

**GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNICATION OF SEXUAL MATTERS
TO PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, CENTRAL KENYA**

BY

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NAIROBI.**



2013

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for any academic examination in any other university for examination.

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The research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to the Almighty God for His Favour, that have provided the strength, patience and whose word has been a booster to my ego. I would also like to dedicate this work to my dear husband Benson Kihanya, my children Elizabeth and Gilbert for their continuous encouragement and prayers. Thanks again for your understanding when things appeared tough and for standing by me.

Great appreciations should be felt by all the respondents, that is the Teachers, Parents and Pupils in the study area of Kiungu district, Kisumu County, Coastal Kenya where the study was undertaken for their genuine co-operation during data collection.

My very deep and grateful appreciation is expressed to my dear husband Ben Kihanya for his understanding and his unconditional support throughout this study my children Elizabeth and Gilbert for being there for me. To all my brothers and my only first grade relatives, friends and colleagues for their encouragement and support in the course of this study.

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Great appreciations should be felt by all the respondents, that is the Teachers, Parents and Pupils in Muguga educational Zone of Kikuyu district, Kiambu County, Central Kenya where the study was undertaken for their genuine co-operation during data collection.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to gain an in-depth insight on communication of sexual matters to upper primary school pupils. This was done by exploring the perceptions of a sample of adolescents aged 12-15 years and their parents, teachers and key informants, on communication of sexual matters in Muguga educational zone of Kiambu County, Central Kenya.

The study was guided by the following question: What are the perceptions of parents, teachers and upper primary school pupils of Muguga educational zone on communication of sexual matters to pupils? What sexuality information is communicated to pupils of upper primary schools in Muguga educational Zone in Kiambu County? And what the differences are in communicating sex matters to boys and girls in upper primary schools in Muguga educational zone?

This qualitative study, guided by a communication model generated data through semi structured, and unstructured interviews. The study participants were purposively sampled. The interviews were audio-taped and notes taken simultaneously. Data were analyzed using the framework analysis approach. This involved identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpreting the findings. Participant's verbal consent was obtained before each interview.

The findings of this study indicate that parents, teachers and key informants in the education sector as well as pupils of upper primary schools appreciated the idea of communication of sexual matters and needed the communication to be initiated at the onset of puberty or when a

child is thought to be getting sexually active. However, initiating discussions on sexuality is challenging to all parties concerned. The study further revealed that the involvement of all actors in the education sector is more or less limited to giving warnings with an aim of instilling fear into the young adults on the dangers and risks of irresponsible sexual behaviours. This aims at promoting abstinence and chastity among the young adults. There is however little or no adult-child discussion and no clear explanation of what the adolescents are expected to do. Some parents as well as teachers revert to beating their children as a strategy of ensuring that they adhere to the norms. Basing on the fact that the adult-pupil communication on sexual matters is basically a one way process, it is possible that adults are not responsive to the pupil's sexual changes and needs.

The findings provide insight on communication of sexual matters, which might contribute to informing the development process of promotion of moral interventions that may address adolescent morality in Kenyan youth. Basing on these findings, it is obvious that parents, teachers and other actors in the education sector need support to enhance their competence and skills to improve their communication on sexual matters to young adults. One way of fostering this change is to influence their attitude and practice towards having more dialogue on sexuality related issues with the adolescent children.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of transmitting information from one person to another and sharing an understanding (Keyton, 2011). The word communication is derived from the Latin word, *communis*, which means *common*. This underscores the fact that unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication. The elements in the communication process, that is, the sender and the receiver; determine the quality of communication, since the sender initiates the communication, by encoding the idea through selection of words, symbols or gestures with which to compose a message while the receiver is the individual to whom the message is sent. A problem in any one of these elements can reduce communication effectiveness (Keyton, 2011). Effective communication of sexual matters should start early, before puberty, and before young people developed patterns of sexual behaviour. The precise age at which information should be provided depends on the physical, emotional and intellectual development of young people as well as their level of understanding, and socio-cultural contexts. What is covered in communication of sex issues and how they are communicated, depends on who is providing the sex education, when they are providing it, and in what context, as well as what the young person's need to know about.

There is a high level of sexual activated among young teenagers (9-15 years) in Kenya today with young girls as young as 9 years giving birth. This makes, among other things, high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates to go even higher especially for girls (United Nation AIDS Report

2010) the question of young teenagers receiving any form of sex education arises as well as how they learn about sexual matters. According to Nduna, Jama and Jewkes (2001), parents find it very difficult to talk about sexual matters to their children who, as a result, have little option but to seek information elsewhere. This raises the question how sex education is perceived especially by parents who are saddled with the responsibility in the socialization of their young children.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Adolescent sexual behaviors and fertility in Kenya have undergone changes over time. Sexual behavior among the adolescents today differs from those of their counter-parts in past traditional settings. Due to the collapse of the traditional mechanisms of socialization, controlling and checking sexual behavior during adolescence, ignorance is the term on which their behavior can be explained. Contemporary adolescents are bereft of sexuality knowledge and this incapacitates them from making informed and responsible decisions on sex matters. A majority of young people in Kenya today are sexually active by the age of ten and premarital sex is common among those between 12 and 24 years of age. It has been estimated that two thirds of all HIV and AIDS infections worldwide have occurred among those aged less than 25 years (WHO, 2010). Many adolescents are infected with HIV because of physiological vulnerability, peer pressure, their tendency to engage in risk taking behaviour, inability to negotiate safer sex practices and difficulties in accessing health information and services South Africa for Human Review (SAHR, 2000). Adolescents' knowledge on sexuality is generally poor.

A great number of youth are at risk with respect to practice and maintenance of moral values. Sexual behaviour in the early adolescents group is said to be due to early maturation, its accompanying sexual feelings, more permissible societal attitudes and the mass media messages

(Durkin, 1995). Children and adolescents need accurate and comprehensive education about sexuality to practice healthy sexual behaviours as adults. Early, exploitative or risky sexual activity may lead to health and social problems such as unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS. This study explores how girls and boys are exposed and communicated to on sexual matters in Kenya and particularly in Kiambu County today.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this study was to explore the gender perspectives on approaches to communication about sexual matters to primary school pupils in Kiambu County in Central Kenya today.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To describe the perspectives of parents, teachers and upper primary pupils of Muguga educational zone on communication of sexual matters and to pupils.
2. To determine how sexuality information is communicated to pupils of upper primary schools in Muguga educational zone in Kiambu County.
3. To analyze the differences in communication of sexual matters to boys and girls in upper primary schools in Muguga educational zone.

1.4 Justification of the study

The study investigated ways of communicating sexual matters which posed problems to both boys' and girls' development and achievements. Sex is a sensitive and taboo subject in most African societies. No other study of this nature had been taken in Kenyan primary schools. The

gap thus existed on methods of communicating sexual matters to boys and girls as they approached adolescence and later adulthood. This is due to the changes in life styles that may not be addressed fully or properly.

This study was germane to gender and sexuality debates in two ways, first, it was a contribution to the theoretical knowledge about social cultural contexts of communication on sexual matters drawing on a local Kenyan case in Muguga Education Zone. Second, this study is an attempt to increase available knowledge in the field of sexuality and socio-cultural issues in sexual education in Kiambu and other regions of similar characteristics of urban influence in Kenya. This study has potential practical utility. From the knowledge generated and obtained from this study, it is hoped that this knowledge, created through the study may contribute information that could drive the formulation of policy for a more effective implementation of the sexual education among adolescent and pre-adolescent primary school pupils. Policy makers within the government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on sexuality education and sexual health may embrace some of the recommendations from this study and implement them

1.5 Definition of Terms

Adolescence according to the World Health Organisation, adolescence is the age bracket between 10-19 years. For the purpose of this study, adolescents will refer to aged 10-16 years corresponding to the Kenyan education system age categorization in upper primary school.

Communication is an act by which a person shares with others knowledge, feelings, ideas, information or facts in a way such that there is common understanding of the meaning, intent and use of the message. In this study it refers to the exchange and sharing of information, attitudes, and ideas to upper primary pupils on sexual matters.

Sex education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about one's sexual identity, development, reproductive health, interpersonal sexual relationships, intimacy, body image and gender roles (Mosher et al 2005). In this study sex education refers to the passing on of information on sexual matters to pupils.

Gender perspective is the evaluation of a situation or facts especially from a gender point of view. In this case, the perspectives refer to ways of evaluating the communication of sexual matters from the point of view of boys and girls of upper primary in Muguga educational zone.

Upper primary school pupils in this study refer to pupils of both middle and upper primary i.e. from Standard 4-8.

Moral degradation refers to the act of being morally upright i.e. pertaining to or concerned with the right conduct as is expected by the society

Sexuality information in this study will refer to the broader context of adolescence reproductive knowledge encompassing puberty, emotional maturity, gender roles and sexual health.

1.6 chapter summary

The young adolescence pupils obtain information on sexual matters from peers, parents and teachers. It is mainly the parent's role to discuss sexuality at home as they can decide the content and the frequency of interaction. However the interaction is low as it has not been traditionally so. As a result young adolescence pupils have insufficient information on sexual matters.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

For most parents in Africa, one of the challenges in child upbringing is answering a child's question on sexual matters. (Kiragu, 2001). A lot of children also find it uncomfortable having conversations about sexuality with their parents as well as with most of the other adults around them. This is because the subject is a taboo. Parents have traditionally not been in the forefront of sexual socialization of their children. In many traditional African societies, sexual socialization of children was done by communities and families through ceremonies at puberty. Examples of this can be found among the Polo of Sierra Leone, the Zulu of South Africa, the Igbo of Nigeria the Krobo of Ghana, and the Gikuyu of central Kenya as documented in writings by McCall, 1995, Cox, 1998, Huber, 1963, and Kenyatta, 1965, respectively.

