

Students' Interpretations of the Messages Communicated by the Scrutinise Campus Campaign at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT This paper investigated students' interpretations of the messages communicated by the Scrutinise Campus campaign targeting students' sexual risk-taking behaviour at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The research was conducted with both male and female students selected from two campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In total, 96 in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions were conducted with an equal representation between male and female students. One of the objectives of the study was to understand how students interpret the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the research sought to provide insight into the messages communicated and how messages are understood by students. The aim was to ascertain how students position themselves in relation to the HIV epidemic. The data was analysed using thematic analysis, and the themes identified formed the basis for discussion in this paper. Students' discussions pointed to a need for the Scrutinise Campus campaign to communicate messages that are informed by sexual risk behaviour as understood by students on campuses. The paper concludes with suggestions to communicate HIV prevention messages that are appropriate to students

INTRODUCTION

The Scrutinise Campus campaign is a communication prevention strategy that uses applied arts to communicate HIV prevention messages to students in university campuses in South Africa (Mutinta and Govender 2012). The Scrutinise Campus campaign was created to support the Scrutinise Campaign created in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Johns Hopkins Health Education in South Africa (JHHE-SA), and designer jeans label Levi.

The aims of the Scrutinise Campaign are to encourage and equip young people to take responsibility to reduce their risk of HIV infection (Spina 2009). The Scrutinise Campaign involves a series of short animated commercials known as animerts. Using animated township characters, the campaign illustrates daily life encounters that place young people at risk of HIV infection.

The animerts, which are intended for 18-32 year-olds in South Africa, aim to equip viewers with HIV insights to examine their own risky behaviours and beliefs. Messages addressed by the campaign include perceptions of risk, multiple and concurrent partnerships, faithfulness, condom use and safety, transactional intergenerational sex, alcohol, and sex (Spina 2009). The

animerts are broadcast on national television and are used to stimulate discussions in a series of organised youth conversations. The Scrutinise Campaign focuses on youth in South Africa's Black urban townships, because research found that they engage in multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships making the spread of HIV and AIDS rife (Higher Education and Training HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS 2010).

Since the Scrutinise Campaign messages were seen as particularly relevant for young students, the Scrutinise Campus campaign, a programme of performances and educational events taking place at higher education institutions in South Africa was created. The campaign is aimed to support the Scrutinise Campaign and reinforce its objectives by promoting abstinence and faithfulness, and other prevention measures. The aim is also to encourage and arm students to take responsibility to reduce their risk of HIV infection. The campaign was designed to raise awareness about high risk sexual behaviour, provide opportunity to students to engage with their peers to talk about issues of risk and create learning moments to "scrutinise" or examine their own behaviour in the context of risk (Spina 2009).

The creation of the Scrutinise Campus campaign was a partnered project. DramAidE, as part

of its Health Promoter project funded by JHHE-SA and supported by the Centre for HIV and AIDS Networking (HIVAN) created a toolkit for use by campus stakeholders. DramAidE then trained Health Promoters and peer educators to run arts and culture festivals around the key themes in conjunction with the Scrutinise Campaign (DramAidE Annual Report 2008).

As its contribution towards the creation of the Scrutinise Campus campaign, ABC Ulna trained campus radio Disc Jockeys (DJs) to generate campus discussions around the key themes of the Scrutinise Campus Campaign. Matchboxology organised the involvement of celebrities and musicians and the logistics for the campus events (DramAidE Annual Report 2008). Then, peer trained educators, animators, comedians, and musicians organised a big concert to bring the campaigns' messages to students. New Start, a non-profit HIV counselling, testing, and referral service, offered HIV testing to students (DramAidE Annual Report 2008).

The Scrutinise Campus campaign's main messages are similar to those of the Scrutinise Campaign aimed at addressing the issue of sexual risk, condom efficacy, faithfulness, multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, early stage infection, sexual networks, alcohol abuse, transactional sex, and intergenerational sex (Spina 2008).

Though the Scrutinise Campus campaign has been in operation for several years, there is lack of studies conducted to ascertain students' responses or interpretations of the messages communicated. The aim of this paper is to show how students interpret the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages intended to address their sexual risk behaviour. This will be achieved by examining students' experiences or perceptions of the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages in relation to their sexual risk behaviour on campuses.

Objectives of the Study

- ♦ To ascertain if students received messages intended by the Scrutinise Campus campaign.
- ♦ To understand the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages recalled by students.
- ♦ To determine the differences and similarities in the interpretation of the Scrutinise

Campus campaign messages between students and the campaign providers.

