

Exposure to Sexual Content on Television and Youth Perceptions of Sexuality in Technical Training Institutions in Kenya

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Abstract

Youth in Kenya are increasing accessing television which has become more saturated with sexual content. The content rarely includes messages on safe sex or consequences of engaging in premarital sexual behaviour. This exposure may influence the behaviour and attitudes of the youth negatively leading to them to engage in premarital sexual behaviour leading to unwanted pregnancies among other effects. The current study sought to establish the sexual behaviour of the youth in technical training institutions, the extent to which the youth are exposed to sexual content and the effect of the exposure on the sexual behaviour of the youth. A descriptive survey design was adopted to generate data from the respondents of the study. Focus group discussions, key informant interviews and participant observation were used to generate additional data for the purpose of validating and supplementing survey information. A total of 420 questionnaires were administered to the respondents selected through stratified random sampling technique. From the study findings, it was established that majority of the youth were sexually active and that they had multiple sexual partners. The study further established that the youth are exposed to sexual content on television and that they perceive the content they watch to have a negative effect on their behaviour. From the study findings, it was concluded that there exists a relationship between exposure to sexual content on television and the sexual behaviour of the youth. The study therefore recommends that media literacy as a skill needs to be improved to enable the youth to interpret media content correctly in order to avoid the possible effects that are sometimes not intended by the media practitioners.

Keywords: Influence, Exposure, Sexual Content, Television, Sexuality, Youth, Institutions, Kenya

1. Introduction

Although there are several potential benefits of accessing television such as the promotion of positive aspects of social behaviour many negative aspects can occur. Several studies have observed that television viewing among the youth is pervasive and many of them view television alone with or without input from adults (Roberts, 2000).

It has been established that media messages will influence the youth if they are perceived to be realistic and valuable guides to behaviour (Truglio, 1992) has observed that adolescents who use television to learn about social relationships believe that TV portrayals are more realistic than do other adolescents. In cases where youth have little knowledge about sexuality, media may create expectations about sexuality (Baran, 1976b).

The effects of the media on behaviour have been observed in many aspects of social behaviour such as aggression, social stereotyping, pro-social behaviour and social attitudes. Most social scientists now agree that exposure to violence on television has a causal effect on aggressive behaviour (Huston *et al.*, 1992). On the other hand the effects of sexual content on television have received relatively little attention from social researchers, though studies show that there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that media may play a major role in the socialization of sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Roberts, 1982).

The reasons Roberts (1982) thinks that the media may have effects are: "(1) the adult nature of most programming adolescents watch; (2) adolescents limited access to or experience with countervailing information or ideas; (3) the 'realism' with which roles, relationships and lifestyles are portrayed, and (4) the overwhelming consistency of the messages about sexuality that are communicated" (Roberts, 1982). Many social scientists have argued that the reason why they think mass media and especially television is important source for sexual information for the youth is because parents have been known to provide very little information while schools tend to focus their attention on biological approach with little attention to romance and interpersonal relationships (Strasburger, 1993). Courtright and Baran (1980) further in their study established that family variable exerted no influence on an individuals' self evaluation and that media and peers were significant influences.

The points raised by Roberts (1982) are more important now than in 1982 when the observations were made. This is because there is an overwhelming increase in the frequency and explicitness of sexual content on television. Young people also have access to a much wider range of media content including other entertainment media which they access simultaneously. Many of the portrayals in the media show glamorous, young adolescents with whom many adolescents are likely to identify and imitate. It is for this reason that young people in this age group often name media figures as the people who they would like to emulate.

Several theories have been proposed to explain how and why media affect behaviour. Bandura (1997) observes that while children learn from the media, learning is more likely to be translated into behaviour when the role model is similar to the viewer, when the behaviour is realistic and when the role model is attractive and the behaviour is positively reinforced. The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997) suggests that adolescents seeing other adolescents enjoying sexual behaviour with no negative consequences have increased probability of observational learning and behaviour imitation. Research suggests that this process takes place through the process of “priming “ and acceptance of social stereotypes and schemas (Martino *et al.*, 2006; Ward & Friedman, 2006).

According to the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) the beliefs that guide behaviours are learned direct experience or significant others. It is observed that children and adolescents who may not have had first hand sexual experience learn and make inferences from the media. If sexual portrayals in the media shape adolescents beliefs, attitudes and perceived norms about sex and sexual behaviour, then sexual portrayals will influence adolescents’ intentions to engage in various sexual behaviours. The behaviours are the primary predictors of sexual actual behaviour.

Sexually active youth may intentionally seek sexual content due to social environmental factors such as communication about sex in the media with friends or family members. It is plausible therefore that media exposure to sexual content shapes beliefs about sex that ultimately lead to sexual activity and that sexual activity in turn shapes media use. Slater (2007) outlined theoretical justification for non-recursive relationship as an approach to media effects research. He observes that “the fullest and most accurate depiction of a media effects process can typically be modelled by assessing both selectivity and effects within the same analysis”.

An experimental study by Greeson and Williams (1986) established that adolescents who were exposed to music videos containing more sexual references were more likely to approve of premarital sex than adolescents exposed to randomly selected music videos. Other experimental studies show that college students exposed to sexual scenes from prime time television shows were more likely than those who had not to endorse the typical television view of sexuality: that men are sex driven and have trouble being faithful, that dating is a game or recreational sport, that women are sexual objects whose value is based on their physical appearance (Ward, 1995; Ward, 2002).

