



Strategic Assessment of the Pentahelix Model in Addressing Prostitution Issues for Sustainable Social Development

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Abstract

Prostitution, the exchange of sexual services for payment, is widely regarded as a significant social issue across many countries, with no clear consensus on the best approach to solve it. However, there is a lack of research on how to solve prostitution impact in society life. This study aims to analysis the Penta helix model as a strategic approach to tackling prostitution and to identify the key of social institutions that play a significant role in resolving the issue. The research used a quantitative methodology with a percentage technique and involves 60 citizens as the sample localized citizen around former Mbaben or Madusari localization. The instrument in this study is a specially designed closed-ended questionnaire to evaluate sample views toward the Penta helix model in solving prostitution strategy by binary Likert scale. The findings show that the Government Sector received the highest level of agreement, the Business Sector ranked second, the Community Sector followed the third, the Mass Media Sector had the fourth, and the last is the Academia Sector. These results indicate that each sector can contribute effectively to a multi-sectoral approach in addressing prostitution, ensuring a more comprehensive and sustainable solution to this complex social issue.

Keywords: Penta Helix Model, Prostitution, Strategic Assessment

Abstrak

Prostitusi, yakni pertukaran layanan seksual dengan imbalan materi, dipandang sebagai permasalahan sosial yang signifikan di berbagai negara, dengan belum adanya konsensus yang jelas mengenai pendekatan terbaik untuk menyelesaikannya. Namun demikian, masih terdapat kekurangan kajian yang secara spesifik membahas upaya penanganan dampak prostitusi dalam kehidupan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis model Pentahelix sebagai pendekatan strategis dalam penanggulangan prostitusi serta mengidentifikasi peran kunci lembaga-lembaga sosial yang berkontribusi signifikan dalam penyelesaian permasalahan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif dengan teknik persentase, melibatkan 60 responden warga yang berdomisili di sekitar bekas lokalisasi Mbaben atau Madusari sebagai sampel. Instrumen yang digunakan berupa kuesioner tertutup yang dirancang khusus untuk mengevaluasi pandangan responden terhadap efektivitas model Pentahelix dalam strategi penanggulangan prostitusi, dengan menggunakan skala Likert biner. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Sektor Pemerintah memperoleh tingkat persetujuan tertinggi, disusul oleh Sektor Bisnis, Sektor Masyarakat, Sektor Media Massa, dan terakhir Sektor Akademisi. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa masing-masing sektor memiliki potensi kontribusi yang efektif dalam pendekatan multisektoral untuk menangani permasalahan prostitusi, sehingga dapat menghasilkan solusi yang lebih komprehensif dan berkelanjutan terhadap isu sosial yang kompleks ini.

Kata Kunci: Model Pentahelix, Prostitusi, dan Kajian Strategis

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Introduction

Prostitution and various activities within the commercial sex industry are frequently debated topics (McLeod 2022). Although long recognized as a social issue, prostitution remains relevant for discussion due to its widespread impact on society. Its presence often leads to social unrest, both as a perceived catalyst for moral decline and as a contributing factor to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (Cabezas 2018). From a broader perspective, prostitution is not merely a moral or cultural concern but is deeply intertwined with social, economic, and political conditions (Gao and Petrova 2022). Its persistence within societal structures for centuries suggests that no authority has been entirely successful in eradicating it.

The regulation of sex work remains a contentious issue across countries, regardless of their economic status, with varying degrees of legality (Di Ronco 2022). In 2015, Amnesty International sparked global debate by advocating for the decriminalization of prostitution, arguing that it is the most effective way to safeguard the human rights of sex workers, including their access to healthcare services (Benoit et al. 2019). According to a report in *The Lancet*, decriminalizing sex work could have a profound impact on addressing the HIV epidemic in various regions, potentially reducing HIV infections by 33–46% over the next decade (Platt et al. 2020).

