

# Perceptions of Students and Administrators on Peer Pressure as a Predictor of Students' Sexual Behavior in Secondary Schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya

Mr. Steve Biko Ouma , Prof. John O. Agak, Dr. Catherine Mbagaya  
Maseno University, Kenya

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7011146>

Received: 25 October 2023; Revised: 10 November 2023; Accepted: 16 November 2023; Published: 22 December 2023

## ABSTRACT

A favorable school atmosphere, in which learners are well behaved, is one of the greatest concerns of education stakeholders. Although studies have documented a number of factors that lead to misbehavior among students in schools, peer pressure is reported to contribute up to 53% of cases of students' misbehavior. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of students and administrators on peer pressure as a predictor of students' sexual behavior in secondary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County Kenya. The objective was to find out the perception of students and administrators on the role of peer pressure in predicting risky sexual behavior among secondary schools' students in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya. The target population was 10761 students and 33 deputy principals in the 33 secondary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County. Stratified and simple random sampling was used to select 30 secondary schools from which 30 deputy principals were selected. Three hundred and seventy students were sampled by simple random sampling. A descriptive survey research design was adopted to find out the perception of students and deputy principals on peer pressure as a predictor of Students' sexual behavior. Data on the students' and deputy Principals' perception was collected using structured questionnaires and deputy principal's interview. The content validity of the research instruments was established by seeking opinions from the experts in Educational Psychology. Reliability was assessed by test re-test method and Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.882 and 0.996 was obtained for students and deputy principal's questionnaires respectively. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, means, standard deviation and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data from the deputy principals' interview was transcribed and categorized into emergent themes. The study revealed that Students generally expressed moderate agreement that peer pressure relates to Students' sexual behavior (mean=2.65). Deputy principals' responses revealed that school administrators had higher level of agreement that peer pressure relates to Students' sexual behavior (mean= 3.24). The findings of this study may help in increasing awareness and insight towards implementation comprehensive peer educational programs in school and provide useful information to the Ministry of Education and policy makers. The study recommend that secondary schools should implement comprehensive peer education programs that would bridge the gap in understanding and foster non-judgmental discussions on peer pressure and its influence on students behavior.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Students' behavior in schools is one of the most pressing issues in the education sector in the world today (Bursztyn and Jensen, 2015). According to Beycioglu et al (2015), misbehavior refers to antisocial and maladaptive behaviors displayed by an individual. Along with literacy and numeracy achievement levels, students' misbehavior ranks as one of the major concerns voiced by the public about schools and the school system in countries worldwide ( Bursztyn and Jensen, 2015). In a school situation, misbehavior can be a serious obstacle to learning, and this has become a major concern for educators and the public. These cases

of student's misbehavior include bullying, acts of disrespect to teachers, verbal abuse for teachers, racial tension, widespread disorder in classrooms, undesirable gang activities, and undesirable cult or risky sexual activities (Ibenegbu, 2017).

Like any other organization, every school requires appropriate behavior, for no group of people can work together successfully without establishing standards of good behavior, respect, and a desirable system of values that lead each person in the group to develop self-control and self-direction. The quality of students' behavior is an important factor in determining the intellectual outcome of students and schools, Childs et al (2016). According to Okonofua (2015), students should be well behaved to make informed decisions, and this entails the learners' ability to discern what is right or wrong. High school is an important period in an adolescent's life as it is the time students make decisions about future educational and career plans. Appropriate behavior is therefore critical and highly valued at this level of learning.

Studies reveal that there is reduced parental guidance occasioned by demanding economic situations that force both parents to be gainfully engaged (Li and Guo, 2016). This reduced parental guidance coupled with a lack of formal and professional counseling services in school (Ochola, 2015) has resulted in a surge in cases of students' misbehavior.

Peer pressure appears to be a powerful force affecting educational choices and whether students undertake important investments that could improve their academic performance or outcomes, (Bursztyn and Jensen, 2015). Students are willing to take risks in their actions and behaviors, as well as to face failure in their studies, as long as they can show a negative self-image that would be valued and accepted by their peers (Sohrabivafa et al., 2017). A peer is defined as an individual who can dominate or influence others to leave an impression on people; for example, a friend who can influence others (Skaniakos et al., 2019). Peers are an important factor in influencing the formation of a person's personality.

Peer pressure occurs when an individual experiences implied or expressed persuasion to adopt similar values, beliefs, and goals, or to participate in the same activities as those in the peer group (Bursztyn and Jensen, 2015). Paying attention to own feelings and beliefs about what is right and wrong can help in knowing the right thing to do. Therefore, peer pressure exists for all ages and no one is immune to peer influence.

Issues of peer pressure and Students' misbehaviors are of great concern due to the changing times and circumstances ranging from social-technological changes to children's rights and many educational demands. The study conducted by Bursztyn and Jensen (2015) indicated that peer pressure influenced maladaptive behavior among students. This pressure often led to the stimulation of students by peer groups to defy authority and get involved in drugs and substance usage to a greater extent as compared to those who resisted the influence of peer pressure. Li and Guo (2016) in a study on peer influence on Aggressive behavior, smoking, and sexual behavior established that there was significant evidence to justify a correlation between certain behavior problems and negative peer pressure among college students in China. Adegboyega et al. (2019) in a study to determine the influence of peer influence on the sexual behavior of undergraduate students in Nigeria found that permissive attitude towards sexual pressure was strongly associated with episodes of adolescents' unhealthy sexual activities such as involvement with erotic electro-stimulation and this led to the youths being more sexually active. Peers influenced each other towards involvement in sexual activities at an early age, having sex with multiple partners, engaging in unprotected sex, or under the influence of alcohol.

