

**AUDIENCE RECEPTION OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE MEDIA MESSAGES IN
KAMPALA - UGANDA CASE STUDY OF GET OFF THE SEXUAL NETWORK
CAMPAIGN**

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DECLARATION

This is my original work, and has not been submitted anywhere for a similar degree in any other university.

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This work has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dr. Hezron Mogambi

DEDICATION

To my parents; Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Mukama,
Thanks for the sacrifices you made to give us an education.

To Becky, Emily and Michael-Samuel (RIP);
You are the Inspiration that I needed to soldier on.

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ABSTRACT

The study's overall objective was to understand how people with more than one sexual partner received, engaged with and made sense of "Get off the Sexual Network" media campaign. In order to do this, the study relied on two audience specific theoretical frameworks – the Uses and gratification theories and the decoding and encoding theories. The study's main assumption was that of an active audience, with the ability to engage with and make meaning of a given message as opposed to a passive mass of people. The study used non-probability sampling and purposively selected 45 respondents – 30 men and 15 women, from who it gathered primary data using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Because of the qualitative nature of the study, the data analysis started during data collection. During the interview, emerging issues were taken note of, and they were later categorised into themes and explored further in the subsequent interviews and discussions. These themes and subthemes were eventually reconstructed into narratives. The study revealed that audiences are very active participants in the entire communication process with the ability to engage the media messages, assessing its relevancy and applicability in their personal situations. The study also revealed that where fear arousing media images or text are used, audiences assess the threats and efficacy contained in those messages – based on individual belief, values and motivations – and these factors determine where he/she will adopt or dismiss the action recommended in the message. Several other factors – including gender, religion and the type of marriage played very critical roles in how the audiences perceived and engaged with the media messages. Men were more relaxed about the need to get off the sexual network compared to women, while polygamous men considered the messages inappropriate for them. Media campaigns are prone to being misunderstood and interpreted by the different individual target audiences. Fear arousing messages may not always lead to a positive reaction especially if it contradicts the audiences' comfort zone. And probably this explains why married couples or those in long-term relationships continue to be at very high risk of being infected with the HIV, despite the massive public campaigns against sexual networks. In conclusion, the study revealed that audiences are not homogenous and passive participants, but rather very highly individualized and active, who engage with a given media messages; with the powers within them to discard or even selectively expose themselves to those that appeal to them.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
UAC	Uganda AIDS Commission
UAIS	Uganda AIDS Indicator Survey
UHMG	Uganda Health Marketing Group
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide a background to the history and trends of HIV/AIDS in Uganda since the first case was reported almost thirty years ago; an explanation of the problem statement highlighting the existing gaps that the sought to address. The rationale for the study is also discussed, together with the study objectives; scope and limitations; and the definition of key terms as used in the study.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 HIV and AIDS in Uganda

Since the first case of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) was reported in Uganda the early 1980s, the country has born the burden of the epidemic which has destroyed lives, in some cases wiping out entire families and leaving millions of orphans in its wake (De Waal 2006). As a result, this burden has had both social and economic impact as children and grandparents were left to assume household head roles after the death of the parents, caregivers and adults due to AIDS related illnesses (Darabi et al., 2008; De Waal 2006).

Since then however, the country mounted a fight leading to the drastic reduction in the national average adult HIV prevalence rates from a high of 18.5 % in 1992 to about 5% in 2000 (UAC 2012)..A number of factors were attributed to this success, among which was the strong political leadership under President Yoweri Museveni, the open approach to combating the epidemic and a strong multi-sectoral, decentralised and community response (UAC 2012). The last 5 years

have however seen a steady increase of the national prevalence rates from 6.4% in 2004/2005 to the now reported 7.3% in 2013 (UAC 2014)

In Uganda, the HIV epidemic is still predominantly heterosexually transmitted (80% of infections), and vertical infections accounting for 20% while blood borne and other modes of transmission probably account for less than 1% (UAC 2008; UNAID 2009). In terms of mode of transmission most of the new infections are in the context of stable long term partnerships, driven in part by multiple (especially concurrent) partnerships, extra-marital relations, and transactional, early and cross generational sex and (b) the drivers of the HIV epidemic include behavioural, socio-economic and structural factors (UAC 2008).

Unfortunately, the infection rates have tended to increase with the level of wealth one acquires. Adults in the population in the lowest quintile have prevalence below the national average while the prevalence rates among the fourth and fifth quintile is above the respective national prevalence levels (UAIS 2011).

Among the key trends shows an emergency of a new risk group – married and co-habiting couples (UAIS 2011). This is due to the fact that many individuals in long-term relationships were having multiple and concurrent sexual partners, with whom they engage in risky sexual behavior. The figures of women with multiple sexual partners stood at 5% in Kampala – the highest percentage in the country; while that of the men was at 12% of men in Kampala (UAIS 2011). On the other hand, the figure of men with concurrent sexual partners stood at 5% while that of women was at 3% (UAIS 2011).

1.1.2 The Get Off the Sexual Network Campaign

In response to the above trends, the Uganda Health Marketing Group (UHMG) launched a multi-pronged campaign, known as the “Get off the sexual network” campaign in 2009 seeking to discourage multiple and concurrent sexual partners and encourage people to get off the “sexual networks”.

The campaign targeted well-educated, urban women (20-29 years) and men (25-39 years) across Uganda who were married or in long-term relationships, and sought to increase monogamous practices by five percent by the end of the four-phased campaign (USAID 2012).

The first phase of the campaign introduced the concept of the sexual network; the second highlighted the consequences to the individual, the partner, and the individual’s family. The third phase, highlighted steps people can take to remove themselves from the network. The last phase emphasized HIV counseling and testing, condoms use, and remaining faithful to one faithful partner. The campaign employed TV and radio spots, billboards, local theatre, and call-in radio shows (ibid).

