



Guidance and Counselling Techniques and Students' Sexual Behavior in Secondary Schools near Fish-landing Beaches

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author SJOO designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To establish the relationship between guidance and counselling techniques and students' sexual behavior among students near fish-landing beaches of Lake Victoria in Kisumu East district, Kisumu County, Kenya.

Sample: The study population was 1368 students who were between the ages of 16 and 19 years-old from which a sample of 410 students was drawn.

Study Design: Survey research design was adopted.

Place and Duration of Study: Students and teachers in public secondary schools near fish-landing beaches of Lake Victoria in Kisumu County, Kenya, between January 2012 and April 2012.

Methodology: Data collection instruments were piloted for face validity and internal reliability were ascertained. Data was collected from 410 obtained using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which was percentages and inferential statistics, which was chi-square.

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Conclusion: The findings revealed that students' sexual behaviour was significantly associated with proximity to fish landing beach; that guidance and counselling techniques were used to varying levels; and that sexual behavior and use of techniques were not significantly associated. Therefore, it was concluded that abstinence was the modal sexual behavior; that guidance and counselling techniques were used in schools, but seldom eclectically; and that usage of guidance and counselling techniques and students sexual behavior were not significantly associated.

Keywords: *Fish-landing beach; sexual behavior; students; guidance and counselling techniques.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Guidance and counselling students on sexual behavior has been opposed on the basis that it was obscene, that it aroused desire to experiment with sexuality and that it did not discriminate among the individual student needs [1,2]. On the other hand, researchers have found out that sex education was associated with responsible sexual behavior among students [3, 4,5].

[6], in China, found out that there was a relationship between student's sexual behaviour and location of a school categorized as rural versus urban locations. On the other hand, [7] and [8] in the USA reported that there was no relationship between student's sexual behavior and the location of their school. However, none of the studies [6,7,8] investigated the effect of the location of a school near a fish-landing beach.

Furthermore, [9] argued that 16 – 19 year olds did not abstain consistently because it was not their sexual behaviour of choice. In addition, it was argued that they only abstained at some points in their lives and not consistently [10,11, 12]. Subsequently, stakeholders engaged in combating HIV transmission in areas near the fishing beaches of Lake Victoria [13] have promoted faithfulness to sexual partner and partner reduction among people in committed relationships as a way of preventing the spread of HIV. However, none of these studies considered the relationship of sexual behavior and proximity to a fish-landing beach.

Moreover, [14] and [15] researched on sexual behaviour around Lake Victoria. They found out that fish-landing beaches were characterized by increased risk-taking sexual behaviour. This raised the issue of how to reduce the impact of risk-taking sexual behaviour so as to reduce HIV infection and prevalence [14]. Condom use, faithfulness to one partner and abstinence were

therefore promoted among the people around Lake Victoria [16]. Nevertheless, these studies did not consider the relationship these interventions had with guidance and counselling techniques among students learning in schools near Lake Victoria.

The members of the Luo ethnic community populate the fish-landing beaches of Lake Victoria in Kisumu County, Kenya. Traditionally, guidance and counselling among the Luo took place in institutions such as initiation schools, the extended family, chieftaincy and taboo systems [17]. The Luo community had special institutions called *Duol* for boys and *Siwindhe* for girls for training young people in adult behavior, using a curriculum that included sexual behaviour [18, 19]. However, these traditional institutions were broken up by modernization, a shift from the extended to the nuclear family unit and the infiltration of foreign culture through print and electronic media [17,18]. Therefore, there was need for an investigation into the influence of guidance and counselling techniques employed in secondary schools and students' sexual behavior.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The consequences of risk-taking sexual behaviour among students include HIV infection, unplanned pregnancies and dropping out of school. Kisumu East district has HIV infections, teen-pregnancy levels, and school dropout rates above the Kenya national average among youths aged between 16 and 19 years old. These rates, according to [14] and [15], rise even higher among youths in fish-landing beaches. However, the impact of guidance and counselling techniques on sexual behaviour has not been ascertained among students in secondary schools near fish-landing beaches.

