

# THE FREQUENCY OF CONTENT WITH ELEMENTS OF NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR PUBLISHED IN THE PULSE MAGAZINE

OWUOR, S.<sup>1\*</sup> – YAKUB, A.<sup>1</sup> – NYAMBUGA, C.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Communication and Media Technology, Maseno University, Private Bag  
Maseno, Kenya  
e-mail: sowuor@maseno.ac.ke*

(Received 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020; accepted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020)

**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 audience. Among the most popular free pullout entertainment magazines is the ‘Pulse’ which is accessed by the youth in secondary schools and may have a behavioural impact on them. This paper analysed the frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour published in the Pulse that would likely motivate secondary school students to engage in practices such as sexual activities, alcohol consumption and night partying which may lead to teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, school dropouts, prostitution and drug abuse. A sample size of 46 magazines were purposively drawn from a study population of 52 weekly Pulse magazines running from January to December 2018. The revelation that the magazine published a high frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour 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.

**Keywords:** *frequency, pulse magazine, youth, secondary school students, negative behaviour*

## Introduction

The media is viewed as an information dissemination vehicle with the primary functions of informing, educating and entertaining its readers (Rich, 2008). Globally the print media has made tremendous strides in publishing entertainment content that is appealing to readers. In Kenya, the media industry has seen some steady growth since independence to become one of the most vibrant in East Africa. The growth has been tremendous ranging from dominant print and broadcast industries such as Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Nation Media Group, the Standard Media, Royal Media and Media Max which stretch to most of the countries in the Eastern region of Africa (BBC Official Portal, 2019). For the print media, the most popular free pull-out entertainment magazines is the ‘Pulse’ which targets the youth ranging from 16 to 24 years of age (Pulse Reporter, 2016) and may be having a behavioural impact on them.

There have been concerns on whether the print media plays an integral role in reinforcing behavioural practices among secondary school students that motivates them to engage in practices such as premarital and unprotected sex; use of unconventional language such as sheng and slang language; pornography; teenage prostitution; rape; consumption of alcohol and other drug substances that lead to cases of early pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, poor academic performance in school; porn addiction; abuse of alcohol and other drug substances. According to Chesang (2013) and Abuto (2013), if the media go unchecked in content dissemination depicting negative or risky behaviour such as drug abuse, teenage sex and other forms of

profanity, it is likely to motivate the practice of certain behavioural practices among the teenagers such as alcohol consumption and other forms of drug abuse, unprotected sex among minors, teenage prostitution among other vices.

It is argued that the surge in commercialization has led the print media to sensationalise stories that highly influence the minds of the masses (Abanyam, 2013). For instance, Uganga (2012), points out that the print media are always compelled to re-launch their publications over short period of times in a bid to make them more attractive to their audiences and to win back an audience that is increasingly looking elsewhere for information. Based on physical appearance, Uganga (2012), observed that the mainstream media such as the Standard and Nation newspapers have established colourful and sensational pull-outs so as to attract readers. It is possible that both mainstream newspaper companies frequently introduced these new products to attract non-traditional readers such as the youth and young professional women among other groups all in the name of expanding their readership base and maximising on profit generation.

This comes from the backdrop of international, regional and national statistics that indicated a rise of incidences emanating from negative behavioural practices among teenagers. For instance, internationally, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Report (2011), U.S. teens experienced as many as 850,000 pregnancies, and youth under age 25 experience about 9.1 million sexually transmitted infections (STIs) annually. The report further indicated that by the age of 18 years 70 percent of U.S. females and 62 percent of U.S. males had initiated vaginal sex (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2011).

The fundamental purpose of this study was to establish whether media content with elements of negative behaviour featured in high frequencies in publications that were accessible to secondary school students yet both the international community, national agencies and governments worldwide have well defined policies and laws that restrict teenage access to adult rated content such as the Council of Europe (2019) and the National Council for Law Reporting (2010).

Furthermore, in sub-Saharan Africa there continues to have some of the highest rates of adolescent fertility in the world, this is according to the Status Report on Adolescents and Young People in Sub-Saharan Africa by Hervish and Clifton (2012), which showed almost no decline since 1990. The report indicated that among the 14.3 million adolescent girls that gave birth in 2008, one of every three was from sub-Saharan Africa (Hervish and Clifton, 2012).

In Kenya, reports undertaken by statutory bodies such as the The National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) and the Kenya Films Classification Board (KFCB) have raised concerns over the increased cases of drug abuse, sexual transmitted diseases, sexual promiscuity among teenagers. In their respective reports (NACADA, 2012); (Mulwa, 2016) they pointed out the rise of negative behaviour such as abuse of alcohol and other drugs, sexual promiscuity, obscenity, teenage prostitution, profane language and violence particularly among the teenagers.

