sex workers also do not represent themselves as passive participants of their plights. Rather, they made a point that they are the active agents who took initiative to escape from their unfortunate circumstances and proudly made their own choices to stay in the job. This representation is achieved through their role as active participants as well as positive lexical items they choose to represent themselves. Indirectly, this also means that they represent themselves equal with any other person who is pursuing a job to make a living. Through this, they established self-respect upon themselves through the descriptions of their roles as mothers to their children and a child to their parents.

4.9 Conclusion

From the analysis, it can be seen that there are parallels and contrasts between self-representation and others’ representation of sex workers. The strategies that were used in both representations were also different and similar in one way and another. The analysis gives a significant insight and understanding about sex workers as perceived in the society and sex workers as they perceived themselves. However, it’s undeniable that the media representation has a profound impact on sex workers lives and their position in the society. The next chapter
summarizes and concludes this research as well as provides recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Overview

This research sought to answer how the media in Malaysia represents sex workers in comparison with the workers’ own self-representation. In finding the answer, the study first explored the referential and predicative strategies applied by The Star Online in its representation of sex workers and the strategies that the sex workers employed in their self-representation. The research also investigates the use of the argumentative strategies used to justify and legitimize both representations. Upon uncovering these, the research seeks to examine the parallels and contrasts between both representations which in return can provide a better understanding of how sex workers in Malaysia are viewed and view themselves.

This chapter illustrates a summary of the findings, the parallels and contrasts of the media and self-representation of sex workers, the implications and recommendations for further studies, as well as a conclusion of this research.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

Sex work is illegal in Malaysia and by default this makes sex workers as transgressors of law. As a community that is criminalized by the country’s law, sex workers face discrimination, prejudices and stigmas in their line of work. This study seeks to examine certain discursive strategies used in representing sex workers and in the sex workers self-representation. Based on the results, there are clear similarities between both representations as much as there are distinct differences as well. In brief, it can be summed
that sex workers were represented as lawbreakers and victims by the media. However, sex workers view themselves more than these two binaries; they see themselves as victims, heroes, breadwinners to the family, independent but also as criminals.

The details of the research findings are illustrated in the following section.

5.1.1 How do sex workers represented in The Star Online and how do sex workers represent themselves? What are the parallels and contrasts between these two representations?

As the results suggest, referential and predicational strategies are used by the media in their representation of sex workers in Malaysia as either lawbreakers or victims to prostitution. This representation matches with the results gained from the previous studies and literature on the same subject matter. The sex workers were represented as lawbreakers by placing them as the accomplice to the sex syndicates, scammers or an individual who engaged in sex work in pursuit of money. This is achieved by activating them as agents or doers in the processes of the selling of sex and pursuing for clients or customers. Their direct involvement with the illegal scammers and sex syndicates in Malaysia positioned these sex workers as criminals and deserving of legal punishment. In return, this will lead readers to believe that actions taken against them, regardless of how discriminative or derogatory they are or were; as reasonable.

The sex workers in Malaysia were also represented as victims in the media. They are either victims of trafficking in which focused on foreign sex workers or victims of poverty. They were narrated as passive participants of the misery befallen upon them and recipient of harmful and negative processes which also helps to accentuate their
victimization. However, even as victims, the sex workers were never referred to as specific individuals. Their anonymity is achieved by referring them as a collective group or according to their age, gender and countries of origin. This anonymity can be interpreted in two ways, firstly it prevents public shaming the sex workers involved, but at the same time, it keeps the sex workers invisible. The invisibility of the sex workers personal identities bring about the invisibility of their voices too. In addition to that, the lacks of personalization on the side of the sex workers will also distant them from receiving sympathy or most of all understanding from the readers.

Similarly, the sex workers who were interviewed for the purpose of this research also represented themselves as victims. However, their victimization works in their favour as it accentuates their innocence and naivety. Describing themselves as young, pretty and stupid who were manipulated and tricked into prostitution by their own family members; it further highlights them in a positive manner. The victimization of sex workers in in the media was also constructed with the presence of a savior who was portrayed with positive attributes and lifted up as heroes who helped the helpless, victimized sex workers. In contrast, in the interview with the sex workers they represent themselves as the heroes who managed to take themselves and their entire families out of misery, irresponsible partners or husbands and their economic difficulties. They made a point that they are not passive participants in their plights rather they are the active agents who took initiative to escape from their unfortunate circumstances and made their own choices to stay in the job. This representation is achieved through their role as active participants as well as positive lexical items they choose to represent themselves.
5.1.2 What are the argumentative strategies used in the media and by the sex workers to justify and legitimize their representation?

In terms of argumentative strategies, the findings revealed that the media used topos of numbers, topos of blame, fallacy and metaphor in legitimatizing their representation of sex workers in the article. Topos of number was used to emphasize the victimization of the sex workers as well as to imply the sex workers immaturity. The sex workers were described as underage or between 13 to 25 years old whom were too young and ignorant that they are easily manipulated or to make wise decision for themselves, hence chose to be engaged in sex work. The media also used topoi of blame to criminalize the sex workers. In this manner, the sex workers were blamed for offering the service of sex to men who by nature have sexual needs. Apart from these topoi, the media was also found to use fallacy in their arguments to justify and legitimize their representation of sex workers. The sex workers were generalized as a group of people coming from the lower social background and their reasons for their involvement in sex work were simplified and categorized based on whether they are locals or foreigners.

