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Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Peer Influence on Homosexual Behaviours in Selected Kenyan Public Universities

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Abstract
University students are in a critical stage of sexual identity exploration and seek to conform to their peers for social acceptance. Peer influence becomes a significant factor that shapes young people's perception of sexual behaviour. This study examines the undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours in selected Kenyan Public Universities. Social Cognitive Theory of Albert Bandura guided the study. Using a convergent parallel mixed-method research design, data was collected through questionnaire, an interview schedule and a focus group discussion guide from 225 undergraduate students, 40 peer counsellors and 4 university counsellors. Collected data was analysed with the aid of SPSS software using both descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation while inferential statistics such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used. The study revealed that there is no significant difference in undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours across the selected universities ($F = .410$, $p = .746$). Both quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that students strongly perceived that peer influence contributes to the practice of homosexual behaviours among youth at Kenyan universities. 83.7 % of undergraduate students perceived that students engage in homosexual behaviours because of peer influence. The university counsellors indicated that financial gains and the need to fit in a group contribute to homosexual behaviours. The peer counsellors stated that the need to belong and recommendation by their friends contributes to homosexual behaviours. The study recommends that assertiveness training should be strengthened and emphasised in university curricula to help students confidently say no to any unwanted peer influence. The study also recommends that university counsellors should continue to provide non-judgemental guidance to students who are navigating social pressure.

Introduction
Homosexuality refers to sexual attraction between members of the same sex (Cantor, 2012). Ahmed (2006) defines homosexuality as the sexual orientation and fantasies, with or without overt sexual behaviour with same sex partner. The term homosexuality was first coined in the late 19th century by

a German psychologist, Karoly Maria Benkert leading to labelling of homosexuals who were defined by their sexuality (Picket, 2011). In a survey of 34 countries, a median of 52% agree that homosexuality should be accepted with 38% saying that it should be discouraged (Pew Research Centre, 2019). The study reported that whereas 94% of those surveyed in Sweden say homosexuality should be accepted, only 7% of people in Nigeria say the same.

Many studies have been carried out on students' attitudes and perception of homosexuality, and the results showed that while some students had a negative perception towards homosexual behaviours, others were tolerant and accepting towards homosexual behaviours. For instance, Mabvurira (2012) conducted a study at the University of Zimbabwe on attitudes, knowledge and perception of homosexuality and the results revealed that students expressed high levels of negative attitudes towards homosexuals. Mtemeri (2015) carried out a study on attitudes and perception of university students in Zimbabwe towards homosexuality and found out that quite a substantial number either were neutral or not hostile to those who practiced homosexuality as indicated by 14% neutral and 24.5% who tolerated and 67.8% did not tolerate homosexuals. Another study conducted amongst students at the University of Development Studies in Ghana revealed that levels of awareness of homosexual practices among students were very high (Haruna, 2015).

A study by Raiz (2006) showed that contact with a homosexual acquaintance was associated with increased support for rights while having a roommate that was openly gay was associated with decreased support for the rights. Students perceived that the amount of contact students have had with gay community played a part in the development of overall attitudes towards homosexuality. In a study conducted by Wangeri and Otanga (2013) on factors related to sexual behaviour among urban adolescents, they found that more boys than girls were influenced by peers to engage in sexual activities. According to Brakefield et al (2014), peers have a powerful effect on adolescents' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. This is supported by Gardner and Steinberg (2005) who said that adolescents are known to take more risks when in the presence of peers compared to solitary conditions. Kingori and Kingori (2014) conducted a study which revealed that peers had a great influence on the sexual behaviours and activities of adolescents. Further, when the respondents were asked whether their peers had ever encouraged them to engage in masturbation or homosexual relationships, they found out that 23.4 % and 18.1 % of the respondents said they were encouraged by their peers to engage in masturbation and homosexual relationships respectively. This illustrates that peer groups heavily influence sexual decision-making and behaviours on campus. A study carried out by Mucherah and Owino (2016) on perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality among Kenyan and United States (U.S.) university students found that Kenyan students held more negative attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality. Further, the findings revealed that both groups acknowledged homosexuality exists on their campuses. The rising reports of same sex behaviours among the young adults' conflict with traditional social norms in Kenya. This leaves it unclear how undergraduate students perceive peer influence on homosexual behaviours.

