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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SELECTED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS RELUCTANCE IN ADHERENCE TO SCHOOL RULES ON GROOMING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KAKAMEGA SOUTH SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Schools in Kenya have put in place rules on grooming particularly for girls. However, it seems like some girls in secondary schools are not getting on well with the type of grooming expected among them. Girls complain about the length of their skirts and their general make up. Several factors have been fronted as major contributors to girls' reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming in secondary schools. However, media, peer pressure, religion, self-esteem and culture were selected for this study. The study utilized the descriptive survey design where target population was 7906 adolescent girls and 105 teacher counselors from Kakamega South Sub County, out of which 100 adolescent girls and 20 teacher counselors were the actual research sample. They were selected using stratified and simple sampling techniques. Focus Groups Discussions and questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. The study findings indicated that peer pressure was the major contributor (42%) to girl's reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming, media (27.7%), and self-esteem (19.3%), religion (8.7%) while cultural factor contribution was (2%). This conclusively indicates that girls tend to live in associations and acquire learned behaviors from their friends. This resonates well with the social learning theory which indicates that an individual's behavior is as a result of the environment and social influence. The study also recommended that the Department of Early Learning and Basic Education in the Ministry of Education should come up with a comprehensive policy framework on grooming among female students in high school.

INTRODUCTION

Grooming among adolescent girls in high schools has become a subject of discussion both locally and internationally. Cases have always emerged when students dress in restricted ways as a form of showing boycott. Some student girl's violation of dress codes rises to a level of substantial vulgar in which case schools are forced to exercise greater control (Haslan, 2001). The school principals are required to implement the school dress codes rules at the same time adhering to the rights and the student's self-esteem. Cases of dress codes and grooming have featured in courts where the courts have struggled between balancing the interests of the students and those meant to be protected within the class environment. Schools must provide necessary dress code policy to their students at the time of admission. Adolescent girls want to display their bodies in the best possible manner. Her body is used as a medium of commanding others respect (Rathus, 2011). They realize the importance of the relationship between social achievements and their personal appearance as such they will take any risky action so as to achieve this purpose (Farrington, 2004).

The dressing codes among girls and their hair styles are greatly influenced by the economic background of their parents (Kasomo, 2006). Modern or western culture could have a bearing to the girls need to look descent and attractive otherwise compromising with the moral requirements of a school (Rathus, 2011). The social life of girls in secondary school system is affected by their grooming which overtly and covertly seem to affect their self-esteem. Adolescent girls are said to adjust well if they develop more positive perceptions of their real self, and not worry so much about what others want, and increase their positive experiences in the world. In such cases, the adolescent girl's real self will be more closely aligned (Rodgers, 1980). Adolescent girls achieve new cognitive skills permitting highly abstract thinking, engage in new kinds of social acquaintances with peers and embark on a search for identity that result in greater awareness of the self. This elevates their self-worth and positive self-regard. Adolescents require numerous social skills, because during this stage of life they develop new patterns of interpersonal relationships, confront new social experiences and need to learn new behavioral responses. This is to enable them grow into adulthood which is the ultimate goal of all societies (Steinberg, 2011). In accordance with Goldenberg (2000), adolescence girls who evaluate their bodies positively respond by showing increased identification with their physical outlook and increased interest in sex.

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Those who are pleased with their bodies emphasize the importance of their bodies. Those not pleased with their bodies underestimate themselves by reducing how much they monitor their grooming and seeking other sources of self-worth. Those adolescent girls interested in their physical outlook concentrate on various dressing codes and the subsequent hair style. According to Feldman (2002) dressing codes is characterized by emphasis on the miniskirt which is rated as wonderful clothing in Kenya without which a Kenyan woman would not be sartorially elegant. Various hair styles have raised a lot of concern among school girls with some advocating for plaited hair, use of weaves and long hair, in particular the weave raised a lot of concern among women in Kenya today. This factors affect the behavior of girls positively or negatively especially towards their teachers or peers. Some of them when writing their resumes end up specifying what they have on their heads than what they have in their heads (Ngugi, 2012). Adolescent girls embodiment underscores how girls resist pressures that are meant to keep them in line, socialize them to civilization according to the status quo, muffle the voices of some, lead some to dissociate from their own voices and thus their knowledge and also their own bodies and cause others to struggle with oppressive institutions, as well as with barriers to authenticity in their relationships, and within themselves (Rhoda, 2001). Their clothing in terms of miniskirts and armbands has become a subject of concern in the backdrop of school policies. The controversies extend to the type of cosmetics including different colorings, paintings or protecting the skin, hair, lipsticks, and nails. An adolescent listens carefully to the remarks about attractiveness and ugliness. She gets worried if she notices something ugly as it interferes with her self-esteem (Feldman, 2002).