This is of total opposite to the arguments used by the sex workers. In justifying their engagement in sex work, the sex workers used topos of responsibility, finance and fear. Their responsibility towards their family and children was used to justify their decision to remain in the sector. This goes hand in hand with topos of finance. They described the financial rewards gained from sex work as a push factor for their choices. Apart from these, the sex workers also responded that their fear towards people who tricked them into the sector as the reason to remain in the job. Besides this, one of the sex workers also admitted
that her fear towards a loan shark she borrowed money was the reason for her decision to stay in the sector.

Another fallacy that is used by the media to rationalize their representation is through fallacy of authority. Instead of providing solid evidences or proofs for the claims that were made against or about sex workers involved in their news articles, the writers used quotes or claims from ‘assumed authority’ or ‘experts’ of the subject. The validation of the speakers’ authority or expertise is realized by emphasizing the speakers’ positions, titles and credentials. However, justifying and legitimizing claims or arguments through ‘assumed authority’ was also observed in the sex workers’ self-representation. This was done through the use of ‘story telling’ where the sex workers used their ‘personal experience or stories of their co-workers or people in the job’ to validate their authority on the subject discussed.

5.1.3 What do these representations reveal about how sex workers in Malaysia are viewed?

The research found that there are both similarities but also differences in the representation of sex workers by the media and by themselves. Similarly, in both representations sex workers were portrayed as victims. The media used the sex workers poverty and innocence to justify their victimization. They were depicted as women from lower social backgrounds who resort to engage in sex work for the sector offers a great deal of financial rewards. Apart from poverty, the media also repeatedly used the sex workers young age to highlight their victimization. Represented as women in their 20’s and under-aged girls as young as 13 years old, the sex workers were portrayed to be victimized and
manipulated by the sex syndicates in the country. This also insinuates the sex workers’ innocence and lack of maturity. Age is also used to legitimize the sex workers representation as the lawbreakers.

Contrary to being a victim to the sex syndicates, the media represented sex workers as the accomplice to the syndicates hence making them not only as active participant in the trading of sex but their direct involvement also implies their involvement as voluntarily. However, the media tends to mention the sex workers’ age in both representations as victims and as lawbreakers. In spite of this, as the lawbreakers, their age does not imply their innocence but it rather suggests their unreliability, ignorance and immature mentality.

Similarly, some of the sex workers who were interviewed for this research represented themselves as victims. In opposed to poverty or tricked by the sex syndicates, the sex workers revealed that they were tricked by their own family members and instead of poverty, they engaged in sex workers due to their irresponsible spouses. However, the most obvious difference between the media and sex workers self-representation is, the sex workers do not represent themselves as a silent victims. Even though they don’t reject the victims’ image, which was depicted in their initial involvement in the job; forced and tricked by their own family members, but thereafter, they described their trajectory into the job as their own choice. One of the sex workers, Shalu even described the job as her source of enjoyment as it provides her with ‘sex, drugs and money’.

Although the researcher sees sex workers community as a heterogeneous group, the research surprisingly revealed that in both representations; by the media and by the sex
workers themselves, the community is represented and represented themselves as a collective group. Both representations also made clear distinctions between the local sex workers and foreign sex workers. However, unlike the media which portrayed foreign sex workers as somewhat of lower status, the sex workers perceived the foreign sex workers as hard earners who engaged in sex work to help their family.

It is also important to highlight that this research does not seek to determine which representations are truer than another nor does it seek to offer ‘the truth’. However, this research does not discount the fact that representation from the people in the sector itself helps in providing alternative insight from what is known or imparted to the public.

5.2 Implications of the Study

Firstly, this study adds to the research on other and self-representation of people in a marginalized group. Sex workers are group of people whose voices are silent and dismissed by and in the mainstream media and this study gave the sex workers who participated in the research, the opportunity to be heard and to examine how they see and present themselves. At the same time, this knowledge also contributes to the understanding of how representation of ‘others’ and ‘self’ complement or differ from each other.

Secondly, this research also proves the effectiveness of Discourse-Historical Approach of CDA in revealing the choices and tools of discursive strategies and linguistic features used both by the media and the sex workers in their representation. In this manner, this study has not only provided a better insight of sex workers and their living realities, but it displayed the appropriate theoretical framework for further research on representation.
5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This research does not aim to be an exhaustive research on sex workers or sex work. It limits its study solely at revealing and comparing two different representations of sex workers from; self and other; which were rarely acknowledged or studied against each other. Hence, there are many more issues relating to sex workers that can be explored for further research. To start, a further research could be done in studying the representation of sex workers from other types or forms of media, for instance their representation in fictional works such as movies, plays or novels.