Universities bring diverse students together in close networks. University students are in a critical transition stage where they are trying to explore their sexual identity and seek to conform to their peers for social acceptance. Peers greatly influence the formation of sexual behaviour amongst themselves through their social proximity to each other. Students are likely to engage in sexual behaviours approved by their peers. Therefore, this paper seeks to establish the undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours in selected Kenyan Public Universities.

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H01: There is no significant difference in students' perception of peer influence on homosexual behaviours in selected Kenyan Public Universities.

This study is significant because it will help university counsellors design targeted support systems for students who are navigating peer influence and sexual identity.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory. Albert Bandura introduced Social Cognitive Theory in 1986, proposing that human behaviour is shaped through a dynamic and reciprocal interaction among personal cognitive factors, behaviour, and the social environment, a process he termed reciprocal determinism. The theory was developed as an expansion of his earlier Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and introduced the concept of self-efficacy as the central cognitive mechanism driving behaviour adoption and change (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own capacity to execute the behaviours required to produce a specific outcome. High self-efficacy allows a person to act on their authentic feelings despite negative peer influence, while low self-efficacy leads to high conformity to perceived group norms. Observational learning, whereby individuals acquire behaviours by observing the actions and consequences experienced by others in their social environment, is a second key mechanism of the theory. This theory proposes that modelling and integration of what people observe is likely to occur when the viewer feels that the characters they see are attractive (Bandura, 2001). Social Cognitive Theory is relevant to this study because it explains how young people conform to the perceived groups' norms to experience group acceptance. Students with low self-efficacy are more likely to embrace sexual behaviours of their peers to have a sense of belonging and avoid social exclusion. When undergraduate students are among their peers they tend to feel more confident and freer to disclose their sexual behaviours.

Literature Underpinnings

This paper seeks to establish the undergraduate students' perception of peer influence on homosexual behaviours in selected public universities in Kenya. Frisch and Hviid (2006) noted that formation of homosexual identity takes time. Further, most pre-puberty children tend to consider themselves heterosexual and are reinforced into this by peer group pressure. Frisch and Hviid further note that, for the child who does not fit in the masculine female or non-masculine male, identification with the opposite sex peer group may prove easier. This can lead to gender confusion in adolescence and identification with others of the same sex who are suffering from the same feelings of isolation. Njiru (2006) observes that peers are an important factor in influencing sexual behaviour. Njiru further notes that males are more likely to give into peer influence than the females as they are constantly challenged by friends in their group to engage in sexual activities. This is supported by a study conducted by Wangeri and Otanga (2013) on factors related to sexual behaviour among urban adolescents which revealed that more boys than girls were influenced by peers to engage in sexual activities. A study carried out by Samperu et al (2025) on the relationship between peer pressure and sexual attitudes among first-year undergraduate students in selected public universities in Nairobi County revealed that there was no correlation between peer pressure and sexual attitudes ($r=0.107$, $p=0.028$).

Kerby (2008) asserted that home environment, the school environment and early sexual experimentation influence homosexuality. Kerby says that peer pressure also influences one to engage in homosexuality. For instance, a boy who does not like sports may end up spending more time than usual with girls and may be very close to his mother. This makes other boys call him mama's boy. With time this label becomes the boy's identity, and this may cause him to do things that lead to

homosexual lifestyle. Mbugguss et al (2004) in their book attest to this by asserting that a young person who has a problem fitting in with peers could be drawn into homosexuality to be accepted by the latter if they are experimenting with the behaviour. The implication is that home environment and peer influence are contributing factors to the young people adopting homosexual tendencies. On the contrary, homosexuality is not a choice, but it is based on biology (Boysen and Vogel, 2007).

