

## THE EFFECT OF TV VIEWING ON THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN RESIDENT IN IKOSI COMMUNITY AREA, ILARO

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### ABSTRACT

Children can use media to increase their understanding of the world around them as well as learn positive social behaviours. A total of 50 questionnaires were administered and retrieved for computation. From the survey, there were more boys (64%) than girls (36%) from the pool of respondents, which were basically children. The majority of the respondents believe that the usual 9pm bedtime practice is old-fashioned, judging by the number; 26 that disagreed with it, while those who strongly agreed (18%) could have been from their strict moral belief in obedience to parents' instructions. Some respondents opined that parental enforcement on the viewing of local programmes over foreign ones is considered an act of wickedness, as the find the local programmes quite boring (62%), even though they quite agreed that TV and other media technology should be used to develop themselves educationally, religiously and morally (88%). Despite the fact that the majority of the respondents (94%) disagreed that TV and other mass media technology are bad for children, 78% of them believe that children are easily carried away by what they watch and learn from these electronic media. It can be deduced that the children living in Ikosi Community Area, Ilaro, are not also immune to the social vices they may adopt from indiscriminate TV viewing and other mass media technology use but these can be curbed if the situation is properly managed and handled. Parents, in particular, should be saddled with the huge responsibility of parental supervision on the TV viewing length, programmes rating, and other mass media technology use by their children.

**Keywords:** Mass Media Technology, Programmes, Questionnaires, Survey, Social Vices

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Since television first appeared in the nation's living rooms in the middle of the twentieth century, observers have voiced recurrent concern over its impact on viewers, particularly children. In recent years, this concern has extended to other electronic screen media, including computers and video game consoles. Although, researchers still have much to learn, they have provided information on the links between electronic media, especially television, and children's learning and cognitive skills. With respect to development, what children watch is at least as important as, and probably more important than how much they watch.

The Collins English Dictionary (2010) defines media as communication, such as magazines and TV that reaches large numbers of people. These means of communication can be thought of as old types of media. New types of media are defined by Flew (2007) as those forms of communication that possess the qualities of being digitalized, compressible, interactive, manipulated, networkable and dense. Some examples of new media are the Internet, computers, video games and DVDs.

Children can use media to increase their understanding of the world around them as well as learn positive social behaviours. These benefits can last through to adolescence. Television viewing has been studied in children who are academically gifted, with results suggesting that selective viewing can promote academic abilities. Furthermore, parents of gifted children are more likely to see the potential benefits of educational TV programmes and make more selective viewing choices.

Video games involving information, academic content and problem solving have been shown to accelerate children's learning. They can be particularly useful for children who have learning problems. Similarly, the array of information available on the internet is clearly able to broaden children's knowledge and behavioural problems can occur in children of all ages, very often they start in early life (Carr, 2000).

Some children may even have serious behavioural problems such as physical fights, drug abuse, arson etc. Rutter and Taylor (2002) admit that there are behavioural problems when a child continues to behave badly for several months or longer or if the behaviour is not ordinary and it seriously breaks the rules accepted in a family and community. These behavioural problems may be disruptive, delinquent and deviant. They opined that these sorts of behavioural

problems can affect a child's development and also interfere with his ability to live a normal life. In reference to the aforementioned, Reza and Mercy (2001) report that violence by young persons is one of the most visible forms of behavioural problems in human society. According to them, world newspapers and broadcast media report daily on violence by gangs in schools or young people on the streets. Electronic media, particularly television, have long been criticized for their potentially negative impact on children. One area for concern is how early media exposure influences cognitive development and academic achievement in children.

### **Statement Of The Problem**

Some societal vices and problems have been attributed to some programmes on TV considered unsuitable for viewing by children. Parents' lackadaisical attitude to viewing restriction, especially to programmes aired on cable TV, also calls for serious concern. Children's vulnerability to want to practise what they watch, without proper guidance, could be attributed to their tendencies to want to be delinquents and menace to the society and the nation at large, children resident in Ikosi Community Area are no exception.

The objectives of this study are to determine;

1. What impact TV viewing has on development of children living in Ikosi.
2. How the children living in Ikosi respond to adverts and information from mass media technologies.
3. The effect TV programmes have on the development of children living in Ikosi.
4. The extent to which TV viewing affect the cultural values of children living in Ikosi.
5. The implications of the adoption of media technology by children living in Ikosi.