This research aims at finding out what today's Kenyan young adolescents from upper primary schools and their parents, teachers and other key players in the education system talk about sexuality and how they discuss it. The difference on how adolescents are socialized on sexual matters makes it imperative to understand experiences of families and schools concerning intergenerational communication on sexual matters. It would be informative to explore how, especially parents and teachers, are dealing with this new challenge of sexuality communication with young adults especially from upper primary schools, and the attempts of these young adults to obtain information on their sexuality and the reaction of both the pupils on one hand and the parents and teachers on the other.

Adolescents in traditional African societies received education on sexuality through different approaches. Senior members of nuclear and extended families played an important role in

educating the youth about sexuality especially during initiation practices. There has never been silence on issues of sexuality in African cultures as indicated below.

Despite considerable exposure to Christianity, the kgatla society of Bondo District, for example, manifested striking openness and importance attached to the sexual matters in the 1930s (Schepera, cited in Delius and Glaser, 2002). Standards of decency were observed in speech and dress and discussion of sexual behaviour was not veiled in deliberate obscurity. The sexual relations between men and women were spoken about to the youth freely and with little embarrassment or mystery. Sex was considered a normal aspect in human life. From an early age children were familiar with copulation and some of their play consisted of games with a definite sexual character. This made it very easy to guide and communicate sexual matters to pre-puberty children and adolescents. Similarly among the Pedie & Petje of Sekhukhune land, in northern Transvaal of South Africa, parents basically ignore forms of sexual play among young children (Delius & Glaser, 2002). The children often sleep in the same room with their parents and become exposed to sexual activities between their parents. However, the onset of puberty in traditional African societies calls to attention how to cope with adolescent sexuality that could result in undesirable outcomes, such as premarital pregnancy (Delius & Glaser, 2002)

In order to communicate matters of sexuality to the young people in traditional African cultures, initiation ceremonies were held, often separately for girls and boys. Rituals associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood included sex education and have been quite pervasive in traditional Kenyan societies. Socially recognized age set or age grade systems had codes of accepted behavior, rights and responsibilities upon which one dealt with issues in adolescence

(Gyepi –Garbrah 1985). Boys and girls were initiated into the age grade and age set institution between 14 and 17 years of age through circumcision rituals and other rites of passage. Boys, further learned how to defend their societies and execute other social responsibilities while girls were inducted into household chores, social duties and roles. Learning was both theoretical and practical, sometimes entailing the test of perseverance of excruciating experiences such as ear piercing, whipping, and hard work. Age-sets underscored the importance of marriage and procreation and gave support to their members and emphasized values that controlled pre-marital sex and pregnancies.

Kenyan ethnic communities organized and conscripted young people to age sets and socialized the youth with the desire to approximate the ideal individual as perceived by the community, relative to its environmental conditions (Akong'a 1988). Informal social education was inculcated by the parents, peers, siblings and other community agents while traditional formal education was provided in seclusion by experienced and trusted men and women during the rites of passage. During such occasions, boys and girls of relatively the same age were respectively exposed to the society's heroic history, responsibilities relating to family life -including sex education- and the secrets of success as sons or daughters, spouse, parent or as a member of community generally. During this time, in a traditional formal context, the society ensured a generation of its young members was exposed to a common code of ethics, values and beliefs from which they would derive self-control in their experiences as adapted members of the community. Sexual discipline was maintained through elaborate parental and societal control, guidance and supervision in a majority of Kenyan ethnic cultures (Kalule 1987, Kenyatta 1965).

Today, the Kenyan primary school pupil is loaded with reading materials which have very little or nothing on sexual matters. Teachers are expected to teach the topics only in the syllabus, so they offer very little, and expect the parents and other key players to do the rest. The parents are either ignorant or know very little of what is expected of them

Traditional notions and mechanisms restricting and controlling the sexual behavior among adolescents in Kenya have become obsolete and superfluous due to the changing life styles. Data abounds on indiscriminate sex and the attendant consequences among adolescents in Kenyan primary schools (*Dorcus Njeri, on students perception of sex education in public secondary schools in kikuyu division, Kiambu county* [undocumented report]). Contemporary adolescent sexual behavior can be evaluated from the backdrop of collapsed traditional moral codes and mechanisms that controlled and checked sexual behavior Child supported Agency (CSA, 2004); dereliction of responsibilities by parents while other supportive family actors (grandparents, uncles and aunts) have become evanescent (Kioli, 2010). The society has had to contend with ill-advised peers and a sexualized media Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS, 2006). There thus exists a lacuna of knowledge on pertinent issues of sexuality amongst contemporary adolescents, while the knowledge they have maybe fallacious and inaccurate. Consequently, the adolescents are increasingly at the risk of being infected with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), /HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, abortion, school dropout and early maternal deaths. According to the CSA (2008), eleven percent of school girls in Kenya drop out of primary and secondary education annually due to pregnancy, while over 60% of abortions and related complications occur primarily among people less than 25 years. In a study by Centre for Disease Control and prevention CDC (2005), over 60% of new HIV infections among women and 40% of those among men occur during adolescence while 25% of sexually active teenagers get an STD every year.

The traditional Kikuyu community of Kiambu county had an institution called *Ombani na Ngweko* (platonic love and fondling) for young people (c.f Kenyatta, 1965: 154). The community organized numerous nights and days for dances, recreation and enjoyment for both boys and girls. Only those who

had undergone physical initiation, both boys and girls participated. Girls would visit boys' huts known as *thingira* and would hang out with them overnight, but actual sexual intercourse never occurred because the girls tied a leather apron around and between their legs to effectively protect their private parts. They would also on other occasions wear skirts tied with a special knot by the grandmother in such a way that she (grandmother) would know whether it had been tampered with (Kenyatta, 1965).

The idea was to teach boys and girls values of self-control, giving rise to morally upright people. Fondling between boys and girls was also allowed during such occasions but not sex, and virginity was highly valued before marriage. Any young man who rendered a girl pregnant or forced a girl into sex was severely punished by the tribal council and made a social pariah. Any girl who became pregnant before marriage among the Kikuyu would be subjected in disrepute and marriage as a second or third wife.

2.2 Challenges faced by parent as they communicate sexual matters to their children

The controversy surrounding communication and teaching about sexual matters in schools has raged the world over. Different schools of thought impose their attitudes and perceptions towards sexuality and the communication and education on sex matters in primary schools but with little if any consideration of the views and needs of youth in dynamic society. This dynamism has propagated divergent perceptions ranging from reactionary to liberal thought. Consequently, the youth have been left at crossroads regarding issues of sexuality with no choice but to scavenge for information on sexuality from their peers, graffiti, the media and other sources, as others, rather than themselves debate their fate.

The review of literature in this section focused on studies on communication of sexual matters to young adults. Themes included in this review include;

Challenges and misconceptions about sex;

Culture and communication on sexual matters;

Literature on sex, social dynamics and sexual behaviour among Kenyan.

2.3 Challenges and Misconception about sexual matters.

Some beliefs and misconceptions regarding sexuality may influence communication about sexual matters and expected behaviour change. It is commonly believed among some societies that young people are by their nature promiscuous and that giving them information about sexuality would make them more sexually active (Friedman, 1993). However there is no empirical evidence to support such beliefs. On the contrary, adolescents need to be aware about their body functions and consequences of early premarital sexual intercourse so as to make informed decision about their sexual behaviour. However, most young men experience pressure from their peers and parents to prove their manhood in their early adolescence (Twa-Twa 1997). This is a reflection of the masculinity ideology, which refers to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards for male sexuality and behaviour. Other traditional beliefs about sexuality are reflected in prohibition of boys 'never to act like girls'; a young man is expected to be physically tough even if he is not big; or 'men are always ready for sex'.

Religious convictions may positively influence adolescent sexuality. In some societies, for instance, it is believed that AIDS is a punishment from God since it is contracted through sexual relationships. If someone, including adolescents is confirmed to be suffering from AIDS then it indicated that he/she must have broken a societal norm or committed a sin. Such stereotypes about young people and their sexuality, impacts negatively on the attitudes of parents and other adults, and are obstacles to psychosexual development. These cultural inhibitors may put a distance between adolescents and their parents, teachers, community or religious leaders with whom they have regular contacts.

2.4 Culture and communication on sexual matters

Culture and communication are inseparable, because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. In fact, our entire repertory of communicative behaviors is dependent largely on the culture in which we have been raised. Culture, consequently, is the foundation of communication. And when cultures vary, communication practices also vary (Samovar et al, 1981:24).

Many adults have difficulty acknowledging adolescents as sexual beings and therefore, adolescent sexuality is viewed as something that needs to be repressed. This applies across most societies and cultures worldwide. Families and parents tend to deny young people information about sexual matters and reproduction. For example in India and Nicaragua, parents and children reported that they did not talk to each other about sexual matters (George & Jaswal, 1995; Zelaya, Marin, Garcia, Berglund, Liljestrang & Persson, 1997). Often, parents and family members do this with the belief that they are protecting young people from information that they believe may lead to sexual experimentation. In most cases young people who openly communicate about sexuality are less likely to be sexually active and girls are less likely to fall pregnant before marriage (Gupta, Weiss & Mane, 1996).