Apart from this, there is also a need to expand the variety of participants and demographics to test how the representation of ‘self and other’ of sex workers from other parts of the world or sex workers from other domains or gender. Further research can address how other variables such as gender, types of sex workers, geographical and social settings contribute in how sex workers represent themselves.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

Sex work and sex workers are not easily discussed topics in Malaysia due to its criminalization and the make-up of Malaysian society that still finds the subject of sex as taboo. Although news stories on sex workers received considerable amount of coverage in the media, discussions on policy, struggles and challenges that affecting them have not been discussed or debated by the people in authority. The stereotypes and narrow representation of sex workers that are dictated, reinforced and promoted by the media does not only contribute in retaining the stigmas surrounding sex workers but it also divert the
attention from the real issues that deserve the public’s and policy makers’ attention such as safety, health issues and violence in the sector.
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APPENDIX 1

News Articles from The Star Online

January

ARTICLE 1

Monday January 30, 2012

Foreign workers get satis-factory sex service

A FACTORY building in a small and medium enterprise (SME) industrial area in Meru, near Klang, has become a prostitution den with girls in their teens being used to lure foreign workers in the area.

Dubbed the “prostitution factory” by residents, the den is said to have been in operation for three years, reported Kosmo! Ahad.

The operators, who use closed-circuit TV cameras to scan visitors, have barred local men from entering. The clients are largely from Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and Myanmar, and the women providing them the sexual service are said to be Indonesians.

A Nepalese worker interviewed by the paper said he had been there three times and to his knowledge the place had never been raided by any enforcement authority.

Jay, 25, said he came to know about the place from a friend, adding that customers can only enter the building through the back door and they must give their name and nationality to a guard there.

“We then choose a girl of our liking and the guard, who is Nepalese, would fix a price for her services,” he said, adding the rate depended on the age of the girl and ranges from RM50 to RM100 per session.
Responding to the issue, International Islamic University sociologist Prof Dr Fatimah Daud said many foreigners had left their wives in their homeland to work here and operators of such dens exploit these men who need to have their sexual needs met.

**ARTICLE 2**

Tuesday January 31, 2012

**Undergrads netting foreign tourists for sex**

MALACCA: The business has been around for a while but thanks to the Internet and social network, it is now easier for undergraduates to prostitute themselves to holidaying foreigners.

A 21-year-old student from Ipoh is one such undergraduate. The student, who calls herself “Dark Angel”, confessed that she attracted clients by posting photographs of herself in revealing outfits in a website which offered escort services.

She said she found out about the site when she typed “part-time work for students in Malacca”.

Dark Angel decided to sign up to the site and she was connected to foreigners seeking such holidays in Malaysia.

“I have been doing this for a month to earn additional income and settle my debts,” she said, adding that many of her varsity mates were also doing this.

Dark Angel revealed to *The Star* her *modus operandi* in meeting her clients.

She would leave her apartment in Malim here and take a taxi to a hotel in Melaka Raya to “escort” a rich foreigner.

“Last month, I met a Middle-Eastern looking man in Melaka Raya. We went for a shopping spree and he treated me to an expensive meal,” she said.
“Then we went to a luxury hotel and I had sex with the man who was about 40 years older than me.”

Malacca Anti-Vice and Gambling task force chief Datuk K. Basil said most of the girls needed the money to maintain their lavish lifestyles.

The fact that the whole process is available online has resulted in a rising number of undergraduates offering their services, he said, adding that the clients were mostly rich, middle-aged Middle Eastern men.

**ARTICLE 3**

Published: Tuesday January 31, 2012 MYT 4:11:00 PM

**Cheap motels add to growth of prostitution, say police**

KUALA LUMPUR: The mushrooming of cheap motels offering low hourly rates is believed to play a major part in the growth of prostitution in the country.

Bukit Aman CID director Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Zinin said these cheap motels were used as a base by the prostitutes to carry out their activities.

"We don't discount the possibility that the existence of these motels, especially those which offer cheap packages, support such activities and encourage this vice among the singles. "Furthermore, there are also restaurants which offer prostitutes as an 'attraction' in order to reap higher profits,” he told Bernama.

Based on the latest Anti-Vice, Gaming and Secret Societies Division (D7) statistics, 11,832 foreign women were detained in 2011 compared to 11,919 in 2010. In addition, 1,801 local women were also detained for prostitution last year.
Kuala Lumpur Social Development, Crime Prevention and Anti-Drugs Voluntary Organisation (Pencegah) president Jeevan S. Ramamurthy said it was possible that motels with cheap rates gained their basic profits from the oldest form of human trafficking in the world.

"There are motel owners involved in prostitution and most of them focus on foreign women as they are paid much less and the owners make two to three times more than if they were to use local women," he said.

He said the difference in currency exchange and socio-economic conditions of the prostitutes' countries of origin were also among the reasons why the women end up in vice here.

On the involvement of local women, he said there were those who did not choose to do so but were cheated into it by their partners.

"Then there are those who are forced into it by their husbands and even some who are trapped by their own lust," he added.

February

ARTICLE 4

Published: Thursday February 9, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Prostitutes now making house calls to avoid detection

SEX syndicates have resorted to delivering prostitutes right at the doorsteps of their customers in the Klang Valley to avoid police detection, Sin Chew Daily reported.

The new move was said to have received good response as the clients need not have to worry about being detained by the police.
The syndicates would usually send out attractive offers such as speedy delivery and not having to pay in advance via SMS to their clients, it reported.

According to the SMS sent out by the syndicates, the prostitutes were aged between 18 and 25 from various countries including China, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The newspaper claimed that local college students charged the highest with their rates going for RM250 per hour or RM500 for three hours.

