

## **Kenyan High School Students' Seeking Out for Sexual Radio and TV Content**

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**Abstract:** *This study used a qualitative method to investigate motivational and contextual factors predicating Nairobi City County public secondary school students' seeking out sexual radio and TV content. It examined these issues amongst 546, 13-20 year old respondents. Data were collected through focus group discussions conducted in five clusters of secondary schools in Nairobi City County. Results indicated that adolescents sought sexual radio to learn and sexual TV content for companionship. The bedroom was the context most associated with higher levels of sexual radio and TV content exposure. By youths' descriptions, parents employed a wide range of strategies to mediate their children's radio and television usage. They themselves suggested many broad relational strategies for mitigating the influence of sexual media content on adolescents.*

**Key words:** *Sexual content, motivations, parental monitoring, social context, users' gratifications, sexual socialization*

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In Kenya, as in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), teaching young people about sex is problematic. Although adolescence is the period when many young people begin to explore their sexuality (Path, 2013), sex is still a taboo subject among many Kenyans (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2013). Despite social liberalization as a result of increased urbanization (Bastien et al. 2011), sex education programs are few and controversy surrounds provision of health services to sexually active teens. Understanding sexual socialization, or the process by which adolescents acquire sexual knowledge and values, is critical, because the source and accuracy of information taken in at young ages may be associated with later sexual attitudes and behavior. In Kenya, increasing modernization has separated young people from their elders who were traditionally responsible for conveying information to them (Wangeri & Otanga, 2013). Today, the single source of sexual information mentioned by young people (24%) is media (IEA, 2010).

At the same time, indications are that the level of sexual content in Kenyan media has dramatically increased in recent years (Abuto, 2013), however the accuracy and appropriateness of that content is highly debated. Substantial empirical research exists in Europe and North America suggesting that exposure to sexual media content is associated with early sexual debut and other negative sexual health indicators, and investigating factors that predict youths' exposure to such content (e.g. Rubin, 1984; Ward et al. 2002; Ward & Friedman, 2006; Ward & Kim, 2004). However, little if any research has explored the motivations and context of adolescent's seeking out sexual media content in Kenya. The purpose of the current study was to investigate demographic, motivational, and contextual influences on Nairobi adolescents' intake of sexual radio and television content.

### **I. Literature Review**

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2008-2009 indicates that more than one out of four young women is married by age 18, increasing their likelihood of having children at an early age. Nearly one-half of births to young women under age 18 are the result of unintended pregnancy. Nearly one out of three young women has an unmet need for family planning, meaning they wish to delay childbearing, but are not using any method of contraception, and are at risk for having an unintended pregnancy. Furthermore, among youth aged between 15 to 19 who had sexual intercourse in the last 12 months, nearly 60 percent of young women and nearly 100 percent of young men engaged in higher-risk sex, meaning they had sexual intercourse with a partner who was neither their spouse nor lived with them. Among these youth aged 15 to 19 who had higher-risk sexual intercourse in the last 12 months, only 40 percent of the young women and 55 percent of the young men reported using a condom during their last higher-risk intercourse. Finally, despite the fact that fewer young people in Kenya today are entering adulthood with HIV infection in comparison to earlier stages of the pandemic (UNAIDS, 2010), the National Aids Control Council (2012) reports that the epidemic continues to

exert a disproportionate effect on adolescents and young adults. Young people between ages 15–35 represent 38% of the national population but are believed to make up more than 60% of new HIV infections.

### **Sexual Content in Kenyan Media**

Among the greatest problems young people across the globe face today is developing a healthy understanding about sex. Such understanding forms the foundation for their attitudes toward sex and relationships and subsequent sexual behavior. Media serve as a major contributing factor to such sexual socialization as youth are immersed in them on a daily basis (Roberts & Foehr, 2004). Even as youths' risks of teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV remain high, evidence suggests that the level of sexual content in Kenyan media has increased in recent years (Abuto, 2013). The current media landscape is dominated by popular vernacular FM radio stations which are available everywhere as people can listen to them on their cell phones, cars, and computers (Synovate Kenya, 2007). As a result of liberalization of media, by 2007, there were 107 vernacular, FM and community radio stations in Kenya and over 15 television stations in the country (Bowen, 2010). Approximately 60% of this expanded media content especially on television is imported, much of it from the U.S., where studies indicate the amount of sexual content has steadily increased over the past two decades (Kunkel, Eyal, Finnerty, Biely, & Donnerstein, 2005). Among the few studies conducted in Kenya on locally produced sexual media content is Gakahu's (2011) examination of sexual content of music popular among youth. The study found that radio programming is basically music. Many times, lyrics of Kenyan songs express graphic portrayals of sexual relationships with little attention to safer sexual messages. Music videos were found to be replete with sexually suggestive clothing and body movements. It appears that Kenya's urban youth are caught up in the increasing globalization of information and media which is characterized by a high level of violence, individualism, and lack of any clear set of social values (Education Development Center, 2009).

