

ATTACHMENT STYLES AND RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIORS AMONG GIRLS IN  
PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SIGOTI ZONE, NYAKACH SUB-  
COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

by

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A thesis presented to the School of Applied Human Sciences

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In Counselling Psychology

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APPROVAL

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COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

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## DECLARATION

ATTACHMENT STYLES AND RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIORS AMONG GIRLS IN  
PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SIGOTI ZONE, NYAKACH SUB-  
COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

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Special thanks to my husband who was my inspiration throughout the study. My special thanks too to my children who gave me the desire to understand children and to be a better mother. Lastly, special thanks to my mother; my primary attachment figure.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research thesis to my family members and Family Fellowship Church of Christ without whom I could not have come this far.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AAQ    | Adolescent attachment Questionnaire                    |
| CBC    | Competence Based Curriculum                            |
| CDC    | Center for Disease Control and Prevention              |
| HIV    | Human Immunodeficiency Virus                           |
| JSS    | Junior Secondary School                                |
| KCPE   | Kenya Certificate of Primary Education                 |
| KCSE   | Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education               |
| NACC   | National Aids Control Council                          |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS             |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                              |

## ABSTRACT

The adolescent period often marks a significant shift and reorganization of relationships between a young person with his family and friends. Adolescents steadily differ and demand more independence from their parents. During adolescence, there are always high developmental changes as one grows from infancy to adulthood. In a bid to gain autonomy, they end up engaging in risky behaviors, which affect their lives in both the short and long term. Some of the likely risky behaviors include but not limited to; risky sexual risk behaviors, drug abuse, illegal businesses, and many other risks. The specific objectives for this study included finding out the prevalent attachment styles amongst girls in Nyakach Sub County, assessing the risky sexual behaviors that the girls engage in, determining the attachment styles that is linked to sexual efficacy amongst adolescents in the Subcounty. The study applied correlational descriptive research design using qualitative and quantitative data. The target population of the study was grade 7 students in the Junior Secondary school. The sample size was comprised of 154 students from selected schools in the county. The results of the study were analyzed using SPSS version 24 and presented in tables, graphs, and frequencies. The results confirmed high prevalence of different types of attachment styles. It was also evident from regression analysis that attachment styles predicted risky sexual behavior and sexual aggression among the participants with ambivalent attachment as a significant predictor of sexual aggression and risky sexual behavior. Furthermore, this study found a correlation between attachment styles and risky sexual behavior and aggression.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The adolescent period usually marks a significant restructuring of peer and family relationships. Adolescents steadily distance themselves and acquire behavioral and emotional autonomy resulting in extra-familial relationship investment. This kind of autonomy is not based on detachment from the parents; however, it is on individuation in relation to them. At the period of adolescence, the functions of attachment are usually transferred to peers from parents and finally to a romantic partner that they acquire (Choe et al., 2020). To feel secure during adolescence, romantic relationships and friendships are essential, and this trend of diversifying and reorienting emotional interaction emphasizes this. Additionally, significant changes in neuropsychology, anatomy, and hormones occur during adolescence, and teenagers are forced to confront their developing sexualities. Early adolescents ought to integrate sexual feelings, attitudes, as well as experiences into a developing self-sense. This kind of exploration is regarded as a natural process in attaining sexual maturity and provides a context for youths to explore the various relationships aspects.

Brooks-Gunn (2017) asserted that as girls mature, they demand more independence from their parents. In some cases, they seek out girlfriends who are similar in pubertal maturation. As evidenced by intensely negative and labile moods, storminess is believed to characterize the young adolescent's emotional landscape. Given that the young adolescent is experiencing many changes, the cumulative load of events may trigger conflictual interactions with people around them, with low impulse control and

depressive and aggressive symptomatology. Early development influences on outcomes of individuals in their later stages of development have been extensively studied in developmental research topics (Petersen et al., 2020).

According to Sroufe (2001), attachment is a strong and enduring emotional bond between two people in which one or both persons seek out the other's company and feels safer there. The caregiver is the first and most crucial relationship in a child's life. Children develop attachment styles based on their early interactions with caregivers, which in turn create a spectrum of emotional regulation, according to Bowlby and Ainsworth (Jamil et al., 2020). During the adolescent period, most individuals' characteristics are in a change state. With the multifaceted change occurring during this developmental stage, many young people engage in sexually risky behaviors and experiences that can result in unintended health and social outcomes. High-risk behaviors subject the health of individuals to many risks and lead to death as well as disability among adults and the young alike.

These behaviors mostly have preventable and common causes (Tariq, 2021). Some of the risky sexual behaviors include unprotected sex, mouth-to-genital contact, multiple sexual partners, anal sex, sexual intercourse with a partner who has ever injected drugs; engaging in sex work; and in this case, starting sexual practice at a young age (Odeigah et al., 2019). Several studies have identified the lack of knowledge about the undesired repercussions of risky sexual behaviors combined with poverty as the factors that have maximized the chances of young adolescent girls engaging in risky sexual activities (Odeigah et al., 2019).



Sexual behavior is complex in nature and therefore affects all human life's aspects. They may vary with regards to culture, gender, age, religious beliefs, and the onset of the said behaviors.

According to Mirzaei et al. (2016), risky sexual behaviors inflict adverse outcomes on relationships, families as well as health (Mirzaei et al., 2016). Unprotected sexual intercourse is the second most leading cause of disability-adjusted life years globally (Odeigah et al., 2019), leads to sexually transmitted infections and plays a causative role in different types of cancers like head cancer, anal, cervical, prostate, vulval, and oral cancer. Unsafe sexual practices are the second leading cause of the worldwide burden of illnesses, and therefore, reliable and valid methods and tools for evaluating risky sexual behaviors are vital for implementing preventive measures as well as assisting young persons and their parents to focus on bringing up healthy and balanced young people.

The bond formed between the caregiver and the infant is implied by attachment theory, a psychological, evolutionary, and ethnological theory about human relationships that is a crucial phenomenon in everyone's development (Jones et al., 2018). The concept of attachment was introduced by Bowlby (1969) to illustrate the relationship of this sort. In order to specifically explain how early attachment results in individual differences in romantic and adult social relationships, Ainsworth (1978) developed the adult attachment theory based on Bowlby's principles. This was another step in the development of the attachment theory. A straightforward category index based on the typology of Hazan and Shaver (1987) could divide people into the three attachment types of anxious/ambivalent, secure, and avoidant. Thereafter, Bartholomew then suggested that early attachment relationships had a significant impact on the later attachment relationships.

A person with secure attachment styles develops stable relationships, confidence, and closeness in others, contrarily, insecure persons develop a negative perception of themselves and a reliance or distrust attitude of themselves and a reliance or distrust attitude towards others; relationships tend to become frustration and dissatisfaction sources. Recent research has also exhibited that insecure patterns might become more secure under particular situations or following the first romantic relationship (Fearon & Roisman, 2017). Myriads of studies have assessed the link between sexuality and attachment styles in adulthood, highlighting a link between greater sexual satisfaction and secure attachment, closer relationships, and sexual practices with fewer partners. Among adults, an ambivalent attachment pattern is linked with more pre-sexual activity (Landgraf & von Treskow, 2017). The pre-sexual activity referring to kissing, cuddling, petting and necking; however, with less sexual satisfaction and less communication. During the adolescence stage, ambivalent patterns tend to result in earlier and more regular sexual intercourse, particularly amongst girls (Potard et al., 2017). Avoidant attachment is especially linked with emotional attachment in sexuality. This kind of attachment style is linked with intimacy avoidance, either by evading sexual or pre-sexual activities or multiplying short-term and superficial relationships. Similar traits are exhibited in late adolescence.

Very few studies have evaluated the link between parental attachment styles, sexual experience, and romantic relationships amongst adolescent girls; they mostly emphasize adolescence in general (Potard et al., 2017). There have been very few studies focusing on Junior secondary-school-going girls, yet it is at this stage of life that marks the start of often experiencing platonic love without physical contact. Adolescents above thirteen

years tend to take advantage of relationships followed by extra genital or genital relationships. Progressive involvement and cognitive changes in bodily exploration already took place earlier before this period.

Young et al. (2018) carried out a study in Ireland to determine the prevalence of sexual intercourse amongst high school students. They found out that 38 % had already engaged in sexual activities, 9 % had more than four sexual partners, and 27 % had engaged in sexual intercourse within the previous three months, and 7 % had been coerced to have sexual intercourse against their will. The study also found out that 12 % had unprotected sexual intercourse and consequently failed to take any measures to prevent pregnancies. Twenty-one percent had used drugs and alcohol prior to engaging in sexual intercourse. Less than 10% of the population had been tested for either sexually transmitted infections or HIV during the past year. Previous research has shown the interconnection between sexual risk behaviors at the adolescent stage and child maltreatment. Thibodeau et al. (2017) carried out a study in Canada to determine the pathways linking adolescent sexual risk behavior and childhood maltreatment. The outcomes of path analyses showed that neglect was linked with several sexual partners, younger at first intercourse, as well as casual sexual behavior.

While avoidant attachment helped to clarify the relationship between the quantity of sexual partners and neglect, as well as the relationship between age at first encounter and casual sexual behavior, anxious attachment mediated this relationship. Thibodeau et al. (2017) found that vulnerable youth who had experienced sexual abuse and neglect were more likely to engage in sexually risky behavior. Sexual abuse was found to be directly linked with the three sexual risk behaviors. They recommended that there should be

interventions designed for the purposes of inducing positive change in attachment security, which would consequently minimize sexual risk behaviors amongst victims of neglect.

Tussey et al. (2018) carried out a study in the United States on poor parenting, dating violence, and attachment styles among college students. The main motivation for conducting Tussey's study was that there was a little-known link of how participation in risky sexual behavior and attachment styles would contribute to violence. They examined the role of child abuse, poor parenting, risky sexual and drug utilization, and attachment styles amongst 1532 college students, wherein 51 % were females. Their study revealed that, compared to men, females were more likely to report higher levels of attachment anxiety but lower levels of attachment avoidance. Witnessing parental violence, physical abuse of children, and poorer maternal relationship quality were among the correlates of attachment anxiety. Additionally, Tussey et al. (2018) study found that women and those with lower attachment avoidance and higher attachment anxiety were more likely to engage in violence while dating.

As per the 2015 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 15% of women aged between 20 years and 49 years experienced their first sexual intercourse by the age of fifteen years, and fifty percent had their first at eighteen which is the age of most final-year secondary school students (World Bank, 2019). This led to increased numbers of teenage pregnancies. The 2015 survey also stated that sexual activity began earliest in the Nyanza region, which also forms the basis of this study's scope. As per Nyateko et al. (2019), this phenomenon creates a huge concern for the education, well-being, health, and opportunities at large for the girls, particularly in Nyanza, where the prevalence rate is

particularly high. The research entailed a diverse range of predictor, outcome, and moderating variables. The main purpose of this thesis was to further contribute to this literature body by determining the impact of attachment styles on sexual behaviors among girls. This research study was developed to determine the link between early attachment styles and the risky sexual behaviors that adolescent girls engage in.

#### Background of the study

Teenage pregnancy has been a major concern to many countries in the world. The World Health Organization reports that adolescent pregnancy is a global phenomenon with well-established causes and negative effects on people's health, communities, and economies. In developing countries, an estimated 21 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 become pregnant each year; 12 million give birth. Girls with less education or lower socioeconomic status are more vulnerable (WHO, 2023).

Teenagers aged 10 to 19 make up about 1.2 billion people, or 1 in 6, of the world's population. According to the WHO (2023), over 3000 adolescent deaths occurred every day in 2015, most of which could have been avoided or treated. There are 44% births of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 every year worldwide. By the age of 15, half of all mental health disorders in adults have already begun, but most of these cases go undiagnosed and untreated. Statistics from the National Aids Control Council (NACC) and the Health Ministry reveal a rise in the number of new HIV infections; according to UNAIDS 2020, there were 1.5 million new HIV infections in 2020. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) most recent estimates were 34,800 new HIV infections in the US in 2019 (CDC 2020) and an estimated 37.7 million people living with HIV worldwide.

Of the estimated 38.4 million [confidence intervals: 33.9-43.8 million] HIV-positive individuals worldwide in 2021, 2.73 million [2.06-3.47 million] were under the age of 19. Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) aged 15-24 are still at high risk of contracting HIV. In 2021, AGYW accounted for 63% of all new HIV infections, the prevalence among young women (ages 15 to 24) is twice as high as HIV prevalence among men. In 2020, an estimated 4200 teenage girls and young women between the ages of 15 and 24 acquired HIV on a weekly basis, lack of access to HIV prevention, care, and treatment facilities contributed significantly to the 850 children who acquired HIV every day in 2021 and the 301 children who passed away from AIDS-related causes. According to information from the health docket, 53 percent of all cases of sexual and gender-based violence in 2021 included teenagers aged 10 to 19.

According to Njuguna et al. (2020), one in every five teenagers aged 15 to 19 in Kenya is already a mother or expecting their first child, ranking Kenya as the third-highest country in the world for teenage pregnancies. The prevalence of HIV infection among young people in Kenya between the ages of 15 and 24 remains alarming. 35% of new HIV infections in 2020 occurred in people aged 15 to 24 years of age, with the young women making most of the cases. HIV prevalence in Nairobi County was reported to be 90% among teenage and young adults ages (15-19), which is much lower than the counties in the Nyanza area. Gender inequality, inaccessibility to services and poverty all contribute to the high prevalence of unintended pregnancies and HIV infections in Homa Bay, one of Kenya's most seriously affected counties (UNICEF Kenya, 2021). In addition, 13% of all HIV infections occur in people in this age bracket.

The 2019 Kenya Census, depicted that Homabay County had the highest percentage of teenagers (ages 15–19) who have given birth to one or more children, at 16 percent, in all Western Kenya counties. It is one of Kenya's most severely affected counties with the highest rates of unplanned pregnancies, HIV infections are caused by gender inequality, education access issues, and poverty. Kisumu County has an HIV prevalence rate that is 3 time the national prevalence (Waruiru, 2022). It is the host county to Nyakach Sub-County, which is in the southern part of the county and bordering Homabay County. Kisumu County shares the same socioeconomic and cultural customs as Homabay County.