A journalist contacted the phone number provided by the SMS. He was told that he would be given several prostitutes to choose from and he had to pay a RM20 transportation fee.

Federal Criminal Investigation Department principal assistant director (anti-vice and gaming) SAC Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan said the police had received numerous complaints on the SMS offers since last year.

“Most of the SMS were elaborate con jobs to entice victims to part with their money.

“In some of the cases, no one turned up after the customers banked in the money through a bank account,” he added.

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**ARTICLE 5**

Published: Saturday February 11, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Sex dished out to restaurant customers**

A CHINESE restaurant at a nursery in Jenjarom, Selangor, offered special “dishes” in the form of sexual services to its “hungry” customers, reported Kosmo!

When police raided the restaurant, they found several customers having sex with women from China in a partitioned section of the premise.

It reported that customers paid from RM100 to RM200 per session.
“The women had misused their visas by overstaying and working as prostitutes in the restaurant. We believe the cashier, a Malaysian in her 20s, is the owner of the restaurant,” said DSP Izwan Abd Karim.

The 13 prostitutes aged from 21 to 50 are being detained at the Sg Jarom police station.

**ARTICLE 6**

Monday February 13, 2012

**Women from China pay RM10,000 to work as prostitutes**

DUE to the high demand for sexual services, women from China have been paying an average of RM10,000 to syndicates to help them get jobs as prostitutes, reported *Kosmo!* *Ahad*.

According to sources, the fee was to pay for flight costs, food and lodging during their stay in Malaysia.

As soon as the women arrive in the country, they will be received by agents from the syndicate, who will look into all necessities including finding customers for the women.

Sources also said there were women who have settled their debt with the syndicate and returned to China first before coming back to Malaysia by themselves.

Police statistics have revealed that Chinese women were the largest group of illegal foreigners out of the total 11,832 arrested over the past year, with 5,922 being detained.

**ARTICLE 7**

Published: Tuesday February 14, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Cheap flights bringing in Chinese prostitutes**
LOW air fares and direct flights from 14 destinations in China are among the contributing factors for the influx of Chinese women into the country, reported China Press.

The daily quoted a Bukit Aman anti-vice, gaming and secret societies spokesman as saying that these women who had valid travel documents and student visas, blended in Chinese-populated areas with ease as the food, living environment, language and dialects were similar to those in China.

“Besides locals, foreigners also prefer them due to lower charges. Each sex session costs between RM150 and RM200,” reported the daily.

ARTICLE 8
Published: Monday February 20, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Visa restrictions help curb prostitution involving foreign students

KUALA LUMPUR: The decision to stop granting visas on arrival and social visit passes to foreign students could curtail crimes, including prostitution involving foreigners claiming to be students of private institutions of higher learning in the country.

Bukit Aman anti-vice, gaming and secret societies (D7) principal assistant director Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan said the police had discussed the matter with the Immigration Department before making the recommendation to the Higher Education Ministry to stop issuing such visas and visit passes to foreign students to check the abuse.

Most of the students arrested for alleged involvement in criminal activities were pursuing short courses, such as language skills, at private colleges not under the ministry's supervision, he told Bernama on Monday.

He was commenting on the Higher Education Ministry's decision to stop issuing visas on arrival and social visit passes to foreign students to check the abuse.
Its minister, Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said visas would only be issued to foreign students after they received an offer from public or private institutions of higher learning under the ministry's supervision.

In JITRA, Home Ministry deputy secretary-general (registration and immigration) Datuk Alwi Ibrahim said the decision would deter foreigners from taking advantage of visas on arrival and social visit passes to indulge in crimes and help attract genuine foreign students. This will also help deter foreign students from abusing their visas, he told reporters after presenting the Prisons Department's excellent service awards to 182 prison officers and staff from the North Zone II here on Monday.

According to Bukit Aman, Chinese women topped the list of foreign prostitutes detained last year at 5,922 followed by Vietnamese (2,169), Thais (1,492), Indonesians (1,208), Filipino women (750), Myanmar (112), Indians (67), Cambodians (36), Bangladeshis (34), Lao nationals (14), Uzbekistanis (12), Nigerians (8), Uganda (four), Austrian (one) and Taiwanese (one).

**ARTICLE 9**

Published: Monday February 20, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Cops nab 10 in brothel raid**

PORT KLANG: A brothel here was shut down after a team from the district’s anti-vice, gambling and secret societies division raided a shoplot here.

Police, in their ongoing Ops Noda, nabbed nine Indonesian and an Indian women during the surprise raid on Saturday.

The women tried to escape through a secret passage from the first floor shoplot in Lorong Cunggah but failed.
A Nepalese and an Indian, who were said to be patrons at the brothel, were also detained. Checks by the police showed that the shop-lot had several small rooms. It is believed the brothel charges RM10 for the use of the rooms while the prostitutes charged RM40 for a session.

South Klang OCPD ACP Mohamad Mat Yusop confirmed the raid and the arrests of the women

March

**ARTICLE 10**

Published: Saturday March 3, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Poverty drives 15-year-old to prostitution**

KOTA KINABALU: With a broken family and little money, a 15-year-old student here began prostituting herself with her 22-year-old stepbrother as her pimp. The local girl, who had been arrested in anti-vice raids twice last year, was recently detained by police while waiting for customers in a cheap hotel in the city's downtown area.

