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## Logic of adaptation of bizi managerial girls in the district of Abidjan

Logiques d'adaptation des filles gérantes de bizi dans le district d'Abidjan

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### ABSTRACT

Society as a whole is experiencing various changes that have a considerable influence on social positions, roles, behaviors, phenomena. Côte d'Ivoire, a cosmopolitan and hospitable country, nevertheless, these major changes have had an impact because of the economic and social crises. One of the consequences of these mutable and timeless phenomena is undoubtedly prostitution. In the Abidjan district, the phenomenon of prostitution is multifaceted and growing among girls. By spreading out, this phenomenon has migrated to a new model that is now called "Bizi", with new adaptations. Defined as an exchange of sexual services, 'Bizi' marketing is done on social networks. The objective of this study is to learn about the "Bizi" neo-phenomenon in the district of Abidjan, with a view to identifying specifically, the profile of girls in 'Bizi' situations, their backgrounds and their logic of adaptation to the constraints of this phenomenon. The results show that the girls in business are young (18-35 years), from all socio-economic classes in Abidjan. More or less graduates, they conceal the phenomenon of prostitution through screen or parallel activities. They are affiliated with active prostitution networks and supported by pimps considered managers, who refine their strategies to give them visibility and make more clients.

### KEYWORDS

Prostitution; Bizi; Internet; Girls; district of Abidjan



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## Introduction

Society as a whole is undergoing various changes. These social changes refer to modifications in social structures and behaviors (Sidler, 2009). These changes are thus observable in most areas of society and they have a considerable impact on social positions, roles, behaviors, phenomena, etc. This is the case of prostitution. Defined as “an act by which a person habitually consents to engaging in sexual activity with an unknown number of others for remuneration” (Andrade de Barros and Nogueira, 2019), prostitution is considered to be «*the oldest profession in the world*». Behind the simple definition of prostitution as an exchange of sexual services for remuneration, lies an infinitely more complex and plural reality (Mathieu, 2015). This activity has, however, undergone profound changes over the last twenty years, if we refer to the report of the French Senate (2014). According to Ripa (2020), prostitution in the 19th century underwent a double modification in Europe, under the combined effect of the demographic revolution, the rural exodus, urbanization and the transport revolution. In Africa, it is Iroko (1995) who, despite the lack of documentation that can help in the reconstruction of prostitution in this continent, shows, from some Beninese cases, that prostitution existed, in particular, in pre-colonial Black Africa in various forms. This variation of the phenomenon is still relevant in black Africa. Indeed, according to Kemayou et al. (2011), the prostitutional activity in her practice, in Cameroon (Douala), has several faces. For these authors, the cosmopolitan character of the city and the heterogeneity of urban actors in a situation of survival, give the African urban environment, a relative originality in the social construction of prostitution. Today, in Africa, even if ethics and morality condemn this practice, even if it is contested by many national institutions and other international conventions, prostitution is increasingly visible. This raises questions because it is at the opposite of African socio-cultural values (Kemayou et al. Op.cit.), prostitution, especially among young people, is raising more and more concerns in major African cities. It is the antithesis of African socio-cultural values. In Côte d’Ivoire, particularly in the Abidjan district, the phenomenon of prostitution is growing (Gueu, 2016). For this author, in addition to evolving, prostitution changes forms or aspects. Thus, he became interested in a particular type of prostitution, fashionable in the Ivorian economic capital, luxury prostitution. It is a prostitution that is practiced through networks of girls in escort agencies or who own apartments or villas and who rather hunt in the category of men with diverse profiles, especially the richest and most generous. In the district of Abidjan, prostitution increased with the generalized impoverishment of society, impoverishment which moreover, widened the gap between the rich and the less fortunate (Gueu, Op.cit.). By spreading out, Abidjan prostitution has migrated to new forms to become what is now called, in a generic way, ‘Bizi’, with new logics of adaptation, especially among practitioners. ‘Bizi’ is a form of prostitution that is evolving in relation to digital technology, with a prominent place in social media marketing (Kouamé, 2021). The author notes, moreover, that Covid-19, which has favored the closure of meeting places, preventing the exercise of this prostitutional activity, has more or less increased this phenomenon. New form of prostitution, which differs from traditional sex work by the operating mode, the ‘Bizi’ is the derivative of ‘business or even bizness’. Even, as Kouamé notes (Op.cit.) if the scientific literature from the point of view of strategies does not include the use of the Internet in general and social networks in particular in prostitution, it is important to take a different look at this new phenomenon that is taking place in several capitals of the sub-region and particularly in the district of Abidjan. For us, it is a question of making a foray into the world of ‘bizi managers’, to highlight their profiles, their paths and their logic of adapting to the challenges of this new face of prostitution in Côte d’Ivoire. Moreover, if from the point of view of the explanatory approach, the factors mentioned are most often economic, social, educational, cultural and individual (Kouamé, 2021), we want to go further to see, above all, how they face the external gaze and the increasingly virulent social reaction towards them. All the studies mentioned above are relevant, but they do not place sufficient emphasis