Burrkel-Rothfuss and Strouse (1993), Ward (2002) and Ward and Rivadeneyra (1999) tried to investigate the relationship between television exposure and expectations about the level of activity among peers. They established that heavy viewers of soap operas tend to overestimate the prevalence of sexual activity in real life and that more frequent TV exposure is related to greater expectations of peer sexual experiences. Infact, according to Ward (2003, p. 238) TV appears to create the impression that “everyone is doing it”. On the other hand greater TV exposure and greater viewing involvement have been associated with stronger support for recreational attitudes (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999) and acceptance of stereotypes as “men are sex driven” and women are sexual objects” (Ward, 2002).

Messages with sexual content on TV can have both immediate and long term effects. The implication of this is that exposure to sexual content on television programmes may change a person's state by inducing arousal, leading to inhibition of impulses, or activating thoughts or associations (Santrock, 2001). It may contribute to enduring learned patterns of behaviour, cognitive scripts and schemas about sexual interactions, attitudes, and beliefs about the real world.

Zillman's arousal theory focuses on immediate effects. According to this theory, if television content produces emotional and physiological arousal, some type of behaviour is likely to follow. Whether or not the behaviour is "sexual" depends on both the personality of the viewer and the environmental (Zillman & Bryant, 1988). Since arousal is not specific, it can lead to aggression, altruism or other forms of behaviour if the conditions are conducive to those behaviours. The study did not focus on immediate effects because it proposes that television influence is long term and it starts at childhood and therefore the effects are accumulated for a long time.

Bandura's (1986) cognitive learning theory suggests that individuals will learn not only from mechanics of sexual behaviour but also the contexts, motives, and the consequences portrayed. He says that individuals will attend to and learn from models who are attractive, powerful, rewarded and similar to themselves. He concludes by saying that individuals do not act immediately on what they learn from television but instead they store the knowledge to be used when their own circumstance provide an opportunity to apply it.

Berkowitz and Rodgers (1986), in their cognitive neoassociationists theory, propose a way of understanding violent content but it can be applicable to sexual content. Though the theory is similar to cognitive learning theory in many aspects, it proposes that viewers’ emotional responses are determined by learned media content and later behaviour. Huesmann and Eron (1986) argue that children learn social and sexual schemas (expectations) and scripts for sexual interactions from exposure to television. Scripts and schemas learned in childhood have particular importance because children do not have well developed ideas and understanding of sexuality. Content viewed may later modify such schemas or reinforce them, but will not have quite the

"primacy" of what was initially learned. Cultivation theory (Signorielli & Morgan, 1990) similarly predicts that mass media convey images of socially normative behaviour and those children absorb impressions and assumptions about who, when, how often, under what circumstances sexual intercourse can occur.

All the theories concur that media "effects" are directional. Youth are not just recipients of media messages; they choose the content to which they are exposed, and they interpret the content within their own frames of reference. Some theories, however, give a lot of importance to the active nature of the viewers in selecting and using media. It is as a result of this that "effects" results from availability of content to serve different functions and from understanding the viewer's interaction with the media of communication.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There has been a growing concern over the influence that television may have on the sexual behaviour of the youth. Information from research has clearly shown that the youth have access to television and that they are exposed to sexual content (Kunkel *et al.*, 1999). The effect of this exposure has not been clearly established by previous research. Strouse and Buerkel-Rothfus (1993) observe that viewing of sexual content on television may affect sexual behaviour of the youth. Ward (2002) also notes that endorsement of gender stereotypes was likely to promote sexual initiation and dissatisfaction with virginity as well as other perceptions regarding normative sexual behaviour. The influence as a result of exposure to sexual content may lead youth in engaging in premarital sexual activity which may lead to putting the youth at risk of reproductive health problems such as unwanted pregnancies and contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Previous research has failed to conclusively determine the effect of exposure to sexual content and its effect on sexual behaviour making it difficult to address the problem of premarital sexual behaviour among the youth. It is also clear that previous research is biased towards the western countries. The implication of this is that the issues concerning media influence that are peculiar to the Kenyan situation may not have been addressed by previous research, given the differences in social reality. Furthermore, little research has been conducted to address the issue in technical training institutions in Kenya. Therefore, there is need for a study to be conducted to provide relevant scientific data which can be used for decision-making or putting interventions place when dealing with issues relating to youth sexual behaviour among the youth in technical training institutes in Kenya.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

First the findings were based on a sample of youths found in technical training institutions in Kenya, and therefore youth who did not attend technical training institutions were not part of the sample even if they were affected by the television sexual content. Secondly, the study only focused on television use though it is clear that youth have increasing sources of media available to them, such as the internet and thus the amount of television they watch and its role in their lives may be changing.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in public technical training institutions in Kenya. At the time of conducting the study there were nineteen (19) technical training institutions and seventeen (17) institutes of technology (ITS). All the institutions, regardless of whether they were institutes of technology or technical training institutes, were referred to as technical training institutions. They are described as public because they are registered under the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology. They also receive government funding and are staffed by the Teachers Service Commission.

The study utilised a descriptive research design. The target population for the study comprised all youth in Public technical training institutions in Kenya, whose total enrolment was 25,384 at the time the study was conducted. The top management staff of technical training institutions was interviewed as key informants because they were perceived to have important information in relation to the study objectives. They included the principals, deans of students and guidance and counselling coordinators of the sampled institutions who were eighteen (18) in total.

The author used multistage sampling to identify respondents for the study. The author used the existing administrative regions where institutions were organised according to the following regions: Western region, Mt. Kenya region, Nairobi region, North rift region and Coast. The method was used to select six technical training institutions and from the institutions a total of 70 respondents were selected through dividing the sample size of 70 by the number of institutions. Out of the total number of 25,384 students who were registered for various courses of study under the period of study, 14,042 were male while 11,566 were female.

