

**EXAMINING THE MULTIFACETED ETIOLOGY OF JUVENILE SEXUAL OFFENDING:  
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS****\*Haji, Yassin**

Police Instructor on Police Duties and Police Psychology at Tanzania Police School, Moshi-Tanzania

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**Abstract**

The study examined the multifaceted etiology of juvenile sexual offences under critical analysis of contributing factors. Applying qualitative design approaches, the study sought to answer two questions (a) what are the psychological, social, and environmental factors that contribute to juvenile sexual offending behaviours? (b) How do individual experiences, such as trauma and exposure to violence, influence the likelihood of juvenile sexual offending? Primary and Secondary data were used, Primary data were collected using questionnaires, observation, interview and focused group discussion. Data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis, where findings were drawn on specific themes that emerged on the cases. Findings revealed that the juvenile sexual offences is pandemic and keep on increasing day to day in Zanzibar equal to and it is caused by pornography, poor parenting, lack of sex education and biological drives. It is recommended that the efforts should be taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Central Government at large, to address these challenges, this can be done by allowing in-service training to police officials on rights of juvenile offenders, counseling skills and police psychology, to have good infrastructure which are friendly to juveniles, for example, having isolated building with police stations to practice free and fair services, and having modern equipment and techniques for active investigation and sensitizing of community to have proximal relationship with police and finally, resources must be mobilized to effect this important exercise.

**Keywords:** Juvenile, Sexual Offending, Contributing Factors, Aetiology, Gender Desk.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The role of psychology extends into investigations by aiding police in gathering reliable information, minimizing wrongful convictions, and promoting ethical interrogation techniques (Shababa, 2020). Countries such as India, Australia, the USA, and the United Kingdom are at the forefront of applying criminal psychology within their justice systems (Sharma, 2021). In Canada, forensic psychology focuses on offenders' assessment and rehabilitation while training law enforcement to handle mentally ill individuals effectively (Gudjonson, & Haward, 1998). Research indicates that, juvenile sexual offenses are influenced by biological factors and psychological vulnerabilities (Aborisade *et al.*, 2018), with initiatives in countries like Kenya providing vocational training to rehabilitate young offenders (Mwangi, 2016). In Tanzania, despite the legislative advancements aimed at protecting juvenile rights, the prevalence of sexual offenses remains alarmingly high (Vag *et al.*, 2016). Report indicate a concerning rise in juvenile sexual offences in specific regions of Zanzibar from 2020 to 2021 (Zanzibar Police Report, 2020). To address these challenges, community initiatives have emerged to report incidents effectively while ensuring police protect vulnerable children. However Zanzibar Police face significant obstacles including inadequate resources and training on child rights (Maulid, & Mallya, 2007). This study aimed to examine sexual offences by mainly analyzing contributing factors since juvenile sexual offences is pandemic and keep on increasing day to day in Zanzibar.

**LITERATURE REVIEW****Police Gender Desk**

Police Gender Desks are crucial for addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), focusing on investigation, public awareness, protection, and survivor assistance. Examples from India, Brazil, Rwanda and Zanzibar illustrate their importance. India's Shiprapath Gender Desk, equipped with advanced resources, provides a survivor-friendly environment. Brazil had 475 women police stations, with similar initiatives in Argentina, Ecuador, and Colombia. Rwanda's Police Gender Desk, with 45 women police in 2009, emphasizes prevention and uses civilian investigators to increase survivor comfort (UNIFEM, 2009). Zanzibar has adopted similar models in almost all its police stations (Haji, 2020; Amour, 2014).

**Juvenile and Sexual Offenses**

Juvenile and Sexual Offenses refer to specific categories of crimes often handled distinctively within the legal system (Kokkalera & Singer, 2022). These categories are; a) juvenile offenses which involve crimes committed by individuals under a certain age, typically 18, and are addressed through juvenile justice systems that emphasize correction and rehabilitation over punishment. Common juvenile offenses include theft, vandalism, truancy, and underage drinking, smoking and sustain abuses. b) Sexual Offenses which encompass crimes of a sexual nature, such as rape, sexual assault, child exploitation, and harassment. These crimes are treated severally under the law, with particular attention to protecting victims and addressing the offender's actions (Kokkalera, & Singer, 2022;

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**\*Corresponding Author: Haji, Yassin,**

Police Instructor on Police Duties and Police Psychology at Tanzania Police School, Moshi-Tanzania.