In a study conducted by Pew Resource Centre (2003) the findings revealed that personal contact with homosexuals is a key factor in shaping people's views on homosexuals. Further, the study revealed that Americans who have a friend, colleague or family member who is gay are likely to favour gay marriage as opposed to those who do not. Capo-Chichi and Kassegne (2007) conducted a study among 122 men having sex with men (MSM) and found that the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants believe that a tendency toward male-to-male sex can be acquired from forced social pressure which means that one becomes a homosexual because he or she wants to behave just like his friend. Allotey (2015) conducted a study on perceptions of youth towards homosexuality in Ghana and the results showed that some of the participants were of the view that peer pressure led to changes in an individual's orientation. The study also revealed that friends influence their fellow friends on how to engage in homosexuality by telling them that if they joined them, they would get money.

Haruna (2015) conducted a study amongst 200 students at the University of Development Studies in Ghana and found out that peers (14.5 %) were among the sources of knowledge for homosexuality. A study conducted by Maina et al (2016) examined the predisposing factors to homosexuality among men in Kilifi town, Kenya and found that majority (41.7 %) of the respondents were influenced by their peers to have same sex orientation. A study conducted by Misigo (2022) revealed that lesbianism is mainly caused by social psychological factors such as peer pressure, childhood sexual and physical abuse, and poor self-esteem. This study concluded that this practice is prevalent in our institutions of higher learning, operates in secrecy, and follows a cult-like manner. The above studies looked at how peer pressure influences people to engage in homosexuality. However, this study aimed at establishing undergraduate students' perception of peer influence on homosexual behaviours.

Methodology

This section presents the study's research design, study site, study population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, pilot testing of research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. Finally, ethical considerations are also presented.

Research Design

In this study, convergent parallel mixed-method research design was used to establish the undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours. Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire, while qualitative data was collected using both an interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions.

Study Site

The study was carried out among third year undergraduate students in selected public universities in Kenya. These universities were Egerton University, Moi University, University of Eldoret and University of Kabianga. The public universities were chosen because they admit students from all counties and are from different socio-economic backgrounds. Third year undergraduate students were chosen because they are the most available demography to have experienced campus life, since fourth year students in many cases would be on attachment.

Study Population

The accessible population was 12,300 third year undergraduate students, 19 university counsellors, and 480 peer counsellors of the 4 public universities. The student peer counsellors and university

student counsellors were considered important because they would provide in-depth information on undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours since they interact more often with the students. Further, the students under study were more likely to open with peer counsellors because they are of the same age bracket and faced similar challenges.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

In the quantitative portion of this study, the students' sample was determined using a formula recommended by Nassiuma (2000).

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2+(N-1)e^2}$$

Where:

n is sample size

C is coefficient of variation N is accessible population e is error margin

Nassiuma suggested that coefficient of variation (C) is 20-30 % while the error margin (e) is 2-5 %. The researcher picked C of 30 % and an error margin at 2 %. When n is the required sample size, N is the total population of the four universities, C is the coefficient of variation (0.3) and e is the error margin (0.02).

$$n = \frac{12300(0.3)^2}{0.3^2 + (12300-1)0.02)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1107}{0.3^2 + (12299)0.02)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1107}{0.09 + (12299)0.004}$$

$$n = \frac{1107}{0.09 + 4.8386}$$

$$n = \frac{1107}{4.9286}$$

$$n = 224.6073$$

According to this formula, the sample size of 3rd year undergraduate students for the 4 universities was approximately 225. A proportionate sample per university was calculated.

The researcher used stratified random sampling to ensure that all the universities were adequately represented. Simple random sampling was used to select the subjects at university level. In the qualitative portion of this study, purposive sampling method was used to select 4 university counsellors and 40 student peer counsellors. 4 separate FGDs, one from each of the four universities, consisting of 10 peer counsellors each were used while each of the 4 university counsellors were subjected to interviews at different times. In addition to the sample size of 225 3rd year undergraduate students, 40 student peer counsellors and 4 university student counsellors from the four universities were included in the sample. Therefore, the total sample size of the respondents for this study was 269.

