

THE IMPACT OF LATIN-AMERICAN TELENOVelas ON THE SOCIAL LIFE OF  
KENYAN TEENAGE GIRLS: A CASE OF ATHI-RIVER MIXED DAY SECONDARY  
SCHOOL

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**CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other examination in this or any other University.

Sign-----

Date-----

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K50/80946/2012

**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

This Research project is submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Dr. Silas Oriaso

Sign-----

Date-----

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**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved children, Ruth Mumbua and Nelson Mandela and my parents, Bernard Mutunga and Josephine Mwikali. You all stood by me and were a source of encouragement. Thank you.

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To all of you, may God bless you.

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

KTN	-	Kenya Television Network
NTV	-	Nation Television
KBC	-	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
EPZ	-	Export Processing Zone
DVB-T2	-	Digital Video Broadcasting, Terrestrial, Second generation
CAK	-	Communication Authority of Kenya
LCD	-	Local Content Directive
MexSoaps	-	Mexican soap operas
DStv	-	Digital Satellite Television
UGT	-	Uses and gratifications theory
NBC	-	National Broadcasting Company
TV	-	Television
SPSS	-	Statistical Package For Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

As the growth of new media and the advantages of the liberalization of airwaves keep being felt in Kenya, it is important for researchers to look at what Kenyan teenage girls may be learning from television programming and more so, from the Latin American telenovelas which have had a dominant presence during prime time in most of Kenyan networks since the early 1990s.

The study aimed to establish the impact of telenovelas on the social life of teenage girls in Kenya by analyzing girls in Athi -River Mixed Day Secondary School. The study embraced a case study design and used both questionnaires and interview schedule for data collection. Social learning theory, User Gratification Theory, and cultivation theory provided the foundations to study the possibility that our teenage girls may through observational learning end up imitating the behavior of characters after long exposure to telenovelas.

The study established that 97% of girls watch telenovelas and 3% of the girls do not watch. The study also established that 69.8 % were watching “wild at Heart” at the time of the study while others were watching ‘Her mother’s daughter’, ‘Maria Clara’ and ‘My eternal’. This showed that ‘Wild at heart’ was the most commonly watched soap opera among the teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Secondary Day School. On the frequency of watching the telenovelas, 62% of teenage girls watched the telenovelas very often, while 25% watched the programmes oftenly. The study also established that the telenovelas were mostly watched at 8pm in the evening as attested by 42.9% of the respondents while the rest at 10 a.m. in the morning as indicated by 22% of the respondents and at 6pm as shown by 23% of the respondents.

On the factors influencing the teenage girls to watch the telenovelas, the study established motivation, need for entertained, need to get educated and escape from reality. The other findings was that teenage girls used telenovelas in various ways such as teaching them on how to live with others as attested by 27% of the respondents, improving self-esteem 24%, widening the scope of thinking 17%, helping them to improve on speaking good English 15%, good decision making 7%, help them to understand the meaning of true love 6% and to improve their academic performance rated at 5%. On the social life of the teenage girls, the study established that the telenovelas influenced the social lives of the girls as attested by 97% of the respondents who said that telenovelas mostly influenced their social life as opposed to 3% of the girls who said that the telenovelas affected their religious lives.

The study recommended that; Parents should control the programmes watched by their children to guide them watch programmes which can be educative to them and they should also regulate the time when the youth watch the programmes. The other recommendation was that parents should act as role models by not watching programmes that may promote immorality.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Telenovela is a limited run serial dramatic programming popular in Latin American, Portuguese, Filipino, Spanish, and American (Spanish language network) television programming. The word combines 'tele' short for televisión or televisão (Spanish and Portuguese words for television), and 'novela', a Spanish and Portuguese word for "novel".

Telenovelas have their roots in Latin America, starting as graphic novel representations of classic literature and stories, later evolving into radio programs called Radionovelas. Radionovelas, the immediate progenitor of contemporary telenovelas, developed in Cuba in the 1940s as local formats of U.S. radio soap operas. The first radionovela to make the leap to television was *El Derecho de Nacer* (The Right to Be Born), which became so popular on radio that it was formatted for television in various nations across Latin America. After moving to television, the genre became known as the telenovela, and spread throughout Latin America. Telenovelas, which are sometimes called "tassels" or "comedias", are produced primarily in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries and are usually shown during prime time. The first telenovelas were produced in Brazil, Cuba and México. The first global telenovela was ("The Rich Also Cry", Mexico, 1979), which was exported to Russia, China, the United States and other countries. For many years people had depended on import of soap operas from the US. However, the development of Latin American telenovelas lessened the influence of US soap operas as they led to the opening of local markets and reduced dependency on US imports. Brazil's television producer, Globo, internationalized the serial form when it first exported its first telenovela to Portugal in 1975.

As the worldwide demand for programming of all types increased in the 1980 and 1990 due to the expansion of satellite and cable, Latin American production centers especially in Mexico and Brazil benefitted significantly and telenovellas became the dominant Latin American Television export. TV Globo was the first company to establish an expansive global distribution network though Telemundo, Venevision and others quickly caught up. Televisa's Univision is the largest Spanish language channel in the US (available in nearly 95% of all US Hispanic households with Telemundo being their close competitor.

Telenovelas have a strong audience appeal, a fact confirmed in 1990 when Telemundo tried to vary its prime time lineup by replacing telenovelas with other genres and that led to a drastic decline in rating. Telenovelas were quickly returned to schedule and now comprise of about 75% of Telemundos prime time offering. Currently the most successful telenovelas are being created by Argos and Telemundo and are re-broadcasted (or adapted) by the main companies. In Mexico, Televisa and TV Azteca are the largest producers and exporters of telenovelas. Currently, the best-known telenovelas come from Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile and Venezuela. In Kenya, telenovelas have found their way in to prime programming on the major media channels. Despite criticism that they have a negative influence on the audience, the passion that young viewers develop for them as well as the pleasure they find in watching and talking about them is certainly not to be overlooked. (Brown E 1994)

## **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Scholars and the general public have debated on the influence of television on society since the medium was invented. Television role on peoples' lives have been described as all powerful, as an important cultural and social force (McQuail 1997). The mass media is felt to have enormous influence on the beliefs ideas and bias of young people (Carlsson&Feilititzen2006). Svenkemd and Suruchi (1999) argues that viewing a particular program perceived as being highly realistic could produce a noticeable influence on social reality independent of other viewing behaviors over a large period. Television programs are said to capitalize on young people's creativity, passion and idealism ,offering their valuable perspective on some of the most critical issues of our times(Sheila & Macy 2003).There is no doubt that there exists a relationship between Latin American soaps and the way teenage girls perceive the world around them since there is a relationship between media consumption and attitude(Matabane1988). Studies have shown that teenage girls tend to turn to media for information on sex love and relationships instead of turning to parents (Buckingham& Bragg2003).

Worldwide, telenovelas have been accused of negative influence on audience .They have been accused of striving for sensation by seasoning their contents with sex, nudity promiscuity ,bad language ,promoting exhibitionism and of contributing to new lifestyle standards that prioritize publicity, glamour ,competition and individualism (Feilitzen 2004).

Some evidence does point to degrees of teenage audience involvement with fictional characters in the long running serials that seem to verge on irrational to the extent that they mourn their

‘fictional deaths’ and share emotionally in their joys (McQuail 1997).It is usually very difficult to assess just how deep such attachments really are and what impact they have on the social behavior of the teenage girls. Lombard (1995) argues that telenovelas are capable of blurring the distinction for media consumers between mediated symbolic and artificial and non –mediated or ‘real’ experiences.

Despite the presence of other genres in the Kenyan media, the Latin American telenovelas are the most popular genre in Television programming in Kenya. However in Kenya, little is known about the actual impact of soap operas on their audience thus raising the question about viewer’s involvement with the genre .Therefore, it was vital to establish the actual impact that telenovelas have on the social life of teenage girls through the critical analysis of teenage girls in Athi- River Mixed Day Secondary School.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

### **1.2.1 General objective**

The general objective of this study was to investigate the impact of Latin American soap operas on the social life of teenage girls.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of this study were;

- 1 To investigate the kind of telenovelas the teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day secondary school watch.

2. To investigate factors that determined the Athi-River Mixed Day school girls' preference for various telenovelas.
3. To investigate what teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School use telenovelas for.
4. To investigate the impact of telenovelas on the social life of teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The study sought answers to the following questions.

1. Are telenovellas watched by teenage girls in Kenya?
2. Why do Kenyan teenage girls prefer watching telenovelas against other genres?
3. How does the Kenyan teenage girl use telenovelas?
4. What is the actual impact of telenovelas on the social life of Kenyan teenage girls?

### **1.4 Conceptual framework**

A conceptual framework is an abstract representation, connected to the research project's goal that directs the collection and analysis of data on the ground. This is the way ideas are organized to achieve a research project's purpose." shield &Nadhini.pg 24).

Social behavior change is not an isolated aspect but on the contrary it encompasses various factors that lead to its accomplishment. The television telenovelas is posited as the independent variable that affects social behavior of teenage girls at Athi-River mixed day secondary school.



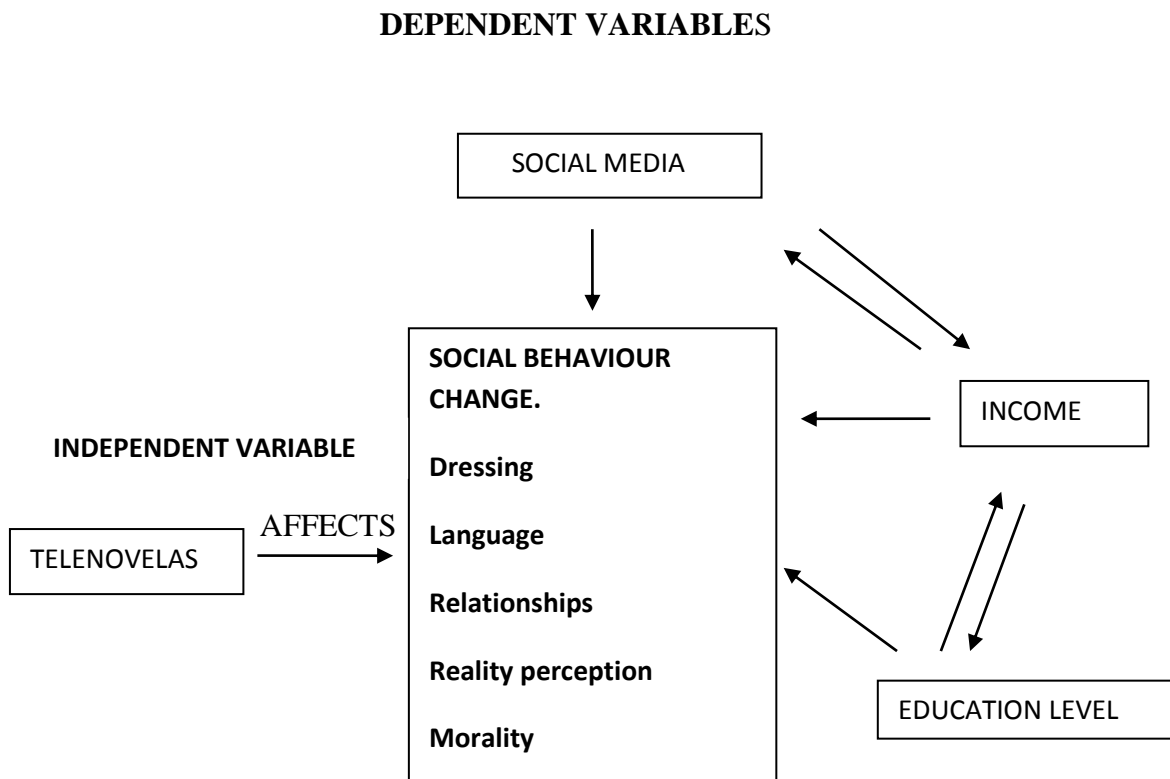
Four factors were posited as the dependent variables that influence change in social behavior. These factors include: education, culture, social media, and income.