Ryan, 2012). Again Kokkalera and Singer (2022) and Ryan (2012), argue that, both categories often require specialized legal and societal responses, including victim support, offender correction, and rehabilitation, as well as preventative measures and other forms of interventions. Juvenile offenders, defined as individuals under 18 years of age, commit sexual offenses due to diverse factors, including psychological and social factors which are low self-esteem, poor social skills, family conflict, substance abuse, and lack of maturity (Nelson, 2007). Behavioral and biological factors including obsessiveness (neurological and developmental factors), inheritance or genetic predispositions, and hormonal influences with males aged 14-15 more prone to such offenses (Sapolskay, 1998; Wright & Beaver, 2005). Environmental and cultural factors comprising urbanization, poverty, and inadequate supervision exacerbate offenses like voyeurism (or onography), rape, and molestation (Ezekiel *et al.*, 2017). Research studies in Nigeria (Aborisade *et al.*, 2018) and Tanzania (Anderson & Starvon, 2000) links juvenile offenses to poor parenting, broken families (or dysfunctional families), exposure to pornography, and social degradation.

### Psychological effects of juvenile sexual offenders/Offenses

Juvenile offenders' face significant psychological challenges in which the researchers listed them as; Mental Health Issues, such as, depression, trauma, antisocial behavior, and suicidal thoughts (Underwood, & Washington, 2016). Cognitive and Social Deficits which are poor impulse control, poor judgment, and poor academic performance are common (Beech & Ward, 2004; Barbaree & Marshall, 2006). Influence of Environment, including negative peer pressure, substance abuse, and lack of role models contribute to dysfunction (Center for Sex Offender Management, 2000).

### Addressing Juvenile Sexual Offences

Handling juvenile sexual offenders requires a multifaceted approach that integrates treatment, supervision, and community involvement to effectively address the unique needs of this population. The motivations and backgrounds of these offenders (or factors promoting or facilitating these offenses) can vary significantly, necessitating tailored treatment strategies that consider individual circumstances and developmental stages (Letourneau & Borduin, 2008; Geradin, & Thibaut, 2004). These includes:

#### a) Arresting

Arresting juveniles follows specific procedures to respect their rights. Juveniles are informed of their offenses, not handcuffed, and/but giving access to parents, food, medical aid, and legal representation. They are held in separate cells from adults, protected from abuse, and must be bailed within 24 hours unless detention is the last resort (Police General Order, 2022). Police psychologists play a role in removing children from abuse, educating them about criminal behaviors, referring cases for social assessment, and ensuring their rights are upheld (Piliavin & Briar, 1964).

#### b) Police Investigation

Police investigations involve documenting cases, escorting victims to medical professionals, collecting evidence (e.g., fingerprints, clothes), and visiting crime scenes. Criminal

profiling is used to understand offenders' behavior, habits, and demographics, aiding investigations. Profiling includes techniques such as geographic, crime scene, psychological, and suspect profiling (Bartol & Bartol, 2013). Police psychologists also support behavioral adjustment, prevent relapses, and ensure children receive psycho-social support (Bauer & Calvert, 2018).

#### c) Interviewing the Suspect

Juvenile interviews are conducted in a stress-free, non-coercive private, and comfortable setting with guardians (and or legal presentations) present. The approach should be informal, empathetic, and tailored to encourage openness using open-ended and probing questions. Interviews last 60-90 minutes with breaks and focus on creating a safe environment to prevent abuse (Vary, 2004; www.penalreform.org). Techniques include observing non-verbal cues like finger and eye or general body movement, using motivational interviewing, and building trust through empathy and active listening (Barbaree & Marshall, 2006).

### Offender Strategies

Offender strategies encompass a range of approaches and interventions designed to address criminal behavior, reduce recidivism, and promote rehabilitation. These strategies can be categorized based on their focus, such as targeted deterrence, online offender tactics, and risk assessment models (Lambert, 2016; Rempel, 2014). Sexual offenders use structured strategies such as choosing hunting grounds, selecting victims, approaching them, committing the crime, and determining victim release locations. They may use weapons or intimidation and commit offenses indoors (or at home) and outdoors, (Beauregard *et al.*, 2007).