Instrumentation

For the quantitative phase of the study, a questionnaire was used to gather data on undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours in selected Kenyan Public Universities. A Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly disagree to strongly agree was utilised. For the qualitative phase, the study employed an interview schedule to gather data from 4 university counsellors. An interview schedule was used because it would allow in-depth exploration of respondents' perceptions regarding peer influence on homosexual behaviours among university students. In addition, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) consisting of 40 student peer counsellors was used to capture the feelings and opinions of peer counsellors regarding peer influence on homosexual behaviours among university students.

Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

To ensure reliability and validity of the instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study at Laikipia university which was not included in the final study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a pilot sample of between 1% and 10% of the sample size is appropriate for pilot test. Specifically, pilot was done with 25 respondents. Piloting was important because it helped to identify ambiguities of the items and vague questions for improvement.

Data Collection Procedures

Before proceeding to the field, the researcher first obtained an introduction letter from Kabarak University to apply and process for research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI). The research permit and the authorisation letter were presented to county commissioners, county directors of education and registrar academic and research of the sampled counties and universities respectively to be allowed to collect data. On the agreed date, the researcher visited the respective respondents and collected data using questionnaire, interview schedule and FGD. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the undergraduate students with the help of trained research assistants. Prior to administration of the questionnaire, the research assistants underwent some training on how to administer the students' questionnaire. The respondents were given forty (30) minutes to complete filling in the questionnaire and were asked to drop them in a box placed at the entrance of the lecture hall. The researcher also scheduled a meeting with the university counsellors for the purposes of interview sessions; every respondent was interviewed separately. The interview took about 20 minutes.

The FGDs with the peer counsellors were conducted using a semi-structured discussion guide. The discussions were moderated by the researcher who ensured that no one person dominated the discussion. The moderator was assisted by two trained note takers who took note of key points in the discussion.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation while inferential statistics such as ANOVA were used supported by Statistical Package for Social Sciences**.** Qualitative data was finally analysed thematically and combined with those that were analysed through quantitative methods.

Ethical Considerations

To support ethical compliance, the researcher used the approval letter from Kabarak University together with a research permit from NACOSTI. The ethical principles of voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were upheld. Respondents provided informed consent after being

briefed on the purpose of the study. The respondents were informed that data was to be used for intended research purposes only.

Response Rates of the Respondents

Data analysis was based on two hundred and twenty-four (224) respondents representing a response rate of 88 % in which 121 (54.0 %) were male students while the rest, 103 (46.0 %), were females. Within the usable data there were some items that were not answered. When analysing the data, these were considered missing variables for the study and thus the variations in the number of analysed outputs. Meanwhile, all the 4 university counsellors and all the 40 peer counsellors participated in the interview guide session and FGD, respectively.

Results and Discussions

The study sought to establish undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours in selected Kenyan Public Universities. The results are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Students' Responses to Statements on Perceptions of Peer Influence on Homosexual Behaviour

Statement	N	Percentage				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
Peer pressure influences students to engage in homosexual behaviours	221	34.8	48.9	10.9	4.1	1.4
Contact with homosexual acquaintance increases support from homosexual rights	218	17.9	36.7	29.4	10.1	6.0
Peers influence their friends to engage in homosexual behaviours to get money	217	16.6	35.9	29.0	13.8	4.6
Peers have a great influence on one's sexual orientation and behaviour	218	31.7	50.5	10.1	6.0	1.8
A young person who has a problem fitting in with peers could be drawn into homosexual behaviours to be accepted	221	27.1	48.9	14.5	7.2	2.3
Tendency towards male-to-male sex can be acquired from forced pressure from peers	222	21.6	45.0	18.9	10.8	3.6
Peers are among the main sources of knowledge on homosexuality	221	18.1	64.3	10.9	5.0	1.8
Curiosity of the youth tends to contribute to engagement in homosexual behaviours	220	21.8	59.5	11.8	4.5	2.3