With a mix of radio, outdoor, press advertisements (posters, leaflets and press releases), experiential teams, Forum Theater, games at community level and television commercials, the campaign sought to warn the public about multiple and concurrent sexual relationships because of the increased prevalence of HIV amongst couples. The campaign was stretched further to incorporate social media networks like Facebook, Youtube. The essence of this was to create

debate, questions, share experiences and solutions about sexual networks on social forums while maintaining the core virtue of living a good life.

1.2 Problem Statement

Fear-appeals have often been used by social marketers to raise awareness and inform people about the potential health risks associated with certain behaviors and appeal to them to change (Witte 1992, 1994; Wong 2009; Witte and Allen 2000). Others have however argued that arousing fear among the target audience is rarely successful as a campaign strategy (Backer et al 1992: 30) and this could possibly be responsible for the persistency of the high prevalence HIV rates among the married/people living together in Uganda.

In Uganda, the use of fear appeals to discourage people from engaging in multiple sexual relations and other risky sexual behavior seems to have not done much to dissuade the target populations. The last 5 years have seen a steady increase of the national prevalence rates from 6.4% in 2004/2005 to the now reported 7.3% in 2013 (UAC 2014). According to the 2013 *HIV and AIDS Uganda Country Progress Report*, the prevalence rates among the “married/ people living together” increased from 6.3% in 2004/2005 to 7.4% in 2011 (UAC 2014).

1.3 Rationale and Justification of the Study

Any communication that aims at influencing complex and persistent behavior of the audience must perform three functions: inform audiences about these behaviors and their consequences;

persuade audiences to cease or avoid those behaviors and finally, train audiences in skills necessary to translate intention into action (McAlister 1981).

The study sought to take a shift away from the traditional effects and quantitative measurement of the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of public communication campaigns promoting healthy behaviors. This is because issues of fidelity among people, and the family as an institution, pose very complex issues which include aspects of trust, religion and cultural expectations.

This study therefore sought to investigate the ways in which audiences, receive and make sense of media messages aimed at influencing their everyday life behavior. This study sought an in-depth examination of the dynamic involvement and varied interpretations of the audience, with a deep understanding of how these two (involvement and interpretations) relate and can be influenced by the audience’s personal characteristics.

In making the audience the central piece of focus, the study sought for a deeper understanding of the audience’s point of view when receiving and making sense of these media messages.

1.4 General Objective

The overall objective of the study was to understand how people with more than one sexual partner received, engaged with and made sense of “Get off the Sexual Network” media campaign.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

- i. Establish how audiences perceived, interpreted and related to the “Get off the Sexual Network” messages.
- ii. Determine the factors that influenced audience reception of the “Get off the Sexual Network” messages
- iii. Explore the impact of the “Get off the Sexual Network” media messages on the target audiences

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The study was limited to investigating the ways in which audiences received and interpreted the behavior change media messages run by the “Get off the Sexual Network” campaign. The study specifically focused on people who are or were once engaged in a multiple sexual relationship. The study did not engage in analyzing the overall effectiveness of the content of the media messages used in the campaign nor did it engage in doing a text analysis.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Serial monogamy: Being in a long-term relationship with one sexual partner at a time, and only getting involved in another after the current relationship has officially ended.

Sexual network: Being in a sexual relationship with more than one partner who also have more than one sexual partner of their own, ending up in a web.

Multiple sexual partner: Having more than one sexual partner within a given period (6-12 months).

Concurrent sexual partner: Being in a sexual relationship with more than one sexual partner during a given time frame.

Married couples: Refers to couples who have been in a long-term relationship (five years and above), and co-habiting.

Side dish: Refers to a regular sexual partner with whom you have a secret relationship.

Incidental sexual partner: Refers to a sexual partner met on assignment with no particular intentions of keeping the relationship beyond the sexual encounter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed the available literature on public media campaigns, including their role in creating awareness and leading to behavior change among audiences. The chapter also devolves into how audiences receive and engage with the massive information bombarded to them by the behavior change communication campaigns; and finally, how public media campaigns have used the fear appeal to cause behavior change. It also reviews the theoretical framework used in the study.

2.1 Public Media Campaigns

According to Rice and Atkin (2009), public media campaigns are purposive attempts to inform or influence behavior in large audiences within a specified time period using an organized set of communication activities. The campaign typically involves a wide range of mediated messages using multiple communication channels intended to produce noncommercial benefits to individuals and society. Public media campaigns involve strategies for producing effects on the knowledge levels, attitudes, and audience behavior across a variety of domains that include the political, pro-social, health and environmental outcomes (Rice &Atkin 2013).

There are essentially two main types of public media campaigns defined by the purpose and these include; (1) individual behavior change campaigns whose objective is to elicit behavior change within an individual and/or promote behavior that lead to improved individual or social

well-being and (2) public will campaigns that attempt to mobilize public action for policy change (Coffman 2002).

However, not all well designed public media campaigns achieve the intended objectives. This is largely because there are a number of resistance barriers that arise at each stage of the projected response from audience exposure to a given media message. Even with fear arousing media campaigns, there are a lot of unintended reactions resulting from misperception of their susceptibility to the consequences, denial of applicability of the message incentives, defensive counter-arguing against the persuasive appeals as well as complete rejection of the unfriendly behavior recommendations. Also, public communications campaigns become less effective when the audiences regard the messages to be offensive, irritating, and unbelievable or even un-motivating (Atkin & Rice 2013).

In their book, *Designing health communication campaigns: what works?* Backer et al (1992) outlined some key generalization about more effective health communications campaigns.