From the above reports, this study postulated that it was likely that the print media's appetite to increase its readership base could lead them to publish sensational stories and content with elements of negative behaviour of which if accessed by teenagers could motivate them to engage in activities that can be categorised as negative or risky leading to teenage pregnancies and sexual transmitted diseases. This study found it

significant to examine the likelihood that the print media content could have a propensity on negative or risky behaviour among teenagers.

This study focused on how the frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour published in the Pulse was likely to have a behavioural impact on teenagers in secondary school students who were part of the larger Pulse magazine target audience from the age of 16 to 24 years (Pulse Reporter, 2016). Previous research work on print media had not focused on how the frequency, of media content could have a behavioural impact on audience.

The Pulse magazine was selected because, among the mainstream newspapers in Kenya it is arguably the most popular free pull out magazine amongst the youth aged 16 to 25 years (GeoPoll, 2015). The magazine is a 20-page entertainment publication produced by the Standard Group media company in Kenya. It is worth noting that other youth related publications such as Zuka, the Nairobi, Eve and Buzz are not as popular among teenagers as compared to the Pulse (Synovate, 2007). A relevant reason for this study selecting the Pulse was because it highlights features on all forms of entertainment arts and lifestyle with the view of entertaining and educating its followers on the current showbiz events, night parties, personalities, updates on the music and movie scene and trends taking place locally and internationally. The published content entails night partying, celebrity interviews, celebrity gossip, music reviews, female modelling images as young as 19 years, sexual related stories and depiction of alcohol consumption.

In order to get a clear understanding on the frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour published in the Pulse, it was necessary to understand the significance of media content generation on this issue. It was important to get the basis of how media content is generated, and its impact on enhancing behavioural impact to an audience. Understanding the traits, trends and the factors that prescribe the development of media content made it important to this study on the auspices that mass media aims at reaching a large of population of people in society through an organized means of communication that is appealing and of significance to the ascribed audience.

Media content generation span around the following schools of thought; firstly, whether print media content developed can contribute in reinforcing existing norms or practices and secondly whether print media content was likely to enhance behavioural traits to a given society through what they publish or broadcast to the Kenyan society. This study summarized these notions through the fundamental argument that content development can enhance behavioural attitudes of persons in society. Mc Luhan (1964) alluded to the above position by contending that media technology determines culture and behaviour not only because of the emergence of various types of mass media but also the way they generate and disseminate messages over vast geographical terrains and to an ever 'thirsty' global society. This he argued had led to the emergence of cultural globalization which he coined as turning the world into a 'global village' (Mc Luhan, 1964). This argument became a significant area of concern mainly because the impact of content generation was all about how media content was packaged and disseminated to a heterogeneous society. For instance, publications such as the Pulse magazine produced content in a sensational, colourful and attractive manner specifically endearing to a target audience. Media packaging could be aimed at promoting the showbiz industry through packaging narratives, images, headlines and topics especially if the storylines hinge on issues such as; sex, alcohol and drug use, use of slang

language, sexual provocative dressing and night partying which could be popular among the youth in Kenya.

The argument by government agencies in Kenya is that there is an increased visibility of obscene and provocative sexually explicit activities among the Kenyan teenagers. This is according to the Mulwa (2016) which looked at the effects of 'Lewd, Vulgar, Violent and Obscene Local and International Music on Children, Youth and the Society in general in Kenya'. From such narratives it was important to assess the fundamental role the print media plays as a content developer on behaviour, basing on themes such as sexual content, provocative or obscene dressing and drug consumption. This is significant because besides the Media Council of Kenya, and the Kenya Films Classification Board, there is no print media regulatory board that the study is aware of which would be able to directly conduct a regulatory role on various publications existing in Kenya.

### ***Theoretical framework***

The study was guided by the Media Dependency Theory which shows how audiences depend on media information to meet needs and reach goals. Developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1976), the theory states that the more dependent an individual is on the media for having his or her needs fulfilled, the more important the media will be to that person. In their study they contended that both media and its audience were integral parts of a large social system where people's social realities were fundamentally attached to the structural conditions of society in which they lived in. They defined dependency as a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party was contingent upon the resources of another party. From their argument, dependency would therefore occur due to the need to understand the social world or act meaningfully and effectively in that social world. The media therefore offered the audience this opportunity through the way they framed or packaged messages for public consumption. This implied that, the stronger the dependency in such matters of understanding societal issues, the greater the likelihood that the information supplied would alter various forms of audience cognitions, feelings and behavior.