The statement of the problem was the frequent occurrences of girls going on rampage insisting that they no longer want to become hostages of stringent school rules on grooming. Female students are reported to disown the long skirts proposed by schools, they equally want to use a variety of hairstyles and perfumes. They instead want to use tight skirts and various perfumes of their choice. The State Department of Basic Education has not come up with a comprehensive policy on grooming. School administrators have therefore encountered problems in instilling proper grooming rules among girls and the subsequent reason for girl's lack of adherence to the said rules. The purpose of the study was to investigate selected factors contributing to adolescent girls' reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming in secondary schools in Kakamega South Sub County. The main objective was to determine the contribution of media, peer pressure, religion, culture, self-esteem to adolescent girl's reluctance in adherence to school rules in grooming among secondary school girls.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. This is because the study required a description of occurrences as they occurred in the study area. The research was ethnographic. Ethnography accepts that human behavior occurs within a context (Robert, 2000). The descriptive survey design adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, which included Focus Group Discussion's and questionnaires. The characteristics of descriptive survey design were non-experimental and dealt with variables in a natural setting. This design was adopted to study the independent variables that

were media, peer influence, religion, culture, and self-esteem in their natural setting, and their contribution to the dependent variable of reluctance in adherence to school rules ingrooming among adolescent girls in secondary school. Kakamega South Sub County was chosen for the study because it had many girls schools compared to boys and the aspects of girls reluctance and boycott on grooming had been witnessed in the area. The population of study was based on students from secondary schools in Kakamega South Sub County. The sub county had a target population of 7906 female students and 115 teacher counselors from the 27 secondary schools, of which the researcher worked with an accessible population of 2477 female students and 20 teacher counselors from five public secondary schools and one private school. The stratified random sampling was used to obtain the six secondary schools from Kakamega South Sub County. In which case the sub county was stratified into four administrative strata and each stratum had a school picked randomly. Two strata with many schools had two schools each selected randomly. Purposive sampling was used to select the 20 teacher counselors. That a sample of between 20-50 cases in each minor group can be selected (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Kombo & Tromp 2006 & Kathuri & Pals 1993). The researcher obtained 100 female students from the accessible population of 2477 female students using Nassiumas formular (2000).

$$S = \frac{N(CV^2)}{0.5^2 + (2477-1)(0.05)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{2477(0.5)^2}{0.5^2 + (2477-1)(0.05)^2}$$

Where, S= required sample size from each school.

N= total population from each school

CV= population proportion to be assumed at 0.5 in relation to social sciences.

e= tolerance at the desired level or significance which can be set as 0.05

Using the above formula and parameters a sample size of 100 participants will be arrived at as recommended to represent the population. Each individual school sample was arrived at using the formula:

$$s = \frac{XS}{N}$$

Where; s=the required sample size for each school

X=individual schools population

S=sample figure generated by Nassiuma's formula

N=accessible population.

Two major instruments of data collection were used. A questionnaire which is a quantitative method was prepared by the researcher to collect data for the study from the female students. The second tool of data collection which was qualitative in nature was Focus Group(s) Discussion (FGD). Each group consisted of 4-6 female students' respondents. There were guided questions designed, which enabled the researcher to have time to interact with the respondents in order to gain more information from the respondents' nonverbal cues. According to Mutai (2000) an instrument is valid if its items are representative of the characteristics that it is intended to measure. Items were constructed on each objective to ensure content validity of the instruments.