To obtain primary data, the study utilized closed-ended questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and non-participant observation methods. Secondary data was collected through the use of documents. The author requested for records from the offices of deans of the institutions under study to have an overview of the kind of cases that the dean deals with which are related to adolescent sexual behaviour like early

pregnancy, dropping out of college, cases of STDs, HIV/AIDS and abortion. The responses from the questionnaire were coded before data was analysed. The coded questionnaire was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. Chi-square was used to test all the hypotheses. The significance level of the stated hypothesis was at 0.05.

3. Results

The study sought to explore the sexual behaviours of youth in public technical training institutions. This was determined by looking at the following variables: the best age for a girl and a boy to start having a sexual intercourse; number of respondent's friends that have had sexual intercourse, respondent's sexual partners; age in which respondent's best friends had sexual intercourse; the number of sexual partners that the respondents have, frequency of respondent's best friends engaging in sex; the frequency of sex engagement by the respondent, and the likelihood of the respondent having sexual intercourse in the next one year.

3.1 Sexual Activity

The literature that was reviewed for the current study indicated that majority of youth in Kenya are sexually active and that a significant number have multiple sexual partners (Kamaara, 2003; Adaji *et al.*, 2010). The study sought to establish the sexual behaviour of the youth in technical training institutions. The respondents were asked to state whether they have ever engaged in sexual intercourse, it was established that majority (60.7%) said that they have engaged in sex while 39.3% have not. Since majority of the respondents were not married, then those who have engaged in sex have engaged in premarital sex. When the respondents were asked to state whether or not they thought their best friend had engaged in sexual activity 58.8% indicated that they thought their friends had engaged in sex while 30% said thought they have not while the rest were not sure.

From the findings, it is clear that both the respondents and their friends have engaged in sexual activity. It should be noted here that the numbers of those who have engaged in sexual activity would have been even higher but because sexual activity is a very sensitive issue most of the respondents do not give the correct accurate accounts.

These findings concerning sexual behaviour concurred with similar findings from key informants who informed the researcher that the youth were sexually active. Of the respondents, 94.4% from the key informants said youth from their institutions were sexually active whereas 5.6% were of the contrary opinion.

One of the key informants further explained why she thought the youth in her institution were sexually active by saying that according to the records maintained at the clinic, condom use was very high with an average of 5 packets being used by an individual student in a month. The same records, she says, indicate a high number of students seeking treatment for STD related diseases and thus reflecting high sexual activity among the students.

3.2 Best Age to Engage in Sex

To determine whether the respondents had some age limits for engaging in sexual activity, they were asked to state the best age for which a girl or a boy should start having sexual intercourse, it was established that majority recommended that sex for both gender should start after 18 years. The results were as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: The Best Age for a Girl and a Boy to Start Having Sexual Intercourse

The best age for a girl and a boy to start having sexual intercourse	Frequency	Percent
Below 10	5	1.3
15-18	45	11.7
Can't tell	102	26.6
Above 18 years	232	60.4
Total	384	100

From Table 1, it is evident that majority (60.4% for girls and 54.9% for boys) of the respondents were of the opinion that one ought to engage in sex after s/he is above 18 years. The reason for this statement is that according to Kenyan constitution, one is only considered to be mature after s/he has reached the age of 18 years and therefore she/he can have a national identity card as well as getting married. However, 11.7% for both cases said that 15-18 years was the best age for both boys and girls to start having sex. In an interview with one respondent concerning this issue, said that 'once a child reaches adolescent stage, then s/he is mature enough and, therefore, there is no evil in having sex. This implies that it is very hard to point out the exact age for which one should start having sex. Contrary to some, other respondents argued that sex among individuals should only start when one is married: "It is only the married couples that are allowed to have sex", they said.

These findings concur with those of Kamaara (2003) who established that the youth expect boys and girls to engage in sexual intercourse at age 17 and 19 for girls respectively and the men ages of 25 and 22.5 for

boys and girls respectively. It can be concluded from these findings that the youth are not consistent in their perception of premarital sexual behaviour. This lack of consistency is likely to result in majority of them being easily influenced to engage in premarital sexual behaviour since they lack a moral stand which they can use as self defence.

The study sought to establish further from focused group discussions on the expectations of the society on premarital sexual behaviour. The responses from the discussions indicated that society itself is not consistent on what is right and wrong concerning premarital sexual behaviour. The respondents revealed that there were no longer role models in the society and even in the institutions as far as sexual behaviour are concerned. They said that majority of their friends were influenced to engage in sexual activity by male adults who should have been acting as role models. They even cited cases of lectures engaging in sexual activity with their students. From these findings it can be inferred that the youth are left in a vulnerable situation when the people they should be emulating as role models in matters on sexual activity are the ones engaging in the vice. It is in this confusion that the youth are likely to be influenced by exposure to sexual television content.

3.3 Number of Friends who have engaged in Sex

For those respondents who agreed that their friends had had sexual intercourse, they were further asked to identify the number of friends who have had sexual intercourse. As a result, it was established that majority (41.9%) said that most of their friends have had sexual intercourse, 20.1% said that a few of them had had sex, 27.3% said none of them had had sex, while 10.7% said that all of their friends have had sexual intercourse. The aim of seeking to know how many of the friends the respondents thought have had sexual intercourse was because most studies have indicated that majority of the youth tend to overestimate the number of their friends who have had sexual intercourse so that they can justify their own sexual behaviours. It should be noted that it is difficult for youth to share their own sexual experiences honestly to enable their peers to give accurate accounts since sexual activity is treated as private and confidential. Research has indicated that when the youth are reporting about the activities of their friends they are more honest than when reporting their own sexual experiences.

