

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF FORMER COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS IN BUILDING THE PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE IN RRI SURAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the adaptation strategies conducted by former commercial sex workers in building the public acceptance in the environment of RRI (Indonesian national radio station) Surakarta. Regardless of their background status that creates a negative stigma, the former commercial sex workers are required to adapt to the local community environment. This study applies the theory of adaptation strategy proposed by John William Bennett, and uses the qualitative writing method and the phenomenological approach. The subjects of this study are the former commercial sex workers aged over than 35 years old and living in the social environment of RRI Surakarta. The data collection techniques used include the direct observation and interviews. The data analysis performed begins with data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and ends with conclusion. The results of this study show that the socio-cultural adaptation strategies conducted by the former commercial sex workers in the environment of RRI Surakarta include the strategies of adaptive behavior, adaptive strategy, and adaptive process. The community in RRI Surakarta is able to accept the existence of former commercial sex workers since in their adjustment process, they show a good behavior, active participating in social activities, and having the desire to change from their former status as commercial sex workers.

Keywords: *Adaptation Strategies; Former Commercial Sex Workers; Public Acceptance*

INTRODUCTION

Commercial Sex Workers are considered as an immoral occupation based on the judgment of general public. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Social Affairs emphasizes that Indonesia is Free from the Localization of Prostitution in 2019. There have been various negative responses from the society regarding the commercialization of sex workers. It is seen as a profession that contradicts the social norms and the rules applied in society, as well as negatively affects the harmony of family and the community environment.

On the other hand, the decision of a woman to become a prostitute is undoubtedly motivated by various factors. The main factor causing the women to take up this profession is the lack of income or the economic insufficiency to meet the needs of daily life. Moreover, there are environmental and social factors that lead an individual to take up the work, with an

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assumption that sex is a dominant need (Putri, 2016). The dominant factor influencing the behavior is the opportunity to have sexual intercourse.

The reasons of many women engaged to prostitution as the prostitutes tend to be complex due to some factors, including the low level of education, unemployment, poverty, promiscuity, and inadequate cultivation of religious values. Female commercial sex workers spread not only in Indonesia, but also throughout the world. Data from the Ministry of Social Affairs shows that the distribution of sex workers is accompanied by the proliferation of prostitution areas in Indonesia. In 2015, the number of active commercial sex workers was 64,435 spread over 168 different locations. Then in 2016, it was reduced to 19,726 spread over 143 areas in Indonesia (Murdiyanto, 2020). The National Coordinator of the Indonesian Social Change Organization (OPSI) has revealed that the estimated number of female sex workers in Indonesia reached around 230,000 in 2019. Cited from the website *komnasham.go.id*, this number is quite large, excluding the male sex workers and the transgender (Solopos, 2021).

One operating location for prostitution is in the city of Surakarta, precisely around the RRI (Indonesian national radio station) area. Data from the Women's Solidarity for Humanity and Human Rights, abbreviated as SPEKHAM, shows that in 2016, the average number of commercial sex workers in the city of Solo was around 1,300. Most of these sex workers are married and hold the widow status (SPEKHAM, 2016). In its development, the Government of Surakarta City strives to handle the social problem, in this case is the prostitution, in their area which is increasingly open, causing the government to take some preventive and repressive countermeasures.

The phenomenon of prostitution practice is a form of social problem that is exceptionally interesting to be discussed and looked for its solution by the community and the concerned government. The public pulls out their social reaction by giving a 'bad stamp' in form of negative stigma as prostitution is assumed to deviate from the rules of customs, law, and religion (Maria, 2016). The public's social reaction also includes the rejection on the existence of any commercial sex workers in their neighborhood. This attitude of refusal causes conflicts and a certain concern for the female commercial sex workers. Hence, it makes things difficult for the former commercial sex workers, who wish to return to a normal life, to interact and socialize with the community.

One of human natures is having the desire to live with other humans in fulfilling the necessities of life. By this relationship, humans want to convey their intentions, goals, and wishes to each other. This can be realized through reciprocal relationships between people in a social environment. Therefore, a process of socio-cultural adaptation is conducted by the former Commercial Sex Workers in their neighborhoods as an effort to achieve a social life accepted by the local community.