In Kenya, the issue of students' behavior in secondary schools has occupied the minds of researchers and it remains a subject of investigation. Examples of such studies include a research by Onsoti (2018) on the influence of peer pressure on students' discipline in public secondary schools. This study revealed that students' misbehavior remains a challenge, especially in an era of social media explosion. The findings showed that misbehavior in learning institutions contributed to 33.3% of the challenges faced by

administrators of the learning institutions. It further showed that there were diverse forms of student misconduct in learning institutions that included disruptive and destructive behavior, student unrest, violence, theft, vandalism, drug abuse, harassment of teachers, sexual misbehavior, among others. These maladaptive behaviors came at a high price to all stakeholders of education. For instance, the destruction of properties leads to financial losses which are often charged as fines to a student’s parent or guardians.

While different forms of misbehavior have been reported by different studies, risky sexual behavior and its consequences stands out in Homa Bay Town Sub County. A review of the Ministry of Education reports on the retention and rescue of vulnerable students’ program showed that seventy-eight girls were sought with the help of local administrators, rescued, and re-admitted back to school in the year 2021 after dropping out due to unplanned pregnancies (MOE, 2021). A separate report on HIV/AIDS prevalence by the National Aids and STI control program indicates that HIV/AIDS prevalence in Homa Bay County is 20.6%, which is considerably higher than the national average of 4.8% (NASCOP, 2018). This elevated prevalence rate is indicative of a substantial burden of HIV in the county. Nyamura and Ochieng’ (2020) also documented a high teenage pregnancy rate of 64 teenage pregnancies for every 10000 people in the sub county which is higher than those of neighboring sub counties of Rangwe, Suba North and Ndhiwa with 62, 58 and 52 teenage pregnancies for every 10000 people respectively. Both HIV/AIDS prevalence and teenage pregnancies are indicators of risky sexual behavior.

While previous research like that of NASCOP (2018) and Nyamura and Ochieng (2020) focused on the existence of the worrying consequences of risky sexual behavior, they did not assess the perceived predisposing factors towards risky sexual behavior. It is on the basis of this determination that the present study focused on the perception of students’ and administrators’ on peer pressure as a predictor of sexual behavior among students in the Homa Bay Town Sub County.

**Statement of the problem**

Student misbehavior is a pervasive and multifaceted issue that poses significant challenges to the education sector worldwide. While misbehavior in schools encompasses various forms of antisocial and maladaptive behavior, including substance abuse, vandalism, bullying, and risky sexual behavior, the role of peer pressure in driving these behaviors remains inadequately explored. Despite the efforts of educators and policy makers to address student misconduct, cases of misbehavior persist, leading to disruptions of the learning environment and adverse consequences for students’ well-being. In Homa Bay Town Sub County, reports indicate a troubling increase in students’ misbehavior exemplified in risky sexual behavior. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among girls aged 14 to 25 in the region is notably high. Teenage pregnancy is also alarmingly high with reports indicating 64 teenage pregnancies for every 10000 people in the sub-county which is higher than those of the neighboring sub counties of Rangwe, Suba North and Ndhiwa with 62, 58 and 52 teenage pregnancies for every 10000 people respectively as shown in table 1.1 below. High teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS infections indicate prevalence of risky sexual behavior. Although previous studies have examined the existence of the worrying consequences of risky sexual behavior , a comprehensive analysis of the broader spectrum of the behavior and its relationship with peer pressure is lacking. Therefore, there is a need for a more holistic and nuanced investigation into how peers pressure influences students’ sexual behavior. This study aimed at addressing this knowledge gap by exploring the perceptions of both students and school administrators regarding peer pressure as a predictor of student sexual behavior.

**TABLE 1.1. Teenage pregnancy across neighboring sub counties in Homa Bay County**

Sub-county	Cases of teenage pregnancy	Total population	Ratio per 10000 people	Ranking
Homa bay Town	742	117,439	64	1

Rangwe	730	117732	63	2
Suba North	724	124938	58	3
Ndhiwa	1123	218136	52	4

Source: Adapted from KNBS census report on population (2019) and Draft Report on Teenage pregnancies by Kennedy Nyamura and Benedict Ochieng (2020)

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of students and administrators on peer pressure as a predictor of selected students' behavior in secondary schools of Homa Bay Town Sub County Kenya.

### **Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following specific research objective.

1. To investigate the perception of students and administrators on the role of peer pressure in predicting risky sexual behavior among secondary schools' students in Homa Bay Town Sub-County,

### **Research Questions**

The following research question guided the study.

1. What is the perception of students and administrators on the role of peer pressure in predicting risky sexual behavior among secondary schools' students in Homa Bay Town Sub-County, Kenya?

