

## Chapter 7

# Likes and Comments: The Untamed Facebook Sex Education in Uganda and Kenya for Emerging Adults

**David Mugambe Mpiima**  
*Makerere University, Uganda*

**Ruth Kendagor**  
*Karatina University, Kenya*

**Sarah Wairimu Ndung'u Njau**  
*Moi University, Kenya*

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter focuses on the changes in sex education among young adults in Uganda and Kenya. Sex education was previously done through paternal aunts and grandparents. However, in the recent past, the proliferation of social media especially Facebook has seen sex education shift to this social media. Using mostly qualitative methods and limited quantitative information, the chapter explores the ease with which sex information; some laced with sexually explicit photographs, has become so easy to access. Some of the shared information is empowering say about fashion, information about safe sex, relationship advice, connecting with people of the opposite sex as well developing identity formation and the freedom about one's body through the likes and positive comments made on Photos posted on Facebook walls. However, some of this information has led to cases of risk behavior like freelance sex, exposure to nudity, sharing of nude photos with boyfriends and girlfriends as well as pathological revenge porn by jilted lovers.*

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In most African societies, sex education and sexuality are treated as taboo matters that can only be whispered about or left unaddressed (Odek, 2007; Kabaabetswe & Norr, 2002). Sex education encompasses behavior, sexual knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes (Magoon, 2010). In Uganda and Kenyan communities, there are essentially two layers of cultural influences on individuals: the household or family and com-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1856-3.ch007

## Likes and Comments

munity. The two layers inform one's sexual values, traditions, and behaviors, varying among individuals and communities. In Uganda, especially among the Baganda and Basoga cultures, the *Sengas* (paternal aunt) play a key role in preparing emerging adults (girls) for marriage. The *Senga* would take action as the betrothal event drew near to prepare her niece for a successful marriage. She would do this by teaching her general good conduct as a growing female and wife but mostly about sex. This long standing tradition is similar to the Swahili culture among the Kenyan coastal community. In this culture, the bride is subjected to a one week or more of teaching by her aunts on how to take care of the husband on various issues, especially on sex and other bedroom matters. It should be noted that there is no such arrangements for emerging adult males.

In other communities, sex educators could be grandparents; for instance, among the Kisi, sex education is not the parents' role but it is carried out by the grandparents. These are the confidants of the grandchildren. While among the Luo and the Maragoli, sexual education targets older children who are kept in separate huts or homes of elderly community members. Sex knowledge is passed on during the initiation ceremonies (Odek, 2007). All this sex education takes place in the homesteads of these various elders as the girls became adults.

The 2011 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) shows that by 15 years, 12 percent of girls and 18 percent of the boys have engaged in sexual activity and by the time they reach the age of 18, 6 out of 10 adolescents (58%) and 47% of the boys have engaged in sex (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) & ICF International Inc., 2012). The 2012 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KHDS) reveals that 7% of young adolescents between the ages of 12 and 14 years have reported ever having sex, with the median age at first sex encounter as 10 years old. Among young adults aged 15 to 24 years, 66% of women and 59% of men have ever had sex. Of those, 21% had reported sexual activity before 15 years of age, compared to 25% in Kenya Aids Indicator Survey (KAIS) of 2007 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). In addition, 4% of women and 30% of men who were sexually active between the ages of 15 and 24 years reported multiple sexual partners (2 or more partners) in the past 12 months. Furthermore, 57% of women and 38% of men reported that they were aware of their sex partners' HIV status. Regarding condom use, 11% of women and 43% of men reported consistent condom use with partners of unknown or discordant HIV status. According to the report, half of all new HIV infections occur among young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Adolescent girls are twice as likely to be infected as boys of the same age. Thus by the time Kenyans and Ugandans get into the bracket of emerging adulthood, many are sexually active.

The heightened sexual activity is triggered by the rapid urbanization, increased levels of education, preference for boarding schools, especially for the urban dwellers, reduced contact with the traditional sex education providers, the culture that eliminates parents from sex education, and the proliferation of both the internet and availability of mobile phones. It is considered embarrassing for parents to discuss sexual information with their own child in African culture, hence emerging adults hardly get open sex education from their parents. With increased detachment from the more secure traditional system that filters sex education messages for emerging adults, the contemporary system leaves them to fend for themselves, often relying on their peers and social media, including Facebook. Thus, they transfer identity explorations for sex to social media platforms, leading to diverse sex education results.

With the lessening of the cultural arrangements for sex education, other groups have sprung up to fill the void. In Kenya, for instance, the emergence of emerging adults meetings known as *Chamas* (self-groups), has been noted. Bridal shower groups in Uganda have also emerged, where sexuality and sex issues are discussed. The bride to be is taught how to sexually satisfy a husband, how to dress appealingly when at home, and how to speak to a man.

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/likes-and-comments/173156](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/likes-and-comments/173156)

## Related Content

---

### An Investigation on Undergraduate's Bio-Energy Engineering Education Program at the Taiwan Technical University

Wen-Tien Tsai (2012). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction* (pp. 46-53).

[www.irma-international.org/article/investigation-undergraduate-bio-energy-engineering/69398](http://www.irma-international.org/article/investigation-undergraduate-bio-energy-engineering/69398)

### Higher Education Institutions and Digital Identity: New Needs, New Skills?

Mónica Aresta, Carlos Santos, Luís Pedro and António Moreira (2013). *Digital Identity and Social Media* (pp. 176-191).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/higher-education-institutions-digital-identity/72388](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/higher-education-institutions-digital-identity/72388)

### Resistance to Internet Banking Adoption in Tunisia: A Grounded Theory Approach

Wafa M'Sallemand Mohamed Nabil Mzoughi (2014). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction* (pp. 32-43).

[www.irma-international.org/article/resistance-to-internet-banking-adoption-in-tunisia/119427](http://www.irma-international.org/article/resistance-to-internet-banking-adoption-in-tunisia/119427)

### Augmenting Collaboration with Personalization Services

Christina E. Evangelou, Manolis Tzagarakis, Nikos Karousos, George Gkotsis and Dora Nousia (2009). *Human Computer Interaction: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1044-1054).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/augmenting-collaboration-personalization-services/22299](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/augmenting-collaboration-personalization-services/22299)

### Personal Information Privacy and Internet Technology

Edward J. Szewczak (2002). *Human Factors in Information Systems* (pp. 83-92).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/personal-information-privacy-internet-technology/22433](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/personal-information-privacy-internet-technology/22433)