Adaptation is self-adjustment and the stage of changing oneself according to the environmental conditions. Humans adapt to the physical, psychological, and spiritual environment. Social adaptation is the ability of an individual to react effectively and harmoniously to social realities and situations by establishing healthy social relationships (Afina, 2016). During the adjustment period, an individual experiences a learning process by understanding and attempting to do something desired in his social environment. This is for the reason that in fulfilling his or her needs and desires, an individual will follow the norms and rules applied in the society. A peaceful, serene, and understanding environment that provides a sense of protection to the community members will become one factor facilitating

the adjustment process (Roslan et al., 2019). The adjustment or adaptation process allows an individual to understand others as well as oneself.

Culture is an overall life process including knowledge, beliefs, laws, customs, and all forms of habits acquired by humans as members of society, thus it can be seen as a form of individual behavior (Harahap, 2020). In other words, culture consists of something learned from normative patterns, including all ways or patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. Cultural adaptation can be indicated through language patterns and behavioral activities that work as models for the adaptation and communication acts, to allow individuals living in a society to show each other (Muhammad, 2020). In the social environment, former commercial sex workers are expected to undergo an adjustment process, thus they can be accepted and live their lives with the community in their neighborhood.

Hence, the problems experienced by former commercial sex workers are related to the social adaptation in their efforts to be accepted by the community in the social environment of RRI Surakarta. By bringing their past background as someone with a profession that violates the rules and norms of society, the prostitution, as well as by having a great concern on the risk of discrimination or negative stigma from the society, former commercial sex workers perform the socio-cultural adaptation strategies to interact and socialize. Based on the problems explained above, this study aims to describe the form of socio-cultural adaptation strategies conducted by former commercial sex workers in building the public acceptance in the environment of RRI Surakarta.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first relevant study is entitled "The Survival Strategy of Commercial Sex Workers in the Localization of Jarak Surabaya" by Aktavia & Sarmini (2014). This study discusses the survival strategy of the commercial sex workers who live in the localization of Jarak, Surabaya. This study explains the commercial sex workers' level of existence in bringing influence to their own lives. If the existence of the commercial sex workers is high, then their living process will be guaranteed economically, and vice versa. Especially for older commercial sex workers, they must be able to maintain their existence in the localization of Jarak, thus they won't be beaten by the young, beautiful and energetic commercial sex workers. This study also intends to explore further on the survival strategies of the commercial sex workers in case they earn no income from their main job. This study is a qualitative type of study with a phenomenological design. The data collection techniques used are observation and interview techniques with informants selected through a purposive sampling technique.

The second relevant study is entitled "The Life of a Former Commercial Sex Worker" by Nengsih (2013). This study discusses the factors causing the cessation of being a female commercial sex worker internally and externally. However, the psychological condition of a former commercial sex worker is unstable, as they are in the process of trying to change and forget their past to get their life back in the society. They attempt to mingle with the society by participating in the social activities. This study applies descriptive qualitative method by taking a former female commercial sex worker as the object of the study. The object is selected by using a purposive sampling technique. The data collection techniques used include observation and interviews.

The third relevant study is entitled "The Perceptions of Community in Putat Jaya Village, Sawan Sub-district, Surabaya City toward the Commercial Sex Workers" by Erik &

Oksiana (2015). In this study, the existence of commercial sex workers is seen as a social problem for the surrounding community in the matter of morals and health. This study aims to reveal the public perceptions toward the commercial sex workers. The results of this study show that the public refuses the existence of commercial sex workers, since they are considered as disturbing and bringing a negative impact. This study applies a quantitative descriptive method. The data collection technique used in this study is a closed questionnaire by giving the respondents some questions or written statements to be answered.