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study help in increasing awareness and provide insight towards implementation comprehensive peer education programs in schools

### **Scope of the study**

The study limited itself to perception of students and school administrators on peer pressure as a predictor of students' discipline in 33 secondary schools of the Homa Bay Town sub-county.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is based on Albert Bandura's social learning theory, also known as social cognitive theory, which is a seminal psychological framework that underscores the significance of observational learning, modeling, and cognitive processes in human behavior (Bandura, 2018). According to this theory, individuals learn by observing and imitating the behaviors of others, with their actions influenced by a dynamic interplay between personal factors, environmental influences, and their own cognitive processes. Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy, wherein one's belief in their capacity to achieve specific goals or tasks plays a central role in motivation and perseverance. Moreover, the theory highlights the role of vicarious reinforcement and punishment, emphasizing that individuals not only learn from their own experiences but also from witnessing the consequences of others' actions.

This study will adopt Bandura's social learning theory by exploring how perceptions of peer pressure influence risky sexual behaviors, in secondary schools within Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya. Bandura's theory, emphasizing observational learning and the role of environmental factors, is highly pertinent in understanding how students may model and internalize behaviors they observe among their

peers.

### **Definition of terms**

For this study, the following terms are defined as follows

**Behavior:** – Observable verbal and non-verbal actions of an individual.

**Misbehavior:** – A tendency of an individual to display more maladaptive behavior than adaptive behavior.

**Influence:-** Ability to exert control on or manipulate another person's behavior

**Peers:** – Individuals to whom one is socially and emotionally close, to the extent of influencing each other's behavior.

**Peer Pressure:** – Direct or indirect influence that peer groups, observers, and individuals exert to change others' attitudes, values, and behavior to conform to that of the group.

**Predictor:-** A variable that has an association with the outcome of another variable.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This design helps provide a quantitative and numeric description of trends, attitudes, and opinion of a population by studying just a sample of the target population and help in the discovery of relevant impact and interrelationships of social and psychological variables of that population (Creswell, 2009). The design involved collecting information through questionnaires, and structured interviews. This design was appropriate for this study in that it allowed the researcher to collect data on the views of students and deputy principals on their perception on peer pressure as a predictor of students' sexual behavior. The respondents formed the core source of data for the research.

### **Study area**

The study covered 33 secondary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub-County, Kenya. Of these 31 are public secondary schools while 2 are private secondary schools. There are three girls' schools and one boys' school. The rest are co-educational, seven of which are registered as boarding schools. The sub-county falls within Homa Bay County along latitude: 0° 54" south. The sub-county is divided into 2 administrative zones; Township and Asego. The sub-county shares boundaries with Rangwe, Suba North and Ndhiwa Sub-Counties.

The sub-county has a population of 117439 according to the 2019 national population census (KNBS, 2020). Those in formal employment constitute 3.8% of the total adult population. The rest of the population is either in casual employment, self-employment, or non-employment. The sub-county has a high level of HIV/AIDS prevalence of 20.6% with the most infected being between the ages of 25 and 40 (NASCOP, 2018). The youth population in school is 22% for primary and 13% for secondary schools (UNICEF, 2009).

### **Target population**

The study targeted 10761 students in 33 schools of the Homa Bay Town Sub-County. 33 deputy

principals were also involved in the study as they are directly involved with students’ disciplinary issues.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

In this study, various sampling methods were employed to ensure the appropriateness and representativeness of the selected samples. The Yamane formula was utilized for determining the sample size for schools, resulting in a selection of 30 schools. This method is generally more suitable for smaller populations where the sample size is a substantial proportion of the total population (Yamane, 1967). Conversely, the Kathuri and Pals sampling table was deemed more appropriate for calculating the sample size of 370 students, as it is well-suited for larger populations, ensuring both statistical validity and resource efficiency (Kathuri and Pals, 1993). Proportional sampling, a form of stratified sampling, was employed to select schools in proportions mirroring their prevalence in the population, (Lemeshow and Levy, 2008). Specifically, 3 girl schools, 1 boy school, and 26 mixed schools were sampled accordingly. Moreover, proportional sampling was applied to students, resulting in the selection of 90 students from 3 girl schools, 46 students from 1 boy school, and 234 students from 26 mixed schools. Students were chosen because they are often the most direct witnesses to behaviors in their peer groups and school environments. Their perceptions and experiences can provide valuable insights into the prevalence and dynamics of behaviors among their peers. Additionally, the study involved the selection of three deputy principals from 3 girl schools, one deputy principal from one boy school, and 26 deputy principals from 26 mixed schools. Deputy Principals were chosen due to their integral roles as school principals’ assistants, actively engaged in student affairs and capable of providing accurate information, akin to principals’.

Yamane formula

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

where:

**n** is the sample size; **N** is the population size; **e** is the margin of error

**Table 2.1: Sample distribution**

Category of schools	Number of schools	Sample of schools	Population of students	Sample of students	Sampled of Deputy principals
Girl schools	3	3	2629	90	3
Boy schools	1	1	1354	46	1
Mixed schools	29	26	6778	234	26
Total	33	30	10761	370	30

The sample frame in Table 1 encompasses three categories of schools: girls’ schools (3 schools), boys’ schools (1 school), and mixed schools (26 schools). It includes the respective populations of students in each category, totaling 10,761 students, from which samples of students have been selected—90 from girls’ schools, 46 from boys’ schools, and 234 from mixed schools. Additionally, the sample frame includes deputy principals, with 3 selected from girls’ schools, 1 from boys’ schools, and 26 from mixed schools, totaling 30 deputy principals. This comprehensive approach allows the study to gather diverse perspectives from different school categories and their respective populations, facilitating the achievement of research objectives and meaningful inferences.