on the logics of adaptation and the path of the 'Bizi Manager' in the district of Abidjan. However, over the past ten years, the phenomenon of 'Bizi' has experienced various fortunes in terms of the reactions, perceptions, representations, etc. That this phenomenon has aroused. But despite all the risks and social imaginings that accompany the 'Bizi', the 'Bizi girls' are going all out. The objective of this study is to know the neo-phenomenon of 'Bizi' in the district of Abidjan. Specifically, it is a question of identifying the profile of girls in 'Bizi' situation, their paths and their logic of adapting to the constraints of this phenomenon. The following questions arise from this objective: what is the profile of 'Bizi Managers' in the Abidjan district? What is the journey/trajectory of these girls engaged in 'Bizi Management'? What is the logic behind the adaptation of 'Bizi' practitioners? If the logic of adaptation refers to the principles that guide the action or behavior of Bizi's managerial girls, it is for us to know how they adapt to the conditions of their 'activities', to the eyes of society or to critics, judgments, rejections, actions of stigmatization, etc. For these girls, it is more an issue of self-defense or the group (family) and/or survival issue in the context of a defense-protection to create a balance against tensions (social, individual, etc.) they face.

This study is based on two theories: the social regulation theory of LeBlanc (1986) and the theory of low personal control of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990). The first consists of multifactorial models including, among others, socio-economic status, social bond, personality, conformity and constraints of the individual exposed to a phenomenon. The second concerns impulsivity in the individual coupled with low personal control that is likely to prevent the establishment of lasting links between this individual and society. This weak link will lead to deviance and delinquency.

This scientific article consists of three essential parts including methodological aspects, a second part devoted to the results of the survey and a third part on the discussion of the results coupled with the recommendations and conclusion.

### **2-1- Site and participants**

This research work took place over four months (January to April 2023) in the commune of Yopougon. The choice of this site is justified by the fact that the pre-survey that we conducted before launching this study showed more responses that designated Yopougon as a municipality that houses more activities of Bizi. In addition, the commune is a dormitory district that houses populations subject to various socio-economic conditions and where affluent and less affluent neighborhoods coexist. Our sample was made from the snowball method (non-probability). It is made up of 33 girls who manage bizi whose age varies from 15 to 45 years. They voluntarily agreed to participate in this study thanks to our foray into one of the networks dedicated to this activity.

### **2-2- Data collection instruments**

The data was collected through a literature search, book and digital, questionnaire and interview guide, addressed to the girls targeted by this study, Bizi managers. The axes focused on the profile, the path and the logic of adaptation of girls engaged in the bizi.

### **2-3- Data analysis methods**

Two analytical methods were selected for this study. These include quantitative and qualitative analysis. They respectively consisted in a statistical treatment of the data with the software of survey and analysis of the data Sphinx Plus<sup>2</sup> which allowed the classification or the categorization of the data and the understanding of the subject by highlighting the regularities in the answers, the perception of this Bizi phenomenon by the actresses themselves but also the underlying phenomena.

## Results

The results of this study are organized around three elements: the profiles, the paths and the logics of adaptation of girls in 'bizi' management.

### 1- Profiles of 'bizi' girls' managers

The profile refers to the set of key socio-demographic and economic characteristics that define 'bizi' female managers in this study.

#### 1-1- Age

To conduct this study, we focused on the age of girls who practice bizi in the district of Abidjan. We have six age sections: 15-20 years; 21-25 years; 26-30 years; 31-35 years; 36-40 years; 41-45 years. The processing and analysis of the collected data show that most «bizi-girls» are relatively young. Indeed, they are the most represented in the age groups 21-25 years (33.3%), 15-20 years (24.2%) and 26-30 years (21.2%). This can be explained by the following:

*“Youth is an important criterion in our work. Our customers prefer freshness. They are looking for something special and sensational. I enjoy it while I can offer what they love.”* (EKT, 21-25).

In their analyses, the girls surveyed observe that prostitution in Côte d'Ivoire, especially in the district of Abidjan, is experiencing remarkable growth because of the difficulties of life in urban areas. These words illustrate this thought:

*“More and more young girls are invading the ‘market’ of prostitution. Some girls who are minors or sometimes very young prefer this livelihood because of the misery of their respective families”* (THL, 26-30years old).

