ABSTRACT
Social media and social networking sites are rapidly evolving sources of sex-related information and education among young people. Online social platforms have also provided opportunities for creation and distribution of sexual content among online friends thus creating a ‘porn culture’ of not only sexualized content consumers but also generators. This has created concerns among sexual health professionals especially in addressing the impact of the consumption of sexualized content and risk sexual behavior and attitudes. In this project report we present and discuss the findings of a descriptive survey of college students in Nairobi Kenya about the use of social media and Social Networking Sites for sex-related information.
A mixed method research design was adopted for this study as it allowed the researcher to obtain rich both quantitative and qualitative data. Data from the questionnaires was collected from a sample of 350 college students age 19 -24 years in a college in Nairobi Kenya. Exposure and consumption of sexual content in the social media (including sexual talk, images and/or videos, online and offline sexual behaviors, memberships and participation in erotic online groups) were the media influence measures. Sex-related knowledge, sexual permissiveness and sexual behaviors were the main outcome measures. The impact of exposure and consumption to sexual content on social networking sites on sexual related knowledge, attitude and behaviors were measured using statistical analysis of correlations between media variables and variables assessing respondents’ sex-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. The results this study indicated that college students were active users of the available social networking tools. The findings also indicated that social networking sites contains explicit sexual content displaying images and/or videos of sexualized nature including exposed men and women genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, homosexuality and lesbianism sexual contact, sexual talk and sexuality activities. The findings further revealed that some of the young people were actively seeking sexual content and some were actively generating such sexualized materials. Significant association was found between variables measuring exposure to sexual content on social networking sites and sexual permissiveness and sexual behaviors.