

ABSTRACT

Reports from Homa Bay County Education Office (HCEO) indicated that out of its five sub-counties (Rachuonyo North and South, Homa Bay, Ndhiwa and Mbita), K.C.P.E grades for Rachuonyo North sub-county (RNSC) continued to be below average despite County ranking relatively well nationally in KCPE (position 18 and 14 out of 47 counties in 2012 and 2013 respectively). In the 2010 KCPE, unlike for the other four sub-counties in RNSC only 21 girls out of 1630 and 41 boys out of 2167 scored between 350 and 390 marks, whereas 996 girls out of 1630 scored below 250 out of the maximum score of 500 marks. Coupled with the poor KCPE results in RNSC was a high primary school dropout rate (20% for girls and 15% for boys) attributed dating related activities. The dropout rate in RNSC was comparatively higher than the average for the other four sub-counties (12% for males and 16% for females). Reports from Homa Bay County Education Office further indicated that the low KCPE grades in RNSC could be attributed to increased adolescents' dating in the sub-county. The purpose of this study therefore was to establish the correlation between adolescents' dating and academic achievement in public primary schools in RNSC. Objectives for the study were to: establish prevalence rates of dating among pupils, determine adolescents' preferred choice of dating method, determine the extent to which dating impacted on academic achievement of adolescents and find out adolescents' choice of person to help address academic challenges that may arise due to dating. The study was based on a conceptual framework showing the relationship between adolescence stage (Independent Variable) and academic achievement (Dependent Variable). The study adopted descriptive survey and correlational research designs. The population comprised of 4611 class eight pupils and 160 deputy head teachers. While simple random sampling was used to select 53 schools and deputy heads, stratified random sampling was used to select 355 pupils for the study. Questionnaire, in-depth interview and Pupils' Exam results records analysis were used to collect data. Reliability of data collection instruments was established by carrying out a pilot study in 16 schools using test retest method. Reliability coefficient indices for the questionnaire and interview schedule were 0.76 and 0.75 respectively. Face validity of the data collection instruments was ascertained by experts in the content area. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages. Pearson's r was used to determine the extent to which dating impacted on academic achievement. Qualitative data was transcribed, organized into themes and sub-themes and presented in text form. Findings indicated that 55.8% of the pupils had lovers; preferred method of dating was face to face meeting (23.7%); an increase in dating frequency resulted in a decrease in academic grades achieved and that mother was the most preferred (17.5%) choice for adolescents to guide them in academic challenges that could arise due to dating. The study concluded that primary school pupils were involved in dating; the pupils preferred meeting face to face in dating; dating impacted negatively on academics and mothers were the most preferred to address academic challenges adolescents faced as a result of dating. It was recommended that school administrations should sensitize pupils on consequences of dating while in school; Parents, guardians and teachers should provide adolescents guidance on activities they can engage in rather than dating and that guidance and counseling of adolescents involving the parents be enhanced to mitigate negative effects of dating.