#### Statement of Problem

Adolescent sexual health is a critical concern globally and Kenya is no exception in facing challenges in mitigating risky sexual behaviors among adolescents. Risky sexual behaviours among adolescents have been reported to be rampant among adolescents in Nyanza and Western Kenya (Juma et al. 2013; Juma et al. 2014). This is not only unfortunate but also shocking given that adolescents are likely to be exposed to sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned teen pregnancies. The Sigoti Zone in Nyakach Sub-County in Kisumu County, has been reported to be facing similar challenges despite the fact that it hosts several public junior secondary schools. Among the students in these schools, adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to engaging in risky sexual behaviors, which can have detrimental consequences on their overall well-being, including potential exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies. If the trend is not reversed, serious suffering among the adolescents will be reported.

Although adolescence is a window of opportunity for some individuals, sexual puberty is linked to numerous challenges. Given the high-risk sexual behaviors severity as well as the cost they impose on society and individuals, being aware of the factors influencing high-risk sexual behaviors amongst girls is vital for designing proper interventions. In the Nyanza region, particularly Nyakach sub-county, most school-going girls hardly make it to the college or university level, and the numbers reaching secondary school level are also of huge concern. Incidences of premature and unplanned pregnancies are on the rise in the region, which consequently subject most of the girls into early marriages eventual dropping out of school. A number of those who resort to early marriages end up being in abusive and violent relationships. Besides, these girls end up contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

Attachment theory proposes that the early bonds formed between individuals and their primary caregivers influence their interpersonal relationships and behaviors throughout their lives. The attachment style an individual develops during childhood can significantly impact their decisions and actions, especially concerning intimate relationships and sexual behaviors. However, there is a gap in research examining the relationship between attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors specifically among adolescent girls in Sigoti Zone.

Understanding the link between attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors is imperative to develop effective interventions that address the root causes of risky sexual behaviors and promote healthy sexual decision-making among adolescent girls. By identifying the attachment styles prevalent among these girls and how they correlate with risky sexual behaviors, targeted programs can be tailored to enhance attachment security,



communication skills, and self-efficacy, ultimately reducing risky sexual behaviors and improving the overall sexual health of adolescent girls in Sigoti Zone, Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya.

There is no vivid and comprehensive understanding of Junior Secondary School girls' sexual behaviors. This needed a study of related factors which may have a bearing on their sexual behaviors. No intervention has been designed for the purposes of including positive change in attachment security, which would subsequently minimize sexual risk behaviors amongst these young girls. There are hardly studies that dwell on adolescent girls in Junior Secondary school which is the age that marks the start of often experiencing of platonic friendship. This study, therefore, was carried out to fill this knowledge gap by examining and analyzing the prevalent attachment styles and the influence of the attachment styles on the sexual behavior among girls in Junior secondary schools in the Nyakach sub-county, Kisumu County, Kenya.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors among girls in public junior secondary schools in Sigoti Zone, Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya.

#### Objectives of the Study

- 1) To determine the prevalence of secure, anxious, ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles among public junior secondary female students in Nyakach Sub-County
- 2) To establish the influence of attachment styles on risky sexual behaviours among public junior secondary school female students in Nyakach Sub- County

- 3) To investigate the extent to which attachment styles influence sexual aggressive behavior among public junior secondary school female students in Nyakach Sub-County
- 4) Examine the correlation between attachment styles and high-risk sexual behavior among public junior secondary female students in Nyakach Sub-County.

#### Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of secure, anxious, ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles among public junior secondary female students in Nyakach Sub-County?
2. What is the impact of attachment styles on risky sexual behaviours among public junior secondary school female students in Nyakach Sub- County?
3. To what extend does attachment styles influence aggressive behavior among public junior secondary school female students in Nyakach Sub- County?
4. What is the correlation between attachment styles and high-risk sexual behavior amongst junior secondary school girls in Nyakach sub-county?

#### Justification of the Study

Family factors greatly influence the development and management of behavior among children. Therefore, it is crucial to define the link between attachment style and problematic sexual behavior to understand the underlying risk factors and develop a framework for addressing this issue among school-going girls. The current study was critical in helping to understand the functional relationship between attachment styles and risk for problematic sexual behaviors and create awareness of strategies to address this problem in the society.

Adolescent well-being goes beyond simply being free of behavioral disorders like drug use in this sense; therefore, it is important to research what causes adolescents to increase their levels of well-being. Studying attachment style is very important as it determines how we relate to the universe. With the insufficiency of studies to give discernments on the role of attachment styles on the risky sexual behavior of girls, there are no strategies to help in the prevention of these risky sexual behaviors, particularly amongst girls in Kenya. Studies in this area could assist in creating awareness, and this is among the numerous ways that could help prevent risky sexual behaviors amongst the many girls dropping out of school and resorting to early marriages.

#### Significance of Study

The findings of this study would enlighten government, policymakers, parents, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and school management on the essence of secure attachment styles and preventive measures of risky sexual behaviors.

First, policymakers make policies to ensure children are raised in family set up with reliable attachment figures. For example, in a children home, care shelters, boarding primary school setting, there should be attachment figures that are responsible and responsive to the young children needs.

This study would help parents and aspiring parents to know how best they can raise their children to have secure attachment styles and sensitize them on the effect of insecure attachment styles on the sexual behaviors of the girl child. It would also help parents to bridge the gaps in their behaviors towards their children that can lead to insecure attachments.

This study would also be beneficial for foster care and care homes where children are accommodated pending adoption or permanently adopted. It will help in training adopting parents as they prepare for the role of adopting the children.

The research study would significantly contribute to the knowledge of the influence of attachment styles on the risky sexual behaviors' empirical studies in Kenya where there is minimal study

It is becoming more and more important for adolescents who are pregnant to have access to high-quality maternal care. It would help in promoting healthy behaviors during adolescence and taking precautions to better protect kids from health risks, both of which are necessary for preventing health issues in adulthood and for the future wellbeing and ability of nations to develop and thrive.

#### Assumptions of the Study

The study made the following assumptions:

1. The age of Junior Secondary school girls in the Nyakach sub-county is between 12 and 15-years.
2. Attachment styles are associated with risk sexual behaviors.
3. There is little awareness on the prevention of risky sexual behaviors in the Nyakach sub-county.
4. The study population will be willing to provide information that is of relevance to the study.

#### Scope of the Study

The study sought to address the role of attachment styles on the sexual behaviors among girls in Junior secondary schools in the Sigoti Zone of Nyakach sub-county. It focused on

girls attending their Junior Secondary School education within five months from February 2023. Sigoti Zone are a group of government public primary schools located Sigoti village is in the Nyabondo plateau, Nyakach County in Kisumu. It is near Sondu Market which is situated on the Kisumu Kisii Highway.

Nyakach was declared a hardship area by the government some years back, the economic activities include but not limited to subsistence farming, fishing, selling of rocks, brock production and trading between the neighboring Kalenjin and Kisii communities.

#### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There were limited studies on the assessment of attachment styles on risky sexual behaviors among girls of age 12 to 15 in Kenya. To delimit this, the study relied on the literature relating to the attachment styles on the behavior of adolescents in the developed world.

Some participants initially refused to participate in this study citing that they were likely to be labelled. To curb this, the students were assured of confidentiality. They were informed that information access would not be granted to anyone else except to the researcher and assistants during data analysis. The questionnaires were coded with no obvious identification.

Due to the sensitivity of this study, only a few students had volunteered to participate in the study. To delimit this, proper psychoeducation was done prior to the commencement of the study.

#### Definition of Terms

Adolescence: This is a boy, or a girl aged between 10 and 18 years (WHO, 2020). The same was adopted in this study.

Attachment– relatively enduring emotional tie to a particular individual (Ainsworth et al. 2015). The same definition was adopted in this study.

Attachment styles-A psychological, evolutionary, and ethnological theory about human relationships is called attachment theory. In this study, the term was used to refer to a way in which adolescents relate with the attachment figure or the care provider. According to Gross, Stern, Brett and Cassidy (2017), it is mostly determined by the caregivers' mannerisms and attitudes.

Awareness –refers to the knowledge and understanding of a particular issue. For this study, it refers to knowledge and understanding of risky sexual behaviors by students.

Risky sexual behaviors/ High risk Sexual behavior: Used interchangeably: -activity that makes it more likely for someone having sex with someone who has a sexually transmitted infection to get infected, get pregnant, or make a partner get pregnant. The term was used to refer to sexual practices that could make a person liable to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and unplanned pregnancies.

Teenage pregnancy: The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) redefined this as child pregnancy below 17 years. The researcher however used the variation used by the Ministry of Health defining teen pregnancy as pregnancy in girls between ages 10- 19 Years.

### Chapter Summary

The chapter gave a brief introduction to the research study, then the background of the study, the study objectives, research questions, justification of the study, and significance

of the study. Besides, the chapter also included the limitations and delimitations, the assumptions of the study, and the definition of terms. Understanding the specific attachment styles prevalent among adolescent girls in these schools and how they correlated with risky sexual behaviors was crucial for designing targeted interventions. By addressing the underlying attachment issues, educational programs could be developed to enhance communication skills, promote healthy relationship dynamics, and reduce risky sexual behaviors among this demographic, ultimately contributing to improved sexual health outcomes. Chapter two was to include a comprehensive literature review comprising of theoretical framework, general literature review, empirical literature, and the conceptual framework.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

When exploring the relationship between attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors among adolescent girls in public junior secondary schools, it is important to investigate how these attachment styles influence their decisions and behaviors related to sexual activities. For example, individuals with anxious attachment styles may engage in risky sexual behaviors to seek validation or acceptance from their partners, while those with avoidant attachment styles may engage in risky behaviors due to their reluctance to form intimate connections.

Literature review assesses documents such as periodicals, books, journals, dissertations, and theses that possess a bearing on the research being carried out. In this chapter, the researcher will critically look at theoretical framework that anchors the study. Besides, the chapter will also entail the general and empirical literature review on attachment styles' effect on sexual behaviors of girls, and eventually, outline a conceptual framework and it will then be summarized by chapter discussion, and a summary.



#### Theoretical Framework

This refers to a research guide based on existing theory in the inquiry field related to or reflects study hypotheses. A theoretical framework is crucial in research since it adds value to the ongoing research study (Philipsen, 2018). This study was guided by the attachment theory and social learning theory.



## Attachment Theory

This is a theory of development focusing on the influence of parent-child attachment relationships on psychopathology and healthy development, as well as behavioral problems. The theory has proven to be a significant framework to study the normal and abnormal development of a person. Bowlby suggested that early relational experiences possess considerable significance for later development in life. Bowlby expressed that an infant need to develop a secure attachment with their guardians prior to launching out into unprecedented circumstances. The attachment behavior of a child is later activated in a particularly frightening and uncomfortable situation and by the mother disappearing or being inaccessible. When this attachment mechanism is active, the youngster communicates to the caregiver that they require protection or comfort.

Children early attachment interactions results in an internal working model that makes them encode and internalize what they are exposed to, which is referred to as internal working models. The model helps the user forecast, comprehend, and establish a sense of psychological stability in their environment. Numerous studies have investigated the connection between attachment type and how a person reacts to various life stages (Crittenden, 2017). Despite being a result of a variety of factors including development, environment, and genetics. Insecure attachment has been shown to increase the risk for psychopathology (Candel & Turliuc, 2019).

In Bowlby's conclusions, he expressed that young children or infant ought to experience an intimate, warm as well as a continuous relationship with their caregivers/parents in which they find both enjoyment and satisfaction. In the present community, children and infants are growing up without adequate or no attention from their guardians and

caregivers. Parental figure's absence has been the main cause of children behave the way they currently do (Jampaklay et al., 2018). A growing child requires adequate support and care from both parents to flourish well in their lives. Previous studies have shown that secure attachment styles with guardians/caregivers minimize participation in behavioral problems; however, when a child lacks this connection with their guardians, then they are at risk (Manyeruke et al., 2021). With the continuous increase in sexual behavioral risk as seen in adolescents, there is a need to find out the kind of attachment style, particularly as experienced by the adolescents. Thus, the theoretical framework in this research study will interrogate how adolescents, particularly girls, engage in risky sexual behaviors.

Adolescent sexual health is a critical concern globally, and Kenya is no exception, facing challenges in mitigating risky sexual behaviors among young individuals. Within the Nyakach Sub-County of Kisumu County, the Sigoti Zone hosts several public junior secondary schools. Among the students in these schools, adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to engaging in risky sexual behaviors, which can have detrimental consequences on their overall well-being, including potential exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies.

Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby, suggests that early interactions and relationships with primary caregivers significantly influence an individual's emotional, social, and psychological development throughout their lifespan. According to this theory, individuals develop different attachment styles based on their early caregiving experiences, and these attachment styles shape how they approach relationships and regulate their emotions and behaviors.

Individuals with a secure attachment style tend to have a positive view of themselves and others. They are comfortable with intimacy and independence and have healthy interpersonal relationships. They are more likely to seek and provide support in times of need. Those with this attachment style often worry about their relationships and fear rejection or abandonment. They seek high levels of intimacy and approval from others but may doubt their own self-worth. Individuals with an avoidant attachment style tend to prioritize independence and self-sufficiency. They may avoid getting too close to others, fearing a loss of independence or vulnerability. They often downplay their emotions and attachment needs.

Disorganized (or Fearful-Avoidant) Attachment attachment style is a combination of anxious and avoidant tendencies, resulting in confusion and ambivalence in relationships. People with a disorganized attachment style may exhibit erratic behaviors, swinging between a desire for closeness and a fear of intimacy. When exploring the relationship between attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors among adolescent girls in public junior secondary schools, it is important to investigate how these attachment styles influence their decisions and behaviors related to sexual activities. For example, individuals with anxious attachment styles may engage in risky sexual behaviors as a means to seek validation or acceptance from their partners, while those with avoidant attachment styles may engage in risky behaviors due to their reluctance to form intimate connections.

Understanding the specific attachment styles prevalent among adolescent girls in these schools and how they correlate with risky sexual behaviors is crucial for designing targeted interventions. By addressing the underlying attachment issues, educational

programs can be developed to enhance communication skills, promote healthy relationship dynamics, and reduce risky sexual behaviors among this demographic, ultimately contributing to improved sexual health outcomes.

#### *The strengths of attachment theory*

Attachment theory explains the relevance of early interactions, it highlights the value of early relationships in molding a person's social and emotional development. It demonstrates how solid bonds built in childhood can contribute to beneficial outcomes later in adulthood. Secondly it offers a framework for comprehending behavior: the theory provides a paradigm for comprehending and predicting human behavior in interpersonal interactions. It explains why people want proximity and comfort from attachment figures when they are distressed or threatened. The theory promotes the idea that sensitive and responsive caregiving encourages the establishment of secure attachments. It encourages parents and caregivers to give their children regular support, which can boost their sense of security and self-esteem. Attachment Theory has impacted a variety of therapeutic techniques, including Attachment-Based Therapy and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy. These interventions seek to improve attachment bonds while also addressing attachment-related issues, it also describes the significance of early interactions, early relationships are important in shaping a person's social and emotional development, according to its hypothesis. It highlights how strong ties formed in childhood can lead to positive consequences later in life.