The results posted in Table 3 reveal that the respondents agreed on all the items. All the items except two had over two thirds' respondents agreeing on the items. The two were; Contact with homosexual acquaintance increases support from homosexual rights and peers influence their friend to engage in homosexuality to get money. The results reveal that on "Contact with homosexual acquaintance increases support from homosexual rights" over a half (54.6 %) agreed and slightly higher than a quarter (29.4 %) were neutral. Regarding Peers influence their friends to engage in homosexual behaviours to get money, slightly more than a half (52.5 %) agreed while slightly more than a quarter (29.0 %) were neutral. The results in Table 3 indicate that the students were of the view that peer pressure influences students to engage in homosexual behaviours. A majority (83.7 %) of the respondents perceived that students engage in homosexual behaviours because of peer influence while 82.2 % of the respondents perceived peers to have a great influence on one's sexual orientation and behaviour. Further, the findings revealed that 76 % of the respondents agreed that a young person who has a problem fitting in with peers could be drawn into homosexuality to be accepted while 82.4 % of the respondents agreed that peers are among the main source of knowledge on homosexuality. The above findings are consistent with findings by Maina et al (2016) who conducted a study with MSM that indicated that majority (41.7 %) of the respondents were influenced by their peers to have

same sex orientation. These research findings support past studies that indicated that peers had a great influence on the sexual behaviours and activities of adolescents (King'ori & King'ori, 2014). The findings are also congruent with past studies by Haruna (2015) that revealed that peers were among the sources of knowledge for homosexuality. The research findings indicated that peers who have friends who are involved in homosexual behaviours play a major role in influencing others to engage in homosexual behaviours. These findings are consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive theory that postulates that modelling and integration of what people observe is likely to occur when the viewer feels that the characters they see are attractive (Bandura, 2001). The results also concurred with previous studies that asserted that peers have a powerful effect on adolescents' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Brakefield et al, 2014). The results therefore imply that students perceived peers to influence engagement in homosexual behaviours.

Concerning the information gathered via interview guide, on the undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours, one of the university counsellors mentioned that;

"Peer influence works against reduction of homosexual behaviours as the youth are easily swayed by their colleagues"

Further, another university counsellor indicated that,

" Peers influence their friends to engage in homosexual behaviours for financial gain"

Another university counsellor noted that *"the desire to belong and fit in a group influences students into homosexual behaviours"*. This statement was also mentioned by yet another university counsellor.

Moreover, through FGDs, the peer counsellors were asked to highlight some of the reasons peers engage in homosexual behaviours. Some of the reasons presented by one peer counsellor were;

"Students acquire homosexual behaviours in order to fit in their peer groups and have a sense of belonging". This is supported by past studies and theories that asserted that peers influence one to engage in homosexuality (Kerby, 2008). These findings were consistent with social cognitive theory that guided the study which asserted that individuals model behaviours of significant others (Bandura, 1977). Mbuguss et al (2004) noted that a young person who has a problem fitting in with peers could be drawn into homosexual behaviours to be accepted by the latter if they are experimenting with the behaviours.

Another peer counsellor had this to say,

"If people are doing well as lesbians/homosexuals then why not join them".

Yet another peer counsellor noted that

"The students, majority of who are youths share a lot of their views and experiences and borrow a lot from their peers". The finding agrees with Bandura's learning theory that postulates that we learn about many behaviours by observing the behaviours of others and model after them (Bandura, 2001). A reasonable number of peer counsellors had mixed feelings when asked to state their perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours. They mentioned that,

"Peers influence each other into homosexual behaviours; students who engage in homosexual behaviours recommend them to their friends.