From the description of some relevant studies above, this study aims to focus on the socio-cultural adaptation strategies conducted by former commercial sex workers who tied to their past background and negative stigma. The adaptation strategies are useful for them to be accepted in the community where they interact and socialize. However, the fact is that there are still concerns in the community in the process of re-accepting a former commercial sex worker, to have them returning to the social life and becoming the part of the society. These concerns rise some forms of adaptation strategies for former commercial sex workers in building the public acceptance. The adaptation strategies will give an impact toward their daily life in performing any activities and in fulfilling their life needs, which cannot be separated from the process of social interaction and socializing with other communities.

This study is analyzed by using John William Bennett's adaptation theory. This theory emerges from his analysis regarding the imbalanced experience between the society and their environment (Bennett, 1969:26). The adaptation is divided into three kinds, including the adaptive behavior, the adaptive strategy, and the adaptive process. First, the adaptive behavior is a form of behavioral change performed by the community to avoid problems that makes them have to adapt to the environment (Bennett, 1976:145). Second, the adaptive strategy is a form of self-adjustment by utilizing resources to solve problems (Bennett, 1976:243-264). Third, the adaptive process is an adaptation process divided into two levels, the individual and the group levels. The individual level consists of *coming-in* and *coming-out*. The *coming-in* process comes as the informants accept their own identity. The *coming-out* process is the acceptance by those closest to them. At the group level, adaptation is an effort to maintain a communal life in a social environment.

In his adaptation theory, John William Bennett explains that in the performed adaptation process, the community demands responsive behaviors from individuals that will allow them to regulate their behavior to meet the life needs as well as to adapt to the situation and conditions in their environment. It is correspond to the adaptation process conducted by former commercial sex workers in building public acceptance in the social environment of RRI Surakarta.

METHODS

The research method applied in this study is a qualitative research method by focusing on gaining a deeper information regarding the experiences of the informants directly. The method used is the phenomenological approach aimed to interpret the human behaviors by describing basic structures focusing on the meaning and the daily subjective experiences of the informants. It describes how the objects and the experiences are formed as a whole and communicated in daily life, which is used as a research topic (Schutz in Denzin & Lincoln, 2009:335). This study is conducted in the area of RRI Surakarta, Kestalan Village, Banjarsari Sub-district, Surakarta city.

Furthermore, to obtain an accurate and in-depth information regarding the focus of the problem, a purposive sampling technique is used, since in selecting the research informants, some specific criteria are formulated and considered. This study is arranged in the way that the data obtained later can be more representative (Lenaini, 2021). In this study, the subjects selected as the main informants are women, the former female commercial sex workers who live in the area of RRI Surakarta. The main informants are four women coming from several different areas. The selected informants consist of MY, 37 years old from the city of Boyolali; AN, 52 years old from the city of Pekalongan; KA, 40 years old from the city of Malang; and the fourth informant is SH, 54 years old from the city of Cilacap and already married. Moreover, there are also supporting informants used in this study to compare the validity of the obtained data from different perspectives. There are four supporting informants consisting of the society members (common people) and some community leaders who live in the environment of RRI Surakarta.

Data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. To get a valid data, this study applies a source triangulation technique. This technique is used to compare and find out data or information, considering that the data in this study are obtained from various sources. Based on the explanation above, this study performs data analysis techniques by Miles and Huberman, starting from data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and ended with conclusion. According to the explanation of data analysis by Saldana et al. (2014), data condensation refers to selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data closes to the whole part of written field notes, transcripts, interviews, and documents and empirical materials. The conclusion is that the data condensation process is obtained after the researchers conducted interviews and obtained written data from the field. Later, the interview transcripts are sorted out to get the research focus required by the researcher. The data are then organized, unified, and concluded. The data presentation in this study supports the understanding on the research context, since this study conduct a deep analysis to draw a proper conclusion. In the process of data collection, it is the same as looking for understanding that has no pattern, taking notes, concerning on the regularity of explanation, as well as the flow of cause and effect until finally, it can be concluded that the researchers have obtained all the required data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The adaptation conducted by former commercial sex workers is in form of self-adjustment to their living environment socially, including the interaction with the members of the society. First, it can be seen from the research results that the female informants of former commercial sex workers are not from the local area of Kestalan Village, Surakarta City. Overall, they come from outside the city of Solo and are looking for work and living in Surakarta. They try various ways to adapt to the community environment, by showing a friendly and polite attitude, as well as starting to participate in every social activity in the community, such as *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation), social services, and helping the surrounding community in case they experience a disaster or holding a wedding ceremony, as well as staying away from activities considered as harmful by society.