More women than men and more people with little formal education than highly educated people feel that media have a negative influence on young people (Carlsson & Feilitzen 2006). Education is a major channel that transmits information or content that can cause change in an individual's beliefs, images, understanding and values. (Carlsson et al 2008). Education also enhances the audience's ability to evaluate the message in telenovellas to evaluate it according to parameters such as truthfulness and interest. Cultural influences on social behavior are due to the fact that we live in a world with open skies where it is no longer possible to control what our teenage girls watch as the young audience keep seeking programmes on satellite channels hence viewing new cultures and embracing some of their values (Carlsson et al 2008). Television is a central storyteller of culture today as it provides audiences with opportunities to think about, discuss and debate their culture and social agendas.

The new information technology has led to the massive use of social media to pass media content very easily and freely. This leads to the view of media being very near to the individual, his needs and his aspirations (Buckingham, & Bragg 2003). Social media has broken social, economic and political barriers and has sped up the feedback process so that audiences leave responses to a program even as they watch and even form cult like internet fan clubs (Adriana 2000)

An individual's income will reflect how an audience is exposed to media content by determining the individual's ability to seek, locate and select information that suits his need. The following is a conceptual map that gives a visual representation of the relationship between these concepts. The basic premise is that change in social behavior is largely shaped by many interrelationships between social factors such as those of education, social media, and income (MCQuail 1997).

**Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework**



Source: Researcher, 2004.

### **1.5 Justification of the study**

Telenovelas constitute a great deal of the total Television output in Kenya and they attract more viewers than any other form of programming. Many of them have been slotted for airing during prime time in the Kenyan media .Although no other form of television fiction is attracting more viewers in more countries ,more regular over a longer period of time like the telenovelas, the serials have often been regarded as trash and largely ignored in the ‘serious ‘ literature and research. Particularly, it has been dismissed as a waste-of-time women’s’ trash or sometimes, adolescent trash (Feitlizin 2004).

Many people have also accused the media of promoting social indecency by airing inappropriate content in the telenovelas hence exposing teenagers to a world of unrealistic indulgences which they end up coping (Underwood, 2006).Currently, our teenagers are faced with a myriad of problems, from rising rates of obesity, obesity related diseases, mental and emotional disorders such as depression, substance abuse, suicidal attention disorders, mood disorders, confusion on relationships, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases among a host of other challenges(Kelleher et al.2000).

For many, the television offers solace to escape from these harsh realities despite the accusations against media content of causing harm to its audience especially the teenagers. According to McQuail(1997), harm may include “changed attitudes or beliefs affecting an individual, changed behaviors particularly an increased propensity to harm others or for self-harm(e.g. anorexia, obesity) or harm in the sense of emotional responses affecting both self and others ,including fear ,upset or hatred(McQuail&Windahl,1993).

Research conducted on telenovelas is mostly with adults while research with teenage girls and this genre seriously lags behind (Feilitzen 2004). Speculations abound on the reasons for the genre's popularity with the teenage audience such as gaining pleasure, excitement and sometimes laughter from viewing these fictional serials, and that they learn, get ideas and advice about, and insight into life and people from them. Young people identify and parasocially interact with certain characters, situations and values, distance themselves from others, check out how characters' behavior works or how they themselves would behave in corresponding situations (Glyn & Dickson 2004).

However, the extent to which the telenovelas influence the social life of teenage girls in the long run is not known. This study therefore aimed to unveil how telenovelas impact on the social behavior of teenagers by focusing on teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School.

### **1.6 The scope and limitations of the study**

This study focused on teenage girls at Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School and all Latin American telenovelas which were airing on Citizen Television, Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation Television (NTV), K24 and the national broadcaster, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). However, the study was limited in scope as the researcher only dealt with the social impact of telenovelas on teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School. The researcher did not analyze the impact of telenovelas on any other aspect of the teenage girls' lives such as, political, religious or academic performance. The researcher also dealt with teenage girls and not boys within the age bracket 14-18 years, yet telenovelas have a global popularity and an appeal that cuts across all ages and gender.

The researcher therefore could not deduce what impact telenovelas may have on the other audience across different ages and gender apart from those on the teenage girls between the ages 14-18 years.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

For a long time, telenovelas have become so popular in Kenya that many television channels have dedicated most of their time to them (Synovate 2011). The popularity of this genre in Kenya warrants the need to understand what lures the teenage girls to keep watching them despite the fact that most of them have almost similar storylines and endings.

This would enable movie producers in Kenya to adopt the same techniques applied by Latin American telenovela producers in order to entice the Kenyan audience to watch and promote local productions.

On the same breadth, the study was critical in establishing detrimental effects if any. For example, it was believed that telenovelas presented a distorted view of reality to audience (Feilitzen2004). This research aimed to confirm or refute if teenage girls social behavior was distorted by the content they watched in telenovelas and help stakeholders in the education sector to come up with corrective measures to deal with the impact of exposure to wrong messages from the telenovelas.

Lastly, the findings on telenovela's subsequent effects on the social behavior of these teenage girls was instrumental to stakeholders in broadcast journalism to redesign programming

especially if the study revealed that telenovelas have negative impact on the social behavior of teenage girls. Findings from this study may be used by the Communication Authority of Kenya to advise media managers on content and programming, and to determine who is suitable for licensing among the many media owners.

### **1.8 Definition of key terms**

**Soap opera-** is a serial drama, on television or radios that features related story lines dealing with the lives of multiple characters and typically focus heavily on emotional relationships (frequently sponsored by a company advertising soap products)

**Radionovela-** Radio soap opera (a serialized program usually dealing with sentimentalized family matters that is broadcast on radio.

**Teenagers-** individuals within the age bracket of 13 years and 17.

**Audience-** is a group of people who participate in a show or encounter a work of art as viewers or listeners.

**Prime time-** is a block of a day's programming schedule with the most viewers and is generally where television networks and local stations reap much of their advertising revenues.

**Channels-** a physical transmission medium such as a wire, or a logical connection over a multiplexed medium such as a radio channel used to convey information or a signal.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This paper presents a literature review of audience perception of telenovellas .The underlying premise of this discussion here was that audience are active in the production of meaning .This audience research rested on the argument that there is “more to watching TV than what is on the screen”(morley,1986,p.47)

Telenovelas, which have traditionally been conceived of as entertainment, actually consist of in terms of content, dramaturgy, and other entry points that help explain why it has become such an attractive genre. Their power of dramatic presentations makes it reach a large audience to articulate debate. People engage, identify and involve themselves strongly with the stories told in them as they strike some everyday experiences which are recognizable to the viewers, thereby sparking identification and feelings of satisfaction and pleasure (Graham 1997). This recognition promotes a sense of social and cultural membership for many low income citizens in the world.

### **2.1 Characteristics of telenovelas**

The plot in telenovellas involves a lot of romance and drama revolving around lovers who are separated by rival families or different socioeconomic backgrounds, and trace the heroine’s efforts to overcome the obstacles to true love. They focus on family romantic relationships, emotions and conflict and the reliance of melodrama as a stylistic form which seems to hold a universal appeal (Carlsson & Feilitzen 2006).

In most cases the genre takes unique characteristic in accordance with the nation of origin. Venezuelan telenovelas are known for featuring “steamy” love scenes while Brazilian and Colombian telenovelas focus more on social themes and political realities.

Mexican telenovelas have tended to favor the family, focusing on emotion and melodrama. They usually have a love couple that encounters many problems throughout, a villain and a hero with one common ending archetype consisting of a wedding, with the villain dying, going to jail, or becoming exposed (Soong, 1999). All in all romance and drama is the international language in all of them with love, quest for true love and happiness greatly emphasized.

According to Feilitzen (2004), the genre has a narrative structure as they involve a serialization of a story over an extended time. Telenovelas also have a different type of story from English language soaps, as most of their story focuses on rivalry between two or more people or families in romance or business. Many of them follow the ‘Cinderella story line’ (a poor girl who is a rival of the male protagonist's evil girlfriend), or two brothers after one woman or two sisters after one man. Typically, the hero gets shot (or something equivalent). Another difference from English soap operas is that telenovelas have an ending and come to an end after a long run while most English language soap operas can continue indefinitely. Telenovelas are usually shown five or six days a week and run for an average of 120-150 episodes (Feilitzen 2004).

Cliffhangers are commonly used to ensure continued viewing and focus. The cliff hanger moments are always heart stopping, making audience to hold their breaths about the fate of the characters, and at the end of each episode, splinter groups emerges, giving their views about what transpired in various scenes in the episode, what could and couldn't have been done by a



particular character, who they suspected was the guilty party, and a prediction of what would happen in the next.

## **2.2 Genres of telenovelas**

Telenovelas falls within six categories. First, there is the working-class melodrama, which is easy to understand and contains less explicit content. This genre features a poor woman who falls in love with a rich man whose family spurns her, such as “Maria la del barri” (1995). Secondly, there is the historical romance type which is set in the past, such as the colonial period (Martín Garatuza, 1986), the restoration of the Republic (El carruaje, 1972), the late 19th Century (El vuelodel águila, 1994) and the revolution (Bodas de odio, 1982)

Teen drama forms the next category of telenovelas. These portray the lives of high school teenagers and their issues with sex, drugs, and other coming-of-age topics. It started with ‘Quinceañera’ in 1987. In addition, there is the Mystery/Thriller which is a colder hearted version of telenovelas than the other sub-genres. It may portray a mysterious death or disappearance, which may tear couples, even families apart, such as “La Casa al Final de la Calle, La Mujer de Judas”.

Romantic comedy is the fifth category of telenovelas. This type portrays love stories with some or lots of comedy such as Yo soy Betty, la fea (Ugly Betty). Lastly, Pop band story type of telenovelas portrays the lives of aspiring musicians such as in Alcanzar una estrella (1990) and its sequel Alcanzar una estrella II (1991).

### **2.3 Telenovelas and stereotypes**

Millions of people watch Spanish-language soap operas in prime time, and their availability on digital media has increased and widened audiences. That they have influence on audiences is no doubt, especially on younger audiences and hence the question: from their overdramatized plots, could they be presenting teenagers with a warped picture about reality? Do they present characters in a particular set way, a stereotypical point of view?

This TV genre portrays female characters in the following way: There is the poor girl/the victim (the traditional female role). This is the woman who represents morality in the story line and she is good and submissive and falls victim to the discrimination and violence of the other characters. She is a victim of aggression, insults, jealous rages and threats from their partners. This woman is the driving force of the family which determines her self-image as opposed to perceiving herself and being perceived by others as a legal person. The family is this woman's symbol of fulfillment, and it defines her individual position. In this, she feels a particular sense of dignity that does not permit her to think in emancipatory categories or demand equality of the sexes even before the law. This has been accused of making many women accept male violence as a punishment for not playing their role as expected and not as unfairness or an infringement of their rights as women.

The second type is the hothead, a woman who no one wants to make upset. She is usually portrayed as being angry and aggressive and would either fake a pregnancy or totally hate getting pregnant because it will ruin her figure. This character is ever rude to the house-helpers and other domestic workers and gives the female heroine nicknames associated with their occupation.

In most cases, her final ending is predictable in that she either ends up in prison or the mental asylum, have acid thrown in her face, being shot by the police while on the run, and being run over by random cars or trains or fall from high buildings.

The third type of women portrayal in telenovelas is the seductress, a woman who will use her body by any means in order to have her way and gain what she desires. She is exotic, hyper feminine, voluptuous and behaves and dresses in a provocative manner in order to gain the attention of the opposite sex. Most of the time, she engages in cat fights with other characters .she is a threatening woman who competes with the other women and the male protagonist.

The fourth common type of women portrayal in telenovelas is the maid who sticks to her gender roles and makes a living by cleaning and cooking. At times, she is devious, and at other times, pure at heart with good intentions. Lastly, the roles of the mother-in-law and sister-in-law, who often live with the partners, are portrayed in an especially negative manner. Often both contribute to exacerbating the problem by promoting and policing traditional gender roles. In all telenovelas, women almost exclusively are the protagonists of the story, which might seem an empowering position. However they are frequently victimized and sometimes physically abused.

As telenovelas grab audiences with romance, crime, and drama, social class exploitation gets distinct portrayal. Class distinction is usually portrayed in the following order: They will have a rich guy falling in love with the poor girl. Also present is a priest who is always nosing on everyone's business. This priest will be the link between the rich and poor.

In most cases, the priest will have a kid, which will question the purity of the clergy. The poor will speak with a peculiar accent known as chilango (a Mexican slang common to people native to Mexico City).