### **Uses and Gratifications Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the present study uses uses and gratification theory, which was initially propounded by Elihu Katz in 1959 when he posed the question 'what do people do with media.' In the early 1970's Katz, together with his two colleagues, Jay Blumler and Micheal Gurevitch expanded the idea exploring the functions of media and the role of the audience needs and expectations. They outlined three basic goals of uses and gratifications as a) to explain how people use media to gratify their needs, b) to understand motives for media behavior, and c) to identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and behavior.

The original framework of the theory described five basic assumptions. First, the audience is active and its media use is goal oriented, purposive, and motivated. This behavior is functional and has consequences for people and societies. Second, the initiative in linking need gratification to a specific media choice rests with the audience member. Third, the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction such as significant others for selection, attention, and use to gratify our needs or wants. There are definitive relationships between mass and interpersonal communication in this process. How well media satisfy our motives or desires varies among individuals based on their social and psychological circumstances. Fourth, people are aware of their own media use, interests and motives. Lastly, social and psychological factors mediate people's communication behavior. ————These factors could be personal predispositions, interaction, and environment such as religious background, which can mold their expectations about the media.

### **Adolescents Motivations for Seeking out Sexual Content**

Although uses and gratification theory argues that youths in Kenya and elsewhere are active media consumers, and that their intake of sexual content is not a one-directional process in which media influence passive users, little if any research has explored the motivations and context of adolescent's seeking out sexual media content in Kenya. This is despite the fact that the limited evidence available suggests that youth's exposure to sexual content of Kenyan media has dramatically increased in recent years (Gakahu, 2011; Kanjama, 2011 & Abuto, 2013).

Research in Western contexts indicates the reasons adolescents search for sexual content may vary, ranging from information-gathering to seeking normative validation for their behavior. Sexually active youth also may be more interested in media sex due to other social or environmental factors such as communication with friends or family members about sex. Actively seeking out sexual content may therefore be related to an adolescent's sexual behavior through its relationship to exposure. Youth exposed to sexual content because they sought it out may be different than others who were exposed to media sex without purposely seeking it out (Bleakley et al. 2011). The latter are those who may accidentally stumble upon sexual content while searching for entertaining dramas or following up on friends' suggestions for good programming.

In an investigation of U. S. American students' motivations for watching TV Ward & Friedman (2006) found three main categories of motives: a) a learning motive (e.g. to gather information about self and others) b)

a fun habit motive (e.g. to get enjoy and for entertainment) and c) a friend/companion motive (e.g. for company and to forget ones problems). Among other variables they tested, viewing motives emerged as the most consistent correlate of their sexual belief systems, demonstrating the power of individual needs in shaping media influence. Both girls and boys who reported watching TV for companionship were also more likely to agree that sex is recreational, that men are sexually driven, and that women are sexual objects. These findings suggest that American teens who turn to TV as a friend are also more accepting of its dominant messages and may be relying more heavily on media for social norms and values. Rubin (1981) identified nine motivations for TV viewership amongst adolescents. These are: to pass time, for companionship, arousal, content, relaxation, informational, escape, entertainment, and social viewing motivation. No significant relationships were noted between social viewing and viewing levels, content viewing and attachment, or relaxation viewing and reality. No study we found that investigates this subject in the Kenyan context.

### **Adolescence Media Viewing Social Context**

Uses and gratifications theory also posits that the context within which people choose to use media has an influence on the outcomes of their media use. Contextual factors such as where youths take in media and with whom may influence both the selection and response to sexual media content (Parkes et al. 2013).

Currently there is no research on this issue in Kenya. However, studies in Western nations indicate that having media in the bedroom leads youth to use media more (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). Parkes and Colleagues (2013) found out that teenagers who co-viewed TV/DVDs with friends more often than with parents were more likely to report sexual intercourse, and the minority of teenagers who reported parental restrictions on sexual content were less likely to report intercourse than their peers. The local press carries concerns about adolescents accessing sexual content in their bedrooms. According to the Kenya National Association of Parents (Knap) Secretary General, Musau Ndunda children who have their own rooms at home conveniently watch sexual content regularly as parents assume they are busy studying. They access the content through mobile phones, laptops or DVD players (Mwangi, 2015).