According to Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1976), the dependency theory which emanates from media effects was primarily bound by a tripartite of audience, media and society. They explained this by stating that the dependency people have on media information were a result of the nature of the socio-cultural systems, category membership, individual needs and the number and centrality of unique information functions that the media system served for individuals and society.

Their research work raised strong and pertinent arguments stating that dependency on media was heightened when a relatively high degree of change and conflict was present in society where forces operating to maintain the structural stability of a society coexisted with forces towards conflict and change of that structure (Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer, 1976). What the two scholars implied in their discourse was that for the dependency theory to have some legitimacy as a media effect it must operate in scenarios where societal challenges were visibly effective leading to the established social arrangements to become inadequate as frameworks within which members of a society could cope with in their life situations. This eventually leads to an increase in people's dependency on media information resources during such periods.

The reasons as to why Dependency theory was fundamental to this study was because; the theory had explanatory power which could explain how the Pulse magazine had specific media information that is not only entertainment based and sensational, but also could have a high frequency of negative content accessible to teenagers as an audience. The media dependency theory primarily has three distinctive characteristics that underpin its very existence as a communication theory. This is according to Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1976), who postulated that the dependency theory predicts three types of effects namely; cognitive, affective and behavioural changes which are derived from the tripartite relationship between the media, audience and society. They argue that these specific kinds of cognitive, affective and behavioural changes were regularly brought about by mass media because of individual and societal dependence on their information resources.

This study focused on the cognitive effect, which stems from the notion that the audience will have an dependency on media as an information resource when there is ambiguity, attitude formation, agenda setting, expansion of people's system of beliefs and impact on their values based on how the media covers events or activities taking place in their societies. The cognitive effect played an integral role in this study by explaining how the media attracts individuals through the consistency and frequency of specific media content that is directed at a specific target audience. The tenate has the capacity to increase the salience of issues through articles, commentaries, displays like photos and captions, advertisements and announcements directed at their audience.

The study therefore applied the Dependency theory through analysing the frequency of content in the pulse magazine that have elements of negative behaviour. The theory explained how cognitive effects such as attitude formation and agenda setting were applied during the selective process of framing and packaging Pulse magazine content. Through the theory, the study was able to understand how consistency and high frequency of content with elements of negative were used as a strategy in the development of media content for the pulse magazine. Such content was likely to create a sense of dependency to the youth through fulfilling the needs for understanding information.

## **Empirical Literature Review**

The Literature review of this study revolved around the frequency of print media content with elements of negative behaviour. It was important to note that much of the research undertaken previously had not focused on whether frequency as a media strategy were likely to enhance negative or risky behaviour among the youth. In this review it was imperative to assess previous studies particularly on the application of frequency and consistency of media content as a communication strategy in targeting audience. More importantly was to examine whether previous studies had focused on explaining the use of frequency in content generation and whether it could have an impact on an audience.

It was significant to get an understanding on whether consistency and high frequency were applied during the packaging and framing of specific media content and whether such action could breed reliability and audience dependence. In this section the researcher examined other studies to establish whether content frequency was ever applied in explaining media effects. This is because, by establishing the extent to which content with elements of negative behaviour were frequently published would provide

salient knowledge on whether the Pulse magazine inundates their publication copies with sexual explicit content, alcohol related activities, night partying and use of sheng and slang language as a marketing strategy to draw and retain a target audience hence bringing various benefits to the magazine such as profits and popularity yet in the long run having a negative influence on secondary school students who freely access the publication.

When examining previous research work from scholars such as Ngula (2015) on; ‘motivation, social context and parental mediation of Nairobi adolescents’ seeking sexual media content,’ the study noted that his findings explained that cable television stations such as DSTV and ZUKU and national Kenyan television stations such as Nation TV, Kenya Television Network and KISS TV had programmes such as music shows, movies and soap operas which contained sexual media content. In as much as his study aimed at underlining the exposure of adolescent to sexual content in broadcast media, his study fell short of elaborating on the frequency of such programmes and whether they were potentially able to influence adolescent attitudes and behavior.

The knowledge gap in Ngula (2015) research was on the frequency of programmes aired and whether that frequency and consistency had the capacity to continuously draw the attention of the adolescents. This implied that there was limited knowledge on whether the content was frequently aired several times in day and whether that kind of regularity of programming was able to draw the attention of teenagers to the various stations. This research intended to focus on the print media and establish a clear understanding on whether there existed the application of consistency and regularity of media content which was likely to draw the attention or interest of a given target audience. This was a significant gap to address because of the likely disparities that existed between print and broadcast media especially when determining the frequency levels of content. It was possible that broadcast media and print media would have varying outcomes because print media has the opportunity to elaborate on content in detail unlike broadcast media and also that print media content had a longer lifespan as compared to broadcast content.