Based on the results of interviews conducted regarding the social interactions between former commercial sex workers and the local community at RRI Surakarta, it is known that the process of social interaction carried out by the informants with the local community is

still well-established. The informant MY, a newcomer in the Kestalan area, admits that during her permanent living and in conducting her daily activities, the process of interaction and socializing with the surrounding community goes well. The patterns of social adaptation performed by MY are including frequently greeting and trying to communicate with neighbors whom she met on the street. The good news is that the surrounding community also have a good respond and acceptance. This is also felt by informant KA who reveals that at the beginning of her adaptation to the environment, she perceived an "ordinary" feeling from the surrounding community. Still, over time, the community's response could be handled by trying to maintain a polite attitude and respecting to each other.

Second, after adjusting to their social environment, these former commercial sex workers also have supporting factors in the adjustment process, called as the family factor. The family support is needed in raising themselves from the difficult times to finally having the desire to return to the community. Based on the results of interviews, it is realized that there are married and single (unmarried) informants. The family support given to motivate the former commercial sex workers returning to the community may also be in the form of advice or positive guidance from the family to the former commercial sex workers.

When asked about the family's response toward the informant, SH admits that the family has accepted her decision well and supports her in adapting to the living environment in Kestalan. The main reason is that SH has two growing-up children and realizes the positive impact that will be received by her and her family from adjusting to the society. This is similar to the informant MY who emphasizes that family factors, especially her children, become her great motivation to change for a better life. Thus, the family factor is a place for someone to return to find comfort, share stories, and love.

Third, the socio-cultural adaptation strategies of former commercial sex workers in conducting their daily lives as humans in their social environment cannot be separated from the presence of other humans. Therefore, interaction and socialization are required in carrying out the activities. In performing the interaction and socialization with the society, former commercial sex workers with a previously deviant background need to apply a strategy. From the results of interviews conducted, the informant AN reveals that the process of interaction and socialization with the community in her neighborhood is going well. The informant AN behaves openly by greeting and starting to communicate with neighbors around the house or any neighbors she met on the street. The surrounding community also gives a good respond and accepts her presence. It is the same with the informant KA who conducts an adaptation strategy in interacting with the community in RRI Surakarta, such as with the members of the KWT (Group of Female Farmers), the head of the society and the local community. Furthermore, the informant KA will ask if she has a lack understanding in the rules applied in the living environment. This strategy helps the former commercial sex workers to interact and mingle with the community. The informant KA emphasizes that the adaptation strategies including greeting to each other and having polite behaviors should be done consistently, thus a harmonious life will slowly be created.

Various reasons cause the former commercial sex workers to settle and reside in the area of Surakarta City. Beside the facts that they have become the city residents and finding the place to fulfill their daily livelihood, they also want to be accepted by the community as individuals with equal rights and obligations, regardless of their past background. Having a peaceful and harmonious life is everyone's desire to live their lives. In achieving a harmonious

life, an individual should integrate with other communities in his/her social environment. Integrating with the society in the social environment is not easy for an individual, especially for those who previously had lived a deviant life in the community. There are some problems or obstacles such as differences in life background to the negative stigma appeared. Therefore, an individual requires a form of adaptation strategy to adapt to his/her social environment to be accepted by the community.

Based on the results of the study, it is found that the obstacle felt by former commercial sex workers in undergoing adaptation strategies in the social environment of RRI Surakarta is the lack of confidence to adapt to the surrounding community. It is due to the additional status as a former commercial sex worker attached to them. However, the results of the interviews show that they have a great desire to be accepted by the community in their social environment. This encourages them to continue performing the adaptation process by making criticism or pressure from society as a motivation. In the process of adaptation to the environment, apart from being influenced by the environmental factor itself, the process is also primarily determined by the individual or the primary agent undergoing the adaptation process. It refers to the former commercial sex workers, on how they respond and behave in the community to achieve the desired adaptation strategy.