Another peer counsellor had this to say *"peers influence each other into homosexual behaviours because they want to belong to a group"*

However, another peer counsellor mentioned that *"I perceive peer influence to discourage homosexual behaviours as heterosexuals encourage their friends to engage in opposite sex relationships".*

Some peer counsellors stated that *"homosexual behaviour was a choice".*

Another peer counsellor indicated that; *"Homosexual behaviour is influenced by genetics"*. This implies that students perceived homosexual behaviours not as a choice but based on biology. This concurs with Boysen and Vogel (2007) who observe that homosexuality is seen not as a choice, but it is based on biology.

Further analysis on the undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours, was done using means and standard deviation. This was accomplished by developing the indices of the perceptions. The means and standard deviations of responses to items were computed and then transformed into students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours index as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Students' Means on Peer Influence on Homosexual Behaviour index

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Peers influence students on homosexual behaviour	221	4.12	0.86
Contact with homosexual acquaintance increases support from homosexual rights	218	3.50	1.08
Peers influence their friends to engage in homosexuality to get money	217	3.46	1.07
Peers have a great influence on one's sexual orientation and behaviour	218	4.04	0.91
A young person who has a problem fitting in with peers could be drawn into homosexuality to be accepted	221	3.91	0.95
Tendency towards male-to-male sex can be acquired from forced pressure from peers	222	3.70	1.04
Peers are among the sources of knowledge for homosexuality	221	3.92	0.81
Curiosity of the youth tend to contribute to homosexual behaviours	220	3.94	0.85
Influence of peers on homosexual behaviour perception index	224	3.74	0.70

According to the above table, the means of the items ranged from 3.46 (SD = 1.07) to 4.12 (SD = 0.86). Most of the means were above 3.5, meaning that majority of the students agreed with the statements. However, there was an item such as "Peers influence their friends to engage in homosexuality in order to get money (M = 3.46, SD = 1.07)" which had below 3.5 mean. This means most of the students disagreed with it. The findings agreed with previous studies by Allotey (2015) which indicated that friends influence their fellow friends to engage in homosexuality to get money. An examination of the SD reveals that they were relatively high ranging from 0.81 to 1.08. This is an indication that there was reasonable variation in the students' responses to the items. The overall mean index (M = 3.74, SD = 0.70) was reasonably high, which suggests that they were of the view that peer influence positively influences homosexual behaviours. The findings were consistent with previous studies that postulated that a tendency toward male-to male sex can be acquired from forced social pressure (Capo-Chichi & Kassegne, 2007).

Further analysis on the undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours was done to find if there are significant differences between respondents' university. The perception means and the results of the ANOVA test are contained in Tables 5 and 6 respectively.

Table 5: Means Scores and Standard Deviations of Perception of Peer Influence on Homosexual Behaviour

University	N	Mean	SD
Moi	68	3.82	0.63
Eldoret	63	3.73	0.70
Egerton	73	3.70	0.68
Kabianga	20	3.76	0.64

The results displayed in Table 5 indicate that Moi had the highest mean score (M = 3.82, SD =0.63) and was followed by Kabianga (M = 3.76, SD = 0.64), Eldoret (M = 3.73, SD = 0.70) and Egerton (M = 3.70, SD = 0.68) respectively. The overall mean score (M = 3.74, SD = 0.70) of the four universities was considered above average given that it was out of a maximum of 5. There was consistency in response to items that were used to measure this construct. There were no major variations. The way the university students perceived influence of peers on homosexual behaviours is homogenous across universities. It does not matter whether one is in Moi University or Egerton University. However, it was not possible to establish by inspection whether the differences among the means were significantly different. This was established using the ANOVA test. The test results are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Comparison of Students Mean Scores on Perception of Peer Influence on Homosexual Behaviours by University

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	*p*-value
Between Groups	.548	3	.183	.410	.746
Within Groups	97.999	220	.445		
Total	98.547	223			

The ANOVA test results in Table 6 indicated that the difference among the mean scores of the four universities was not statistically significant, F = .410, p = .746. This is an indication that the students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours across the four universities were similar. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in undergraduate students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours across the selected universities was not rejected. The implication is that the undergraduate students across the selected universities share similar perceptions regarding peer influence on homosexual behaviours.