The content of the instruments was validated by supervisors and research experts in the Faculty of Education and Community Studies of Egerton University. Reliability was obtained through the test-retest method. Test-retest reliability is the degree to which scores on the same instrument are consistent over time (Lunenburg, 2008). In determining the internal consistency of the item, Cronbach's coefficient alpha which is a general form of Kuder-Richardson (K-R) 20 formula, was used. Data collection involved the process of acquiring subjects and gathering information needed for the study. After approval of the proposal by the Board of Postgraduate studies, at Egerton University and on receiving the permit to carry out the research from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), the researcher proceeded to the field for data collection. The quantitative method of data collection involved the filling of questionnaires by the female students and student's discussions in Focus Group Discussion which was followed closely and recorded so that the information was sieved through to come up with patterns and clusters in order to arrive at a particular conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to find out the contribution of selected factors to adolescent girls reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming. The findings presented are based on the data collected from questionnaires and focus group discussions. The factors being discussed are peer influence, cultural influence, self-esteem, media influence, and religious influence. A sample of 100 students was selected and given a questionnaire on how each of the factors contributed to their grooming. The outcome is as given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Outcome of the Extent to Which Selected Factors Contribute to Grooming

Selected Factors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Peer Pressure	39	39
Culture	01	01
Self- Esteem	30	30
Media	27	27
Religion	03	03
Total	100	100

From Table 1, it is evident that 39% of the girls agreed that peer influence is a major contributing factor to grooming compared to influence of self-esteem (30%) and media influence (27%). However, religious and cultural influences have the least contribution of 3% and 1% respectively. This indicates that major grooming aspects seen among adolescent are commonly a resultant of their peers. However it was evident that a combination of the contribution of peer, self-esteem, and media resulted to 96% of influence. Friends and peers among the youth are extremely important in determining their behavior including grooming. Peer pressure has a lot of impact on girls and especially when they are in the school environment (Robert, 2003). Friendship and self-esteem are compatible among the youth; they can change the perception of the youth to the best or worse. 29% of youth's time is spent on media. These media and other advertising agencies impacts on youth behavior and personality. Most videos emphasize on female worth and beauty (Debenhams, 2001). Most female adolescents who watch media are likely to become violent and reluctant to the grooming aspects in their school.

Table 2. Response on whether female students can choose miniskirts for their uniform

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	25	25
Agree	20	20
Undecided	08	08
Disagree	18	18
Strongly Disagree	29	29
Total	100	100

This results are in agreement with Tajfel's Social Identity Theory which states that members of a similar group (the in-groups) develop similar characteristics and behavior. This brings about the social identity as a way of countering the outside group. As a way of the inner group comparing itself with the outside group a competition results (Haslan, 2001). This competition is as a result of peer pressure. This is what brings the uniqueness in dressing among the adolescents. Adolescent girls struggle to achieve positive self-concept and consequently self-esteem. Most girls who sit together develop and influence each other on the dress code, cosmetics use, and other areas such as hairstyles. The aspect of watching television or playing video is so rampant among the youth. This is counterproductive to education and the general growth among the youth (Robert, 1999). The time spend on the screen outweighs the study time. Their concentration on the screens gives them ample time to look into various dress styles which they eventually copy. Similarly they concentrate on puppet shows and freeze their imaginative ability. Most schools have televisions for study purposes. When students close schools, they get time to spent on televisions since most parent can't control their children (Ndirangu, 2007). Religious attires have minimal influence on the students, this could be because school uniforms may lead to religious discriminations. Many institutions argue that school uniform infringe on a student's religious freedom. A school dress code is said cannot prevent any student from expressing religious beliefs. Therefore students can do their expressions even outside the school environment (Ashurst, 2015). Under many circumstances, policies or codes that prohibit students from wearing religious attires such as Yarmulkes, turbans and head scarves are unconstitutional or unlawful. A policy on dress code should be neutral to expression or one that can differentiate among different views and opinions. Should also have substantial government interest to include student's achievements, focusing on learning, promoting safety and to provide a more orderly environment for the student to per sue her academics.