3.4 Age of the Sexual Partners

The study sought to determine the age of the respondents' sexual partners. It was established that majority (57.3%) of the respondents said that their sexual partners were their age mates. This proves that most of the things like sexual intercourse are done under the influence of peer pressure. For instance, Bandura (1986) notes that from observing others one may form an idea of how new behaviours are performed and on later occasions this coded behaviour may serve as a guide for future action. Therefore, by observing what the age mates are doing, the individual will tend to do the same. It was also established that 25.3% of the respondent have both age mates and adults as their sexual partners. When some respondents were asked why they consider having adults as their sexual partners, they said that adult partners are more understanding and more so, they provide them with basic needs especially female students.

Furthermore, similar information was obtained when respondents were asked to state who their best friends' sexual partners were. It was established that 49.5% said that their sexual partners were age mates, 23.4% said that they were both age mates and adults, 3.4 % respondents indicated that it was none of the options given, while 23.7% claimed to know nothing in relation to their best friends' sexual partners. The implication of this finding is that the youth seem to share a lot in terms of sexual behaviour and as a result they are able to estimate the sexual activities of their perceived peers. It is important to note however that most of the time it is difficult because of the sensitive nature of the topic for youth to share information on the type of sexual partners. Therefore this response can only be taken as their own perception which coincidentally similar to theirs.

3.5 Age in which Respondent's Best Friends Had Sexual Intercourse

The respondents were asked to state approximately the age in which they thought their friends had sex. From the results, 28.1 % of the respondents said their friends engaged in sexual intercourse at the age of 15-18 years. As explained earlier, this is the age bracket where an individual is in adolescent stage and therefore, she/he wants to experiment things on his/her own without being controlled by the parents. Out of curiosity, most youths engage in sexual intercourse at an early age than usual.

According to Elkind (1978), youths tend to have increased sense of self consciousness concerning their appearance, personal qualities and abilities and as a result, parental influence decreases as the impact of peer influence increases. However, from the findings, it was established that majority (53.1%) of the respondents did not have an answer because according to them, it was very hard to determine the age in which their friends had sexual intercourse since every individual has got his/her own background best known to him/herself. Moreover, they argued that some matters are private and confidential and their one's privacy ought to be respected. These findings contradict with an earlier finding where the respondents were able to state that majority of their friends

have engaged in premarital sexual activity. One, therefore, wonders how they could easily tell that the majority had had premarital sexual intercourse and yet they would fail to tell the perceived age when these happened. What can be inferred here on the responses on sexual behaviour is lack of consistency most likely due to the nature of the study and the sensitivity of the topic under investigation.

3.6 Number of Sexual Partners

Consequently, similar responses to the previous questions were elicited when respondents were asked to state the number of sexual partners that their friends have. Majority (45.1 %) said that they had no idea while 34.1% argued that their friends had only one partner while 11.5% said that friends had more than one partner.

On the other hand, when respondents were asked to state the number of their sexual partners, majority (45.3%) said that they have only one partner. Having one sexual partner and being faithful to him/her is very important following high HIV / AIDS prevalence rate together with other STIs and also it brings hope to students' future plans since they know that lives are safe. However, it is very dangerous for instance, for those respondents who said that they cannot tell the number of their sexual partners. This is because they seem to change sexual partners and therefore, becoming difficult for them to point out the exact number. Under this circumstance, it is very easy to contract sexually transmitted diseases.

3.7 Frequency of Respondents Engaging in Sex

Heavy contents of sexual scenes on television may increase the frequency of engaging in sex. Following earlier findings that all respondents are exposed to television, the study therefore sought to establish the frequency of respondents' best friends engaging in sex.

The findings indicated that majority (39.1%) of the respondents said that they did not know how often their friends engage in sex due to what was termed as privacy. However, 20.8% said that their friends engage in sex at least once a month while few (2.1%) said that their friends engage in sex once per year. Although there was no absolute measurement for these acts, it is believed that the information provided by respondents were valid. According to Reiss (1967), perceptions of close friends' sexual attitudes were predictor of youths' own sexual attitudes than perception of their parent's sexual attitudes.

On the other hand, when respondents were asked to state the frequency of their sexual engagement, 24.2% said that they engage in sex once a month. However, 23.2% said that they cannot tell their frequency which can be as a result of having several sexual intercourses and therefore, the exact number cannot be predicted. From the literature reviewed, Kunkel *et al.* (1996) says that youths who are exposed to television with sexual contents are more likely to overestimate the frequency of some sexual behaviour, have more permissive attitudes towards premarital sex and they initiate sexual behaviour.

From the above findings, it can be deduced that the responses on the individual respondent and their perceived friends are almost similar on the frequency of engaging in premarital sexual activity. These findings concur with those from focus group discussions with youth and interviews with administrators of the institutions. According to the results of the focus group discussions, majority of the respondents said that premarital sexual activity was common more especially during the weekends and during discos. It was noted that it was mostly during discos which were held at least twice per term in most of the institutions that majority of the students were lured into engaging in sex. The respondents said that this could be evidenced by the number of condoms that could be found every morning after the disco in most of the institutions. In one institution it was revealed that the management had started a training programme on proper disposal of condoms this was after the workers protested about the way used condoms would be found everywhere in the compound and most of the times they were forced to dispose them.