Lastly in as much as Ngula (2015), findings were significant to this study since they explained the existence and possible exposure of sexual media content to the youth, his study fell short of addressing the other elements of negative behaviour such as alcohol consumption, use unconventional language such as slang and sheng, night partying and celebrity stories which were likely to have a negative impact on the youth just as sexual content. It was important to note that these other elements of negative behaviour were not captured in Ngula (2015) research study yet the high frequency level of their depiction could play a mutual role on enhancing behavioural impact of the youth who have access to such media content.

Previous research by Ugangu (2012), postulated that Kenya had undergone great transformation characterised by a growing diversity of media houses coupled with a change in penchants for content of a modern and expanding middle class. He inferred that these transformations had led to the print media such as the Standard and Nation newspapers to design and package colourful publications so as to attract these expanding audiences, hence besides changing the design of their publications, the two mainstream companies had also introduced new products to attract non-traditional audience groups such as the youth, children and young professional women among other groups all in the name of expanding their audience base.

From Ugangu (2012), position this study gathered that there was an increased significance placed on sensationalising media content through use of advanced technology to satisfy an audience with an increased appetite for modern media content who exist in a well versed globalised social network. This study presupposed that it was possible that these media institutions employed frequency in the prioritisation of commercialisation and technology for the successful dissemination of media content to a target audience, at the expense of pursuing a more socially responsible role in society. This was the gap noted in Ugangu (2012) research of which, despite being significant did not delve into specifics of how these publications applied frequency of content as a marketing strategy during the production of colourful, sensational and graphically attractive content. This study intended to go beyond the general responsive perspective of the Kenyan media perpetuated by Ugangu (2012), on how a responsible society should address the role of the media by examining whether publications like the Pulse magazine could be applying frequency of media content as a marketing strategy by enhancing the depiction of contemporary norms such as night partying, celebrity gossip, dancing, modelling and alcohol consumption which have elements that can be deemed impact the behaviour of teenagers.

The hypothesis of media packaging and presentation based on interpretation of media content led this study to examine research work by Yakub et al (2014), who researched on how presentation of visual texts in Safaricom newspaper advertisements impacted on the audience purchasing decision. Their argument was based on how visual semiotics and written language were useful in the Safaricom advertisements to help in meaning interpretation and establish the impact of using the visual images and written language on the audience's ability to interpret the messages. What was significant about their research was that they focused on interpretation of the messages by the audience in the newspaper advertisements whereby they advanced the notion that visual messages must be understood by the audience for any informed decision to be made. They concluded that without the written words some of the advertisements could not mean anything to the audience.

This current study posited that their argument implied that the packaging of written words together with the images created a communicative experience in the advertisements which the audience would relate to in their daily practices and thereafter draw out the aspect where they felt the appreciated and needed by Safaricom. What this current study deduced from Adam et al. (2014), was that media content packaging was a salient strategy applied by the media during information dissemination in order to create a communicative experience that would lure audience to their content. For this study, it was important to go beyond Adam et al. (2014), position and establish whether consistency and frequency was also applied in the of packaging and dissemination of media content in order to achieve intended results, which would not only draw target audience to the specific information but also retain them and create a sense of dependency on that content. This study therefore intended to examine whether high frequency of specific media content existed in the packaging of information so as to create a sense of dependency of the media by a target audience. In doing so this study would also establish the existence of high frequency of thematic media content possibly having an impact on the behaviour of a given audience.

To get a better understanding of media framing the study reviewed research work by Ojwang (2009), whose study focused on the implications of news stories reporting on peace and conflict inherent through the words of the key political players as published

in the print media. He analysed articles by reviewing the language choices that the media used to frame the hopes, fears, expectations and disappointments entailed in the peace messages through setting the agenda that guided the public in monitoring and evaluating the peace process. In his findings he observed that the print media could have framed their content to relay a significant aspect of the peace-making process which was that social injustice stood out as a prerequisite for peace. He also observed that the media through its framing, could choose to be a catalyst for peace or conflict depending on their ideological leaning or interpretation of the situation (Ojwang, 2009). Finally, Ojwang (2009) concluded that the reporting frames chosen by the media during coverage of the 2008 post-election violence ultimately influenced the perceptions of peace prospects by the consumers of the publications. This current study deduced that in as much as Ojwang's (2009) research uncovered framing as a critical communication strategy there were key components that his study might not have addressed which could possibly form a strong foundation for this study during the assessment of whether there existed application of frequency of print media content as a strategy during the dissemination of information to a given audience. Key among them was that the concept of frequency was related to the agenda setting process whereby in order for the media to be effective in attracting audience to their content, a strategy identifying pre-existing issues trending in society and capitalising on them through consistency and regularity were applied.