Discussions about prostitution, like other issues related to women's bodies, often revolve around whether the practice is exploitative, empowering, or simply a manifestation of immorality (Sanger 2022). Generally, there are three dominant perspectives on prostitution. The first argues that prostitution stems from a lack of personal morality (Langford and Skilbrei 2021). This viewpoint is rooted in patriarchal traditions and religious beliefs that associate female sexuality with temptation, while male sexuality is linked to dominance and an assumed state of perpetual dissatisfaction (Sarmini and Rizaq 2019). Conversely, the "sex work" perspective maintains that prostitution is a legitimate profession that is not inherently harmful to women (Harsin 2019). This perspective underscores women's autonomy over their own bodies and acknowledges that, while sex work may be oppressive for some, it can also provide economic stability and empowerment for others (Giobbe 2018).

A third perspective views prostitution as a consequence of broader social, political, and economic inequalities, with women disproportionately driven into the industry due to systemic vulnerabilities (Wagenaar 2019). As the exchange of sexual services for compensation, prostitution remains a deeply complex social issue across the globe, with little to no consensus

on how to effectively regulate or address it. The ongoing debate is rooted in differing moral and ethical beliefs about those engaged in the sex trade, societal attitudes toward sexuality, and the implications of commodifying one's body, making it a highly sensitive and controversial topic in many cultures (Hansen and Johansson 2023).

Prostitution has a significant impact on social life. The presence of illegal prostitution often leads to increased crime, noise, and disruptions that disturb the peace of local communities (Di Ronco 2022). Additionally, it contributes to rising domestic conflicts, higher divorce rates, and adverse effects on children's mental development, as well as increased juvenile delinquency in affected areas. In the digital era, online prostitution has further exacerbated the situation by facilitating sex trafficking through various online platforms (Sanger 2022). This has heightened the risk of exploitation and violence against sex workers, while inadequate regulation and oversight have only worsened the problem. Moreover, the normalization of digital prostitution has influenced societal perceptions of sexuality, morality, and gender dynamics (Henriksen 2021).

Addressing the issue of prostitution requires a comprehensive approach encompassing preventive, repressive, and rehabilitative strategies. Preventive efforts should focus on educating the public about the negative impacts of prostitution and instilling moral and ethical values from an early age (Bhat 2022). The government must also provide job opportunities and skills training for vulnerable groups to prevent them from being drawn into the sex trade. Additionally, social rehabilitation programs, legal protections, social security, and economic empowerment initiatives can serve as long-term solutions for those seeking to leave prostitution (Lanau and Matolcsi 2024). On the enforcement side, repressive measures should be carried out through strict law enforcement, complemented by skills training programs that enable individuals affected by prostitution to reintegrate into society and build a better, more dignified life (Gao and Petrova 2022).

Then, changing individual behavior, particularly male behavior, through the enforcement of criminal law, public shaming campaigns, and other repressive measures can be a viable policy solution if we assume that the core issue of prostitution lies in the commercial exploitation of women's sexuality (Sawyer et al. 2018). Conversely, empowering sex workers by granting labor and social rights, as well as expanding opportunities for social inclusion, presents an alternative approach if we view the root problem as stemming from global capitalism and neoliberal state policies that perpetuate gender, class, and racial inequalities intertwined with sex work (Oliveira et al. 2023).

While previous studies have explored the impacts of and responses to prostitution, research on the application of the penta helix model in addressing this issue remains limited. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the penta helix model as a strategic approach to tackling prostitution and in identifying the key social institutions that play a significant role in resolving the issue. The penta helix model divides societal perspectives into five main social institutions: academia, government, the business sector, the community, and mass media.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. The main objective of this study is to analyze Penta helix model in solving prostitution strategy. The subjects of the study consist of localized citizen around former Mbaben or Madusari localization. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 persons that describe below (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

No.	Characteristics	Information	Amount
1.	Origins	Native=33 Migrants=27	60
2.	Gender	M=25 F=35	60
3.	Age	≤20 Years =22 21-30 Years = 27 ≥31 Years =11	60

The instrument used in this study is a specially designed closed-ended questionnaire to evaluate sample views toward the Penta helix model in solving prostitution strategy. The survey utilizes a binary Likert scale, with 0 indicating “No” and 1 indicating “Yes” (Wu and Leung 2017), to measure the level of agreement students have with various statements related to environmental care attitudes. Data collection was carried out by distributing the questionnaire to the selected participants.