The interviews with administration staff concurred with those of the focused group discussions. While confirming that premarital sexual activity was rampant in most of the institutions, the administrators were equally alarmed at the number of condoms which were being used by the students. They said that if they were to go by the number of condoms they could say that everybody else was doing it. In fact one principal said that he was surprised to see condoms in some strange places like the pavilion. He wondered aloud why these students could not go to decent places if they had to engage in the vice.

The research also confirmed the observations by the focused group discussions and those of interviews when she visited the halls of residence and saw the condom dispensers being refilled and by the following day there were no condoms. During one of the disco days the author also visited one of the institutions under investigation and saw used condoms in strange places like the playing fields. In conclusion it can be noted the frequency of sexual activity as reported by the respondents through the questionnaire is an underestimation which is expected because of the nature of the study. The real picture was brought out by the accounts of the focused group discussions, interviews with administrators and observations by the researcher.

3.8 Condom Use among the Youth

The use of condoms in any sexual act is very important because it helps the affected party to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. As a result, the study sought to establish whether respondents' friends use condoms while having sex or not.

The findings from the study indicated that most respondents' used condoms when having sex. This is attested by 63.5% of the respondents who agrees to the statement. High condom use in public technical institutions may be as a result of government initiative of supplying free condoms to all institutions. This has therefore led to easy access of condoms. These findings concur with previous ones in the current study on the frequency of engaging in sexual activity. The observations that majority of the students engage in premarital sexual behaviour frequently is validated by the number of those using condoms. However, the study did not seek to determine the consistency of condom use as most studies have shown that youth do not use condoms consistently. Lack of consistency can lead to serious effects such as unwanted pregnancy, contraction of STDS and HIV/AIDS among others.

The findings from the key informant interviews attested to the fact that youth in text training institutions use condoms. From the analysis of the key informant interviews, majority 80% of the respondents said that the youth in the institutions use condoms. Some of them went as far giving the exact number that the youth consume in a month, saying that on average an individual would use up to 5 packets. According to the key informants the high use of condoms was not an indicator that the youth were protecting themselves but a pointer to the fact that majority of the youth are sexually active.

3.9 Frequency of the Respondent engaging in Casual Sex

Since from early findings it was established that respondents watched certain programmes on television which contain sexual contents that may affect their attitudes towards sex, respondents were asked to state the frequency of their sexual intercourse, physical flirting, passionate kissing and intimate touch with casual partners. Likert scale was used to analyse answers (1 = Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = Sometimes, 5 = Always). Thus, this question was analyzed by using the mean to identify the rank of each attribute. Table 2 summarizes the findings.

Table 2: Frequency of the Respondent Doing the Following Scenes with Casual Partners

Frequency of the Respondent Doing the	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Following Scenes with Casual Partners			
Sexual Intercourse with a Casual Partner	1.68	1.27	1
Physical Flirting with a Casual Partner	1.72	1.27	2
Passionate Kissing with a Casual Partner	1.73	1.29	3
Intimate Touching with a Casual Partner	1.95	1.37	4

In relation to the above findings, sexual intercourse with a casual partner was ranked first (1.68), physical flirting with a casual partner was ranked second (1.72), passionate kissing with a casual partner was ranked third (1.73) while intimate touch with a casual partner was ranked fourth (1.95). From the above findings, it was established that respondents rarely engage in sexual intercourse, physical flirting, passionate kissing and intimate touching with casual partners. This is evidenced by the statements having means ranging from 1.68-1.95 respectively and which implies to 'Seldom' on the Likert scale. According to them, they had their formal relationships which they were committed to and therefore least did they engaged in the above mentioned scenes with their casual partners.

Furthermore, when they were asked to state whether their best friends engaged in the above-mentioned activities with casual partners, they elicited similar responses to theirs by saying that their friends also rarely engage in sexual intercourse, physical flirting, passionate kissing and intimate touching with casual partners. The findings indicated that youth sexual behaviour is not for commitment but for leisure. The dangers are that they are likely to suffer from the consequences of engaging in premarital sexual activity in the process of enjoying themselves.

3.10 Likelihood of having Sexual Intercourse in the next one Year

When respondents were asked to state the likelihood of having sexual intercourse in the next one year, majority said that there were high chances of engaging in sex after one year. As a result, it was established that majority (43.8%) of the respondents were likely to engage in sexual intercourse after one year. According to the findings on respondents' bio data, it was established that majority (49.2%) were third year and therefore to majority, this was their last year in college. This therefore implies that after one year most of them will have completed college and therefore are free from school commitments hence the likelihood of engaging in sex being high. According to them, they said that college life is very difficult with a lot of tasks ranging from assignments to the final exam

and therefore, after the final exam, they release away school related stress thus, engaging in sex.

On the other hand, 34.4% said that they can't tell while 21.9% said that it's unlikely that they engage in sexual intercourse. This may be due to their future plans of pursuing high education before they involve in other activities. On the contrary, when respondents were asked the likelihood of having sex while in college, majority (42.9%) said that it was unlikely that they will have sex since they wanted to focus on their education; however, 28.6% said they could not tell whether they would have sex while in college or not while 28.4% said that, it was likely that they will have sex while in college.

It should be noted that the number that reported that they did not know were most likely to engage in premarital sexual activity more especially as a result of influence since they had not already made up their mind on the issue. One can infer that the youth have no consistent stand on whether to engage in premarital sexual activity in college or not. The few who said they were not likely were just reporting to conform to the expectations of the college administration or their guardians/parents or the society at large.