- ♦ To determine how students felt about the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages, and how appropriate or inappropriate messages are to students on campuses.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Study

This research is informed by Interpretive Communities theory by Stanley Eugene Fish. The theory postulates that the meaning of a text is created, rather than discovered, by the reader (Fish 2011). Fish is part of the "reader-response" movement that believes that readers have crucial roles in shaping and producing the meaning of literary works (2014). The "reader-response" movement believes that readers' experiences can affect the understanding of a text. Thus, Fish introduced the theory of "Interpretive Communities" (Fish 2008). He argues that the interpretation of texts is dependent upon readers' subjective experiences. Fish postulates that people interpret texts as part of the "interpretive community" and this influences them to read texts in a particular way.

Fish (1999) argues that the activity of understanding is divided into two categories; same readers can interpret different texts differently, and different readers may interpret the same text in a similar way. According to Fish (1999), the shared interpretation suggests that readers will follow certain reading strategies more closely than the text itself. Therefore, Fish assumes that readers follow some strategies that enable them to interpret texts and find meaning (Fish 1999). He indicates that the "interpretive strategies" are flexible and they are shaped according to readers (Owen 2001). According to Olson and Worsham (2004), interpretive community holds that if a person agrees with another person about his or her interpretation of a text, then that person is not agreeing on the content of the text; he or she is simply agreeing on how to read the text.

From the interpretive community's point of view, readers produce literary texts. Without readers, texts do not exist (Fish 1999). In such an existentialist situation, there is no right or wrong interpretation to any text. Each reader reads the text in his or her own way. This is supported by Landa (2003) who argues that there is no stable basis for understanding. Meaning, there is no

correct interpretation that will always be true and or always be false for every perspective.

Community interpretive posits that meaning does not exist essentially or permanently in the text but in the reader, or the reading community. The text contains nothing in itself; even the content is supplied by the reader (Fish 2011). It is the reader who determines the shape of text, its form and content. This is how community interpretive can claim that readers “write” or “give meaning” to texts. In other words, the reader has the central role of evaluating the text and giving it meaning (Owen 2001).

According to Fish (1999), interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. Thus, interpretive communities are groups of critics who agree that certain elements in texts are more significant than others (Fish 2011). They are a group of readers who have the same strategies for interpreting texts; they are part of a single interpretive community (Owen 2001).

Fish (1994) argues that one cannot learn skills of interpretation because they are innate. Thus, things that can be learnt are means of construing texts. He further states that, if the interpretive strategies change for any reason, then the change will result in certain change in the text. This is because change in a text changes the way a text is understood by the reader. Members of the same interpretive community establish an agreement in interpreting the same text, not from the text itself but from the communal strategy. This strategy determines the text’s meaning and existence (Olson and Worsham 2004; Fish 2011).

Hall (1999) built on the interpretive community theory by arguing that audiences are active producers of meaning communicated to them through various channels of communication such as radio, television, print media, and others. Therefore, audiences are not simply absorbers or consumers of whatever messages or texts they receive. Hall (1999) explained that audiences make sense of the meaning of messages or media texts according to their social position, gender, age, class, race, and others. His argument is that audiences are not passive but active recipients of texts (Hall 1999).

In addition, Hall (1996) explained assumptions of how people make sense of media texts

through decoding. He revealed that people decode texts according to their ‘preferred reading’ in a media. The different social situations people find themselves in influence them to decode texts in different ways. Hall (1999) explained that “negotiated” readings are produced by those who inflect the preferred reading to take account of their social position; and “oppositional” readings are produced by those whose societal position puts them into direct conflict with the preferred reading.

Therefore, Hall’s (1999) model invites scholars and analysts to classify texts as “oppositional”, “dominant” and “negotiated”. These three concepts assume that media messages are vehicles of dominant ideology. In a nutshell, the model argues that audiences are no longer seen as consumers of messages or texts instead they are producers of meaning.

Guided by interpretive communities theory and the concept that audiences are active producers of meaning, this study explores students’ interpretations of the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Setting and Sample Size

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is a hub of the HIV epidemic in South Africa with the prevalence percentage at 17.8% (UNAIDS 2010). Also, this province boasts the second largest provincial population of 10.8 million people and is one of the poorest of the provinces in the country (Statistics South Africa (SSA 2012)).

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was formed in 2004 following the merger of the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. It has five campuses; Howard College, Westville, Pietermaritzburg, Edgewood, and the Nelson Mandela Medical School, and enrolls about 40 000 students. The demographics of the campuses vary. They are multi-cultural campuses comprising of Black African students, Indians, Coloureds, and Whites. Students come from within South Africa, other African countries, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Some live on campus, while others live in rented houses outside the campus in neighbourhoods that are closely-joined, with at times, mixing of racial groups.

In the first stage of this study, two campuses out of five were purposively selected. The

researcher took into account financial and technical constraints as it was impossible to cover all the campuses. In the second stage, a one-time ballot selected two faculties as follows; each of the eight faculties of the two campuses was assigned a unique serial number. These numbers were written on equal sized pieces of paper, folded, and placed in one box representing all faculties. The box was shaken vigorously, and two pieces of paper were picked from the box, one at a time without replacement. The two schools whose serial numbers corresponded with the numbers picked from the box were studied. A list of students in the selected schools was obtained from the Department of Management Information (DMI). Using purposive sampling, 80 students; 40 male and 40 female were selected from each of five levels of study that is, first year, second year, third year, fourth year and all post graduate levels for the IDIs. Each level of study was represented by 8 participants.