From the tabulated results, culture and religion had very little influence. The students in Focus Group Discussions were of the opinion that, their school administration did not entertain them having various attires representing their various cultures and religions. The administrators preferred the use of uniform as a standard way of dressing. However, the female students were equally withdrawn from their religions and cultures. They were better off aligning themselves with their schools rather than identify with their cultures and religions. Student's dress codes were equally affected by modernization and civilization. Results on various grooming attires used in schools, it was evident that 62% of female students still love their uniforms while only 38% hate their uniforms. On putting on skirts without petticoat, many adolescent girls (57%) prefer putting on skirts with petticoats while 43% preferred putting on skirts with petticoats. The latter are viewed as moral misfits. Female students and their hair styles was equally studied and 51% of

the girls agreed that they should be allowed to use various hair styles in school while 40% disagreed on being allowed to use a variety of hairstyles in school. Those who disagreed felt that many hairstyles in school will bring about completion and disadvantage the poor students who may not have money to rhyme with their friends. The aspect of miniskirts forming part of school uniform was studied and 47% disagreed using miniskirts as school uniform while 45% agreed. The undecided were 8% as clearly seen in Table 2 below. From Table 2, Statistics show that it is almost balanced for those supporting the use of miniskirts and those who are against the use of miniskirts as a form of uniform. Those who are against use of miniskirts are those that are strongly rooted in their culture and religion. The Luhya culture is against female students exposing their bodies as a form of immorality instead it should be covered as a way of being righteous in the face of the community (Bogonko, 1992). The same group that is against the use of miniskirts as a form of uniform could be showing solidarity with the school administration which is against.

Conclusion and Recommendation

- That there are three main types of media contributing towards girl's reluctance in adherence to school rules and grooming. These are social media, print media and music.
 - That peer pressure is the major contributor to girl's reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming. This is because girls tend to live in associations and acquire learnt behavior from their friends.
 - The two main types of religion are Christianity and Muslim where Christianity is widely spread than Muslim. Religious influence on girl's reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming was found to be minimal.
 - Culture is the least contributor to girl's reluctance in adherence to school rules on grooming. The Luhya culture which is most prevalent in the area of study is seriously fought by western civilization engraved with permissiveness.
 - Students with skirts and blouses that were new and fitting had higher self-esteem compared to the rest. However those who came from poor families, could not afford the basics in grooming had low self-esteem. It was therefore not true that many female students hate the kind of uniform they put on.
 - Students went for counseling on issues ranging from tight skirts, unmaintained hair style, torn uniforms and use of unwanted cold creams. It was also true that various school guidelines on grooming were not enough to stop girls from complaining about grooming aspects in their schools. And that the State department on basic education had done little contribution to avert any boycott or dissatisfaction arising from girls grooming.
- In view of the above summary and conclusions, the following recommendations have been made**
- The school administrations should monitor with strictness the mode of entertainment in school and particularly what girls watch from televisions and listen from radios. Girls should also not be allowed to use internet on computers when teachers are not around. This can make them misuse the use of internet on their computers. Mobile phones should not be under the custody of students.
 - The ministry of education in the State Department of Basic education should come up with a comprehensive policy framework on grooming among female students in high schools. This should incorporate the length of the skirt, the use of various hairstyles. To further define the kind of cold creams to use in schools, the type of uniform whether skirts only or use of long trousers among female students. The policy should explain whether female students will be barred from using necklaces and earrings in schools and if they should be compelled to dress in complete uniform inclusive of the undergarments.
 - Parents should be careful and watchful on how their female students dress. They should not let the permissive society overtake their cultural and religious perception on how females should dress. Their cooperation with the administration and the ministry of state department of basic education will yield a united front towards achieving acceptable grooming attires among female students.
 - Parents should help students to acquire new uniforms so that their self-esteem is raised. The school on the other hand should endeavor in encouraging girls to keep smart. The learning environment should be kept clean and conducive for leaning, one that can raise the esteem of female students. School administration should also be careful when selecting uniforms for female students. Should have conspicuous colors that can stand out among the rest.
 - Female students should be incorporated when the school administrations are making key decisions on grooming. Teacher counselors should also be involved in the process of making such decisions because they hold a lot of information on female students grooming.

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