### **Parental Mediation of Adolescent Media Use**

This high level of exposure to sexual media content is taking place at a time when many traditional sources of sexual information are no longer available to Kenyan youth. The Institute of Economic Affairs (2010) has stated that about 60% of Kenyan adolescents either do not have any credible source of sex and health information or rely on media for it. The paucity of credible sources of sexual and reproductive health information in Kenya and increasing modernization that has separated adolescents from their elders who were traditionally responsible for helping them navigate adolescence period responsibly makes the problem more acute (IEA, 2010). Parents may be involved in socialization of their children by monitoring their children's media use. This can involve any of three different behaviours that occur before, during and after media use. Parents may set rules on how much, when and what media content teenagers can use, discussing content with the teenager and using media together (Parkes, Wight, Hunt, Henderson & Sargent, 2013). There are no studies recording parental media monitoring in Kenya, however studies conducted in the U.S. indicate that parental monitoring of adolescents' media use is associated with less time spent using media in general. Furthermore, studies in the western world (e.g. Amanda et al. 2011; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010; Parkes et al. 2013) suggest that parental monitoring is important in guiding teens on the proper media content to watch and specifically in lessening exposure to sexual TV content.

Based on this literature, we posed the following research questions.

RQ1: What motivations do Nairobi high school students report for seeking out a) sexual radio content and b) sexual TV content?

RQ2: What contextual influences do Nairobi high school students report for seeking out a) sexual radio content and b) sexual TV content?

RQ3. What parental mediation strategies do Nairobi high school students endorse for limiting their intake of sexual radio and TV content?

## **II. Method**

Researchers obtained a research permit from the Ministry of Education (National Commission for Science & Technology) and authorization from the Teachers Service Commission, Nairobi City County Commissioners' office, principals of secondary schools, and finally from the respondents at every phase of data collection. A qualitative method and a purposive sample were considered appropriate as they seek an in-depth understanding of the perspective of study respondents within their natural context about a certain matter (Obwatho, 2014), and also because very little research has been done on this topic in the Kenyan environment. This method enabled the researchers to develop a more complete understanding of the subject at hand as they directly recorded respondents' narrations.

### **Study Population**

The population of the study included all secondary school students of Nairobi City County public secondary schools. The researchers chose to carry out research in public secondary schools in Nairobi because these schools admit students from across the country hence they represent a wide range of Kenyan youth. According to Ministry of Education (2013) the Nairobi City County had 42,422 public secondary school students 54% of whom were male and the rest 46% were female. Respondents were selected from each of the five clusters of school types, i.e. boys' boarding, girls' boarding, boys' day, girls' day and boarding and mixed day and boarding schools. Half of the FGDs respondents were between 12-15 years and the other half between 16-20 years. This wide age range (13-19 years) was chosen because as Brown and L'Engle (2009) observed, adolescents typically grow more curious about sex as their own bodies sexually develop within this period. 50% were boys and 50% were girls. Of the respondents, 10 (24%) were form ones, 15 (36%) form twos, 10 (24%) form threes, and 7(16%) form fours. The majority of respondents reported to pay annual school fees of between 20,100 – 90,100. Respondents' parents were mostly businessmen and women and professionals.

### **Sample and sampling method**

Five focus group discussions were conducted. Each of the five focus groups had eight members, which is within the six to twelve members recommended by Morgan (1997). Forty respondents, twenty boys and twenty girls of between 13-20 years of whom about 80 % were Christians participated in FGDS. Respondents reported to have been moderately involved with religious activities.

### **Procedures**

Focus group discussions were conducted with the help of research assistants in their early twenties who were undergraduate students from a local university, Africa Nazarene University and who had done their secondary education in Nairobi City. The research assistants were briefed on what was expected of them during the focus group discussions. Among things they were trained to do were: creating rapport with students, seeking assent/consent from the participants, handling electronic recorders and taking copious notes during proceedings. Because all the city schools sampled had at least three or four streams of each form. They were supplied with class lists which they used to pick participants. They picked by ticking two students each from form one to four. In two schools where form fours were not available because they were doing exams they picked three form fours and three form twos or form ones. The names of the picked students were supplied to the teachers who in turn used class prefects to coordinate them to dining halls, theatres halls or in a classroom where the discussions took place as directed by schools authorities. Four FGDs were done after 4:00 p.m. classes and one during lunch time overall period of 45 days.