### Crime Scene Handling

Crime scene handling is a critical process in criminal investigations that involves a systematic approach to securing, documenting, and collecting evidence. This process ensures that the integrity of the crime scene is maintained, which is essential for successful prosecution (Remo *et al.*, 2000). Key Steps in Crime Handling as proposed by Remo *et al.*, (2000)

1. Secure the scene: The first officers in the scene ensure safety and secure the area to prevent contamination of evidence. This involve establishing a perimeter using crime scene tape and controlling access to the site.
2. Separate Witnesses: Witnesses should be isolated to prevent them from collaborating with or influencing each other's accounts of the incident. This helps maintain the reliability of their testimonies
3. Scan and Seen the Scene: Investigators conduct an initial scan to identify key areas of interest and potential evidence. This includes taking photographs and making observations about the layout and condition of the scene.
4. Sketch the Scene: A detailed sketch is created to document the layout of the crime scene, including locations of evidence, which can be crucial for letter analysis and court presentations
5. Search for Evidence: Various search patterns (e.g., grid, spiral, and zone) are employed to thoroughly examine the area for physical evidence. Each piece of evidence must be

carefully documented and collected using proper techniques to avoid contamination.

6. Secure and Collect Evidence: All identified evidence must be collected, preserved, and logged meticulously. This includes maintaining a chain of custody to ensure that the evidence remains admissible in court.
7. Documentation: Throughout the process, comprehensive notes should be taken detailing every action, observation, and piece of evidence collected. This documentation serves as a vital references during investigations and trials.

By following these structured steps, law enforcement can effectively manage crime scenes, ensuring that all relevant information is preserved for investigation and legal proceedings. Police officers at crime scenes preserve evidence such as condoms, clothes, or semen, photograph injuries, secure the area, and collect fingerprints while ensuring proper juvenile handling (Schiro, 2000).

### Challenges to Investigation of Juvenile Cases

Investigating juvenile cases faces significant challenges such as; Resource Constraints including lack of fund, counselling rooms, and social workers/psychologists (Haji, 2020). Inadequate training which is caused by insufficient police training on handling children and a lack of child-friendly facilities at police stations (Mwangi, 2020). Finally Systemic Issues like corruption, poor societal cooperation as well as parental cooperation, and absence of legal representation for juveniles in custody (Giffin, 2010).

### Prevention of juvenile sexual offences

Police play a crucial role in preventing juvenile sexual offenses through strategies such as counseling, therapy, behavioral change treatment, education of information dissemination and community-oriented policing. Examples include; a) Community-Oriented Policing, that is, engaging stakeholders (schools, leaders, neighbors) to address issues proactively. Programs like youth focused community policing and sports mentorship (e.g., Tallahassee Police Athletics) build trust and guide youth (City of Tallahassee, 2013; Pegram & Brunson, 2018). b) Police Psychologists including providing advisory roles, designing education and information dissemination offend programs, conduct clinical assessments, and support rehabilitation (Gudjonsson & Haward, 1998). c) Prevention Techniques, this is including curfew laws, patrols, public awareness campaigns, and victim-centered approaches (Mac Vean, 2000).

### Effective Approaches

**Community-Based Programs:** Programs like the Louisiana sexual behavior problem treatment emphasize counseling, therapy, family involvement, and victim empathy to reduce recidivism (Dailey *et al.*, 2016; Letourneau *et al.*, 2009).

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** Focuses on correcting thinking errors, managing anxiety, and reducing irrational beliefs to prevent relapse (Saleh *et al.*, 2010; Barbara, 2010).

**Skill Development:** Education and Skills Training programs such as those at Kamiti Youth Training in Kenya prepare juveniles with practical skills like carpentry and dressmaking, fostering societal reintegration (Mwangi, 2016).

### Prevention Techniques

Preventive measures include establishing watch groups, recreation programs, capable guardianship (teachers, parents), and surveillance tools like security cameras and I.D. checks at community centers (Cohen & Felson, 1978; Hormel, 1996). Programs targeting social and behavioral transformation have shown success in reducing juvenile offenses and recidivism.