### Instruments for data collection

These are tools, techniques, or methods used in research to systematically gather information or data from

research subjects or participants. These instruments are designed to facilitate the collection of data in a structured and organized manner, enabling researchers to obtain relevant information for their study (Kumar, 2019). In this study, a combination of questionnaires and interview schedules was employed to collect comprehensive information. The questionnaire comprised two distinct sections. Section A gathered essential demographic information, including gender, age, school category, and class. Section B featured Likert scale-based questions to assess respondents' perceptions of sexual behavior. To further enrich insights, structured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth information on these subjects. This multifaceted approach ensured a well-rounded exploration of the research topic, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques for a comprehensive understanding of the issues under investigation.

### **Students questionnaires**

The student questionnaire served as a valuable tool to collect insights into secondary school students' perceptions concerning the influence of peer pressure in predicting risky sexual behavior, within the Homa-Bay Town Sub County in Kenya. The questionnaire had two distinct sections. Section A was dedicated to gathering demographic information, including students' gender, age, school category, and class. Section B comprised a series of close-ended questions employing a 4-point Likert scale, with values assigned as follows: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The 4-point likert scale was preferred because it eliminates the situation where respondents avoid making real choices either favorable or unfavorable by choosing the neutral or undecided option (Hopper, 2016).

### **Deputy Principal's questionnaire**

The questionnaire administered to deputy principals served as a valuable instrument for gaining insights into their perspectives concerning the influence of peer pressure on the prediction of risky sexual behavior among secondary school students in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya. This questionnaire consisted of two distinct sections. Section A gathered information on demographic information, including gender, age, and school category of the deputy principals. Section B featured a series of close-ended questions employing a 4-point Likert scale, with values assigned as follows: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

### **Deputy Principals' interview**

A structured interview schedule was designed for deputy principals to provide an additional layer of depth and clarity in understanding the subjects under investigation. The interview schedule offered a dynamic platform for engaging with deputy principals, enabling in-depth discussions and seeking further clarification on the multifaceted topics of peer pressure's role in predicting risky sexual behavior, among secondary school students in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya.

## **RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENTS**

### **Reliability**

Reliability in research refers to the consistency and stability of measurements or findings when the same research instrument or procedure is applied repeatedly to the same sample or population (DeVellis, 2016). The test-retest method is a research approach used to assess the reliability of a measurement or instrument. It involved administering the same measurement to the same group of participants on two separate occasions and then analyzing the consistency of the results obtained (Bland & Altman, 1996). According to DeVon et al. (2007), utilizing 10% of the study population is a suitable practice for assessing the reliability of research instruments. In this study, a pilot test was conducted involving three schools, as a representative subset of

the study population. The instruments administered twice within a two week interval. The reliability of the research instruments was determined using the Pearson correlation formula, ensuring that the measurement tools provided consistent and dependable results in preparation for the main research endeavor. The results are presented in table

Pearson correlation formula

$$r = (\Sigma[(X - \bar{X})(Y - \bar{Y})]) / [\sqrt{\Sigma(X - \bar{X})^2 * \Sigma(Y - \bar{Y})^2}]$$

r represents the Pearson correlation coefficient.

X and Y are the two variables you want to calculate the correlation between.

$\bar{X}$  represents the mean (average) of variable X.

$\bar{Y}$  represents the mean (average) of variable Y.

**Table 2.2 Reliability Test for the Questionnaires**

Scale	No of Items	Pearson Correlation	Sig(2-tailed)
Student questionnaire	30	0.882	0.000
Deputy Principal Questionnaire	30	0.996	0.000

Source: Researcher

The presented results in Table 3.2, include; Pearson correlation coefficients and significance values for the test-retest reliability results for the Student Questionnaire and the Deputy Principal Questionnaire. The Student Questionnaire exhibited a strong positive correlation of 0.882 between the initial and retest responses, with a highly significant p-value of 0.000, signifying its stability and consistency when administered to students on different occasions. Similarly, the Deputy Principal Questionnaire displayed a correlation of 0.996, along with a p-value of 0.000, indicating stability in responses from deputy principals across two administrations. These results suggest that both questionnaires were highly reliable tools for gathering consistent data and were suitable for research and assessment purposes.

### Validity

Validity is the degree to which the results obtained from the analysis of data precisely represent the phenomenon under study. Content validity refers to the immediate appearance of the measurement tool. It addresses whether or not a test looks valid on its surface and whether a test appears to be an adequate measure of the conceptual variable (Sherri, 2009). The content validity of the instruments was ascertained by submitting the instruments to educational psychology experts who independently scrutinized and evaluated the instruments. Their suggestions on appropriate correction were incorporated in the final instrument to improve the validity of the instrument.