3.11 Access to sexual content on television

The study sought to establish the level of exposure to sexual content on television among youth in technical training institutions in Kenya. The study hypothesized that those youth who watch more television will come across more sexual content bearing in mind the fact that youth prefer shows with more sexual content. The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends that children and adolescents view television no more than 2 hours each day and that parents take an active role in guiding television use (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2001). While the implementation of this guideline might be difficult it forms a basis for which TV viewing might be regulated. This study borrowed this guideline in order to determine the amount of exposure to television since none seems to exist in Kenya.

3.11.1 Frequency of Access to Television

The respondents were asked to state whether they had access to television. They all agreed that they had access to television. This therefore implied that they were familiar with what goes on in the media and that they were able to give important information needed for the study. The study further sought to find out the number of hours spent by the respondent in watching television per week. It was established that majority of the respondents (57.8%) spent between six and twenty five hours and watching television in a week whereas 42.2% spent less than five hours per week watching television. This clearly indicates that at least per day one has an access to television watching programme(s) of his/her choice. According to Brown *et al.* (1996), youths are heavy consumers of sexually oriented media sources including television, videos, movies and others. In addition, it has been established that television broadcast contains a high, growing and increasingly explicit dose of sexual messages which is directed towards youth (Kunkel *et al.*, 1997).

3.11.2 Importance of information on sexuality

Respondents were asked to state whether information about sex was important to them. The aim of seeking to know the importance of this information is that if it is important for them the youth are more likely to go out to seek for it using different types of media. Findings from study clearly suggest that respondents acknowledge that sexuality information is important (74.2%). Respondents who did not think the information was important were 25.8%. It is thus clear that sex information is important in a way that it helps an individual to know much about him/her than going with peer opinions. Moreover, sex education enables an individual to realize and evade all the dangers that are associated with premarital sex. Furthermore, information on sexuality helps the youth to understand better the physiological changes taking place in their bodies and therefore, being able to adapt to those changes positively.

As a result, it was established that 'storm over paradise' was the frequently watched television programme by the respondents. This is attested by the statement having been ranked the first with a mean of 2.91 which implies to 'frequently' on the Likert scale. The study findings indicate that 'Storm over paradise' and 'Tahidi high' were the frequently watched programmes by the respondents while 'Waridi', 'Tabasamu' and 'until my last breath' were occasionally watched. This is evidenced by the statement having means of 2.25, 1.90 and 1.71 which implies to 'Occasionally' on the Likert scale

3.11.3 Frequency of Encountering mixed scenes with sexual content

The respondents were presented with randomly selected scenes, some with sexual content and others depicting consequences of engaging in premarital sexual behaviour. Likert scale was used for the responses (1=never, 2=occasionally, 3=frequently, 4=always). The response was analysed through using the mean to rank each attribute. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3: Frequency of Encountering mixed scenes

Frequency of Encountering the Following Scenes when Watching T.V	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Passionate Kissing	2.65	0.98	1
Talk about HIV/AIDS	2.51	0.84	2
Intimate Touch	2.40	0.98	3
Physical Flirting	2.24	0.99	4
Talk or Behaviour Depicting Risks or the Need for Safety in Regard to Sexual Activity	2.22	0.90	5
Portrayals Related to Pregnancy	2.19	0.87	6
Talk About Sex that has Occurred	1.99	0.90	7
Portrayals Related to Abortion	1.97	0.83	8
Portrayals Mentioning or Showing Condoms or Birth Control	1.93	0.79	9
Couples Engaging in Sex	1.73	0.67	10

Source: Survey Data, 2010

As a result, it was established that passionate kissing was a scene which was frequently observed by respondents. This was evidenced by the statement having a mean of 2.65 which implies to 'frequently' on the Likert scale. Passionate kissing, intimate touch, physical flirting and real sexual acts are scenes that are common in most soap operas programmes aired from television.

This findings concurs with other findings from previous research which indicates that scenes with sexual content are prevalent in most television programs (Kunkel *et al.*, 2003). The findings further concur with previous research findings which indicate that the consequences of premarital sexual behaviour such as pregnancies are rarely portrayed on television. Kunkel *et al.* (2003) in a study conducted in the USA established that characters involved in television programmes hardly experience negative consequences. Similarly, a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2003) found out that only 3 out of the 200 programs depicting shows with sexual content placed emphasis on sexual risk or responsibility. The failure to show consequences of engaging in premarital sexual behaviour might contribute to influencing the sexual behaviour of the youth.

3.11.4 Perceived Effects of Watching Sexual Contents from Television

The study sought to determine the perceived influence of exposure to sexual content. The study sought to establish whether respondents agree with the following statements in table 4.11 below. Likert scale was used for recording the responses (1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Can't Tell, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree). The response was analyzed by using the mean to identify the rank of each attribute. Table 4 summarizes the findings.