In most of the novellas the people from Northern Mexico all wear sombreros (wide brimmed hat) and have mustaches, people from the south of Mexico will have colorful clothes. In addition, the rich become poor and the poor become rich. Usually, the poor are humble, while the rich are arrogant. Also worth noting is that, real, authentic Mexicans will never be the heroes or protagonists, instead they will have someone people with colored eyes or even blondes. The more conventional Mexican image with brown eyes and black hair will never be the hero but are given roles as servants, probably gardeners, and ignorant, low class or without class.

Telenovelas have become a significant part of their audience life with teenagers feeling that they learn much about reality from them. According to Kottak (1991) many viewers of Brazilian telenovelas are probably predisposed to liberal attitudes and habitual viewing further reinforces such attitudes. The danger here is the distorted stereotypic view of the world presented, one that is dominated by interpersonal problems and catastrophes. Just in the same way many American movies have street shootings and car chasing, telenovelas melodramatic shows capture the attention of their audiences due to over-dramatization despite accusations that, they always have women sobbing, It is almost as if there are no serious women, one does not see a strong number of female presidents of countries or senate, in their plot lines.

## **2.4 Telenovelas appeal to audience**

Television plays a crucial role in circulating ideas (Lombard, M.1995), particularly in developing nations and in Kenya, as the audience easily relates with the situations depicted in the telenovelas. The narrative has been able to generate different relationships between them and the audience. Constant exposure to the smaller, less burdened families depicted in the telenovelas creates a preference for them as the audiences identify and connect with depictions of upward social mobility, story lines on criticism of some traditional values, modern lifestyles and female emancipation (Singhal & Rodgers 1999.)

Kenyans also regularly watch evening soap operas, which usually portray a very specific model of family: small, attractive, white, healthy, urban, a typical middle class setup that most viewers identify with regardless of their socio-economic status.

At the family level, telenovelas have also influenced the choosing of names for children in families, a move away from naming children based on traditional family lineage. The likelihood that the 20 most popular names in a certain area include one or more names of characters of a popular soap opera aired in a given year is common. There are also suggestions that the soap's content has also influenced divorce rates especially when the leading female character of a soap opera was divorced or not married and ends up winning in love or becoming materially successful.

Telenovelas have the ability to emotionally stir their audience, especially the teenagers, a people that are still forming their views about society and issues on sexuality, (relationships, dating and intimacy), religion, self-esteem and self-worth. Viewers find themselves in these characters.

“They see the characters and say, ‘I’m that one, but I could be that other one, and I wish I could be that one, (Feilitzen 2004)’. For that reason, they command a passionate following, as the audience feels that the soaps thoughts are audible to them. Coupled with prime time programming for general audience, they are much more than a form of entertainment in that they engage the politics, socio-economic and culture of their audience as a whole.

### **2.5 Global telenovela’s appeal on audience**

Mass media is a major part of the everyday lives of young people ( Davis & Kay 2004 ).Latin American telenovelas are a complex genre and therefore very interesting. They have a clear Latin American identity but also a universal appeal. Also, telenovelas have introduced the Latin American television industry into the global cultural industry .In this respect, through telenovelas, Latin America may be doing better than Europe, because Europe is not succeeding in the task of producing a genre with a universal appeal (Feilitzen 2004). Telenovelas thus are an important exportable product due to their popularity among global audiences .Telenovelas have been exported to over a hundred countries spanning five continents with whom they do not share cultural similarities.

The consumption of telenovelas is social, so the influence of telenovelas always interacts with the family, they allow a subject in to a family and the members have a say in the subject. To teens aged between 11 and 13, telenovelas becomes an information source, a kind of window on the world, world which the family set up may not be willing to openly discuss. As they watch the telenovelas, teenage girls and boys learn about problems, contemporary issues and options for

acting as an adult man or woman(Feitlizen 2004).Girls are exposed to interesting, exemplary female characters' who influence the plot, and who are hardly found in other programmes. For teenage boys who are still searching for stable points of orientation to the modernized male, the telenovelas offers an alternative to the conventional, relationship-oriented state of being a man.

Economically, programming blocks and titles treat teenagers as a potential consumer group hence telenovelas become advertising mediums using forms like the sponsoring of sections, contest and abundant product placement (McQuail1997). The teenagers identify with some of the products advertised while the contest arrests their attention towards the telenovelas being aired with a wish to participate and win.

Telenovelas are broadcast throughout Brazil, six days a week, in the afternoon and during prime time. They attract a daily audience of more than forty million (Feitlizen2004) and they are able to capture and maintain the attention of a faithful audience during their duration of six to eight months on air. Their plots can conform to real life seasons and holidays, and often they introduce fashion and products and approach contemporary social issues. Brazil has also made available to the audience, a range of possibilities of interaction and involvement with fictional content .Most telenovelas have an official web site with links to official Face book and Twitter pages that allow for visualization and sharing, as well as more interactive parts, such as games, polls and apps in which the user can create his own content by remixing images from the producers. The audience watches the online content, and creates entries about their favorite fiction on Wikipedia.

In Colombia, Caracol Televisión, the major producer of telenovelas has made available to the

audience a range of possibilities of interaction and involvement with fictional content, with the WAP portal standing out by allowing users to keep connected on their cell phones. The possibility of comment, criticism and recommendation by sharing on social networks is dominant. This interactivity has captured and absorbed the telenovela audience in different media to a common forum. In Spain, network Antena3 stands out in the creation of twittersodes to the series *El barco* (The ship). In this country, the female participation in comments about fiction on social networks is bigger than their male counterpart. Mostly, women accessed the platform to interact with the protagonists and creators of fiction, while the series was being aired on TV. In Africa, lovers of Spanish and other TV soap operas have since August 12, 2012 been treated to a rollercoaster of romance, mystery, action and adventure, as NBC Universal International Television an American company, for the first time in Africa, launched a 24-hour Spanish-language telenovela channel dubbed Telemundo with the tagline – “Feel the Passion”. The channel is now available in 48 countries in Africa on the pay-TV satellite platform DSTV owned by South African firm Multi-Choice. In the United States just like in Spain and Colombia, producers of Univision and Televisa present different forms of audience interactivity, with fiction content made available by Telemundo being considered more accessible and easier to navigate. The new factor is the addition of content to the Hulu platform, an online repository of Television content, which allows audiences to watch series episodes at any time. The digitization of media has therefore produced a wider and stronger telenovella audience due to more interactivity with the content and other content users (Svenkemd & Suruchi 1999)



## **2.6 Telenovela's appeal to the Kenyan audience**

Kenya shares neither a social nor a cultural history with Latin America and yet it has been importing and airing Latin American telenovelas since the early 1990s (Mutunga, 2007:22). With TV ownership and the liberalization of the airwaves, telenovellas remain extremely popular with the Kenyan audience and are transmitted at regular and frequent times, often daily and have a faithful audience and more especially women. In fact, recently Kenya has risen to be the most popular country in East Africa where its citizens watch telenovelas with Mexican and Philippines telenovelas being very popular in Kenya (*Htp://www.El Corazon.com*).

The Kenyan media have made initiatives which have seen telenovellas slotted on prime time - 6pm, 8pm, 10pm despite the airing of 60% Local Content Directive (LCD) from the Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK). The liberalization and the ongoing migration from analogue to digital TV broadcasting is creating more room for more content as the Digital Video Broadcasting-second generation Terrestrial (DVB-T2) signal is being transmitted from Limuru to Nairobi, Ngong, Kiambu, Machakos, Thika, Muranga and Embu. This signal will be then rolled out in Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret and Nyeri in the next 2 years. This has led to more entrants in to the market to provide more local digital content .Local shows have been on the increase, from talk shows to comedies. Sadly, most local productions vanish almost as soon as they appear. The most popular ones are showcased on Citizen TV, NTV, KBC, KTN and K24 with audiences sharply criticizing their content, lack of creativity and a lack of continuity in the

storylines. 'Changing Times' a show aired on KTN was critiqued for forgetting some story lines or discarding them altogether without coming to a credible conclusion with audience wondering, 'what happened next to some characters'? 'Mali, 'the first Kenyan soap opera aired on NTV has been accused of forgetting important story lines with non-convincing characters. Mexican soaps have been credited for following things to the bitter end (Davies,M 1997).MexSoaps, as they're called, get aired simply because they're "better" than the very cheap local shows, but still much cheaper to get the rights to them than major American shows and they are a big hit with the target audience of middle aged women.

Slum dwellers in Kenya form part of the loyal telenovela audience. Even though slums are seldom seen in telenovelas, and worker's houses are always built almost beyond recognition, being cleaner, more beautiful, and always more bountiful and richer than in real life in the East African region, nevertheless slum dwellers in Kenya do identify with the characters and their experiences .women in the slum areas identify with female characters fighting ability to keep their head up high. The struggle not to give up and to maintain personal pride despite social misery identifies with most slum dwellers struggling to make it in the world. In Kenya, NTV launched the soap opera Mali in 2011, running three times a week in English and Kiswahili. With the tagline '*United by Blood, Divided by Greed*,' it follows the intrigues of an affluent family. However, telenovelas still fill prime slots in East African television programming. Uganda's longest-running series, "*That's Life Mwatu*", celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, while newer shows "*The Hostel*" and "*Deception*" are gathering followers .However the popularity with telenovelas remain high. Many people have accused local

productions of lack of continuity, they just go off air without notice' which disappoints its audience (Wandago, A.2003).

Production costs have also impacted negatively on the production of local content hence local production struggles to compete with the low-cost of foreign soaps. In Uganda, an episode bought from Telemundo can cost as little as \$300, whereas an episode bought from the local distributor of "*The Hostel*" costs around \$770.

African series in ethnic languages are still a niche market, but it's getting more and more developed. Kenya is leading the way, to develop content that represents its culture. Despite these efforts, telenovelas still command a huge following amongst the audience. There is therefore a clear need to further investigate both the positive and the negative effects of these narratives to understand how teenage girls incorporate them in their everyday life. In Kenya, it is difficult to escape their influence on teenagers as evident in the after discussions they receive once students meet in school over break time or in colleges and at home between family members immediately after the end of an episode.

### **2.7 Telenovela's appeal to the Kenyan teenage girl**

Kenya has been importing and airing Latin American telenovelas since the early 1990s, and telenovelas have permeated many aspects of Kenyan daily life, when compared to other foreign globally-distributed media products that are aired on Kenyan television (Mutunga, 2007). The teenagers are part of this audience as Digital media has spread and gained popularity among the youth. More and more often, teenagers are watching telenovelas on their smart phones over the internet (Feilitzen & Carlsson 2000).

According to Hall 2005 a medium is likely to play a role in influencing on attitudes and behavior. The teenage girls in this study, who are in an urban setting encompassing slum life and middle class socio economic status refer to telenovelas for hints on the latest trends in fashion, romance, hairstyles, opinions or slang, soaps and at times, reflect on their lives and prepare for their social change based on the lives' of characters they identify with.

Telenovelas have many characters and intersecting plotlines, making it possible to tackle multiple issues simultaneously. They can broach issues that would otherwise be taboo to many teenage girls as it is often more acceptable to discuss things like sexuality, violence or substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy through the guise of a fictional third party. Teenagers form bonds with the characters going through some experiences like themselves (Buckingham & Bragg2003).

To miss an episode is to miss out big time unlike missing a news bulletin and those who do miss it are seen come the following day eagerly asking to be filled in on the details by their friends at schools, colleges, offices or by watching the episodes over the internet. Great is usually the response to the telenovela that even with the occasional power blackout, families and teenagers fear to miss an episode while those in families without TV can be spotted, at their neighbors'/ friends' houses gladly watching the same. To say the least, at such times especially at 8pm, women, teens, children and surprisingly a good number of the men folk tune in to watch fresh episodes of the programmes.

However at times, the telenovelas contain highly sexualized content without addressing risky

behaviors or serious social problems, at times not addressing the facts that risky sexual behaviors can result in serious physical and mental challenges and problem thus leaving teenagers to form opinions based on incomplete information (Palmer 1986).