There are contrasts in sexual norms and communication about them in different ethnic groups. In some groups such as the Luo of Kenya, women who give birth before marriage are disgraced, while in other culture this is seen as a valuable sign of fertility. Virginity in women is highly

prized in some ethnic groups as evidenced by the dowry paid for the bride. Among the Kikuyu, an impotent husband may provide another sex partner for his wife. Among the Nandi, a married woman can continue to have sex with her former lover or other members of her husband's age set. In contrast, the Maragoli regard extramarital sex as adultery. Therefore, the sexual culture shock in urban areas comes not only from contact with Western ideas and media, but also from interaction with diverse traditional value systems. (Lema, Rogo, and Kamau, 1996)

The majority of young people are sexually active by the age of twelve and premarital sex is common among those aged 15-24. WHO (1995) estimated that half of all HIV and AIDS infections worldwide have occurred among those aged less than 25 years. Many adolescents are infected with HIV because of physiological vulnerability, peer pressure, their tendency to engage toward risk taking behaviour, inability to negotiate safer sex practices and difficulties in accessing health information and services (SAHR, 2000). However adolescents' knowledge on reproductive function and sexuality is generally poor. A great number of youth are at risk with respect to HIV and AIDS. Sexual behaviour in the early adolescents group is due to early maturation, its accompanying sexual feelings, more permissible societal attitudes and the mass media messages (Durkin, 1995). Therefore, it is important for children to obtain information about sexuality before they reach adolescence.

Current intervention programs should target sexual education and communication of related matters. This is because, by waiting until adolescence, some of the youth would have been involved in risky sexual behaviours, thereby decreasing any effort to curb teenage pregnancy and other related problems. Children and adolescents need accurate and comprehensive education about sexuality to practice healthy sexual behaviours as adults.

There is scarcity of literature on communication of sexual matters to adolescents by either parents or any different categories of family members in the sub-Saharan Africa. (Gage, 1998).

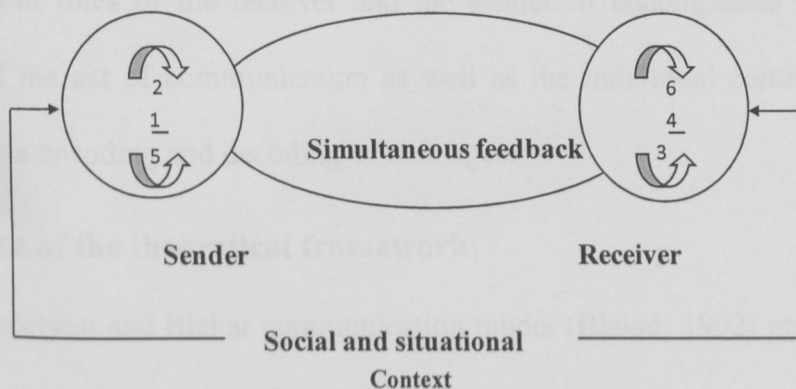
2.6.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study used perspectives from interpersonal communication as elaborated in the Rommetveit and Blankar communication model (Rommertverit & Blankar 1992). The theoretical perspective in communication view was necessary in this study because it is the medium through which children are socialized into adulthood. Communication is the 'vehicle' by which parents, teachers, key informants and children develop a relationship. It is generally the means by which individuals gain social competence.

2.6.1 Rommetveit and Blankar communication model

The Rommetveit and Blankar communication model represents a dialogical perspective of communication (Blankar, 1992) was adopted for this study. This model provided not only a framework for understanding the nature of communication on sexual matters to upper primary school pupils, but also an insight on the strengths and weaknesses in the communication process. The model has six key elements of the communication process which include; (1) production of the message, (2) encoding of messages by the sender before sending them, (3) decoding the messages by the receiver, (4) processing while memorizing the received message, (5) sender's anticipation of receiver's decoding, and (6) the receiver's listening on the precise of the sender (figure 1).

Figure 1: Rommetveit and Blakar communication model



Source: Blakar, 1992

The communication model above shows that communication is a transactional process. Sending and receiving messages often takes place simultaneously. The model also recognizes that there are preconditions to be met for effective communication. These include factors that can foster or hinder effective communication, which are attributable to any of the four elements of the communication process namely the source, message, channel and receiver. Lack of confidence or distrust, for instance, may seriously hinder communication. In respect to this study, both pupils and adult communicators of sexual matters should have some degree of mutual trust and confidence in each other, to be able to communicate effectively.

The social and situational context is emphasized by this model. Parents, teachers, key informants or even pupils may conceive a message but due to cultural provisions, such as taboos, they may

employ vague language to transmit their message. This may partly be due to the embarrassment associated with parents, teachers, key informants or pupils' communication on sexual matters.

The Rommetveit and Blakar model is appropriate for this study because it describes communication as a two way process, whereby the sender and the receiver are concurrently playing both roles of the receiver and the sender. It encompasses the social and situational aspects of the act of communication as well as the individual communicants' processing, for example the encoding and decoding of messages.

Relevance of the theoretical framework:

The Rommetveit and Blakar communication model (Blakar, 1992) provides a useful framework for discussing the nature of the communication in this study. According to this model, communication can best be understood as a two way process with a continuous change in the roles as sender and receiver. Although the model itself is not a prescriptive one, but simply meant to be a tool for description and analysis of interpersonal communication, it constitutes a valuable point of departure for throwing light on adult-pupils communication on sexual matters.

An obvious weakness with the communication as described by parents and offspring is lack of real and meaningful two-way communication. A second challenge is the vagueness of information and advice provided by the adults. The combination of vagueness of the messages and lack of real two-way interaction is particularly critical, since the vagueness of the information provided by adults is unlikely to be challenged. If the adolescent children are not given an opportunity to give a feedback to their parents, then the appropriateness of the messages will not be determined. Therefore, the teachers, parents and key informants will continue providing the same messages, hoping that their children understand.

The Rommetveit and Blakar model also emphasises the social and cultural context of the communication. Differences in contexts of adolescents and adults may contribute to less effective communication, and contextual constraints as well as cultural and social factors may contribute to complicating and producing barriers which effectively hinder effective and meaningful information exchange.

2.1 Research design

A qualitative research design was used in this study. This allowed the researcher to gather information, summarize, present and interpret it for the purpose of describing (Kvale, 2002). It involved a description of the nature of affairs as it exists in the target population rather than a description of affairs by stating what is happening in the present (Kvale & Tvedt, 2001). The qualitative research design was chosen for this study because it focused on the main perspective of

2.2 Study site

The study research was conducted in Mruvaga Education Zone of Kibera District of Nairobi County (Figure 2). This is a peri-urban area bordering the capital city of Kenya (Nairobi) which is densely populated with the great majority of the population due to the presence of many governmental institutions like The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) among others and other industrial

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the study methodology and design, description of target population and sampling procedures. It also explains the research instruments, pilot study, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis and presentation, limitations to the study, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

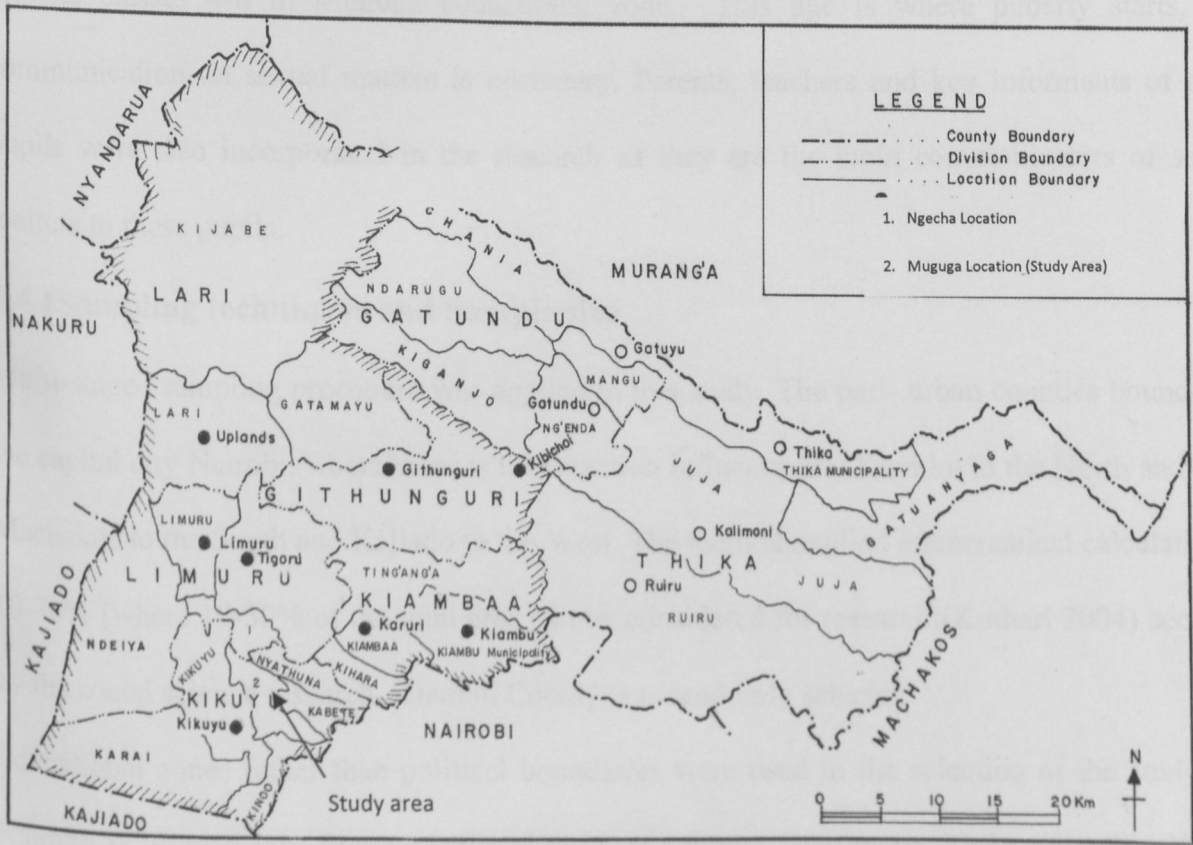
A descriptive research design was used in this study. This allowed the researcher to gather information, summarize, present and interpret it for the purpose of clarification (Orotho, 2002). It involved description of the state of affairs as it exists [as the target population gave a present state of affairs by stating what is happening on the ground] (kombo & Tromp, 2006). The descriptive survey design was chosen for the study because it focused on the emic perspective of boys and girls who receive information on sexual matters differently.

