Measuring Social Norms and Attitudes about Age-Disparate Transactional Sex

Nancy Perrin, PhD
Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
13 October 2020
Age-disparate Transactional Sex (ADTS)

ADTS occurs between girls less than 18 years-old and adult men at least 10 years older

Negative health and psychosocial consequences
  Increased risk for HIV and STI
  Increased risk for intimate partner violence
  Stigma

Social norms influence ADTS
  Interventions may want to use a social norms approach
Create a measure of community’s norms and attitudes towards ADTS that can be used to evaluate future social norms interventions - be able to directly compare social norms and attitudes to help understand the process of change

Construct Validity & Reliability

Factor analysis for social norms
Factor analysis for personal beliefs
Cronbach’s alpha

Examine Concurrent Validity

Test hypotheses about association of norms and personal beliefs with gender, age, and experience with ADTS
Favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Socially and economically vulnerable communities

Rudimentary infrastructure

High crime and drugs activity with many ruled by drug lords

Over 14% of adult men engaged in ADTS
Based on previous qualitative work
Wrote items based on interviews
Team classified them into domains

**Domains**
- Girls motivations for engaging in ADTS
- Girls readiness of sex and agency
- Men’s motivations for engaging in ADTS

**Attitudes**
In your opinion....

**Social Norms**
In the opinion of the residents of your community..

Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5)

**Expert Review**

Clarity
Relevance
Importance

N=14

Generated 71 Items

42 items

Content Validity Coefficients computed for each item (possible range 0-5)

Items with score ≥4 were retained

Items with score <4 were reviewed for exclusion or revision

For redundant items, the item with the highest CVC was retained

Pre-test

N=17

31 items

Moved to the Psychometric Study

Dropped items related to drug trafficking (4)

Selected among items that were perceived as highly similar

Psychometric analyses

N=431

13 items

Final Scale
Communities selected according to geographically location and Social Vulnerability Index
   Three locations (Complexo de Maré, Babilônia and Chapéu Mangueira)

Multi-stage sampling plan (census sectors, households, resident)
   Randomly selected 23 census tracts
N=431

53.1% female

32.3% 15-17 years, 31.6% 18-24 years, 36.2% 25 years or older

45.2% described their position in the household as child or step-child & 38.1% head of household

38.7% had not completed primary, 36.6% had not completed secondary school
31 items

Examined if items had sufficient variance explained (communalities >.30)

Identified common items across Attitudes and Social Norms to be used in factor analysis

Attitudes
24 items with sufficient variation

Social Norms
23 items with sufficient variation

15 items in common to both Personal Beliefs and Social Norms
Factor Analysis

3 factors emerged based on eigenvalues and interpretation

2 items did not load on any factor for Attitudes and the same 2 items had very low factor loadings in Social Norms → they were dropped

Factor analysis of the 13 items had 3 factors with good simple structure

  All items had factor loadings > 0.35 for Attitudes and > 0.45 for Social Norms

  40.2% (A) & 46.6% (SN) of the variance was explained by the 3 factors
If a girl responds positively to the advances of a man on the street, she should have sex with him.

Girls that accept presents or protection from men should repay with sex.

Girls that use short skirts are looking for male attention.

Girls that spend a lot of time in the street are available to get involved with men.

Girls get involved with men to gain financial stability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Social Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Men’s Motivations (5 items)

Men feel more powerful in sexual relations with girls than with woman

Men get more pleasure from sex with girls than with women

Men think that the body of a girl is more attractive than that of a women

Men like to get involved with girls because they are easier to control than women

Men never refuse sex offered by a girl

Cronbach’s Alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Social Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Girls’ Readiness to Have Sex (3 items)

A girl with a developed body has the maturity to make decisions about her sexual partners and relations.

A girl with a developed body is ready to have sex.

Girls of 13 to 14 years old are able to choose their sexual partners and relationships.

Cronbach’s Alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Social Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attitudes vs. Social Norms

- **Attributions to Girls Behavior**: p < .001
- **Men's Motivations**: p = .310
- **Girls' Readiness to have Sex**: p < .001

Categories:
- **Att**: Blue
- **SN**: Red
Differences by Gender

Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attributions to Girls Behavior</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Motivations</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls' Readiness to have Sex</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Norm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attributions to Girls Behavior</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Motivations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls' Readiness to have Sex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences by Gender

**Atitudes**
- Women less likely to make attributions to girl’s behavior than men
- No difference
- Women less likely to say young girls’ are ready to have sex than men

**Social Norms**
- Women see the community making fewer attributions to girl’s behavior than men
- No difference
- Women less likely than men to say the community sees young girls’ are ready to have sex
Differences by Age

**Attitudes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributions to Girls Behavior</th>
<th>Men's Motivations</th>
<th>Girls' Readiness to have Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17 years</td>
<td>p=.120</td>
<td>p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social Norm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributions to Girls Behavior</th>
<th>Men's Motivations</th>
<th>Girls' Readiness to have Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17 years</td>
<td>p=.032</td>
<td>p=.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences by Age

**Attitudes**
- No difference

**Social Norms**
- Younger age groups see the community making more attributions to girl’s behavior than younger age groups

**Attributions to Girls’ Behavior**
- Younger more likely to see young girls as ready to have sex than older age groups

**Men’s Motivations**
- Younger more likely to see men as motivated to have TS than older age groups

**Girls’ Readiness to have Sex**
- Younger more likely to see young girls as ready to have sex than older age groups

**Social Norms**
- Younger more likely to see the community as ready to have sex than older age groups
Differences by Engaged in TAS

### Attitudes

- **Attributions to Girls Behavior**
  - Yes: 3.5
  - No: 2.5
- **Men's Motivations**
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 4
- **Girls' Readiness to have Sex**
  - Yes: 4
  - No: 3.5

Significance:
- **p < .001**
- **p = .003**

### Social Norm

- **Attributions to Girls Behavior**
  - Yes: 3.5
  - No: 2.5
- **Men's Motivations**
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 4
- **Girls' Readiness to have Sex**
  - Yes: 4
  - No: 3.5

Significance:
- **p < .001**
- **p < .001**
- **p < .001**

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Men
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences by Engaged in TS</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Social Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attributions to Girls’ Behavior</td>
<td>Those who have engaged in TS more likely to make attributions to girl’s behavior</td>
<td>Those who have engaged in TS see the community making more attributions to girl’s behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Motivations</td>
<td>Those who have engaged more likely to see men having stronger motivation for TS</td>
<td>Those who have engaged more likely to see stronger social norm for men’s motivation for TS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Readiness to have Sex</td>
<td>Those who have engaged more likely to see young girls as ready to have sex</td>
<td>Those who have engaged more likely to see the social norm that young girls are not ready to have sex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

- Norms and Attitudes on Age-Disparate Transactional Sex captures three subscales with parallel items for social norms and attitudes:
  - Attributions to Girls’ Behavior
  - Men’s Motivations
  - Girls’ Readiness to have Sex
- Personal attitudes are more positive than social norms for Attributions to Girls’ Behavior and Girls’ Readiness to have Sex.
  These are areas that may be ready for social norms interventions.
- Men’s Motivations are more entrenched with no difference between personal attitudes and social norms or between men and women.
- Psychometric properties of the scales are good, although Girls’ Readiness to have Sex Attitudes scale needs internal consistency to be improved.
- Scales do not exhibit ceiling effects.
  Promising to be sensitive to change in evaluations of social norms interventions.