Considering the above reviews, this study postulated that it was possible that frequency of media content as a media strategy in the dissemination of information could be applied as a means of reinforcing pre-existing norms in specific audiences. Based on the fact that the key objective of this study was to analyse the frequency of content with elements of negative or risky behaviour published in the Pulse magazine, the above notion would play a significant role in achieving that objective.

This study intended to use the argument by Cacioppo and Petty (1979), which stated that message repetition could influence attitude and cognitive behaviour of the message consumer. They hypothesised that the sequence of topic relevant thoughts generated in response to a repeated and persuasive message could have an influence on the eventual attitude and behaviour of the consumer of the message (Cacioppo and Petty 1979). Their argument played a significant role in this study to aid in understanding how frequency of media content was been applied in the dissemination process through constant and repetitive appearance of thematic content with elements of negative behaviour in the form of texts, images, headlines and graphics.

## **Materials and Methods**

This study adopted the use of qualitative research methods. Qualitative research was done through examining the variables which were frequency, negative behaviour and the Pulse magazine. For instance, examining text data was adopted to establish the frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour published in copies of the Pulse magazine. This was carried out with the focus being the characteristics of the messages identified in the magazine and examining how they were being used to communicate. Special attention was given to understanding content or contextual meaning of the text and images (Budd et al., 1967).

For qualitative data collection, the sample size of the magazines was determined using Yamane (1967) sample size formulae. The study population of 52 magazines was



calculated using the formulae  $n = N/1 + Ne^2$ . For this study,  $n$ = sample size,  $N$ = the size of the population  $1$ = the constant and  $e$ = the degree of error expected. Subsequently, the sample size  $n$  needed for the proposed study was:  $52/1 + 52 (0.0025) = 46$  magazines with a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$ . The research undertook purposive sampling technique to identify the 46 magazines. Purposive sampling technique was identified as an ideal sampling technique in this study because the researcher was only interested in the most productive samples of the population that were relevant to the objectives of the study Marshall (1995). In this case the researcher selected a sample that had the following characteristics namely: provocative dressing, sexual provocative images, profane language use, sexual related articles, celebrity gossip, night partying, drugs and alcohol consumption and picture speak, which were all relevant to whether content published in the magazines have elements of negative behaviour. Other themes include slang language and night clubbing advertisements.

This was done using coding sheets as a data collection technique. The above procedure was significant in addressing objective one which was to analyse the frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour published in the pulse magazine. The sample size of the magazines was determined using Yamane (1967), sample size formulae. The study population of 52 magazines was calculated using the formulae  $n = N/1 + Ne^2$ . For this study,  $n$ = sample size,  $N$ = the size of the population  $1$ = the constant and  $e$ = the degree of error expected. Subsequently, the sample size  $n$  needed for the proposed study was:  $52/1 + 52 (0.0025) = 46$  magazines with a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$ . The research undertook purposive sampling technique to identify the 46 magazines. Purposive sampling technique was identified as an ideal sampling technique in this study because the researcher was only interested in the most productive samples of the population that were relevant to the objectives of the study Marshall (1995). In this case the researcher selected a sample that had the following characteristics namely: provocative dressing, sexual provocative images, profane language use, sexual related articles, celebrity gossip, night partying, drugs and alcohol consumption and picture speak, which were all relevant to whether there was a high frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour published in the Pulse. Other themes include slang language and night clubbing advertisements. This was done using coding sheets as a data collection technique.

## Results and Discussion

This study purposively sampled 46 Pulse magazines copies out of a total of 52 magazine copies to establish how the production of print media content applied consistency and frequency of themes eliciting negative behaviour among the youth by analysing the frequency of content with elements of negative in the Pulse. The units of analysis were content with sexual provocative images; sexual stories; sexual provocative dancing; celebrity gossip, night partying; drugs and alcohol consumption; sheng and slang language use. They were considered elements of negative behaviour because they were likely to enhance risky behaviour among teenagers if emulated such as premarital sex, drug abuse, rape, pornography and poor academic performance (Chesang, 2013; Terzian et al., 2011).