### Data Analysis

The data collection process involved the use of questionnaires administered to both students and deputy principals, along with interviews conducted with deputy principals. The collected data underwent a series of preparatory steps, including sorting, editing, coding, classification, and tabulation, to facilitate a streamlined analysis process. To summarize the findings regarding the perceptions of students and administrators on peer pressure as a predictor of sexual behavior in secondary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County,



various descriptive statistical tools were employed. These tools encompassed frequency counts, means, standard deviations, and percentages, which were utilized to provide a concise summary of the questionnaire results. The analysis was conducted using the SPSS software, enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of the process. Additionally, for the qualitative data gathered from the principal interview schedule, transcription and categorization were performed, ultimately yielding emergent themes.

**Ethical considerations**

The researcher sought relevant approval the National Commission for Science Technology (Kenya). After receiving authorization, a formal request was made to the principals of the sampled schools for permission to carry out research in their institutions. The researcher then met the sampled respondents in their respective schools and sought their consent to participate in the research by filling in the consent form. They were informed that the researcher would ensure the respondents’ confidentiality and use the information gathered for the study only. The study objective was made clear to the participants. They were further informed that participation in the study was voluntary and nobody would have been victimized should he decline the invite to be a participant. They were also assured that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any condition. The questionnaires were appropriately coded to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. Raw data collected was safely kept by the researcher. The data would be made available to the participants once processed and analyzed.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

**Perception of students and school administrators on Peer pressure as a predictor of Students Sexual Behavior**

The objective was intended to examine the Perception of students and schools administrators on Peer pressure as a predictor of Students Sexual Behavior. Respondents, who included 30 deputy principals and 359 students, gave their opinion on a series of ten statements. The responses were rated on a four-point likert scale from **SA** for **strongly agree**, **A** for **agree**, **D** for **disagree** and **SD** for **strongly disagree**. The mean and standard deviation for responses was calculated. The results are as shown in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

**Table 3.1 Perception of Students on the role of Peer Pressure in Predicting Risky Sexual Behavior among Secondary School Students in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya.**

STATEMENT		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Sdv
1	The influence of close friends/peers plays a role in the occurrence of unsafe sex among secondary school students.	181 (50.4%)	105 (29.2%)	28 (7.8%)	45 (12.5%)	3.18	1.027
2	The influence of peers affects the prevalence of pre-marital sex among secondary school students.	125 (34.8%)	142 (39.6%)	59 (16.4%)	33 (9.25%)	3.00	.940
3	My close friends are likely to engage in unsafe sex if I do or encourage them to	44 (12.3%)	69 (19.2%)	83 (23.1%)	163 (45.4%)	1.98	1.067
4	My close friends are likely to avoid unsafe sex if I do or encourage them to	162 (45.1%)	119 (33.1%)	43 (12.0%)	35 (9.7%)	3.14	.972

5	My close friends are likely to engage in pre-marital sex if I do or encourage	44 (12.3%)	78 (21.7%)	77 (21.4%)	160 (44.6%)	2.02	1.075
6	My close friends are likely to avoid pre-marital sex if I do or encourage them to	150 (41.8%)	95 (26.5%)	59 (16.4%)	55 (15.3%)	2.95	1.093
7	I am likely to engage in unsafe sex if my close friends do or encourage me to	33 (9.2%)	69 (19.2%)	65 (18.1%)	192 (53.5%)	1.84	1.036
8	I am likely to avoid unsafe sex if my close friends do or encourage me to	213 (59.3%)	69 (19.2%)	39 (10.9%)	38 (10.6%)	3.27	1.027
9	I am likely to engage in pre-marital sex if my close friends do or encourage me	52 (14.5%)	38 (10.6%)	64 (17.8%)	205 (57.1%)	1.82	1.109
10	I am likely to avoid pre-marital sex if my close friends do or encourage me to	210 (58.5%)	73 (20.3%)	39 (10.9%)	37 (10.3%)	3.27	1.018
	Overall mean					2.65	

Source: Researcher.

Table 3.1 presents students' responses from the questionnaire. In examining the responses from the students' questionnaire, it is evident that respondents generally agree that close friends' influence plays a significant role in shaping the sexual behavior of secondary school students. For instance, in the first statement, "The influence of close friends plays a role in the occurrence of unsafe sex among secondary school students," a majority, comprising 50.4% who strongly agree and 29.2% who agree, express concurrence. This consensus is reflected in the relatively high mean score of 3.18, with a low standard deviation of 1.027, indicating responses closely clustered around the mean.

Similarly, the second statement, "The influence of close friends affects the prevalence of pre-marital sex among secondary school students," receives agreement from respondents, with 34.8% strongly agreeing and 39.6% agreeing. The mean score of 3.00 and a low standard deviation of 0.940 further emphasize the consensus, as responses are tightly grouped around the mean. However, the third statement, "My close friends are likely to engage in unsafe sex if I do or encourage them to," yields a lower mean score of 1.98, indicating less pronounced agreement. While 12.3% strongly agree and 19.2% agree, the higher standard deviation of 1.067 suggests some variability in responses, indicating a more nuanced perspective.

On the other hand, the fourth statement, "My close friends are likely to avoid unsafe sex if I do or encourage them to," garners strong support from respondents, with 45.1% strongly agreeing and 33.1% agreeing. This is reflected in the mean score of 3.14 and a low standard deviation of 0.972, suggesting a consensus.