### METHODOLOGY

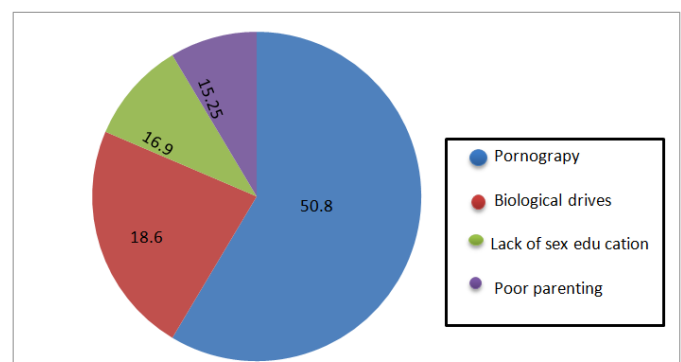
This is mixed study, where qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used together with case study design. It is mixed since the researcher wanted to study phenomenon in its natural setting using actual situation and quantifying some circumstances while spending more time eyeballing, observing and recoding an in-depth interview of the problem getting feeling and insight (Cress well, 2012). The interview, focus group discussion, observation and documentary review have been used as a study data collection techniques (Kombo *et al.*, 2006), to examine the multifaceted etiology of juvenile sexual offending at police gender desk in Zanzibar. Inductive thematic data analysis technique was used along with the consideration of all six steps as proposed by Cohen and Clark (2006). The accuracy of research tools was ensured, along with trustworthiness which include dependability and conformability. The idea is to make the study rise the intended focus. Consent form was provided to the study participants to ensure ethical consideration.

### FINDINGS

The study examined the of juvenile sexual offending under critical analysis of contributing factors using two research questions. The findings have been presented in accordance with the questions used in the study as follow:

#### A: What are the psychological, social, and environmental and factors that contribute to juvenile sexual offending behaviours?

The question aims to explore the complex interplay of various factors that may lead to juvenile sexual offending, which provide a foundational understanding through investigations based on Zanzibar police gender desks. The researcher intended to assess the main reasons(factors) for juvenile sexual offences occurring in Zanzibar, Tanzania. The study findings indicate the following contributing factors to the juvenile sexual offending in Zanzibar.



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Figure 1. Percentage of the Reasons for Juvenile Offences

The study comprised of fifty-nine (59) respondents (100%) of the entire respondents, including five juvenile sexual offenders equal to 8.4%, four social workers equal to 6.7%, three magistrates, equal to 5.08%, and thirty-two police officials equal to 54.2% and seventeen community members equal 28.8. The data in this question were collected through focus group discussion, interviews, and questionnaires. The findings from questioners indicated that, twenty-eight respondents (50.8%) said pornography is a contributing factor. Eleven respondents (18.6%) said biological drives as driving factor. Ten respondents (16.9%) said lack of sex education as a contributing factor, and nine respondents (15.25%) said poor parenting as another factor for sexual offending.

The findings from the interview revealed that, juvenile sexual offences in Zanzibar is contributed by many factors including pornography, biological drives, lack of sex education, poor parenting, child labour, drug abuse, divorce, lack of capable guardianship, moral decay, imitation of evil deeds, school dropout, girls and boys attractants to each other's, in proper dressing codes and body built of girls attract boys to have sex with them, lack of fear of God, and punishment from the God due to sin. The findings also indicate that, the society has changed its norms and traditions and follow western cultures (westernization), taking a long time before marriage for youths, urbanization, poverty, single parent family, and the disunity of the social members. Here one community member during the interview said that; *"Little children look at the phone with dirty things."* (Community Member Interviewed on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

On the same point, another respondent during the interview said that: *"There is an issue of biological d; they have reached to do the actions some of them are doing to some of them, to animals or sexual intercourse."* (The second social worker Interviewed on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

The findings from the researcher's observation, it was observed that juvenile sexual offences in Zanzibar caused by varied reasons, including the high rate of school dropout, especially in the coastal areas such as; Tumbe and Wambaain Pemba Island. Kiwengwa, Paje, and Nungwiin Unguja Island. Traditional rituals associated with drinking liquor and music in the areas such as Kibojeand Ndagaa in Unguja where several girls and boys participate fully. These areas have attendances of many reported juvenile sexual offences, this is according to the crime statistics from Courts and Police records of the year 2020 – 2022 (Survey Data, 2022).

According to the Regional Magistrate in Western Unguja, in 2020, there were 6 cases reported at the police station; for example, Mahinda had three cases (50%), Mkokotoni one case (16.6%), and Kiwengwa had two cases (33.3%). In the year 2021, the same region has eleven (11) cases, but Mkokotoni has five (5) cases (45%), Mahonda has three (3) cases (27.27%), Kiwengwa one (1) (9%), Nungwi one (1) (9%) and Bubwini 1(9%). Many youths in these areas spend most of their time surfing on social media and accessing pornography that stimulates sexual crimes; the school dropout rate is high, and many children join child labour in the tourism sector (Researcher, 2022).