The sample was distributed to reflect the ethnic groups' diversities among the study population. This distribution was informed by the results of the survey by Mulwo (2009) which showed that the majority (68%) of the students at the university were Black, 20% of them were Indian, while the remaining were White (8%) and Coloured (4%). Based on these statistics, the researcher selected participants. The number of White and Coloured participants was adjusted slightly to give more meaningful results. In total, 80 IDIs and four FGDs consisting of 8 each were conducted with students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology was used to investigate students' interpretations of the messages communicated by the Scrutinise Campus campaign. This approach is inherently cross-sectional and descriptive. Data was collected using in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). Group dynamics were observed to ascertain individual and group thinking and obtain the majority view of students' normative behaviour. The IDIs were conducted in quiet environments to provide a confidential atmosphere in which participants could share sensitive and personal information.

FGDs were conducted with each session lasting about one hour. Data was transcribed within a few hours of collection. FGDs were used for

several reasons. FGDs use interactions between researchers and participants to generate data. As suggested by Creswell (2013), the dynamic nature of interaction enables the generation of insights which provides comprehension of how people view a situation. Babbie (2010) emphasizes the use of FGDs to understand the social construction of sensitive issues which are characterised by taboos or silence. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) claim that FGDs afford the researcher privileged access to in-group conversations which often include everyday language and home-grown terms, uncovering variety, group dynamics, and stimulating conversations and reactions.

All standard ethical procedures were followed, with particular sensitivity to issues of confidentiality and anonymity, given the focus on sexual risk behaviour and the link with HIV. Ethical clearance was obtained through the UKZN research ethics committee. All participants were provided with information sheets detailing the aims of the research and the research process. These information sheets were provided to the participants directly. All participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and were aware that they could withdraw from this research at any time without negative consequences. There were no existing power relations between the researcher and participants that could be perceived as coercive. A verbal explanation was also provided to all students. Written consent was obtained from participants before commencement of data collection. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms in the research reporting and by changing specific contextual details that could have revealed the identity of the participants.

Data Analysis

A qualitative thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts, which were transcribed verbatim from the audio recordings. The analytical software package NVivo 8 was used to process and analyse the data. Qualitative research is concerned with making sense of human experience from within the context and perspective of human experience (Babbie 2009). According to Ajjawi and Higgs (2007), qualitative research has been widely applied in the pursuit of rich data within socially engaged research for the purpose of generating a deeper understanding

of the particular phenomenon being researched. Drawing on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), analysis involved identifying patterns or themes across the dataset (also see Ajjawi and Higgs 2007). The researcher was concerned with the multiplicity of students' interpretations of the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages rather than attempting to ascertain the "truth" about actual messages. Patterns of similarities and differences in participant responses were identified and catalogued into themes and sub-themes. These themes form the starting point for the following discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Consistent and Correct Condom Use

The Scrutinise Campus campaign messages addressed condom efficacy in the prevention of HIV infection. Students reported that the campaign dramatised the existence and use of both male and female condoms. This is reflected in Kesh's response that:

The piece of drama presented by the campaign taught us to use the rubbers (condoms) to block the ninja (HIV). Rubbers are effective and can protect a person from HIV infection. They also taught us that rubbers are tested to ensure that they are able to protect us (Indian male postgraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012).

This response suggests that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages promote the efficacy and effectiveness of condoms. In addition, the response differentiates between the protection students would get under real life conditions that depends on the quality of the condoms, and the influence of students' behaviour in making the condom work effectively. Therefore, condom effectiveness in the Campaign messages is used to refer to the level of protection against HIV when condoms are used consistently and correctly.

The majority of the participants reported that they knew that condoms can prevent HIV infection but their problem was using them:

The campaign messages highlighted that condoms are ninety percent efficacious in reducing the risk of HIV infection, but our problem on campuses is that we are not able to use them all the times (Samuel, Black male undergraduate student, Pietermaritzburg, interview 2012).

This response shows that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages on condom use are appropriate for students on campuses because they engage in unprotected sex. However, students' interpretation of condom messages is different from what was intended by the Campaign. Students only remembered the effectiveness of the condoms to prevent HIV. Thus, students' interpretation leaves out the aspect of consistent and correct condom use that is critical in the prevention of HIV. Therefore, the majority of the participants did not grasp the comprehensive message intended by the campaign that condoms are effective in preventing HIV infection if used correctly and consistently. Students who did not recall the second part of the message confirm the interpretive communities' theory which holds that communities are interpretive entities with their own lenses of perceiving and interpreting a phenomenon (Fish 2011). Therefore, communities or students have their own way of interpreting condom messages. This finding is reinforced by another student who said:

These messages on condoms are good because many students on campuses engage in high-risk sexual practices, but eishi, very few use condoms because ijazi lomkhwe-nyane lichipisa ukujabulela ucansi (condoms reduce the pleasure of sex) (students laughed) (Thembile, Black female undergraduate student, Pietermaritzburg, interview 2012).