Once the data was collected, content validity was tested by experts to ensure that the questionnaire covered all the key aspects of Penta helix model. Additionally, the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency and the reliability of the research results. The instruments used were proven to be valid and reliable based on the tests, making them appropriate for this study. The obtained data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to calculate the percentage for each question and aspect of the Penta helix model perspectives.

Result and Discussion

This study is designed to analyze community views about Penta helix model in solving prostitution. The community perspective divided into five social institutions according to Penta helix model, those are; academia, government, the business sector, the community, and mass media. The results of this analysis can be observed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Community Perspectives about Penta helix model in solving prostitution

No.	Aspect	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Academia	Conducting research and scientific studies	61.7	38.3
		Developing intervention models	53.3	46.7
		Organizing training and empowerment	50	50
		Providing psychosocial support	58.3	41.7
		Preparing policy and program recommendations	70	30
Average			58.7	41.3
2	Government	Preparing inclusive and transparent policies	75	25
		Conducting socialization and education	83.3	16.7
		Collaborating with stakeholders	80	20
		Providing rehabilitation and reintegration programs	75	25
		Monitoring and evaluation	71.7	28.3
Average			77	23
3	Business Sector	Providing training and skills improvement	75	25
		Opening up job opportunities	71.7	28.3
		Providing business capital assistance	75	25
		Mentioning entrepreneurship programs	78.3	21.7
		Providing supporting facilities and infrastructure	80	20
Average			76	24
4	Community	Building Awareness and Communication	70	30
		Monitoring and evaluation	66.7	33.3
		Serving community needs	75	25
		Building partnerships and collaboration	71.7	28.3
		Providing social support	66.7	33.3
Average			70	30
5	Mass Media	Providing accurate and transparent information	61.7	38.3
		Building community awareness and understanding	58.3	41.7
		Facilitating public discussions	60	40
		Supporting Government and NGO Programs	65	35
Average			61.3	38.8

The table above provides a detailed percentage of each aspect. Based on the recapitulation in the table, the following diagram presents the results from the five aspects.

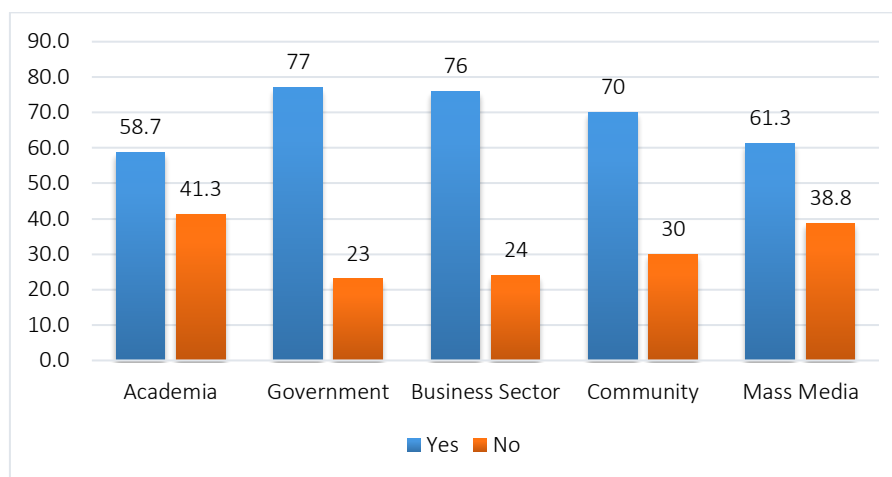


Figure 1. Recapitulation of The Community Perspectives

Based on the figure 1 provided, it is clear that a large portion of students selected “Yes” for the five aspects. The government as the most favored aspect, followed by business sector, then community, academia, and mass media coming last in order of preference. This suggests that community have known about several efforts that has been implemented to solve prostitution problems by five social institutions.