**Table 1: Age of girls in business management**

Age	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
15-20 ans	8	24,2%
21-25 ans	11	33,3%
26-30 ans	7	21,2%
31-35 ans	5	15,2%
36-40 ans	2	6,1%
41-45 ans	0	0,0%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Authors, 2023*

#### 1-2- Nationality

Nationality is the state of a person who is a member of a nation. It is therefore in public international law, the country of belonging of a natural or legal person. In our search for knowledge of these girls in the district of Abidjan, it is important to know which country they come from. Our study shows that bizi managers in Abidjan come from several African countries. But the nationality that is leading,

after counting, is that of Côte d'Ivoire. They are followed by Nigerians and Liberians. This lady, in her late forties, gives us a brief history of the entry of Ivorian women into prostitution:

*“In its evolution, prostitution was practiced by non-ivorian women in the 1980s and 1990s, including Ghanaians, Liberians and/or some Togolese. And this could be explained by the periods of war and unrest that their countries had experienced. But when many of them returned to their countries of origin, with Côte d'Ivoire in turn experiencing some turmoil, Ivorian women began to take an interest in prostitution, with all the variations we know today.”* (MYO, 41-45years old).

Since then, prostitution, as we can see, has been «nationalized» with a significant share of Ivorian women in the practice of this ‘job’. And the data of this study confirm these comments through the different answers of the respondents who are, for 30.3% of Ivorian women involved in the practice of prostitution, and prostitution based on Bizi, in the district of Abidjan. Despite this strong breakthrough of Ivorian women, some women of other nationalities still work there. This is the case for Nigerians (18.2%) or Liberian (15.2%), Guinean (9.1%), Malian Nigerien and Senegalese (6.1%), then at the end of the ranking Ghanaian and Burkinabé (3%).

**Table 2: Nationality of girls**

Nationalité	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
Ivoirienne	10	30,3%
Libérienne	5	15,2%
Guinéenne	3	9,1%
Malienne	2	6,1%
Burkinabé	1	3,0%
Ghanéenne	1	3,0%
Nigérienne	2	6,1%
Sénégalaise	2	6,1%
Nigériane	6	18,2%
Autre.	1	3,0%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Authors, 2023*

### 1-3- Grade level

School level refers to the stage of learning at which a person is in a given educational system. Indeed, for this study, we took into account, to indicate the school level, the cycles of primary, secondary (middle and high school) and higher education to which we added the category ‘illiterate’. bizi girls tend to have primary (36.4%) and secondary education (36.4%). Some respondents mentioned the level of education, higher education (15.2%) and others, the category of illiterates (12.1%) fewer, say they can neither read nor write. The low school level of these girls can be explained by the fact that school is a place of constraints. The learner is confronted with the necessary appropriation of the rules of collective life. However, it is difficult for these girls to accept these binding rules, necessary to make them understand the meaning but also the limits of their freedom and better accept that of others. Because they present, for some, disabilities or for others, and this leads them to disconnect from school to do something else at their leisure, less restrictive than school, as this survey shows:

*“In school, teachers impose too many rules, it’s like a military training school. It was very annoying. To this must be added tons of exercises to do. So, I stopped at the fifth grade to not waste my time. But since I don’t have any diplomas, bizi was my solution. I’m doing well.”* (ZKG, 15-20years old).

For other girls, it is the socio-economic and financial situation of the family that explains their school level and the fact of entering the management of the Bizi:

*“I was an early father’s orphan. My mother remarried a man who hated me and my three brothers. Our mother, a saleswoman at the big market, was not at home most of the time. My father-in-law hated me. He ended up refusing to pay our school fees and everything else that goes with them. So, I stopped classes in second grade. Idle and disoriented, friends told me about a possibility to earn money. This is how I came to the bizi to help my brothers.”* (WPS, 31-35years old)

**Table 3: Educational attainment of respondents**

Niveau scolaire	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
Analphabète	4	12,1%
Primaire	12	36,4%
Collège	6	18,2%
Lycée	6	18,2%
Supérieur	5	15,2%
Autre.	0	0,0%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Authors, 2023

**1-4- Social Class**

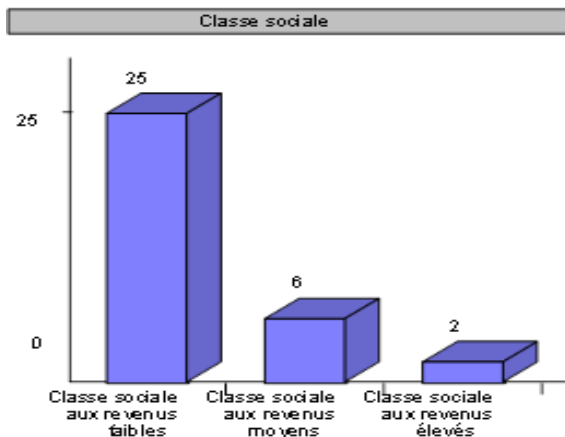
This diagram clearly shows a fairly significant level of economic precariousness among these ‘Bizi’ practitioners. There are 25 or 75 low-income girls.8% of the workforce. Those from the less precarious and brightest classes represent 18.2% (6) and 6.1% (2) of the girls in the sample.

The comments below show the significant share of income in the engagement of these girls for the practice of ‘Bizi’.