1.3 Relevance of the Study

This study may benefit education stakeholders such as the government and sponsors of schools

who have taken hard-line positions on sex education in schools. In addition, this study provides an empirical evaluation of the effect of guidance and counselling techniques on students' sexual behavior.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between guidance and counselling techniques and sexual behavior among students in secondary schools near fish-landing beaches of Lake Victoria in Kisumu County, Kenya.

The objectives were to

- i. Describe students' sexual behavior in terms of abstinence, faithfulness to one partner and condom use in secondary schools near fish-landing beaches.
- ii. Determine the relationship between use of modeling, reinforcement, and core conditions as guidance and counselling techniques and students' sexual behavior of abstinence, faithfulness to one partner and condom use.
- iii. Determine the relationship between students' sexual behavior of abstinence, faithfulness to one partner and condom use on one hand and the location of a school near a fish-landing beach on the other hand.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the [20] eclectic counselling model. This study used the eclectic approach because, according to [21], there is no proof that any one theoretical approach is better than all others are. In addition, every person is unique and singular, therefore no theory may encompass every human experience of every person [22], and therefore, an eclectic model is appropriate to cover all the experiences of human beings. Moreover, an evaluation of psychological theories indicate that there is not only commonality of outcomes when counselling is done but similar concepts with different names are found across different theories [23]. Furthermore, purist theoretical approaches have little bearing on the actual counselling that teachers do use in schools [23]. These are the reasons why the current study adopted an

eclectic model to investigate the guidance and counselling techniques.

The [20] eclectic model is a three-tiered pyramidal structure. The base tier requires that the counsellor establish his/her philosophical and epistemological assumptions. The middle tier requires a general theory indicating determinants of human behavior, while the third tier requires the counsellor to develop techniques for a therapeutic intervention.

Following from this model, the philosophical assumption for the current study was that students acquire sexual behaviour both from their internal processing of issues, and influences in their environment such as the acceptable sexual practices at a fish-landing beach. The view of human nature for this study was that students are capable of both self-actualizing tendency such as safe sexual behavior and self-destructive tendencies such as risk-taking sexual behavior. The determinants of human behavior considered in this study were guidance and counselling techniques acting within the location of the school near a fish-landing beach. The guidance and counselling techniques investigated in this study were modeling, reinforcement and core conditions.

The independent variable for this study was usage of guidance and counselling techniques; with modeling, reinforcement and use of core conditions techniques as sub-variables. The intervening variables were factors affecting student sexual behaviour, which were gender and type of school. The dependent variable was student sexual behaviour with abstinence, faithfulness and condom use as sub-variables.

Guidance and counselling techniques were argued to influence behavior in different ways. Reinforcement technique might influence students' sexual behaviour through such reinforcers as physical pleasure, peer approval, and feelings of intimacy [24]. Modeling technique might influence students' sexual behaviour through vicarious learning by electronic media, pictures, and in social interactions [23,25,26,27]. The core conditions might influence students' sexual behaviour through unconditional positive regard, genuineness, warmth and personal presence [25,28,29]. All these guidance and counselling techniques were brought together in effective counselling practice by the eclectic model.

The strength of the [20] eclectic model is that it provides the teacher counsellors with firm theoretical bases for their practice and a solid structural framework to carry out his techniques. The weakness of the [20] eclectic model is that the theories may describe the same phenomena using different terminologies and that it may not address the possible incompatibility between technique and the client's cultural worldview [30]. The impacts of these weaknesses were reduced by using guidance and counselling techniques from theories that were fundamentally different but applicable to the students' worldview.

2.2 Literature Review

Sexual behaviour affects almost every aspect of students [31]. It affects the health of students through post-abortion complications and infection with sexually transmitted infections. In addition, it also affects students' social life by affecting their self-esteem and relationships with significant others [31].