The researcher used coding sheets to examine whether the 46 magazines had a high frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour. Data was collected using a total of 46 coding sheets which were assigned to each magazine. All the 46 magazines

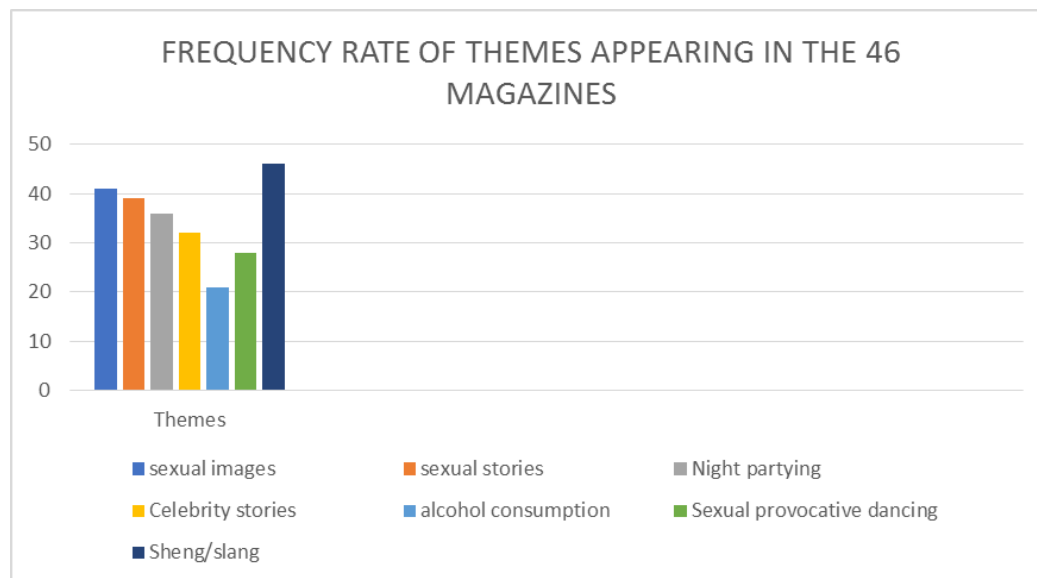
which represented the sample size, were found to be relevant to objective one of the study giving a response rate of 100% (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Response rate on magazines analysed.

No of story coding sheets used	Relevant	Relevant response rate
46	46	100%

According to Babbie (2002) and Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a 50% response rate was adequate, 60% good and above 70% rated very good. This implied that the response rate in this case of 100% was very good. The objective of the study sought to analyse the frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour which according to Durham (2000) and Reichert (2003) enhance risky behavioural practices among the youth aged between 16 and 18 years leading to cases of teenage pregnancies, drug addiction, poor academic performance, rape cases, prostitution and pornography addiction.

The study used story analysis forms which broke down the elements when examining the number of times images, headlines, stories relevant to the themes of the study appeared in the 46 magazine copies based on the Pulse’s model of reporting on entertainment news. The study identified the frequency of these themes based on the number of times each theme appeared in the 46 copies sampled. The study noted the following: Sexual provocative images repeatedly featured in 41 magazines (89%), sexual stories and headlines in 39 magazines (85%), sexual provocative dancing in 28 magazines (61%), celebrity gossip in 32 magazines (70%), alcohol and drug consumption in 21 magazines (46%), sheng and slang language in 46 magazines (100%) and night partying in 36 magazines (78%) respectively. These frequency levels are indicated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Structural equation of self-regulated learning in Arabic language learning.

When examining the number of times articles relevant to the themes of the study repeatedly appeared in the 46 magazines, the study established that out of a total of 4,471 articles published in the 46 magazines, 3,139 were associated with these themes:

