
ABSTRACT

Psychological vulnerability of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) and its formative process

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The objective of this research is to study psychological vulnerability of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) and its formative process. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with CSWs who work for a sex parlor (“called soapland”) in Tokyo and three quantitative tests (MMPI, DES-T and GHQ). As a result of qualitative analysis using M-GTA, it was shown that CSWs reveal an official self full of “strong sense of professionalism”, but hidden behind it is a vulnerable private self having “personality of masochistic caretaker”, “dependency on relationship”, “dissociative tendencies”, “dependency on sex work”, “manic defense as sex work”, “invasiveness into the heart through invasion of privacy”, “somatization of stress”, and “sense of emptiness”. In the formative process, “psychological background in their childhood and adolescence” composed of “influence by dysfunctional family”, “traumatic experiences”, and “onset of psychic symptoms”, and “uncontrollable impulse to take action” composed of “strong desire to become independent”, “sex work as an exception to self-regulation”, and “sex work as acting out” were apparent. The results of quantitative tests supported the above-mentioned results.

Key Words: sex work, acting out, dissociation, manic defense, dysfunctional family