**TABLE 2.1Telenovelas aired in Kenya as from January 2014**

<b>CITIZEN</b>	<b>NTV</b>	<b>KTN</b>	<b>K24</b>	<b>KBC</b>
Un Refugio	La Patrona	Los roy	It seems so beautiful	Emerald necklace
Wild at heart	Dyesebel	Her mother's daughter	Corazon apasionado	Beautiful ceci
CoronaDe lagrimas	One true love	Mariana and scarletta		

Source: Researcher, 2014

**Table 2.2 Telenovelas aired as at August-December 2013**

<b>CITIZEN</b>	<b>NTV</b>	<b>K24</b>	<b>KTN</b>	<b>KBC</b>
The power of Destiny. (La Fuerza)	Mara clara	It seems so beautiful (Baade Ache)	El clon(The clone)	Emerald necklace
The one who couldn't love	Beautiful but unlucky	Passions of the heart	Glamorosa	You are the one
Abyss of passion. Amor bravio	<b>Maid in manhattan</b>			

Source: Researcher, 2014

From Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 above, it is evident that telenovelas have a ready consumer market within the Kenyan media since each media channel has apportioned a great deal of its programming to telenovelas. This shows the popularity and appeal of telenovelas amongst the Kenyan audience and that's why each media station in Kenya strives to include telenovelas in their prime time

Some of the telenovelas aired in Kenya that have managed to captivate audiences with their powerful plots are: Stomp over paradise, Curse by the Sea, MaraClara, Triumph of Love and El clon.

## **2.8 Synopses of past powerful telenovelas in Kenya**

### **Storm over paradise**

This is telenovela that was produced by Televisa. Ahzac a Mayan priest discovers that his daughter, Ixmy, has given herself to the love of a white man; she was destined to be sacrificed as a gift to the gods along with some gifts made of gold and with a black pearl of similar size. Ahzac then invokes a curse upon the black pearl, saying: "Whoever has this pearl in their possession will never be able to know what happiness is!"

In 1987, explorers Eliseo Bravo and Hernán Lazcano go exploring underwater and find the black pearl. Once the pearl is touched by Hernan, Ahzac's curse takes effect. The pearl wakes the greed in Eliseo, who provokes the death of his partner Hernán, thus leaving Hernán's wife, Analy, and their newborn daughter, Aymar, alone. Aymar later grows into a very beautiful and physically striking girl. Her mother is killed by a jealous Nakuk when she is 19, and she now lives with a good friend of her mother Capitán Pablo Solis.

Later on, Aymar meets Nicolás Bravo, son of Eliseo Bravo and fall passionately in love with each other. As the story progresses, a selfish, coldhearted, money loving woman known as Maura Duran is introduced. She falls in love with Eliseo's oldest son David, who also falls desperately in love with her. She goes to the hacienda in the name of Karina Rosemberg, a rich heiress whose land Eliseo has been planning to get his hands on for quite a long time now.

After being brainwashed by the fake Karina, Eliseo immediately does not take a liking to Aymar,

and detests the intimate relationship she has with his son. The real Karina Rosemberg is in a mad house. One day, the real Karina meets David, drunk and in an awful state. She falls in love with him quickly, but the feeling is not immediately mutual for David Bravo. He gradually sees the uniqueness and beauty of the real Karina, after seeing the evil manipulative side of Maura Duran.

Later on, Maura arouses many problems between Aymar and Nicolás. She then pretends that she is pregnant by Nicolás, supporting this claim after being able to lure drunken Nicolás in one night romance with him. However, she is actually pregnant for the youngest of the Bravo's, Leonardo, who also falls in love with Karina after her maliciously seductive actions. Unfortunately, he is killed after a plot set up by Karina and ranch worker, in order to rid of him and any evidence.

Karina and her godmother now seem to have the upper hand in the Bravo estate. Aymar tries to get everyone to believe that she is no longer involved with Nicolás, and is now married to José Miguel. She does this to avoid any problems that might come between her, her baby, and ever so loving Nicolás. Nevertheless, Karina is not satisfied. She now tries on two very dangerous occasions to kill Aymar, after finding out that she also got pregnant by Nicolás. Though one of her attempts gets everyone to think she is dead, she is actually alive, in the care of a kind black lady. During investigation of Aymars death, Nicolás finds out that Aymar was pregnant, and he is crushed. He then makes friends with now blind José Miguel, who was also madly in love with Aymar.

In the meantime, Karina's godmother is making very huge attempts to win Eliseo over, though he



does not take much notice because he is mesmerized by the return of the mother of his children. At the end of the story, Maura and her godmother try to run away after being exposed, but they are caught and persecuted by counselor Nicolás Bravo for fraud and all sorts of other crimes. David and Karina get married, and so do Aymar and Nicolás. (No. of episodes 185)

### **Curse by the sea**

This is a Spanish-language telenovela, a remake of the 1978 Venezuelan telenovela *Maria del mar*. For Estrella life is like the sea, full of danger and evil. But the sea also fights and moves forward. This humble fisher has suffered from the disorder that the crazy Casilda has. Casilda is Estrella's mother, who was in this state after being raped by Guillermo a wealthy man who is tormented by this sin. Since then, the crazy Casilda roams aimlessly. In the absence of their parents, Estrella received the shelter of her humble sponsors, who bring her up as their child.

Estrella learns to read, and through books knew love. She begins to fall for the famous writer, Victor Manuel .Victor Manuel lived for years traveling in different directions while writing his adventures as a sailor. One day, destiny and fate crossed his path, and he meets Coral, a woman who washed up on a beach and has Amnesia. This strange woman steals Victor Manuel's heart.

However, this relationship ends when Victor Manuel learns that Coral is killed in a tragic boat explosion. Devastated and feeling guilty about the death of Coral, Victor Manuel returns to Playa Escondida, the town where he grew up. He drinks, trying to forget his sorrows. He never imagines that Estrella might bring the sparkle back to his life.

While drunk, he flies an plane to Playa Escondida and falls asleep, almost crashing the plane into Estrella, who is fishing. Estrell recognizes the author who made her love reading. Very excited, she decides to help the sailor, who at first does not accept her. Later, Victor Manuel is overcome with love for her.

However, problems begin to appear for Estrella. A wealthy but selfish man, León Parra-Ibáñez wants to build a hotel complex on her sunny village. To carry out his plans, he wants to have the town cleared. All the fishermen who live in Playa Escondida would have to leave. Unfortunately, this land belongs to Victor Manuel. León wants to buy the land. Therefore, he convinces his self-centered daughter Oriana to seduce Victor Manuel and convince him to sell the land to him. Casilda, Estrellas mother returns to Playa Escondida. Full of anger and revenge toward those who hurt her, she attempts suicide by almost drowning herself, but some villagers rescue her. Now Estrella needs to work to cure her mother of these suicidal thoughts. To make money, she comes to the house of León and begins to work as a secretary. León is struck with her beauty and wants her. This only makes Oriana hate Estrella more. León's relative, Guillermo, visits from time to time. He learns that Estrella is the daughter he abandoned years ago with her mother. Drowned in a deep depression, he admits to Estrella that he is the one who caused so much damage to Casilda, and therefore, her father. León has another daughter, Elena.

Elena has fallen for a village boy, Salvador. Leon is very jealous of Victor Manuel and wants Estrella for himself, so he pretends to be sleeping with a girl who looks like Estrella, while Victor Manuel watches. Thinking its Estrella, Victor Manuel, in revenge, becomes entangled with Oriana before Estrella's eyes.

Hurt and heartbroken, Estrella takes Casilda to Mexico City to help cure her. She avoids Victor Manuel and her father, who she still has a grudge against for leaving them. Once in Mexico City, Estrella meets the psychiatrist Dr. Hernán Irazábal who falls in love with her. Victor Manuel learns that it was all a trap from León and decides to search for Estrella. But soon he encounters the woman that he fell in love in the past in Miami - Coral. Coral is found alive on the shore in Playa Escondida, without any memory. She doesn't even recognize Victor Manuel. He feels guilty about her situation, and decides to help by letting her stay in his mansion. In reality, Coral just wants to stay at his side to conquer and enjoy his wealth. Hernán helps Casilda heal while becoming good friends with Estrella, who begins to feel affection for him. Time passes, and Hernán helps to make Estrella a successful woman. Guillermo gives Estrella his inheritance, frustrating León and Oriana. Her mother Casilda, is cured of her disorder. Hernán begins to date Estrella and helps her overcome her disappointment in Victor Manuel. Estrella is now in a big business and very happy but past comes back haunt her.

Victor Manuel cannot stop looking at Estrella. Coral gets a tumor and will die in a few months. Hernán finds out about this and thinks he might lose Estrella if the two meet again. He tries to prevent them reuniting, but inevitably, their paths cross again. Estrella has changed though; and Victor Manuel is strapped to a deranged Coral. Meanwhile, León and Coral meet.

They begin to see each other, and become friends throughout their mutual hate of Victor Manuel and Estrella. They are full of vengeance and ready to finish Estrella and Victor Manuel off. Throughout these months, Oriana begins to change. She sees that she was wrong to be so selfish and evil, and has a change of heart.

She begins to love Santos. Victor Manuel begins to see Estrella again. One night, he gets in a fight with Hernán and afterwards Hernán is found dead, Victor Manuel is the main suspect and is put in jail (Hernán was actually killed by his nurse). Soon, Victor Manuel is proven innocent and returns to be with Estrella. Only the true bond of love between Estrella and Victor Manuel succeeds. They end up together.

### **Mara Clara**

Mara and Clara, both born on the same day, were switched after birth by Karlo David, Gary David's young brother who was working at the hospital, where Mara and Clara were born, as a janitor. Though, it is noted that Karlo was only following Gary's orders and lived a life of guilt, knowing that he deprived Mara of her real parents.

Mara lived as the poor daughter of the couple Susan and Gary David, and Clara, their real daughter, was brought up by the rich Amanthe and Alvira Del Valle. The good-natured Del Valle couple takes in Mara as a servant and decides to spend for her education not knowing that she is their real daughter. Clara makes life for Mara difficult. But, as time progresses, they found their true identity in the spotlight. The two children find it hard to accept the truth. The Del Valle couple swears to fight to keep Clara and also take back Mara, so does Susan promise to not give up Mara but a court verdict orders both children to be returned to their real parents. Clara then develops much more hatred for Mara blaming her for stealing her popularity in school, her boyfriend, Christian, and eventually her parents, and vows to make her life more miserable.

### **Beautiful but unlucky (Bella Calamidades)**

This is Spanish -language telenovela produced Telemundo. A sizzling romance story, it features a ravishing beauty plagued by bad luck. The story involves a beautiful, passionate woman named Lola, who is an outcast in a town dominated by superstition. Convinced that she brings misfortune to everyone, Lola shies away from other people.

When her hiding place is discovered, she returns to her home town, where a series of freakish events inevitably lead to tragedy. Heartbroken and fearing for her life at the hands of the villagers, Lola's life is revitalized by hope and one man's love and her grandfather's generosity changes her life. No one trusts her except for the man who truly loves her, Marcelo Machado.

### **Triumph of Love**

Victoria Sandoval is introduced as a young servant working in the Iturbide's household. Juan Pablo Iturbide Montejo, the future priest, son of Octavio and Bernarda is attracted to Victoria, the attraction is mutual. In a night, and Victoria becomes pregnant with Juan Pablo's child. Bernarda is furious upon discovering Victoria's pregnancy and kicks her out of the house. Victoria finds support from her friend, Antonieta Orzoco and together they find work in a Humberto Padilla's sewing company, owned by Rodolfo Padilla the father of Federico (Fernanda's ex-boyfriend). Victoria gives birth to a girl and names her Maria. Although poor, Victoria is nonetheless happy, but her happiness is soon interrupted. Bernardas intent on revenge convinces herself that God has chosen her to enact his punishment on Victoria. She attempts to kill Victoria and her daughter, but instead only succeeds in separating them.

Years later, Victoria eventually succeeds in establishing a major fashion empire alongside her friend Antonieta. Victoria is happily married to Osvaldo a popular actor, who has two children, Max and Fernanda. Victoria seems happy with the life that she leads, but secretly suffers and tormented by the absence of her missing daughter, Maria.

Meanwhile, Maria Desamparada Iturbide Sandoval is now a young woman who is ready to leave the orphanage where she grew up. She moves in with Linda Sortini and Nati Duval. Maria's aspirations to be a great model lead her to the most famous designer of the moment, Victoria. But far from being a friendly boss, Victoria treats her with contempt and arrogance, especially since Maria is compared to a younger version of Victoria. Maria does not let Victoria's negative attitude affect her work, and it is in the workplace where she meets Max. Max and Maria fall in love, but their love is rejected by Victoria, and she plots with Max's ex-girlfriend and fashion model Ximena de Alba to separate the two. Together they hatch a plot in which Max mistakenly ends up believing that he impregnated Ximena with his child, and is forced to marry her. Meanwhile, Maria is pregnant with Max's child, but keeps her pregnancy a secret. She sacrifices her love and happiness so that Max can fulfill his mother's wishes to marry Ximena. She seeks solace from Juan Pablo, who is a respected priest, and, unknown to her, is also her real father. Padilla and El Alacran burn Maria's home. Bernarda owns the place where they live now. Maria finds support in Ximena's renown photographer Alonso del Angel. He helps Maria through her pregnancy, and eventually aids her return to the modeling world. He falls in love with Maria, though Maria cannot reciprocate his love as she continues to love Max.