### **Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following questions;

1. To what extent should children living in Ikosi be exposed to TV and other mass media technology?
2. To what extent has the children living in Ikosi's exposure to TV and other mass media technology contributed to their development and upbringing?
3. What can be done to improve the positive roles of TV and other mass media technology on the upbringing of children living in Ikosi?
4. Are there any adverse impacts of TV and other mass media technology on the children living in Ikosi?
5. To what extent do TV and mass media technology influence the children living in Ikosi's social behaviour?

### **Significance Of The Study**

The significance of this investigation is that it sheds more light on the impact with which electronic media, particularly TV, have on the social interaction and behavior among the children living in Ikosi Community Area.

The result of this project work will enable their parents to better understand and be well acquainted with how to effectively use TV and other electronic media for the benefit of their children and the potential dangers that may arise from their abuse and parental negligence on their children's TV viewing habit.

It could enable the government to educate the masses, especially parents, on the importance of parental control over TV viewing among children and stress the need to adhere to the age restriction/rating on programmes especially on cable TV. It could also encourage the government to use its broadcast instrument; the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), to censor, regulate, enforce and promote 70% local content among the licensed indigenous broadcast stations.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Mass Media and Communication**

To achieve the positive effects of mass media and technology on the upbringing of children, different methods are to be in place. Parents can select well-designed, age-appropriate programs and view the programs with their children to maximize the positive effects of educational media.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2013), mass communication is any form of communication transmitted through a medium (channel) that simultaneously reaches a large number of people. Mass media are the channels that carry mass communication.

### **Types of Communication (Mass Media)**

Communication has two types of relations which are stated as follows:

**Direct or Interpersonal Communication:** This is a type of communication which is produced between one or more persons situated nearby, that interacts and influences each other

**Indirect Communication:** This type of relation is also between one or more persons that do not stand nearby, the communication between them is being mediated by a technical mean more or less complicated (letter, newspapers, books, telephone, radio, television, computer, internet) and is called indirect or mediated communication.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There is no one single theoretical model that can be applied to explain the current state of knowledge. Therefore, two frameworks provide the theoretical foundation for this paper.

### **Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura first developed the SLT in 1962. He theorizes that people learn by observing others and thought processes are key to understanding personality (Bandura, 1986). Knowledge is acquired through observation of models. Interpersonal relations or media sources can serve as models. SLT is useful to explain and predict the media effects of TV and video games, which positively correlates with violence and aggression (Olsen *et al.*, 2009). This model assumes that constant exposure to a behavior, even if the result is negative, has great impact on expressed behavior.

### **Displacement Theory**

Many researchers utilize the Displacement Theory (DT) to explain and guide research on the effects of media on children. Displacement Theory (DT) assumes that media use is a choice and that the greater amount of time children spends engaged with media, the less time that they have for other pursuits such as sports, schoolwork and social interaction. The results of this displaced activity are increased physical and psychosocial health risks.

## **EMPIRICAL STUDY**

Wilson (2008) reviewed evidence of the link between media use and children's emotions, and explored how media affects social development. She analyzed over 110 articles published between 1963 and 2007. Her report revealed a good deal of evidence to suggest that media contributed to children's fear and anxiety especially in younger children. Those who viewed TV > 6 hours per day were more likely to have anxiety and depression. There was strong evidence of a positive correlation between violent TV programs and video games with aggressive behavior (Wilson, 2008). However, she found that educational programs and situation comedy targeted to youth increased altruism, cooperation, and tolerance. Wilson (2008) demonstrated that media effect "depends on the content to which the children are exposed" and is highly influenced by age, gender, race, home life, and temperament. Children's choice of media, identification with characters, modeling of behavior, and imprinting may be the mechanisms by which children's behaviors were acquired. This lends support to Social Learning Theory and the Message Interpretation Process model.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research work entails the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, method of data collection, questionnaire design and method of data analysis.

### Research Design

A research design is a systematic approach that a researcher uses to conduct a scientific study. For the purpose of this research work, quantitative research design was used.

### Sampling Technique

Probability Sampling Technique: It means that every individual in a population stands an equal chance of being selected, because probability sampling involves random selection, it assures that different subsets of the population have an equal chance of being represented in the sample. For the purpose of this research work, probability sampling techniques was used to select respondents; basically children, living within Ikosi Community Area, Ilaro.

