

Examining Main Factors that Contributes to Homosexual Practices among Male Students in Primary Schools: A Case Study of Morogoro Municipality

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate the main factors that contributes to homosexual practices among male students in Morogoro Municipality. The study employed a mixed research approach along with a case research design. The sample size for this study was 135 respondents, including the Morogoro Municipality Educational Officer, Morogoro Municipality Community Development Officer, Ward Educational Coordinators from three wards, five Heads of schools, seventy - five teachers, and ten male students from each school selected in a tagged sample. The study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and group discussion tools to collect primary, primary, and published data. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent analysis using content analysis. The study also found that the main factors contributing to homosexual practices in Morogoro Municipality were sexual and sex education from media, health and sex education, experience learned during childhood in the family, sexual abuse for male students and peer pressure sure. The study recommends that, to mitigate these concerns, it is imperative to introduce effective intervention strategies. These measures could include media literacy programs to counter unrealistic portrayals, comprehensive and inclusive sexual education, support systems for victims of abuse, and guidance to navigate peer pressures.*

Keyword: Homosexual Practices

1. Introduction

The concerns surrounding homosexual practices are rooted in the risks they pose to respondents lives, including moral issues based on religion (Siker, 2007), worries about cultural effects on adulthood that might lead to the loss of reproductive abilities for boys, the threat of harassment (Marx&Kettrey, 2016), and the increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases (Valleroy, et al., 2002).

The origins of homosexual practices are believed to have started in European countries and then spread to other parts of the world through trade, religion, and education, often associated with sub - cultures such as commercial, political, academic, and artistic expressions (Jeffrey, 2010). The momentum for these practices increased during the family conflicts over supporting homosexuals in the nineteenth century, presenting challenges to the youth (Galperin, 2012). The European student uprisings and the U. S. civil rights movement in the 1960s further contributed to the acceptance and visibility of homosexuality (Jeffrey, 2010).

Nowadays, more homosexuals are "coming out" at a younger age and living openly with support from various spheres (Gary et al., 2012). However, challenges persist, especially for those who are not supported or "out" (Galperin, 2012).

Research on the prevalence of homosexuality among male students varies across countries due to cultural, social, and legal differences. Sexual orientation is a complex aspect of human identity, and studies provide insights rather than definitive numbers. For instance, a study by the CDC in

2019 reported that 8.2% of U. S. high school students identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Lindley et al., 2020). In Australia, 3.5% of male university students identified as gay or homosexual (Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health, and Society, 2018).

In the United Kingdom, a study found varying prevalence rates of common mental disorders among adults identifying as lesbian/gay, with differences across age groups (Semlyen et al., 2016). Similarly, studies in the UK estimated that around 2.6% of British male students identified as gay (Fish et al., 2018).

In the African context, discussions on homosexuality are often complex and divisive. Many African leaders oppose homosexuality on cultural and religious grounds (Kunhiyop & Adejuwon, 2020). While South Africa stands as a pioneer in recognizing homosexual rights through its constitution, other countries like Uganda have enacted strict laws against homosexuality (Dunton& Palmberg, 1995).

In Tanzanian public primary schools, the issue of homosexuality can create an unfriendly environment due to prevailing social norms (Galperin, 2012). This study seeks to shed light on the situation in Morogoro Municipality, considering causes.

The causes of homosexual practices in this context remain unclear, influenced by societal, cultural, familial, and educational factors (Curtis & Johnson 2019; Robinson, 2019). Effects could range from mental health challenges to academic difficulties (Kann et al., 2016), while interventions are necessary to promote inclusivity and provide support

(UNESCO, 2019; Human Rights Watch and Wake Up and Step Forward Coalition, 2013).

Although research on homosexuality among male students is growing, studies focused on Morogoro Municipality are lacking, limiting the development of effective strategies (Drescher, 2019). Understanding the main factors that contributes to homosexual practices among male students in Morogoro Municipality is essential for creating supportive learning environments and promoting the well - being of all students.

2. Research Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology that guided the study. The study employed a mixed research approach along with a case research design. The sample size for this study was 135 respondents, including the Morogoro Municipality Educational Officer, Morogoro Municipality Community Development Officer, Ward Educational Coordinators from three wards, five Heads of schools, seventy - five teachers, and ten male students from each school selected in a tagged sample. The study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and group discussion tools to collect primary, primary, and published data. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent analysis using content analysis.

3. Research Finding and Discussion

This study aimed to establish main factors that contributes to homosexual practices among male students in Morogoro Municipality. The findings of this study are presented below:

3.1 Sexual and sex Information from Media

Table 3.1: Sexual and sex Information from Media

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	43	57.3%
Neutral	11	14.7%
Disagree	21	28.0%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results presented in Table 3.1 demonstrate that 43 respondents (57.3%) agreed that sexual and sex information from the media is a significant factor contributing to homosexual practices among male students. On the other hand, 11 respondents (14.7%) expressed a neutral stance, while 21 respondents (28%) disagreed with this notion. These findings suggest a divergence of opinions among the participants regarding the impact of media's sexual content on homosexual practices among male students. However, given that a majority (57.3%) concurred with the idea, it implies that a significant proportion of respondents perceive media exposure as playing a role in the prevalence of homosexual practices among male students. These findings were supported by a respondent in an interview who pointed the following:

Specifically, these risky sexual practices were found to be earlier initiation of sexual activity and an increase of sexual

oriented and erotica themes in media. Different theories can be used to explain the reasons behind why respondents engage in same sex practices from differing philosophical backgrounds.

