

ABSTRACT

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL BEHAVIOR OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN VIHIGA DISTRICT, KENYA

The purpose of the study was to investigate the association between the adolescent's parent's socio-economic and demographic status, their personal attitudes and qualities, the print and electronic media, peers, and the type of school and the adolescents' sexual behavior. A conceptual model derived from Bronfenbrenner's Ecology of Human Development theory was used to guide this study. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. A random sample of 140 school girls from four schools; one girls boarding, one mixed boarding and two day schools from Vihiga division constituted the study sample for the study. Data was collected by the use of a self administered questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion. Descriptive statistics, namely percentages and frequencies were used to describe the adolescents' sexual behavior. Cross-tabulation was done and Chi-square used to establish whether there was any relationship between the independent variables and the adolescent sexual behavior. The adolescent ages in the study ranged from 13 to 20 years. Out of the 140 respondents, 74 (52.9%) of them were found to have a boyfriend. A Majority of the respondents; however, reported to have received love letters or gifts during their relationship (N=89, 63.6%). However, a minority of these students reported that they had ever engaged in lesbianism (N= 16, 11.4%). The respondents who had multiple partners were found to be more (N=29, 65.6%) than those who had one sexual partner. Out of the 63 respondents who had started having sexual relations, 26 (41.3%) reported that they started at the age of 14. The most reported sexual partners for the sexually active girls were boyfriends who were of the same age as them. The most cited reason for having engaged in sexual intercourse for the 63 girls who had engaged in sexual intercourse was due to peer pressure reported by 33 (52.4%) of the respondents. Results of the likert scale question used to gauge student's attitude towards marriage revealed that a majority of the students 100 (71.4%) had a negative attitude. Chi square results revealed no significant relationship between the adolescent's attitude towards premarital sexual intercourse and their adolescent sexual behavior. Chi square results revealed that most of the adolescent friends' sexual behaviors had significant relationships with their sexual behavior. Most of the results revealed that the adolescents tended to have friends who engaged in similar sexual activities or some other different sexual activity. Majority of the respondents reported that they got their sexuality information from their teachers (N=107, 76.4%). The chi-square results on the relationship between print and electronic media were found to be significant for various indicators of adolescent sexual behavior. The opinion most valued on sexual issues by the adolescents was that of parents. The Chi-Square results, however, revealed that the parenting practices like parents fighting, drinking, or being broke were not found to have any significant relationship with the adolescent's sexual behavior. A majority of the students 116 (82.9%) reported that they had sex education programmes in their schools. The most reported sex education programme was Guidance and counseling as reported by 111 (79.3%) of the respondents. The chi-square results between the presence of sex education programmes in schools and adolescent sexual behavior were found to be significant for the factor of the adolescents engaging in sex with the opposite sex. In view of the findings that emerged from this study, the researcher recommended that existing school sex education programmes, church, family, and the media can be used to educate the youth about their sexuality and promote their awareness on they can handle sex-related issues.