

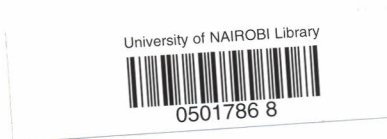
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Information, Education and Communication Messages in the Mass Media Among Adolescents: A Case Study of the Television “*Chill*” Adverts

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) mediated messages among adolescents by examining the “*Chill*” adverts that ran in the media in 2005.

The objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of the behaviour change messages mediated through television targeting adolescent and youth sexual behaviour. This was done by studying how the youth perceive these messages and the possible reasons why despite these efforts there seems to be no significant change in adolescent sexual behaviour.

The research methods used were interviews using questionnaires as the research instrument, as well as focus group discussions. In the preliminaries, there was a mission to discover who the advertisers were, that is, those who put these messages in the media. There was also need to find out what their objectives were and whether these objectives were met or not. This study was both qualitative and quantitative in that it gathered data that was quantified such as in a sample, how many youth have seen the behaviour change messages on alcohol and the “*Chill*” adverts. The data was put in percentages and averaged. There was also some data such as attitudes and feelings that was not quantifiable but nevertheless empirically investigated through descriptive means.

The study was carried out in October 2007 among school-going adolescents aged between the ages of 10 and 18 years who are in upper primary and secondary schools. A total of 577 respondents from four schools in Nairobi with a total population of 4030, were interviewed. The schools were selected according to their geographical location, one primary and one secondary school from an affluent neighbourhood and one primary school and one secondary school from a poor neighbourhood.

A brief summary of the findings revealed that the messages reached the target audience, with 94 percent of those interviewed saying they saw and understood the messages but they did not think they were very effective in achieving behaviour and attitude change among the adolescents. Only 10 percent of the respondents thought the “*Chill*” adverts

achieved their purpose of delaying sexual debut among adolescents. 90 percent of the respondents believe that the media, specifically television (TV), influence adolescent sexual behaviour through pornographic and sexually-charged movies and music videos. On how they learn a new behaviour, 60 percent said the best way they learn is from authority figures like parents and teachers, while 9 percent said they learn new behaviour from watching TV programmes. Only five percent said they learn a new behaviour from campaigns such as the “*Chill*” adverts. Therefore, one can conclude that the “*Chill*” adverts on TV were not effective in achieving attitude and behaviour of adolescents regarding sexual behaviour to delay their sexual debut.

Having seen what adolescents think of and how they view campaigns such the “*Chill*” adverts, it is necessary to come up with better ways of not just reaching them with messages, but also creating a supportive environment in which positive attitude and behaviour change can be achieved. These may include entertainment education or edutainment where they can learn from role models or where behaviour change messages are infused with entertainment in movies, soap operas and music videos since the respondents indicated that the media, especially TV, influence the adolescents. Also, a supportive environment involving parents and teachers as well as peers need to be set up to compliment the advertisements and programmes. This is because 60 percent of the respondents say they learn a new behaviour from parents and teachers while 14 percent said they learn from their peers. This therefore implies that behaviour change strategies should include both IEC messages as well as behaviour change communication (BCC) which provides a more supportive environment for new behaviour to be learned and sustained.