*“My family and I live in precarious situations. My father lost his job. My mother left him. I had to stop school. I want to help my parents get out of poverty.”* (AGT, 21-25years old).

*“I am an orphan father. My mother has a precarious job with less than 100,000 to feed four children. She can’t take it anymore. So, I do what I can to help him.”* (ZBV, 15-20years old)

**Graph1: Social class of girls in Bizi**

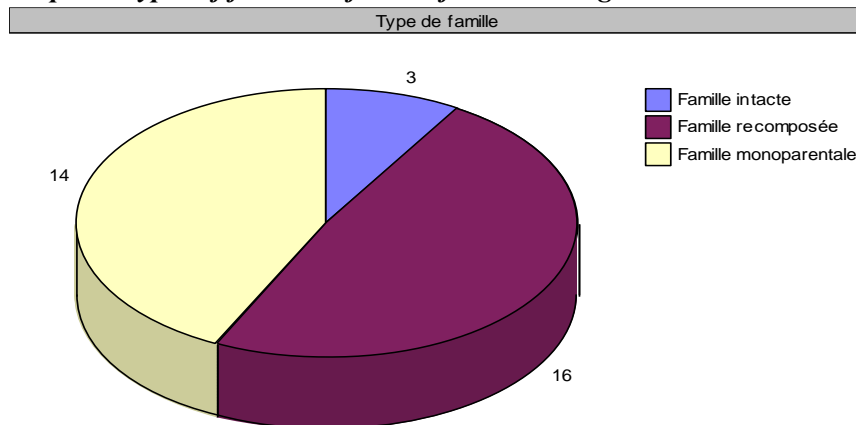


Authors, 2023

### 1-5- Family Type

One of the key criteria revealed by this study is the type of family these girls belong to. The “problem” families, that is, the blended and single-parent families from which they come, seem to occupy an undeniable place in their commitments to the practice of bizi. The results indicate that girls from ‘problem’ families represent 90.9% of the sample compared to 9.1% of girls from intact or normal families.

**Graph 2: Types of families of Bizi's female managers**



*Authors, 2023*

### 1-6- Family status

In this study, it groups the marital situation, parenthood and the number of children of the girls surveyed.

The observation regarding the marital situation is that the majority of girls engaged in this practice are single, they represent 72% of the sample. The presence of married girls, in relationship and cohabitation with respective percentages of 3%, 12.1% and 9.1% adding that of widows of 3% is certainly suggestive of financial precariousness.

With regard to parenthood, the majority of practitioners are 27 (81.8%) and are therefore mothers with responsibility for their child. Relative to the number of children, it does not exceed 3. We find that 14 girls or 42.4% have 1 child, 9 (27.3%) have 2 children and 4 or 12.1% have 3 children. There is a ‘non-response’ category for girls who did not want to give a number of children.

After a brief overview of the socio-demographic situation, we will present the socio-economic situation of these women; for it would seem that the economic variable is decisive in the engagement of this activity.

**Table 4: Marital status of Bizi's female managers**

Situation matrimoniale	Nb. cit.	Fréq.	Mère de famille	Nb. cit.	Fréq.	Nombre d'enfants	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
Célibataire	24	72,7%	Oui	27	81,8%	Non réponse	6	18,2%
Mariée	1	3,0%	Non	6	18,2%	1 enfant	14	42,4%
En relation	4	12,1%	<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>	2 enfants	9	27,3%
concubinage	3	9,1%				3 enfants	4	12,1%
divorcée, veuve	1	3,0%				4 enfants	0	0,0%
Autres.	0	0,0%				5 enfants et plus.	0	0,0%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>				<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Authors, 2023*

### 1-7- Professional situation outside of business management

The socio-professional situation refers to the activities they carry out thus guiding their socio-economic status. Thus, the study reveals that women engaged in this prostitution activity for the majority is not unemployed. The reality portrayed is that most of them have activities, but they feel that they do not generate sufficient income to meet their responsibilities and needs. The following table shows the corresponding distributions.

The study reveals that most of the practitioners or practitioners of bizi are not 'unemployable' people. 27 of them have activities outside the bizi management. Those who work in the informal sector seem to be mostly engaged in the bizi. Bizi handlers are about 60.61% in the informal sector. Students represent 18.2%. Public and private workers represent 3% each. This important engagement of people in the informal sector and students/students could be understood by a more flexible schedule which promotes their availability to respond to customer requests. Finally, we note that these activities have become 'screens' that allow them to hide their second activity.

As mentioned earlier, bizi managers have indicated that the socio-economic situation through the exercise of their ordinary activity is not bright. Does it improve with the practice of bizi?