According to them (Backer et al 1992:30),

More effective campaigns use multiple media (television, radio, print, and so on); more effective campaigns combine mass media with community small group, individual activities, supported by an existing community structure (this involves using a “systems approach” to campaigns); more effective campaigns carefully target or segment the audience that the campaign is intended to reach; campaigns for preventive behavior are more effective if they emphasise positive behavior change rather than the negative consequences of current behavior; more effective campaigns set fairly modest, attainable goals in terms of behavior change; more effective campaigns direct messages to people

linked targeted individuals, especially with direct personal influence, such as peers (spouses) and parents; and more effective campaigns utilize utilize educational messages in entertainment contexts (referred to as the education-entertainment strategy); among other generalizations.

But while the above generalizations all speak of “more effective” campaigns, no assumption should be made that any one of them is more important than the other, nor should they be considered as the only essential attributed for success in any given behavior change campaign (Backer et al 1992:29).

2.3 Audience Reception of media messages

Audiences play a very central role in public communication campaigns since they are the primary targets whose behavior and attitudes are a subject for change. Media audiences play an active role in the communication process by exercising their assumed free will to choose and use media so as to fulfill their specific needs (Blumler and Katz 1974). Blumer and Katz (1974) further suggested four broad needs that media audiences gratify through consuming media products. These included; diversion (a form of escape from the everyday pleasures); personal relationships (a form of companionship created with media personalities or characters); personal identity (the ability to compare one’s life with the situations as portrayed by the media) and finally, surveillance (the need for information on current affairs). Audiences are therefore always on the lookout for media content and programs that meet these or a combination of these needs.

Audience are always engaged in decoding (constructing the meaning) of the media texts/messages which is of a paramount importance because it constitutes self-confident, independent spectators, capable of action in favor of or against the media texts (Hall 1980, 1993). Hall argues that audiences receive and decode media texts depending on their social position and orientation. Public communications campaigners are more interested and would consider their campaign successful if the audiences positively receive the information and recommendations or embrace the proposed actions. For this to happen however, the audience must share in the ideology of the media message without questioning its authenticity or relevancy. This is what Hall refers to as the dominant-hegemonic position or preferred position reading.

Some audiences however while appreciating the dominant position of the communication campaign, may require certain clarifications from the campaigners to fully embrace the information and call of action. In clarifying these uncertainties, the communication process will then achieve what Hall refers to as negotiated meaning. According to Hall (1980), a lot of misunderstanding and failure of communication campaigns are a result of the campaigners failing to address the issues raised by the audiences. Lastly, Hall (1980) argues that sometimes, the audience may arrive at a totally different interpretation of the objectives of the media campaign. He refers to this as oppositional/protest reading of the texts.

According to McQuail (1997), media use is always likely to be shaped predominantly according to early experience and identifications forged in personal social life or in line with the social context of the moment. At each point of the communicative process there is a scope of

indetermination which allows for several potential meanings and impacts to be enacted. Also, reception is a social act that serves to negotiate the definition of social reality in the context of broad cultural and communicative practices (Jensen 1991: 137)

2.4 The Use of Fear Appeals in Media Campaigns

Mass media campaigners have employed the use of fear appeals to enhance the effectiveness of their health behavior change messages (Wong, et al; 2009). According to Witte (1992, 1994) media messages are designed to arouse fear among individuals by providing graphic descriptions of the negative consequences that they will experience unless they stop engaging in risky behavior and embrace corrective measures. Fear appeals have often been used by social marketers to raise awareness and inform people about the potential health risks associated with certain behaviors and appeal to them to change.

According to Witte and Allen (2000), fear appeals are more effective when they contain high levels of threat as well as efficacy. The media message must have a strong threat or risk, and a specific action that the audience should take to mitigate the threat or risk. The message must therefore arouse the target audience to the fact that whatever the risk or threat, they have the ability to deal with them. The individual needs to perceive that there is a way to address the threat and that he or she is capable of performing that behavior.

In his *Extended Parallel Process Model*, Witte (1992, 1994) argues that there are two parallel message appraisals whenever an individual is exposed to a threat, that's to say, threat appraisal

and efficacy appraisal. During the threat appraisal, the individual makes an assessment of the severity of the threat and his or her vulnerability to that threat. While on the other hand, efficacy appraisal, the individual will make an assessment of the suitability of the proposed action as well as personal ability to perform the respective action as recommended in the media message.

The above two message appraisals, would therefore lead to three fear appeal effects that include; (i) non-response effects, (ii) danger control effects, and (iii) fear control effects. This is because, when the individual perceives threat and efficacy to be low, the fear appeals will then produce a null effect on his/her behavior change because he/she does not see a serious personal health risk. In the end, the fear appeal is ignored because the message has failed to enlist any threat that would incite the individual to give consideration to the efficacy piece of information that has been embedded in the message (Witte 1994). On the other hand however, when the perceived threat is high, the fear appeals may either lead to either a positive or negative behavior change, but this also entirely depends on the assessment of efficacy.

Secondly, if perceived efficacy is high, the fear appeals will lead to danger control (i.e., adaptive) responses as individuals attempt to reduce and tame their feelings of fear (Witte, 1994). The attention will then shift to eliminating the perceived the threat through adopting the recommended behavior. On the hand however, if perceived efficacy is low, the individual will instead embrace fear control (i.e., maladaptive) responses. His/her whole purpose will be on eliminating the perceived fear, but this time, by doing nothing about the threat, being defensive, about it, and total denial of the existence of the threat (Witte; et al., 1998).

According to Bourne (2010), when individuals are faced with messages that arouse fear, they engage in a number of different coping strategies including; avoidance where the fear arousing message is ignored by either switching off the channel, turning the page among other options; denial where, the individual convinces him/herself that the harmful consequences as portrayed by the fear-arousing message are unlikely to happen to him/her; counter-arguing where the individual rejects the whole notion of the risk as portrayed in the fear-arousing message arguing it to be an exaggeration by the source. Finally, individuals react by what Bourne calls, Othering, where the person deflects the messages away from themselves – claiming the message was not designed to target him or her.