Deputy city police chief Supt M. Chandra said the girl faced a tough life after her parents divorced, forcing her to turn to prostitution. Meanwhile, a 12-year-old stateless boy was found selling drugs whenever he was not peddling contraband cigarettes with his stepmother.

Chandra said police caught the boy with 59 plastic straws containing about five grammes of syabu worth RM1,500 on Thursday.

In yet another juvenile delinquent case, two 17-year-old students were arrested for stealing at least three motorbikes, including one belonging to a man attending Friday prayers at the State Mosque here.
The boys were riding a motorcycle bearing a fake number plate when police stopped them on Feb 23, he said.

Chandra added that the suspects had hidden two other stolen motorcycles in a bush near the State Archives building.

**ARTICLE 11**

Published: Tuesday March 6, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Woman asks for ‘quickie’ – and gets handcuffed**

GEORGE TOWN: A Chinese national, said to be a prostitute, mistook a police officer for a client during a raid at an apartment in Bukit Dumbar here and asked him to “do it quick”.

It is learnt that the woman, in her 20s, told the police officer to make it a “quickie” when he entered her unit. The woman told him she had many potential customers waiting. The police officer quickly handcuffed her.

The woman was among six Chinese nationals nabbed for alleged involvement in vice activities during a raid which started at about 12.15am yesterday.

Each of them were in their respective units when the police came knocking.

Initial investigation showed that the women, aged between 23 and 29, were from Hubei, Shanxi and Guangzhou in China.

A man, said to be a customer, was also nabbed in the raid. He was released after having his statement recorded.

Police also seized a large number of condoms, mouthwash, lubricants and towels from the units.
ARTICLE 12
Published: Friday March 9, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Girl pimped by mum and stepbrother
KOTA KINABALU: A 15-year-old student who was detained for prostitution here last week was first pimped by her mother.

Last week’s arrest was the third time the girl was found to have prostituted herself. Her 22-year-old stepbrother was also caught for pimping her.

It turned out that the mother, in her 40s, was arrested for approaching customers to have sex with her daughter last year.

The woman was charged under Section 372 of the Penal Code for exploiting a person for purposes of prostitution and is still awaiting trial.

Kota Kinabalu OCPD Asst Comm Ahmad Sofi Zakaria said the girl had been placed under the care of the Welfare Department.

ACP Ahmad Sofi said the girl was driven into vice as a means to earn money as she came from a poor and broken family.

ARTICLE 13
Published: Sunday March 18, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Prostitutes engineer robbery
KOTA KINABALU: Two engineers who sought the services of prostitutes got more than what they bargained for when they lost their handphones and cash at Kampung Air here.

Each of them paid RM70 to the prostitutes for “services” on Tuesday evening.

As they went about their “business”, one of the women's accomplices used a secret door leading to both rooms to sneak in and search the men's trouser pockets.
Shortly after that, a man knocked on the door of both rooms, saying that the police were about to raid the place.

The men realised they were theft victims after hastily putting on their trousers.

Deputy city police chief Supt M. Chandra said the men lodged a police report at the city police headquarters.

Police managed to detain five people, including two women aged 19 and 21 who were believed to be the prostitutes.

**ARTICLE 14**

Published: Saturday March 24, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Cops rescue Viet women**

KUALA LUMPUR: Police acted swiftly to rescue eight Vietnamese women from a human trafficking syndicate within four hours after receiving a tip-off from the embassy.

The victims, aged between 17 and 23, were rescued after police stormed into two flat units in Taman Sunway, Batu Caves, at about 1am yesterday.

Three locals and a Vietnamese woman were detained.

Bukit Aman anti-vice, gambling and secret societies division head Senior Asst Comm Datuk Jalil Hassan said the victims were lured by syndicate members in Vietnam with offers of jobs as waitresses with a lucrative salary.

He said the syndicates would pick up the tab for their flight tickets and other expenses before handing them over to the Malaysian syndicate.

“The local syndicate would take the victims and lock them up in the units before forcing them into prostitution,” he said after the closing ceremony of the Interpol Capacity Building
Programme on the Prevention of Migrant Smuggling and Illegal Migration in South-East Asia here.

SAC Jalil said the victims would be provided three options to be a prostitute, guest relations officer or get married to local men.

“A few were willing to get married to locals because they did not want to get involved in prostitution. The syndicate members would lie to the locals that the victim was here to find a life partner and would introduce them,” he said, adding that the local would have to cough out between RM18,000 and RM20,000 for the marriage.

SAC Jalil said investigations showed the syndicate had been in the midst of arranging for two 17-year-olds to get married to locals.

He said the women would have to pay a bondage fee of US$3,000 (RM9,200) to free themselves from the syndicate.

The suspects have been remanded for investigations while the victims would be sent to a shelter home after a medical check-up.

**ARTICLE 15**

Published: Monday March 26, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Bogus job offer lures woman into sex slavery**

A 25-YEAR-OLD woman has been traumatised after an offer of a high-paying job in a restaurant turned out to be an attempt to rope her into prostitution, reported China Press.

The woman, who was locked up for seven months by the man who offered her the job, managed to escape on Monday. She subsequently lodged a police report.

According to the daily, the woman was raped by the man several times while imprisoned in a house in Kepong.
The man also hit her when she refused to prostitute herself.