The results indicate two factors associated with risky sexual practices. Firstly, there's a trend of younger respondents starting sexual activity earlier, which poses risks due to potential lack of knowledge, experience, and emotional maturity. This can lead to unintended pregnancies, STIs, and emotional repercussions.

These findings concur with study by Omona and Ssuka (2013) which found that, the prevalence of early sexual debut was 22.6% among female and 22.1% among male, respectively. Age was associated with early sexual debut, with more of the adolescents (37.4%) older than 14 year found to have had sexual intercourse at or before 14 years. Furthermore, gender was associated with early sexual debut among adolescents.

The second point highlighted pertains to a rise in sexual and erotic themes within media. This suggests that various forms of media, including movies, TV shows, music, and online content, have increasingly centered around sexual content and explicit visuals. This surge in sexual content holds the potential to shape people's views, actions, and perspectives regarding sex. Being exposed to explicit sexual material at a young age might lead to a warped comprehension of healthy relationships, consent, and safe sexual conduct. Furthermore, it could foster the acceptance of risky sexual actions and unrealistic perceptions concerning sexuality, resulting in significant repercussions.

Another respondent added that:

A freedom of school teenagers to access phones, computers and other electronic devices from their parents, peers and other community members have contributed much to erode moral firms of our children to the extent that they stimulate children to engage in sexual practices. Most of these devices have some installed programs which are unfavorable to the welfare of the children.

The results indicate that providing unrestricted access to phones, computers, and electronic devices for school teenagers has had a negative impact on their moral values. This open access exposes them to harmful content and various influences from parents, peers, and the broader community. Certain pre - installed programs on these devices seem to contribute to the degradation of moral values and could potentially encourage children to engage in sexual activities.

These findings align with a previous study conducted by Marx et al. in 2018. The study highlights that information about sex and sexuality is now prevalent in media and pop culture, a shift from previous generations. These influences are deemed harmful to the sexual development of young people. Additionally, the research identifies two key factors contributing to an increase in risky sexual behaviors: depressive symptoms and negative body image.

3.2 Poor Health and Sex Education

Table 3.2: Poor Health and Sex Education

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	21	28.0%
Neutral	6	8.0%
Disagree	48	64.0%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results presented in Table 3.2 demonstrate that among the respondents, 48 respondents (64%) agreed that poor health and sex education play a significant role in contributing to homosexual practices among male students. Conversely, 6 respondents (8%) remained neutral on the issue, while 41 respondents (28%) disagreed. These findings collectively indicate a prevailing consensus among the majority of respondents that inadequate health and sex education are linked to homosexual practices among male students.

The data suggests a connection between the lack of comprehensive education on health and sex and the occurrence of homosexual practices among male students. This implies that the surveyed respondents perceive a relationship between insufficient knowledge in these areas and the likelihood of engaging in same - sex relationships or behaviors.

Research conducted by Russell, et al. (2020) supports this notion, proposing that students lacking proper understanding of healthy relationships and consent are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual violence or participating in non - consensual sexual activities. When sexual education programs fail to address matters concerning consent and boundaries within same - sex relationships, it contributes to a culture of ignorance and raises the risk of victimization.

In light of these findings, educators need to be attuned to the need for a sensitive approach in integrating sexual and health education into students' understanding of their own sexuality. A crucial aspect is recognizing the various developmental stages of students, ensuring that information is tailored appropriately without revealing prematurely. Moreover, mere awareness of the issue is insufficient; effective programs necessitate active engagement between educators and students, facilitating the acquisition of the pertinent knowledge. These findings were supported by a respondent in an interview who pointed the following:

It is better to provide relevant sex and sexual education to students in the realistic situations. Sex and sexual health education can be a useful tool for educators, facilitators' students as well as community members. This also will make the students understand how complex decision - making is, particularly in sexual situations.

The findings from the respondents suggest that while many sexual health education programs can positively impact students' behavior, certain programs do not lead to definitive changes due to their design. This implies that even well - intentioned, comprehensive sexual health education initiatives can be ineffective in driving behavior change

when there is insufficient understanding of individual students and topics. These findings align with a study conducted by Josiah et al. (2022), which emphasizes the significance of sexual education in empowering students to make informed and respectful choices about relationships, sexuality, emotions, and physical health.

3.3 Experience Learned During Childhood in the Family

Table 3.3: Experience Learned During Childhood in the Family

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	42	56.0%
Neutral	11	14.7%
Disagree	22	29.3%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results presented in Table 3.3 indicate that 56% (42 respondents) agreed that childhood experiences within the family contribute to homosexual practices among male students. In contrast, 14.7% (11 respondents) remained neutral, and 29.3% (22 respondents) disagreed. This suggests that a majority of respondents see a connection between childhood experiences in the family and homosexuality among male students. The findings imply that a person's upbringing and early life experiences within their family can influence their sexual orientation, particularly in the context of male students and homosexuality.

