

Abstract

Globally the print media has made strides in publishing content that is appealing to readers. The Kenyan mainstream newspapers have established colourful and sensational pullouts to attract youthful readers. Among the most popular free pullout entertainment magazines is the 'Pulse' which is accessed by the youth in secondary schools and its content may be having a behavioural impact on them. The objective of the study was to establish the preference secondary school students have to content published in the Pulse on negative behaviour that is likely to motivate students to engage in practices that contribute to cases of early pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and drug abuse. The study was guided by the Media Dependency Theory by Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer [1], showing audience dependency on media information. The study adopted a cross-sectional design targeting a population of 24,539 students. A sample size of 393 was drawn from the population of 24,539 students using Yamane [2], sample size formula. The study thereafter administered questionnaires to the 392 students. The study established that 356 respondents out of the 393 found content in the Pulse magazine appealing at a frequency rate of 90%. This was of concern due to the likelihood that the youth would engage in risky behaviour if given a chance leading to outcomes detrimental to their health and academic performance. The study will assist education policy makers, the media, and academicians in establishing ethical policies during the development of print media content.