Victoria deals with her hidden past by focusing on her fashion label; her husband feels increasingly isolated from her and consoles himself with another woman, Maria's friend and roommate, Linda. However, Osvaldo also hides secrets from his past; while everyone believes Max's biological mother Leonela Montenegro is dead, she is, in fact, alive, and in jail. Osvaldo is hated by his supposed "friend" Guillermo Quintana, out of jealousy for both the relationship he once had with Leonela, and for Osvaldo's fame and fortune. He sets out on a path to destroy Osvaldo and his family, and begins by impregnating Ximena, and goes along with the plot to pass the child as Max's.

Max eventually finds out that Ximena's child isn't really his, but Guillermo's, which destroys his marriage. Max ends up maintaining custody of the child since Ximena is unfit to take care of him. He also learns that Maria is pregnant with his real son, and they are reunited. Ximena unites with Bernarda to destroy Sandoval's family; Bernarda buys full control of Victoria's failing fashion label, and enlists Ximena as her stylist. Osvaldo is shot by his ex-wife Leonela, but he survives. Victoria's happiness continues to disintegrate as she discovers her husband's infidelity, the fact that his first wife Leonela is still alive, and that she has breast cancer. Bernarda, also abducts Maria's son, which also hurts Victoria as he is her grandchild; mother and daughter bond over this mutual pain, though not understanding why the bond is so deep. El Alacran was killed by Bernarda and then Rodolfo was killed in a shootout by the police officers. Eventually, Victoria discovers the truth regarding her daughter's identity, and is troubled to learn that the girl she had worked so hard to destroy is in fact her daughter.

Bernarda plans to get rid of Maria and sets her abduction. Victoria runs to her aid but it falls on a lure and also pitched for it with Maria is kidnapped in an abandoned warehouse. Max and Osvaldo, with Alonso, Fernanda and father anxiously awaiting Juan Pablo at the home of Victoria's call demanding the ransom the kidnappers of the two The kidnappers are captured by federal agents, while Victoria is released on the outskirts of Mexico city.

After the kidnapping, Alonso proposes marriage to Maria and she accepts. But Alonso is made aware by Ximena that he is infected by a virus that is destroying him and can cause death at any time. Therefore, Alonso rejects Maria and abandons her at the altar of the Church. Guillermo and Osvaldo are hired by Televisa for a production and in the middle of filming, Guillermo "drops" Osvaldo, who falls from a hill to end up in a river but he survives. Alonso dies from the virus and Maria receives a video recording of Alonso telling Maria to be happy and not mortified by his death. Casa Victoria and Casa Bernarda face in a fashion contest. The winner of the night turns out to be Casa Victoria, with Maria as the flagship model of the moment. But the happiness of Victoria last only a moment, when Maria's nose begins to bleed and she loses consciousness. Maria is taken to hospital, where Dr. Heriberto Rios Bernal tells Victoria that Maria has Phase 1 disease and acquired the same virus that killed Alonso and must remain isolated to prevent future infections. Victoria goes mad with grief and Bernarda took the opportunity to take Juan Pablito's home, where she plans to make him a priest when he grows up, to make up for the sins she has made in the past. Max refuses to stay away from the love of Maria and removes the cloth insulation and gets infected.



Meanwhile, Bernarda is arrested by federal authorities when evidence that she was the mastermind of the kidnapping of the son of Maria in the past. Leonela learns the location of Max and goes to hospital, where he communicates Leonela, Heriberto, Victoria and Max is in Phase 2 of the disease and that his situation is more delicate than that of Maria. Max passes through the virus and Victoria helps her daughter Maria get over the virus.

Then, Bernarda is poisoned by drinking poisoned wine. Bernarda is then trapped in a car and caught on fire; she breaks the window and gets out of her car, kills Eva, then proceeds to run from the law. Bernarda goes on a plane and dies in a plane crash. Osvaldo receives a call from his friend, and moves to Spain. Ximena arrives at Max and Maria's wedding, attempting to kill Maria, but fails and runs away to Guillermo's house. Guillermo and Ximena commit suicide when they drive their car off a cliff. Maria and Max are happily in love with their two kids Juan Pablito and Osvaldito. Victoria is happy with her boyfriend Heriberto and her family.

### **El clon**

This is a Spanish-language telenovela produced by the US based television network Telemundo and the Brazilian network Globo. This melodrama features a love triangle featuring Lucas, a handsome hero, challenging his clone for the love of an enticing, exotic woman.

Lucas is young when he falls for a young Arab girl named Jade. She is caught between modern values and her Islamic upbringing. They separate and two decades pass. Then a strange turn of luck brings the pair together. Then Jade meets the clone, who is just like Lucas, but twenty years younger.

She must choose between the man she loved and the memory she cherishes. Jade and Lucas live happily, their love never broke.

Usually, Latin American Soap operas are easy to purchase by media managers. Formatting of telenovelas, which entails buying the scripts, promotional materials, graphics, etc., of an already-produced series and creating a local version, has become more common since 2000. The hit Columbian telenovela `Yo Soy Betty la Fea(UGLY BETTY) has been formatted in several markets, including India and Indonesia, while the Argentine youth-oriented `Chiquititas' has been reformatted in the U.S. and Portugal.

## **2.9 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical foundation of this study was eclectic, involving the use of the Social Learning Theory, User Gratification Theory (UGT) and cultivation Theory. Each of these perspectives provided information about the potential effects of television content on audiences. Social Learning Theory explained how teenagers may imitate the observed behavior shown on television while user gratification Theory provided insight as to why and how audiences choose certain media and what it was that they were trying to satisfy while cultivation theory gave an insight on what the teenage girls get from telenovelas following a long period of exposure to them.

### **2.9.1 Social learning theory**

The social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura is an influential theory of learning and development. In social learning theory Bandura (1977) states behavior is learned from the

environment through the process of observational learning. Individuals that are observed are called models. In society, teenagers are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents, characters on TV programmes, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of masculine and feminine behavior to observe and imitate. Teenage audiences pay attention to some of these people (models) and encode their behavior. At a later time they may imitate (i.e. copy) the behavior they have observed. They may do this regardless of whether the behavior is gender appropriate or not. Most of the times, teenagers identify with the characters they meet in telenovelas. This study aimed to unearth if modeling occurred in teenage girls when they identify with a model they perceive as attractive. Some of the characters are facing challenges or situations similar to what the teenage girl in Kenya is facing. Other characters tackle issues the way the teenagers would wish to tackle them. Other characters end up living lives that these teenagers would wish to live, so do the teenage girls copy how their models tackle the daily challenges they are meeting in their lives? Exactly what is it that they copy?

Secondly, the people around the teenager or the society may respond to the behavior he/she imitates with either reinforcement or punishment. If a teenager imitates a model's behavior and the consequences are rewarding, he is likely to continue performing the behavior.

The reward may also be in form of how that character/model that he identifies with, is treated or perceived by society. If the character is accepted, the teenager may copy that behavior. Likewise, if the character/model is rejected by society because of a certain behavior, the teenager may also

drop it (negative reinforcement). Reinforcement can be external or internal and can be positive or negative.

If a teenage girl wants approval from parents or peers, this approval is an external reinforcement, but feeling happy after identifying with a character who is her role model is internal reinforcement. Therefore Social learning theory provided the foundations to study the impact that telenovelas have on the social lives of teenage girls' from characters they identify with. However the theory did not tell why teenagers would prefer to watch telenovelas and not any other programmes aired on media channels hence the need to turn to Users and Gratification Theory (UGT)

### **2.9.2 User gratification theory**

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs (Severin, Tankard, 1987). UGT is an audience-centered approach to understanding mass communication. UGT focuses on "what do people do with media (Katz, Elihu (1959).

UGT discusses how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interactions/companionship, diversion, or escape (McQuail, D. 1983). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch synthesized that UGT's approach was focused on "the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other

activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones (Katz, Elihu 1959). This would mean that audiences just do not watch telenovelas since audience are also formed as a result of some type of content, some performer or compelling presentation (McQuail 1997).

Could the compelling melodrama found in telenovelas be a basis for this audience formation?

According to UGT, goals for media use can be grouped into five uses (MacQuail 2010). The audience wants to:

1. be informed or educated
2. identify with characters of the situation in the media environment
3. simple entertainment
4. enhance social interaction
5. escape from the stresses of daily life.

UGT therefore views media consumption as a consequence of expectations generated by need bases on social and personal factors (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1974). Therefore, UGT presented a basis for investigating why the teenage girls as an audience chose to watch Telenovelas, what needs and what goals and desires does this genre meet in their lives.

### **2.9.3 Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation theory is a social theory which examines the long-term effects of television. "The primary proposition of cultivation theory states that the more time people spend "living" in the

television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television (Cohen 2000). Cultivation leaves people with a misperception of what is true in our world.

Developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross the theory posits that the cultivation effect occurs only after long-term, cumulative exposure to television and since TV contains so much violence, people who spend the most time in front of it develop an exaggerated belief in a mean and scary world (Griffin 2012). Gerbner posited that television as a mass medium of communication had formed into a common symbolic environment that bound diverse communities together, socializing people into standardized roles and behaviors. He compared the power of television to the power of religion, saying that television was to modern society what religion once was in earlier times.

The popularity of telenovelas amongst diverse audiences is evident. Teenage girls spend a lot of their time glued to the TV set to watch the melodramatic episodes. This theory therefore helped unravel the kind of reality presented to the teenagers following the long exposure to the series and if that presentation affected their perception of real life issues. From the constant exposure to telenovelas, did the teenage girls have a realistic or a warped perception to reality? Did they take life as they saw presented on the screen? Did they judge issues as they saw the models they identified with do?

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the procedures which were used in the study. The chapter focused on research design, target population, sample strategy, sample size, research instruments, and data collection techniques and data analysis.

### **3.1 Research design**

This study employed case study design. Kombo and Tromp (2006) points out that a case study enables the acquisition of detailed information regarding a phenomenon. The rationale for this methodological position was that it provided an appropriate framework for the development of in-depth understanding of hitherto under-researched phenomena (Cresswell, 2007) and leads to the discovery of in-depth comprehensive narratives of the lived experiences of individuals.

In this case the case study will help to unearth the impact of Latin American telenovellas on teenage girls in Kenya using Athi-River Mixed High School students in Machakos County.

### **3.2 Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School in Mavoko Municipality, Athi-River district, Machakos County, approximately 29km from Nairobi, near the junction of Nairobi –Mombasa highway and Namanga road. Athi-River is a town in Machakos County, located 29 kilometers on the outskirts of Nairobi, in the former Eastern province.

It is also known as Mavoko. According to the 2009 census report on <http://www.mavokomunicipal.or.ke> the town has a population of 139,380 people and it is ranked

number 15 in Kenyan town's population size. The town is relatively industrialized with six cement factories located within its vicinity. These include Bamburi Cement, Mombasa Cement, East Africa Portland cement, Savannah Cement, National Cement and Athi-River Mining. The area is also a growing residential area due to its proximity to the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi.

Athi-River town is adjacent to and three kilometers from Kitengela town(which belongs to Kajiado County).The town also borders Mlolongo town, situated 14 kilometers from Nairobi on the Nairobi Mombasa Highway .Mlolongo is a town known not only as a transit point for trucks from Mombasa to western Kenya and the Eastern countries ,but also for its weighbridge, numerous entertainment joints and a hub for commercial sex.

The choice of Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School in Athi-River town was ideal since Athi-River town is an industrial town bringing together diverse individuals from different ethnic groups, backgrounds, religions and cultures .The teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day School used in the study are thus from a cosmopolitan environment since most of them have their parents working in the cement industries in Athi-River town or in the Export processing zone (EPZ) factories in Kitengela town while others work as housekeepers in the many residential houses and in the numerous entertainment joints in the three towns . The cosmopolitan nature of the town was ideal because Latin American telenovelas is a genre that has gained popularity and acceptance across gender, races, socio-economic status as well as diverse religious backgrounds.