**Table 5: Socio-professional situation of girls in Bizi**

Statut socioéconomique en dehors du biz	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
Non réponse	3	9,1%
Elève/Étudiante	6	18,2%
Travailleuse du public	1	3,0%
Travailleuse du privé	1	3,0%
Commerçante	8	24,2%
Coiffeuse	3	9,1%
Couturière	1	3,0%
Serveuse de maquis/bar	4	12,1%
Gérante de maquis/bar/hôtel	1	3,0%
Activités libérales	2	6,1%
Sans emploi	2	6,1%
Au chômage	0	0,0%
Autres.	1	3,0%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Authors, 2023*



## 1-8- Economic situation thanks to bizi

Looking at the previous table, we see that these activities are «screens» that facilitate the discreet practice of bizi as an important source of economic income. Indeed, to the question of whether this activity is profitable, 32 managers or 97% answer in the affirmative. The management of bizi would bring monthly between 50000 f CFA and 200000 f CFA for the less fortunate and more than 500000 for the luckiest. The majority are between 200000 f CFA and 500000 f CFA. The following table shows more clearly the distribution.

**Table 5: Monthly earnings of Bizi's female managers**

Gains mensuels du Bizi	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
50 000-200 000	6	18,2%
200 000-350 000	14	42,4%
350 000-500 000	11	33,3%
500 000-plus	2	6,1%
Autres.	0	0,0%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Authors, 2023*

## 2- Girls' Bizi Manager Journey

This axis takes into account the place of origin and residence, the technique or method used to enter the activity, the operating mode to have customers as well as the duration in the management of bizi.

### 2-1- Place of origin and residence

The provenance is diverse. Although girls come from cities in the interior and ECOWAS countries accounting for 12.1% and 15.2% respectively, it is noted that the majority of bizi managers are from the district of Abidjan. Indeed, 72.7% come from 11 communes in this district. The communes of Yopougon and Abobo occupy the first and second place. As for the place of residence of these managers, it is the municipality of Yopougon which brings together more with 72.7% of the girls.

**Table 6: Places of origin and residence of Bizi's female managers**

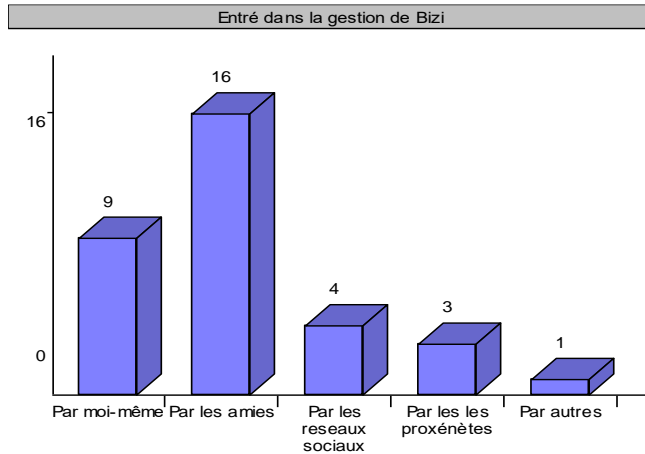
Lieu de provenance	Nb. cit.	Fréq.	Lieu de résidence	Nb. cit.	Fréq.
Yopougon	9	27,3%	Yopougon	24	72,7%
Abobo	4	12,1%	Abobo	1	3,0%
Adjamé	2	6,1%	Adjamé	3	9,1%
Attécoubé	2	6,1%	Attécoubé	0	0,0%
Bingerville	1	3,0%	Bingerville	0	0,0%
Anyama	1	3,0%	Anyama	2	6,1%
Songon	0	0,0%	Songon	0	0,0%
Port-Bouët	1	3,0%	Port-Bouët	0	0,0%
Koumassi	1	3,0%	Koumassi	0	0,0%
Marcory	1	3,0%	Marcory	0	0,0%
Cocody	1	3,0%	Cocody	1	3,0%
Plateau	0	0,0%	Plateau	0	0,0%
Treichville	1	3,0%	Treichville.	2	6,1%
Intérieur du pays	4	12,1%	<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>
CEDEAO	5	15,2%			
Autres.	0	0,0%			
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>			

*Authors, 2023*

### 2-2- Bizi Management Entry Techniques

As for the integration procedure in the field of bizi management, it is varied. It is made majority through friends or auto-entry. Those who joined the community through friends are 16 or 48.5%. Girls entering the activity without external intervention represent 27.3%. 4 or 12.1% of girls who practice this activity entered through social networks against 3 or 9.1% through pimps.