Based on the results of the interviews, it is realized that the adaptation strategies used by former commercial sex workers in responding to the perceived negative stigma are as follows: (a) always openly behave and friendly to the community in the social environment. A friendly attitude can be given by greeting each other when meeting with neighbors and the surrounding community and respecting others; (b) playing an active role in helping other members of the community. This is a form of concern from former commercial sex workers toward other members of the community that experiencing difficulties; (c) establishing good communication. Social interaction is essential in undergoing the adaptation process, such as interacting with each other in the social environment. It includes not hesitating to ask questions once experiencing difficulties to interact with the community; (d) actively participating in social activities. Former commercial sex workers also admit to participating in various activities held in their social environment to blend in and get closer to the society. The existing social activities include social services, cooperation, and recitation; (e) responding to negative stigma with a positive response. Former commercial sex workers try to be more confident when they get negative stigma and show a positive attitude toward their activities. Former commercial sex workers are also part of society in general, and they are also born as social beings who need other humans to live their lives. This also underlies former commercial sex workers in adapting to the local environment, with a hope to be well accepted by the surrounding community in the area of RRI Surakarta. They try to conduct the adaptation process by establishing interactions or socializations and responding to the negative stigma. Hence, every member of society desires recognition and acceptance for him/herself in the respective social environment.

The Socio-Cultural Adaptation Strategies of Former Commercial Sex Workers

The socio-cultural adaptation strategy referred in this study is the way to adapt to the social environment conducted by former Commercial Sex Workers in form of social interaction and socialization, thus they can build the public acceptance in the environment of RRI Surakarta. It is explained in the adaptation theory that an individual will try to accept and adapt

to the environment wherever he/she is (Bennett, 1976:243). This is accomplished to make it easier for someone to achieve his/her goals. Self-adjustment can be formed between human relationships and their social environment, since humans should be able to change their behavior and even to establish social relationships with other humans as well as to adapt to all social activities performed by others (Rahmawati, 2015). In the process of adapting to the environment, some determined strategies or tactics can also be used to conduct the process of interacting and socializing with the surrounding community.

The existence of former commercial sex workers is still a matter of pros and cons in the community. It corresponds to the research conducted by Ritaudin (2019) stating that even though some people still respect the existence of commercial sex workers, there are many others reluctantly socializing with them. Therefore in performing the adaptation strategy, former commercial sex workers is expected to adjust to the local community to build the public acceptance through interactions and socializations.

Adaptive Behavior

Individuals often experience changes in behavior as a way to adjust to the rules applied in their living environment. The behavioral adaptation strategy is conducted by former commercial sex workers by following the changes occurred in the community. This strategy is used to defend oneself against the environment by following the existing path in the environment with the aim of avoiding problems (Bennett, 1976:145). Following the flow in the community, meeting people's expectations, and avoiding problems are the keys in behavioral adaptation strategy, by paying attention to everyday behavior to meet the expectations of the community. Changes in behavior by former commercial sex workers are conducted to adjust to the community in order to avoid problems in the social environment of RRI Surakarta. The success of behavioral adaptation strategies can be assessed once an individual or group fulfills the demands of society. Therefore, the informants conduct the behavioral adaptation strategy process by following the requirements set by the people surrounding the RRI Surakarta. One demand from the community toward former commercial sex workers is that they should try to blend or interact with the community in the area of RRI Surakarta.

The former commercial sex workers make their effort in complying the public demand by behaving politely, friendly, and not harming the community. It corresponds to the confession by the informant MY who changes her behavior, thus her current situation can be accepted by the community and herself. This process of behavioral change receives a support from the surrounding community. The adaptation process performed by the informant MY emphasizes the importance of public acceptance as well as self-acceptance in human life, since self-acceptance is a way of uniting one's condition and the environmental demands (Destiani, 2008). The informant KA tries to adjust herself by establishing social relations through interactions with the community, thus becoming more intimate, harmonious, and close. The adaptation process through social interactions is usually conducted with the community in the social environment, such as greeting to each other and frequently communicating with the community, aimed to gain the public acceptance for the former commercial sex workers. Former commercial sex workers are like humans in general who need a sense of being needed and accepted by other people in a social environment (Nengsih, 2013). Therefore, the former commercial sex workers who already have the awareness and desire to return to the society by

adjusting to their social environment will consider their future behaviors to avoid any violation on the rules of society.