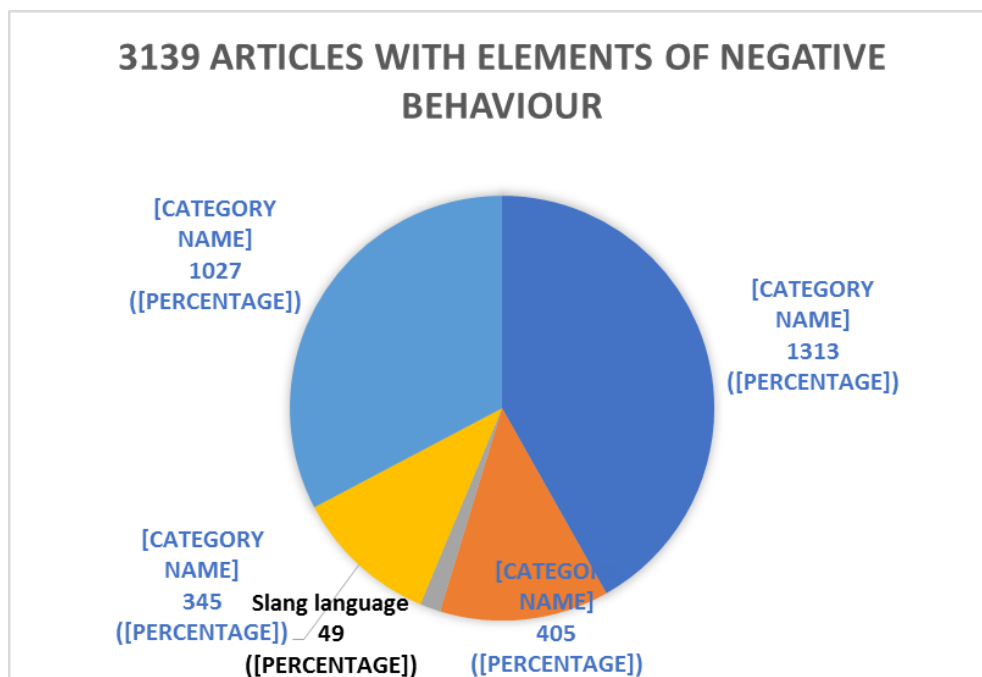
Sexual connotation, Night partying, Celebrity gossip, Alcohol consumption and Slang language. This represented a frequency rate of 70% which is very good (Babbie, 2002) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Response rate on articles analysed in the 46 magazines.

Number of stories in the 46 magazines	Relevant	Relevant response rate
4471	3139	70%

From the above data in Table 1 the study observed that the 3,139 articles which were present in all the 46 magazines represented a high level of consistency and frequency (70%) on the packaging and framing of media content relevant to the themes of the study denoted elements of negative behaviour hence supporting Hall’s (1982) notion on media packaging which can contribute in reinforcing existing norms or practices, by depicting behavioural traits appealing to a specific audience in society. The data shows a high level of consistency and frequency on the publication of content related to the themes of sexual content, alcohol and drug abuse, celebrity gossip, use of slang language, sexual provocative dressing and night partying at 70%.

From a high frequency rate of 3,139 articles the breakdown of the themes’ frequency levels are indicated as follows: Sexual connotation 1,313 (42%), celebrity gossip 345 (10.9%), alcohol and drug consumption 405 (13%), sheng and slang language 49 (1.5%) and night partying 1,027 (32.7%) respectively. These frequency levels are also indicated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Number of articles with elements of negative behavior.

Based on the objective of the study which was to analyse the frequency of content with elements of negative or risky behaviour published in the Pulse magazine, the study established the consistency and high frequency of content with elements of negative behaviour used during the packaging and framing of stories in the Pulse magazine (Figure 3). It was also established that the Pulse magazine inundated their publication

copies with sexually explicit content, alcohol related activities and night partying. This addressed the hypothesis on whether consistency and high frequency were applied during the packaging and framing of specific media content and whether such action could breed reliability and audience dependence. Below is an image depicting sexually explicit dressing published in the Pulse magazine.



**Figure 3.** Image of a model in a sexual pose dressed in skimpy outfits.  
Source: Pulse Magazine (28 September 2018).

The image depicts (Figure 3) a young female model wearing a tight short black mini skirt and a bra-like outfit barely covering her breasts and tummy. In addition, the model is depicted slightly bending forward with her face turned back as if staring at her tightly dressed mini skirt. The model in Figure 3 was also captured in another 4 of the 46 copies of the Pulse magazine, namely: *Pulse Magazine 2nd March 2018*; *Pulse Magazine 9th March 2018*; *Pulse Magazine 25th May 2018*; *Pulse Magazine 26th October 2018* she was also pictured dressed in skimpy and sexually provocative outfits which further exposed body parts such as breasts, backside and thighs.

The findings demonstrated that the application of high frequency on specific media content, had the capacity to continuously draw the attention of audience to the medium. The findings established a clear understanding that the application of consistency and regularity of media content was likely to draw the attention or interest of a given target audience which addressed the knowledge gaps in Ngula's research on whether there was frequency of programmes with sexual content being aired and whether that frequency and consistency had the capacity to continuously draw the attention of the adolescents. His study had limited knowledge on whether the sexual content was

frequently aired several times in day and whether that kind of regularity of programming was able to draw the attention of teenagers to the various stations. Also addressed was whether there were disparities that existed between print and broadcast media especially when determining the frequency levels of content. The findings indicated that broadcast media and print media had varying outcomes because the Pulse unlike broadcast, had the opportunity to elaborate on content in detail. As demonstrated by the articles and images examined the Pulse had the opportunity to elaborate on its content in detail through reporting on lengthy stories and consistent repetition of images and themes. In addition, the published copies, unlike broadcast media content had a longer lifespan that could be stored and accessed at any given time.