The consequences of risk-taking behavior have been found to include suicide, physical abuse and violence, alcohol and drug abuse, unwanted pregnancy, and unsafe abortion [32,33]. Since sexual behaviour is so vitally important to the welfare of the student, stakeholders use many approaches including sex education and guidance and counselling to influence students' sexual behaviour. Therefore, sex education seeks to provide youth with the information and skills needed to make healthy and informed decisions about sex in a traditional pedagogical approach [4].

Guidance and counselling, on the other hand, seeks to be more participatory and student-centered [23]. However, [1] and [2] opposed guidance and counselling on sexual behaviour on the basis that it was obscene, aroused desire to experiment with sexuality in students and that it did not discriminate among the individual student needs. The opponents of guidance and counselling on sexual behaviour therefore argued that it did no good and promoted what it set out to reduce – irresponsible sexual behaviour among students [34,35]. Nevertheless, other studies found a significant association between exposure to formal sex education and responsible sexual behaviour [3,4,5]. Therefore, there was need for an investigation into the relationship of guidance and counselling techniques and students' sexual behavior.

On abstinence, there was debate whether young people abstain or not. On one hand, some research reported that young people did not abstain because it is not their sexual behaviour of choice [9,10,11,12]. On the other hand, [35] argued that AIDS prevention messages were having some impact in influencing young people toward abstinence. However, the argument continued that young people only practiced abstinence at some points in their lives and not consistently [11,12,24]. Moreover, some research suggested that young people may believe in abstinence but not practice abstinence [34,36]. This left pending the need to establish the level of abstinence among students.

Regarding condom use, some research found out that promotion of condom use does not result in increased sexual activity among the targeted groups [37]. It was also argued that young people rarely used condoms because they found them tedious to use [38,39]. Furthermore, in Kenya, it was also suspected that condoms might be unavailable to students in Kenyan schools because Kenyan legal provisions forbid promotion of condoms among students [40,41]. In addition, many stakeholders, such as churches, which sponsor some schools, and funding agencies, which sponsor abstinence-promotion programs, oppose use of condoms among young people arguing that it encouraged promiscuity [2,13,42]. Societal attitudes which view condom use as sleaze and the domain of people of ill-repute, or as interrupting sexual momentum; also work against condom use [37, 43,44]. Therefore, it had been reported that although knowledge about condoms was widespread in Kenya, their acceptability was very low [45]. There was, therefore, need to determine the level of condom use among students.

The third sexual behavior that the current study investigated was faithfulness to a sexual partner. Faithfulness has been promoted among people in committed relationships as a way of preventing the spread of HIV [13]. However, since the HIV prevention is often presented in a package, young people also receive the message of faithfulness to a sexual partner. Therefore, [13] set strict conditions on how and with whom faithfulness was to be promoted as a sexual behavior. On the other hand, [46] and [47], argue against faithfulness saying that it is an impediment to sexual fulfillment, and contrary to human genetic composition. Furthermore, [48] reported that sex with multiple partners did not

cause emotional or psychological distress for young people. The current study, therefore, sought to determine the level of faithfulness among students in secondary schools.

According to [49], school characteristics such as location of school may influence the sexual behaviour of students. Studies done in the U.S.A. and China found out that rural and urban youth differed in sexual experience with the urban figures being much higher than rural ones [6,7]. On the other hand, other researchers working in the U.S.A. reported that there was no significant difference in the sexual behaviour between rural and suburban youth [50]. In addition, [7] who investigated geospatial distribution of sexual behavior in Kisumu concluded that neither urban nor rural residence significantly affected risk behavior or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) prevalence. However, these studies did not consider the sexual behavior between students near and those far from fish-landing beaches.