**Graph 3: Means of entry into Bizi used by girls**



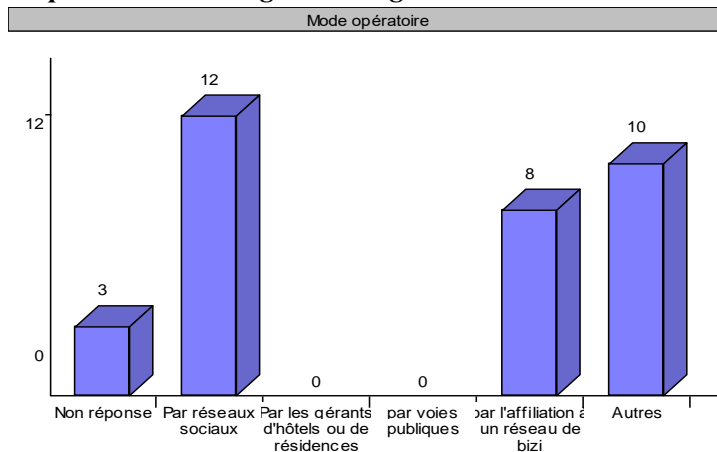
*Authors, 2023*

### 2-3- Procedure

After entering this activity, one of the difficulties that arises is the search for customers. How do you 'bait' customers or 'sell well'?

Various operating modes are presented. It appears that ICTs play an undeniable role in facilitating this activity with 12 respondents or 36.4% who use it. Those who are affiliated a network of management bizi represent 24.2%. Some girls (10 or 30.3%) rely more on discretion and use less visible techniques unlike social networks and bizi management networks, which they did not want to reveal precisely to easily continue their activity.

**Graph 4: How Bizi's girls manage**



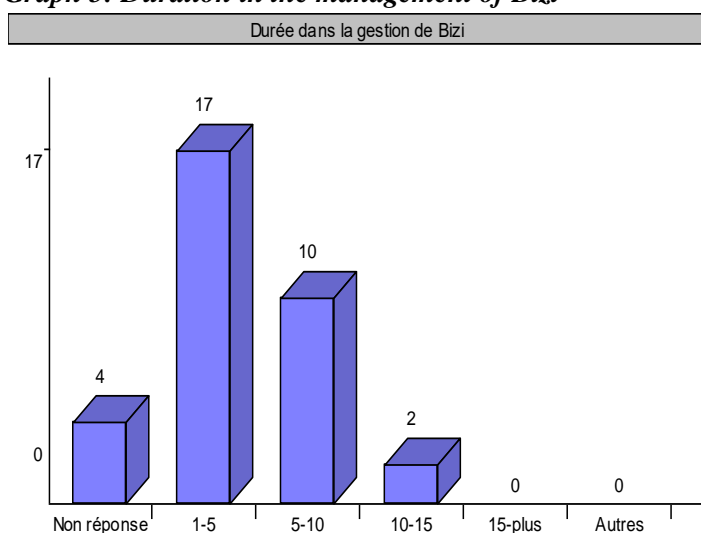
*Authors, 2023*

## 2-4- Duration in Bizi management

The practice of prostitution in Bizi's current strategy is recent. One could even deduce from this histogram which refers to the time spent in this activity the seniority or not of this practice. We observe that it is less than 15 years old. The majority of girls are hired less than 10 years ago, 51.5% (17) of them have been there for less than 5 years and 30.3% (10) less than 10 years.

In general, the practice of this activity poses many difficulties, including that of discretion, performance, the search for a safe customer (honest and paying well) and fierce competition. What are the logics that these girls adopt to face these presented difficulties not exhaustive?

**Graph 5: Duration in the management of Bizi**



*Authors, 2023*

## 3- Adaptation logics of young girls in 'bizi' management

By referring us to Piaget, we will remember in this study that the logics of adaptation concern both assimilations and or regular accommodations. Thus, bizi managers will integrate new data and then transform it to adapt to the new situations they face on a daily basis.

The logics of adaptation will concern on the one hand the thoughts that govern them and promote their engagement in this activity, and on the other hand the strategies of adaptation in the activity but also the strategies of loyalty or customer retention.

### 3-1- Thoughts or opinions that promote engagement in bizi stewardship

The following verbatims show us the diversity of opinions or thoughts that govern their engagement and retention in this activity.

*"I didn't go far to school, everywhere I go, they say diploma. I have to eat and take care of my children. What I go there (prostitution) is better than stealing, or?" (BSL, 26-30years old)*

*"I no longer have a father; my mother is a servant in people's homes. With a servant's job, it is difficult to feed and pay for four children's school. I do what I can to help him." (PFY, 21-25years old)*

*“I travel a lot. So, when I arrive, I am in the big clubs or restaurants”.* (GNM, 36-40 years old)

*“The manager manages an app or dating site. Discreetly I signed up. And I’m comfortable with that. It’s safe and it pays off.”* (LJQ, 15-20years old)

*“I am not an Ivorian. I am not known here. So, it suits me”.* (XTS, 15-20 years old)

*“I’ve got it in my head that it’s the only alternative. I’m really into it. I’M HAPPY IN IT. So, I go as far as I can from my neighbourhood to do it.”* (MRP, 21-25years old)

*“I am divorced and alone. I am not accountable to anyone because no one is helping me. This activity allows me to support myself and live without bothering anyone.”* (PFY, 21-25years old)

*“I consider it my main activity”.* (SNL, 21-25 years old)

*“The people we found here don’t have a good job. I’m content with that to survive.”* (CDF, 21-25).

