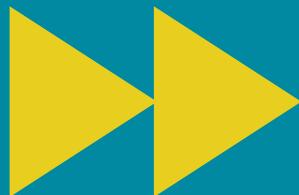


‘I trap her with a CD, then tomorrow you find her with a big old man who bought her a smartphone’

Constructions of masculinities and transactional sex: a qualitative study from North-Western Tanzania



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Introduction: Transactional Sex

“Non-commercial, non-marital sexual relationships motivated by the implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material support or other benefits” (Stoebenau et al., 2016, p.23)

Introduction: Aims

- Gain clarity on men's behaviours within, and perspectives of, transactional sex
- Unpack homogenous view of the role of men and adolescent boys in transactional sex
- Strengthen initiatives working with men and boys to shift social norms and for greater gender equity

Methods

- Focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews
- Transcripts translated verbatim from Kiswahili into English
- Thematic analysis and grounded analysis

	IDIs	FGDs
Young men (14-24 years)	8	4
Adult men <td>12</td> <td>4</td>	12	4
Total	20	8

Results: Masculinities and Transactional Sex

Men are expected to
provide material
items to their sexual
partners

Men should
demonstrate their
masculinity through
heightened sexuality
and sexual prowess

Results: Performing and Questioning the Provider Norm

- Young men had to ‘work very hard’ to provide in relationships
- Older men used the ‘gift method’ to ‘trick and trap’ girls, including those having a ‘money emergency’
- Some men were outcompeted for TS partners by others better able to provide

Results: Performing and Questioning the Heightened Sexuality Norm

- Men express a bodily desire for sex: ‘the body is harassing you’
- Monogamy unlikely to satisfy men’s sexual desire
- Men gain ‘swag’ by boasting about the number and young age of their sexual partners

Results: Questioning Transactional Sex

He has lost his self-awareness that he has responsibility for a family [...] he forgets that when he has more than one partner, his expenses will be too high, and there are important things that his family is going to miss.

(IDI, Older man)

I think that somebody that gives out money to get sex [...] his muscles are small [...] when you don't have money, [sex] stops there.

(FGD, young men)

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[My friends] always come [and say] “the wife at home is tiresome my friend, escort me here” [...] but] I don't need to embarrass myself, to lose my dignity and respect.

(IDI, older man)



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Discussion

- Transactional sex presents an opportunity for men to enact provider norms and heightened sexuality norms and align themselves with a hegemonic masculinity
 - Perpetuating women's and girls' economic dependence on men,
 - Sexual coercion and control – differentiate men from 'easily manipulated girls'

Discussion

- Men's participation in and perspectives of transactional sex are influenced by reference groups of other men
 - Non-conforming individuals are sanctioned (outcompeted, ridiculed)
 - Men mitigate threat of social sanctions by pre-emptive behaviours and narratives – directly influence participation in TS

Discussion

- Men who question transactional sex do not necessarily challenge harmful hegemonic masculine ideals
- Older men men discredited men TS participants for risking ability to provide for their families and protect children
- Younger men discredited older men using narratives of their sexual prowess, or love and trust

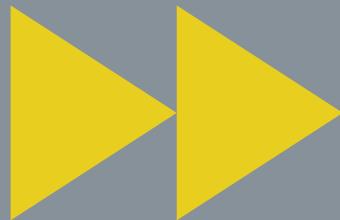
Limitations

- Strong ecological validity, but limited generalisability to a wider population
- Limited understanding of views and behaviours of older men non-participants in transactional sex
- Did not track changes in the same men over time

Conclusion

- Transactional sex provides men with an opportunity to adhere to gendered expectations
- Men are influenced by sanctions exerted within reference groups of other men
- Age and access to resources has an important influence on men's participation in and attitudes toward TS

Thank you



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