Apart from the adaptation effort by changing behaviors in the community, former commercial sex workers try to take part in every activity within RRI Surakarta environment to meet the demands of the community and avoid problems. This attempt to participate in public activities means being useful and helpful in the conducted activities, as performed by the informant KA who actively joining the activities in the Group of Female Farmers in Kestalan village. According to the researchers, by participating in every activity in the community, the former commercial sex workers will find their way to adapt to the social environment and fulfill the public demands. The former commercial sex workers strive to be accepted by the community by providing assistance through their respective ability to them who are in need. The former commercial sex workers realizes that through their participation in every activity, the community in RRI Surakarta can accept their existence. For former commercial sex workers, when someone is useful to others, it will slowly erase the existence of past background or negative stigma. It is expected that in the future, by taking part in activities and benefiting the community, people around RRI Surakarta can accept the existence of the former commercial sex workers.

Adaptive Strategy

In its implementation, adaptive strategy depends on the environmental situation and the ability of individuals to use the environment in the way they adapt. Adaptive strategy is a way of adapting by solving the problem of environmental change by using existing resources in the community. Although environmental changes do not always bring a negative effect, adjustment to the environment must still be conducted by individuals or groups in society with appropriate patterns to gain a proper position to survive (Bennett, 1976:243-264).

The former commercial sex workers may solve problems with adaptive strategies to interact and socialize with the community, although there is a problem in the form of the negative stigma that affects the public acceptance arising from the community itself. Former commercial sex workers try to get closer to the community at every gathering opportunity or only by meeting on the street, as conducted by the informant MY who admits that she often greets and communicates with neighbors around her house or the ones she met on the street. For the informant MY, it is the way to interact with the community, and according to her, the surrounding community also gives a good response and accepts her existence. This corresponds to the research conducted by Suryadi (2011), stating that the interaction between sex workers and the community goes well because of the mutual respect and assistances. The informant KA argues that over time, she always interacts with the community in the process of adapting to the environment in the area of RRI Surakarta, and she tries to behave well and politely. By this way, the community can accept her existence. Public acceptance definitely cannot be separated from the role of the individuals who adapt to the society itself, as explained by (Destiani, 2008) that individuals who are able to adapt to their environment can achieve the accepted positions in the society.

Humans as social beings cannot be separated from the help of others in fulfilling their needs to live their lives. Therefore, humans are attached to the form of cooperation created by a group of people to lighten the work. From the explanation above, it is required an exchange or a reciprocity system aimed to meet the needs of the community. Former commercial sex

workers also build a reciprocity system in their social environment, as performed by the informants AN and KA. Both informants are involved in social activities focusing on food processing that can be used as their business in the future. Reciprocity is not only in the form of money exchange, but also an exchange in the needs of community in the form of goods and services (Pribadhi, 2011). The exchange from former commercial sex workers in this reciprocity system can be a form of service, with an expected public acceptance in return for the former commercial sex workers.

Adaptive Process

The self-adjustment conducted with adaptive process is divided into two levels, the individual level and the group level. In the adaptive process, individuals who are trying to adapt must be able to survive to solve problems together in the social environment. Adaptive process is an adaptation that requires quite a long time (Bennett, 1976:265).

At the individual level, the way people conducting the adaptive process can be called as *coming-in*. Individuals perform this method to make peace within themselves and accept what they have done. Their past experiences cause conflicts in themselves. This applies to the former commercial sex workers who had a deviant profession in the past. Based on the background of the experience until the time they have stopped, there is self-acceptance that they must be admitted. Now, they realize that there is no need to feel remorse in themselves as they now become the part of society. The adaptive process conducted by the informants MY and SH aims to make peace within themselves with a solid intention to quit from the profession as commercial sex workers, no matter what happens. The informant MY admits the sense of regret and accepts her past job. The informants MY and SH try to be better individuals than before and move forward by thinking and burying the past.