When it comes to HIV prevention, Fry (1996) argues that it is a process which cannot be pegged on a single media campaign. He says that an audience cannot be held in a permanent state of fear and after a while they will simply ‘switch off’ from scary imagery or information as part of a self-protective mechanism. Arousing fear is rarely successful as a campaign strategy (Backer et al 1992: 30). Fear appeals may therefore be more effective at triggering the desired behavior change in the short-term but their influence diminishes with time (Schoenbachler & Whittler 1996). If fear appeals are used in campaign messages, they should be coupled with mechanisms for reducing the anxiety that is created (Backer et al 1992: 31).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study will rely on two theoretical frameworks; the uses and gratification theory as well as the decoding and encoding mode.

2.5.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

The origin of the uses and gratification theory lies in the search for explanations of the great appeal of certain staple media contents. According to McQuail (1997), the central question posed by media scholars was: why do people use media and what do they use them for? (McQuail 1997: 70). The theory presupposes that media use behaviors are influenced by certain internal individual needs, expectations, and specific gratification-seeking motives, which in turn influence the effects of their media use habits (Lin 1993). Lin argues that with such self-fashioned intentions, audiences are able to dictate their content selection and use patterns for the purposes of fulfilling their gratification expectations.

The basic assumptions of this approach were; a) media and content choice is generally rational and directed toward certain specific goals and satisfaction that is to say, the audience is active and its formation can be logically explained; b) audience members are conscious of the media-related needs that arise in personal (individual) and social (shared) circumstances and can voice these in terms of motivations; c) broadly speaking, personal utility is a more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors; and d) all or most of the relevant factors for audience formation (motives, perceived or obtained satisfactions, media choices, background variables) can, in principle be measured (McQuail 1997: 71)

According to Blumler and Katz (1974) therefore, media audiences play an active role in choosing and using the media and/or its content. Audiences take an active part in the communication process and are believed to have clear goals and objectives in consuming certain media products, which is essentially to fulfill the audiences' specific needs. According to the

uses and gratification theory, audiences have a free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them.

In her study, which was examining key factors influencing people's selection for different newspaper content, Wang (1977) discovered that people tend to concentrate on news items which they perceived to be of most relevance to them. On their part, Blumler and McQuail (1968) argue that media use is driven by surveillance (where individuals seek for information such as news to help them accomplish something), personal identity (where individuals seek media or information to reinforce their values), anticipated communication, excitement, among other perceived gratifications. In short, audiences are not passive consumers of media messages but rather quite active and selective.

In fact, Klapper (1960) suggested that sometimes individuals expose themselves to, perceive and retain media messages selectively. According to him, an individual will choose to engage with a certain media if that media/message resonates well with his/her beliefs, values and aspirations. In circumstances where the individual has no option but to be exposed, Klapper argues that the respective individual will choose to perceive the message selectively. And this will still depend on the person's beliefs, values, motivations, and other factors. It is therefore not incomprehensible that two individuals are exposed to the same media messages, but have different interpretations and perceptions.

Further, Klapper (1960) suggests that the amount of information that individuals decide to remember after a given exposure is influenced by factors such as the individual's beliefs, values,

motivations, and other aspirations. Mass media audiences can therefore not be treated as victims of persuasive media campaigns, but rather very active players in receiving, processing and interpreting the media messages they get exposed to. The mass media campaigns can thus be seen more as agents of reinforcement than causal agents of behavior and attitude change among their target audiences (Klapper 1960). This is because the individuals will subject all media messages they get exposed to, to a litmus test and will only choose and use those that fulfill their specific needs and gratifications (Blumer and Katz 1974).

2.5.2 Encoding and Decoding Theory

The encoding and decoding theory provides a frame of understanding the relationship between media messages and audiences by concentrating on how audience make sense of the media messages through their use of cultural symbols in both print and visual media (Campbell 2003).

According to Hall (1980), meaning from media messages is not determined by the producer, who merely encodes it, but by the receiver (audience) who decodes the media text and thereby constructs the meaning of the text through his/her own reality. In other words, the senders encode meaning in their messages according to their ideals and views and the messages are decoded by the receivers according to their own ideals and views, which may lead to miscommunication or to the receiver understanding something very different from what the sender intended (Hall 1993).

Hall (1980, 1993) therefore sees the media audience as always active because it is constructing the meaning of the media texts/messages which is of a paramount importance because it constitutes self-confident, independent spectators, capable of action in favor of or against the media texts. According to Fiske (1987), media audiences are not merely passive masses on the receiving end, but rather are active participants in decoding and engaging with the media messages in a myriad of ways the senders can never fathom.

In discussing his Encoding and Decoding theory, Hall notes that there are three different positions audiences assume in the process of decoding the meanings within cultural texts, particularly televisual discourses. These positions include; the dominant-hegemonic position; the negotiated position; and the oppositional position (Hall 1993: 101).

According to Hall (1980, 1993), the audience can be said to have assumed the dominant-hegemonic position when he/she is in total agreement with the ethos of the media messages as envisaged by the sender. When this happens, there will be very little misunderstanding and/or miscommunication, since the sender and receiver are operating within the same set of rules, assumptions and cultural biases. Uganda's success story in fighting HIV&AIDS is indeed attributed to the practical application of a campaign that reflected the realities in the society. In advocating for especially the young and unmarried people to Abstain or delay their sexual encounter; being faithful to their sexual partners, and the consistent and proper use of condoms, the leadership was aware of the sexual behaviors of the masses. Each of these messages were carefully crafted and meant for different audiences (De Waal 2006).

On the other hand, the audience is thought to have assumed the negotiated position when they are able to decode the sender's message within the context of the dominant cultural and societal views (Hall 1993: 102) but also within the framework and contexts of their individual situations. Hall argues that it is entirely possible for the audience to decode the message as more personal message, which is when their own biases and viewpoints affect the decoding process. It therefore becomes critical for messages senders to provide mitigation measures, including availing avenues where the audience can seek clarification should he/she need more information.