It's important to note, however, that these results do not imply a causal link between family experiences and homosexuality. While family dynamics and childhood experiences can undoubtedly shape a person's attitudes and beliefs, sexual orientation, including homosexuality, is generally understood as a complex interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental factors. These factors are not fully comprehended at this time, and sexual orientation is typically seen as a natural and inherent aspect of an individual's identity.

This aligns with a study conducted by Boysen and Vogel (2007), which similarly found that childhood experiences within the family can contribute to the development of homosexuality. The study highlighted interactions and circumstances within families that may influence this outcome, such as overbearing parenting, lack of affection from the father, and overly close relationships with the mother. Inadequate sex education during childhood was also identified as a factor related to homosexuality. Additionally, the idea that homosexuality can emerge as a result of an individual's personal desires is explored. It's suggested that respondents may initially experience discomfort with homosexual practices on a biological level, but the presence of a homosexual community can gradually make them more at ease with these activities.

These findings were supported by a respondent in an interview who asserted that:

Parents related behaviors lead to homosexual practices among their children as well as uncontrolled experience

springs the speed for such kind of undesired behavior in Morogoro ongoing male primary school students.

Results from the respondent prove that, homosexuality is into a large extent as a result of the per - determinism of biological factors interacting with socio cultural ones. A biological link to environmental factors seems to be more possible cause of homosexuality than a gay gene. These results concur with study by Fish, et al (2018) which found that, high levels of parental stress contribute to the increase risk of parental psychological problems and turn to children's psychological and misbehavior practices like homosexual. Such an overflow sexual practices effect may explain why parents experience of stress influences their children's psychological outcomes.

3.4 Sexual Abuse for Male Children

Table 3.4: Sexual Abuse for Male Children

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	41	54.7%
Neutral	9	12.0%
Disagree	25	33.3%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results presented in Table 3.4 indicate that 41 respondents (54.7%) agreed that sexual abuse of male children is a significant contributing factor to homosexual practices among male students. Additionally, 9 respondents (12%) remained neutral on this issue, while 25 respondents (33.3%) disagreed. This suggests that the majority of respondents are in agreement that sexual abuse of male children plays a role in fostering homosexual practices among male students.

These findings suggest that regardless of the gender of the victim, sexual abuse can have deep and enduring effects on an individual's mental, emotional, and sexual well - being. Male children who have experienced sexual abuse face potential risks of developing various psychological challenges such as post - traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, low self - esteem, and difficulties in establishing healthy relationships. These consequences can manifest in different ways, including alterations in sexual behavior; however, it's important to note that they do not determine an individual's sexual orientation.

These results align with a study conducted by Shakeshaft and Cohan (1995), which identified that sexual abuse of male children can take both non - contact forms involving exposure to verbal and visual sexual content, as well as contact forms involving indecent assault. Notably, both children and adults can be perpetrators of sexual abuse towards children.

3.5 Peer Pressure

Table 3.5: Peer Pressure

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	44	58.7%
Neutral	11	14.7%
Disagree	20	26.7%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Data (2023)

Results in Table 3.5 above show that 44 respondents (58.7%) agreed that peer pressure is one of the main factors that contribute to homosexual practices among male students, 11 respondents (14.7%) were neutral while 20 respondents (26.7%) disagreed. These results indicate that, majority of respondents agreed that, peer pressure contribute to homosexual practices among male students.

These results suggest that societal influence from peers can play a role in the development or engagement in homosexual behavior among male students. One of the reasons for this is that, peers have the great influence to behavioral development to children. These findings were supported by a respondent in focus group discussions who revealed that:

The greater influence of behavior change is friends and peer groups, because when your friends tell you I have done that, you also want to try it. Because we do trust our friends so much in things that we shouldn't even trust them with. Especially the group I have here at schools, they makeme feel like an abnormal if I do not practice such kind of behavior.

The respondents agreed that peer pressure contributing much to homosexuality practices because peers have the ability to develop individual behavior positively as well as negative behavior. These results concur with a study by Sowton (2021) which found that, peer relationship, teamed with a nurturing home, play an integral role the developing mind and to an individual's overall perception. Parents and guardians have to direct their children in selection of good friends to maintain their personalities.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the influence of media, inadequate education, family upbringing, sexual abuse, and peer pressure were identified as factors contributing to homosexual practices. These practices expose students to risks such as sexually transmitted diseases, psychological distress, and increased suicide risk. Feasible intervention measures are proposed to address these issues and promote the well - being of male students. Implementing these interventions is crucial for protecting the welfare of students and fostering their overall development in both educational and societal contexts.

The study recommends that, to mitigate these concerns, it is imperative to introduce effective intervention strategies. These measures could include media literacy programs to counter unrealistic portrayals, comprehensive and inclusive sexual education, support systems for victims of abuse, and guidance to navigate peer pressures. By implementing these interventions, we can safeguard the well - being of students, ensuring their growth and development in both academic and social spheres.

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