#### *Weaknesses of Attachment theory*

There are different arguments that determine the limitations and weaknesses of attachment theory. First, the assumption that kind, honest, and respectful parents would

have children with similar behavior may not be the case in all situations. Some theorists believe that parents do not shape children's personality or behavior. Some argue that peers have more influence than parents (Lee, 2003). Another important argument and criticism of this theory is based on the idea that model attachment is founded on behaviors occurring during stressful situations and momentary separation and not during non-stressful situations (Lee, 2003).

Broad understanding of this theory would require observations of how children in their social groups interact and what they gain during non-stressful situations. Hence, behaviors directed towards attachment during different situations cannot be the only factors used when defining attachment (Lee, 2003).

Finally, the attachment theory fails in its identification that the list of attachment behaviors is limited to those occurring with primary attachment figures. For instance, an adult can have more than one attachment figure like spouse or child which can be equally applied to adolescents. Another weakness of Bowlby attachment theory's flaws is that it focuses on one primary attachment figure, who is often the mother; nevertheless, children may build attachments with other individuals in their lives, such as their father, siblings, grandparents, and maybe nannies.

#### Social Learning theory

The social learning theory is deemed an important framework for this study as it is founded on the most common approach that people learn especially in social groups such as family and the community. The social interactions with greatest implications are the people who matter the most as we group up (Suryoputro et al., 2007). These groups include parents and other family members, neighbors and teachers among others (Burton

et al., 2002). Therefore, social learning theory can be used to explain risky sexual behavior among adolescents as such behavior is learned due to social forces as internalized definitions supportive of the behavior.

Learning theorists have focused on explaining people's thinking and factors that define their behavior, the social learning theory is an example of learning theories grounded on the idea that human behavior is determined by three-way association between cognitive factors, behavior, and environmental influences (Suryoputro et al., 2007). In this sense, the underlying concept relies on various assumptions about people and their behavior (Hogben & Byrne, 1998). In most cases, theorists assume that humans are social beings that pay attention to their surroundings.

Social learning theory has been used by sexuality theorists with research on sexual behavior focusing on cognitive aspects of the decision-making process (Winfree & Bernat, 1998). Most investigations have centered on the core concept of self-efficacy (Burton et al., 2002). For instance, with adoption of the social cognitive theory as a framework, high perceived self-efficacy beliefs have been defined as being positively associated with the intentions to use condom and self-reported use (Suryoputro et al., 2007). In this dimension, it is possible to establish an example of how social learning theory has been applied in various reproductive health sexual behavior research.

Some researchers have used social learning theory as a framework for explaining that sexually abusive and risky sexual behaviors among adolescents arise from their own sexual victimization (Burton et al., 2002). As such, the theory describes a mechanism by which learning of different forms of sexual behaviors and aggression is thought to occur and is reinforced (Suryoputro et al., 2007). In essence, a traumatized child will be fixated

on the trauma and recreate the experience in ritualistic patterns that become elaborate, rigid, and secret with time (Suryoputro et al., 2007). Therefore, when applied to the current study, it is worth recognizing the historical use of social learning theory with reference to its central aspects such as sexuality development, adolescent sexuality, health-related sexual behavior, and use of contraceptives and protection.

The Social learning theory complemented the attachment theory in this study by providing constructs that the attachment theory does not cover. The attachment theory explains attachment as being provided only by the caregiver, who in most cases is the mother, while the social learning theory considers other influential people around the child like the father, siblings, and sometimes nannies which is the case in most households in African context especially in Kenya.

In the study area there are possibilities of the study subject living with relatives other than their biological parents, this is due to the cultural belief of a child belonging to the community and not an individual.

#### General Literature review

This section summarizes previous studies about girls' attachment types and sexual behaviour. Learning how to control one's sexuality is a necessary part of becoming a responsible person. All actions used to satisfy a person's sexual demands are considered sexual activity. Numerous studies have investigated the connection between attachment type and how a person reacts to various life stages (Crittenden, 2017). Despite being a result of a variety of factors, including development, environment, and genetics, insecure attachment has been shown to increase the risk for psychopathology (Candel & Turliuc, 2019).

Whereas sexual behavior and sexuality expression are normal phenomena, the perspective in which the behavior is expressed may make it risky. Risky sexual behaviors are the practices that expose the individual to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, hence affecting their health. The health outcomes of taking sexual risks comprise emotional trauma, unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted illnesses, and deaths. Researchers have studied sexual abuse from the perspectives of sexual relationships, sexual practices, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and reproductive health.

Alcohol and hard drug use are potential contributors to unsafe sexual practices (Chawla & Sarkar, 2019). It might also involve avoidant coping mechanisms for dealing with uncomfortable feelings and peer expectations, as well as a lack of parental supervision and love. Exposure to dysfunctional parenting during childhood typically results in psychological functioning that is emotionally and behaviorally dysregulated, such as risky sexual activity.

Despite the danger and frequency of high-risk sexual abuse, it is still not fully understood what psychosocial factors underpin these behaviors (Debowska et al., 2018). A review of the literature reveals that although extensive research that has been conducted with children and adolescents and linked attachment patterns to changes, these specific variables have not been adequately determined in conjunction with teenagers, particularly girls.

Psychosocial attachment represents a behavioral security system promoting survival and safety in adults and adolescents and coping and help-seeking behavior promoting healthy emotional regulation and parent attachment (Chen et al., 2018).



Bowlby acknowledged that parental psychological attachment has a huge impact on relationships all through the life span of an individual, and the lasting bond between the child and the parent is also contributing to the development of abilities of a person to cope with stress and the numerous demanding circumstances (Bowlby, 1979). Just like children, adolescents who go through stress could try to get to an attachment figure (parent/partner) to reestablish an emotional harmony sense. Secure parent attachment offers a person with efficient and perceptive resources with which to handle and process temptations towards risk-taking practices later in their life (Zhang et al., 2019).

### *The cultural influences*



People culture is their way of life, world view, food and livelihood, so much more than just a bunch of rules and customs to be followed by a group of people. There are known risk factors and protective factors that are culturally specific.

In comparison to other ethnic groups in the United States, Asian American teenagers and young adults, for example, have more sexually conservative views and behaviors and commence sexual intercourse at a later age. There are signs that Asian Americans' attitudes and behavior are becoming more congruent with the White American norm as they grow more acculturated to mainstream American culture (Guo, 2018). Culture can also influence whether abuse is reported and treated, this largely inform the societal response and view concerning children who have been abused. There appears to be less child abuse in communities where there is a positive response and action done against the abusers, but there appears to be more child abuse in countries where there is no adequate mechanism for reporting and dealing with child abuse (Jerusha et al., 2018).

For understanding the complex interplay of human, familial, environmental, and cultural aspects involved in CSA disclosure, contemporary disclosure models reflect a social-ecological, person-in-environment approach. (Alaggia et al., 2017), an individual is a complex combination of many factors, culture include.

#### *Age of the study population*

The age of an adolescence is important factor in determining the relationship between the individual's attachment styles and risky sexual behavior. Adolescents may be exposed to sexual content in the media at a time when gender roles, sexual attitudes, and sexual behaviors are developing. This demographic may be especially vulnerable since the cognitive skills required to critically examine media messages and make decisions based on possible future repercussions are not completely developed.

Enid and Joel (2000), a biopsychosocial theoretical framework viewpoint holds that the timing of first intercourse is influenced by a complex set of personal qualities and societal circumstances that impact developing teenagers' decision to commence or postpone intercourse, younger adolescent may not make such decisions unless there is intentional exposure by an adult or a figure of influence (Skinner et al., 2008). In many countries the sentence for sex offenders of younger children- adolescents is more severe compared to the sex offenders of much older children. For example in Kenya, the law state clearly in the Sexual offence act number 3 of 2006 section 8 that defilement occurs when a person engages in an act that produces penetration with a child, with or without consent. A person who defiles a child aged eleven years or less shall get life imprisonment. Defilement with a child aged twelve to fifteen years is punishable by imprisonment for a

term of not less than twenty years, and any person who commits defilement with a child aged sixteen to eighteen years is punishable for not less than twenty years.

#### Empirical Literature Review

Empirical literature review is the literature that elaborates the relevant previous researches that is correlated with the study in the methods used, similar titles, population, theoretical framework and any other related studies in the research that are to be used as the references to develop the methodology and data collection

#### Prevalent Attachment Styles

Guardians and caregivers who offer children secure attachments also provide the framework for healthy relationships as well as positive internal working representations or models of self (Gorman, 2017). Healthy internal models maximize the chances that individuals can get other relationships characterized by affection, love, and reliability; these models also offer mechanisms for persons who could be sick or troubled to turn to those they utterly trust for help. As secure adolescents and children mature, they have the perspective of becoming independent, possessing appropriate self-esteem as well as gaining confidence and healthy persons. On the other hand, insecurely attached adolescents and children have the likelihood of developing adult attachment styles that are anxious and avoidant which are also more vulnerable to take part in impulsive practices.

Psychology has it that men have the tendency of engaging in numerous risk-taking practices increasing their risk of diseases, injuries, and even worst-case scenarios of death (Frey et al., 2017). For instance, it has been established that men take part in risky tobacco use, excessive drugs, and marijuana use in comparison to women. Moreover,

they also tend to have several sexual partners and thereby being victims and perpetrators of criminal acts and violence. Disparities in explanation between females and males in risk-taking behaviors are varied because of physiological factors, cultural differences, parental styles differences that permit, encourage, and romanticize men who take part in risk-taking acts. In this current study, we determine the relationship between the various styles of attachment and risky sexual behaviors shown by girls.

An online study done in the United states by Cronin et al. (2018) noted that Attachment instability is linked to poor mental health across the lifespan, and growing research suggests that challenges with emotion regulation play a role in these correlations. Voges et al in their article Revisiting the African Origins of Attachment Research—50 Years After Ainsworth says that numerous socioeconomic factors affecting living conditions, such as unemployment, financial difficulties, limited education, substandard housing, single parenthood, a lack of partner support, substance abuse, and depression were found in nine studies that evaluated infant attachment style using self-report or observation methods. Global patterns of attachment classification appear to be congruent with overall distributions of attachment classification proportions. Despite challenging circumstances, secure connection was rather common and avoidant attachment rates were low in some populations. When the category was taken into account, rather significant rates of disordered attachment were discovered.

Styles of attachment are characterized by various ways of behaving and interacting in relationships (Virga et al., 2019). There are two broad categories of attachment styles between the guardian and children: secure and insecure attachment. These two styles of attachment define the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive patterns of a person. During

infancy, these attachment styles were centered on how parents and children interacted. Currently, psychologists have recognized four major attachment styles: secure, ambivalent, avoidant, and disordered attachment. Bowlby believed that there were four distinct traits of attachment: safe haven, proximity maintenance, secure base, and separation distress.

Wambua et al. (2020), in their study done in Nairobi Kenya for a sample of 137, a relatively high number (89.9%) of adolescents had overall highly vulnerable attachment security scores.

Most studies discuss adolescents in general, yet girls have their own uniqueness, which would also affect their styles of attachment. This study is therefore seeking to fill the gap of data of prevalent attachment styles among adolescent girls in Kisumu County, Kenya

### Secure Attachment

Children who are closely attached frequently experience sadness when their caregiver is away and excitement when their caregiver or guardian comes back. These kids frequently turn to their parents or caregivers for solace when they're scared. By being able to provide a safe and supportive environment, the caregiver or guardian can help the child develop a secure attachment style. According to Ainsworth (1972), an insecure style of attachment could develop and disrupt normal development, including emotions, brain function, and internalizing behaviors, if the attachment model does not provide a sense of safety.

Adolescence is a change period in a person. The period is recognized as an opportunity window and risk in development (Jones et al., 2018). It is a change period of such rapidity and magnitude that is linked with exacerbation or onset of several health-related problems like eating disorders, dependence and substance abuse, antisocial and

delinquent practices, school dropout, and risky sexual behavior. There has been increasing evidence at this phase, and it is the operating difference through the nature of parent and child attachment.

Securely attached adolescents usually manage their transitions more efficiently and enjoy better relationships and go through fewer conflicts with both their peers and family in comparison to insecurely attached adolescents (Moreira et al., 2021). It is in the event of the adolescence transition that they commence forming close relationships with their peers. When they are securely attached to their guardians, the adolescents are given the chance of experimenting with potential identities although having an emotional base to get back to. Secure attachment is vividly essential to healthy adjustment at the adolescent stage. Adolescents do not always require the same proximity degree as children do because they have the capacity of deriving comfort from knowing their parents are helpful and supportive even when absent. Thus, adolescents feeling understood by their guardians even amidst conflict confidently move towards adulthood.

Rezaei et al says, that the most typical attachment style was secure, whereas ambivalent attachment style was the least prevalent. Compared to married adults, unmarried people were more likely to have an avoidant attachment style this is according to in their article Relationship between attachment styles and happiness in medical students.

The four latent attachment groups of secure, insecure-anxious, insecure-avoidant, and disorganized were found using a latent profile analysis of attachment data from 588 participants who met the criteria for non-affective psychosis. The most common attachment style was secure attachment, which may suggest that many patients with psychosis are naturally resilient (Bonanno, 2004).

This study helped to determine the prevalence of secure attachment styles, establish the influence of secure attachment styles on risky sexual behaviours investigate the extent to which secure attachment styles influence sexual aggressive behavior, examine the correlation between secure attachment styles and high-risk sexual behavior among public junior secondary female students in Nyakach Sub-County.

### Avoidant Attachment



This kind of attachment style forms in children and babies when their caregivers or guardians are largely emotionally unresponsive or unavailable most of the time (Miller, 2020). Children possess a deeper inner need of being close to their caregivers. Children with avoidant attachment stop expressing emotion and seeking closeness when these inner connection needs, as well as those for physical closeness, are not met. Some actions by caregivers that could encourage avoidant attachment in kids include failing to acknowledge their charges' needs and getting angry with them when they show signs of fear or distress. Nonetheless, caregivers who also have unrealistic emotional and practical independence expectations for their children also encourage avoidant attachment.

