

# Influence of Television Sexual Content Consumption on Teenage Pregnancy Among High School Students in Embakasi Sub-County

Cherono Winnie Koros<sup>1\*</sup>, Collins Wagumba<sup>2</sup>, Sammy Baya<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Postgraduate Student, Faculty of Media and Communication, Multimedia University of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Head of Department, Faculty of Media and Communication, Multimedia University of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Faculty of Media and Communication, Multimedia University of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

**Abstract:** The objective of the study was to establish the influence of television sexual content consumption on teenage pregnancy among high school students in Embakasi Sub-County and the corresponding research question was formulated. The study targeted 198 respondents but only 129 of them participated translating to a response rate of 65.2% which is satisfactory for statistical analysis for generalization of findings. The study adopted mixed research method and purposive sampling. SPSS Version 23 was used to analyze data using descriptive statistics. Research findings revealed that television sexual content consumption influenced teenage pregnancy among high school students in Embakasi Sub-County. The study confirms Cultivation Theory and Social Learning Theory which shows close link between the variables.

**Keywords:** sexual content consumption, teenage pregnancy, cultivation theory, social learning theory.

## 1. Introduction

Sexual content consumption refers to viewing or listening to sexual contents such as pornographic materials, movies, soap operas, music and other explicit contents that triggers sexual desires (Hassan & Daniyal, 2013) whereas teenage pregnancy is a pregnancy of human females under the age of 19 until the time that pregnancy ends (Chandra, 2018). Although empirical evidence strongly indicates a close link between television sexual content consumption and teenage pregnancy among high school students (Miriti, 2019; Collins, 2018), most studies are confined to general teenagers in other countries more so the US, Europe and Asia.

Methodologically, most of the studies on larger population group like high schools in the whole country (Collins, 2018) and others focused on urban teenagers in either private or public schools nor necessarily high schools.

### A. Television Sexual Consumption

Sexual contents of media such as television have to some extent contributed to the increasing number of teenage pregnancies around the world. Portrayal of sexual contents from television contents such as soap operas, advertisements, pornography or other related programs have increased sexual

activities and pregnancies among youths and teenagers (Greenberg & Busselle, 2016). Adolescents with high level of exposure to soap opera programs with sexual contents are as likely to get pregnant or impregnate someone (Kappeler, 2015). Sexually active teenagers who watch popular television shows among the teens which are full of flirting, kissing, caressing and scenes laced with sexual innuendo are about twice as likely to get pregnant or get a partner pregnant (Aubrey, 2010). Teens who watch sexual scenes on television are twice likely to get pregnant (Evans, 2018).

### B. Teenage Pregnancy among High Schools Students in Kenya

Teenage pregnancy has been a concern to many countries across the globe. Approximately 16 million teenagers aged 15 and 19 years become pregnant every year, constituting 11 percent of all births worldwide (Habib & Soliman, 2015). Teenage pregnancies are a global problem that occurs in high, middle- and low-income countries whereby 7.3 million of the births are by girls under the age of 15 (Harwood, 2016). The Sub-Saharan region has the highest number of teenage pregnancies as compared to other developing countries in Africa (UNFPA, 2020). Every year, estimated 21 million girls aged 15 to 19 years in developing regions become pregnant and approximately 12 million of them give birth. At least 777,000 births occur to adolescent girls younger than 15 years in developing countries (Chandra, 2018).

About 11 percent of teenagers are having sex before the age of 15, which has led to an increase in the number of girls who fail to sit for Kenya Certificate of Secondary education (KCSE) (Uwezo, 2012). An estimated 47 percent of teens in Kenya are sexually active before the age of 18, the legal age of consent (Ngware, Oketch & Ezech, 2008). Data from Demographic and Health surveys shows that almost 2 out of 10 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are reported to be pregnant or already had a child which has been quite consistent for more than two decades with little change in prevalence between the years 1993 and 2014 (Kappeler, 2015).

Embakasi Sub-County is one of the highly populated areas in Nairobi County with a total number of 181,338 people

\*Corresponding author: cwagumba@gmail.com

according to the Kenyan census 2019 report (Distribution of Population by Social Economic Characteristics, 2019). Embakasi Sub-County is located in Nairobi city; therefore, television accessibility is easier. This Sub-County has 16 girls' secondary schools and a total number of secondary schools.

*C. Television Sexual Content Consumption and Teenage Pregnancy*

Sexual contents as portrayed or viewed on the television have influence on teenage pregnancy. Television has also been proven to have influence on teenage pregnancy through a great access and exposure of teenager's television (Habib & Soliman, 2015). Adolescents receive a considerable amount of information about sex through television and that programming typically does not highlight the risks and responsibilities of sex (Chandra, 2018), therefore television may play a significant role in the high rates of teenage pregnancy. Watching television with sexual content may influence teen sexual behavior.

Soap operas portray girlfriends or boyfriends in the finest love relationship and sexual activities that lure viewers in imitating such acts just to conform (Al-Harbi, 2015). Teens who watch a lot of television content are more likely to initiate sexual intercourse and that frequent exposure to television sexual content was associated with significantly greater likelihood of teenage pregnancy in three years following the exposure (Wiley,2016). Sexually active teenagers who watch popular television shows among the teens which are full of flirting, kissing, caressing and scenes laced with sexual innuendo are about twice as likely to get pregnant or get a partner pregnant (Aubrey, 2010).

**2. Methodology**

The study adopted mixed method. Primary data was collected from 129 students who were purposely selected among high school students in Embakasi Sub County. SPSS Version 23 was used to code, enter and analyze the gathered data.