In contrast, the fifth statement, "My close friends are likely to engage in pre-marital sex if I do or encourage," shows some agreement (12.3% strongly agree and 21.7% agree), but the mean score of 2.02 is relatively lower compared to previous statements. The standard deviation of 1.075 indicates variability in

responses, reflecting diverse views. Statement six, “My close friends are likely to avoid pre-marital sex if I do or encourage them to,” receives stronger agreement, as indicated by the higher mean score of 2.95. However, the standard deviation of 1.093 hints at some diversity in responses.

Furthermore, statement seven, “I am likely to engage in unsafe sex if my close friends do or encourage me to,” reveals disagreement, with a mean score of 1.84, suggesting respondents generally reject this idea. Still, the standard deviation of 1.036 shows some variation in responses.

Statement eight, “I am likely to avoid unsafe sex if my close friends do or encourage me to,” enjoys strong support, with 59.3% strongly agreeing and 19.2% agreeing. The high mean score of 3.27, combined with a standard deviation of 1.027, underscores the consensus.

Similarly, statement nine, “I am likely to engage in pre-marital sex if my close friends do or encourage me,” yields disagreement, as suggested by the low mean score of 1.82. The standard deviation of 1.109 indicates variability in responses.

Finally, statement ten, “I am likely to avoid pre-marital sex if my close friends do or encourage me to,” receives substantial agreement, with 58.5% strongly agreeing and 20.3% agreeing. The high mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 1.018 underscore this consensus. Overall, the combined mean score of 2.65 suggests that respondents, on average, demonstrate a moderate level of agreement with the statements concerning the influence of close friends on sexual behavior. The varying standard deviation values reflect the diversity in perceptions across different statements, adding depth to the understanding of these complex dynamics.

**Table 3.2. Perception of Administrators on the role of Peer Pressure in Predicting Risky Sexual Behavior among Secondary School Students in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya**

STATEMENT		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.dv
1	The influence of close friends/peers plays a role in the occurrence of unsafe sex among secondary school students.	21 (70%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	0	3.60	.675
2	The influence of peers affects the prevalence of pre-marital sex among secondary school students.	23 (76.7%)	5 (16.7%)	2 (6.7%)	0	3.70	.596
3	A student is likely to engage in unsafe sex if his/her close friends do or encourage him/her to	23 (76.7%)	7 (23.3%)	0	0	3.77	.430
4	A student is likely to avoid unsafe sex if his close friends do or encourage him/her	14 (46.7%)	16 (53.3%)	0	0	3.47	.507
5	A student is likely to engage in pre-marital sex if his/her close friends do or	16 (53.3%)	14 (46.7%)	0	0	3.47	.507

6	A student is likely to avoid pre-marital sex if his/her close friends do or encourage	8 (26.7)	10 (33.3%)	12 (40.0%)	0	2.87	.819
7	Students with few friends are more likely to engage in risky sexual activities due to peer pressure than those with many friends	0	20 (66.7%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)	2.50	.777
8	Students with few friends are more likely to avoid risky sexual activities due to peer influence than those with many friends	0	23 (76.7%)	7 (23.3%)	0	2.77	.430
9	Students with many friends are more likely to engage in risky sexual activities due to peer pressure than those with few friends	16 (53.3%)	14 (46.7%)	0	0	3.53	.507
10	Students with many friends are more likely to avoid risky sexual activities due to peer influence than those with few friends	0	23 (76.7%)	7 (23.3%)	0	2.77	.430
Overall mean						3.24	

Source: Researcher

The data from the deputy principal questionnaire in Table 3.2 provides valuable insights into the perceptions of administrators regarding the role of peer pressure in predicting risky sexual behavior among secondary school students in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Kenya.

For the statement, “peer influence plays a role in the occurrence of unsafe sex among secondary school students,” a substantial majority of respondents strongly agree (70%), while 20% agree. The mean score of 3.60 indicates a high level of agreement, and the relatively low standard deviation of 0.675 suggests that responses are clustered around this consensus. Similarly, for the statement, “peer influence plays a role in the occurrence of pre-marital sex among secondary school students,” a significant majority strongly agrees (76.7%), with 16.7% in agreement. The mean score of 3.70 indicates strong agreement, and the low standard deviation of 0.596 suggests consensus among respondents.

Moreover, when considering the influence of close friends, it becomes evident that deputy principals believe that students are likely to engage in unsafe sex if encouraged by their peers, with 76.7% strongly agreeing, while 23.3% agree. The mean score of 3.77 demonstrates strong agreement, and the low standard deviation of 0.430 indicates a high level of consensus. Furthermore, the perception that students can avoid unsafe sex with the influence of close friends is shared, albeit with slightly lower agreement percentages (46.7% strongly agree, 53.3% agree). The mean score of 3.47 suggests a slightly lower level of agreement compared to previous statements, and the standard deviation of 0.507 indicates some variability in responses.

Additionally, regarding the statement, “Students with few friends are more likely to engage in risky sexual activities due to peer influence,” respondents generally agree that they are more likely to engage in risky sexual activities due to peer influences (53.3% strongly agree, 46.7% agree). The mean score of 3.53 suggests a relatively high level of agreement, and the standard deviation of 0.507 indicates some variability.