Adults and adolescents having avoidant attachment styles usually have a deactivated attachment system. Avoidant persons do not seek intimacy, nor do they seek proximity. These individuals possessing avoidant attachment styles avoid emotional display and seem to be cold and distant. They are besides less likely to fall in love; they fear intimacy concerns and are most unlikely to be engaged in any relationships. These reasons make avoidant attachment typically have fewer long-term relationships and prefer to have casual sex encounters or abstain from sex.

Both avoidant and anxious attachment styles have been connected to infidelity in both married and unmarried couples across a few prior studies, this however does not give a clear picture on adolescent girls' avoidant attachment relation to risky sexual behavior.

The study therefore added more knowledge on the prevalence of avoidant attachment styles, establish the influence of avoidant attachment styles on risky sexual behaviors, investigate the extent to which avoidant attachment styles influence sexual aggressive behaviors among adolescent girls, examine the correlation between avoidant attachment styles and high-risk sexual behavior among public junior secondary female students in Nyakach Sub-County.

#### Ambivalent Attachment

The ambivalent attachment style originates from a childhood in which affection and love are consistently provided (Jantz, 2016). Affection and love are perceived as extremely brittle things that can disappear without any warning. Since the child is never certain of receiving affection and love, they subsequently have an overriding need of securing the insecure. Children who are uncertain of love live with constant abandonment fear while growing up ambivalent towards relationships. In ambivalent relationships, they exist no safety. Affection and love experienced on a single day do not necessarily translate to the same being experienced the following day. Persons with ambivalent attachment styles are constantly looking for proof of affection and love. Since the relationships seem often to be in jeopardy, ambivalent persons tend to concentrate obsessively on their relationships (Jantz, 2016). No reassurance amount will seem enough; the individual appears clingy and needy while also capable of exhibiting extreme rage and anger.



Attachment orientation is measured alongside two dimensions: attachment anxiety and avoidance. Persons possessing higher levels of attachment anxiety/avoidance are regarded as insecurely attached (Cook et al., 2016). People who exhibit low levels of anxiety and avoidance are securely attached. Increased levels of insecurity and attachment about relationships are associated with attachment anxiety.

Attachment avoidance is linked with a strong desire for relationship independence and minimized intimacy comfort, whereas secure attachment is linked with emotional and intimacy comfort. Moreover, securely attached persons have been perceived to negotiate and maintain close relationships with ease in comparison to insecurely attached persons. Utilizing this framework, researchers have established that persons having higher attachment anxiety/avoidance levels in comparison to those with lower levels of attachment anxiety/avoidance have the likelihood of possessing negative thoughts and feelings associated with relationship maintenance and formation.

For example, Wilson (2016) determined that people with anxious attachment styles are more probably than avoidant or secure persons to believe that their intimate partner was unavailable. Cook et al. (2016) expressed that few empirical studies have addressed the relationship between sexual risk behavior and adult attachment, and the relevant literature asserts that securely attached persons take part in less risky sexual behaviors in comparison to persons having higher attachment anxiety/avoidance levels. For instance, several studies have expressed that attachment anxiety is linked with adverse beliefs about the usage of condoms, minimized condom-use likelihood, and lower HIV infection perceived risk. This may be an outcome of the individual tendency of those higher in attachment anxiety to make use of their sexual relationships to achieve the needs of

attachment. This could, as an outcome, result in minimized assertive communication of the issues of sexual matters since any sort of conflict emanating from such communication could be perceived as a relationship threat.

In addition, research on the association between sexual risk behavior and attachment style has been minimal and thus inconclusive. A few studies have also established that there is a link between sexual risk behaviors and attachment avoidance among both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Attachment avoidance has been linked with avoiding sex and having multiple sexual partners. Cook et al. (2016) in his study has expressed in their research study that avoidant attachment individuals have a high probability of agreeing to have several casual partners in comparison to anxiously/securely attached persons.

The study therefore endeavored to shed more light on how adolescent girls with ambivalent attachment style handle their insecurities with regards to their sexual behavior, determine the prevalence of ambivalent attachment styles, establish the influence of this attachment styles on risky sexual behaviours and examine the correlation between ambivalent attachment styles and high-risk sexual behavior among the research population in the area of study.



#### Fearful avoidant Attachment

Fearful avoidant attachment bonds emanate from poor parenting (inconsistency, unresponsiveness, rejection, lack of warmth, and discontinuity in parenting). Family breakups and prolonged separation from mothers also produce behavioral problems (Obi-Obasi, 2021). Adolescents having styles of fearful avoidant attachment with their guardians have the likelihood of compensating for their disturbances by taking part in conduct behaviors. Studies have established that poor-quality mothering possesses a link

to the number of convictions both during adulthood and adolescence. Parent-child rearing acts have been linked with poor discipline of the child, early years' parental aggression and increases with growth.

Noteworthy, several adolescents are continually exposed to numerous adverse experiences on a handful develop inappropriate habits. It is perceived that the quality of home life considerably increases vulnerability to reduces resilience to adverse experiences. There is also an increased consensus that features of insufficient parental behaviors be linked to minimized attachment quality and hence predictive of maximized behavioral problems. In their study named Behavior Problems in Middle Childhood: The Predictive Role of Maternal Distress, Child Attachment, and Mother-Child Interactions, Dubois-Comtois et al. (2019) found out that Lower mother-child interactive quality, male gender, and child ambivalent attachment were also predictors of externalizing clinical problems. In this practice-based study, 108 outpatients were asked to fill in the Experiences in Close Relationships – Short form, the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation – Outcome Measure (CORE-OM), the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), and the Drug Use Disorders Identification Test (DUDIT) at treatment start and end. Patients were given psychological treatments with a directive, reflective or supportive orientation. Insecure attachment style was more common among the SUD outpatients, compared to non-clinical groups. Patients with a fearful attachment style scored higher on psychological distress than patients with a secure attachment style. The associations between the attachment dimensions and psychological distress were stronger than those between attachment and SUD. Significantly more patients had a secure attachment style at treatment end.

This study added more understanding on the relationship between fearful avoidant attachment styles, its effects on adjustment of an individual to the environment and the risky sexual behavior in young adolescent girls, investigate the extent to which fearful attachment styles influence sexual aggressive behavior, examine the correlation between fearful attachment styles and high-risk sexual behavior and to determine the prevalence of secure attachment styles.

### Risky Sexual Behaviors amongst Girls

According to a study carried out in the United States, risky sexual behavior's magnitude was forty-six percent, whereas, in Ethiopia, the risky sexual behaviors amongst preparatory and secondary school students were steadily increasing; for example, it was reported to be 33 percent in Jimma and 15 percent in Jiga (Keto et al., 2020). In Gonda City, studies indicate that twenty percent of the sexually active participants had more than one partner concurrently. Moreover, 17% of all the male correspondents sexually active had sexual intercourse with commercial sex workers; amongst them, 82% never utilized condoms. Kasahun et al. (2017) carried out a study in Gonda City amongst secondary school students to assess the risky sexual behaviors and associated factors and established that 19 percent of the study respondents had pre-marital sexual intercourse, from which 7 percent had sexual contact with commercial sex workers.

According to Alsubaie (2019), in his study to explore sexual behavior and associated factors amongst adolescents in Riyadh High Schools, indicated that approximately 54 percent of his study respondents took part in daily masturbation, whereas 38 percent participated in active sexual contact. The findings also showed that males participated in risky sexual behaviors and had negative activity.

Mamo (2020) carried out a study of knowledge, practice, and attitude towards risky sexual behavior amongst preparatory and secondary students in South-Western Ethiopia. As per several studies, sexual risk behavior impacts youth and adolescents' life-style and contributes to various negative effects; however, the prevalence is increasing because of several factors like insufficiency of information on adolescent sexuality. According to the UNAID 2013 report, 35 million people have HIV/AIDS, with young people between the ages of 15 and 24 making up about 33% of new infections each year. The World Health Organization report also shows that 333 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections take place annually and approximately a third of the statistics occur in persons below 25 years of age.

Sub-Saharan nations like Ethiopia are the most affected. As per the Ethiopian family planning association, approximately 72 percent of boys and 71 percent of girls had their first sexual act within 15-17 years, whereas 13 percent had begun engaging in sexual activity between 10 and 15 years (Aklilu, 2020). As per a 2002 Analysis in Ethiopia, 54 percent of pregnancy to girls is unwanted in comparison to 37 percent of between 20 and 24. As per research in the country, the main predisposing factors raising sexual practices amongst adolescents are increased pre-marital sex, deteriorated traditional values and norms that discouraged pre-marital sex as well as media transmitting new thoughts through TV series and movies.

Mbuthia et al. (2019) carried out a study to find out the patterns of risky sexual behaviors and their associated risk factors amongst first-year university students in the coastal region of Kenya. They carried out a cross-sectional study that involved 473 respondents in two universities, and most of the students were between 17 and 20 years. 42% of the

students indicated that they had their first sexual act between 15 and 19 years, whereas 15% had theirs between 7 and 15 years. Only a handful, 33%, made use of protection consistently within the past year. Males were linked with the history of engaging in early sexual debut, having inconsistent use of condoms, having multiple sexual partners as well as engaging in sexual intercourse under the influence of drugs and substances. Muthia et al.'s findings indicate that females having multiple sexual partners have an increased risk of infection because of cervical immaturity and, therefore, the risk of contracting cervical cancer.

Mwangi et al., (2019) indicates in their study that young persons in Kenya are participating in high-risk behaviors highly contributing to the increased HIV/AIDS transmission. These behaviors, as per Mwangi et al. (2019), include multiple sexual partnerships, early sexual debut, unsafe sex, low rates of HIV testing, and ignorance of the HIV status of their partners. Adolescent girls of the age 15-19 years were particularly vulnerable with a considerable high risk of taking part in sex in comparison to men.

Given the above prevalence and trends, existing risky sexual behaviors amongst youths are of huge concern to the Ministry of Education and the government. Despite the ministry improving its awareness programs on enlightening adolescents in schools on risky sexual behaviors (Muthia et al., 2019), there have been few studies linking risky sexual abuse and attachment style carried out in the Nyanza region, which leads to HIV/AIDS prevalence rates and therefore this study seeks to fill this knowledge gap by identifying specific risky sexual activity that girls engage in because the mentioned studies have generalized.

A myriad of studies has been done to explain and explore the causes and mitigations of risky sexual behaviors among adolescent girls, this study will delve into the correlation between risky sexual behaviors and attachment styles, to provide a different understanding of the possible causes of risky sexual behaviors and develop mitigation measure for the good of the adolescents and young people.

#### Attachment Styles Promoting Sexual Aggression

Reis (2016) conducted a study to explore the styles of adolescent attachment styles of those who sexually offend. Reis administered adolescent attachment style interviews to thirty-two young males between 12 and 19 years who were alleged to have carried out a sexual offense. Results indicated that sex offenders are likely to show insecure attachment styles. The respondents in Reis' (2016) study were males, and therefore, we cannot conclusively relate it with the current study in which the study respondents will be female. Hence the need to fill the knowledge gap by carrying out a study to find out the attachment styles that promote sexual efficacy.

Spencer et al. (2021), examined attachment styles (something commonly incorporated into couples therapy) and their association with physical intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration and victimization among men and women. This meta-analysis incorporated 33 studies that looked at the association between four different attachment styles and IPV. This study examined the strength of the correlation among different attachment styles and IPV perpetration and victimization, examined gender differences in the strength of the association among attachment styles and IPV, and compared the strength of the association with IPV among different attachment styles. The study found that anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and disorganized attachment styles were all

significantly associated with physical IPV perpetration and victimization. Secure attachment was significantly negatively related to IPV perpetration and victimization. There was a significantly stronger association between avoidant attachment and IPV victimization for women compared to men. Clinical implications related to the importance of fostering secure attachments when working with couples or individuals who have experienced IPV are addressed.

#### Correlation between Attachment Styles and High Risk-Sexual Behavior

Nik, Modarres & Ziaei (2018) carried out a study to assess the relationship between attachment style and sexual self-concept in married women in Tehran. Nik et al. (2018) used a descriptive-analytical cross-sectional study to carry out a study on women between the ages of 15-44, three hundred and sixty-five respondents. Results indicated that there was a direct link between anxious/avoidant attachment and negative sexual self-concept, whereas secure attachment had a negative correlation with sexual self-concept. Contrarily, positive sexual self-concept had a reverse connection with avoidant and anxious attachment and a direct link with secure attachment. The direct link between secure attachment and positive sexual self-concept can be predicted that by efficient planning for secure attachment, healthy sexual behaviors are achievable.

Kim and Miller (2020) carried out a meta-analysis to find out if insecure attachment styles relate to risky sexual behavior. The purpose of their study was to determine the outcomes of the link between adult attachment and risky sexual behavior. The results indicated that attachment anxiety possesses a small impact on having more than one partner and engaging in unsafe sex, whereas avoidance attachment style has a small influence on having more than one partner; however, it had no influence on participating



in unsafe sex. The study concluded that insecure attachment styles have a relation to risky sexual practices, and the link between anxiety attachment style and having more than one partner insignificant as the mean age of participants maximizes and when the population of the study is especially an at-risk population.

The difference between Kim and Miller's study and the current study is that it investigated adult attachment, whereas the current study was on school-going girls who are predominantly adolescents.

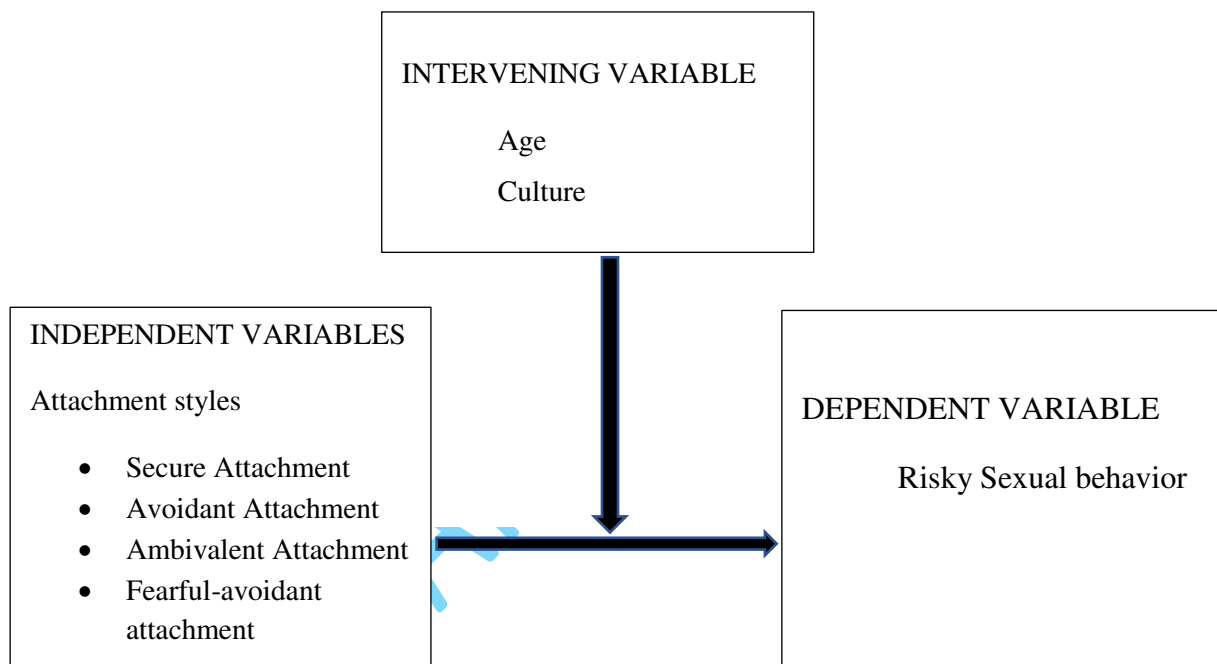
Childhood experiences could maximize the likelihood that an individual develops an insecure attachment style. These experiences include a troubled childhood, sexual and physical abuse, child mistreatment, and early separation from caregivers. Wang & Wang (2019) carried out a systematic meta-analysis study to find the relationship between risky sexual behaviors and childhood maltreatment.