3.3 Study site

The field research was conducted in Muguga Education Zone of Kikuyu District of Kiambu County (figure 2). This is a peri-urban area bounding the capital city of Kenya Nairobi; about 24 kilometers away, along the great north road. It has a cosmopolitan population due to the presence of many government institutions like: The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KFRI) among others and other industrial factories in the area that employ Kenyans from diverse parts of the country.

THE STUDY SITE, KIAMBU COUNTY

Figure 2: A map of Kiambu County with the arrow pointing at Muguga Educational Zone



The Muguga educational zone, was purposively selected from the other 4 educational zones, it was purposively selected for the study due to its proximity to the capital city of Nairobi, its cosmopolitan nature of population and its relative gender parity in the provision on education in its fourteen public primary schools. These factors made Muguga educational zone a representative of the larger county and other counties with similar socio-cultural characteristics

3.4.0 Target population

The target population in this study was comprised of the pupils from public mixed primary schools classes 4-8 in Muguga educational zone. This age is where puberty starts, and communication on sexual matters is necessary. Parents, teachers and key informants of these pupils were also incorporated in the research as they are the main communicators of sexual matters to these pupils.

3.4.1 Sampling techniques and Sample size

Multi-staged sampling procedure was applied in this study. The peri-urban counties bordering the capital city Nairobi, where there is urbanization influence are: Kiambu to the North and East; Machakos to the South and Kajiado to the West. The method applied mathematical calculation of 10-30% [where 10-30% of the total area can be considered for research](Kothari 2004) accepted by the social science research, Kiambu County was randomly selected.

Educational zones rather than political boundaries were used in the selection of the study site. Kiambu is divided into five educational districts namely: Githunguri, Thika, Kiambu, Kikuyu and Limuru. Through simple random sampling, which involve randomly picking any names from a list of the five Districts, Kikuyu educational division was selected.

Kikuyu division has five educational zones namely: Thogoto, Kabete, Muguga, Kikuyu and Karai. For a study of this nature, narrowing down a wide research locale was important for its manageability and collection of in-depth data. Therefore through random sampling Muguga educational zone was selected to represent the others.

Muguga educational zone has fourteen (14) public mixed day primary schools. These are: Fairlawns, Gatwanambu, Kamuguga, and Muguga, kahuho, Kanjeru, Ngurionditu, Muguga Model, Utafiti, Nderi, kerwa, Kanyanjara, Nduma and kandegwa primary schools. The study applied 30% [i.e. 30% of 14 schools is 4.2 which to the nearest is four schools] four schools namely: Kanjeru, Kandegwa, Gatwanabu and Fairlawns was randomly selected.

4.1 Data collection instruments

The study sample was drawn from the four sampled schools. 10-30% (Kothari 2004) of the population of the target classes standard 4-8 was selected making a target population of 10 pupils per school to be interviewed. Out of the four schools another 16 pupils (8 girls and 8 boys) from each school was selected for a focus group discussion. They were put into different strata; two pupils (one girl and one boy) were selected from each stratum. There was a separate focus group discussions consisting of eight (8) girls and eight (8) boys in each group. Focus group discussion require 6-8 pupils to give each a chance to participate. A group with more than eight members is too large for effective discussion. To recruit the pupils for the Focus Group Discussion the list of pupils was provided by the class teachers, the names was be randomly selected by picking on any names of a pupils but confirming form the class teacher that the picked name is not of a minor.

In each primary school, the study purposively selected class teachers (from standard 4-8) to make a sample size of 20 teachers from selected schools. The teachers responded to an unstructured interview conducted by the researcher. Another source of information was key informants. These comprised of 20 representatives designated as: Religious leaders, sponsors, guidance and cancelling persons as well as from gender club members where appropriate. The

informants acted as representatives, 5 from each school. The researcher employed purposive sampling to reach the 20 representatives. Since different schools have different key players e.g. sponsors, PTA members, church leaders etc, the researcher worked with whoever key player available in any school. Hence the purposeful sampling.

3.5.1 Data collection Instruments

Interview guides were used on all the target samples. There were focus group discussions with the pupils. In-depth interviews schedule was administered to both the pupils and the school representatives, while unstructured interviews were applied to the teachers.

3.5.2 Data collection procedures

Data collection was carried out from September to October 2013. This involved semi structured in-depth interviews in both English and Kiswahili [Kikuyu, a local language in the study area was occasionally used]. Interview guides for both pupils and adults served as primary reference during the interviews. They contained an outline of themes and sub themes to be explored during the interview. The preliminary thematic guides were developed by the researcher and then subjected to a peer review to validate the content before the final write-up.

The researcher was flexible, and used personal discretion to determine how closely to follow the guide and how strongly to pursue an individual respondent's answer. Probing questions were also used to guide to important directions, and to confirm or disconfirm the interviewer's interpretations.

Most of the parents were interviewed at home and all the pupils were interviewed at schools. The teachers and key informants were consulted to choose venues where interviews were held and the language preferred during the interviews to reduce inconvenience. This allowed them to be interviewed in privacy and in a comfortable setting. For all those interviewed in school, the head of the school or a responsible teacher assisted in identifying a suitable and quiet place for us to hold the interview. Each interview lasted about twenty minutes and was audio taped. Permission to record the interview was obtained from each individual participant at the time of the interview after establishing rapport. The transcribing of the interviews commenced during the data collection and was completed a month later. Field notes were simultaneously taken during the interview.

3.6 Data analysis.

Data obtained from the interviews were transcribed. Transcription of the audio-recorded interviews was done with care to preserve the core content of the dialogue. Principles drawn from the framework analysis approach (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) were used to analyse the data. This process involved several stages. First the researcher read through the transcripts of each interview many times in order to be familiarized with the central issues. This was done at individual participant level, then at the school level and for the sample as a whole. This also enabled the researcher to identify the key themes emerging from the data. An index of themes and sub themes was drawn. The appropriate numbers from the indices were entered in the margin against every piece of data which could be the whole phrase. A number of charts files corresponding to the main themes were created. The indexed data from each transcript was copied into an appropriate file.

The content of information was retained and a hyper link established to make it easy to return to the transcript to explore the point in more detail or to extract the text for verbatim quotation. In this way the data was ordered within an analytical framework which was grounded in respondents own accounts. The files displayed the range of views described by respondents, which made it possible to compare the contrast 'within' and 'between' cases.

3.7.0 Verification of results

Verification is the process of checking, confirming, making sure and being certain of the study findings. In qualitative research verification refers to the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and thus the rigor of the study (Morse et al, 2002).

Despite the flexibility inherent in qualitative inquiry, in this study interview guides were used to grant consistency in the data collection. During the data collection exercise, feed back to the participants was provided to crosscheck and clarify whether the researcher's understanding of a particular response was in line with the original thinking of the respondent. In qualitative data analysis the researcher accounts for most of the variability (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Constant comparison between the final themes and the raw data was done to ensure that the themes are grounded in the original data. Audio recording and taking of field notes also increased the reliability of this study.

3.7.1 Verification of data

This study obtained data through individual interview and focus group discussions. It was envisaged during the development of the research protocol that these two different methods had the possibility of giving different results. As it turned out, the results showed that both sets of

data were related in a consistent way. This is to mean, there was a logical continuation in the themes identified in the focus groups with that of individual interviews. The focus groups were designed to an opportunity where views were not only expressed but challenged and debated upon by group members. It was observed that debating was minimal in various discussions. As a result, most statements were made almost as they would have been individual interviews. This may have deprived the study of a wealth of information which would have been uncovered in a good debate.

A second step in data verification involved comparing the responses in individual interviews with the pupils, teachers, parents and other key informants in the education system. The interviews are self reports, but comparison of all reports enabled the researcher to gain a picture of communication of sexual matters that reflects of interaction.

