



THE REGULATORY DANCE:

Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy

Findings Summary

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS & METHODS

- How has the rise of lap dancing happened?
- How do dancers experience clubs as workplaces?
- How are clubs regulated internally and externally?

Survey

197 dancers

We asked about:

- ▶ motivations and journey into dancing;
- ▶ other forms of work;
- ▶ education;
- ▶ feelings about work;
- ▶ earnings, fines and fees;
- ▶ tax;
- ▶ unions;
- ▶ advantages & disadvantages
- ▶ work patterns.

We asked:

'What were the conditions like in your last four clubs?'

Respondents had worked in:

- ▶ 45 towns and cities
- ▶ 16 places worldwide

Interviews

- ▶ 35 dancers
- ▶ 20 club workers; owners, managers, bar workers, security, house mums
- ▶ 15 regulators: police; health and safety; licensing and enforcement officers; Local Authority officials

We conducted observations and visits to 20 clubs and pubs

WHO ARE THE DANCERS?

Demographics

Age range of 18-53, but mainly 22-29

- ▶ Majority not mothers (83%)
- ▶ The majority of the dancers were British (61%)
- ▶ 29% were EU nationals (largely Romanians)
- ▶ 10% were non-EU nationals (largely Brazilians)

Education

- ▶ 87% had completed further education
- ▶ 23.2% had completed undergraduate education
- ▶ 5% had completed postgraduate education
- ▶ 29% of dancers were engaged in some form of education while dancing

Other work

- ▶ 42% of dancers were engaged in some form of other employment
- ▶ Mainly formal but low pay and low skilled jobs were left behind for dancing.

Work Patterns

- ▶ 70% of dancers had been working for less than 5 years
- ▶ Most dancers worked between 3-5 shifts per week, though 25% did two or less
- ▶ 12% worked 6 nights per week, and these were mainly migrant women
- ▶ 74% stated their job satisfaction as between seven and ten out of ten. No dancers said that their job satisfaction was 0-2.

FEELINGS ABOUT DANCING

PLEASE HELP YOURSELF TO
TEA AND COFFEE
BUT FOR GODS SAKE PLEASE
KEEP THIS AREA CLEAN AND
TIDY.
DO NOT LEAVE SUGAR
OR WATER ALL OVER THE PLACE
AND
PLEASE WASH THE CUPS UP
AFTER YOU HAVE USED THEM
SORRY BUT YOU HAVE TO GET YOUR OWN MILK!
IF YOU DO LEAVE THE PLACE IN A MESS
I WILL HAVE TO REMOVE THIS FACILITY
AND EVERYONE WILL LOSE OUT



Advantages

- ▶ 87.6% - choosing their hours
- ▶ 81.8% - getting money straight away
- ▶ 80.3% - earning more money than in other roles
- ▶ 76.6% - being independent
- ▶ 72.5% - combines fun and work

Disadvantages

- ▶ 59.1% - I never know how much money I will earn
- ▶ 47.4% - I have to keep my job a secret
- ▶ 40.1% - Customers are rude or abusive towards me
- ▶ 30.7% - I have lost respect for men
- ▶ 27.7% - I feel I have to compete with the other dancers

"I am a performer and for me this is fun. When you go to the clubs with private dancers, it then comes down to the management and security being good and on the ball. If they run it well you'll be fine, but beware of dodgy managers!"

"I am free to study and earn enough to live comfortably in London. I have time for holidays, unlike my friends who are in regular employment... The atmosphere always keeps you alive and I have time in work to do as I like... I am my own boss and it keeps me super fit".

"I don't like it for the fun! It's a job"

"I find the terms and conditions of the job [depending on the club/company] disempowering and exploitative. I find the general public understanding of my job to be frequently inaccurate and judgemental".

"Management come and they say, "do this, do that", but we're self-employed, so they shouldn't be able to. Also, what we wear. We should be allowed to wear what we want, we're self-employed".