Table 4: Perceived Effects of Watching Sexual Contents from Television

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Messages from Television are that it is Okay for the Youths to Engage in Sex Before Marriage	3.94	1.65	1
The Kinds of Programmes that I Watch on TV Affect the way I feel Towards Sex	3.89	1.27	2
Most Television Networks Have Shows that are Sexually Explicit	2.29	1.26	3

Source: Survey Data, 2010

N=384

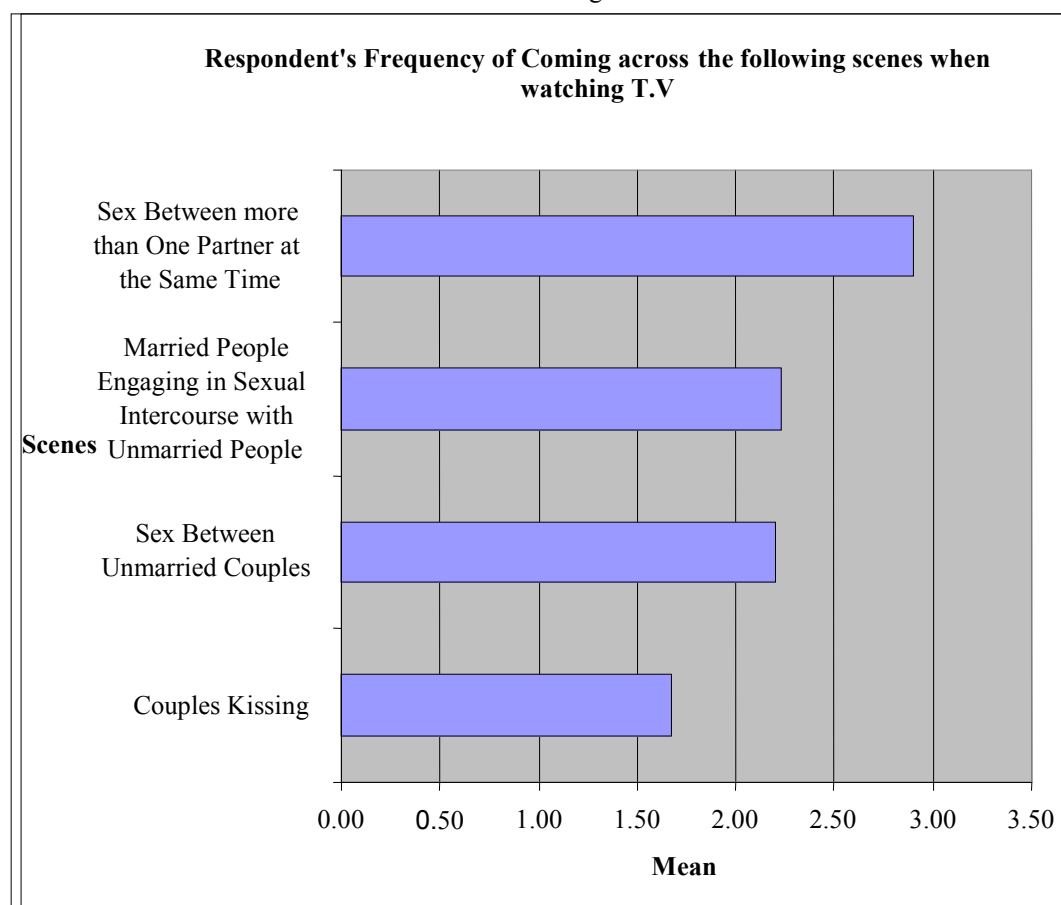
In relation to the above named statements, messages from television are that it is okay for the youths to engage in sex before marriage was ranked first (3.94), the kinds of programmes that I watch on television affect the way I feel towards sex was ranked second (3.89) while most television networks have shows that are sexually explicit was ranked the least with a mean of 2.29 on the Likert scale. As a result, it is evident that the kind of programmes watched by respondents portrays what is termed to them as 'true picture'. This is attested by the respondents agreeing that the messages that they receive from television in relation to engaging in pre-marital sex is correct. It is from this notion that permissiveness on issues related to sex in most public training institutions are on the rise. This can be evidenced by the rate of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, the rate of abortion and even unwanted pregnancies. According to Lillian *et al.*, (2005), youths who are exposed to television with sexual contents are more likely to overestimate the frequency of some sexual

behaviour, have more permissive attitudes towards premarital sex and they initiate sexual behaviour.

Furthermore, respondents agreed that the kind of programmes that they do watch from television affects the way they feel towards sex. This is true in that if the kind of programme watched contains sexual contents, then the consumer of the content will embrace the idea by implementing it such that if the programme contains numerous sexual activities, then consumers who are the youth in this case will see no harm in engaging in premarital sex because the way they feel that it is acceptable kind of behaviour. A close scrutiny of the above findings indicate that respondents agreed that messages from television are okay for the youths to engage in sex before marriage and that the kinds of programmes watched from television affects the way they feel towards sex. However, they disagreed to the statement that most television networks have shows that are sexually explicit.

3.11.5 Respondent's Frequency of Coming across Scenes depicting sexual activity when Watching T.V

When respondents were asked how often do they come across scenes like couples kissing, and sexual activities, majority of them said sometimes they come across them. Likert scale was used for answering (1 = Always, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Rarely, 4 = Not at all). Thus, this question was analyzed by using the mean to identify the rank of each attribute. This information is summarized in figure 1.



Source: Survey Data, 2010

Figure 1: Scenes with sexual activity

In relation to the above statements, couples kissing was ranked first (1.67), sex between unmarried couples was ranked second (2.20), married people engaging in sexual intercourse with unmarried people was third (2.23) while sex between more than one partner at the same time was least ranked (2.91).

As a result, respondents said that they sometimes come across couples kissing when watching television. Couples kissing can mean various things; it can either mean that they are preparing for a sexual act or as a sign of temporal separation for instance, when one is going for a journey or to work. However, couples kissing in preparation for sexual act are common among soap operas which therefore have negative impacts to youths who take the actors as their role models. In addition, sex between unmarried couples also known as premarital sex tend to spread the message of premarital sex permissiveness among the adolescent in public technical institutions. According to Greeson and Williams (1986), adolescent who are exposed to sexual contents from media are more likely to approve premarital sex than those un-exposed.