The choice of the school was in consideration of the fact that it is a day school therefore the



teenage girls have access to television at the end of the day and during the weekends. All Kenyan teenage girls were thus fairly represented in this study, a key factor that reduces biases that may occur in mono-ethnic setting. The school started in 2008 with an initial population of 84 students. Currently, the enrollment stands at 347 students, 182 girls and 165 boys.

### **3.3 Target Population**

According to Borg and Gall (1989), target population refers to all members of a real set of people, events or objects to which we generalize hypothetical results of the research. The target population for this study was all the teenage girls in Kenya. However, in this case, since the study embraces the case study method the target population was the 182 girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School. Most of the girls reside within Athi-River town and in the neighboring towns of Kitengela in Kajiado county and Mlolongo, in Machakos County. Majority of them are from poor families residing in the various slums in the above mentioned towns such as Sofia, Slaughter, Embakasi, and Kibera Ndogo.

The target population comprised of a population which is also faced with challenges such as poverty, drug abuse, pollution, unemployment, frequent fire outbreaks among other challenges. Most of these girls were also vulnerable to sexual exploitation, early marriages and teenage pregnancies attributable to factors like proximity to an industrial town (Athi-River), presence of many truck drivers within the three towns of Kitengela, Mlolongo and Athi -River and being in a day school where students commute home every day.

### **3.4 Sample size and sampling technique**

A sample is a subset of the population to which research intends to generalize the results

(Wiersma, 1986). From the total population of 182 girls in the school, 64 of them will be sampled. The 64 girls constitute 35% of the target population which is way above the 10% as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (1989). To get the respondents, Stratified random sampling was used to categorize the students into classes, that is, form 1, 2, 3 and 4. According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006), stratified random sampling involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups and then taking a simple random sample in each subgroup. After stratifying the students into classes, 8 girls were picked from the 8 classes since the school has a double stream. This was done using simple random sampling where the researcher through the help of the class teacher wrote the word 'yes' on 64 pieces of papers and then folded the papers. The papers were then picked randomly in order to give every student a chance to be picked. Any student who picked a paper marked yes became part of the sample.

Purposive sampling was also carried out to collect data from the Principal, the deputy principal as they handled most of the students discipline cases and had more information on student's welfare and background information. Twenty seven parents and three religious leaders in Athi - River District were also interviewed to get their views about the impact of telenovelas on the social life of teenage girls.

### **3.5 Research instruments**

This study used the questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaires were used to collect data from students. The questionnaires were used because they are quick to administer and information would be collected from many respondents simultaneously. The questionnaires contained both close-ended questions and open ended questions. The closed questions were used

to assess the respondent's opinions or attitudes by choosing a rating on a scale. Additionally, the closed questions were used to elicit specific information in an efficient manner.

The open-ended questions allowed the participants to come up with their own responses and allowed for the documentation of the respondents opinions in an unrestricted manner. These types of questions were useful for obtaining in-depth information on facts, opinions, attitudes and suggestions, or sensitive issues.

One-on-one interviews were conducted on the principal, the deputy principal and religious leaders. Twenty seven parents of students in Athi-River Mixed Day School were also interviewed through focus group discussion to gather data on the the impact of Latin American telenovelas on teenage girls in Kenya using girls of Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School.

The interviews were used because through interaction with the respondent, a deeper, fuller conceptualization of those aspects of our subjects lives we were most interested in understanding was achieved (Miller and Glassner (1997)

### **3.6 Validity& reliability of the Research instruments**

Pre-testing was conducted to assist in determining accuracy, clarity and suitability of the research instrument. According to Borg and Gall (1989), one can carry pilot study on two or three cases. The purpose of the pre-test was to assist to identity the items which would be inappropriate so as to make necessary corrections, examine responses to determine the level of ambiguity of the questions and determine the percentage of responses. The Pilot study was carried to validate the instruments. Ten girls with similar characteristics were used. Content validity was used to examine whether the instruments answered the research questions (Borg and Gall, 1996).

The responses were checked to verify whether they answered what they were intended to answer in order to ensure instruments validity. Based on the analysis of the pre-test; corrections, adjustments and additions to the research instruments were made.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research and the extent to which studies can be replicated (Wiersma, 1986). This was assessed by a pilot study carried out through administering the questionnaire to five respondents. The questionnaires were administered to the same people after two weeks and the results of the two were compared. The results were the same thus the questionnaire were reliable

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected from the individual student as respondents. Before collecting data a brief explanation on the purpose of the study was made. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents during the pilot and main study and later picked immediately after they were completely filled up.

### **3.8 Data analysis and presentation techniques**

The raw data collected was edited and cleaned by checking for any inconsistencies. The close-ended questions were coded, whereas the open –ended data were thematically analysed and presented in narrative format.

The coded data was then fed into template and analyzed thematically using computer software SPSS (Statistical Package For Social Sciences). Several data analysis techniques such as univariate statistics (tables, frequencies, percentages, and graphs) and bi-variate statistics such as Cross tabulations, were used to establish the relationship between the variables.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

This study abided to the ethics of research. It ensured that all the respondents willingly gave their responses and that the responses they gave were treated with high level of confidentiality. There were no questions seeking individuals' private life.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the data analysis, presentation and interpretation section which comprises of the questionnaire return rate, data presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings. The presentation is based on the research questions as highlighted in chapter one. The information was presented in two sections. Section one involved data collected from the teenage girls in Athi-River mixed day secondary school while section two involved data collected from parents, teachers and religious leaders in Athi-River District.

### **4.1 Questionnaire return rate**

Questionnaire return rate is the proportion of the questionnaires that have been returned after they have been administered to the respondents. Out of 64 questionnaires administered to the girls all of them were returned making the questionnaire return rate to be 100%.The questionnaires to the respondents were administered in person and then collected immediately after they were filled up hence making it possible to have a questionnaire return rate of 100%

### **4.2 Findings from students**

The study was able to collect diverse views about the popularity and the impact of telenovellas among teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School. The findings were as below:

#### **4.2.0 Telenovelas watched by teenage girls**

Objective one of the study was to establish the kind of telenovelas watched by the teenage girls.

This was to ascertain or refute whether telenovelas is a popular genre amongst the Kenyan teenage girl by using girls from Athi-River mixed day secondary school. To understand the kind of telenovelas that they watched, it was paramount to first establish whether the teenage girls watched telenovelas.

The responses on whether teenage girls watch telenovelas are as in Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1 Responses on whether girls watch telenovelas.**

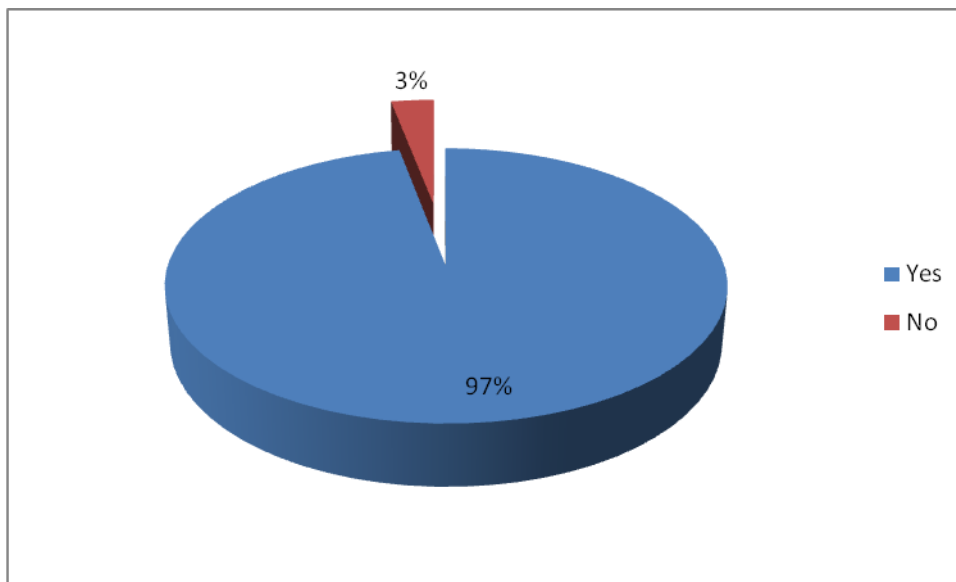


Figure 4.1 shows that out of 64 students who responded on whether they watch telenovellas 97% of them agreed that they watch and 3% said that they do not watch. This is an indication that telenovelas are programmes which are highly watched by the teenage girls in Kenya and that was the reason that all major media channels in Kenya have telenovelas in all their prime time.

The study also sought to establish the frequency at which telenovelas are watched by the teenage girls. The results are as in Figure 4.2

**Figure 4.2 The frequency of watching telenovelas**

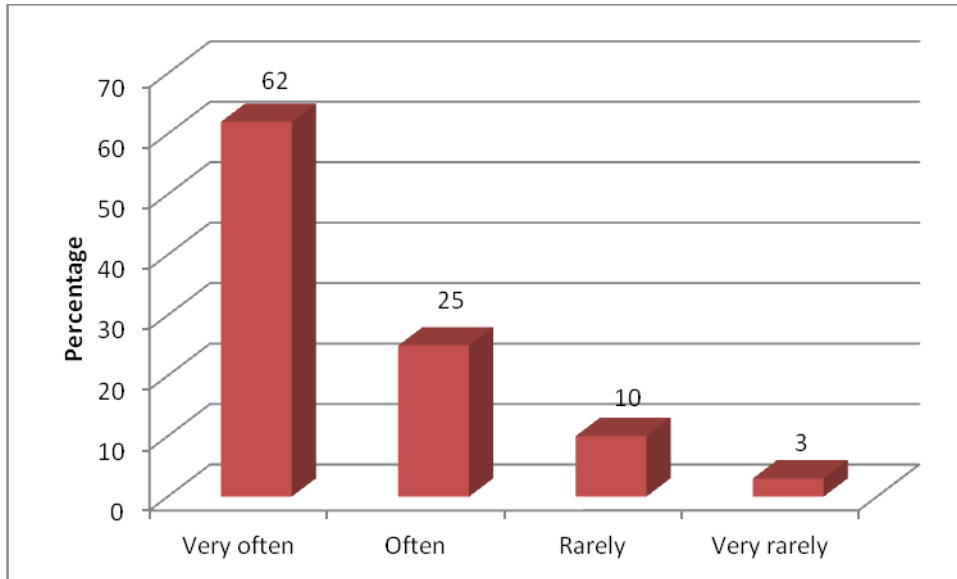


Figure 4.2 show that 62% of the teenage girls watch the telenovelas very often, while 25% watches the programmes oftenly. This implies that telenovelas have a great appeal and a loyal audience amongst the teenage girls in Athi –River Mixed Day secondary school.

The study also explored to establish the previous telenovela series which were watched by the teenage girls. Since the study aimed at establishing whether teenage girls actually watched telenovelas, it was prudent to ask them about the previous series they had ever watched. The results are as in Table 4.1



**Table 4.1 Previous telenovelas watched by the teenage girls**

---

<b>Title</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Triumph of love	56	16.2%
Beautiful but unlucky	51	14.8%
Rafaela	32	9.3%
Curse by the sea	36	10.4%
Storm over paradise	56	16.2%
La tormenter	36	10.4%
Don't mess with an angel	23	6.7%
Daniela	42	12.2%
The promise	13	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

---

This aimed at establishing the type of message that teenage girls like getting from the soap opera because they all carry different messages. Table 4.1 shows that there were several telenovelas which were watched by the teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School, and they include, Triumph of love, Storm over paradise, Beautiful but unlucky, Daniela, La tormenter, Curse by the sea, Rafaela, Don't mess with angel and The promise.

This is an indication that those telenovelas whose titles have a theme of love like Triumph of

love and Storm over paradise were commonly watched programmes. This is so because teenage girls have many questions concerning love and romance and since they are embarrassed to seek answers from their parents or people in authority, they seek those answers from telenovelas by identifying with characters facing the same issues as themselves.

On the telenovela that they were currently watching, the results are as in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2 Telenovelas currently watched by teenage girls**

<b>Title of Soap opera</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Wild at heart	44	69.8%
Dysebel	5	7.9%
Mara clara	6	9.5%
Her mother's daughter	8	12.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4.2 shows that 69.8 % of the girls said that they were at the time of the study , watching Wild at Heart followed by 12.7% who said that they were watching Her mother's daughter, then 9.5% were watching Maria Clara and 7.9% were watching Dysebel.