Wang et al. (2019) calculated pooled risk estimates utilizing the random effect model, and results indicated that childhood maltreatment was considerably linked with an early sexual debut, multiple sexual partners, and unprotected. The study was a meta-analysis study, and hence there was need to carry out an empirical study and compare the findings, particularly on other causes of insecure attachment and determine an existing correlation with the variables. There has been very few research on attachment and risky sexual behaviors in Kenya, thus this study would add to the minimal data that is available.

### Conceptual Framework

This refers to a schematic flow or representation of a research problem entailing the concepts' network. The study conceptualized that the independent variable, attachment

style, will have an impact on the dependent variable, which is risky sexual behaviors. Persons with secure attachments will have lower scores for high-risk sexual behaviors, whereas those with insecure attachment like anxious and avoidant will have higher score for risky sexual behavior. The relationship was mediated by intervening variables namely age and sex and culture. The conceptual framework is illustrated as shown in the figure below.



*Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework (Source: Author 2023)*

### Summary

In chapter 2, the discussion centred on the theoretical framework, empirical framework and the conceptual framework, the attachment styles were elaborated and the relationship between attachment styles and risky sexual behavior.

In chapter 3, the discussion was on research methodology and the data collection instruments and procedures, pretesting and sampling procedures and finally the ethical considerations that will have to be followed while the research will be conducted.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods to be used for data collection and analysis as well as the research design. The discussions cover the research design, the study site, the study's target population, samples and sampling techniques, research instruments, pretesting, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, tools, and ethical considerations. They also cover the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

#### Research Design

Research design defines the structure of data collection and data analysis in order to achieve research objectives using the empirical evidence (Dannels, 2018). This research used a correlational research design to outline the link between the variables. Correlational research focuses on assessing relationship between variables by obtaining information on one variable and using it to estimate the changes in the other variable. The purpose of using this design was to gather and use data in establishing relationships. Therefore, this design was adopted in the current study to help the researcher in investigating the relationship between attachment styles of junior secondary girls and their involvement in risky sexual behavior and the strength of the relationship. From the nature of the research, using correlational research helped to see variables in a natural setting it also provides an alternative to experimental research.

## Population

Population refers to the whole group of persons, objects, or events that possess common traits (Otzen & Manterola, 2017). Even though the whole population does not take part in the research study, the outcomes of the research can be generalized to the whole population. The population in this study were girls attending Junior Secondary Schools in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. There were approximately 2400 girls in the Junior Secondary schools in Nyakach Sub County (Nyakach sub-County Education Office, 2023).

## Target Population

The target population was chosen purposively by picking one of the zones in Nyakach. The schools in the target population were: Naki Junior Secondary schools, Pundo Junior Secondary School, and Ndori Junior Secondary School, Pap Ndege Junior Secondary school, Kabondo Junior Secondary School, Ongielore Junior Secondary School, Soko Junior Secondary School, Mwangaza Junior Secondary School, Kibwon Junior Secondary School, Holo Junior Secondary School, Lwanda Junior Secondary School and Guu Junior Secondary schools. The estimated number of girls in these schools was 215.

*Table 3. 1: Number of students in Junior High schools in Sigoti Zone*

| School                  | Number of Students in junior Secondary school |
|-------------------------|---|
| Naki                    | 18  |
| Pundo                   | 15  |
| Pap Ndege               | 16  |
| Ndori                   | 18  |
| Kabondo                 | 15  |
| Holo                    | 16  |
| Guu                     | 19  |
| Lwanda                  | 16  |
| Ong'ielore              | 21  |
| Soko                    | 17  |
| Saka                    | 18  |
| Kibwon                  | 10  |
| Mwangaza                | 15  |
| <b>Total Population</b> | <b>215</b>                                    |

Source: Nyakach Sub- County education office

#### Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

All girls aged between 12-16 years in the 12 junior secondary schools were eligible to participate in the study. Since these schools are in a village set up and there is possibility of some of the participants having started school late, or some who may have dropped out of school and rejoined school, girls above 16 years were allowed to participate in the study. The participants were to be in session during the time of study. The participants must have been in the same school for more than three months. Private schools were excluded from the study.

Participants in the primary school section were also excluded from the study. Participants undertaking the last cohort of 8-4-4 in Standard 8 were excluded from the study. All the boys and transgender population were excluded from the research.

### Study Area

This study was conducted in Sigoti zone which consists of 12 government sponsored primary schools. There were more than seventeen (17) Primary schools in the zone but only government sponsored schools were considered in this study; this is because most of the schools that have self-sponsored students have a different landscape in their programs and mode of teaching. Some of the schools that were church sponsored could have totally different approach and response in handling issues of sexuality and were therefore excluded from the study.

The current Junior high school seventh graders are the pioneers of the CBC curriculum in Kenya, this was due to the government directive that has seen the formerly class seven join grade 7 under the new Competence Based Curriculum that was adopted a few years ago. The population is unique because they are the first group to join the Junior High school. In Sigoti Zone, the primary section comprises of day schools with most of the students coming from the villages around the schools, however under the new system of Junior High schools, some of the schools had been merged.

### Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to choose junior secondary schools to take part in the study. In this regard, all junior secondary schools in Sigoti Zone were chosen to participate in the study. The sample size will be determined using the Yamane's formula.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling in which researchers choose members of the public to participate in their surveys based on their own judgment.

The researcher in this study wanted to reach out to particularly adolescent girls within Luo Nyanza region, Nyakach sub-county. All survey participants were chosen because they met the specific profile of being adolescent girls living in Nyakach sub-county, Kisumu County when there is a great concern of the number of young people contracting HIV and several teen and adolescent pregnancy.

### Sample Size

A sample size refers to the number of participants in a particular inquiry that represents the whole population. It is often required to be large enough to be a good representative and provide an excellent picture of the population (Kadam & Bhalerao, 2010). Kadam and Bhalerao supported the statistical significance of a sample size greater than 30 while Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) recommended size between 10% and 30% of the total population.

Using Yamane's formula for sample size determination, the sample size was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{215}{1 + 215 * (e)^2}$$

=150 participants.

Adding a 10% attrition rate, gave a working sample size of 154.

Where N is the target population and e are the margin of error of 0.05.

### Data Collection Procedures

Upon successful defense of the research proposal, the researcher acquired an Ethics and Review Board approval from the Daystar University Institutional and Review Committee



(DU-ISERC). The researcher also applied for approval from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation permit (NACOSTI). The researcher proceeded to the Kisumu County Commissioner's office and the County Director of Education for authorizations. After obtaining all these, the researcher visited the 12 Junior secondary schools and informed the administration of the intent for the study and the benefits of the study to the schools. She was given a chance to inform the students about the intended study. Those willing to participate in the study were asked to register with their respective class teachers. The researcher met those interested to give them consent forms to take home for their parents/guardians to sign.

On the actual day of data collection, the researcher and her assistants met the students in a designated assembly hall in each of the schools. Each school was given a separate timing in line with their school schedules. Upon meeting the students in the school, the researcher recruited the participants in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. They were required to assent because they were minors. After this, questionnaires were distributed to the recruited participants.

The qualitative data was collected by the researcher having a focus group discussion with the participant to glean more information from the respondent. They were reminded that they are free to participate and free to withdraw at any point of the discussion.

#### Data Collection Instruments

A self-administered closed ended questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the students. It is an adopted questionnaire from both the Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire and Sexual Risk Behavior scale. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the socio-demographic information such as student's age, living arrangement

at home, and marital status of the parents or guardians. The second section focused on items from Attachment Style Questionnaire measuring four attachment styles namely secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. The secure and preoccupied styles were measured with seven items while fearful and dismissing were measured with five items. The respondents were required to give their views on each question using Likert scale rating from 1; as I strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree.

The qualitative data was collected in second section of the questionnaire and had items measuring student's risky sexual behavior and sexual aggression which is derived from the Cambridge shire & Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Child Sexual Abuse Assessment Tool. Besides the questionnaires, focus group interview were conducted to glean more information from the respondents.

#### Pretesting

Pretesting of the data collection instruments was done in a population with situational and demographic characteristics that are like the population that was being studied. In this research the pre-testing was done in Manywanda zone, Seme Sub- County in the same Kisumu County. This site was picked because of the shared characteristics with the schools under research was carried out. Some of the similar characteristics is that they were both in the border to other Counties, Nyakach sub-county bordering Homabay county which is ranked the county with the highest number of adolescent pregnancies in Kenya, while Seme Sub- County bordering Siaya County which is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in adolescent pregnancies. Secondly, they are both in the same ethnic community, the same county one to the south the other in Central Kisumu.

Sixteen girls from Gumo Junior Secondary School in Seme Sub County were selected to participate in the pre-testing. The gathered data was utilized to erase any errors and ambiguity in the tools before carrying out the actual study.

#### Validity and Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which a certain procedure of measurement gives a similar outcome repeatedly. It is obtained using the stability method and test-retest method in order to establish an instrument's reliability. To establish the reliability of these instruments, the test-retest method ought to be utilized. As per Moran, Lecannelier and Rodriguez (2015), the adolescent attachment questionnaire is suitable since it is a short-self-administered questionnaire showing similar psychometric traits to an English version that they had translated to use for the Chilean population. Moran et al. (2015), in their study, showed that there was sufficient internal consistency of the research instrument with Cronbach alpha's values of between 0.61 and 0.83; these values are acceptable and exhibit high levels of reliability.

Validity is the accuracy of inferences based on the research results (Fitz Patrick, 2019). In order to safeguard the validity of the instruments of research, the respondents only interacted with them at the time of data collection. Both instruments; Attachment style questionnaire and the sexual risk behavior scale have been tested and approved for use. Both instruments have been tested before and their validity have been approved.

Content validity of the questionnaires was established to ensure they measure the concepts of the study (Aoki, Hall & Takasaki, 2019). The researcher went through the instruments and made a comparison with the set objectives and made sure that they

contained all the information: answering the set questions and addressing the research aims and objectives.

### Data Analysis

Upon completing data collection process, the researcher coded the questionnaires in preparation for analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26) was used in this case for data analysis. The data was subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive statistics focused on organizing and summarizing data for easier comprehension of items such as demographic characteristics using means and frequencies. Inferential analysis was adopted to infer population properties by testing the hypothesis and deriving estimates. Pearson correlation was applied to establish the strength of association and direction of the relationship between variables. Regression analysis test was used to assess the predictive power of the independent and intervening variables. Qualitative data was categorized into thematic areas and deductions made.

### Ethical Considerations

#### *Confidentiality*

There were assurances of confidentiality for the participants in this study. Additionally, they were told that taking part in the study is completely optional. The researcher explained the expectations and the data collection process to them. They were given a chance to ask for any clarifications. The respondents were also informed that just in case there were any emotions or any other issue psychological in nature, it was dealt with. To ensure that high levels of confidentiality are maintained, only the researcher and her assistants had access to the raw data. In addition, no names were written on any of the tools. The participants received an informed consent after being fully informed of the

study's requirements. There was no any discrimination of any kind, and the respondents were guaranteed of confidentiality.

#### *Voluntary Participation and withdrawal*

The participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were free to discontinue at whichever stage of the study.

#### *The perils and perks of the study*

The participants were informed by the researcher that after completing the study, their awareness of their anxiety levels would be addressed, and as a result, they would perform better in their daily activities in addition to maintaining focus in their studies. Additionally, the participants were made aware that the study carried no risks for them. However, they were made aware that any psychological harm resulting from study-related problems would be addressed. The group members had a debriefing.

#### *Compensation*

The study participants were made aware to expect no monetary gain as they would be able to improve their awareness of their attachment styles due to the items of the questionnaire form.

#### *Informed consent*

Consent was sought from the head teachers of the schools that were participating in the study. The teachers were also requested to inform the parents prior to the data collection. The participants were then taken through the objectives of the study. Being minors, the children were asked for their ascent for them to be included in the study and informed of voluntary participation.

#### *Debriefing*

Participant who may have had any mental issue arising from the questionnaire or any data collection process were debriefed.

### Summary

This chapter describes the whole process of collecting study data for this research. It concentrated on the design of the research, which is a descriptive survey with both quantitative and qualitative facets. The chapter also discussed the target population as well as the study area. Ethical consideration and pretesting have also been considered wherein all study respondents are to participate on a voluntary basis.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

## Introduction

The chapter provides findings based on the data that was collected on the relationship between attachment styles and risky sexual behavior among girls in public junior secondary schools in the selected region. The first section covers reported results and findings from quantitative data and second reports on qualitative findings from the focus group.

## Response Rate

Response rate entails the number of participants who successfully completed the survey divided by the total sample group. The response rate for this study is reported in the table below.

*Table 4.1: Response Rate*

| Category                 | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Correct forms returned   | 146       | 94.8%      |
| Incomplete/ not returned | 8         | 5.2%       |
| Total                    | 154       | 100%       |

Results from table 4.1 indicated an excellent response rate. As such, this implied that the data collected from the participants was good enough to be analyzed and reported for this study.

## Reliability Test

The results in table 4.2 reported on the reliability test that was conducted using Cronbach's alpha.

*Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics*

| Category          | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| Attachment styles | .50              | 8          |

|                       |      |   |
|-----------------------|------|---|
| Risky sexual behavior | .640 | 7 |
| Sexual aggression     | .808 | 8 |

The table above illustrated the calculated Cronbach's alpha value for each category of data that was collected using the questionnaire. It was evident that the risk sexual behavior and sexual aggression category reported highest reliability as compared to attachment styles. Therefore, since the alpha coefficients are greater than 0.5, these results imply the instrument used was reliable.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

#### Demographic Characteristics

The next section explored the sample properties based on the demographic characteristics with special focus on factors such as age, parents' marital status, and family living arrangement.

*Table 4.3: Age of the Respondents*

| Age   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 12    | 15        | 10.3    | 10.3          | 10.3               |
| 13    | 76        | 52.1    | 52.1          | 62.3               |
| 14    | 38        | 26.0    | 26.0          | 88.4               |
| 15    | 14        | 9.6     | 9.6           | 97.9               |
| 16    | 3         | 2.1     | 2.1           | 100.0              |
| Total | 146       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

The table above reports on the distribution of the sample participants by age. From the results above, the largest number of participants were 13 years of age accounting for (n = 76, 52.1%) followed by 14 years accounting for (n = 38, 26.0%) and 12 years accounting for (n = 15, 10.3%). The smallest group comprised of those aged 15 years accounting for (n = 14, 9.6%) and 16 years accounting for (n = 3, 2.1%).



*Table 4.4: Marital Status*

|                       |           |  | Count | Column N % |
|-----------------------|-----------|--|-------|------------|
| Parent marital status | Divorced  |  | 1     | 0.7%       |
|                       | Married   |  | 124   | 84.9%      |
|                       | Separated |  | 5     | 3.4%       |
|                       | Single    |  | 7     | 4.8%       |
|                       | Widowed   |  | 9     | 6.2%       |

The researcher also investigated the parents' marital status as reported in the table above. From the results, the largest number of students came from family background where their parents were married accounting for (n = 124, 84.9%). A small number of participants came widowed families (n = 9, 6.2%), single families (n = 7, 4.8%), separated families (n = 5, 3.4%), and divorced families (n = 1, 0.7%).

*Table 4.5: Living Arrangement*

|                    |                       | Count | Column N % |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------|------------|
| Living arrangement | Father only           | 5     | 3.4%       |
|                    | Guardian/relative     | 22    | 15.1%      |
|                    | Mother and father     | 84    | 57.5%      |
|                    | Mother and stepfather | 5     | 3.4%       |
|                    | Mother only           | 30    | 20.5%      |

Family living arrangement was also investigated in this research. The results are illustrated in the table above. It is evident that many the participants were living with their mother and father (n = 84, 57.5%) followed by those staying with their mother only (n = 330, 20.5%) and guardian or relatives (n = 22, 15.1%). A small number of the participants were staying with their father only or with mother and stepfather accounting for (n = 5, 3.4%).

### Living Arrangement and Attachment Style

Another important part of this research was to report on the association between living arrangement and the emerging attachment style as reported among the participants. It is important to note that the scores of each attachment style differs based on the homes the participants reported.

*Table 4.6: Living Arrangement and Attachment Style*

|                   |      | Living Arrangement |                    |                 |                     |             |
|-------------------|------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|
|                   |      | Father only        | Guardian /relative | Mother & father | Mother & stepfather | Mother only |
| Ambivalent        | Low  | 2                  | 14                 | 51              | 3                   | 18          |
|                   | High | 3                  | 8                  | 33              | 2                   | 12          |
| Avoidant          | Low  | 1                  | 15                 | 35              | 2                   | 15          |
|                   | High | 4                  | 7                  | 49              | 3                   | 15          |
| Fearful Avoidant  | Low  | 2                  | 11                 | 37              | 2                   | 16          |
|                   | High | 3                  | 11                 | 47              | 3                   | 14          |
| Secure attachment | Low  | 0                  | 8                  | 26              | 2                   | 11          |
|                   | High | 5                  | 14                 | 58              | 3                   | 19          |

The results in table 4.6 reported on the association between different living arrangements and the reported type of attachment style. The main implication is that the living arrangement or family background of a child has a great influence on the resulting attachment style they develop. Each category reports on the number of participants presenting high or low attachment style relative to the living arrangement. For instance, in the first row, it is evident that there were 14 participants in low ambivalent and 8 participants in the high ambivalent category for living with guardian or relative. Similarly, for secure attachment, it is evident that there were more participants in the living with both mother and father category where low secure attachment reported 26 cases while high secure attachment had 58 participants.

The Prevalence of Secure, Anxious, Ambivalent and Avoidant Attachment Styles Among Public Junior Secondary Female Students in Nyakach Sub-County

The first objective of this study was to investigate the prevalence of four attachment styles among female students in the public junior secondary schools.

*Table 4.7: Prevalence of Attachment Styles*

|                         | Low   |         | High  |         |
|-------------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|
|                         | Count | Row N % | Count | Row N % |
| Avoidant style          | 68    | 46.6%   | 78    | 53.4%   |
| Ambivalent style        | 88    | 60.3%   | 58    | 39.7%   |
| Secure attachment style | 47    | 32.2%   | 99    | 67.8%   |
| Fearful Avoidant style  | 68    | 46.6%   | 78    | 53.4%   |

The results in table 4.7 reported on the prevalence of the various attachment styles rated as high or low based on the participants' self-reported questionnaire. From the table, it is evident that for Avoidant attachment style, most students reported high (n = 78, 53.4%) while the rest (n = 68, 46.6%). In the second category, it is evident that there were more cases of low ambivalent style (n = 88, 60.3%) compared to high ambivalent (n = 58, 39.7%). From the third row, high secure attachment style was more pronounced (n = 99, 67.8%) compared to low secure attachment style (n = 47, 32.2%). Finally, the last row reveals that high fearful avoidant attachment style is more prevalent (n = 78, 53.4%) compared to low fearful avoidant style (n = 68, 46.6%). The results have demonstrated varying prevalence of the various attachment styles most of which reported high except for ambivalent style.

#### Influence of Attachment Styles on Risky Sexual Behaviours

The second objective of this study was to investigate whether attachment styles predict risky sexual behavior among secondary school students.

*Table 4.8: Model Summary*

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .178 <sup>a</sup> | .032     | .004              | 2.014                      |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Secure attachment, Ambivalent, Avoidant, Fearful Avoidant

The R-square value is used to indicate how much the total variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. The results above showed that the variables secure attachment, avoidant, ambivalent, and fearful avoidant attachment styles accounted for 3.2% of the total variation in the risky sexual behavior which is very small. Therefore, other factors that were not included in the study may explain the remaining 96.8% of the variation in the students' risky sexual behavior.

*Table 4.9: ANOVA*

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 18.640         | 4   | 4.660       | 1.149 | .336 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 571.805        | 141 | 4.055       |       |                   |
|       | Total      | 590.445        | 145 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: risky sexual behavior total

b. Predictors: (Constant), Secure attachment, Ambivalent, Avoidant, Fearful Avoidant

The results in the ANOVA table are used when reporting how well the regression model fits the data when predicting the dependent variable. From the results in the table 4.9, it was evident that the regression model did not predict the dependent variable significantly well given the p-value of 0.336 which is greater than 0.05.

*Table 4.10: Coefficients*

| Model |                   | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|       |                   | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1     | (Constant)        | 7.196                       | .801       |                           | 8.980 | .000 |
|       | Avoidant          | -.031                       | .077       | -.036                     | -.407 | .685 |
|       | Ambivalent        | .192                        | .092       | .177                      | 2.084 | .039 |
|       | Fearful           | -.004                       | .084       | -.004                     | -.048 | .962 |
|       | Avoidant          |                             |            |                           |       |      |
|       | Secure attachment | .021                        | .095       | .019                      | .220  | .826 |

a. Dependent Variable: risky sexual behaviour total

The coefficients table 4.10 was used in providing the necessary information for predicting the dependent variable while at the same time determining whether the independent variables contribute statistically significantly to the model. The table showed the predictive weights of the attachment styles. The results in the table showed that only ambivalent attachment style statistically significantly contributed to the model given p-value of 0.039 which is smaller than 0.05, these results implied that when the influence of the four attachment styles is considered, the more ambivalent a student was, the high likely they were to involve themselves in risky sexual behavior.

#### The Extent to Which Attachment Styles Influence Sexual Aggressive Behavior

The results were presented in table 4.11.

*Table 4.11: Model Summary*

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .344 <sup>a</sup> | .118     | .093              | 5.054                      |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Secure attachment, Ambivalent, Avoidant, Fearful Avoidant

The results in the table 4.11 for R-square showed that only 11.8% of the total variation in the sexual aggressive behavior could be explained by the independent variables secure

attachment, ambivalent, fearful avoidant, and avoidant attachment style which is very small. While the contribution of the attachment styles was small, it is important to note that it was statistically significant based on the results in ANOVA table 4.12 Hence, it was worth noting that other factors that may not have been included in this study account for the remaining 88.2% of the total variation in sexual aggressive behavior among the students.

*Table 22: ANOVA*

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 482.945        | 4   | 120.736     | 4.726 | .001 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 3602.041       | 141 | 25.546      |       |                   |
|       | Total      | 4084.986       | 145 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Sexual aggression total

b. Predictors: (Constant), Secure attachment, Ambivalent, Avoidant, Fearful Avoidant

The results in the table 4.12 showed that the regression model predicted the dependent variable significantly well since it scored a p-value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ .

*Table 4.13: Coefficients*

| Model |                   | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T     | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|       |                   | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1     | (Constant)        | 8.891                       | 2.011      |                           | 4.421 | .000 |
|       | Avoidant          | -.094                       | .194       | -.040                     | -.483 | .630 |
|       | Ambivalent        | .944                        | .231       | .331                      | 4.077 | .000 |
|       | Fearful Avoidant  | .152                        | .211       | .062                      | .719  | .473 |
|       | Secure attachment | -.021                       | .238       | -.007                     | -.088 | .930 |

a. Dependent Variable: Sexual aggression total

The results from the coefficient table 4.13 showed that only ambivalent attachment style contributed statistically significantly well to the model in predicting sexual aggression. Given the positive value, it was worth noting that the higher ambivalent a student gets, the higher their chances of engaging in sexual aggressive behavior.

The Correlation between Attachment Styles and High-Risk Sexual Behavior and Sexual Aggression among Public Junior Secondary Female Students

*Table 4.14: Risky Sexual Behavior Correlation*

|                   |                 | Risky Sexual Behavior Total |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Avoidant          | Pearson         | -.011                       |
|                   | Correlation     |                             |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .897                        |
|                   | N               | 146                         |
| Ambivalent        | Pearson         | .173*                       |
|                   | Correlation     |                             |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .036                        |
|                   | N               | 146                         |
| Fearful Avoidant  | Pearson         | .026                        |
|                   | Correlation     |                             |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .757                        |
|                   | N               | 146                         |
| Secure attachment | Pearson         | .029                        |
|                   | Correlation     |                             |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .724                        |
|                   | N               | 146                         |

The Pearson correlation results shown in the table 4.14 indicated that risky sexual behavior was negatively correlated with avoidant attachment style ( $r = -0.011$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.897$ ), risky sexual behavior also positively correlated with ambivalent attachment style ( $r = 0.173$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.036$ ), at the same time risky sexual behavior had a very small positive correlation with fearful avoidant attachment style ( $r = 0.026$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.757$ ).

Risky sexual behavior had a positive but small correlation with secure attachment style ( $r = 0.029$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.724).

*Table 4.15: Sexual Aggression Correlation*

|                   |                 | Sexual Aggression Total |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Avoidant          | Pearson         | .023                    |
|                   | Correlation     |                         |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .779                    |
| Ambivalent        | N               | 146                     |
|                   | Pearson         | .338**                  |
|                   | Correlation     |                         |
| Fearful Avoidant  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000                    |
|                   | N               | 146                     |
|                   | Pearson         | .118                    |
| Secure attachment | Correlation     |                         |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .155                    |
|                   | N               | 146                     |
|                   | Pearson         | .030                    |
|                   | Correlation     |                         |
|                   | Sig. (2-tailed) | .720                    |
|                   | N               | 146                     |

The Pearson correlation results shown in the table above indicated that sexual aggressive behavior was positively correlated with avoidant attachment style ( $r = 0.023$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.779), sexual aggressive behavior also positively correlated with ambivalent attachment style ( $r = 0.338$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.00), at the same time sexual aggressive behavior had a positive correlation with fearful avoidant attachment style ( $r = 0.118$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.155). Finally, sexual aggressive behavior had a positive but small correlation with secure attachment style ( $r = 0.030$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.720).

#### Thematic Analysis of Focus Group

The researcher also conducted interviews with some of the students and inquired about different questions related to the current topic. The most important areas of interest were examining the students' perception about sharing information about their romantic life



with their parents. Another question that raised particular response was related to an encounter with fellow students who had engaged in any kind of sexual or romantic behavior. The researcher was also interested in understanding the students' life away from school and relationship with their parents.