It was believed that at least eight women were locked up by the man and forced to become prostitutes.

**ARTICLE 16**

Published: Saturday July 7, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

**Young prostitutes front for gang of thieves in KK**

KOTA KINABALU: A 13-year-old girl is among six prostitutes arrested here for helping a gang of thieves steal their clients' wallets and other personal belongings.

City police deputy chief Supt M Chandra said the prostitutes, the oldest of whom is only 20-year-old, were arrested while waiting for customers along the back alleys of Kampung Air near the city's downtown area.

Chandra said the prostitutes cum thieves, known locally as ting-ting, would lure their clients to a specially modified room after offering their services for between RM30 and RM50.

He said the modus operandi of the prostitutes was to have their accomplices hide in a secret compartment in the room, who would steal the clients' wallets and valuables while the men were “busy”.

“Suddenly, the girl would then pretend to get a call warning that police were coming to raid the place, causing the client to abruptly leave the room without realising that he had been robbed,” he added.

The suspects had been put under remand, said Chandra, adding that the case was being investigated under Section 380 of the Penal Code for theft.
ARTICLE 17

Published: Sunday July 8, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

13-year-old among prostitutes-cum-thieves arrested

KOTA KINABALU: A 13-year-old girl is among six prostitutes arrested for helping a gang of thieves steal their clients' wallets and personal belongings.

City police deputy chief Supt M. Chandra said the prostitutes, the oldest of whom is only 20, were arrested while waiting for customers along the back alleys of Kampung Air near the city's downtown area.

Supt Chandra said the prostitutes-cum-thieves, known locally as ting-ting, would lure their clients to a specially-modified room after offering their services for between RM30 and RM50.

He said the modus operandi of the prostitutes was to have their accomplices hide in a secret compartment in the room, and steal wallets and valuables while the men were “busy”.

“Suddenly, the girl would pretend to get a call warning that police were coming to raid the place, causing the client to abruptly leave the room without realising that he had been robbed,” he added.

The suspects have been placed under remand, said Supt Chandra, adding that the case was being investigated under Section 380 of the Penal Code for theft.

ARTICLE 18

Published: Monday October 8, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Ladies’ shoes lead officers to uncover vice
MALACCA: A ruse by a hotel operator here to mask vice activities fell apart when a large number of ladies' shoes were found at the place.

Immigration Department officers who raided the hotel near Jalan Tun Ali found that a pub in the hotel had a few male patrons.

However, their suspicions were aroused when they found a large number of women's shoes near the cashier's counter.

This prompted a search and they found 13 Vietnamese and four Thai women, believed to be prostitutes, hiding under tables and in secret rooms.

State Immigration director Kamalludin Ismail said a 50-year-old Vietnamese woman, believed to be the “mummy”, was also detained.

Two men from Bangladesh and Nepal were also detained for questioning. He added that all the suspects, aged between 17 and 52, would be sent to Machap Umboo detention centre in Alor Gajah pending further investigations.

“Ten of them did not have valid permits while 10 others abused their social visit passes,” he said.

ARTICLE 19

Published: Monday October 15, 2012 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Get an escort via ‘drive-thru’

A SYNDICATE has come up with an innovative escort service, which Metro Ahad termed a “drive-through system of order, wait and go”.

According to its reporter who went undercover, it was carried out openly along a road in Kuala Lumpur with customers waiting near a taxi stand.
The middleman, who was known as abang, would first enquire about the type of escorts customers wanted.

He would then go to a nearby building to fetch the women.

If the customers liked what they saw, they paid the middleman.

The prostitutes were allowed to follow the customers wherever they wanted to go for a day, usually starting in the morning.

The syndicate is believed to have been active for a while but the authorities have difficulty detecting it because it only deals with “trusted customers”.

The price ranges from RM180 to RM400 based on the nationality of the escort.

Based on the Malay daily's investigation, most of the customers are businessmen and womanisers who would rent cheap hotel rooms near the city.

Others take the escorts to entertainment outlets.

December

ARTICLE 20

Saturday December 8, 2012

14-year-old call girl held

WHILE her friends were spending their school holidays hanging out in malls or catching the latest movie in the cinemas, a 14-year-old girl was entertaining men at an illegal nightclub.

Harian Metro reported that the teenager was among 29 guest relations officers arrested during a midnight raid at the nightclub in Sri Hartamas, Kuala Lumpur.

She was accompanied by a man in his 40s who was supposedly her boyfriend.
However, further investigations revealed that the teenager worked as a call girl and was in
the midst of entertaining her clients.

Another nightclub in Jalan Pudu was also raided.

The two raids by the Bukit Aman anti-vice, gaming and secret society division led to the
arrest of another 28 GROs, including Indonesian, Thai, Chinese and Myanmar nationals.

Division chief Inspector Muhamad Mat Jais said the GROs were dancing on the stage
during the raids.

They were brought to the Brickfields police headquarters for questioning, he added.

“The teenager will be investigated under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-
Smuggling of Migrants Act for working as an underaged person at the nightclub.

“The other foreign women will be investigated under the Immigration Act for wrongful use
of their social visit passes,” he said.