What should be remembered from their analyses is that these thinking logics are mostly related to their precarious financial and social situations. These life situations motivate them and forge their thoughts, thus promoting their guilt-free. The survey reveals that 42.4% are motivated by meeting the needs of their families and 48.5% are motivated to meet their personal needs. The despair of having no other alternative or means than to exercise this activity, in order to ensure their well-being and to provide for their families is the main logic of these young women’s thoughts.

### **3-2- Strategies for adapting to Bizi practice**

Coping strategies in this activity are legion. However, after analysis, we can retain some of them in view of their recurrence in the answers of the respondents. Adaptation strategies will focus on the maintenance mechanisms in the activity. The first maintenance mechanism is related to the psychological state. Indeed, they have developed a mechanism of protection by detaching themselves from judgments and thus ignoring the social reaction. Therefore, one of the techniques will consist in using a socio-professional status to serve as a screen for the management of the bizi, this status allows them to exercise in complete peace the prostitutional activity. Thus, they are for the most part sheltered from judgements and hostile looks.

In this regard, the respondent states:

*“I don’t care how society reacts. People will always judge and my situation will stay that way if I don’t move.”* (VNB, 21-25years old)

We note that screen activities also allow them to hold during periods when there is little solicitation. Other techniques will be to promote it by attaching the services of managers for marketing and customer search, or to be a regular member of clubs or bar that facilitates meetings. Another is to be more independent by promoting it through social networks. Finally, the boldest strategy is to frequent upscale hotels or restaurants by focusing on their elegance not to miss proposals.

The comments below illustrate these mechanisms or techniques of maintenance in the practice of bizi. For screen activities, the following respondents indicate that:

*“I take advantage of my waitress activity to carry out my activities”.* (XTS, 15-20 years old)

*“My job covers me well to manage my bizi”*. (LJQ, 15-20 years old)

*“I trade between Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea and therefore I profit from it”*. (YRJ, 21-25years old)

For those who prioritize managers and clubs, the following comments were made:

*“To boost my business, I hang on to my manager who supports me enormously by putting me on good people”*. (BSL, 26-30 years old)

*“I put myself in the network of a manager who does a lot for me”*. (SNL, 21-25 years old)

*“I am affiliated with several clubs. We see each other regularly at festive events that are organized by members once or twice a month”* (PFY, 21-25years old)

*“Managers are my marketers. I owe everything I earn to them”* (MRP, 21-25years old).

Other mechanisms or techniques are illustrated by the following responses:

*“I proceed by statuses in sexy on my favorite networks with a fake name and a picture of loan”*. (UMD, 21-25 years old)

*“I post my sexy statuses on my Instagram and Snapchat pages with fake names”*. (JDT, 31-35years old)

*“Networks help me a lot to be visible”*. (DPI, 21-25 years old)

*“In the big hotels or restaurants, I always put myself chic”*. (GNM, 36-40 years old)

*“I spend most of my time at the bar to make myself available. And my boss likes it.”* (ORE, 26-30years old)

### **3-3- Client Retention Strategies**

The practice of this activity requires a number of constant and innovative dispositions. To have a loyal and serious clientele, the strategies are multiple. Some are about safety and discretion, some about hygiene, availability and some about performance.

In terms of security and discretion, for example, girls opt for equipped residences in neighbourhoods with a high security rating. Also, meetings with customers take place in residences or luxury hotels according to the will of the customer because in these places, the customer is sure of discretion but especially of his safety. The words of this girl are illustrative:

*“My clients like my discretion as a choice criterion”*. (OBT, 31-35years old)

Hygiene and availability are essential assets for customer loyalty. The majority of girls demonstrate this through the following verbatims:

*“To maintain my clientele, I make myself available to them. I am always there for them and I am ready for them. In return, they are kind and generous.”* (BSL, 26-30years old)

*“My availability is my main asset”.* (LJQ, 15-20 years old)

*“I am beautiful and always well cared for with a smell of good perfume”.* (UMD, 21-25 years old)

*“I take care of my look and I wear designer and very clean clothes. This sets me apart from other girls. I rent a studio class”.* (AST, 26-30 years old)

It should be noted that there is often an interaction or relationship between availability and familiarity. Thus, being always there for the customer will create a certain familiarity, he no longer simply sees the young woman in her initial role as a bizi manager but rather as a company of circumstance and some go a little further by becoming what are called ‘sex friends’. The following comments of the respondents show the change in relationship paradigm between them and certain clients.