At the *coming-out* level, former commercial sex workers who have or are currently going through the process of self-acceptance by making peace within themselves, must also seek the acceptance or recognition from their families or other communities, thus leaving their past image as commercial sex workers. The life experiences of former commercial sex workers who have lived with scorn, ridicule, and rejection from the society must be ended immediately. As someone claiming to experience a deviant job in the past, such as being a commercial sex worker, there lies risks that must be accepted by oneself. It follows by the consequences such as facing the responses and reactions from the family or society. It should be noted that the *coming-out* process is a long process and requires several stages until the family and the community acknowledge and accept the former commercial sex workers against their past. The former commercial sex workers conduct the *coming-out* process as they stop being commercial sex workers by trying to confess to other people with different responses. However, from the results of research conducted on the former commercial sex workers, no one has decided to tell their respective family. The researchers realize the thing, since former commercial sex workers assume that having been a commercial sex worker is something that deviates from the regulatory norms. Moreover, they are also not ready for the response that may be received from the family.

The adaptive process at the *coming-out* level can also be achieved by participating in a social activity. Within the RRI Surakarta itself, there are various social activities that can be joined by the former commercial sex workers. The authority of Kestalan village provides a space for those who want to take part in the social activities without any exception. Based on

the results from observations and interviews, some informants including MY, KA, AN, and SH are active in the activities conducted within the RRI Surakarta, starting from PKK, community service, social services, Female Farmer Group, and other activities. With the participation of former commercial sex workers in the social activities held by the surrounding community, it is expected that they will be more independent, since in the activities, there is training intended to empower the community.

Public Acceptance

The research results on public acceptance regarding the existence of former commercial sex workers in the environment of RRI Surakarta show that people are able to accept the existence of former commercial sex workers in their social environment. This means that the community can accept the existence of former commercial sex workers, and willing to directly guide and embrace them. This can be seen from the community's considerations, such as involving former commercial sex workers in various social activities in the community and willing to interact or socialize with them. The community in this case also provides social space for former commercial sex workers to interact with the community. However, there are still concerns regarding the existence of former commercial sex workers in the community.

Responding to this, the head of Kestalan village, Suyono, states that the public acceptance towards the existence of former commercial sex workers in the social environment of RRI Surakarta depends on the behavior patterns shown by the former commercial sex workers in their daily lives, as well as through their participation in the public activities. He believes that the surrounding community has no issue regarding the public acceptance of former commercial sex workers in the area of RRI Surakarta. Former commercial sex workers and the community also have interacted. Not only former commercial sex workers, but also many individuals with different backgrounds have become the members of society in general. There is no formulated term or title for the former commercial sex workers or others. Thus, the public can accept the existence of former commercial sex workers in the environment of RRI Surakarta, since they are considered as capable to interact and socialize with the community through various forms of adjustment they perform in their social environment.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes three main findings in explaining the forms of socio-cultural adaptation conducted by former commercial sex workers in building the public acceptance in the social environment of RRI Surakarta. First, the adaptive behavior is applied to fulfill the community's demands by changing behavior to avoid problems, such as mingling and interacting with the community, taking part and participating in the social activities, and behaving friendly and polite. Second, the adaptive strategy is used in self-adjustment through the utilization of existing resources in the community, such as interacting and socializing with the community as well performing the reciprocity system in the community. Third, the adaptive process is divided into the individual level and the group level. At the individual level, former prostitutes conduct *coming-in*. It is the way for individuals to create peace within themselves and accept what they have done. At the group level, former commercial sex workers perform *coming-out* through the acceptance or recognition from their families or society. Hence, the existence of former commercial sex workers in the social environment of RRI Surakarta is well

accepted by the surrounding community, since they can be directed to change for a better living by conducting social adaptations to interact and socialize with the community.

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