He said the women offered sexual services at RM150 each time, adding that the nightclubs
had been raided four times for operating without a licence.
APPENDIX 2

Transcription from the Focus Group Interview

M: The interview will start off with questions on personal background. Your answers will not be shared, it’s solely for research purpose, so hopefully you can share honestly and comfortably.

My first question is, your name (sorry not name), age, nationality, gender, orientation and where are from as well as your marital status. So, maybe we can start with Katherine?

M: How old are you?
K: 58
M: 58. Where are you from?
K: I was born in Kuala Perlis but after my mother passed away I moved to Kuala Selangor.
M: How many years have you lived in KL?
K: I came here 40 years ago.
M: Ok. Where do you live here, in KL?
K: I live in Sungai Rampai
M: Are you married?
K: Yes
M: Do you have children?
K: Yes. One.
M: What does she do now?
K: Huh?
M: What’s her job?
K: She’s married and now lives with her husband.

M: How about Ayu?
A: I’m from.....I’m 39 years old, from Sandakan Sabah. I came to the West Malaysia, I’m not sure how many years..but I came in 1992.
M: Did you come for work?
A: I worked with my aunt in Pahang. I was in Pahang before I came to KL.
M: Are you married?
A: (implying no)
Angah: She’s single.
A: I don’t have a home. I’m homeless.
M: Thank you. Angah?
Angah: I’m 55 years old.
A: Still young.
Angah: I have two kids but they passed away. I’m a widow now. Similar to Ayu, I don’t have a home. I was wandering around downstairs just now. Everywhere.
M: Are you from KL?
Angah: No. I’m from Kuala Terengganu.
M: When did you come here (KL)?
Angah: In 1990.
M: Have you ever worked somewhere else before?
Angah: Yes, I have. Work to find a living.
M: How about your children?
Angah: They have passed away.
M: I’m sorry to hear that. How about Shalu?

S: I’m 48.
M: You don’t look 48.
S: (giggle) I look young, don’t be jealous (giggle. From Penang, grew up in KL, got screwed in KL, in Chow Kit... homeless.
M: Are you married?
S: Widow.

M: What about Habibah?
H: I’m 64 years old now. I was married and have one kid.
M: Where is your kid now?
H: I don’t know. She is with her husband. Her husband doesn’t want her to see me.
M: How long have you lived in KL?
H: I was here in 72....1972...came from Ipoh to here.
M: Do you have a house here?
H: No. I’m homeless.
Angah: Just like me..
Ayu: Homeless

M: I will move on to the next question. How long have you been working as sex workers. Can we begin with Katherine?
K: It’s been awhile..
M: How long approximately?
K: Around 38 years.
Angah: 30 years for me.
Shalu: Almost 20 years.
Habibah: I was 24 when I started and now I’m 64. 40 years.

M: My next question is more personal. How did you start? How did you start working as sex workers? What is or are the reasons? Why?

Ang: I started sex work when I was kidnapped. This is how I became a prostitute. I moved to my brother’s house in Pasir Putih Kelantan. So, his wife’s cousin kidnapped me. Maybe because I was young and pretty. I was young, I was in my 20’s. Maybe I was pretty. He took me to a place in Kuantan. Maybe...maybe because I was pretty. I was younger back then, in my 20s..maybe I was pretty then. I still remember it was at Bristine Hotel. My first time was there. I was already a widow at that time. There...so...there...I just can’t... he forced me. He ‘ate’ me, he hit me. When I got the money, he took all of them. I was stupid, I didn’t know anybody because I just came. But after a while, I became a little smarter and started enjoying the work, because the money keeps coming in. So, I was happy working like that, I didn’t care what people say because I was making money. You can’t leave the job because the money was good. I was happy with the money. When I had enough money, I quit for a short while then, I got back to sex work. Quit and then come back. Quit and then come back. It has always been like that till today.
A: I followed a friend. I had a different job at the time but...
M: What job was it?
A: I worked in a restaurant. My friend was also a trans. Working like that (sex work), I could see money coming in every day. That made me happy. Working a permanent job, you only get your pay at the end of the month. So I quit the restaurant job and continued that work. But sometimes when I get bored doing that work, I start looking for a permanent job. Different job.
M: Is it easy to get a job?
A: Sometimes it’s not easy. Especially when people see a trans like me. Sometimes people don’t like us. So, we just have to keep looking.
M: What about you, Katherine?
K: It was the same for me. My uncle took me when I was young. He put me in a rented room with his friend. So I couldn’t run because he would hit me. (silent)
M: And Shalu?
S: For me...It was drugs, money and a little bit of enjoyment. Three reasons. Drug, enjoyment, finance problem. After enjoying the sex, I get to smoke grass and I get to enjoy. It’s pleasurable. It’s like 3 in 1.
M: Habibah?
H: For me it was because my husband didn’t support me financially. I had nothing. I didn’t want to die. Back then, it was common..working at night clubs..it was famous as pub. My husband didn’t support me financially. Working in a pub wasn’t a bad thing back then. I was a GRO, I accompanied the customers for drinks and dance. But eventually, it turned to sex work.