The students provided some interesting remarks regarding the question of whether they would tell their parents about having a boyfriend. The responses to this question revealed that most participants would not consider being open to their parents. The students raised different concerns regarding how their parents would react if they considered taking to them about having a boyfriend. Some of the emerging concerns raised among the participants were that their parents would react by beating them up or chase them away from home. Other emerging comments were that the parents would confront the boyfriend's family or even consider not paying for their school fees as they believe relationships would ruin their future. Another major concern that would be raised by the parents was the worry that their children would be impregnated in the process. Here are examples of responses to this question:

*I would be punished because am not old enough*

*My parent would take me to boyfriend's place and talk about the issue*

*My parent will not pay my school fees and tell the boyfriend to pay*

The second question that was addressed during the interview with the focus group was whether a fellow student had ever been sexually involved with another partner and reaction from teachers on the same. The students reported that in such cases there would be punishment from the teachers and parents. It was evident that most parents are strict regarding this issue and react by either punishing the child or sending the child to the

boyfriend. The responses also revealed that some teachers tend to be supportive in this situation by guiding the student involved in sexual behavior and may even go to an extent of aiding them financial support to complete school. Most emerging concerns related to such sexual engagement included a student getting pregnant, dropping out of school and being infected with HIV/AIDS. Here are some of the responses regarding this question:

*Teachers feel like beating them, but they don't and consider advising them*

*The grandmother found about the boyfriend and beat her.*

*The girl was beaten by the grandmother using a "fimbo" for having a boyfriend*

*Teachers called the student and talked to them.*

*Parents will beat the child if they find out.*

The last critical question that was addressed through the focus group focused on understanding the students' relationships with their parents from childhood. Most participants in the interview gave positive response to this question. The emerging themes were that their parents were good to them, encouraging, understanding, supportive, and comforting. Most of the parents seem to have taken their responsibilities seriously and provided the best care they can. The only concern was that most parents would be busy with work at some moments. However, the general remark was that the students received the best care and basic needs from their parents. Here are some responses from the focus group:

*My mother offers comfort in times of difficulty by encouraging me to do better when I fail exams.*

*My father defended me while I was being beaten by mom because of a mistake.*

*My mother taught me how to lead a decent life and support me in times of challenge.*

*My parents confronted me and later forgave me for having and writing a letter to my boyfriend.*

*My parents encourage me to work hard when I fail exams.*

*Mom is always busy with work so no time to talk to her in event of difficulty.*

#### Summary of Key Findings

1. There exist differences in the type of attachment styles that participants demonstrate based on their living arrangement.
2. Prevalence of the most attachment styles associated with high levels except for ambivalent attachment.
3. Regression analysis revealed attachment styles influence risky sexual behavior with ambivalent attachment being the statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable.
4. Regression analysis revealed attachment styles affect sexual aggressive behavior with ambivalent attachment style being statistically significant predictor.
5. Correlation exists between attachment styles and risky sexual behavior with ambivalent attachment being reported as statistically significantly correlating with risky sexual behavior.
6. Correlation exists between attachment styles and sexual aggressive behavior with ambivalent attachment reported as being statistically significant when correlated with sexual aggression.
7. Parents concerned about their children dropping out of school or getting pregnant.

8. Varying relationships between parents and their children as parents hold a firm stand against children engaging in sexual relationships.

#### Chapter Summary

The chapter provided an analysis of the data that was collected from the respondents regarding attachment style, risky sexual behavior, and sexual aggression among female students in junior secondary schools. An elaborate illustration and presentation of the results was provided in this chapter including descriptive and inferential statistics. The next chapter dived deep into discussion of these findings while providing a comparison with past research and determination of the current study's implication for future research.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

#### Introduction

The chapter provides a discussion of the findings provided and illustrated in the previous chapter. The goal of this discussion is to examine the implication of the study findings for previous and future research. The study was built on the account that there exists an association between attachment styles and risky sexual behavior and sexual aggression among female students in junior secondary schools.

#### Discussion of Key Findings

##### Prevalence of Secure, Anxious, Ambivalent and Avoidant Attachment Styles Among Public Junior Secondary Female Students

The first objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of the four attachment styles, secure, ambivalent, avoidant, and fearful avoidant. The current study revealed that there were many cases of high than low levels of each attachment style except for ambivalent attachment. Excellent understanding of the prevalence also entailed examining the attachment styles relative to the children's living arrangements.

The results comparing living arrangement with attachment style are supported by previous studies. For instance, persons brought up in families with both parents usually portray secure attachment styles compared to individuals from blended families like guardian or who grew up with single parent. According to previous inquiries, adolescent girls who came from two parent family backgrounds demonstrated secure attachment styles while those from single parent families tend to be associated with insecure attachment (Yarkovsky & Timmons Fritz, 2014). Extensive inquiries also found that

students from divorced families often portray high attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. Furthermore, some studies also found that the attachment between a parent and their child often grows stronger in single parent families (Owino & Asakhulu, 2021).

#### Influence of Attachment Styles on Risky Sexual Behaviours Among Public Junior Secondary School Female Students

The second objective of this study focused on examining the influence of attachment styles on risky sexual behavior among female junior secondary students. The study used regression analysis to establish this relationship. The results from this study revealed that the attachment styles influenced risky sexual behavior though at lower rate. Furthermore, only ambivalent attachment style was reported to be a significant predictor of risky sexual behavior among the participants.

The relationship between secure attachment style and risky sexual behavior as reported in this study can also be related to previous research that demonstrated that young adolescents with secure attachment rarely involve in sexual activities in early age as compared to those portraying ambivalent attachment (Odera, 2022). The research findings from this study also relate to previous inquiry examining sexual behavior of adolescent girls which revealed that insecure attachment strongly relates with increased risk of having different sexual relationship partners and other risky sexual behaviours (Yarkovsky & Timmons Fritz, 2014). It is therefore important to highlight that the protective effect of the secure attachment style against risky sexual behavior tends to manifest in line with the attachment theory. For instance, an individual reporting secure attachment are often brought up by caring and responsive parents or caregivers. As a

result, they tend to hold a positive self-image while viewing attachment figures as available and trustworthy.

It is important to note in this case that secure attachment is associated with feeling worthy of attachment figure's attention and such people do not show any worry or care about rejection. As such, based on the results from this study, students who portray secure attachment style were not desperate for approval, attention, and rarely consent to participating in sexual activities to avoid reject or make the other party happy. It is also important to note that those students in the study sample who reported engaging frequently in sexual activities in the insecure attachment may have developed this tendency due to their lack of capacity to develop healthy relationships with others. as such, any physical satisfaction is derived from sexual activities but still remain emotionally isolated.

In this context and with reference to findings from the connection between living arrangement and attachment style indicating that the participants who reported insecure attachment might have considered using sex as their alternative approach to cope with difficult family situations. It is important to note that the findings from current study showed that the likelihood of individuals who present more secure attachment style to engage in risk sexual behavior is very low. Such findings were also reported and are consistent with what was established that students with secure attachment style are less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior (Wambua et al., 2018).

Previous investigations revealed that among adolescent with secure attachment, there are lower rates and chances of engaging in risky sexual behavior (Paulk & Zayak, 2013). As such, adolescents with secure attachment style have less vulnerability in terms of the risk

of engaging in risky sexual behavior as they tend to find validation from within themselves. Their self-worth does not rely on other people's acceptance or approval and are less concerned about abandonment by their romantic partners as they have lower levels of attachment anxiety.

The results from this study also revealed that fearful avoidant was not a significant predictor of the risky sexual behavior. Previous research differ in argument as risky and impulsive sexual behavior has been associated with fearful avoidant and avoidant attachment style (Yarkovsky & Timmons Fritz, 2014). Previous research by Odera (2022) has also found a connection between fearful avoidant style with transactional sex. However, these studies focused on different respondents from the current study's school students. The results from the current study imply that students demonstrating fearful avoidant attachment style tend to desire close relationships but are often worried about getting disappointed or hurt in the process, in a bid to feel validated and appreciated they tend to engage in intimate relationship with opposite sex and considering their age and ability to make the right decisions they end up hooking with the wrong people. Thus further exposing them to more heartbreak and a desire to get a more fulfilling relationship.

Avoiding intimacy is a key aspect that account for students with fearful avoidant style not being interested in engaging in risky sexual behavior. As reported in the current study, students who reported fearful avoidant attachment may not have engaged in sexual activities as the attachment avoidance serves as a protective mechanism against risky sexual behavior. Previous results on attachment security and sexual behavior have revealed that adolescents with avoidant or fearful avoidant attachment style are mostly



motivated to engage in sexual activities for different reasons. As such, this explains why present study found ambivalent attachment style as the better predictor of risky sexual behavior. From the current study, the avoidant attachment style may have had the anxiety of facing rejection and experiencing pain from sexual partners and so they may have chosen to restrain themselves from getting intimate for the fear of hurt.

#### Extent to Which Attachment Styles Influence Sexual Aggressive Behavior Among Public Junior Secondary School Female Students

The study also focused on the relationship between sexual aggression and attachment style. The results from this study revealed that only ambivalent attachment style was significantly correlated with sexual aggression. The relative predictiveness of the four attachment styles also revealed that only ambivalent attachment statistically significantly predicted sexual aggression among the study participants. The findings from this study revealed that there was an association between students reported sexual aggressive behavior and the attachment styles based on the correlation analysis. Basing the argument on previous research by Yarkovsky and Timmons Fritz (2014), it was worth noting that secure attachment style predicted less aggressive behavior.

The current study findings were supported by past studies which have demonstrated that adolescents demonstrating secure attachment are often less likely to be aggressive towards others (Wambua et al., 2018). Regression analysis revealed that ambivalent attachment style was a significant predictor of risky sexual behavior while avoidant was not. It is important to note that avoidant attachment style was not identified as a significant predictor of risky sexual behavior among the study participants based on the results from regression analysis. The results from regression analysis also found that

ambivalent attachment style was major and significant predictor of the participants' sexual aggression. As such, these findings support previous research by Odera (2022) that established that ambivalent attachment style significantly contribute to aggressive behavior in a sample of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Avoidant attachment has also been previously found to influence sexual aggressive behavior. An important remark is that secure attachment style is less likely to contribute to aggressive behavior compared to insecure attachment styles. Therefore, individuals demonstrating secure attachment find it easy to adjust and show high level of prosocial behavior and empathy compared to those in insecure attachment (Wambua et al., 2018). Students who demonstrate avoidant and fearful avoidant attachment are usually associated with looking at others in a negative light increasing their chances of misinterpreting signals (Yarkovsky & Timmons Fritz, 2014). As such, they often feel less constrained from actions that are aggressive towards others. Such individuals also place little value on intimacy given their distrust of others. Given their little concern about maintaining relationships, there have a high chance of harming others through aggressive behaviour and allowing others to take advantage of them so that they avoid getting hurt or abandoned. In intimate partner violence that is one of the biggest concerns in young adults, securely attached individuals are less likely to fall prey to their abuser, while on the other hand, insecurely attached individuals sometimes feel so helpless and tend to feel that they have no option but to allow the aggressors to take advantage of them.

Previous research supports this argument suggesting that individuals demonstrating fearful attachment style tend to be abusive in relationships (Owino & Asakhulu, 2021). Such individuals are usually torn between desiring intimacy and dreading too much

closeness creating a conflict that leads people with fearful attachment into passive aggressive behavior.

Previous studies have established that there exists a significant positive relationship between vulnerable attachment and behavioural problems (Wambua et al., 2018). Secure attachment style particularly among adolescents acts as a buffer mechanism against development of many pressures both external and internal to an individual. Studies conducted in Nairobi revealed that parental monitoring plays a crucial role in defining the relationship between adverse childhood events and problematic behaviours. As such, any close tie between a child and their parents allows for greater self-expression as the child will receive better care. The central argument is that attachment insecurity has a great impact on the development of behavioural and emotional problems among adolescence. Such patterns explain why certain attachment styles like secure style have been found to reduce participants' vulnerability to risky sexual behavior and sexual aggression. As such, the more insecure a child becomes, the higher their vulnerability to developing behavioural problems like risky sexual behavior and aggression. In this study

#### Correlation Between Attachment Styles and High-Risk Sexual Behavior Among Public Junior Secondary Female Students

The results from this study also found significant correlation between chances of engaging in risky sexual behavior and attachment avoidance or ambivalent attachment style. As such, the results implied that risky sexual behavior is associated with the dimensions insecure attachment or ambivalent attachment style. Based on the correlation analysis conducted in this study, aggressive behavior was significantly correlated with ambivalent attachment. The main implications from this study are that students

demonstrating insecure attachment styles are usually vulnerable to aggression. Therefore, these results confirmed previous findings on the association between ambivalent attachment and risky sexual behavior (Yarkovsky & Timmons Fritz, 2014). For instance, previous research by Owino and Asakhulu (2021) into this topic found ambivalent attachment to be useful in predicting risky sexual behavior among high school students in USA. At the same time, another study also confirmed that adolescents reporting high level of ambivalent attachment usually engage in sexual activities at an early age.

Most people who are associated with ambivalent attachment usually feel they do not require an attachment figure's love as a result becoming more sensitive to any form of rejection. A previous inquiry by Wambua et al. (2022) revealed that such individuals readily concede to sexual demands when in romantic relationships to demonstrate love and avoid rejection. Such fear and a desire to please others drives persons associated with ambivalent attachment behavior to engage in sexual activities even when there are some associated risks. The underlying desire is to get the emotional security they did not receive from their parents or caregivers such that the more sexual intimacy the better the quality of their relationships. In this context, ambivalent individuals tend to consider or interpret sexual interests from others as affirmation of their value and agree to engage even in risky sexual activities.

The avoidance attachment style as reported in this study can also be related with previous investigations into its impact on risky sexual behavior. However, the current study failed to demonstrate statistically significant relationship between avoidant attachment with risky sexual behavior based on the correlation analysis. Therefore, it is worth reporting that there may exist a weak association between avoidant attachment style and risky

sexual behavior among students. When examined from attachment perspective, it is important to highlight that individuals who portray avoidant behavior often have positive image of themselves. As such, such people will show little trust of their attachment figures since they might have a history of rejecting or hostile upbringing.

In the current study, students who reported avoidant attachment style could be viewed as being extremely emotionally independent. Another important comment from the study results is that participants who demonstrated avoidant style rarely value close interpersonal relationships or desire to be liked or please others. Based on the study results, the negative correlation between avoidant attachment style and risky sexual behavior implies that students who were associated with avoidant style rarely involve in sex with intention of pleasing their partners or being liked. It is also important to note that the weak negative association between avoidant style and risky sexual behavior as reported in the current study may be explained by the fact that students with avoidance behavior rarely participate in sexual activities compared to those from ambivalent attachment style (Odera, 2022). The underlying explanation is that those in avoidant style usually place little value on interpersonal intimacy, have few close relationships, have few romantic partners or friends, and are less inclined to engage in sexual relationships (Pault & Zayac, 2013). Avoidant attachment style as reported in this study revealed that participants in this category rarely form close relationships with individuals from the opposite sex due to lack of trust and fear of disappointment. As such, they have fewer opportunities to engage in any sexual activities especially those that are risky.

Previous research can also be used to explain the current results on avoidant attachment and risky sexual behavior. For instance, according to Owino and Asakhulu (2021),

individuals with ambivalent or anxious attraction can engage in sex for purposes of approval or meet unmet attachment needs. On the other hand, the previous research revealed that individuals with avoidant style tend to prefer casual sex without long-term commitment. Such individuals are rarely included towards emotional intimacy. Other studies on college students' attachment and attitude towards sex support findings from the current study (Wambua et al., 2022). For instance, avoidant attachment was reported among students who accepted casual sex and possess liberal attitude towards sex. These findings align with results from the current study such that junior secondary students with avoidant attachment style were more likely to hold an open attitude towards sex.