This response represents many other students who believed in the effectiveness of condoms on the ideal level and not in real life because they do not use them saying they reduce sexual pleasure. This finding is in agreement with Mutinta's (2012) finding that students believed that having sex using a condom reduces sexual pleasure and makes sex unnatural. More than three- thirds of the participants reported that they do not use condoms because they trust their partners. This seems to suggest that once students have developed trust for their partners they do not use condoms making the question of consistent and correct condom use null and void. In addition, Mulwo (2009) and Mutinta (2012) found that students are more concerned about pregnancy which can be seen by people and may make their parents throw them out from their homes. Therefore, students use pregnancy prevention pills and have unprotected sex because their main concern is addressed by the pill.

This finding shows how misguided the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages are on condom use. In spite of the emphasis on condom messages, overall messages do not address students' main concern that condoms reduce sexual pleasure influencing students to engage in unprotected sex.

Students reported that during the Scrutinise Campus campaign event in Pietermaritzburg, both drama and interactive public discussion messages encouraged them especially females to use condoms even when on pregnancy prevention pills. More female participants recalled this message compared to their counterparts. This insinuates that messages on pills are not meaningful to male students because they do not affect them directly compared to their counterparts. This supports Mutinta's (2012) finding that students remembered messages that were closer to their interests, than those that were far from their immediate welfare. This echoes the need for audience segmentation, an approach the campaign is not using to effectively target specific populations of students and attenuate their sexual risk behaviour.

Segmentation of students' population can help determine students' subpopulations to target, and then provide useful information on preferences, values, and lifestyles of the individuals in these subpopulations. By viewing students in this context, the Scrutinise Campus campaign can create appealing messages about the effectiveness of condoms and resonate with students engaging in unprotected sex.

Students who recalled message to use pills seem to resonate Mulwo's (2009) finding that students do not perceive sex without using a condom risky because their decision to have or not have sex is based on the physical appearance of a partner. Lengwe (2009) found that condoms are not appealing to students because they lose their grip and slip off, and sometimes break even when used carefully.

On the whole, messages on correct and consistent condom use are reasonable because the Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS 2010) found that students engage in unprotected sex. However, students' concern was that they engaged in unprotected sex because they believed that condoms lessen sexual pleasure. Some male students reported that unprotected sex is what defines their gender identity as real men. The current study seem to sug-

gest that in as much as the campaign addresses the efficacy and effectiveness of condoms, it does not address the reasons student do not use condoms, or engage in unprotected sex. The fact that students reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages promote condom use shows that somehow the campaign addressed the importance of condom use.

Secret Sexual Partners

When students were asked to recall messages communicated by the Scrutinise Campus campaign, more than three third reported that the campaign informed them that there are many people in South Africa who are not faithful to their sexual partners. Students reported that through comedy and drama they were enlightened that unfaithfulness leads to multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships making them susceptible to HIV infection:

The campaign informed us that having many sexual partners can put people at risk of HIV infection. For me this message challenged our sexual lifestyles on campuses (Anderson, coloured male undergraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012).

This perception shows that some students are now aware of the risk of having many sexual partners. The majority of the participants recalled that the Scrutinise Campus campaign teaches them about the risk of multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships:

The campaign underscored the risk of having many sexual partnerships especially those that overlap over time. Some of us have sexual relationships that begin before the other ends. I totally agree with the messages because there are many students who have multiple and concurrent sexual partners on campuses. There is just too much cheating of partners (Thobile, Black female postgraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012).

This perspective is in agreement with Fish's (2011) explanation that when the majority of the community interpret a text in a particular way then the community is aware of what is happening at that time and the repercussions, if there are any.

The majority of the students reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign teaches them that HIV is like a computer virus, once it has entered into a computer network spreads rapid-

ly from one computer to the next unless one has a powerful virus protection programme: *For me, the campaign taught us to have an ESET NOD32 Antivirus* (students laughed) *by having one exclusive sexual partner and using condoms* (Fontein, Black male postgraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012). This response suggests that students have their own way of interpreting and recounting the messages on undercover lovers that is different from the Scrutinise Campus campaign's perspective. The bottom line is that messages communicated are appropriate to students on campuses because they address undercover sexual relationships that make students susceptible to HIV infection. A study by Mulwo (2009) identified multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships as high-risk sexual behaviour students engage in. However, the way students interpret faithfulness, and multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships suggest that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages are negotiated or misconstrued. Bernard, a Black postgraduate student from Howard College put students' interpretation into context:

The campaign message on sexual partnering was good, however on campuses to be faithful to your partner does not mean to have one sexual partner as portrayed by the campaign (the researcher probed further for more insight into the concept). *To be faithful on campuses means that you have one main partner who is publicly recognised by your fellow students, but you can still have another or other secret partners not known to your main partner* (interview 2012).