And lastly, the oppositional view is when the audience has the ability to decode the message in the way it was intended to be decoded, but often chooses to decipher a different interpretation based on their own societal beliefs (Hall 1993: 103).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study research design, including the sources of the data and the relevant data collection techniques that were used. The chapter further explains how the study dealt with issues of reliability and validity of the data collected as well as the sampling techniques that were used. Data analysis and interpretation, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, and informed consent are also clearly explained. This section also discusses how the data collection instruments and tools were pre-tested before being employed in the field.

3.1 Research design

In order to achieve the overall study objective of understanding how married people received and engaged with the “Get off the Sexual Network” media messages, the study used a cross-sectional design employing purely qualitative approaches where audience views and interpretations of media messages of the ‘Get off the Sex Network Campaign’ were documented and analyzed. This was because qualitative methods of research have long been considered the most appropriate for in-depth understanding of beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, motivations, views and behaviors of people in particular social contexts (Raftopoulou 2007: 17).

3.2 Data collection techniques

In order to gather information that helped the researcher understand how audiences receive and interact with behavior change media messages, the study used primary data that was collected by conducting in-depth interviews and one focus group discussion with a sample size of the population. This was because in-depth interviews have the ability to generate much more

detailed information than what can be achieved through other data collection methods, such as surveys (Boyce & Neale 2006). Additionally, these in-depth interviews provided me with more accurate responses to a very sensitive issue of fidelity in marriage and relationships (Wimmer & Dominick 2006). Specifically, a set of written questions were used, allowing the researcher the flexibility to amend with follow-up questions during the interview making it possible to gather more in-depth responses.

In order to compliment the limitations of in-depth interviews, the study had proposed to conduct two focus group interviews with some of the interviewees who took part in the individual in-depth interviews (each for males and female respondents), but this was not possible as all the female respondents declined to participate. Nonetheless, the single (only males) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was quite useful as the responses were more complete and less inhibited than those from individual interviews, validating Wimmer & Dominick's (2006) assertion about focus group discussions that a response from one respondent has a tendency to stimulate others to pursue lines of thinking that might not have been elicited in a situation involving just one individual.

The FGD was also helpful in validating some of the personal interview responses as well as gauging the mannerisms of participants when discussing such a sensitive issue as fidelity in a group setting. The study took cognizant of nonverbal expressions such as nodding or frowning.

As part of the interview process, participants were showed three samples of the campaign poster materials that were used by the UHMG and an audio clip played back to them to refresh their memory.

3.3 Pretesting

In order to ensure accuracy as well as relevancy and validity of the information collected, the research instruments were pre-tested among selected respondents similar to those to be interviewed, and reviewed by communication research experts. The instruments were amended accordingly to serve the purpose, which was to capture the relevant information needed for analysing and achieving the study objectives.

3.4 Data sources

The study relied on primary sources of data from the interviews that were conducted as part of the data collection procedure.

3.5 Issues of reliability and validity

In order to ensure that the information gathered was reliable and valid, the study used two methods of data collection, in-depth interview of individuals as well as conducting two follow-up focus group interviews with a section of the interviewees. Additionally, the two research instruments were subjected to review by both the supervisor and other experts in the field of communication research. After every interview, a summary of the respondents' answers were read back to the respondent(s) to validate their responses, but also provide the interviewees with an opportunity to either change or consent that I have captured what they have told me (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

3.6 Sample size and sampling procedure

The study used non-probability sampling since it was interested in finding out how a small group could be used for illustration purposes (Kombo & Tromp 2006). The study thus purposively selected and interviewed a sample of 45 married people (30 men and 15 women). These were interviewed as individuals not as couples. Because of the central objective of the study, the study used criterion sampling to identify the 45 participants who were currently engaged or had been involved in a multiple sexual relationship during the campaign period. Criterion sampling involved searching for cases of participants who met the specific criterion (Lisa M, 2008). Additionally, given the sensitivity of the issue under investigations, the study used the snowball or networking method to recruit additional participants by working with the initial number to reach out to colleagues who were hard to reach or willing to participate in the study due to lack of confidence and trust.

The study started with 10 of my male acquaintances who fit the sampling criteria. Through my interaction with public transport drivers (both motorcyclists and special hire taxis) I was able to identify a further 10, who I then requested to bring along a friend who fit the study, bringing the total to 30. This number made up for the deficiencies I faced with the female respondents where I could only manage to get 15 participants.

In identifying the female participant, without the benefit of any known female acquaintances who fitted the criteria, I requested friends and colleagues who knew of anyone fitting the study criteria of the sample. And unlike the males who are not so secretive about their affairs and actually share with peers, the females were quite a challenge. Indeed the snowball method could

only work at the level of identifying someone who once had an affair. None of the people interviewed could bring a colleague.

During the FGD, the study requested 5 of the participants who participated in the individual interviews to participate in the FGD. These comprised of two Moslems with more than one wife; two Christians wedded in church; and one secular who had had a traditional marriage.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Because the study was basically qualitative and was using in-depth interviews and FGD, the data analysis started during data collection. During the interview, I took note of upcoming relevant issues, categorised them into themes and explored them further in the subsequent interviews and discussions. These themes and subthemes were eventually reconstructed into narratives. The results from the individual in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion are interpreted simultaneously. For purposes of emphasis, direct quotations from the interviewees are extensively used during the presentations and discussion of the findings.

3.8 Ethical considerations

In order to uphold the ethical considerations of confidentiality and informed consent, all the participants in this study were briefed on the intended purpose and objective of the study, they were informed that participation was voluntary and they could choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. All the participants declined to be recorded on tape, but were willing to be interviewed while I took the notes. Even then, verbal consent was sought before starting the interview itself and assured them that all the answers were confidential. Again, only the initials

of the participants' names have been used in the presentations to reserve the true identities of respondents.

