‘You must get your wallet torn’
Achieving masculinities through 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
• Results
  • Provision norm
  • Heightened sexuality norm
  • Questioning transactional sex
• Discussion
Methods

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IDIs</th>
<th>FGDs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young men</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>(14-24 years)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult men</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>(&gt;24 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
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Results: Masculinities and Transactional Sex

Men & adolescent boys’ behaviours within and perspectives of transactional sex relationships
Results: Performing and questioning the provider norm

• Providing gifts and other material support is an important part of ‘being a man’
• Men have to ‘work very hard’ to provide in relationships
• Men use the ‘gift method’ to ‘trick and trap’ girls, including those having a ‘money emergency’
Results: Performing and questioning the provider norm

“That's when I start to remember that money, I get angry with these women I spent a lot of money on.”

“I trap her with a CD, then tomorrow you will find her with a big old man [...] he has brought her a smartphone. She abandons me and goes to the other.”

(IDI adult man)

(FGD adult men)
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: Performing and questioning the heightened sexuality norm

“A girl might be passing [and men] might be talking [about her]. Then one might touch her [...] There are [men] who will hate it [...] but he cannot go and stop him [...] because the men will say ‘you are jealous’.”

(IDI young man)
Results: Questioning transactional sex

“I see them as stupid fools who are spoiling children. An old man of 50 years cannot move with a child of 16 years. If you give birth to a child, what will he call you?”

(FGD young men)

“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)
Discussion

- Transactional sex presents an opportunity for men to enact provider norms and heightened sexuality norms
  - Factors including age influence individuals’ navigation of gendered expectations
  - Acknowledge multiple masculinities, and hierarchies of masculinities
  - Possibilities for highlighting positive alternatives
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)

  • Must work with groups of men, promoting positive role models, and peer support
Discussion

• Men who question transactional sex do not necessarily challenge harmful hegemonic masculine ideals
  • Gender transformative approaches are essential!
Thank you