The overall mean across all statements is 3.24, signifying that, on average, respondents’ express agreement with the statements related to peer pressure and its influence on risky sexual behavior among secondary

school students. The standard deviation values offer insights into the degree of consensus or variation in responses across different statements.

The comparison of the overall means between the students' questionnaire (2.65) and the deputy principal questionnaire (3.24) reveals an interesting contrast in perception. Students, on average, expressed a moderate level of agreement or disagreement regarding the influence of peer pressure on risky sexual behavior among secondary school students, indicating a moderate level of consensus with some variability in their responses. In contrast, deputy principals, who provide an administrative perspective, demonstrated a higher level of agreement with the same statements, suggesting that they perceive peer pressure as playing a more substantial role in shaping students' risky sexual behavior. This disparity in mean scores underscores the differing perspectives and highlights the administrators' heightened concern regarding the impact of peer pressure on students' behavior within the school environment.

The deputy principals' structured interview exploring the influence of peer pressure on risky sexual behavior among secondary school students, revealed compelling findings. A respondent candidly affirmed the presence of peer pressure, stating, "Yes, peer pressure exists—it's obvious." He attributed this pressure to students seeking relationships, rating its influence at 7/10. This sentiment was echoed by the second respondent, who emphasized the link between peer pressure and risky sexual behavior, particularly among girls striving to fit in. Similarly, the third respondent acknowledged the sway of peer pressure, rating it at 7/10, cautioning that students may neglect protection in such scenarios. Respondent 4 corroborated these claims, rating the connection at 8/10. Furthermore, Respondent 6 disclosed gender-specific behaviors, highlighting how girls engage in risky behavior while adapting peer-influenced identities like "*watu wa Nairobi*" and "*waschana wa Homa Bay*." Respondent 8 shed light on grade-specific vulnerability, noting that Form 2 and Form 3 students are more susceptible to peer pressure in the realm of risky sexual behavior. This qualitative analysis underlines the pervasive influence of peer pressure and its complex dynamics on students' decisions regarding romantic relationships and potentially risky behaviors.

This study's findings are similar to those of Adegboyega et al. (2019), which revealed that peer pressure could lead students to engage in erotic electro-stimulation, prostitution, increased the risk of contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), and involvement in incest.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of findings

The analysis of responses from the student questionnaire indicated that students generally agreed that the influence of their close friends played a significant role in shaping the sexual behavior of secondary school students. They expressed strong consensus on statements related to the influence of close friends on unsafe sex and pre-marital sex, with mean scores of 3.18 and 3.00, respectively. However, there was less agreement on statements about students' likelihood to engage in risky behavior themselves based on peer influence, showing more nuanced perspectives.

The overall mean score for the student questionnaire was 2.65, suggesting a moderate level of agreement among students, with some variability in their responses across different statements. In contrast, the deputy principal questionnaire revealed a higher level of agreement among administrators regarding the role of peer pressure in predicting risky sexual behavior. Deputy Principals strongly agreed that unsafe sex and pre-marital sex occurred among secondary school students due to peer pressure. They also believed that students were likely to engage in or avoid risky sexual behavior based on peer influence. The overall mean for the deputy principal questionnaire was 3.24, indicating a higher level of agreement compared to students.

Additionally, the qualitative insights from interviews with principals reinforced the idea that peer pressure

significantly influenced students' decisions regarding risky sexual behavior. Respondents consistently acknowledged the presence and impact of peer pressure, with some highlighting gender-specific behaviors and grade-specific vulnerability. This qualitative analysis underscored the pervasive nature of peer pressure and its complex dynamics in the context of students' romantic relationships and risky behaviors.

## Conclusion

In the context of sexual behavior, students generally agree that their close friends have a notable impact on their peers' engagement in unsafe sex and pre-marital sex. However, there is less consensus regarding their own likelihood to engage in such behavior due to peer influence. Deputy Principals, on the other hand, strongly believe in the influence of peer pressure on students' sexual behavior. The varying degrees of agreement and disagreement among students and deputy principals regarding the influence of peer pressure indicate a complex dynamic. It suggests that while many students are aware of the influence of their peers on their sexual behavior, administrators are even more concerned about this issue. This highlights the need for a more in-depth examination of peer pressure dynamics within schools. The stark contrast between the perspectives of students and deputy principals is noteworthy. While students express a moderate level of consensus with some variability in their responses, deputy principals show a higher level of agreement. This disparity implies that administrators perceive peer pressure as playing a more substantial role in shaping students' risky sexual behavior, possibly indicating a sense of urgency in addressing this issue. The qualitative insights obtained from deputy principals' interviews reveal that peer pressure is not just an abstract concept but is a palpable force in the school environment. Students, may be pressured into risky sexual behaviors to fit in. Additionally, the interviews highlight gender-specific and grade-specific vulnerabilities, offering a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of peer pressure.

## Recommendations

Given the variance in perceptions between students and deputy principals regarding the influence of peer pressure on risky sexual behavior, it is recommended that secondary schools implement comprehensive peer education programs. These programs should aim to bridge the gap in understanding by providing students with accurate information about the risks of unsafe sexual behavior and the influence of peer pressure. Additionally, such programs should foster open and non-judgmental discussions among students and between students and administrators, creating a safe space for addressing these complex issues.