*“A friendship was born because we see each other regularly. There are customers who like to go with the same girl for personal reasons.”* (BSL, 26-30years old)

*“I have specific and demanding clients. We see each other about 3 times a week. So, we are very familiar. Only I know them.”* (GNM, 36-40years old)

*“Beyond the bizi we spend a lot of time together”.* (UMD, 21-25 years old)

*“My clients have practically become my friends now”.* (JDT, 31-35years old)

*“All my clients have my contacts. They call me when needed”* (MRP, 21-25years old)

As for performance, it should be noted that it is not left out in the criteria of customer choice, therefore these young women give the best of themselves to seduce and retain their customers. This is not really understood in terms of duration, since time is taken into account in the amount to be paid. It is more a question in this case of the offer of the different services that can allow the managers of bizi in the satisfaction of certain practices and fantasies of the customers. In this regard, some respondents mentioned the following:

*“Customers are not complicated. Just give in to their whims. And then they prefer you over other girls.”* (MRP, 21-25years old)

*“My clients are special and generous”.* (YRT, 21-25 years old)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As Mathieu (2015) points out, behind the simple definition of prostitution as the exchange of sexual services for remuneration, lies an infinitely more complex and plural reality. Previous studies on the issue of prostitution in descriptive, comprehensive and explanatory approaches have highlighted multiple factors in particular related to individual social and economic characteristics. Overall, the analysis of the data presented, social, educational and economic variables intervene primarily in the engagement of these girls in the bizi (Kouamé, 2021; Gueu, 2016; Bamba, 2014). These studies generally address the issue of profiles and career paths in a furtive way. This study aims to be more ostensible with a particular emphasis on profiles, the paths and logics of adaptation of girls in 'bizi' management. The profile refers to the set of socio-demographic and economic characteristics that define the respondents. These girls or women are considered relatively young. Of the six age sections retained, the most represented is that of 21-25 years old. Even if several nationalities are represented it can be said that this activity has been «nationalized» in view of the number of Ivorian women involved. From the point of view of education, the study shows that most of them have a primary level of education. Also, there is some significant economic fragility among 'Bizi' practitioners. The type of family from which they come seems to occupy an undeniable place in their commitments. To this end, the so-called "problem" families, that is to say single-parent families, are representative of the majority of the respondents. On the matrimonial level, the observation is that the majority of girls engaged in this practice are single, mothers and heads of family. The socio-professional situation which confirms their socio-economic status shows that most of these women engaged in this prostitutional activity are not without employment although they feel that their activity outside the practice of bizi does not generate significant income to meet their responsibilities and needs. These "screen" activities facilitate the discrete practice of bizi as an important source of economic income. It is a profitable activity. In terms of route, it is necessary to take into account the provenance and the residence. But also, the integration procedure and the duration in the practice of the bizi. Thus, we note that the provenance is all around although the communes of Yopougon and Abobo occupy the first and second place. As for the places of residences, it is the municipality of Yopougon that brings together the most of these managers. The integration procedure is varied but is majority through friends or self-interest. The life time in this activity is less than ten years for the majority of them. To face the difficulties mentioned in connection with responsibilities but above all judgment and social reaction, they have developed logics of adaptation that concern on the one hand the thoughts that govern them and promote their commitment in this activity, and other strategies of adaptation in the activity but also strategies of customer loyalty.

What should be remembered from their analyses is that these thinking logics are mostly related to their precarious financial and social situations. These life situations motivate them and shape their thoughts, thus favoring their exoneration which promotes distancing between them and external judgments against them.

Adaptation strategies will focus on the maintenance mechanisms in the activity. The first maintenance mechanism is related to the psychological state. Indeed, they have developed a mechanism of protection by detaching themselves from judgments and thus ignoring the social reaction. Therefore, one of the techniques will consist in using a socio-professional status to serve as a screen for the management of the bizi; this status allows them to exercise in all tranquility the prostitutional activity. Thus, they are for the most part sheltered from judgements and hostile looks. Other techniques will consist in promoting the phenomenon by attaching the services of managers for marketing and customer search, or to be a regular member of clubs or bar that facilitates meetings. Another is to be

more independent by promoting it through social networks. Finally, the boldest strategy is to frequent upscale hotels or restaurants by focusing on their elegance not to miss proposals. The practice of this activity requires a number of constant and innovative dispositions. To have a loyal and serious clientele, the strategies are multiple. Some are about safety and discretion, some about hygiene, availability and some about performance. Also, there is a paradigm shift in the relationship between them and certain clients. Total availability will create a certain familiarity. Some clients no longer perceive the young woman simply in her initial role as a bizi manager but rather as a company of circumstance. Others go a little further by becoming 'sex friends.

From all the above, we remember that, the practice of bizi is part of an issue of self-defense or the group (family) and/ or issue of survives as part of a defense-protection to create a balance against tensions (social, individual, etc.) they face. This study dovetails well with the social regulation theory of LeBlanc (1986) and the low personal control theory of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990). In their multifactorial perspective including socioeconomic factors, including individual low personal control and distortions of the social bond, these theories allow to understand this neo-phenomenon of bizi management.



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