This showed that 'Wild at heart' was the most commonly watched telenovelas by the young girls in Kenya at the time of study with a viewership rating of 69.8%. From the above results, it was evident that teenage girls mainly watched the working class melodrama telenovelas which

revolves around a girl from a poor background falling in love with a man from a higher economic background and facing numerous opposition but is able to conquer all and win her true love. Triumphs of love and Storm over paradise were highly watched at 16.6% amongst the telenovelas watched in the past and they also have the working melodrama story line.

#### 4.2.1 Factors that determine the girls' preference for various telenovelas

Objective two of the study was to establish the factors that determined the preference of the telenovelas watched by the teenage girls. The respondents were asked to indicate the reasons that make them watch telenovelas and the responses are as in Table 4.3

**Table 4.3 Factors determining the teenage girls' preference for telenovelas**

Factors determining the programme to watch	Responses	
	N	Per cent
To be educated or informed	20	23.3%
To be entertained	24	27.9%
To escape from realities	4	4.7%
Motivation	38	44.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4.3 above shows that there were several reasons that influenced the teenage girls' preference for watching telenovelas. Among the reasons given in order of priority are; motivation 44.2%, to be entertained 27.9%, to be educated 23% and to escape from reality 4.7%.

This is a confirmation of the assertion by UGT that users deliberately and actively choose media and that audiences just do not watch telenovelas since audience are also formed as a result of some type of content, some performer or compelling presentation (McQuail 1997).

To get further insight on what made the teenage girls prefer watching telenovelas, the study sought to establish whom the teenage girls discussed their favorite telenovelas with and what they discussed.

**Table 4.4 Those that the teenage girls discuss their favorite telenovelas with.**

<b>Those that they discuss with</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Parents	11	5.7%
Other teenage girls	55	28.7%
Neighbors	46	23.9%
Boys	30	15.6%
Siblings	50	26.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

From the above results, teenage girls discuss the happenings in their favorite telenovelas with their fellow teenage girls at the highest percentage of 28.7%, discussions with their siblings

followed next with a 26.0%, discussion with neighbors was at 23.9% while with boys took a 15.6%. Parents were the least people that teenage girls discussed their favorite telenovelas at 5.7%. This confirmed the assertion that telenovelas are popular amongst teenage girls as they discussed amongst themselves issues they identified with the characters. The fact that teenage girls discussed with neighbors at 23.9% could be attributed to the fact that telenovelas are so popular such that even if one household did own a television set, it is common to find teenage girls in the estates going to their neighbors houses to watch an episode and thus the discussions ensue.

Discussion with siblings had a high rating at 26.0% since the consumption of telenovelas is within with the family and they are aired during prime time which gives the family, time to watch and discuss events as they unfold.

Parents are the least people that the teenage girls discuss their favorite telenovelas with. This may be partly because teenage girls face a wide range of issues about sexuality, love, romance and opposite sex relationships, topics that they may be embarrassed to discuss with their parents in the African setting.

Telenovelas have their main theme as love and romance. This study wanted to establish what the teenage girls discuss about in their favorite telenovelas. The results are shown in table 4.5

**Table 4.5 what teenage girls discuss about in telenovelas**

<u>Topics of discussion</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	Frequency	percentage
Characters behavior	24	37.5%
What may happen next in an episode	12	18.8%
Physical features of the characters	5	7.8%
Dressing and fashion	11	17.1%
Characters environment	4	6.3%
<u>How to characters handle issues</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12.5%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

From the above results, the characters behavior was the most highly talked about issue by the teenage girls after watching an episode at 37.5%. This was followed by discussion on what may happen next in the next episode at 18.8%. Dressing and fashion followed at 17.1% followed by discussion on how various characters handled issues at 12.5% and the least talked about issue was the characters environment at 6.3%. This is an indication that teenage girls may be affected by a characters behavior to the extent of copying it if after discussion they concur that a certain character is behaving in a pleasing way.

This is a confirmation of the cultivation theory's assertion that prolonged exposure to television may make an individual believe the social reality portrayed there.

Most of the teenage girls also discuss what may happen next at a higher level as indicated by the

18.8% because telenovelas use cliffhangers which are heart stopping kind of endings which leaves the audience at a high level of suspense, hence discussions about what may happen next.

To understand what other aspect may make teenage girls prefer watching telenovelas and not any other genre aired on television, the respondents were asked to identify the time slots when they watch the telenovelas.

On the time when the programmes are watched the results are as in Table 4.6

**Table 4.6 Time slots allocated to telenovelas by the teenage girls**

Time when soap operas are watched	Responses	
	N	Per cent
10 a.m.	14	22.2%
6 p.m.	15	23.8%
8 p.m.	27	42.9%
10 p.m.	7	11.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4.6 shows that telenovelas were mostly watched at 8pm in the evening as attested by 42.9% of the respondents.

The rest of the respondents said that they watched telenovelas at 10 a.m. in the morning as indicated by 22.2% of the respondents and at 6 p.m. as shown by 23.8% of the respondents.

However, there are those who watched them at 10 p.m. at night and they were the least in number at 11.1%.

The fact that the greatest number of respondents watched telenovelas at 8pm(42.9%) is an indication that the teenage girls preferred watching telenovelas against other genres because of the fact that they are programmed during prime time at 8 pm when most of them are in their homes since they school in a day school.

#### **4.2.2The use of telenovelas by the teenage girls**

The third objective of this study was to seek to know how the teenage girls use the telenovellas. They were asked to indicate how they positively benefited from watching soap operas. The results are as in table 4.7



**Table 4.7 Ways in which teenage girls use telenovellas**

---

Positive use of telenovelas	Responses	
	N	Per cent
Help speak good English	12	14.5%
Improve self esteem	20	24.1%
For entertainment	22	26.5%
Good decision making	6	7.2%
Improve academic performance	4	4.8%
Widen scope of thinking	14	16.9%
Help understand meaning of true love	5	6.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

---

Table 4.7 shows that the teenage girls use soap operas in various ways such entertainment as attested by 27% of the respondents, improving self-esteem 24%, widening the scope of thinking 17%, helping them to improve on speaking good English 15%, good decision making 7%, help them to understand the meaning of true love 6% and to improve their academic performance rated at 5%. This showed that the telenovelas are differently consumed by the teenage girls as illustrated in Table 4.7

### 4.2.3 Impact of telenovelas on the social life of teenage girls

The fourth objective of the study was to establish the actual impact of soap operas on the social life of the respondents.

The girls were first asked to indicate in general terms the life aspect influenced by the soap operas, the results are as in Figure 4.3

**Figure 4.3 The life aspect of the girls influenced by soap operas**

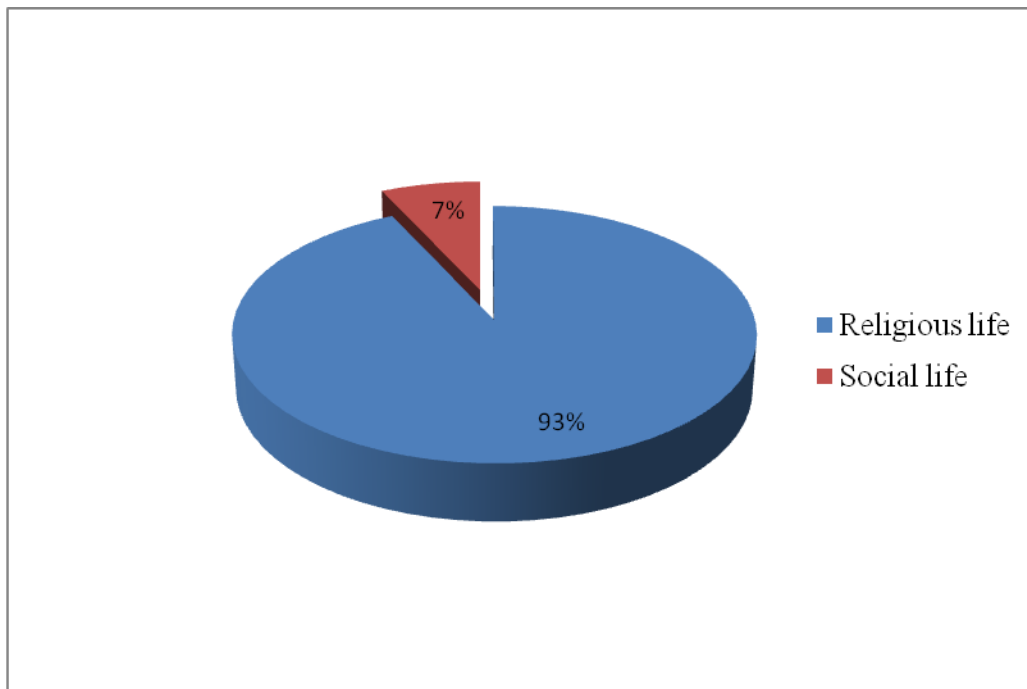


Figure 4.3 show that 93% of the respondents said that telenovelas mostly influenced their social life as opposed to 7% of the girls who said that telenovelas affected their religious lives. This implied that the telenovelas indeed influenced the social life of the girls.

The actual influence of telenovelas on the social life of the teenage girls was as presented in Table 4.8

**Table 4.8 Influence of telenovelas on social life of teenage girls**

Influence	Responses	
	N	Per cent
Influence their way of dressing	59	39.6%
Drug addiction	35	25%
Conflict with parents	14	9.4%
Irresponsible/risky sexual behaviour	31	20.8%
Promote unrealistic perception of reality	10	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4.8 shows that the soap operas negatively influence the behavior of the teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School. The influence ranges from the way of dressing which is not in conformity with the Kenyan culture, drug addiction, conflicts with parents, teenagers engaging in risky, irresponsible and premature sexual relationship and making them have an unrealistic perception of reality. This was a confirmation that telenovelas influenced teenage girls negatively.

For comparison purposes, church leaders, Athi River Mixed Day Schools administration, and parents were also interviewed to get their in depth views about telenovelas and their impact on teenage girls .The results are as below.

### 4.3 Church leaders' views

The three religious leaders interviewed concurred that telenovelas was a popular genre with a great following amongst the teenage girls and across gender and diverse ages as most people watched them as the awaited to watch 9 p.m. news.

Despite their popularity the religious leaders expressed dissatisfaction with the content in telenovelas as *'they seemed to glorify sin especially alcoholism, adultery; and divorce'* hence. They also expressed concern on the exposure of too much nakedness and the impact they may have especially when the protagonist is divorced and ends up being successful yet the Bible is against divorce. The teenage girls also tended to copy whatever they saw on the programs and as a result, most of them have lost their African values since the programs contain so much nakedness and promiscuity and most of the teenagers are drawn to that. As a result telenovelas make them lose their sense of family values and seem to embrace vices such as divorce yet the Quran is against it. Most of the teenagers are encouraged to go for sugar mummies to try and have the lifestyles that they have copied be financed. The teenage girls want to watch the telenovelas because they feel they offer them something different from what their parents can offer, for example if they see a character elope with his/her lover, the girls are encouraged to do the same irrespective of how disastrous a relationship may be to them in the future.

The girls have not realized that the characters they copy are doing a job to make money and it's not realistic. According to the religious leaders, the Bible and the Quran gives the best teachings about family and morals so there was nothing positive the teenage girls would learn from telenovelas, in fact most of them propagate western values which are negative

The religious leaders proposed that the government should put in to place policies that encouraged production of programs that encourage the preservation of the African culture and those that promote moral values amongst diverse audience.

#### **4.4 Views from Parents**

Out of 272 parents, 27 of them were interviewed through focus group discussion to get their views about telenovelas and the impact they have on the social life of teenage girls. Their responses were as follows:

Most of the parents agreed that they watched telenovelas together with their children especially those aired at 8pm since most of them are at home at that time. This confirmed the popularity of telenovelas in Kenya. Most of them agreed they were at the time of study watching Wild at Heart which was showing on citizen television and they agreed that they had watched some previous series like Storm over paradise and Beautiful but Unlucky.