There was also the issue of *external validity or transferability* that arose and need to be answered. As explained in chapter two, the goal of qualitative research is not generalized findings (Merriam 1998). Rather, there is emphasis on obtaining rich description of a phenomenon. This notwithstanding, limited generalisability can be argued for. This can be based on the diversity of respondents and themes obtained (Creswell, 1994). This study obtained a varied number of themes, such as where upper primary pupils obtained their sexuality information and who they trusted for this information. The experience of pupils going through puberty was also captured. The study participants were also of different backgrounds. The parents, for example, had educational background ranging from primary to university level. They also had diverse employments i.e. farmers, dressmakers, an architect, social workers, school teachers, a baker, a professional driver, a policeman and homemakers.

Some of the families had either parent who was living away from home. These parents lived in other towns but paid their families regular visits, while other pupils lived with their grandparents permanently. In light of this background, it stands to reason that the participants were sufficiently diverse.

3.7.2 Sampling:

Since the purpose of sampling in a qualitative research is to gain insight of the issue being explored, purposeful sampling was used in the study. This helped to identify the information on sexual matters communicated to upper primary pupils by all informants. This study also collected data on what was communicated as well as what was not talked about and the reasons for failure of interaction. However it was realized that participants with apprehensions about talking about sexual matters were most likely to turn down requests to participate in the study. This implies a risk of only or mainly obtaining participants who had a favourable attitude towards the issue.

3.8 Limitations of this study

This study was carried out when schools were in session. It cannot be ruled out that some eligible families were not captured because some of their other adolescent children were away in boarding schools located outside the district.

During the interviews some of the young adolescents were reluctant to express their views and therefore were limiting their conversations. It is possible that this could have been their first experience of having an interview on such a sensitive issue. In this case, this could have introduced an element of shyness and an atmosphere of uneasiness particularly when talking to a stranger. The researcher however, used probing questions to get more information from these children.

It was difficult to access sufficient peer reviewed literature from Kenya relevant to this study. However, it is possible that a bulk of research work is at operational level and hence not published in peer reviewed journals or there is no much research done to address the aspects of communication on sexual matters in Kenya. Therefore I expanded the scope of the literature search and included other available research from a number of countries in the African region and some developed countries. Where necessary, some unpublished research reports from Kenya have been referenced.

These limitations should be considered in light with the strengths of the study. This study in contrast to much of the existing literature in Kenya, explored perceptions of sexual communication within a semi-urban setting- Muguga. Secondly this was a qualitative study, conducted in a real setting and drawing on the lived experiences of the study participants.

3.9 Ethical Considerations.

This study was conducted in conformity with the ethical guidelines and approval of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Permission to carry out the study was sought from the education administrators. Teachers, key informants and respondents were informed of the intended research project and requested to take part voluntarily and were assured of confidentiality of their information and identity. Minors [those below the target age of 9-15years] were exempted from the research procedures.

Participants were assured that confidentiality would be maintained and their anonymity protected both during data collection and management of the data generated. To achieve, this no reference was made to individual participants' names nor were names requested for or noted anywhere during the interviews. Parents, teachers, key informants and other participants were also made aware that they were not expected to demand for details about the interview from the pupils after the interview.

Some of the responses which the researcher felt were excerpts of the typical or deviant views have been reflected in the text.

The chapter presents socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, the perceptions of sex education communication on sexual matters, sexuality information communicated, views on frequency of communication on sexuality, factors influencing communication on sexuality, barriers to communication between parents/teachers and other players and the pupils, suggestions for improving this communication and finally the summary of key findings.

4.1.2 Sample characteristics

This study was carried out among a sample residing in Niger state educational zone, that is an area where the sample schools are in similar environment regardless to the geographical and political boundaries. The sample is pupils, teachers, parents and key informants from the four public primary schools (Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Owerri) and two private public day primary schools (Abuja, Lagos) families represented by the five-parents' representatives per school (parent to family liaison committee) parents. Only class teachers, biological parents of the pupils participated in the study. The study included other key informants from the schools (one per school). The study had variables of their socio-demographic characteristics as shown in Table 1 below

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of data analysis are presented according to the themes in the research questions and objectives stated in chapter one. The results reflect the content analysis of the participants' accounts of their perceptions on communication on sexual matters. Some of the responses which the researcher felt were exemplars of the typical or deviant views have been reflected in the text.

The chapter presents social-demographic characteristics of the sample, the perceptions of sex education, communication on sexual matters, sexuality information communicated, views on frequency of communication on sexuality, factors influencing communication on sexuality, barriers to communication between parents/teachers and other players and the pupils, suggestions for improving this communication and finally the summary of key findings.

4.1.2 Sample characteristics

This study was carried out among a sample residing in Muguga educational zone, this is an area where the sample school are in similar environment regardless to the geographical and political boundaries. The sample is pupils, teachers, parents and key informants from the four public primary schools [Kanjuru, Kandegwa, Gatwanabu and Fairlawns public day primary schools]. Twenty families represented by the five parents' representatives per school totaling to twenty interviews on parents. Only class teachers, biological parents of the pupils participated in the study. The study included other key informants from the participating schools one per schools. The study had variations of their social-demographic characteristics as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Respondents' Social-demographic characteristics

School	Study Participants	Educational status	Employment	No. of siblings	Geog.Location	Religion
KANJERU	Pupil Son-14yrs	class 4	Pupil	6	Kanjeru	Christians
	Parent	Mother-8	Housewife	(4 th child)		
	Class teacher	Teacher Certificate	TSC*			
	Key informants	Church Elder	ACK*			
KANDEGWA	Pupil Daughter-13yrs	Class 5	Pupil	(1 st born)	Zambezi	Christians
	Parent	Father	Businessman	3	Nderi	Christians
	Class teacher	Diploma	TSC*			
	Key informants	Sponsor	D.E.B*			
GATWANABU	Pupil	Class 8	Pupil	Last born	Kingero	Christians
	Parent	Mother	Teacher	2		
	Class teacher	Secondary	TSC*			
	Key informants	G&C person	NGO*			
FAIRLAWNS	Pupils	Class 7	Pupil	2 nd born	KARI*	Muslims
	Parent	Father	Gov. employee	4		
	Class teacher	Graduate	TSC			Christian
	Key informants	Chairperson Gender club	Retired teacher			Christian

*TSC-Teachers Service Commission, *ACK-Anglican Church of Kenya,

*DEB- District Education Board, *NGO- Non Governmental Organization

* Kenya Agricultural Research Institute.

4.2 Perceptions of sex education

All discussions began with questions to establish the respondents' perceptions on communication of sexual matters to upper primary pupils in general. More specifically, respondents were asked if they had heard about sex education. Sex education was outside the scope of this study, but this question was meant to be introductory before the interview narrowed down to the more specific issues regarding communication on sexual matters.

4.3 Sexuality information sources for pupils

The study sought to find out the sources of information about sexuality among primary school pupils. Their responses referred to both the origin of the information in terms of location and the people from whom the information was obtained. In general, the main sources of information mentioned by the pupils were teachers, mothers and social media. Other sources were friends, church siblings father and social clubs. Each of the sources had their attributes, with credibility and trust being a crucial factor in choice of source.

Several pupils identified teachers as their source of information on sexuality. Their science teachers were especially singled out as the sources of information on sexual matters. These discussions took place within classrooms meaning that the information was contained in the school syllabus.

Teachers seem to have gained the respect of pupils as good communicators, as one girl in standard 8, 14 years noted:

'I will prefer to ask my teacher. She knows a lot and can keep my secret'

Other pupils were of the view that teachers could do more teaching on the subject. They held the view that teachers had a lot of information but keep it to themselves:

'Teachers also have good information but they 'frown' their faces if you ask them such questions [about sexuality] Standard 4 Girl 13 yrs

There is no evidence of interaction on sexual matters with teachers outside the classroom setting where pupils can consult their teachers privately especially the male teachers. The pupils reported that teachers would make it difficult for pupils to communicate with them:

'I asked a question to my teacher once. He said he couldn't provide an answer at school. He told me to come home for an answer. I could not go to his house because it was too far away' (Standard 6 Boy, six years)

4.4 Sources of information on sexuality outside schools

Many pupils spoke favourably about their mothers as sources of information on sexuality:

A boy in standard 4, for instance, said; 'I will rely on my mother, she gave birth to me, and she knows best' most pupils also felt that mothers were truthful: 'I trust what my mother says, for example television is real but your mother can never lie to you'-(Standard 6 Girl, 14 years)

By this he meant that his mother will give him the correct information on sexual matters but the information from television could be contradictory.

Another boy said he could easily approach his mother but not his father:

Even before you ask a question to your father, the expression on his face would make you afraid... but you can easily approach your mother and ask her what you need to know on sexual matters (-standard 5 boy-14 years)

Many pupils believed that communicating on sexual matters was regarded as a natural duty by mothers. Some of the mothers said that mothers talked to their children and even extended it to other children in their neighbourhoods. One of the respondents, for example, said:

'I talk about sexuality to my children. I am not limited to my children only. If I find that a child passing or a child in the neighbourhood needs such information, I would not hesitate to give it' (Mother 2)

The respondents did not generally speak favorably about fathers with regard to their potential to communicate effectively on sexual matters. Some respondents and informants indicated that fathers either did not care, or were ignorant and hostile. One pupil said;

My father is very strict. If I should ask him questions on sexual matters, he will think I have been have been manner less... I will ask my mother or grandmother' (Standard 4 boy, 12 years)

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Many pupils said they received information on sexual matters from television from watching advertisements, especially on HIV/AIDS and soap operas. A concern was expressed that feedback cannot be received using this media. There is a relation between use of television and parents as sources. Parents admitted on discussing with their pupils what they watched together on television: If I find something interesting [on sexual matters] on television, I call all my children and we watch together... I don’t feel shy discussing sexual matters (Mother 2)

Additionally, some of the pupils who participated in this study said that they obtained information on sexuality from Sunday school classes at their churches. They reported that some churches had organized seminars for youth to teach pupils on boy-girl relationships from a Christian perspective.