Male focus groups were be facilitated by the first author and female focus groups were facilitated by female research assistants with the support of the first author, as Millward (2012) recommends having similar gender increases disclosure in FGDS. Before the commencement of the exercise, respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and how to conduct themselves during the exercise. They were informed that they would be audio recorded and assured of confidentiality. Assent was obtained orally. Respondents were also informed of their right to leave if they felt they had a reason to terminate, although none did so. Consequently, the discussions started with ice breaking questions before delving into the core study questions. Four focus groups took between 45 minutes to one hour and one took 30 minutes.

### **Data Processing and Management**

FGD protocols were formulated in open-ended questions with probes and prompts to provide follow up areas of inquiry and clarity and stimulate further discussions. They were prepared in English the instruction language at Kenyan secondary schools. After competition of data collection, a data cleaning exercise was effected to correct anomalies on the data. Data were then transcribed, coded and analyzed. Key themes and patterns emerging were coded, analyzed and interpreted using uses and gratifications as a theoretical guideline. As Bradley, Curry and Devers (2007) suggested, themes provided general propositions that emerged from diverse and detail-rich experiences of participants and recurrent and unifying ideas regarding the subject of inquiry. Data transcription was done by research assistants and randomly cross-checked by one of the researchers for quality control.

## **III. Results**

### **Motivations for Seeking out Sexual Radio Content**

RQ1a asked about youths' motivations for seeking out sexual radio content. Although most respondents indicated they did very little radio listening overall, local programming was popular with Classic FM and KISS FM, XM FM and Jambo Radio breakfast shows being most popular, followed by music programs. Across all FGD listening to learn was the most prominent reason mentioned for radio listening.

However, respondents from all groups also said they listened to radio programs for fun and a very few mentioned doing so for companionship. Respondents offered that some programs offered more fun listening while others were for learning as this respondent said, "In radio I listen to shows where people complain so I can learn." Another learning motive oriented respondent explained that he listened to learn about things ranging from the mundane such as traffic jam and road accidents updates and marital and relationship counseling, a domain of local FM stations' morning and evening shows. Yet another respondent who listened for learning argued that;

I mostly listen to Dr. Love on KISS FM so that I can learn about relationships that in the future when I get heartbroken I can know how to deal with it. The reason why I listen to Dr. Love is to learn from the show. For instance, somebody calls and says my boyfriend does not respond to my calls. So I can listen to hear what his response will be to such a question and how one can handle relationships.

New motivational items recorded for radio in general apart from those listed in Ward and Friedman's (2006) scale in FGDs included, listening to find out what new is trending, to be soothed, and to be spiritually uplifted.

### **Motivations for Seeking out Sexual TV Content**

RQ1b asked about youths' motivations for seeking out sexual TV content. Soap operas and music shows were popular TV programming among focus group participants. Popular TV music shows included, Straight UP and the Beat and Live on Blast. Foreign soaps were more popular with girls, as evidenced in this quote, "I watch soap operas that come from 6.00 to 7.00, there is a soap opera on NTV or Citizen. Then from 7.00 to 8.00 there is a soap opera on QTV which is Indian." Another girl admitted to being an addict, "I am a soap addict. I watch just about every soap that is on TV. I don't care what channel I just love soaps. Yet another one explained, "my brothers watch more than me so I never really get to watch. But when I watch, I watch soaps on local channels."

Participants said they watched TV more for companionship and fun activity motives and least for learning motivations. Companionship motive was recorded in all groups as respondents went to play stations accompanied by their estate peers and classmates especially during weekends to watch and discuss TV programs together in mixed gender groupings. Play stations are entertainment houses in major towns where youths play video games in one corner at another they watch music videos and in some cases they also have a barbershop. In some schools, respondents reported that some groups also facilitated music shows where students could watch music together. In the category of fun motivations, respondents spoke of watching for fantasy, as an addiction and relaxation, to talk about with peers, for curiosity, to catch up to latest celebrity gossip, to see talent. Respondent watched TV to learn among other things more about what is happening around them, to learn new dance moves, to learn about culture and to keep up to with trends. They also said they watched to win awards and for comparison purposes (comparing different genres and artists).