The findings are supported by many types of research around the globe as; Darwin (1859) said that in the sexual evolution, males and females are naturally get attracted to each other, and

the accessible context of a potential victim is another factor Aborisade *et al.* (2018) in his research in Nigeria said that juvenile sexual offenders caused by biological reason, emotional arrest, psychological vulnerability and drug abuse Barbaree (1990) juvenile sexual offense is committed by juvenile due to poor parenting, poor self-regulation and some example are rape and sexual assaults, Ezikiel *et al.*, (2007) in his research in Tanzania said that sexual offences caused by poverty, poor parenting, moral degradation urbanization Anderson and Starvon (2001) said that juvenile sexual offences caused by poor parenting, broken/ dysfunctional family and pornography. The finding that 58.8% of respondents identified pornography as a contributing factors suggest a need for further investigation into how exposure to sexual content influences behaviours among juveniles. This align with existing literature that highlights the potentials desensitization effects of pornography on youth and its correlation with sexual aggression and unrealistic expectations about sex (Faupel, Przybylski, 2019; Maweu, 2022). Apart from that, with 18.6% attributing sexual offending to biological drives, this raises questions about the role of innate biological factors in shaping sexual behaviours. While some studies suggests genetic predispositions may influence aggressive or deviant behaviours, the evidence remains inconclusive (Foupe & Przybylski, 2019; Selek & Bolu, 2018). This findings underscores the importance of considering biological factors alongside environmental influences. The 16.9% who pointed to a lack of sex education as factor indicates a critical gap in knowledge that could be addressed through educational programs. Comprehensive sex education has been shown to reduce risky sexual behaviours and improve understanding of consent and healthy relationships (Buhori, No date; Berger, 2017). This suggests that enhancing educational curricula could be a proactive measure in preventing sexual offenses.

The 15.25% who cited poor parenting as a contributing factor highlights the significant role that family dynamics play in shaping behaviours. Research indicates that children from unstable or neglectful home environments as at higher risk for engaging in delinquent behaviours, including sexual offenses (Neufeld, 2021; Beech, 2006). This findings advocates for interventions aimed at supporting families and improving practices. In the broader societal implications, these findings collectively emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach to addressee juvenile sexual offending, including education and prevention programs, support for futures and public awareness campaigns. Addressing juvenile sexual offending requires an integrated strategies. That considers biological, educational, and familial influences. Future research should continue to explore these dimensions to develop effective responses in terms of prevention and intervention strategies tailored to at-risk or venerable youth population. This is due to the fact that, this is a disaster that needs to be resolve that affects the life of juveniles in the society who are future leaders and constructive part of the nation, they need to be protected and saved to help them make their dreams reality.

#### **(b) How do individual experiences, such as trauma and exposure to violence, influence the likelihood of juvenile sexual offending?**

Individual experiences, particularly trauma and exposure to violence, significantly influence the likelihood of juvenile sexual offending. Research highlights several key ways in which these factors contribute to such behaviors (Quinn *et al.*,

2017; Grady *et al.*, 2022). Understanding the influence of individual experiences such as trauma and exposure to violence on juvenile sexual offending is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. By recognizing the interplay between these factors and implementing supportive measures, it is possible to reduce the likelihood of future offending behaviors among at-risk youth. The findings indicated the impact of trauma on juvenile sexual offending as follow:

a) Types of trauma, this include the concept of childhood sexual abuse. Studies indicates that a history of sexual abuse is linked to an increased risk of engaging in sexual offending behaviours. This connection is often moderated by factors such as family dysfunction, where unhealthy family dynamics amplify the effects of trauma (Kaplan-Regan, 2022). The trauma experienced can lead to maladaptive coping strategies and distorted perceptions of relationships, which may manifest in sexually aggressive behaviours. In this way the findings revealed that, society has a leading position on causing the sexual offence in Zanzibar. When the researcher was asking the thirty-two (32) police officers at the police gender desk; the researcher wanted to know the magnitude of the sexual offences cases committed by juveniles in all police gender desks in Zanzibar; the researcher set the question on a regional-wise, the findings are presented as follow. The Urban West Region had three (3) cases in 2020 and twenty-four (24) cases in 2021, North Unguja Region had six (6) cases in 2020 and 2021 had eleven (11) cases, North Pemba Region had (11) cases in 2020, and 2021 has twenty (20) cases, South Unguja Region has six (6) cases in 2020 and 2021 has twenty-eight (28) cases. South Pemba Region has ten (10) cases in 2020 and 2021, eleven (17) cases; the common cases were rape, unnatural offences, abduction and indecent assaults; the summarized distributions are as follows.