*A. Study Response Rate*

The number of questionnaires issued out was 198 and only 129 were properly filled in and returned as shown in Table 1.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Responded	129	65.2
Not responded	69	34.8
Total	198	100

As shown in Table 1, this translated to a response rate of 65.2 % which is adequate enough for statistical analysis. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50-60% is good, 61-70% is adequate and above 70% is excellent. Given a response rate of 65.2%, the response rate is therefore considered as adequate.

*B. Age of the Respondents*

The study sought to determine the age of the respondents. The output was summarized in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, 29.46 % of the students were of the age bracket of 13-15 years, 51.16% of them fall in the age bracket of 16-17 years, while 19.38 % of them were of the age bracket of 18-19 years. Implication of this is that the study involved all the teenagers in the respective girls' high school that would meet the objectives of the study.

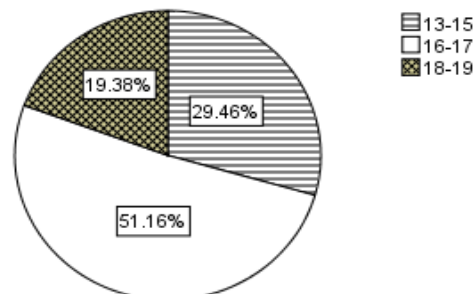


Fig. 1. Age of the respondents

*C. Class Level of the Respondents*

The study sought to determine the class level of the respondents. The results are depicted in Figure 2.

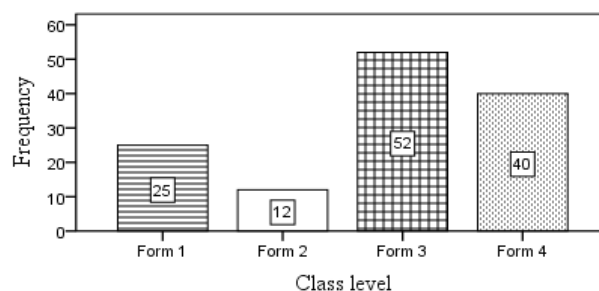


Fig. 2. Class level of the respondents

Twelve of the respondents were in form one, twenty-five of students were in form two, fifty-two of the respondents were in Form Three while forty of the respondents were from Form Four. This indicates that the study incorporated all the students and never discriminated them on the basis of the class levels. Therefore, the study was able to obtain inclusive information from the various class levels of High School.

*D. Owning television at home*

The study sought to determine whether the respondents owned televisions at home. The results are displayed in Figure 3.

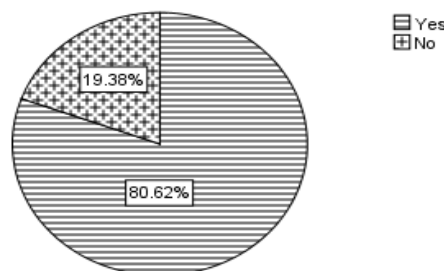


Fig. 3. Owning television at home

Figure 3 indicates that 80.6% of the students agreed that they had televisions at home while 19.4% confirmed they had no televisions at home. But on whether they watch television, all the 129 students confirmed that they do watch. Based on the study findings, this implies that the students were in a position to watch television even in an event that they had no televisions at home.

#### E. Favorite Television Programs

The study sought to determine the favorite television programs watched by students. Table 2 displays the results.

Table 2  
Favorite television programs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Soap Operas	36	27.9
Movies	22	17.1
Series	24	18.6
Reality Television Show	10	7.8
Music	20	15.5
Others	17	13.2
Total	129	100

On question about their favorite programs on the television, 36 of the respondents (27.9%) chose soap operas as their favorite program, 22 of the students (17.1%) chose movies, 24 of the respondents (18.6%) chose series, 10 of them (7.8%) chose Reality television shows, 20 of them (15.5%) opted for Music while 17 of the respondents (13.2%) opted for other programs as favorites. This implies that the teenagers in high schools watch or listen different programs on the televisions that influence their thinking and decision making.

### 3. Discussion

From the results of data collected and analyzed, 77.5% (110) respondents agreed that excessive viewing of soap operas on television triggered certain behaviors or actions pandering to dangerous sexual behaviour which could lead to early pregnancy. The study findings also revealed that 61.2% (79) respondents agreed that the promotion of sexual content on television contributes to increase in teenage pregnancies. Finally, the results of the analysis, 72.1% (83) of the respondents agreed that heavy sexual content on television contribute to increased teenage pregnancies in schools. Television with more of sexual contents builds up on various characters and behaviours that are eventually tried out with the teenage girls. Such character then triggers them to engage in sexual activities such as pecks, kissing or sex with boys or men within the society. Such sexual contents awaken different emotions, feelings and actions that make it easy for the girls to indulge in sexual activities. In the eventuality of things, this then may result to increased teenage pregnancies in the high schools in Embakasi Sub- County.

### 4. Conclusion

The study aimed to establish the influence of television sexual content consumption on teenage pregnancy among high school students in Embakasi Sub-County. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. From the data analyzed, the study confirmed that television sexual content consumption have influence on teenage pregnancy among high school students in Embakasi Sub-County.

### 5. Recommendations

The study recommends empowerment of the high school girls with knowledge and information, media practitioners to regulate the content aired on the television and implementation of more strict laws and policies against teenage pregnancies. Further study can be conducted on examine the influence sexual content consumption on teenage pregnancies among high school students in other counties in Kenya or private schools as well. The findings of these studies will enrich literature on variables of the study as well as help in comparison, contrast and generalization of the findings.

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