Kisumu East district is on the Winam gulf of the Lake Victoria on the Kenyan side. It has some schools which are close to fish-landing beaches while others are far way from such beaches. Studies conducted among the fishing communities around the lake from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya indicated that fish-landing beaches were characterized by increased risk-taking sexual behaviour [14,51]. In addition, high levels of sexual activity had been reported among people closely engaged in the fish industry [14]. However, these studies had been done with members of the general population engaged in the fishing industry at the beaches and not with students per se. Therefore, this study sought to find out the relationship between usage of guidance and counselling techniques and student sexual behavior across locations of schools near or far from fish-landing beaches.

A study conducted among public high school teachers and students in Kenya revealed that although guidance and counselling programs were supported by the educational policy in the country, these programs were not fully effective [52]. The study attributed this to inadequate training, less time and lack of support from the school administration. The paper suggested that further research should highlight challenges in implementing guidance and counselling programs, which would lead to harmonizing policy and practice. However, [52] did not investigate the guidance and counselling

techniques of modeling, reinforcement and core conditions.

The premise of modeling was that sexual behaviour was learnt vicariously as students observed a model [23,25,26,27]. Modeling technique of guidance and counselling was used in schools in Migori and Busia districts to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for increased enrolment, retention and completion of girls in schools [53]. However, the [53] study was limited in its scope by investigating girls only and not boys. On the other hand, [54] reported that modeling technique does not significantly influence human sexual behaviour. Therefore, the relationship between modeling technique and sexual behaviour of students remained to be established.

Reinforcement technique was premised on the position that behaviour was learnt through rewards obtained from the environment [55,56]. It had been argued that reinforcement is effective in influencing the sexual behaviour of students [57,58,59]. On the other hand, [18] reported that the cultural background of students made young people expect to do the right thing without rewards. Therefore, reinforcement technique would be alien to the cultural mindset in which the students had grown up because a reward is perceived as a bribe for good behavior [18].

The third guidance and counselling technique investigated in the current study was the use of the core conditions, which were summarized as readiness, acceptance and empathy [23,60]. It had been argued that the core conditions were necessary and sufficient for a student to develop responsible behaviour which would include sexual behaviour [28,61,62]. On the other hand, it was also argued that core conditions might be ineffective in influencing student sexual behaviour because they may not be compatible with the cultural worldview of students [30,63]. Therefore, this study sought to describe the usage of core conditions and the relationship with student sexual behaviour.

Eclectic guidance and counselling was considered in this study as the systematic choice and application of complimentary techniques that are appropriate to the client's needs using an eclectic model [21,22,27,30,64]. It was argued that the eclectic model lends itself to teacher-counsellors by bridging the gap between theoretical techniques and practical ways of

guidance and counselling [30]. This was because the eclectic approach gave the teacher-counsellors flexibility and allowed them room for creativity in using techniques from different theoretical approaches as they cater for uniqueness of every student [21,22,64,65]. On the other hand, it had been argued that there was no proof that any one theoretical approach was better than all others [21]. The current study, however, used the eclectic approach because it had more bearing on the guidance and counselling that teacher-counsellors did in schools, than purist theoretical approaches [23]. Therefore, this study investigated the use of modeling, reinforcement and core conditions techniques using the [20] eclectic model among students.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study used survey design to investigate the relationship between sexual behavior and guidance and counselling techniques. Survey design assessed the characteristics of students in Kisumu East district by administering questionnaire items. The administration of questionnaires was conducted at one point in time and thereafter there was an examination of the relationship between guidance and counselling techniques and students' sexual behavior to capture patterns of past behavior.

3.2 Study Participants

The study population comprised of students and teachers from 53 public secondary schools in Kisumu East district with 1368 Forms Three students aged between 16 and 19 years. This study was conducted among Forms Three students aged between 16 – 19 years old because they were at the developmental stage of middle to late adolescence. This stage is characterized by physical development for sexual behavior, mental capacity to be guided and counseled and emotional capacity for love and passion [66]. The sample of 410 students, being 30% of the population, was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling [67].