A respondent who watched to learn social issues explained, ". (. ...) and then some shows like Live on Blast they play music but at the same time they address some issues." Asked by the interviewer, "Can you remember specifically a previous program on Live on Blast where you learnt something?" the respondent replied, "The last time I checked I was watching a program, Live on Blast they were addressing some issues on contraceptives. And they were asking if it has some impacts on the youths and some of its benefits."

Female respondents in both boarding girls and mixed boarding repeatedly mentioned watching for romantic fantasy. "I watch for ideas about love and romance, to feel comfortable, to enjoy romance." Another respondent in the group was blunter: "I watch movies because of the sexuality. I want to know about sexuality. Another expanded;

That is a very good question. You know we are teenagers and there is something called adolescence and that is something everyone goes through. You find that in adolescence we are being told about hormones... these hormonal activities. You start getting attracted to the opposite sex. So if you know in your mind that you cannot go straight ahead and start touching a girl, I will satisfy my urge by watching it on TV. That is basically the main reason why people find themselves watching these things. You can't do it practically so you satisfy your urge with your eyes. You see sometimes that it can be a girl getting attracted to a boy and she cannot go and tell him so she ends up watching TV. You look at this girl, you look at this boy and you begin to think "How I wish it was me." That is basically the main reason.

Among those who watched TV as an addiction one girl boarder's comment was typical;

Okay these days most of these programs have porn, sexual contents. It is just so normal. It is not like olden days when it was a big deal. It is so normal and when you see it you'll be like "Duh! That happens." It's just normal. You watch a movie and you see sex, you no longer put a pillow on your face at it –so you don't want to watch. No! You want to watch and go into the deepest... it's so normal.

Probed further by the interviewer on what she meant by going deepest. The respondent said:

You see I'm saying if you watch such contents your mind gets corrupted. It's just like drugs; when you take the first time and you will want to take more and more and more until you can't stop anymore. So the moment they start they are just hugging, what's a hug? Then they are just kissing. What's a kiss? They are just making out. Then it goes on.

Respondents in a boys' day group said watching for fantasy was a female obsession: "...about these soaps, I don't know... they give especially ladies ideas about love and romance. So it occupies them and provides them with fantasy."

### **Social Context of Nairobi Adolescents' Intake of Sexual Radio Content**

RQ2a asked what contextual influences youths would mention about taking in sexual radio and TV content. Radio was less preferred as a media channel than TV amongst respondents. However, of the few who tuned in to radio, some reported to listening to radio from everywhere and anytime. This does not mean radio was pervasive but meant that any time someone felt like listening to radio they could because it was probably in a portable mode and less cumbersome to carry. Some respondents reported listening to radio in the morning while going to school as it is the case for day scholars. They also talked about listening during afternoon drives, evenings and late at night. For example, one said, "Okay, when I'm on holiday I listen to One FM mostly at night. And also in the evening from 6.00 to 11.00 listening to programs such as KISS FM, Dr. Love which comes at around 10 at night."

Radio had the advantage of being attended to while respondents carried out other chores. However, many respondents across all groups listened to radio from the bedroom, while others listened in public transport. A few attended to radio at the barber shops/salon, play stations, video houses and 'anywhere'. They listened mostly via mobile phone on earphones as this respondent said, "radio I access in the house or from my phone." Yet another respondent who accessed radio through the same method said, "Most people listen through their phone then like on Kiss TV and 91.5 there are mixes at night by different DJs.

Apart from listening with peers and friends at the play stations as reported in most groups, radio was an activity carried out mostly individually but content was later discussed amongst friends later. For example, one respondent said, "I listen alone but then I afterwards go and discuss with my friends who have also listened to the show. Another one added that, 'I'm usually alone but sometimes I call a friend and I'll be like how about you tune to this situation and hear what they are saying.'" Nevertheless many respondents said they were not much on radio compared to TV and videos as this one commended, "I also listen to radio very rarely, I prefer movies, but whenever I do, I listen to Truth FM. Yet another confirmed the same theme of poor radio listenership, "I rarely, rarely listen to radio. But whenever I do, it will be may be in public places and most of the time the station they play is Kiss FM because I am an art student. Otherwise the music I listen to is gospel music."