**Table 6. Number of Cases per the Year 2020 – 2021**

Region	Number of cases per 2020	Number of Cases Per 2021
Urban West Region	3	24
South Unguja Region	6	28
North7 Unguja Region	6	11
Pemba Region	11	20
South Pemba Region	10	17
Total	36	100

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The findings show that the situation is very detrimental; there is increasing in juvenile sex crimes by about 56.25%; it needs a solution as soon as possible because it will affect many youths psychological and their life at large, and it will cost families and Government to use much money to treat their children due to undergo with a mental disorder like depression, anxiety anti-social which will result from joining with criminal life for the rest of their life To conclude, the prevention techniques are significant to save the life of juveniles and to protect them from sexual offences by making cooperation between Police and society.

b) Continuous exposure to Violence. Continuous exposure to community violence has been shown to increase the likelihood of reoffending among adolescents. For instance, research found that those who repeatedly witnessed or were victims of violence were more likely to face severe legal consequences and engage in further criminal activities (Wyrick, & Atkinson, 2021). This suggests that repeated exposure can desensitize individuals and normalize aggressive behaviours. In this study,

the researcher wanted to know who is most charged with sexual offences between boys and girl; the question was asked to 59 respondents (100%), and the finding showed that boy is the most abuser, Guardian number 1 said; "I have a son in my house who was convicted of rape." (Guardian 1 interviewed on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2022). This finding supports Miranda *et al.* (2001). They said that it is estimated that 90% of the sexual offenders are male with a minimum age of 14 – 15 year. Sapolskay (1998) argue that male is more prone to sexual arousal due to 95 % of the test one production that speed up to be more attentive.

C) Family dynamics which include dysfunctional family environments, characterized by violence or neglect, significantly contribute to the juvenile sexual offending. Adolescent raised in such constrains may learn maladaptive behaviours and have fewer positive role models, leading them to replicate abusive patterns in their own interactions (Kaplan-Regan, 2022; Grady *et al.*, 2008). The presence of domestic violence has been specifically noted to increase the likelihood of sexual offending behaviours significantly (Kaplan-Regan, 2022). In this study the Magistrate in Urban West Unguja said that in the year 2020 there were six (6) cases, including Abduction, four (4) unnatural offences, and two (2), while in Western Pemba received eight (8) cases in 2020 include four Abduction, two rape 2 and unnatural offence while in 2021 the Court mentioned nineteen (19) cases include thirteen (13) rape, three (3) unnatural offence, one (1) abduction, and one (1) indecent assault. Magistrate said that "Many cases we are charged with here in the courts are rape and escape which are mainly caused by family conflicts and their dynamics." (Interviewed on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2022). Individual experiences of trauma and exposure to violence play crucial role in shaping the likelihood of juvenile sexual offending. Understanding these connections is noted for developing preventions and intervention strategies aimed at at-risk youth. Addressing both the symptoms of trauma and environmental factors contributing to these behaviours is essential for fostering healthier outcomes for affected individuals.

## DISCUSSION

Juvenile sexual offending is a multifaceted and complex issue shaped by various interrelated factors. A study conducted in Zanzibar, Tanzania, provides valuable insights into the underlying causes of these offenses, drawing from data collected through focus group discussions, interviews, and questionnaires involving 59 respondents. Participants included juvenile offenders, social workers, magistrates, police officials, and community members. The findings underscore the interplay of individual, societal, and environmental factors that contribute to this troubling phenomenon and highlight the urgent need for targeted prevention and intervention strategies. A significant portion of respondents (50.8%) identified pornography as a major driver of juvenile sexual offending. The accessibility of explicit content, facilitated by digital technology and the lack of regulatory frameworks, has negatively impacted adolescents, distorting their understanding of healthy relationships and sexual boundaries. Exposure to pornography often normalizes aggressive and exploitative sexual behaviors, encouraging imitation among young viewers. In Zanzibar, cultural taboos around discussing sexual matters further exacerbate the problem by depriving adolescents of accurate information to counteract these harmful messages. Addressing this issue requires community-based interventions,