The findings of this study indicate that the Penta helix model that implemented in former localization have good response according to community perspective. The Penta Helix model, which involves collaboration between government, business, academia, mass media, and the community, offers a strategic approach to tackling the issue holistically (Prajanti et al. 2023). Government policies should not only focus on law enforcement but also on rehabilitation and reintegration efforts to help individuals transition out of prostitution (Gonzalez-Arribas et al. 2024). Additionally, mass media plays a key role in shaping public perceptions, reducing stigma, and promoting awareness about the complexities of prostitution (Bhat 2022).

The study reveals that the Government Sector received the highest level of agreement at 76%, with the strongest support for the statement "Conducting socialization and education" at 83.3%. The second most favored sector is the Business Sector, also at 76%, where the highest agreement is for "Mentioning entrepreneurship programs" at 78.3%. The Community sector ranks third, with 70% agreement, and the most highly supported statement is "Serving community needs" at 75%. The Mass Media sector follows in fourth place at 61.3%, with the strongest agreement for "Supporting Government and NGO

programs" at 65%. Finally, the Academia sector ranks last, with 58.7% agreement, and its most approved statement is "Preparing policy and program recommendations" at 70%.

Government

The study reveals that the Government Sector received the highest level of agreement at 76%, with the strongest support for the statement "Conducting socialization and education" at 83.3%. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that government-led awareness campaigns and educational initiatives play a crucial role in shaping public perception and addressing social issues (Wagenaar 2019). Effective socialization and education programs have been recognized as essential tools for preventing social problems such as prostitution by promoting awareness, instilling values, and guiding behavior through structured interventions (Connelly 2018).

However, the lowest agreement statements, both at 75%, were "Preparing inclusive and transparent policies" and "Providing rehabilitation and reintegration programs." This suggests that while the government is expected to lead in policy formulation and social interventions, there may be concerns regarding the inclusivity and transparency of these policies. Previous studies highlight that effective policy implementation requires collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including civil society and affected communities, to ensure comprehensive and sustainable solutions (Jahnsen and Wagenaar 2018). Furthermore, the relatively lower agreement on rehabilitation and reintegration programs may reflect ongoing challenges in designing and executing programs that effectively support individuals transitioning out of vulnerable situations, a concern echoed in social reintegration literature. These findings emphasize the need for governments to strengthen policy transparency and enhance rehabilitation efforts to ensure long-term social impact.

Business Sector

The Business Sector is the second most favored aspect, with an agreement level of 76%. The highest level of agreement within this sector is for the statement "Mentioning entrepreneurship programs" at 78.3%. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship as a means of economic empowerment and social mobility, particularly for vulnerable populations (Yasin and Namoco 2021). Entrepreneurship programs provide individuals with the necessary skills and resources to achieve financial independence, reducing their likelihood of engaging in high-risk economic activities,

including prostitution (Junaidah et al. 2020). By fostering self-sufficiency, these programs contribute to both individual and community development.

However, the lowest-rated statement in this sector is “Opening up job opportunities” at 71.7%. This suggests that while entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a viable solution, there may be concerns about the availability of stable employment opportunities within the business sector. Research indicates that job creation plays a crucial role in economic resilience and poverty alleviation, but challenges such as market competition, skill mismatches, and business investment constraints often hinder employment expansion (Wilson 2012). The relatively lower agreement on job creation highlights the need for a more structured approach to labor market inclusion, ensuring that vulnerable individuals have access not only to entrepreneurial pathways but also to stable and sustainable employment options.

Community

The third most favored aspect is the Community sector, with an agreement level of 70%. The highest level of agreement within this sector is for the statement “Serving community needs” at 75%. This aligns with research emphasizing the essential role of community engagement in addressing social issues, as communities are often the first to respond to local challenges (Stanitsas, Kirytopoulos, and Leopoulos 2021). When communities actively participate in problem-solving initiatives, they create a more supportive environment that fosters social cohesion and collective well-being (Blum 2006). This finding suggests that respondents recognize the importance of community-driven efforts in addressing issues like prostitution through localized support systems and grassroots interventions.