### **Social Context of Nairobi Adolescents' Intake of Sexual TV Content**

RQ2b asked what is the association of the social context of Nairobi adolescents' intake of sexual TV content and the extent of reported exposure to that content. Respondents watched TV programs mostly variedly across the day. However most popular day segment for TV viewership were the late afternoon and evening to night segments. In the late afternoon period TV was mostly watched, between 2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. mostly to catch with music shows as this respondent says, "Let's say from 5 in the evening to 6 because that is the specific time which they play the music. And for Live on Blast. " For the evening to night segment from 7.30 after evening news to 11. p.m. mostly a movie segment across Kenyan TV as this female respondent had to say, "I watch from 8.00, 9.00 pm going on." Another respondent said, "Where I stay we usually have power outage until 6.00 p.m. So, I usually watch with my mum from 6.00 p.m. up to about 9.00 p.m. One respondent reported that she watched TV past mid night. However, several respondents reported that sometimes especially during weekends they watched TV 'throughout the day' as this respondent said, "I watch from 8 in the evening but if my mum is not around I watch TV the whole day. Yet another one said, "If I'm watching movies or series I can watch from my room the whole day."

Unlike girls across all schools, boys' boarders did not report watching much of soaps but mostly watched music and movie programs between 2.00 p.m. to late evening, 11.30 p.m. A few watched TV programs in the morning at around 9.00 a.m. and a few in the evening. Some female respondents however, reported to watching TV the 'whole day' especially during weekends.

Gender difference came to play in the time for 'corporate' viewership as girls at mixed boarding schools reported that they joined boys at the 'play station' only in the afternoon after doing house chores, which their male counterparts did not have to do. However, both gender, watched TV programs from both public and private settings. Privately they watched mostly from the bedroom. A respondent said if she wanted to watch sexual content she goes to her aunt's house. Publicly, respondents reported that they watched from the sitting room, play stations, at parties and in organized school functions. Probed by the interviewer, a boys' boarding

respondent mentioned that they watched educational programs in class, “we have a TV which is used for academic purposes in class only...” In a mixed gender school, a respondent also confirmed TV was watched in school even for non-academic purposes but only after some level of censoring by the school authorities, “, here in school the movies we watch are filtered. The teacher in charge of entertainment has to watch a movie and be sure it is okay before we can watch.”

In both private and public contexts TV enjoyed more co-viewership compared to radio. Respondents co-watched TV from include kinyozi (barber shop), play stations, video houses, homes and in rare cases in school classes as earlier mentioned. However play stations were mostly mentioned as contexts for TV co-viewership. Here, respondents said they listened in groups and mostly discussed and critiqued content as this respondent evidences;

Yea I do discuss TV programs with my friends. Especially in my estate we are friends in the street and we are all following the same program. So we watch TV like from 6 to 7 and immediately it is over we go out and we begin discussing how it was, how it should have been, what we expected. Then we go back to still watch another program.

Another respondent who attended the play station viewing sessions added that;

We meet may be at the end of the week. Sometimes we agree on what movies to watch.... Yea... we have like a group of us. So we usually discuss what movie or series to watch then let's say on Sunday all of us meet and discuss what happened even the sexual contents and stuff.

Apart from the conspicuous contexts such as bedroom, play stations, living rooms and personal cars TV some respondents said they also watched in unlikely places as supermarkets, electronic shops , at friends and relatives homes and in clubs.

### **Parental Mediation and Recommendations for Decreasing Youths' Intake of Sexual Media Content**

RQ3a and b asked what are the adolescent's suggested strategies for their intake of less sexual radio and TV content. Save for a small minority, most respondents reported that their parents restricted their media consumption in one way or the other. Disallowing their teenagers from watching some particular stations and programs was the prominent measure of regulating media that FGD respondents' parents applied. Frowning by a parent when they caught their children watching 'bad' content, getting a dressing down or just yelling to show their disgust. One respondent caught up by her mother watching Shuga, a local semi-edutainment soap, high on sexual content said, “She never listened to the message. She only saw the image and she screamed and said, “If I ever catch you watching this thing, you'll see.” Disallowing some programs when younger children were present, disconnecting power when leaving and use of parental control pin were also reported by a few respondents.

Other measures respondents mentioned included mother-daughter co-watching, locking up media technology and accessories and use of the remote control to flip over when offensive content such as condom adverts crept in. A respondent reported that her parents only insisted that she performs her homework first, “If you are through with your school work you are free to watch TV but not on particular stations or programs, watch until it reaches a certain time.” An example of regulating by the remote control was explained by this respondent, “Most of the time when we are watching with my dad and they start showing things like condom adverts, he goes like, “Where's the remote?” he switches it off and says, “It's 8.00 today we have to sleep early.”