However, a majority of the pupils mentioned that they asked questions on sexual matters from friends and peers. They said they turned to friends when their attempt to communicate with

parents and other adults are rebuffed. Nevertheless, the pupils were skeptical about the quality of information from friends and peers as a girl explained: 'Friends will tell you what they have heard from others. Everyone has his own views. In the end you don't know who is right' (standard 4 girls, 13 years)

A few pupils preferred to contact with peer educators. Peer educators presented information to them during education sessions after school. Mentor clubs did not exist in most of schools attended by the pupils in the study.

Older brothers and sisters are also sources of sexuality information for their younger siblings. Most respondents considered older siblings to suitable for the role of sex educators because they had recent experiences of puberty and other related issues on sexual matters. The pupils who mentioned discussions with brothers and sisters revealed that they felt much more comfortable talking about sexual matters with their siblings than with their parents, teachers or religious leaders.

4.4 Other sources of sexuality information for pupils

Besides getting sexuality information from parents, the study findings indicate that pupils were getting information from other different sources too. Such options might enable the pupils to obtain information on sexual matters at a more regular basis. The radio and teachers seem to be the most common source of information as mentioned by both parents and pupils (Table 5). However uncles and neighbours were mentioned by boys and the fathers and not by girls and mothers. Health workers although mentioned do not seem to be perceived as a common information source for adolescents. It was also noted that parents seem to trust that their children

were receiving the right information from these sources outside their families, especially from radios. Paternal aunts were mentioned as one of the reliable sources that some parents claim had enough experience in communicating sexual matters.

Table 2: Other common sources of communication on sexual matters

	Fathers	Mothers	Daughters	Sons	Total
Radio	2	3	3	2	10
Teachers	2	2	2	3	9
Friends		1	4	2	7
Magazines	1	2	1	1	5
Seminars	2		1		3
Older siblings	2		1		3
Aunts	1	1	1		3
Uncles	1			2	3
Neighbours	1			2	3
Grandmother			2		2
Organized youth group activities	1				1
Total	14	9	16	14	53

N/B: Several sources were mentioned by the same respondents.

Pupils who participated in the Focus Group Discussions were asked where pupils of their age obtained sexuality information. They reported that some pupils received this information from their mothers and teachers-- principle sources. One girl stated: *'Your mother will have the patience to listen to you but not your father'* (FGD 1, girl aged 14). In focus group 2, a boy had this to say: *mothers are always free with their children'* (FGD2, boy aged 15). The word 'free' in this context means that mothers are easy to get along with. On the other hand, fathers were described as people with whom communication was difficult. This supports the finding made in the individual interviews. This point was emphasized in FGD two where one participant said: *We [pupils] may fear our fathers would beat us up'*. Television and video shows were mentioned as sources of information, but had a limitation of lack of feedback. A girl in FGD four put it this way: One participant said:

Television for example will not further. A programme on sexual matters may run for some time, like for half an hour. After the programme, no further explanations can be sought'. (FGD1, girl aged 15)

The pupils, however, said that they were hesitant to ask questions from adults in general because they were uncertain of their reactions; *'It is not easy to ask questions on sexual matters because you are not sure about the answer you will receive, people would suspect that something is wrong...'* – FGD2, boy aged 15

Fathers were handily a source of information. Information was also exchanged within the peer network, but the perception of the pupils was that some of this information could be erroneous. Discussions on puberty centered on physiological changes and the interactions occurred after changes commenced. Most pupils highlighted lack of prior knowledge of these physiological changes. As a result there was mixture of emotions when the puberty changes began. These included shyness and embarrassment. The subject of communicating sexual matters to upper

primary pupils was avoided in most families as parents believed that teachers were responsible for explaining these issues. Furthermore, some parents held the notion that their children were too young to know about *'these things'*.

Parents experienced discomfort when talking to their children on sexual matters. This resulted to the use of vague terminology in interaction as highlighted in a latter section, more fathers still expressing more discomfort than mothers. Fathers considered it *'awkward'* to talk about sexual matters with their children. The belief that children will initiate sexual activities as a result of communicating sexual matters to them was shared by a majority of parents. The majority favoured open communication with their children on sexual matters. They asserted that the information would protect them from moral decay as a result of inadequate information on sexual matters.

There was a general outcry from the study participants that communication on sexual matters should be provided more regularly, preferably on a daily basis and should be initiated at an early age. The study revealed that despite this concern, these discussions seem to be initiated at the onset of puberty or when a parent is provoked by the child's negative actions. Furthermore, an adolescent receives sexuality information on sexual matters from other sources which may compliment or contradict the parents' efforts to provide information on a more regular basis.

4.5 Content of discussions with primary school pupils on sexuality.

Most of the pupils understood that puberty is marked by the development of secondary sexual characteristics. The main issues discussed between the pupils and educators such as their

teachers, parents and church elders on puberty were wet dreams, pubic and armpit hair, breaking of the voice and why girls menstruate. When talking about puberty, personal hygiene was among the key issues discussed. Parents were more worried about their daughters getting pregnant than their sons impregnating girls. They readily referred to their daughters when this issue was discussed. A mother who participated in the study observed:

You see, the problem we have is that we are more interested in girls than the boys. I have talked to the boy once when these changes began. However, we talk to girls constantly. It may be a problem with us [parents] because we focus more on the girls, mainly due to their vulnerability. (Mother 5).

In general, parents initiated conversations when they observed behaviour and events which they felt could be inimical to the well being of their pupils. Body and biological changes at puberty are often used by parents to initiate conversations. The parents, especially mothers who participated in the study, mentioned that they called their sons and daughters for conversation when they began to notice physical changes in their children.

A father, who admitted talking infrequently about sexuality, said he could not fail to notice when his children [especially his son] reached pubescence. He said in part: 'These [pubertal changes] are things you cannot hide, so what prevents you from talking about them?' (Father 1). However, some parents relied on other sources to initiate the discussions with their children. Television stations in Kenya, for instance, broadcast a number of very popular soap operas and relationship programmes. The airing of these programmes in living rooms leads to discussions on sexual matters. There are occasions where the entire family is present. A mother said she found it a good opportunity to hand down advice on sexuality.

The triggers explained above seem very important because it broke the reluctance of some parents to initiate conversations, especially those who believed that their children were too young to talk about sexuality. The existence of these clues in the environment therefore allows discussion on communication on sexual matters, which would have otherwise been difficult if not impossible. In spite of these clues, sexuality was still considered as sensitive to the extent that the pupils, parents, teachers and church elders had reasons for not communicating. One of the mothers gave the following comment:

‘When you talk to children about sexual matters, it would draw their attention. You can only bring up the subject when you have evidence that they [children] are behaving in an improper manner. (Mother 3)

Interestingly her daughter would consider it impolite to ask questions on sexuality from her mother. She would rather wait to be approached first; she observed: ‘I cannot ask my mother about sexuality out of nothing. If she begins talking about it, then I can ask. Otherwise she may think I’m a bad girl’-(*Girl 3*). Therefore neither this mother nor her daughter would initiate a conversation on sexual matters. This is in spite the fact that the daughter wanted answers and it but her mother would have wished to present information she considers appropriate for her daughter’s age. In certain instances, the children insisted on more privacy and this provided a cue to mothers. Boys also presented questions to their parents when they noticed pubertal changes.

4.6 Perspectives on Communication of sexual matters to children

The teachers, parents, religious leaders as well as the pupils found communication of sexual matters a difficult topic to discuss. There was the tendency to avoid the issue as much as possible. This was reflected in the body language and the demeanor of participants during the interviews. The comment from this mother supports this assertion:

Hmm, sometimes it is difficult. You may wish to drag your feet a little but if you don't [talk about sexual matters] and your children may become wayward. If this happens, it is mothers who are blamed. We are always being blamed by society for bringing up wayward children that result to a rotten society. So you cannot afford to be quiet.' (Mother 7)

The feelings of discomfort about discussing sexuality were dealt with by using of vague language. The assumption is that the pupils would understand the language. Pupils were told to 'be careful about girls or boys' or 'stay away from them,' which meant they must avoid sexual intercourse. These are a collection of phrases used for sexual intercourse itself, for example, *the negative thing, go to bed, climbing the bed, go near a woman, and touching a girl*. In some cases, parents explicitly stated that the use of direct words which refer to sexual activity must be avoided when talking to pupils. They believed that their children would understand these expressions. On the other hand some parents supported the use of unambiguous language: 'It would take the grace of God even for adults to understand [vague expressions], tell them in black and white' (Mother 3)

In the words of a father below children may have a different frame of reference from that of their parents with regard to sexuality:

Some of us were introduced to proverbs in our days. Children of today are different. They have a different culture. They grow up watching television, reading magazine and have access to the internet, these sources have little or nothing to say about proverbs'- (Father 8)

Parents considered children's' curiosity about sexuality an embarrassing. The discourse reveals that they were themselves raised to view sexual matters as a 'bad' topic to talk about with children. A father expressed his sentiments this way: 'It is awkward to call my child for a conversation on sexual matters' (Father 2). This feeling was also present among the pupils. They expressed the view that they were shy and apprehensive in talking to their senior on sexual matters.