### Conclusion

The results from this study confirmed that the various attachment styles which are associated with relationships with parents and caregivers have a great influence on the junior secondary school students' sexual aggression and risky sexual behavior. The attachment theory which formed the basis of this study offered an excellent explanation and approach to predicting students' self-perception and how they view others basing on the mental models of attachment relations which influences their behavior when relating with others and themselves. As such, the current study findings support the argument provided in the attachment theory. It is important to recognize that as this study was founded on the tenets of attachment theory, the findings from this study have supported the model's established view that argues in favour of secure attachment. Therefore, it is important to recognize that secure attachment often have positive influence on an individual's emotions and behavior. Numerous studies on attachment have examined children or adults but little attention has been given to adjustment factors.

In the current study, the findings offered an elaborate basis for understanding this issue from a perspective of attachment security among junior secondary school students while using attachment theory as useful model for understanding their behavior especially during adolescence. Regarding attachment styles, the study concluded that more secure attachment styles were associated with reduced risk of engaging in risky sexual behavior. The central basis for supporting this argument is that secure attachment increases an individual's positive self-image while reducing desire for approval. As such, these students were not vulnerable to engaging in risky sexual behavior or aggression as opposed to ambivalent attachment style. Therefore, attachment security which is derived for the various attachment styles has a great impact on an individual's susceptibility to developing emotional and behavioural problems like sexual aggression and risky sexual behavior.

#### Limitations of the Study

Despite desire to cover a large area of the population, this study had its methodological limitations. For instance, the study only included a sample comprising female participants while leaving out male participants. A focus on female students was a major limitation raising the need for future research to explore this area to uncover underlying gender differences. The study was also limited to children who are aggressive but failed to consider those who are also victims which could have allowed for more comprehensive understanding of sexual aggressiveness. Finally, failure to provide relationship between attachment styles and assessment of early sexual experiences was also a limitation in this study. Therefore, there should be an assessment of individual characteristics and experiences before and after first sexual intercourse to understand the individual changes

that contribute to increased risk of sexual aggression and vulnerability to risky sexual behavior.

### Recommendations

The results from this study could be used to influence policy and education practice in junior secondary schools which are still a new system in the country. As such, it is crucial for education policymakers to introduce counsellors who will help students with insecure attachment styles given their great vulnerability to risky sexual behavior and sexual aggressiveness. The parents and caregivers play an important role in influencing the type of attachment styles that students develop. Therefore, it is essential for this group to be educated on the importance of secure attachment which will influence them to practice parenting style that enhance a sense of security among their children. Teachers in various schools should also be trained on how to identify the junior Secondary students that are struggling so as to help them. Some of the insecure attachments are intensified by teachers who are harsh and not understanding the students. The teachers to student ratio should be increased by the relevant authorities so as to give teachers more out of class time, a number of the junior high schools were severely understaffed most only had 2-5 teachers against over 14 subjects and the number of students in the junior Secondary schools. It is also recommended that other programs that are developed to address sexual aggression and risky sexual behavior should focus on students with insecure attachment. The students should also be encouraged to form secure attachment bonds with each other and their parents which will form a protective shield against risky sexual behavior and aggression. Parents and guardians should also be encouraged on the importance of forming close bonds with their children. Last but not least, a multifaceted approach by



churches, Non-Governmental Organisations, trusted individuals and institutions can use age appropriate sex education in the schools to reduce the students' curiosity and give them the right information about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

#### Recommendations for Future Studies

With regard to future research, this study recommends future research focusing on other variables that are related to attachment style such as drug abuse and self-esteem and how they affect academic performance. The current study should also be replicated with focus on wider population such as among college students and primary schools. In addition, a special focus should also be given on the youth in correctional facilities as they are the most affected by the impact of insecure attachment styles. A further investigation on beliefs and attitudes can shed some light into the major contributor of risky sexual behaviour that result in high number of adolescence pregnancy and HIV prevalence among adolescent people and young adults in the region.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Informed Assent

My name is Josephine Akinyi Oguna, a Masters student at Daystar University. I am conducting a study on attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors among girls in public junior secondary schools in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. Some of the questions that will be asked during this study are on intimate subject and may be embarrassing or make you uncomfortable. In such cases you are allowed to refuse to answer or stop the interview at any time. Your participation in this research will help us to learn how to provide effective services to improve health among students and avoid risk of problematic sexual behavior.

The information given here will be confidential and will not be share with anyone, except in cases of child neglect and abuse, then the relevant authorities will have to be engaged. Your participation in this study is voluntary and your name will not be recorded on the questionnaire. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign in the space below.

Thank you

Respondent's signature ..... Date .....

Researcher's signature ..... Date .....

## Appendix B: Informed Consent- Principal

My name is Josephine Akinyi Oguna, a Masters student at Daystar University. I am conducting a study on attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors among girls in public junior secondary schools in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. This research will help us to learn how to provide effective services to improve health among students and avoid risk of problematic sexual behavior.

I would like to ask for your consent to allow me carry out this research in your school. Your students' participation in this study is voluntary and their names will not be recorded on the questionnaire. If you agree to allow your students to participate in this study, please sign in the space below. Thank you.

Principle's signature ..... Date .....

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### Appendix C: Oral Consent for Parents

My name is Josephine Akinyi Oguna, a Masters student at Daystar University. I am conducting a study on attachment styles and risky sexual behaviors among girls in public junior secondary schools in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. This research will help us to learn how to provide effective services to improve health among students and avoid risk of problematic sexual behavior.

I would like to ask for your consent to allow me carry out the research with your child. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and their names will not be recorded on the questionnaire. If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, please let the child come with the feedback.

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## Appendix D: Student's Questionnaire

**Section A: Background Information**

Please select the option applicable to you:

Age (in years): .....

What is your parent(s) / guardian(s) marital status?

Married [ ]

Divorced [ ]

Single [ ]

Separated [ ]

Widowed [ ]

Which of the following is your living arrangement?

Mother and father [ ]

Mother only [ ]

Father only [ ]

Guardian/relative [ ]

Mother and Step father [ ]

The following section includes different set of statements to describe you. Please read and mark which best applies to you.

**Section B: Attachment Style**

| Statement about me                                     | Strongly disagree | disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| I feel comfortable sharing how I feel                  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I try avoiding close relationships                     |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I trust people easily                                  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I am comfortable with close and intimate relationships |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I am afraid that some people may not like me           |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I prefer being independent                             |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I fear getting into close relationships                |                   |          |          |       |                |
| I fear getting disappointed when I get close to others |                   |          |          |       |                |

**Section C: Risky Sexual Behavior**

| Statement about you | Not at all | One or two times | Three to four times | Five to six times | Six or more times |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                     |            |                  |                     |                   |                   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Have you shared explicit pictures of yourself?   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Have you ever participated in sexual or romantic activity even when you never wanted but your boyfriend insisted |  |  |  |  |  |
| Have you ever had sexual intercourse   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Have you ever had sex with someone you did not know well   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Have you ever had sexual intercourse with someone older than you by more than four years                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| Have you ever had sexual intercourse without using a condom  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How often do you look at sexually explicit material like video   |  |  |  |  |  |

#### SECTION D: Sexual aggression

| Statement about me  | Strongly disagree | disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Have you ever had an occurrence of peeping, exposing, using obscenities                                       |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Do you get preoccupation with sex such that it interferes with daily function                                 |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Have you attempted/forced others to expose genitals   |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Are you always pre-occupation with chatting online, giving out personal details, meeting online acquaintances |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Have you ever touched the genitals of others without permission   |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Do you practice unsafe sexual practices   |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Do you sometimes send/receive sexual images of multiple people with their consent                             |                   |          |          |       |                |
| Are you sexually aggressive /obscenities in any way   |                   |          |          |       |                |

Thank you for your participation.

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## Appendix E: Focus Group Questions

1. If you had a boyfriend would you tell your mother or father? What would their reaction be?  
Comments
  
2. Have students in your school ever been sexually involved with a boy or a girl? What happened, how was it handled by the teachers or parents?  
Comments
  
3. How do you relate with your parents from childhood, do they offer comfort in times of difficulty?  
Comments
  
4. Do you have any questions or concerns about your sexual attractions or your relationship with your parents?  
Comments

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## Appendix F: Ethical Clearance



**Nairobi Campus**  
P.O. Box 44400 - 00100, GPO  
Nairobi, Kenya.

**Athi River Campus**  
P.O. Box 17 - 90145  
Athi River, Kenya.

Tel: 0709 972 000  
0716 170 313  
0748 100 759  
0724 256 408

E-mail: [admission@daystar.ac.ke](mailto:admission@daystar.ac.ke) OR  
[info@daystar.ac.ke](mailto:info@daystar.ac.ke)

Website: [www.daystar.ac.ke](http://www.daystar.ac.ke)

**VERDICT: APPROVED WITH COMMENTS**

Daystar University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (DU-ISERC)

Our Ref: **DU-ISERC/ 04/09/2023/000965**

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

To: Josephine Oguna (15-2718)

Dear Josephine,

**ATTACHMENT STYLES AND RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIORS AMONG GIRLS IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SIGOTI ZONE, NYAKACH SUB-COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA**

Reference is made to your ISERC application reference No. **010923-02** dated **1<sup>st</sup> September 2023** in which you requested for ethical approval of your proposal by Daystar University Ethics Review Board. We are pleased to inform you that ethical review has been done and the verdict is; **Revise, to the satisfaction of supervisors and then proceed to the next stage.** As guidance, ensure that the attached comments are addressed. Please be advised that it is an offence to proceed to collect data without addressing the concerns of Ethics Review board. Your application approval number is **DU-ISERC-000965**. The approval period for the research is **between 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024** after which the ethical approval lapses. Should you wish to continue with the research after the lapse you will be required to apply for an extension from DU-ERB at half the review charges.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements.

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review approval by Daystar University Ethics Review Board.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to Daystar University Ethics Review Board within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to Daystar University Ethics Review Board within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of a signed one-page executive summary report and a closure report within 90 days upon completion of the study to Daystar University Ethics Review Board via email [[duerb@daystar.ac.ke](mailto:duerb@daystar.ac.ke)].

**Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission**

Appendix G: Research Permit



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Ref No: **527411**

Date of Issue: **11/September/2023**

**RESEARCH LICENSE**



**This is to Certify that Miss.. Josephine Akinyi Oguna of Daystar University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kisumu on the topic: ATTACHED RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIORS AMONG GIRLS IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SIGOTI COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 11/September/2024.**

License No: **ACOSTI/P/23/29364**

**527411**

Applicant Identification Number



Director General  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &  
INNOVATION**

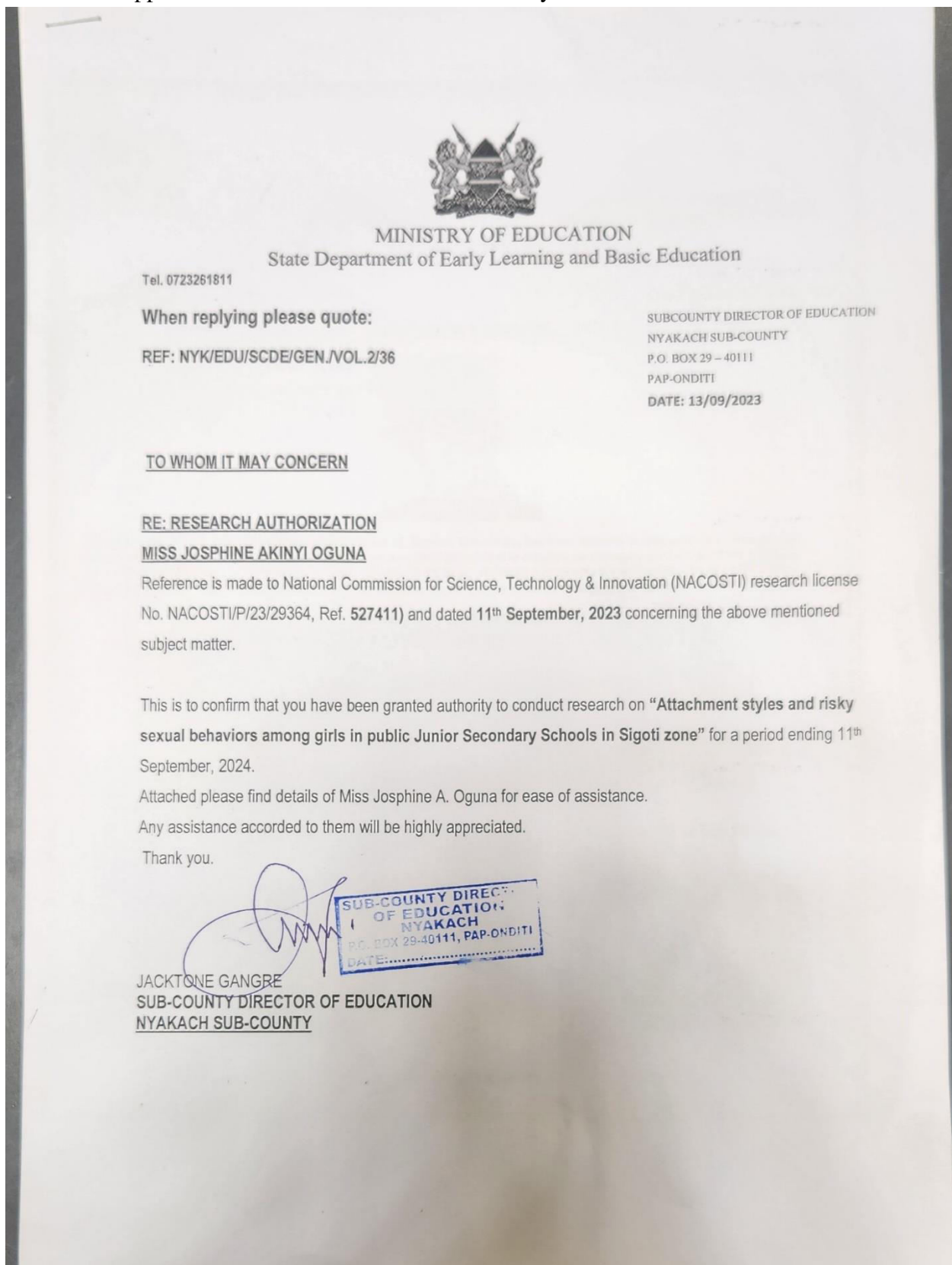
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**See overleaf for conditions**

Appendix H: Authorization from the County Director of Education



Appendix I: Plagiarism Report

# Josephine Akinyi Oguna Thesis

*by josephin oguna*

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**Submission date:** 17-Oct-2023 07:03AM (UTC+0300)  
**Submission ID:** 2184340945  
**File name:** Josephine\_Akinyi\_Oguna\_Thesis.docx (166.64K)  
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