

ABSTRACT

Sexual risk taking behavior among adolescents remains an area of interest due to its potential detrimental consequences. Researchers have pointed out that impulsivity and sensation seeking are possible expeditors of adolescent sexual risk taking behavior both of which are developmentally capacitated, and whose influence may be catalyzed by peer pressure that increases during this period. In Kisumu municipality, sexual risk taking behavior among adolescents has been reported as the major contributors to the high HIV/AIDS prevalence which stands at 15 % against the national prevalence of 5.1%. Despite available evidence on the possible links, there still exists limited knowledge on the relationship between developmental capacitation and sexual risk taking as well as the mediating role of peer pressure. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between developmental capacitation, peer pressure and sexual risk taking among secondary school adolescents. The objectives of the study were to determine the relationship between; adolescents' developmental capacitation and sexual risk taking, determine the relationship between susceptibility to peer pressure and sexual risk taking, examine the relationship between developmental capacitation and susceptibility to peer pressure and to determine the mediation effects of peer pressure on the relationship between developmental capacitation and sexual risk taking. The study adopted descriptive survey and correlation research designs. From the study population of 10,278 secondary school students in 31 secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality, a sample size of 384 students was selected using stratified random sampling based on type of school. Ten School counselors and 10 Deputy head teachers of the sampled schools were the key informants. Data was collected using Barrat Impulsivity Scale 11, Sensation Seeking Scale V, Peer Pressure Inventory, Risky Sexual Behavior Indulgence Scale, interview schedule for school counselors and deputy head teachers and two focused group discussions. Reliability of the instruments was ascertained using Cronbach's alpha and α value of .81, .74, .69 and .79 were obtained for the five scales respectively. Content validity was established through subjecting the instruments to expert opinions of members of the department of Educational Psychology. SPSS and AMOS application packages were used to run logistic regression analyses and Structural Equation Modeling respectively. Study findings indicated a significant relationship between developmental capacitation and sexual risk taking, which varied across the genders. Sensation seeking was a better predictor of sexual risk taking among male adolescents (OR=1.847 (CI 95 %: 1.011-3.373)) while impulsivity was better predictor among the female adolescents (OR=2.023 (CI 95%: 1.123-3.647)). There was a positive significant relationship between susceptibility to peer pressure and sexual risk taking except for family and school involvement. Family involvement significantly predicted sexual risk taking among male adolescents (OR=.488(CI 95 %: .305-.783)) while misconduct made significant prediction of sexual risk taking among the female adolescents (OR= 2.847(CI 95%:1.484-5.558)). Developmental capacitation was positively and significantly correlated to all indicators of susceptibility to peer pressure except family involvement and school involvement. Peer pressure partially mediated the relationship between developmental capacitation and sexual risk taking behavior. The study recommended that behavioral strategies developed for secondary school adolescents should be gender differentiated and that peer group is a useful entry into addressing sexual risk taking challenges. These findings are useful to educational and youth stakeholders in designing appropriate preventive educational intervention programs to address adolescents' sexual risk taking behavior.