However, the lowest agreement statements within this sector, both at 66.7%, are “Monitoring and evaluation” and “Providing social support.” This indicates potential concerns regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of community-based initiatives. Previous studies highlight that while community involvement is crucial, the absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation can limit the long-term impact of social programs (Constantin 2012). Similarly, providing adequate social support requires strong coordination, resources, and professional intervention, which may be lacking in some community-led efforts. These findings suggest the need for structured mechanisms to enhance the community’s role in

monitoring and evaluating interventions while strengthening social support systems to ensure comprehensive assistance for vulnerable individuals.

Mass Media

The fourth social institution, according to respondents, is Mass Media, with an agreement level of 61.3%. The highest-rated statement in this sector is “Supporting Government and NGO Programs” at 65%. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the role of mass media as a crucial tool in disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and amplifying the efforts of governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing social issues (Nakaya 2018). Media platforms play a vital role in raising awareness, advocating policy changes, and mobilizing public support for initiatives aimed at combating prostitution and other social challenges (Sa’ad Abdullahi and Pindiga 2023). The relatively high agreement on this aspect suggests that respondents acknowledge the media’s role as a strategic partner in promoting solutions and interventions.

However, the lowest-rated statement in this sector is “Building community awareness and understanding,” which received 58.3% agreement. This indicates that while mass media is seen as a supporter of institutional programs, its effectiveness in fostering deep community engagement and education may be limited. Previous studies suggest that media campaigns alone are insufficient to drive behavioral and attitudinal changes unless they are accompanied by interactive and participatory approaches (Noetzel et al. 2023). This finding underscores the need for media organizations to not only report on social issues but also actively engage with communities through targeted awareness programs, storytelling, and discussions that encourage critical thinking and social action.

Academia

The last aspect in the study is Academia, with an agreement level of 58.7%. The highest-rated statement in this sector is “Preparing policy and program recommendations” at 70%. This finding highlights the critical role of academic institutions in providing evidence-based research, policy analysis, and recommendations to address social issues, including prostitution. Previous studies emphasize that academia serves as a knowledge hub, bridging theoretical insights with practical applications to inform government policies and intervention strategies (Dyllick 2015). The strong agreement in this area suggests that respondents recognize the importance of academic contributions in shaping effective policies and guiding institutional responses.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated statement in this sector is “Developing intervention models,” which received 53.3% agreement. This indicates a potential gap between theoretical research and practical implementation. While academic institutions contribute valuable knowledge, challenges such as limited collaboration with stakeholders, resource constraints, and the complexity of real-world issues may hinder their ability to design and implement effective intervention models (Salvioni, Franzoni, and Cassano 2017). This finding suggests the need for stronger partnerships between academia, government, and other sectors to ensure that research translates into actionable and impactful solutions. Strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration and increasing opportunities for field-based research could enhance academia’s role in developing and testing intervention models that effectively address social challenges.

Conclusion

The study highlights the varying roles of different social institutions in addressing prostitution. The government sector is seen as the most influential, with strong support for its role in conducting socialization and education programs. However, there are concerns about the effectiveness of its policies and rehabilitation programs, indicating a need for more inclusive and transparent approaches. The business sector is also recognized as important, particularly for its efforts in promoting entrepreneurship programs. However, there is a need to expand job opportunities to provide sustainable alternatives for vulnerable individuals. The community sector plays a crucial role in serving community needs, but it faces challenges in monitoring and evaluation, as well as in providing adequate social support. The mass media sector is valued for its ability to promote government and NGO programs, yet its role in building community awareness and understanding requires further strengthening. Lastly, the academia sector is acknowledged for its contributions in policy and program recommendations, though there is a gap in developing practical intervention models that can be effectively implemented.

Suggestion

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. The government should improve its policies and expand rehabilitation programs to support those affected by prostitution. The business sector should create more accessible job opportunities and enhance entrepreneurship training. The community sector needs to strengthen its social support systems and improve monitoring efforts. The mass media should develop more

effective awareness campaigns and collaborate more closely with government and NGOs. Finally, academia should work on translating research into practical solutions by developing intervention models that can be applied in real-world settings. By implementing these recommendations, each sector can contribute to a more comprehensive and sustainable solution to address prostitution.

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