3.9 Study Area Rationale

The study was conducted in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. This was because, as the capital, city, Kampala is cosmopolitan with a diversity of population quintiles. At 5%, Kampala holds the joint highest number of women with multiple sexual partners, yet it also has the lowest number of men (at 12%) with multiple sexual partners (UAIS 2011). This provided for an interesting investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings from the study as well as the interpretation. The findings are presented basing on three broad themes; (a) audience perception, interpretation of and relation to the “Get off the Sexual Network” media messages; and (b) audience reception of fear arousing media messages and (c) the factors influencing audience reception of the “Get off the Sexual Network campaign media messages.

Direct quotations from the interviews and FGD have been used quite extensively in discussing some of the key findings. For purposes of confidentiality and in line with the assurances given to the interviewees, only initials of the participants have been used in the presentation of the findings.

4.1 Audience perception of the “Get off the Sexual Network” media messages.

The study has revealed that audiences view public media campaigns as useful tools in raising awareness of the ways through which HIV is spread and warning the people from engaging in risky sexual behavior, noting that media campaigns have indeed played a critical role in reducing the HIV prevalence from the highs of 18.5% in the 1992 to about 5% in the 2000.

“Some of us need these constant reminders, given the temptations that we encounter every day. Just because I know the dangers of engaging in risky sexual behaviors doesn’t mean that I will not. But these constant reminders, and sometimes scares have saved some of us from falling for the temptations.” Says AB (male respondent).

JK (male respondent) agrees thus;

“These campaigns are very useful, because they act like a big brother watching over you. For us who are always in residential workshops, away from home, the temptation to go to bed with other participants is very high, especially after a beer or two in the evening. But there is this nagging sound – “who are you really sleeping with?” So, it is important that we have these constant reminders.”

For most respondents, the media campaigns (re)initiated a self-evaluation process of their life and behavior. This is because HIV/AIDS has been in Uganda since the early 1980s, and there has been a great transition especially in the appearances of the patients – from the thin/emaciated to very health looking people living with the virus. It is no longer possible for others to “diagnose” with the naked eyes as used to be back then.

“For me, these campaigns are very useful. When I was still a (female) student, you always wondered if your boyfriend is also cheating on you, who else he is sleeping with, is he using a condom, etc, because anyone can have the virus. When you are alone and think about it, you imagine all sorts of things and then realize that the (power) to change your life is in your hands. Condom use had to then become part of our sexual life, but I also eventually had to change my ways. says RN (female respondent).

Of course the messages were quite hard hitting, especially for us with more than one sexual partner, but at the end of the day, what I thought really mattered was engaging in safer sex, and for me I always use a condom. Explained MY (male respondent)

For MN (female respondent), the campaign was very personal;

These messages were really speaking to me and warning me to abandon my risky sexual behavior. But as you know, it is a process. And it took some time for me to make that decision to get tested for HIV. But once I was told that I was negative that was the end.

The study also revealed that the media campaigns can inadvertently lead to misinterpretation of the entire campaign. While most respondents believed that the campaign was aimed at portraying the people who have more than one sexual partner as being at high risk of contracting and spreading HIV to their loved ones, some respondents felt that as heterosexuals, they were being portrayed as if they were indirectly having sex with fellow men.

*The thought of (me) sleeping with another man really struck me.... and the first time I encountered these message..... anywhere (radio/television/billboards), it sent a chill down my spine..... Says **EM** (male respondent)*

“I would switch off (the radio) or tune to another station” he says.

*That question of; “who are you really sleeping with?”(in the adverts) was quite a wake-up call for me... you know people living with HIV are still stigmatized in Uganda.... So the thought of sharing my sexual partner with someone else whose (HIV) status I do not know really scared me.... It is always easy to tell yourself that you are dating two guys, but when you think about the possibility that your two guys could also be having other sexual partners, you wake up... (**JBL** female respondent)*

On the other hand, other respondents felt the messages were irritating and portraying people with more than one sexual partner in a bad light, leading to negative reception about the campaign.

The messages were very judgmental and I had a negative reaction. Says VA (female respondent)

We (people on sexual networks) were portrayed as being unreliable, irresponsible and not aware of what I am doing, which is not the case. Says JW (male respondent)

The study also revealed the existence of an active audience that decodes media messages through their cultural symbols. It is interesting that one of the respondents (**EM** above) interpreted the campaign as insinuating that he is actually practicing homosexuality. This is in line with Hall (1980; 1993) and Fiske (1987) assertions that audiences decode and engage with media messages in ways that senders can never really anticipate and never intended in the first place.

And through the actions of **EM** of switching off and/or tuning to another station, the study reveals that indeed audiences can be selective in the way they receive and engage with a given media message. In this case, the respondent chose to selectively avoid the message because it was not resonating well with his beliefs. This is consistent with Klapper's (1960) argument that audiences receive and perceive media messages selectively based on their beliefs, values and motivations among other factors.

4.2 Audience reception of fear arousing media campaigns

The study also revealed media campaigns with fear arousing messages are appraised by the individual recipients for their threat and efficacy, with respondents assessing the severity of risks

that their sexual behavior exposed them to and their suitability or capacity to take up the recommended action – getting off the sexual network, getting tested and living a good life.

According to PD (male respondent) he had to re-think his sex life in some way due to the campaign. And while he has not entirely quit the vice, but says he uses condoms as a safety measure.

“I am no longer the player I used to be back then, but once in a while if I am tempted really, I must use a condom. And will always go and test for HIV. The campaign had a personal message regarding my behavior.