The data suggested that communication on sexual matters was more embarrassing when third parties are present. A boy said he felt inhibited talking about sexual matters to his parents, teachers or even church leaders in the presence of others. One mother also mentioned that her strategy was to talk to each of her children one at a time and not together.

4.7 Gender and communication on sexual matters

The pupils related to their mothers, fathers. Female teachers, male teachers and church leaders of different sexes differently. Mothers reported that they took an active interest in the lives of their children. They were in charge of the daily needs of the children such as food and clothing. They also provide emotional support for their children. Consequently, mothers and their children developed a closer bond than fathers. The pupils were willing to turn to mothers for information on sexual matters than fathers. A mother had this to say on the role of fathers:

‘The Bible says that the man is the head of the house. He must see to the training of the children in all matters, including sexual matters. However, with all respect to you, men do not make time for their children and wives. So if you are married to a man like that you have to take up that responsibility’ (Mother 4)

The pupils who participated in the study did not view talking about sexual matters as a negative experience. Most of them said that they were glad to get the information from teachers and parents, especially if they had lingering questions but feared to ask because they could be seen as ‘bad’ children. Similarly parents felt a sense of accomplishment of their parental responsibility after communicating sexual matters to their pupils.

4.8 Perspectives on Responsibility for communication about sexuality

One of the thorny obstacles in meeting the sexuality information needs of the pupils was about who should bear the communication responsibility. Both teachers and parents were mentioned as those responsible for communicating sexual matters to the pupils. This view was expressed by the pupils and their parents.

Teachers were identified as responsible for communication because they were trained and had information on sexual matters. One girl said:

I think it is the science teacher [who has to be responsible]. He normally teaches on the growth system of the body. But nowadays our religious and social skills [subject] include that. So the religious and the social skills teacher also teachers on sexuality'-(girl 7).

Another girl similarly said:

It is also the duty of the teacher. This is because they have the topic in class. They are bound to do so. Also, because they are educated they may know these issues better than parents. Some parents are not educated and so may not be very knowledgeable about such matters' (Girl 5).

Parents backed the statement from the children above that the teachers were the best suited to communicate on sexuality. They said that teachers were trained on adolescent sexual and reproductive health while parents were not. This parent further suggested that female teachers could be in a better position to teach young adolescents:

You see, it is difficult for a parent to discuss sexual matters with their children because you were not trained like that. Therefore you'll find it difficult... we believe that teachers, especially female teachers can do a lot to help our children. (Father 3)

Teachers were said to have a lot of time with children at school as compared to parents. Fathers are particularly away from home during the day and only came home late at night when the children were asleep. One boy noted:

Some parents are busy. They leave very early in the morning and come back very late at night. Teachers live in the community and so can even monitor the movements of their pupils even at night. They are in a position to offer the best advice (Boy 1 aged 16years).

4.9 Summary of key findings

The key findings indicate that parents and teachers think that they have an obligation to provide sexuality information to their pupils in upper primary schools. Most parents and teachers do not normally discuss sexuality issues but rather authoritarian approach was usually used this is where the pupils are expected to comply to obey and comply to the norms without questioning

The general feeling among the study participants is that sexuality information should be provided more regularly and should be initiated at an early age. The study also revealed that despite this concern, discussions on sexuality seem to be initiated at the onset of puberty or when provoked by the child's negative actions.

All participants proposed suggestions to improve their communication on sexual matters mainly by seeking and improving knowledge on sexuality related issues, and improving communication skills among all concerned.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter will deal with the summary, conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Summary

The main research question for this study was to understand how sexual matters are communicated to upper primary pupils. The study did not examine the respondents' perceptions of communication as a construct but rather focused on various aspects of the communication process between the pupils and their parents/teachers/key informants. What is of concern to this study is the willingness of parents to take on this responsibility. As pointed out by one respondent; parents may be shy to discuss sexual matters with their children, but teachers have a skill which can be useful in such a context. It could be argued that teachers can easily take on this responsibility and integrate sex education in the ongoing curriculum. Nevertheless, giving the responsibility to teachers cannot justify exempting parents' involvement. Parents, as noted by Dutra and colleagues (1999), have influence on the sexual behaviour of their children through communication. However, some skeptics of parent-based approaches argue that parents are ill-informed and often convey inaccurate information about sexual matters (Jaccard et al. 2002). Although this might be true, this information gap can be remedied through educational efforts. Both parents and adolescents can be empowered to be better communicators on sexual matters than is currently the situation in Kenya.

It is desirable that parents should assume a more active role of providing appropriate information on sexual matters to their children as early as possible, particularly in the absence of the traditional channels of socialisation. This is based on the premise that children and adolescents learn certain attitudes and behaviours early in life from adult role models such as parents (Carolyn et al, 2003). However, besides information, the adolescents also need communication and negotiation skills. This will empower them with important information and skills and enable them make informed choices, particularly when facing risky situations.

Effective communication can take place if the receiver and the sender have a shared social reality. In this case, fathers would be well suited to provide sexuality information to their sons [and daughters]. Unfortunately, they seem to be playing a distal role in initiating communication on sexual matters. This leaves the mothers, who may feel uncomfortable talking to their sons about specific male reproductive and sexuality issues, although they may be able to address general issues like HIV risk prevention.

The teacher admitted being assigned the responsibility of communicating sexual information to the pupils and stated that they do so as provided for by the syllabuses. This was also done during the guidance and counseling sessions.

5.2 Conclusions of the study

The principle aim of this study was to provide an insight on the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, key informants and upper primary pupils on communication of sexual matters at all levels level. The findings provide a representation of opinions on communication on sexual matters from pupils and the concerned adults. This is an aspect which has not received adequate attention in the Kenyan context. The study findings have some implications for sex education

programmes in Kenya. First, messages from parents are vague, and mainly focused on warnings about the negative outcomes irresponsible sexual behaviour. Many topics on the broader aspects of sexuality, including adolescents' sexuality, relationships and reproductive health needs are clearly not being discussed to pupils. Failure to provide the pupils with accurate information on these specific topics may place them at risk for negative outcomes, particularly if they seek such information from peers.

In addition, not only do many different topics need to be discussed, teachers, parents and key informants need to adopt an open and receptive approach when initiating conversations or encouraging questions and responding to pupils questions. An open process of communicating sexual matters involves all communicators [adults] having adequate knowledge, being willing to listen, talking openly and freely, and understanding the feelings behind any questions posed by pupils. This approach to communication might not be widely accepted across cultures. However, teachers, parents and key informants should be made to understand that, having open discussions with the pupils will not deprive them of imposing restrictions, like not returning home from school late.

These implications are tentative and it is hoped that after an intervention phase, there will be need for more research to illustrate our understanding of the influence on teacher/parent/key informant communication on sexual matters in the Kenyan context.

5.3 Recommendations

For the pupils to be able to increase their control over and improve their social and moral lives, a secure foundation in a supportive environment, access to information, life skills and opportunities of making informed decisions are paramount.

Communication on sexual matters should be promoted through various mechanisms. Among which should be promotion of schools sex education programmes with homework assignments designed to be completed by both parents and pupils to enhance communication on sexual matters between parent and pupils. This will be possible as the atmosphere appears conducive with increased school enrolment through Universal and Free Primary Education (UFPE).

This study revealed that all participants supported provision of sex education in schools. Involving the wider community in appreciating the significant of communication sexual matters to Upper Primary pupils and identifying interventions to enhance this communication since culture was identified as a barrier to communication.

Providing adequate information and skills to enable parents overcome the communication barriers related to communication on sexual matters to upper primary pupils. This can be done by involving parents in 'straight talk' programmes, seminars as well as guidance and counseling sessions.

Established institutional structures, such as, the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs) and other Community-based Organisations (CBOs) be fully utilised to enhance communication on sexual matters to upper primary pupils.

Mass media need to continue providing sex education and hence minimize the cultural bottlenecks related to communication on sexual matters. This is based on the premise that, in this study the mass media is referred to a lot, and that it serves to trigger off discussions on sexual matters.

Other innovative approaches to promote communication on sexual matters to upper primary adults could include targeting church counseling opportunities such as junior youth forums like

choir, sports teams and such like. These avenues could be suitable for communicating sexual matters to young adults.

5.3.1 Recommendations for further research

Further studies needs to be carried out on the perception of pupils in primary schools to the teaching of sex education as a subject needs to be carried out. An evaluation of the existing sex education curriculum in terms of content and methodology needs also to be carried out as well as an investigation into the possibility of a life skills approach toward the teaching of sex education in schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUPILS

How are you girls and boys?

My name is Marie Kihanya, a teacher and a student the University of Nairobi, and I want to find out how much you know about sexual matters. I intend to carry out an interview on you, and I would be glad if you answered the questions as truthfully as possible and anything you find uncomfortable to talk about just let me know, and we will discontinue. Everything we discuss will be confidential. Anything you need clarification is welcomed.

Thank you for your co-operation.

1. Communication of sexual matters

- What do you understand by sexual matters?
- Do you think it is necessary to discuss sexual matters?
- Have you ever discussed sexual matters with your parents?
- Who do you think they are the best persons to discuss sexual matters with? Why?