including limiting access to explicit materials and fostering open, informed discussions about sexuality to equip youth with a healthier perspective. Biological factors were identified as significant contributors by 18.6% of respondents. Adolescence is a period of heightened hormonal activity, particularly testosterone production in males, which can lead to increased sexual arousal and impulsivity. These biological changes, when combined with limited emotional regulation skills and the absence of appropriate outlets for expression, often result in inappropriate sexual behaviors. The findings align with research suggesting that males are more prone to sexual arousal and aggression due to hormonal influences. Without proper sex education or guidance, these biological drives can intersect with other risk factors, such as pornography or family dysfunction, increasing the likelihood of sexual offenses. Interventions focusing on emotional regulation and healthy coping mechanisms are crucial to addressing this challenge. Approximately 16.9% of respondents pointed to the lack of comprehensive sex education as a contributing factor to juvenile sexual offending. In Zanzibar, cultural and religious sensitivities often hinder open discussions about sexuality, leaving young people without the necessary knowledge to navigate consent, boundaries, and appropriate behaviors. This information gap creates an environment where misinformation and harmful practices thrive. Adolescents may rely on peers, media, or pornography for guidance, leading to distorted perceptions of sexuality. Introducing culturally sensitive, accurate, and age-appropriate sex education programs in schools and communities could play a pivotal role in preventing juvenile sexual offenses. Poor parenting, identified by 15.25% of respondents, is another critical factor influencing juvenile sexual offending. This encompasses neglect, lack of supervision, and an absence of open communication about sensitive topics. Parents play a vital role in shaping children's values and behaviors, and when this role is undermined, children become vulnerable to external influences.

In Zanzibar, where extended family structures often play a significant role, poor parenting may reflect broader societal challenges, such as economic hardship and limited resources. Strengthening parenting skills and providing family support systems could mitigate these risks and foster more stable environments for youth development. Juvenile sexual offending is also deeply linked to individual experiences of trauma and exposure to violence. Research has consistently shown that childhood sexual abuse significantly increases the risk of sexually aggressive behaviors later in life. The connection between trauma and offending is often amplified by unhealthy family dynamics, characterized by neglect, abuse, or violence. For instance, studies indicate that children growing up in dysfunctional families are more likely to develop maladaptive coping strategies, including distorted perceptions of relationships. This can manifest as sexually aggressive behaviors, as individuals struggle with boundaries and healthy interpersonal interactions. The Zanzibar study highlighted this issue, with police officers reporting a sharp increase in juvenile sexual offenses from 2020 to 2021. The overall rise in cases 56.25% underscores the urgent need for effective interventions to address the root causes. Continuous exposure to community violence also emerged as a significant factor. Adolescents who witness or experience violence are more likely to internalize aggressive behaviors, normalizing violence in their own actions. This cycle of violence perpetuates criminal behavior, making it harder for individuals to break free from patterns of offending. The study also revealed that boys are predominantly

responsible for juvenile sexual offenses in Zanzibar. This finding is consistent with global research indicating that males constitute the majority of sexual offenders, often due to a combination of biological predispositions and societal influences. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions that focus on both gender-specific dynamics and broader societal norms. The study highlights the importance of a multifaceted approach to reducing juvenile sexual offending. Key strategies include: **Regulating Access to Pornography** which include implementing policies to limit access to explicit materials and launching awareness campaigns to educate youth about the dangers of pornography can reduce its harmful influence. **Comprehensive Sex Education:** Introducing culturally sensitive and accurate sex education programs can empower adolescents with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about their sexual behavior. **Parental Support and Family Interventions:** Providing parenting workshops and resources can help caregivers better supervise and guide their children, fostering healthier family dynamics. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Addressing the psychological impacts of trauma through counseling and support services can help at-risk youth develop healthier coping mechanisms. **Community Collaboration:** Strengthening cooperation between law enforcement, social services, and community organizations is essential for creating a supportive environment that addresses the root causes of juvenile sexual offending.

## Conclusion

Juvenile sexual offending in Zanzibar is driven by a complex interplay of factors, including pornography, biological drives, lack of sex education, poor parenting, trauma, and exposure to violence. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions that address these root causes at individual, family, and societal levels. The study recommends that, by implementing comprehensive prevention strategies and fostering collaborative efforts, Zanzibar can work toward reducing juvenile sexual offenses and creating a safer environment for its youth in Zanzibar and wherever in Tanzania and the world at large.

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