From figure 1, it can be inferred that couples kissing, sex between unmarried couples and sex between married and unmarried people are scenes which respondents sometimes came across while watching television. However, they said that they rarely came across sex between more than partner at the same time. The responses clearly indicate that the youth are exposed to content from the media that has sexual content.

Hypothesis III: There is no association between accessibility of television by the individual youth in public technical training institutions and their exposure to scenes with sexual content.

The independent variable in testing this hypothesis was accessibility to television by the youth. On the other hand, dependent variables in this study were accessibility to scenes with sexual content such as passionate kissing, talk about HIV/Aids, Intimate touch, Physical flirting, talk or behaviour depicting risks or the need for safety in regard to sexual activity, portrayals related to pregnancy, talk about sex that has occurred, portrayals related to abortion, portrayals mentioning or showing condoms or birth controls and couple engaging in sex.

Table 5: Cross tabulation between Accessibility to Television by the Respondent and their exposure to sexual behaviour scenes

	Chi-square			Correlation		
	Value X2	df	significance	Value R	Std error	Significance
Independent variable Accessibility of Television by the Respondent						
Dependant variable	71.053	4	0.000	0.317	0.037	0.000
a) Passionate Kissing						
b) Talk about HIV/Aids	150	4	0.000	0.396	0.44	0.000
c) Intimate Touch	38.430	4	0.000	0.257	0.031	0.000
d) Physical flirting	53.509	4	0.000	0.277	0.033	0.000
e) Talk or behaviour depicting risks or the need for safety in regard to sexual activity	37.978	4	0.000	0.143	0.020	0.004
f) portrayals related to pregnancy	78.571	4	0.000	-0.329	0.038	0.000
g) Talk about sex that has occurred	52.77	4	0.000	0.284	0.034	0.000
h) portrayals related to abortion	52.77	4	0.000	0.284	0.034	0.000
i) portrayals mentioning or showing condoms or birth controls	84.34	3	0.000	-0.275	0.032	0.000
j) Couples engaging in sex	150	4	0.000	0.396	0.44	0.000

From table 5 it is clear that there is an association between respondent access to television and their exposure to sexual behaviour scenes. In all the above dependent variables, the chi-square value is significant at 0.000 which implies that it is not more than $P < 0.05$.

The implication of this finding is that the more the youth have access to television the more they are likely to come across scenes with sexual content. Previous research concurs with this finding as they indicate that the media play a major role in the socialization of sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Roberts, 1982). The reasons why Roberts (1982) thinks that media have effects are “(1) the adult nature of most programming adolescents watch; (2) adolescents limited access to or experience with countervailing information or ideas; (3) the “realism” with which roles, relationships and lifestyles are portrayed; and (4) the overwhelming consistency of the messages about sexuality that are communicated” (Roberts, 1982).

Majority of the social scientist have observed that the reason why television is likely to have influence in the sexual behaviour of the youth is because parents are known to provide very little information on sexuality while schools tends to focus their attention on the biological approach with little attention to romance and interpersonal relationships (Strasburger, 1993).

4. Conclusion

From the study findings, it is concluded that majority of the youth engage in premarital sex, they have multiple sexual partners and that the rate of condom use is very high though the study could not determine the consistency of condom use. Lack of consistency can lead to serious consequences such as unwanted pregnancies contraction of STDS and HIV/aids among others.

The study established that the youth have access to television and that they spend many hours within the week watching television and that majority of the programmes they watch have sexual content. Further the study established that the youth perceive that the programs they watch are likely to affect their sexual behaviours. Through hypothesis testing the study established that there is a relationship between access to television and

exposure to sexual content. The implication of this finding is that the youth who have more access to television are more likely to come across more sexual content.

The findings of the study concur with the observations of the theories which were used to inform the study. Social cognitive theorists demonstrated that imitation and identification are the products of two processes. The first is the observational learning where observers can acquire new behaviour simply by seeing those behaviours performed. The second is inhibitory effects where seeing a movie character for instance being punished for a behaviour reduces the likelihood that the behaviour will be performed by the observer. The third method is disinhibitory effects where seeing a model rewarded for prohibited or threatening behaviour increases the likelihood that the observer that the behaviour will be performed. The cultivation theory by Gerbner (1973), on the other hand, presupposes that those youth who are exposed television seem to develop attitudes and behaviours that are similar to those of the characters on television. They say that this is possible through the process called mainstreaming of reality where individuals are moved towards sharing televised created understanding of how things are supposed to be done. Cultivation analysis (Gerbner, 1973) says that television "cultivates " or constructs reality of the world that, although possibly inaccurate, becomes accepted simply because the embers of a culture believe it to be true.

5. Recommendations

Baran (2004) observes that although many of people are quick to condemn the media for the influence on behaviour, they rarely question their own role in the mass communication process. He continues to observe that individuals always overlook their role because they participate in mass communication naturally without making any conscious effort and that they possess high level interpretive and comprehensive skills that make even the most sophisticated television show, movie or magazine story understandable and enjoyable. The implication of this observation is that sometimes individual participation in the mass communication process through interpreting media content may lead to interpretation of a meaning that was not the intended purpose. The study therefore recommends that media literacy as a skill needs to be improved to enable the youth to interpret media content correctly in order to avoid the possible effects that are sometimes not intended by the media practitioners.

Media literacy should be introduced at an early age since youth start consuming media content when they are still very young.

The study further recommends that for the youth in technical institutions managers of these institutions can develop curriculum to train the youth on media literacy skills. This will assist in assisting the youth to interpret the content from the media appropriately.

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