The few respondents whose parents did not regulate their media content reported three reasons: one, that they did not have the time to be home to check what content their teenagers were consuming; two, they trusted that their children were watching the right media content; three, they just believed their teenagers were mature enough to select appropriate content.

A further narrative emerging was that of punishments for disobeying parental rules on media consumption. These penalties ranged from being grounded, locking up media technology and stoppage from watching TV for some time. As one respondent said, “there was a time she stopped me from watching TV for one week because she caught me watching until 12 O'clock.”

When asked what they themselves thought were the most effective ways of limiting the influence of sexual media content, respondents said parents should advise or counsel/guide their teenagers to what media contents to consume, give them media literacy on sexual content, engage them in other activities such as in church to keep them busy and generally be involved in their lives more closely. Some students said parents should give their children a free hand to choose what they want to watch and listen to. They urged parents to cultivate good and friendly relationship with their children even after they reach puberty. Some called upon their parents to change with the evolving world and even pray for their children so that they don't fall in the trap of watching offending content. One youth said;

I'll say the first thing is education. The second thing is strictness. The parents should be strict with the children because without that the children will take the cases for granted. I was raised by a strict father so when he is at home there are things I cannot watch...(...).

A respondent who asked parents to engage adolescents in other activities to keep them busy said; Like for me my parents make me busy such that I don't have time for such stuff. For instance I love violin so my mum bought me violin and got me a teacher even though it's expensive. So we plan and I go for lessons from this time to this time. Then she keeps looking for seminars and church stuff so that when it is holiday we all have things to do. There is a stage a child reaches and he wouldn't like to be so close to the parents so may be getting him involved in activities in the church would help. Parents can make their children get involved in some activities like swimming or something like that. So that anytime you think of doing something bad, you can be involved in some useful activities.

A boarding and day mixed respondent who advocated for a close relationship between teenagers and parents a protective measure said;

It is good for parents to keep in touch with teenagers. You know sometimes teenagers watch these things to look for solace. Because may be you lack the parental care and attention that you need so you want to keep your mind busy with other things. So they need to be talked to so that if I am your daughter and I come to tell you I have a problem in this and this then you can tell me what to do. If parents have this kind of relationships with their children, it will save us the disaster of watching such programs.

Another respondent who advocated for close relationship between parents and their teenagers offered that;

The reason why parents are complaining is because they are the only ones talking. When they are the only ones talking, there is no communication there. Yes advise them but also allow the children to tell you there is a problem. If you are always the one talking even when the children have problems, they will not talk to you, they will just keep to themselves and find out for themselves. Parents need to stop this kitambo- medieval mentality, ati-which says, don't associate with boys. As a girl, you can have friends who are boys. Just know the limit, set the boundaries. Let them not be like they are bad. They are bad how? Si also, you married my dad. I just don't get the point.

Parents were also advised that the world has since changed especial the ever- evolving media technology hence they should appreciate the changing nature of their adolescent's media diet as this respondent advised;

Parents should also accept that this is a changing generation. This is not their time so some things that happened during their time, they should not expect it to happen during our time. Because us we can access the Internet and stuff while they could not. So it is not our fault that they did not have those things.

For those parents who were overly strict in applying extreme restrictive measures, a girls' boarder advised that, "I have a friend whom the mum never even allows her out so when she comes to school she decides to misbehave because she knows she would not have chance at home. So don't be too strict. Asked by the interviewer to get in the shoes of such parents...she said; they should be moderate. You know teenagers, when you stop them from doing something they will even want to do it more. So the tactics of hiding TV is not going to work because they will still find somewhere to watch. So get to their hearts. Get to the root of the problem. It's not about hiding or disconnecting the TV.

#### **IV. Discussion**

This study used a qualitative method to investigate motivational and contextual factors predicating Nairobi City County public secondary school students' seeking out sexual radio and TV content. Several patterns were found regarding youths' uses and gratification of sexual media, and their suggestions for intervention by parents and others to decrease exposure to sexual content.

First, regarding motivation, the finding that listening for radio was more associated with learning and TV was more associated with companionship and fun was converse to research in developing countries that almost exclusively suggest instrumental motives for TV viewership are associated with intake of sexual content (Rubin, 1983; Rubin 1984; Ward & Friedman, 2006; Kim & Ward 2004). It could be argued that listening to radio for fun is likely to lead listeners to consuming more sexual content while consuming TV for companionship could lead to further discussion of the same by those watching together consequently more retaining of the text for future reference and possible action upon activation.