3.3 Research Instruments

This study used questionnaires as instruments for data collection. Questionnaires, with closed-ended items with a five-point Likert scale, were used in this study because they were effective in

inquiring about a sensitive topic such as sexual behaviour and could efficiently collect quantifiable data without introducing interviewer bias [68].

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 30% of the 16 – 19 year-old Form Three students and teacher-counsellors to participate in the study from the target population. Proportionate stratified random sampling is a probability sampling technique where the researcher divides the entire population into different non-overlapping strata, then randomly selects the final subjects proportionally from the different strata [69,70].

Proportionate stratified random sampling was used because it reduced sampling error by ensuring the representation of respondents with different characteristics from various sub-groups in the population according to the ratios of their total frequency counts. Furthermore, the student population readily lent itself to proportionate stratified random sampling because it could be divided into distinct sub-groups based on location of school near or far from a fish-landing beach.

3.5 Data Analysis

This study used quantitative data analysis methods to analyze the data because the instruments for data collection yielded quantitative data. The data on sexual behaviour and guidance and counselling technique was analyzed across proximity to fish-landing beach. The data was analyzed also using descriptive, which is percentages, and inferential statistics, which was chi-square test of association, at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Chi-square was calculated according to the formula obtained from [71].

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{Observed Frequency} - \text{Expected Frequency})^2}{\text{Expected Frequency}}$$

Chi-square statistics was used to determine if a distribution of observed frequencies differed from the theoretical expected frequencies because the data from the questionnaires was nominal [72].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On students' sexual behavior in secondary schools near fish-landing beaches, the study

findings revealed that the percentages for abstinence and condom use for students in schools close to fish landing beaches (52.5%; N = 19 and 16%; N = 19 respectively) were lower than for the students in schools far from fish-landing beaches (23.3%; N = 391 and 65.5%; N = 391 respectively). However, percentages for faithfulness for students in schools near fish-landing beaches were higher than those in schools far from fish-landing beaches (31.5%; N = 19 and 11.2%; N = 391 respectively). This was contrary to [9,10,11] and [12] but in line with [13]. Therefore, the inferential statistics was performed to determine the association between guidance and counseling techniques and students' sexual behavior in such schools.

On the relationship between guidance and counselling techniques and students' sexual behavior, data analysis revealed that usage of modeling had a significant association ($\chi^2_{(2, 0.05)} = 0.000$) with students' sexual behaviour in school near fish-landing beaches. This was in line with some previous findings [53,73,74,75]. The present study also found out that reinforcement technique had a significant association with students' sexual behaviour ($\chi^2_{(2, 0.05)} = 0.000$). This finding was similar to the findings of [76,77,78] but was contrary to the finding of [79]. The present study, furthermore, found that the relationship between use of the core conditions and students' sexual behaviour was highly significant ($\chi^2_{(2, 0.05)} = 0.001$). Therefore, the finding of the present study supported the findings of [62] and [80] but was opposed to that of [81].

On the relationship between students' sexual behavior and location of a school near a fish-landing beach, chi-square test of association was performed for students' sexual behaviour and location of schools in relation to a fish-landing beach. The data analysis indicated that there was a significant association ($\chi^2_{(2, 0.05)} = 0.030$) between the students' sexual behaviour and location of schools near a fish-landing beach. This was similar to findings that indicated that people living at fish-landing beaches practiced risk-taking sexual behaviours [14,15].

5. CONCLUSIONS

First, the study concluded that safe sexual behaviour were less prevalent than risk-taking sexual behaviour among students in schools near fish-landing beaches. This was evidenced by lower levels of abstinence and condom use

and higher levels faithfulness indicative of more sexual activity and sexual partners. Secondly, the study found that there were significant associations between the use of specific guidance and counselling techniques and students' sexual behaviour in schools near fish-landing beaches. Thirdly, the study concluded that proximity to fish-landing beach had a significant association with students' sexual behaviour.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

All authors declare that written informed consent from the participants and research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation of Kenya (NACOSTI) for conducting this study.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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