This interpretation seems to suggest that as long as the main partner does not know that their boyfriend or girlfriend has another partner, then one is faithful to the main partner. Being faithful is taken to mean being able to keep the other relationship secret from the main partner. Similarly, students said that one is not said to have multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships if other partners are not known by the main partner. This reveals that if the unfaithful partner is able to keep other relationships secret, still consider herself or himself faithful to the main partner. This is related to Eleazar's (2009) study that found that students had open sexual relationships where partners were free to tell or not tell their main partners about their other partners. The same applies to being single. The majority of the participants reported that the Scrutinise

Campus campaign dramatised the advantages of being single:

We were informed about the benefits to flying solo (being single) *as well that it saves one from worrying about HIV infection because you are not in a relationship with anyone* (Teddy, White male postgraduate student, Pietermaritzburg Campus, interview 2012).

Participants explained that to be single on campuses does not mean that a student is not dating someone or not having sex as interpreted by the Scrutinise Campus campaign. Students reported that to be single means that they are not married, living together or going steady with someone, but they may have many sexual partners:

To be single means not being in a relationship with a particular person such that a person has the liberty of doing anything and going anywhere without having to check-in with anyone. It is an opportunity to takeaway (having sex with any person one wants) *and an opportunity to get to know my sexuality* (Chadwe, female postgraduate student Howard College, interview 2012).

The finding on how students interpret being single resonates with Hall's (1999) theory that individuals are not passive and do not just accept messages communicated but interpret the message according to their own understanding of the message and their behaviour. It also confirms the concept of negotiated meaning because students negotiate the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages (Hall 1999). Thus, students tend to agree with the idea of the risk of secret sexual partners but also disagree because they interpret it in a way that reduces their perception of the risk involved.

Students reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign drama messages and public interaction discussions attributed multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships mainly to economic contexts:

The Campaign informed us that undercover lover partnerships are common on campuses because of economic considerations and substance abuse. The campaign said that students have undercover lovers because they want to have access to cash, clothes, and red carpet life (Teddy, White male postgraduate student, Pietermaritzburg Campus, interview 2012).

When students were asked about the underlying factors to undercover lover relationships the Scrutinise Campus campaign messag-

es are addressing, more than half of the participants reported that it addressed the pursuit for material wealth and abuse of substances. This is in agreement with Mutinta and Govender (2012) study that reported economic consideration and substance abuse as instigators of multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships among students. In addition, students in Mutinta et al.'s (2013) study reported multisystemic sexual risk factors including desire for physical beauty, sexual pleasure, "incompatible" private parts, unfaithfulness, lack of trust, lack of good sex, pursuit for long term relationships, fusion of cultures, negative peer influence, competition for social status, among others. Findings in the current study show that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages do not comprehensively address the instigators of multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships among students on campuses.

Deceitful Love Words

The majority of the participants reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign highlights the risk of deceitful love words. Ayanda, a Black female undergraduate student from Pietermaritzburg Campus, said that:

The campaign is about scrutinising (examining) love words because what is true for one person may not be true for another. We are easily deceived you know by people who claim to have money and promise us endless care and love that is not achievable. So, to me the message is just what students need to hear to be able to challenge deceptive men (interview 2012).

This account suggests that both the Scrutinise Campus campaign and students perceive deceitful words to be sexual risk factors. Participants were able to recall that the campaign taught them to be cautious with love words people use. Julia, a White female undergraduate student from Pietermaritzburg interpreted the message this way:

The campaign informed us to examine the crafty words people use to charm others into sexual relationships. Older people like to use sweet words to get sex from students. We have an epidemic of treacherous partners especially men (interview 2012).

This finding suggests that the Campaign encouraged students not to fall prey to love words that can place pressure on them to have sex. The majority of the participants reported

that messages on deceitful love words are appropriate because a lot of students are unfaithful to their partners: *There are few students who are really committed to monogamous relationships. The majority of us are big cheats and first class sexual con artists* (Sifiso, Black male undergraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012). This reinforces the earlier finding that students cheat in relationships hence interpret faithfulness to mean different things not addressed by the campaign. This confirms Mulwo's (2009) finding that students cheated their partners as a way of settling scores with their partners who were cheating on them. Whatever the circumstance, cheating seems to be common on campuses. This study found that upon discovering that their partners are cheating on them students get hurt and revenge by getting other sexual partners without breaking up with the first partner.