Further analysis on the summary of the students' perceptions of peer influence on homosexual behaviours is given in Table 7.

Table 7: Perception of Peer Influence on Homosexual Behaviours

Perception n = 224	Frequency	Percentage
For	193	86.2
Against	31	13.8

As shown in Table 7, over three quarters (86.2 %) of the students were of the view that peer influence positively influences their perceptions of homosexual behaviours. The results were consistent with studies by Kerby (2008) that indicated that peers influence one to engage in homosexual behaviours. The findings were also consistent with previous studies that postulated that peers have a powerful effect on adolescents' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Brakefield et al., 2014; Gardner & Steinberg, 2005).

Students open ended questions were analysed to get more information on why they perceived that peer influence did or did not contribute to homosexual behaviours. The findings are posted in Table 8.

Table 8: Students' Reasons why Peer Influence Contributes to Homosexual Behaviours

Reason n = 224	Frequency	Percentage
Influences		
Urge to fit in the group/class (be accepted, part of the trend, not left out)	35	15.63
Tendency to engage behaviour/beliefs/character of that one is close to (those who practice homosexuality talk positively and encourage colleagues to support it)	86	38.39
Fear of being rejected, seen as coward, the odd one out by colleagues	3	1.34
Weak/unprincipled when with friends	7	3.13
Do not influence		
Homosexuality is a personal choice driven by one's beliefs, moral not peers	14	6.25
Others (genetic, only negative peer influence)	4	1.79

As shown in Table 8, slightly above a third (38.39 %) of the respondents revealed that people acquire homosexual behaviours because those who practice it talk positively and encourage their colleagues to acquire it, over a tenth (15.63 %) said peers influence each other into homosexual behaviours because of the urge to fit in the group while 1.34 % of the respondents said that they acquire homosexual behaviours for fear of being rejected, to be seen as coward or the odd one out by colleagues. This is in line with findings by Mbugguss et al (2004) who assert that a young person who has a problem fitting in with peers could be drawn into homosexuality to be accepted by the latter. Those who believed that peer influence does not lead to homosexual behaviours gave these reasons: homosexuality is a personal choice driven by one's beliefs (6.25 %) while others (1.79 %) revealed that homosexuality is genetic. The findings that students perceive homosexuality as a personal choice are consistent with previous studies that indicated that homosexuality is not inborn or genetically acquired but a choice (Maina et al 2016). The findings concurred with a previous study that asserted that some students felt that homosexuality is acquired while others argued that you cannot rule out biological characteristics when accounting for homosexuality (Njiru, 2006). The findings are also in agreement with Boysen and Vogel (2007) who observe that homosexuality is seen not as a choice, but it is based on biology. The findings imply that although there were divergent perceptions on peer influence on homosexual behaviours, many of the respondents (38.39 %) perceived peer influence contribute to homosexual behaviours because people talk about the behaviours positively and encourage others to acquire the behaviours.

Limitations of the Study

The study was only limited to public full-fledged universities hence the results may not be generalised to youth outside of the university system. Some respondents were sceptical and uncooperative in giving the needed information. To mitigate this, the researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and guaranteed them confidentiality.

Conclusion

The study revealed that most of the respondents perceived that peer influence contributes to homosexual behaviours. The study revealed that the undergraduate students across the selected universities share similar perceptions regarding peer influence on homosexual behaviours. Based on the study findings as well as the conclusions, the study recommends that assertiveness training should be strengthened and emphasised in university curricula to help students confidently say no to any unwanted peer influence. This is because peers play a significant role in shaping each other's views while on campus. The study also recommends that university counsellors should continue to provide non-judgemental guidance to students who are navigating social pressure.

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