Most of the parents had varied reason why they watched telenovelas. For some, it was to get love messages and get ‘a good feeling’, to be entertained, to escape from realities like loneliness, to others, the female characters dressing was fashionable and made them wish to have such beautiful clothes as theirs, while to others, the tight fitting jeans of the male characters inspired them as far as their fashion sense was concerned. To other parents, telenovelas brought them good memories of their youth as they see some characters and say ‘*that’s how I was those days*’

Many of the parents agreed that the content in telenovelas revolved around love which was good for adults since ‘*we all feel the need to be loved, in fact most of the time we wish to be a winner like the protagonist.*

However the parents said that the content was wrong to the teenage girls since telenovelas have a big impact on teenagers on how they view marriage, love and property

as the telenovelas present a very simplistic picture of 'one of the most difficult human emotions, love'. As a result most teenage girls would end up thinking it is so easy to fall in love, maintain it and be wealthy which the reality is not always

Majority of the parents also expressed concern that telenovelas had too much sex scenes which may promote irresponsible sexual behavior in teenage girls and that most of the telenovelas encouraged girls to start looking for sugar daddies in a quest to have the same kind of life as those lived by the characters they love. They also felt that most telenovelas poison young girls mind about finding easy love and money which is not realistic and also most of the telenovelas were not decent, since characters showed '*too much flesh*' and they had too much sex scenes which is against African ethics.

According to the parents, most of the women characters in telenovelas presented were highly materialistic and not good mother figures and the men are usually violent

Majority of the parents preferred to have more religious programs on Kenyan television and the slotting of telenovelas as from 10pm to minimize their negative effects on teenage girls in Kenya while other parents proposed that media owners should produce more educative programs like documentaries which are more realistic.

#### **4.5 School Administrators views**

The study sought the views of the principal and the deputy principal in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School.

The principal watched telenovelas less frequently while the deputy watched them more frequently. The two administrators concurred that telenovelas contain messages that were harmful to teenage girls as they gave the wrong picture to teenagers and youth about love, marriage and life in general. They also encouraged girls to go for elder men as they compete to dress and live like the characters they see in the telenovelas. They were also of the opinion that telenovelas had negative impact on teenagers as at times, they have made many teenagers engage in opposite friendship and premarital sex and in the process unwanted pregnancies and even spread of sexually transmitted diseases occurred. This was so because the teenagers want to look like their models and girls have even gone to hook up with truck drivers and older men .They were of the opinion that the content in telenovelas was helpful to married couples more but was destructive to the teenagers.

They advocated for a change in television programming with more educational content being taken in to consideration and wished that the stake holders in media industry would air more documentaries instead of telenovelas. They advocated for change in the time slot for telenovela programming to 10pm to avoid distracting the school going teenagers with unrealistic expectations about life.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and presents conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

### **5.1 Overview**

The purpose of this study was to establish the impact of Latin American telenovelas on the social life of teenage girls by carrying a case study on secondary school girls in Athi –River Mixed Day Secondary School in Machakos County. The study was triggered by public concern through debates on the influence of television on society since the medium was invented. This is attributed to the role of Television on peoples' lives which is described to be powerful, as an important cultural and social force. The study was guided by four objectives which focused on: the kind of telenovelas watched by teenage girls, factors determining the girls' preference for various telenovelas, uses of telenovelas by the teenage girls and the impact of telenovelas on their social life. The study embraced a descriptive design and used both the questionnaires and interview schedule for data collection. Literature review focused on the type of telenovellas watched by the youth and the message they carry in them. The data analysis was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using the SPSS for the data from questionnaires and data from the interview schedule was analyzed thematically.



## **5.2 Summary of key findings**

Through data analysis the study established that 97% of girls watch soap operas and 3% of the girls said that they do not watch an indication that telenovelas are programmes which are highly watched by the teenage girls in Kenya and also majority of the parents interviewed.

The study also established that 69.8 % are currently watching Wild at Heart while others watch Her mother's daughter, Maria Clara and Dysebel. This shows that wild at heart was the most commonly watched soap opera among the teenage girls in Athi -River Mixed Day Secondary School. Most of the parents and school administration staff interviewed also agreed that they were at the time of study watching Wild at Heart. Besides the telenovelas which were currently being watched, there were other telenovelas which had previously been watched by the youth in Kenya. Such telenovelas included Triumph of love, storm over paradise, Beautiful but unlucky, Daniela, la tormenter, curse by the sea, Rafaela, Don't mess with angel and The promise.

On the frequency of watching the soap operas, 62% of teenage girls watch the soap operas very often, while 25% watches the programmes often implying that the telenovelas are always watched by the teenage girls in Athi- River Mixed Day Secondary School.

The study also established that the telenovelas were mostly watched at 8pm in the evening as attested by 42.9% of the respondents who said that they watched the programme at 8 p.m. The rest of the respondents said that they watched soap operas at 10 a.m. in the morning as indicated by 22% of the respondents and at 6pm as shown by 23% of the respondents.

On the factors influencing the teenage girls to watch the telenovelas, the study established that motivation is the main factor that influences the teenage girls to watch soap operas as shown by 44.2% of the respondents, the other factor is for one to get entertained, to be educated and to escape from reality. In this case motivation premiered as the main factor that influences the teenage girls to watch soap operas.

Majority of the parents, teachers and religious leaders interviewed felt that telenovelas have strong messages on sex, love and marriage which may be right to adults but harmful to the teenage girls as majority felt the telenovelas do not present a realistic picture about real life.

The other finding was that teenage girls use telenovelas in various ways such as teaching them on how to live with others as attested by 27% of the respondents, improving self-esteem 24%, widening the scope of thinking 17%, helping them to improve on speaking good English 15%, good decision making 7%, help them to understand the meaning of true love 6% and to improve their academic performance rated at 5%. Most parents attested to the fact that telenovelas have a variety of need that they cater for in their lives, ranging from relaxation, a source of fashion, education to entertainment as they wait for the evening news.

On the social life of the teenage girls, the study established that telenovelas influenced the social lives of the girls as attested by 97% of the respondents who said that telenovelas mostly influenced their social life as opposed to 3% of the girls who said that the telenovelas affects their religious lives. The three religious leaders interviewed did not approve the content found in telenovelas and expressed concern that telenovelas glorify sex, drugs and other deviant behavior like divorce, too much nudity and prostitution.

This affects their perception of reality as they pushed the teenage girls to live in sin like the characters they watch and identify with.

In relation to social life, the telenovelas influenced the life of the teenage girls by influencing them to copy the mode of dressing of the characters they identify with in the telenovelas. Most of the time; the type of dressing is not in conformity with the Kenyan culture. Others confirmed that they had experimented with drugs after viewing some characters do it on the screen, while others attested to the fact that they had engaged in premature sexual relationship and making them have no trust on people of opposite sex regardless of the relationship after watching various telenovelas. The school principal and the deputy expressed the opinion that telenovelas influenced the teenagers to want to look like their models and girls had even gone to hook up with truck drivers and older men to get money to look like the models they fancied thus making telenovelas not appropriate for watching by teenage girls.

The religious leaders advocated for more religious programmes while ,the teaching staff advocated for more educational programmes and less telenovelas on Kenyan media while majority of the parents expressed their wish for soap operas to be aired as from 10pm to avoid too much distraction on the teenage girls

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This study established that in-deed the teenage girls in Athi-River Mixed Day Secondary School watched telenovelas regularly for various reasons such as entertainment, motivation, education and helping the youth in critical thinking.

The study also showed that the telenovelas are watched mostly in the evening from 6Pm to 10 pm depending on the time when the programme is aired.

On matters of influence of telenovelas on social life of the teenage girls, the study established that telenovelas influenced the life of the teenage girls through the mode of dressing which is not in conformity with the culture of people in Kenya, drug addiction, while some teenage girls also copy their models and engage in premature relationship which later on following the consequence of their choices make them have no trust on people of opposite sex regardless of the relationship.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that;

Parents should control the programmes watched by their children in order to guide them watch programmes which can be educative to them.

The study also recommends that the parents should regulate the time when the teenagers watch telenovelas. This would help the teenage girls concentrate on their studies.

The other recommendation is that parents should act as role models by not watching programmes that may promote immorality. By acting as role models, the teenage girls will do away with programmes that may affect their morality and have a clear perspective about life and decision making.

The study also recommends that parents should guide their children on picking the messages which are useful to them and shun away messages which may corrupt their moral intellect since not every message aired and not every character is worthy coping. The other recommendation is that teachers through guidance and counseling program should guide children in schools on programmes they should watch.

The church leaders should also organize seminars and guide the youth on programmes they should watch as a means of guiding their morality. They should teach the youth why they should not watch a particular kind of programme and why they are advocating for another.

The study also recommends that the government should put in place policies that encourage production of programs that encourage the preservation of the African culture and those that promote moral values amongst diverse audience.

The other recommendation is that telenovelas should be pushed and be watched beyond 10 pm as a way of discouraging the youth from watching them and minimizing the negative impact they may have on teenagers.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further study**

Based on the finding of the study the researcher suggests the following studies to be carried out.

Carry a study on the impact of Latin American telenovelas on secondary school girls in a different district or county for comparison purpose.

There is also a need to carry out a detailed study on the influence of telenovelas on moral character of both boys and girls in urban areas.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for students.**

*I am Mary Mbithe, a communication student at University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting a study on the impact of Telenovelas on the social behavior of teenage girls as part of the requirements for the Master of Art in Communication Studies. As part of my data gathering process, I request you to fill for me this questionnaire. Any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality.*

Age----- gender-----

1. Do you watch telenovelas?

- Yes
- no

2. How often do you watch telenovelas?

- a. often
- b. very often
- c. rarely
- d. very rarely

3. Which of the following past Latin American telenovelas have you watched?

- a. Triumph of love
- b. Beautiful but unlucky
- c. Rafaela
- d. Curse by the sea
- e. Storm over paradise
- f. La tormenta
- d. Don't mess with an angel

e. Daniela

4. Which of the current telenovella shown on the Kenyan Media are you watching?

a. Corona de lagrimas

b. Wild at heart

c. Un Refugio

d. Dysebel

e. La patrona

f. One true love

g. Los Rey

h. Her mother's daughter

i. It seems so beautiful

j. Corozan Appassionado

k. Emerald necklace

5. Why do you watch telenovelas?

a. be informed or educated

b. to identify with characters of the situation in the media environment

c. for entertainment

d. to enhance social interaction

e. to escape from the stresses of daily life

f. Any other reason

6. What time slot for telenovelas do you prefer?

- a. 10a.m.
- b. 6p.m.
- c. 8p.m.
- d. 10p.m.
- e. Any other

7. Would you like more telenovelas on Kenyan Television?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you have anyone you talk to about your favorite telenovella?

- a) Parents
- b) Other students
- c) Neighbors
- d) Boys
- e) Siblings
- f) Any other

If yes, what do you talk?

- a) The characters behaviors
- b) What may happen next in the episodes?
- c) The physical features' of the characters
- d) The environment of the characters
- e) How characters handle issues
- f) Any other

9. Do you think telenovelas have effects on somebody's social life?

If yes, which ones

- a. Irresponsible/risky sexual behavior
- b. unrealistic expectations
- c. promote violence
- d. Promote socialization.
- e. promote one's self esteem
- f. Any other

10. Do telenovelas have any effects on teenage girls?

If yes, how

- a. Promote truancy
- b. Promote pairing with boys
- c. Conflict with parents
- d. Conflict with school administration
- e. Promote deviant sexual behavior
- f. Promote unrealistic perception of reality.
- g. Any other

11. What has changed in your life since you started watching telenovellas?

- a. advanced in fashion
- b. advanced Language ability
- c. changed Perception to reality
- d. enhanced academic performance
- e. become more romantic
- f. advanced self esteem

## **APPENDIX 2: Interview schedule**

The following is an interview schedule that was followed to conduct interviews on two teachers, twenty seven parents in Athi River Mixed day secondary school and three religious leaders in Athi-River district as part of data collection procedure.

1. Do you watch Television/Do you watch telenovelas?
2. Do you approve of the programs content?
3. Why do you think teenage girls watch telenovelas?
4. Do you think telenovelas are appropriate for teenage girls to watch?
5. Are there any effects on teenage girls as a result of watching telenovelas?
6. Do you think soap operas affect the teenage girls' perception of reality?
7. What kind of message would you wish to be contained in the telenovelas?
8. What is your role in ensuring that the telenovelas do not affect the social behavior of teenage girls?
9. Any recommendations to policy makers and stakeholders about telenovela and television programming?

Thank you for your time.