MONEY

Girls please note as from
Friday 9th April 2010 the Floor
Fee for Fridays & Saturdays
would be £30.

The rest of the week remains
unchanged.

Would you also note that chewing gums are not
allowed.

Following fines apply

Consumption of chewing gum £30

Being in possession of chewing gum £10

House fees and commission

- ▶ Dancers had to pay house fees and commission to clubs in order to work
- ▶ Fees Range: £0-£200
- ▶ Fees Average: £80
- ▶ House fees were higher in London
- ▶ Commission range: 0%-80%
- ▶ Commission average: 30%

Fines

- ▶ 42% had been fined in their current workplace for 'rule breaking'
- ▶ 61% had been fined at least once during their time dancing
- ▶ Fines issues for chewing gum; using mobile phone; lateness; absence; taking time off; drunkenness; outfits
- ▶ Fines range: £10-£50
- ▶ Fines were arbitrary

Finances

- ▶ 70% of dancers reported losing money at some point by going to work
- ▶ 50% of dancers reported losing money in their current workplace
- ▶ 14% had had owed debts to the club
- ▶ 56% had paid NI and tax
- ▶ 83% had never had a wage slip
- ▶ 90% had never had a contract
- ▶ 96% did not pay into a pension
- ▶ No dancers had ever received holiday pay or sick pay

"If club is not busy, should let girls go home... you have to pay the full fee to go home".

"It's gone down, my satisfaction, as it is harder to make money. Everyone is a bit desperate now. Bit hard to give them what they want to get them to stay and spend more money"

"I actually don't need to dance, I just talk. I can't remember the last time I did single dancing. They are a waste of time. That's not how you make money. They pay me for conversation... I go to VIP, they pay you straight away... that is much easier".

FUTURE / CHANGE IN REGULATION

In 2010 the Policing and Crime Act changed the ways in which lap dancing venues are licensed. As a result:

- ▶ Clubs have been reclassified as Sex Entertainment Venues
- ▶ Local Authorities have greater control over the amount of clubs
- ▶ An uneven landscape of licensing is emerging across the UK
- ▶ Some LAs are reducing the numbers of clubs or adopting a 'nil policy'
- ▶ It was felt that such reductions would lead to loss of jobs and force the industry 'underground'

New regulation was felt to be necessary:

"The industry requires regulation in order to prevent unfair and unpredictable rules being aimed at workers. There needs to be some form of uniform guidelines with regards to the way in which these places are run. For example: my club does not have a first aid box. As it currently stands, I feel that management ultimately have complete control over workers, it is this which is actually exploitative, not the actual strip work".

But many dancers feel that the current system of regulation is insufficient in protecting them and improving their conditions:

"The new licensing laws have nothing to change the way the dancers are charged fees and fined and treated by the owners, in fact they will now probably have to charge the dancers more to cover the licensing cost"

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Dancing was part of a strategy for making money whilst at the same time preparing for a different future through other forms of work or education
- ▶ Dancers liked their work, but experienced high levels of financial exploitation
- ▶ There was significant variation in standards of management and safety between clubs
- ▶ Verbal abuse and unwanted touch was frequently experienced but was generally dealt with by dancers, and usually supported by security and management
- ▶ Safety was a complex issue:
 - ▶ Measures such as CCTV and door staff did not always increase safety
 - ▶ Yet on the whole most dancers felt safe working in clubs
- ▶ The regulation of clubs under current policy does not automatically address issues of welfare, employment status or financial exploitation

Recommendations

- ▶ Clearly displayed council rules in a number of places in the club:
toilets, changing rooms etc
- ▶ Offer a receipt for fines and fees – make sure fines and fees go through the books
- ▶ Offer a receipt for dances where commission is taken
- ▶ Monthly meetings to discuss rules, changes, get dancers' input
- ▶ Tighter regulation on the location and type of private booths to achieve a balance between privacy and security
- ▶ Insurance information for the dancers
- ▶ Limiting the number of dancers per capacity of clubs



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