More than three- thirds of the participants reported that the campaign informed them on how unfaithfulness is triggered by being lonely, not being satisfied within their existing relationships, and due to negative peer influence. Participants also mentioned disappointments by their partners as risk factors to deceitful sexual behaviour found to be addressed by the campaign:

The campaign deals with the issue of disappointment in relationships. But it is too simplistic in addressing risk factors to deceitful words. I feel there is more than what is communicated in the messages (some students intruded that the campaign was good. The researcher butt in and told them that he was entitled to his opinion) Lyabonga (thanks), what was I saying? (Students laughed. The researcher again interjected and reminded the participant what he was talking about) Yes, you see the messages are too basic, the issue of ubungagala (masculinity), access to imali (money), and desire for sexual pleasure are not addressed (Peter, a Black male undergraduate student, Pietermaritzburg, interview 2012).

This response indicates that there are other risk factors to students' deceitful words not addressed by the campaign. This finding echoes Mutinta (2013) and Lengwe's (2009) finding that multisystemic risk factors including the risk of competition for social status, influence of living in different locations with their partners, lack of basic needs, and alcohol abuse were strong influences to students' deceitful sexual behaviour.

The Scrutinise Campus campaign messages on deceitful love words are appropriate for students on campuses because the majority of students reported that cheating in relationships was rampant on campuses. Nevertheless, the fact that students reported several instigators of their deceitful behaviour not addressed by the campaign, shows that messages are lacking in content. This is because the campaign is more focused on addressing risk practices, and fails to effectively deal with risk factors to students' deceitful sexual behaviour.

Alcohol Abuse

The majority of the participants reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign underscored the risk of alcohol abuse. Students said that the campaign encouraged them to desist from abusing alcohol because it influenced their sexual risk behaviour:

Well, I don't know how to say it. I heard the usual things that alcohol affects our brain that controls reasoning and judgment such that we engage in high-risk sex. I appreciate the message but come on, everyone says this, and no one dares find out why we drink the way we do, or at least give us strategies to overcome drinking rather they sing about the risk we know (Martin, a coloured male postgraduate student, Pietermaritzburg, interview 2012).

This view implies that the messages on alcohol presented nothing new to students because they were already aware that alcohol sedates inhibitory abilities. Thus, students would rather be informed on how to deal with their risky drinking habits. Students recalled that the Scrutinise Campus campaign informed them that alcohol abuse can influence them to have many sexual partners, can make them more likely to have casual sex and can influence them to less likely use condoms and more likely to be exposed to HIV:

I remember the sketch on how alcohol can lead us to do certain things we cannot do when sober. This message iraiti (is alright) because I know the things I have done under the influence of ibucwala (alcohol) that I wouldn't want to share to everyone here (Students laughed and saying, tell us umfanyana (boy). Alcohol makes you fail to think rationally and have less fear of getting infected with HIV. After taking more than enough of Heineken or Guinness

you can sleep with several girls without using condoms, it does not matter at that time (Thabo, a Black male undergraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012).

This experience suggests that students agree to the campaign messages that alcohol abuse leads to sexual risk behaviour. The agreement in the risk involved in alcohol abuse supports what Hall (1999) calls "dominant" reading in the sense that students take away the meaning from the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages. However, agreeing is not equals to translating messages into action because only a handful of the participants reported that they drunk with moderation after being exposed to the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages.

When students were asked to recall the risk factors to alcohol abuse, the majority remembered negative peer influence and attending late night parties. Factors found to instigate students' alcohol abuse in Eleazar's (2009) study included the influence of having paid work which means extra money to spend, and belief that the majority of student used alcohol and that alcohol is a quick destressor. The finding this study is advancing is that the Scrutinise Campus campaign addressed the risk of alcohol abuse but failed to deal with some of the underlying risk factors to alcohol abuse. Furthermore, it does not explore and inform students on strategies for overcoming alcohol abuse. This demonstrates that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages to some extent do connect with students' drinking behaviour on campuses.

Age-disparate Sexual Relationships

Participants reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign deals with the practice of having sexual relationships with older partners. Students said that the campaign cautioned them not exchange sex for money or material goods promised to them by older partners because they make them vulnerable to HIV infection. This is in agreement with what Vulile who had attended two campaign events said:

At all the two campaign events I attended they dramatised the high-risk of age-disparate sexual relationships, and I am in agreement with the message because experience has taught me the risk involved in age disparate sex. I have had multiple age-disparate sexual relationships one on campus and two off campus. Poor

health made me to go for HIV test and my results are positive. I was damn depressed, and I did not want to live anymore. I am not blaming anyone but myself because I was so naïve about university life. The message is well-timed because sometimes as female students we think we are HIV invincible and use sex as a valued resource and strategy to gain gifts and favours from older partners (Black female undergraduate student, Howard College, interview 2012).