The study also revealed that decision to leave or stay in the sex network for most was based on their individual assessment of the risks they felt. Majority of the male respondents did not feel necessarily the need to end their other sexual relationships, especially those who claimed to be using condoms consistently. Some female respondents on the other hand went ahead to end the relationships after assessing their vulnerability and inability to sometimes demand the use of condoms with their sexual partners. This reaction would be quite consistent with the social, cultural and religious contexts of Uganda where men are allowed to have more than one wife and polygamy is generally accepted. Yet it is taboo for a woman to have more than one husband. Indeed polyandry in Uganda is quite a taboo.

The study also revealed that some audiences favor the use of fear arousing, shocking and hard-hitting images/messages. This was largely informed by the country’s history with the HIV

epidemic, which has virtually affected everyone and the assumed role that scary messages played in the early days of HIV in Uganda, with catchy phrases like; “AIDS KILLS”

Sometimes people need a rude awakening (JB – male respondent 2014) even if they will not respond to the message the way you want. You would be surprised that there are those who got discourage to even start engaging in extra marital affairs after being bombarded with the Get off the Sexual Network campaign messages.

This scenario would have provided the best results possible of matching up the required percentages of people abandoning the behavior with the likelihood that other likely candidates have not joined. For most public media campaigners, these results provide the best case scenario.

Some respondents however felt fear arousing, shocking and hard-hitting images have less effect in Uganda right now and are a bit irresponsible.

People already know the effects of AIDS and there are people who have lived with the virus for a long time. Besides, we also have children who were born with the virus, who are now in their twenties. So, what message are you sending to them? That they were reckless with their lives? No no no...” says PW (male respondent)

4.3 Factors that influenced audience reception of the Get of the Sexual Network campaign messages

From the study, it has emerged that several factors influenced how the target audiences received one love campaign media messages. It is important to note here that the main goal of the campaign was to “increase serial monogamy among the target population by 5%. The media messages were thus designed and packaged in ways that captured the attention of the audiences and enlist some kind of intra-personal reflections on the subject matter.

The study reveals that gender played a key role in how audiences received and interacted with the campaign messages. While the females felt the immediate need to abandon the vice, completely, their male counterparts reaction was to engage in safe sex by consistently using a condom rather than disengaging from having side dishes.

The temptation is always high out there..... (so) I used to pack condoms whenever I would travel, but if you have noticed, most of the hotels now sell them (condoms), so it is easy (according to PM – male respondent)

The study also revealed that religion plays a very central role in the sex life individuals. Male respondents wedded in church revealed that the campaign was a direct interrogation of their unfaithfulness to their spouses more than the dangers described in the advertisements, while their Moslem counterparts with more than one wife felt the campaign was asking them to be vigilant with their wives.

“The campaign was not for me directly, but the message I got was to engage my wives and not to give them any reason to cheat on me” said RM (male Moslem respondent – he has three wives)

According to HB, also a polygamous Moslem male respondent;

“Just because I have more than one wife should not mean that I am on a sex network. These are my official wives. I would only be concerned if my wives were cheating on me”

Related to the above, the study also revealed that the type of marriage or relationship was a very big factor in determining how audiences received and interpreted the Get off the Sexual Network

media messages. The male respondents who considered themselves to be polygamous did not consider the campaign targeting their sexual behavior, on the other hand, male respondents who were wedded in church or officially introduced by the spouse to their families (traditional marriages) felt the campaign was targeting their unfaithfulness on top of portraying them as a risky group.

The messages did not really affect my sexual behavior because I have two wives who are faithful to me. Says SW, male respondent.

The campaign was very offensive to me and alarmist. That I am very stupid, reckless ... just because I have more than one sexual partner. Says JT (male respondent with children from two different women)

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0: Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusions from the key findings of the study and proceeds to make both specific and general recommendations for future academic and application research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study sought to understand how married people engaged with and related to, including making sense of one love campaign media messages that was aimed at changing their sexual behaviors. Specifically, the study had three objectives, which included; establish how audiences perceived, interpreted and related to the “Get off the Sexual Network” campaign messages; establish factors that influenced audience reception of the Get off the Sexual Network campaign messages; and establish the impact of the Get off the Sexual Network campaign media messages on the target audiences.

The main assumption of the study was that of an active audience capable of engaging with and interpreting given media messages based on individual orientations and feelings. Indeed the study confirmed the existence of a very active and individualized audience – even among the target audiences, despite their similarity in behavior.

The study revealed that audiences are very active participants in the entire communication processes with the ability to engage the media messages, assessing its relevancy and applicability in their personal situations.

The study also revealed that where fear arousing media images or text are used, audiences assess the threats and efficacy contained in those messages – based on individual belief, values and motivations – and these factors determine where he/she will adopt or dismiss the action recommended in the message.

The study also revealed that several other factors – including gender, religion and the type of marriage played very critical roles in how the audiences perceived and engaged with the media messages. Men were more relaxed about the need to get off the sexual network compared to women, while polygamous men considered the messages inappropriate for them.

The study also revealed that indeed media campaigns are prone to being misunderstood and interpreted by the different individual target audiences; but also that fear arousing messages do not always lead to a positive reaction especially if it contradicts the audiences' comfort zone. And probably this explains why married couples or those in long-term relationships continue to be at very high risk of being infected with the HIV, despite the massive public campaigns against sexual networks.

The study also revealed that the biggest impact of the campaign was to keep the reality of the HIV on peoples' agenda and raise awareness of the existence of sexual networks that were becoming key drivers of the HIV virus.

5.2 Conclusion

The above findings largely provides proof to the various arguments that have been made about an active audience, capable of exercising their assumed free will to choose and use media; (Blumer & Ktaz 1974) and are always engaged in decoding media texts depending on their social positions and orientation (Hall 1980; 1993). When audiences are hit with a certain media messages, especially those laden with fear arousing texts or images, these are interpreted in relation to the audiences' personal, social and other contexts. In the study findings, most of the respondents felt that there was a personal message within the advertisements about their sex life, despite the varied reactions to the recommended next steps in the adverts – “get off the sex network and get tested”.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 For Behavior Change Campaign Designers

In designing behavior change media campaigns the use fear appeals, care should be taken not to overdo it as the audiences will develop a resistance to the messages. In a situation like Uganda, even with the associated stigma around people living with HIV, AIDS is no longer such a immediate threat given the fact that PLWH on medication can look as healthy as any other person and live a “normal” life including giving birth to children who are HIV free.