Lastly was that the findings also showed the existence of other content with elements of negative behaviour such as alcohol consumption, use unconventional language such as slang and sheng, night partying and celebrity stories were likely to have a negative impact on the youth just as sexual content. This study established the existence of these other elements of negative behaviour besides sexual content which were not captured in Ngula (2015) research study yet they had a high frequency level of depiction in the Pulse. In essence the findings demonstrated that the Pulse inundated its publication copies with adult rated content such as sexual information, alcohol related activities, night partying, among others which could have an adverse effect on a teenage audience.

The findings in this objective also showed that the Pulse magazine employed frequency in the prioritisation of commercialisation and technology for the successful dissemination of media content to a target audience, at the expense of pursuing a more socially responsible role in society This gap was noted in Ugangu (2012) research work. The findings showed that the Pulse drew the attention of audience to their colourful and sensational content through use of frequency and consistency. This was observed through the high frequency of images depicting sexual provocative dressing, sexual provocative dancing, and sexual poses taken by models. In addition, were frequent images depicting night partying and alcohol consumption. The use of frequency of media content as a strategy was able to enhance the depiction of contemporary norms such as night partying, celebrity gossip, dancing, modelling and alcohol consumption which had of negative behavior.

Below are several images on *Figure 4* depicting night partying and provocative dancing. The study observed images depicting young ladies dancing in sexually seductive ways and young men shown to either react by provocatively dancing or showing appreciation and admiration of the act. For instance, there is an image showing two separate scenes that depicted sexual provocative dancing, one depicts a young lady bending over and shacking her behind as a young man stares at her while the second scene shows a young lady shacking her behind while her tight mini skirt is seen to be raised just below her buttocks (Pulse Reporter, 2016).



**Figure 4.** Image of provocative dancing.  
Source: Pulse Magazine (13 July 2018).

The gaps on packaging, presentation and framing of media content which were noted in Adam et al. (2014) and Ojwang (2009) research were also addressed. In packaging and presentation as noted in Yakub et al, it was established that consistency and frequency could also be applied in the packaging and dissemination of media content in order to achieve a communicative experience that would lure audience to their content and also create a sense of dependency and affinity to the Pulse. It was demonstrated that the Pulse repeatedly sensationalised stories and headlines related to sex, alcohol, night partying and sheng/slang language. The findings also established that the application of frequency was a significant component that aided the use of media framing as a key communication strategy applied by the media to influence decision making among audience. This implied that frequency helped the Pulse effectively use framing to attract the youth to their content through a strategy of identifying pre-existing activities relating to sex, night partying, alcohol, sexual provocative dressing, sheng and slang language use which were trending in society and capitalising on them through consistency and regularity are applied.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings discussed above, the researcher concluded that the print media publish a high frequency of sensational and entertaining content associated with elements of negative behaviour such as sexual provocative dressing, sex stories, alcohol related content, night partying, sexual provocative dancing and use of unconventional language such as slang which are not suitable for students in secondary schools whom the government classifies as minors. The high frequency of such content was a matter of concern to the researcher since according to the Pulse magazine's marketing strategy, its target readers range from 16 to 24 years which implies that the secondary students who range from 14 to 18 years fall under this category. The fact that the publication was exposing these minors to adult rated content was worrying, bearing in mind that the copies of the magazine were freely accessible to the students both at home and in school.

From the above conclusion it is recommended that in order to promote a more positive role the media plays on behaviour of the youth, firm measures must be put in place such as reduce the high frequency of content related to negative behaviour in the media. This entails the Kenya Government establishing a strong print media regulatory body like the Kenya Films Classification Board which regulates film and broadcast content. This would help rein on print media content not suitable for minors. This is significant to establish because it would be completely redundant to put checks and balances for example, on sexual explicit content and alcohol related material in television and radio stations only to allow such content to infiltrate the print media through free-pull-out magazines like the Pulse. There should also be policies clearly outlining the positive role the media should play in the development of the youth who form the largest portion of the Kenyan population.

## Conflict of Interest

Authors confirm there are no conflict of interest between any other parties. Authors also confirm that the study above (including introduction, materials and methods, results and discussion, as well as conclusion) are fully responsible by author and co-authors.

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