This view represents many other students who recalled that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages dealt with the risk of age-disparate sex. To some extent, this finding suggests that students are not coerced to engage in age-disparate sexual relationships. For instance, about half of the female participants argued that they are not pressurised into age-disparate sexual relationship. Instead, they choose to use their sexuality as a way of maintaining control over their older partners. This finding reiterates Mutinta (2012) and Mulwo's (2009) finding that students are not passive victims, but consciously engaged in sex with older partners to meet both their needs and wants.

Besides, students identified different underlying factors to age-disparate sexual relationships addressed by the campaign including the drive for material wealth, belief that sex offers an opportunity to try out a range of men or women, negative peer influence, competition for social status, and lack of attention in relationships. Mutinta's (2012) study also identified other risk factors to age-disparate sexual relationships. These include desire for wealth, dissatisfaction and nagging in relationships, shift in the understanding of sexual relationships, lack of trust and care, joining universities as adolescents, and others.

The argument this study is fanning is that the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages addressed the risk of age-disparate sexual relationships and their underlying risk factors. This shows that messages offered to students on the risk of age-disparate sexual relationships are far-reaching. On the other hand, there is need for the campaign to widen its scope so as to deal with other strong risk factors that encourage age-disparate sexual relationships on campuses identified by Mutinta (2012) and Eleazar (2009).

Undercover HIV

Participants recalled the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages on how HIV invades the

body. Nale, a Black female undergraduate student from Howard College represents other participants, said:

The campaign explained to us how HIV gets into the body and that the first two to six weeks after infection a person might think he or she has flu or might feel and look completely fine. This is because the virus is undercover streaming into, and attacking the body (interview 2012).

This response proposes that the Scrutinise Campus campaign addressed the risk of HIV in particular the effect it has on the human immunological system. Students also reported that they were informed on how the immune system recognises HIV, leads the defence strategy of the body through antibodies. Sifiso, a Black male undergraduate student from Howard College put this finding in perspective:

Umyalezo onyukhumbulayo ukuthi HIV (the message I remember most is that HIV) can be found in the body fluids such as igazi (blood), idlozi (semen), isibumbhu or nkomozi (vagina) and other fluids containing blood. The campaign also highlighted the behaviour that can place people at risk of HIV such as having sex with more than one sexual partner, having one night stands, and having sex without using a condom what some of us do (interview 2012).

This report suggests that the Scrutinise Campus campaign message on undercover HIV addressed where HIV is found.

The majority of the participants were not able recall whether the campaign addressed the risk of injecting illegal drugs by sharing needles when injecting drugs. Students were also not able to remember if the campaign dealt with the risk of campus rape in spite of being focus areas of the campaign. This may be attributed to the fact that these risk practices are not rampant on campuses when compared to multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships. Thus, injecting of illegal drugs and campus rape may not be perceived as students' real concerns on campuses in spite of being dominant messages communicated by the campaign.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the participants recalled that the virus is depicted by a ninja-like character though in reality HIV cannot be seen. Sibusiso, a Black male postgraduate student from Pietermaritzburg Campus, interpreted the undercover HIV message this way:

Eishi, wena (hey, you) the Scrutinise Campus Campaign has a lot of messages. What I

remember and like most is the ninja notion that in the first six weeks of the infection it is very easy for a person to pass on the virus if he or she has sex without a condom because of the high amount of virus in the body. The virus is usually in hiding until the immune system has developed ninjas to fight HIV. So, ngiyabona (you see) if the ninjas have not been developed even if a person was to go for an HIV test he/she may not test positive because the HIV test looks for the ninjas that the immune system produces to fight HIV (interview 2012).

Students seem to remember this message because of the analogy used to explain the immunological defence system. Students said that it helped them to understand the meaning of the message.

Participants also reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign taught them about the importance of re-testing for HIV after three months as a way of ensuring that they know their status. When asked why they thought it was important to re-test after three months, more than three thirds of the participants were able to explain that it takes about three months for the immune system to recognise the infection through antibodies that are produced. Zulu, a third year male undergraduate student from Pietermaritzburg Campus reported that the Scrutinise Campus campaign educated them that shortly after being infected the viral load is low (interview 2012). More than half of the students were able to recall the message on undercover HIV. This seems to suggest that students were able to grasp the messages intended to make them understand how a person's immune system defends the body from germs and viruses.

The majority of the participants recalled the Scrutinise Campus campaign message on CD4 cell count. For instance, the majority of the participants reported that HIV positive people may continue to look well without symptoms and only begin to feel unwell when the virus has "looted" the defence system. Sheila, a black female undergraduate student from Howard College put it well when she said: *We were told that a person living with HIV may still look well but it is possible to pass the virus to someone else if they had unprotected sex (interview 2011).* In addition, about half of the participants recalled that once the immune system is very weak a person is likely to develop serious diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, cancer, fungal in-

fections, and others. Students also reported that during this time a person is more likely to infect others if they have unprotected sex because of the high levels of the virus in the body.