## Suggestion for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following area is suggested for further study;

The influence of peer pressure and its impact on secondary schools students' sexual behavior.

## REFERENCES

1. Adegboyega, L. O., Ayoola, V. A., & Muhammed, S. (2019). Influence of Peer Pressure on Sexual Behavior of Undergraduates in Kwara State. *Anatolian Journal of Education*, 4(1), 49-58.
2. Ajayi, A. I., & Okeke, S. R. (2019). Protective sexual behaviours among young adults in Nigeria: influence of family support and living with both parents. *BMC public health*, 19, 1-8.
3. Akaneme, N. I., Aye, E. N., & Ebere, D. A. (2018). Peer Pressure and home Environment as Predictors of Disruptive and Risky Sexual Behavior of Secondary School Adolescence. Retrieved on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 from <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ahs/article/view/173569>.
4. Anjago, L.A. (2012). Challenges Facing Teachers in Curbing Misbehavior in Secondary Schools In Asego Zone, Homa Bay district, Kenya. Marist International University. Masters; Thesis.
5. Bandura, A., & Hall, P. (2018). Albert Bandura and social learning theory. *Learning theories for early years practice*, 63-65.

6. Beycioglu, K. (2015). The Views of Teachers Towards Perception of Discipline in Schools. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* , 197, 120-125.
7. Blerta, P.(2017). Peer Influence and Adolescents Sexual Behavior Trajection: links to Sex to Sexual Initiation. Retrieved on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2022 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318538114\\_peer\\_Influence\\_and\\_Adolescents\\_Sexual\\_Behavior\\_Trajections\\_Links\\_to\\_Sexual\\_Initiation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318538114_peer_Influence_and_Adolescents_Sexual_Behavior_Trajections_Links_to_Sexual_Initiation)
8. Bursztyn, L., & Jensen, R. (2015). How Does Peer Pressure Affect Educational. Investments?. *The quarterly journal of economics*, 130(3), 1329-1367.
9. Camile, W., & Weaver, C. (1999). Social Psychology II. In psychology; 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (pg.616-617).
10. Carl, E.P. (2010). The Power of Peers. Retrieved on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012 from <http://uzspace.uzulu.ac.za/handle/10530/138...>
11. Childs, K. E., George, H. P.,& Kincaid, D. (2016). The relationship between school- wide implementation of positive behavior intervention and supports and student
12. Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
13. Daily Nation. (2015). War on Teen Pregnancy. Retrieved on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 from [www.nation.co.ke/counties/war-on-teen-pregnancy-in-homa-bay.../110787/2/27/51420](http://www.nation.co.ke/counties/war-on-teen-pregnancy-in-homa-bay.../110787/2/27/51420)
14. Gichangi, A. Et. Al. (2018). Factors associated with unsafe sex among Kenyan youth: Results from a nationally representative population-based survey. *eajahme*, 2(2).
15. Hopper. J .( 2016). Why You Need 4- Point Scales. Retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 from <https://versarresearch.com/blog/why-you-need-4-point-scales/>
16. Kasirye,W., Rachael, C., Swahn, M., & Whitton, A. (2022) Attitudes and Risky Sexual Behavior among Youth in Kampala, Uganda: Empirical Analyses of Risk Factors by gender. Retrieved on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023. from [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9757820...](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9757820...)
17. Kathuri, N.J., & Pals, D. A. (1993). Sample Size in Survey Research. *International Journal of Research in Management*. Retrieved on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 from [www.rspublication.com/...](http://www.rspublication.com/...)
18. Keyzers. A. Et. Al (2020). Peer Pressure and Substance Use in Emerging Adulthood: retrieved on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32400279/>
19. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2020). Kenya Population and Housing Census-2019, vol.1. *Distribution of Population by Sex and Sub-county*. Pg. 19.
20. Li, Y., & Guo, G. (2016). Peer influence on aggressive behavior, smoking, and sexual behavior: A study of randomly-assigned college roommates. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 57(3), 297-318.
21. Mbuthia, G., Wanzala, P., Ngugi, C., & Nyamogoba, H. D. N. (2019). Patterns of risky sexual behavior and associated factors among undergraduates in the coastal region of Kenya. *African Journal of Health Sciences*, 32(3), 16-26.
22. Mugenda, O. M and Mugenda, A.G. (2003): *Research Methods; Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi.
23. National Aids and STI Control Program. (2018) Kenya HIV Estimates. Nairobi: Government Printer.
24. Nyamura, K., & Ochieng',B. (2020). Teenage pregnancy In The Wake of Covid-19 within Homa bay County: Rapid Assessment. *The East African Centre for Human Rights*.
25. Sohrabivafa, M., Et. Al., (2017). Prevalence of risky behaviors and related factors among students of Dezful. *Iranian journal of psychiatry*, 12(3), 188.
26. Ssewanyana, D. Et. Al (2021). The occurrence of Sexual Risk Behaviors and its Association With Psychological Well-being Among Kenyan Adolescents. Retrieved on 22/10/2023 from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9580808/>.