Institutions such as cultural and religious institutions should be incorporated in behavior change campaigns as these play a significant role in influence the audiences' beliefs, values and perceptions and by extension, the audiences' reception of media messages.

And as noted in my conclusion, the study reveals that gender is a key factor in how audiences receive and engage with behavior change campaign messages. It would therefore be important, while conceptualizing and designing behavior campaign media messages to reflect some of the realities and have gendered media campaigns.

5.3.2 For Future Research

While the study has generated some interesting findings, regarding audience behavior towards and reception of fear arousing media messages, there is still a lot of room for more research into the subject.

The study solely focused on the target audiences for the campaign, it may be important that future research include audiences who are not engaged in multiple sexual relations – if not for comparison purposes, to try and understand the unintended effects of the campaign on other audiences of interest.

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APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS GUIDE

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome and thank you for accepting to participate. My name is Paul Kimumwe, I am an MA student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting this interview for my thesis to determine how audiences received and adopt to behavior change media messages, specifically, the “Get off the Sexual Network” media campaign. Everything you say here is confidential and only your initials will be used in my report.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

1. What is your name (Initials only)? _____
Occupation? _____
Religion/faith _____
2. What kind of long term sexual relationship are you in? (Married/dating)
3. How long have you been in the current relationship? _____
4. Have you ever had a sexual relationship with more than one person in the same period?
Yes/No: _____
5. If YES, what led to this and how long ago was this? _____

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

1. Do you remember any media campaign against sexual networks? If yes, kindly provide a description of the campaign: _____
2. Why do you think you remember this/these media campaigns? _____

3. What is your opinion about these campaigns? _____
4. In your opinion, what was the purpose of these campaigns? _____
5. Do you think these campaigns are useful? _____
6. What do you feel about how the campaigns portray people who have more than one sexual partner? _____
7. Do you think these campaigns are against polygamy? _____

AUDIENCE RECEPTION OF FEAR AROUSING MEDIA MESSAGES:

Showing the ads: (see below Images I, II & III Audio clip

1. What do you think these images and clip are communicating in your own words? _____
2. What were your feelings and thoughts when you first saw it in the street, TV etc? _____
3. How did you react when you first saw/view the advertisement? _____
4. What was so striking about it? _____
5. How did it make you feel after watching/seeing it a couple of times? _____
6. Did you ever feel it was targeting you? Was there any message for you in the advertisement?

7. Given what you knew/know about HIV/AIDS, did you pick anything that you considered crucial to your personal health? _____
(And what was that?) _____
8. What are your thoughts on the way people with multiple/concurrent sexual relations are represented in this particular? _____
9. Do you think fear arousing, shocking and or hard-hitting images should be used in HIV&AIDS campaigns? Why? Why not? _____

10. How would you describe something shocking? _____

11. What would be hard hitting and shocking enough to be effective in such a campaign? ____

12. What would be shocking and arouse fear in you personally? _____

CONCLUDING:

Any further comments or anything you want to add/clarify that we have not covered in the interview? _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

APPENDIX II: FOCUS GROUP (FOLLOW-UP) INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome and thank you once again for accepting to participate in this focus group discussion.

My name is Paul Kimumwe, I am an MA student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting this interview for my thesis to determine how audiences received and adopt to behavior change media messages, specifically, the “Get off the Sexual Network” campaign. Everything you say here is confidential and only your initials will be used in my report.

I have talked to all of you here privately and this is just a follow up to our discussions. It should take a maximum of 30-45 minutes.

ACTION: Share copies of the advertisements to the participants (Images I, II and III) and played audio clip I

1. What were your first thoughts of these advertisements when you saw them? _____
2. Can you describe the message that they are communicating? _____
3. What are your feelings/thoughts on fear arousing media campaigns? _____
4. How did these advertisements make you feel in general? _____

CONCLUDING

Any further comments or anything you want to add/clarify that we have not covered in the interview?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

APPENDIX III: SAMPLE OF THE “GET OFF THE SEXUAL NETWORK CAMPAIGN” MEDIA IMAGES


Image I




Image II

Who are you
really **sleeping** with?

CAT **H** Y T **I** M **V** INCENT



Get off the sexual network,
get tested for HIV and start a new life.

 **USAID**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





 **UxMG**
UGANDA HEALTH MARKETING GROUP

Image III



**“Grandma is all we have left
because of the sexual network.”**

Daddy, mummy, get off the sexual network so we can live a good life



Script of “Who are you sleeping with?” Audio Clip

SFX: Phone rings. Click

Male Voice Over 1 (MVO1): Hello?

Male Voice Over 2 (MVO2): Hi

MVO1: Huh? Who is this?

MVO2: I’m the man you’ve been sleeping with

MVO1: What?

MVO2: Let me explain.

I know you sleep with Cathy every Wednesday at the VELVET lodge because that is
The day I sleep with Gloria.

MVO1: Who told you? What do you want?

MVO2: Nothing, I’ve been sleeping with Cathy too and if she does with you what she does with me, then she insists that you don’t use protection.

MVO1: Oh No! Oh no!

MVO2: Oh yes. That means we have been sleeping with each other.

And by the way I don’t know my HIV status. Mmmh

ANNOUNCER: When you sleep with someone, you sleep with all the other people they have slept with. Being on their sexual network exposes you to H.I.V. and A.I.D.S.

Get tested for H.I.V., get off the sexual network and live the good life

This message is brought to you by UHMG. The Home of the good life