M: Next question is more personal. How much approximately do you earn monthly?
S: It depends. Sometimes I can earn a thousand in a day. But once upon a time...It’s a lot isn’t it? Imagine earning one thousand a day, in 30 days you can get 30 thousands! But now, I get around hundred to two hundred. Sometimes, depending on the timing. No money at all. I’m already old.
A: No customers.
Ang: Don’t have money at all.
A: There was once when I didn’t have a customer for a month.
Ang: It depends. Sometimes we get a lot, sometimes a little.
A: As for me, I’m a drug addict. So, I use my money to buy drugs.
Ang: Most of us are drug addicts.
H: When you work with a monthly salary, you see the money deposited in. This work, you get the money day to day. You’re not aware what you spend your money on.
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M: The next question is more personal. Have you ever been arrested?
All: Yes we have….
Ang: Getting arrested is a common thing. It’s our game.
S: It’s like one leg inside (the prison) and one leg outside.
Ang: We are doing a bad thing. There’s always a punishment for it. Because we are bad people, one of our legs always in the prison and another one outside.
A: We are always ready.

M: Can you share some of your experience being arrested?
Ang: Sometimes we got arrested because we were scared. When we saw the police, we would naturally run. So, when the police saw us running, they arrested us. But, this is what we deserve. We are doing a bad thing, we deserve the punishment. The same with when do good, we will get the rewards for our deeds. So we accepted it. We are used to it.

M: When the police arrested you, did they know that you’re sex worker?
Ang: They knew because of the place. They know the places, the area, the zone. When we passed along the area and they see us, they will arrest us.
A: But for a trans like me, the police will send me to JAWI.
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M: Have you ever been harassed? Or threatened?
Ang: I usually get harassed by drunk people. But I usually run. I don’t entertain them.
S: They want free sex.
A: There was once I got into a customer’s car and he locked the car. He wanted me to serve him but he didn’t want to wear condom. I gave him a lot of excuses and he threatened me. He said “If you didn’t want to serve me I will call my friends”. So I played my role. I talked to him softly. Calmed him down. You shouldn’t get angry or it would get worse.
Articles
1. ".. there were those who did not choose to do so but were cheated into it by their partners.
"Then there are those who are forced into it by their husbands and even some who are trapped by their own lust," he added

S:Seks,lust, drugs, ,money.
Ang: For me it wasn’t my husband.
S: If you see a woman with a baby begging for money, the husband is usually nearby waiting.
Ang: It’s because of love. Love for their husbands.

2. “I have been doing this for a month to earn additional income and settle my debts,” she said, adding that many of her varsity mates were also doing this.

Ang: That’s true. There are some who borrowed money from loan sharks. For instance like me, I didn’t have customers for a month, my husband didn’t work. There’s house rent to pay, electricity, water need to be paid. Where am I supposed to get the money from? My husband didn’t work at all, depending solely on me. I had to ask money from a loan shark. You borrowed 300 and you paid 500. So I have to work again. Things like that. Paying somebody else’s debt.

A: Some paid for their boyfriend’s debt.
H: If you don’t pay the loan shark, you’re a dead meat. The loan shark will hit you. They hit you with helmet.
Ang: My friends got beaten up by loan sharks.

3. "Bogus job offer lures woman into sex slavery"
S: That’s true. Especially foreigners.
Ang: Or those from the village. They came because they were promised a job here. It turned out to be prostitution.
S: A lot of them promised high paying jobs. We think of only one thing, to help our family. Some others trust their boyfriend, husband when in fact these men are fox in sheep clothing!

4. "most of the girls needed the money to maintain their lavish lifestyles."
S: True. Even thousand. But they entertain people of high status.
A: They also dressed differently from us.
S: They usually in....what do we call....night life....night clubs...

5. "Based on the Malay daily's investigation, most of the customers are businessmen and womanisers who would rent cheap hotel rooms near the city."
S: No. As long as they have money....married people...all kinds of people...lower class, high class...doctors, lawyers.
Ang: Sometimes they are not sexually satisfied with their wives at home. When they had arguments with their wife at home, when they are under stressed, where else would they go? The back alley of course.
A: Or when their wives are under confinement after labor..or having their period.
Ang: People come with different kinds of behavior. When they have money....
A: Humans’ lust will never stop....Their lust will be gone only when they are dead.

6. How do you feel about doing sex work?
Angah: Scared but brave. That is how we feel. We know we have to do it because we need the money.
A: Not only afraid of getting arrested. But afraid of getting sick.
H: I am most afraid of the illness. That is what I am mostly afraid of.
S: There were times when we could get a lot of customers, a lot of money and it we were really happy. There were customers who don’t mind paying 1000 ringgit. We were so happy seemed like the whole world belonged to us. Stayed in 5 stars hotel. There’s nothing to think about when you get a lot of money.

Have you ever felt inferior or ashamed because of your work?
Angah: Sometimes I feel ashamed, but sometimes I feel normal. There’s no shame anymore but when people stare at me, I do feel embarrassed with myself.
A: When people stare at me, I feel inferior and ashamed but I choose to do this job. So, I don’t really think about it.
H: I feel normal. I’m helping my family, take care of my family, sending my kids to school. Even my kids know what I do.

7. What would you like to be when you were young?
Angah: I wanted to be a police officer, but ended up working at the back alley. (laugh)
A: I wanted to be a teacher but ended up being a blowjob teacher.
K: I wanted to be a teacher.
S: I wanted to be a lawyer.
H: I wanted to work on the plane..what do you call it….stewardess.

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