2. Experiences of parents and pupils on communication of sexual matters

- Have you ever discussed with your parents on sexual matters? Can you share with me your experience on discussing sexual matters with your parents?
- What issues did you discuss?
- Where else do you get information on sexual matters?
- In your own opinion where would you prefer to get information on sexual matters? Probe for preference, parents, teachers and other sources.
- What role do you play while discussing sexual matters?

3. Gender perspective and differentials

- How do you discuss sexual matters with your parents, individually or as a group?
- On these occasions how are the grouping; girls and boys separately or all together?
- What factors do you discuss separately and which do you discuss as a group?
- Which is the most comfortable form of discussion?

4. Factors perceived to influence the communication process on sexual matters

- Should parents talk to their primary school children on sexual matters?
- Are there parents who do not talk to their children on sexual matters?
What are the reasons?
- What do you think encourages parents to discuss sexual matters with their children?
- For those who do not discuss, what do you think hinders them?

5. Frequency of interaction on sexuality

- When do you decide to talk with any of your parents on sexual matters?
- Who begins the discussion?
- Do you think what you discuss with your parents on sexual matters is sufficient/appropriate?

6. Content of parents adolescent communication on sexual matters

- What do you think parents discuss with their children on sexual matters?
- What issues do you discuss with your own parents?
- Who decides on what to talk about?
- How do you compare the content of discussion with your parents with information you get from school or friends?
- In your view do you think these discussions give you adequate information?
Probe for reasons.
- Where do you hold such discussions? Are you comfortable with these places?

7. Challenges/dilemmas to parent-pupil interpersonal communication on sexual matters

- Are there topics you find easy to discuss? Which are they?
- Are there topics you find difficult to discuss? Which ones are these?
- In your opinion how can difficulties in discussing topics on sexual matters be overcome?
- What advice would you give parents concerning discussion of sexual matters and other related issues with their children?

8. Personal information

- Age
- Gender
- Date of interview

- School
- Number of siblings
- Order of birth
- Geographical location of origin
- Living with parents?

Thank you for this important information

and should you feel we need to discontinue be free to say so. I will try to ask about anything you need clarified.

1. Perception on communication on sexual matters

- What do you understand by communication of sexual matters? What is your opinion does it cover?
- What are your views on communicating sexual matters to your primary school children?
- Do you think issues related to sexual matters should be discussed with upper primary school children? (Probe for reasons)
- How do young people in this community get information on sexual matters? (those in school and those out of school)
- What is your opinion on the accuracy of the information children are getting on sexual matters? (Probe also for appropriateness)
- Are you aware of anyone in this family providing this information on sexual matters to your children? (Probe for specifics and roles)
- How do you ensure that your child gets correct information on sexual matters?
- What are the social barriers to effective communication on sexual matters to primary school children in this area?
- What are the cultural barriers to effective communication on sexual matters to primary school children in this area?

2. Experience of parents on communication on sexual matters

- Tell me about your own experience during your adolescent time. In your adolescent time did anyone give you information on sexual matters? if yes who gave it? how was it given? What issues were talked about? In your opinion was this information adequate/appropriate/needed? Probe for actions
- Where else did you get information on sexual matters?
- How do you distinguish on sexual matters between you and your parents or other providers?

APPENDIX 2; INTERVIEW GUIDE- PARENTS

Thank you very much parents for availing yourselves.

My name is Marie Kihanya, a parent, a teacher and a student at The University of Nairobi. I intend to carry out a research on how we as parents communicate sexual matters to our upper primary pupils in this area. I intend to interview each one of you at a time; my request is that we be as honest as possible. Confidentiality is assured and should you feel we need to discontinue be free to say so. Feel free to ask about anything you need clarified.

1. Perception on communication on sexual matters

- What do you understand by communication of sexual matters? What in your opinion does it cover?
- What are your views on communicating sexual matters to your primary school children?
- Do you think issues related to sexual matters should be discussed with upper primary school children? [Probe for reasons].
- How do young people in this community get information on sexual matters? [those in school and those out of school]
- What is your opinion on the accuracy of the information children are getting on sexual matters? [Probe also for appropriateness].
- Are you aware of anyone in this family providing this information on sexual matters to your children? [Probe for specifics and roles]
- How do you ensure that your child gets correct information on sexual matters?
- What are the social barriers to effective communication on sexual matters to primary school children in this area?
- What are the cultural barriers to effective communication on sexual matters to primary school children in this area?

2. Experience of parents on communication on sexual matters

- Tell me about your own experience during your adolescent time: In your adolescent time did anyone give you information on sexual matters? If yes who gave it? How was it given? What issues were talked about? In your opinion was this information adequate/appropriate/helpful? Probe for reasons.
- Where else did you get information on sexual matters?
- How were discussions on sexual matters initiated and conducted with your parents or other providers?

3. Gender perspective and differentials

- How do you discuss sexual matters with girls and boys?
- What issues concerning girls do you discuss differently from those concerning boys?
- Are these issues discussed by the same parent or are there issues handled by the mother while others are handled by the father?
- Why is it important to discuss these issues separately?

4. Factors influencing communication process on sexual matters

- What in your view prompt discussion about sexual matters with children in primary schools in this area?
- Are there issues you find easy to discuss? What are they?
- Are there issues you find difficult to discuss? What are they?
- In your opinion how can issues difficult to discuss be made easier?

5. Frequency of interaction on sexuality

- In your opinion when should children begin receiving information on sexual matters?
- From whom should this information be communicated?
- How often do you think such discussions should be held with children?

6. Content of communication of sexual matters between parents and young adolescents

- What sexual issues are normally discussed with your children?
- What determines the sexual issues to be discussed?
- What aspects of sexual matters do you feel conformable or difficult to discuss?
- In your opinion how much information on sexual matters should primary school children be given?

7. Challenges/dilemmas to parent-adolescent communication on sexual matters

- Are there any beliefs in your community affecting discussion on sexual matters with boys and girls? Can you tell me any you know?
- What in your opinion do you find challenging in discussion with your children on sexual matters?
- How do you go about discussing issues that you find difficult to discuss?
- How in your opinion would such challenges be overcome?
- If you were given a chance to advise other parents regarding discussion on sexual matters with their children, what would you tell them?

8. Personal information

- Relationship with the primary school pupil(s)
- Gender
- Number of children in the family
- Order of birth of pupils participating in the study
- Religion
- Educational background
- Geographical location of origin
- Marital status

Thank you for providing this important information

1. What is your age?

(a) 23-30years

(b) 31-39years

(c) 40-49years

(d) 50-59

(e) >60years

2. Gender

(a) Male

(b) Female

3. Your marital status

(a) Single

(b) married

(c) separated

(d) widow/widower

(e) divorced

(f) co-

habiting (g) other (specify)

4. What is your religion?

(a) Christian

(b) Muslim

(c) Other (specify)

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE- TEACHERS

My name is Marie Kihanya, a teacher, a parent and a gender student at The University of Nairobi. I am here to find out our attitude as teachers on communication of sexual matters to upper primary pupils, our knowledge on sexual matters and our perception of appropriateness of the school curriculum to sex matters in primary schools in Kenya. Please let us be truthful in our interview and I assure you observation of confidentiality.

1. Social-demographic characteristics

1. What is your age?

(a) 25-30years

(b) 31-39years

(c) 40-49years

(d) 50-59

(e) >60years

2. Gender

(a) Man

(b) Woman

3. Your marital status

(a) Single

(b) married

(c) separated

(d) widow/widower

(e) divorced

(f) co-

habiting (g) other (specify)

1. What is your religion?

(a) Christian

(b) Muslim

(c) Other (specify)

2. What is your professional qualification? (choose highest qualification attained)

- (a) Untrained teacher (b) certificate (c) diploma (e) Degree (f) Masters degree
(g) other (specify)

2. **Attitude of teachers on communication of sex matters**

- . Is communication on sexual matters appropriate for pupils? Why?
- In your opinion which pupils should receive this communication? Why?
- What are some of the barriers to communication of sex matters in this area?
- How do you rate the importance of communication of sex matters to upper primary pupils?
- How willing are you to teach sexual matters if officially introduced?
- Who should communicate sexual matters to pupils in your school?
- Should Sexual matters be incorporated in primary schools?
- Should teachers be at the forefront in communicating sexual matters?
- Is the school curriculum is appropriate for communicating sexual matters?
- Do you think boys and girls should be given information on sexual matters differently?
- Why, and what outcome in your opinion would it have?
- In your opinion, briefly comment on the status of communication of sexual matters in Muguga Educational Zone today?
- What does this imply?

Thank you for providing this important information.

APPENDIX 4: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

How are you boys/girls.

My name is Marie Kihanya. We are here to discuss issues on sexual matters. I would like us to be as truthful as possible, let say be open and not hold anything back or be shy to say exactly what we feel or think, if at any moment you feel you want to withdraw from the discussion, you are free to do so. I assure you anything we discuss here will be confidential. I have guiding questions to guide us through our discussion? Everyone will have a chance to be heard.

Any clarification before we start?

1. What are sexual matters?
2. With whom do you discuss sexual matters with?
3. With whom would you like to discuss sexual matters with?
4. What issues on sexual matters would you like discussed?
5. How would you like sexual matters discussed girls and boys separately or together?
6. Who should decide how the discussion these matters?
7. What should be your role in these discussions?
8. Are there topics you find difficult to discuss on sexual matters?
9. What should be done to ensure that these issues are discussed with ease?
10. What other issues concerning communication on sexual matters would you like to highlight?

Thank you very much for your participation.