Due to convergence of media including proliferation of smartphones there is now a thinner line between someone who is watching TV or listening to radio alone or in a group. This is because modern technology allows sharing hence active interaction with information and content with those who are present physically and those who are present via technology (Parkes et al. 2011). Watching and discussing TV content in the presence of opposite – sex friends (Bleakley et al., 2011; Rubin, 1993) as it was reported by current study respondents is likely via technology especially the common usage of smartphone and could increase TV contents' impact on adolescents.



The results for social context for intake of both radio and TV sexual content also extend scant previous research that context of media consumption was associated to exposure to sexual content (Nathanson, 2001; Parkes, 2011, Kaiser Family, 2005). The significant but also expected finding indicating that the bedroom had greater exposure to both radio and TV sexual content echoes Mwangi (2015) concerns that parents and perhaps teachers should be more concerned with what their teenagers are doing in the confines of their bedrooms.

Adolescents' recommend to parents that harsh restrictions could be counter-productive. They suggested varied strategies prominent of which include empowering the teenagers with media literacy and especially about sexual media content, to have regular rapport between parent to child on talk about matters such as sexual content, friendly advisory and tutelage, more understanding of adolescents living in a media technology savvy world. These suggestions support Nathanson (2002) caution that though parental supervision and control was likely to reduce adolescents' association with high-risk peers thereby decreasing their indulgence with sexual media content, it could also breed negative effects such as rebellion and disobeying parental restrictions. There is therefore the need to do it in a more friendly and educative way for teenagers to understand the consequences of exposure. Secondly, results show the need of today's Kenyan parents to find ways of keeping pace with media literacy and a more convergent-savvy media technology and perhaps seek to appropriate positive gains from them as a way of keeping tabs with what their children were doing and the friends there were interacting with as they help them negotiate sexual media content on their journey to responsible adulthood.

Findings suggest that though sex education is often approached with great unease and addressed in little detail in schools, community programs and at homes even both in developed world (Hust et al 2008) and developing world (Path, 2013) both parents and schools should still find it useful giving teenagers health education to help them become healthy adults. Consequently secondary schools should collaborate with parents associations and health organizations to design a comprehensive, implementable and easy to-evaluate media literacy curriculum to empower adolescents with knowledge, understanding and interpretation of media content.

Results of this study suggest further research in areas that emerged prominent but were not part of current investigation. One, there is the need to examine how exposure to sexual content is associated with sexual behaviors in the Kenyan context. Motivations for exposure can influence adolescents' behaviour. For example, Bleakley et al. 2011; Bleakley et al. (2008) found evidence that teenagers with risky friendships or a romantic partner may be more likely to seek out sexual media content. Alternatively, formation of risky friendships, finding a boyfriend/girlfriend and co-viewing with mixed sex friends might heighten any influence of sexual media content toward early sexual intercourse, since exposure to such content may increase sensation-seeking. Additionally exposure to sexual media content could affect attitudes and beliefs which could encourage early sexual initiation, permissive sexual norms and increased safe-sex self-efficacy (Bleakley et al. 2011). Ward & Friedman (2006) noted that girls and boys who reported watching TV for companionship were also more likely to agree that sex is recreational, that men are sexually driven, and that women are sexual objects. These findings suggest that teens who are turning to TV as a friend are also more accepting of its dominant messages and may be relying more heavily on media for social norms and values. These findings therefore necessitate a further study in the area in the Kenyan context.

Limitations for current study include the fact that, in keeping with the traditions of its theoretical framework, it relied on self-reported data hence there is the possibility of dishonesty or simply reporting what the respondents thought the researcher wanted to hear. Second, the study was cross sectional, hence the researcher could not draw conclusions on youths' media habits over the long term. Finally, even though the sample for the focus groups was carefully drawn, information from this sample cannot be generalized to the larger adolescent population in Kenya, or even in Nairobi.

## **V. Conclusion**

In the Kenyan context where media literacy is low, sex education is still shied away from and teenagers are increasingly and actively exposed to sexual media content, motivational research is important to assist in crafting interventions to protect them from harmful content. Because school and family are still influential factors in teenagers' sexual socialization, study findings help clarify why teachers and parental mediation are important constructs in the study of media content exposure and effects on adolescents. Although this study was, to our knowledge, the first to examine motivations and contexts for adolescents' exposure to sexual media content in Kenya, future research should examine how this exposure is associated with adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors.

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