Participants recalled the message concerning AIDS. Philani, a second year undergraduate student from Howard College put it well:

The message about AIDS was that when a person has developed Ubhubhane/isandulela ngculazi (AIDS) there are fewer than the needed ninjas left in the body while there are a lot of dissident ninjas that are unstoppable. To me really I feel this is a hopeless stage because it is a stage whereby soon or later a person will die (interview 2012).

This response seems to be the preferred interpretation of the Scrutinise Campus campaign message because the majority of the participants used the "ninja" analogy when recounting the undercover HIV messages.

Participants also recalled that the campaign "edutained" them on the possibility that a person living with HIV can delay the beginning of AIDS. This can be so by adopting healthy lifestyles such as eating healthy food, exercising, avoiding drugs and taking vitamins that boost the immune system. Students also reported that they were informed about the ability of antiretroviral drugs to prolong life and that they are to be taken for the rest of a person's life since stopping would make one sick again. Vuyo, a male postgraduate student from Pietermaritzburg Campus, said:

Scrutinise addressed the issue of embracing a healthy lifestyles for instance of avoiding substance abuse especially boozing that can both make our bodies weak to fight the virus, and make us engage in sexual risk practices a phenomenon that is common on campuses. The message was sensible and the campaign must be supported (interview 2012).

Students' ability to recall these messages may be attributed to the symbolisms used to communicate the undercover HIV messages making it easy for students to retain the core messages. The majority of students were aware of the undercover HIV. However, not the same can be said about translating this knowledge into practice by using condoms correctly and consistently to prevent the undercover HIV infection. Mutinta (2012) and Mulwo (2009) found that students' decision to have sex was based on the physical beauty of their partner not that

they knew that they were HIV negative. In addition, students reported that they rarely used condoms because they reduce the pleasure of sex. In spite of students' technical knowledge on undercover HIV, they engaged in high-risk sexual behaviour. This seems to suggest that the Scrutinise Campus campaign may be effective in information dissemination and not in behaviour change.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to draw attention to the messages communicated by the Scrutinise Campus campaign and students' interpretations of these messages. In recognition of the messages communicated by the Scrutinise Campus campaign such as condom efficacy, faithfulness, early stage infection, sexual networks, alcohol, transactional sex, and intergenerational sex, student's interpretation of some of these messages is different from what is intended by the campaign providers. Thus, findings of this research suggest that messages should be informed by students' experiences and perceptions of sexual risk behaviour on campuses. These findings are not exhaustive in exploring students' interpretation of the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages. Nevertheless, it is critical to note that the interpretive communities theory and the concept of audiences as active producers of meaning provide a good theoretical framework for understanding students' interpretations of the Scrutinise Campus campaign messages. Addressing sexual risk behaviour on campuses from students' perspective may help the Scrutinise Campus campaign to keep pace with the dynamics of students' sexual risk behaviour and their causes, and effectively reduce the HIV epidemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The efforts of the Scrutinise Campus campaign should be supported by both government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal so as to effectively address students' spate of engaging in sexual risk behaviour.

The Scrutinise Campus campaign messages on the use of condoms should be tailored in such a way that they address the reasons student do not use condoms or engage in unprotected sex. For example, the belief that condoms

lessen sexual pleasure and that unprotected sex is what defines masculinity should be addressed.

Campaign messages should deal with the practice of having secret lovers and multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, being single and faithful from students' perspectives because they have different meanings on campuses compared to those held by the campaign providers.

In addition, the Scrutinise Campus campaign should address the underlying factors to undercover lover relationships. The campaign should address students' desire for physical beauty and sexual pleasure, unfaithfulness, lack of trust and good sex, pursuit for long term relationships, fusion of cultures, negative peer influence, competition for social status, among other risk factors.

The campaign should balance between messages addressing students' deceitful relationships and their risk factors. Risk factors including competition for social status, influence of living in different locations with their partners, lack of basic needs, and alcohol abuse should be dealt with effectively.

There is need for creativity in the manner messages on alcohol are presented so that there is something new students get from the campaign not the usual song that alcohol sedates their inhibitory abilities and leads to sexual risk behaviour. Messages should teach students strategies for overcoming alcohol abuse or risky drinking habits. In addition, risk factors to alcohol abuse should be highlighted.

There is also a need for the campaign to widen its scope so as to deal both with the risk of age-disparate sexual relationships and factors that encourage age-disparate sexual relationships on campuses. Students should also be encouraged to delay sexual initiation until marriage as a strategy of avoiding risky sexual practices such as multiple sexual partners. These measures may help students to understand the consequences of sexual risk behaviour and their causes and adopt measures not to engage in sexual risk behaviour.

The campaign should employ audience segmentation so as to divide students into more similar subgroups based upon defined criterion such as age, level of education, ethnicity, gender, sexual behaviour, alcohol use and other demographics and psychographics. This may help the campaign to design and tailor messages that address students' sexual risk behaviour.

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