### Sample Size

A research population is generally a large collection of individual or object that is the main focus of a scientific query (Oze, 2007). Akinbo (2004) opines that a sample is a part or subset of the population carefully selected, observed and studied in order to make a generalization or inference about the whole population. The sample size of this study is 50, denoted by  $N = 50$ .

### Method of Data Collection

Data collection is a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to a research problem, and evaluate the outcomes.

Data collection for this study was done through the collection and collation of primary data from the respondents. The primary data were collected through the use of the questionnaire method and a few personal interviews conducted with some of the older respondents.

### Questionnaire Design

According to Fagoyinbo (2014), a questionnaire is a quick and cheap method of conducting a survey. For the purpose of this research work, close ended questions were adopted. Out of the 100 questionnaires administered, 85 were retrieved and used for the analysis of this study.

### Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. For easy understanding and interpretation, simple percentage method was used in analyzing these data and presented in tabular form.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this section is to present and analyze data that were generated from respondents.

Out of a total of 50 questionnaires administered, the entire 50, which depicts a 100% response rate, were retrieved for computation, over a 4-week period. This was achieved mainly because the investigation adopted an on-the-spot response technique in which the researcher waited as the respondents filled in the questionnaires after being guided and assisted as to how. The table below shows the demographic data of the respondents collectively.

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Respondents

S/N	Sex	Age	Education	Tribe	Home
1.	B = 32 (64%)	5 – 10 = 33 (66%)	Basic = 36 (72%)	Yoruba = 43 (86%)	Broken = 3 (6%)
2.	G = 18 (36%)	11 – 16 = 17 (34%)	Secondary = 14 (28%)	Others = 7 (14%)	Intact = 47 (94%)
T	50	50	50	50	50

From the table, there were more boys (64%) than girls (36%) from the pool of respondents. The age bracket 5 – 10 had a higher percentage of 66% as compared to that of 11 – 16 with 34%. 72% of the respondents are basic school pupils while the remaining 14% are secondary school students. The majority of the respondents are Yoruba (43%) while just 14% are from other tribes which include Hausa, Igbo and Bini. 47% of the respondents are from intact homes with both parents still together while unfortunately, 6% are from broken homes with both parents either separated, or divorced.

Table 2: Frequency Table for the Respondents' Answers to the Research Questions

S/N	QUESTION	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Children's bedtime should be 9pm	9 (18%)	11 (22%)	4 (8%)	26 (52%)
2.	Children should use TV and other mass media technology to better themselves educationally, religiously and morally	4 (8%)	44 (88%)	--	2 (4%)
3.	Parents should monitor and enforce more of local and educational contents viewing and consumption in their children	1 (2%)	12 (24%)	6 (12%)	31 (62%)
4.	TV and other mass media technology are bad for children	--	3 (6%)	--	47 (94%)
5.	Children love to imitate what they watch, learn and consume from TV and other mass media technology	5 (10%)	39 (78%)	--	6 (12%)

Keys: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree

Table 2 shows the general knowledge of the respondents on what they think and believe about the impact of TV viewing and other mass media technology's use in relation to how they socially behave and interact. From the interviews conducted, the majority of the respondents believe that the usual 9pm bedtime practice is old-fashioned, judging by the number; 26 (52%) that disagreed with it, while those who strongly agreed; 9 (18%) could have been from their strict moral belief in obedience to parents' instructions. Some respondents opined that parental enforcement on the viewing of local programmes over foreign ones is considered an act of wickedness, as the find the local programmes quite boring; 31 (62%), even though they quite agreed that TV and other media technology should be used to develop themselves educationally, religiously and morally; 44 (88%). Despite the fact that the majority of the respondents; 47 (94%), disagreed that TV and other mass media technology are bad for children, 39 (78%) of them believe that children are easily carried away by what they watch and learn from these electronic media. Children tend to want to copy exciting scenes from TV, ranging from wrestling, dress and dance culture, the notion that the acquisition of money and cars are good signs of success and achievement, to wanting to practise the use of hard drugs, alcohol and sex as things to make them feel mature and accepted socially. Unfortunately, these images stick to their memories long enough to potentially induce some social vices and unacceptable social behaviours among vulnerable children.

The possible effects of media contents on children include both good and bad attitudes, it also both improve and cause decline in academic performance. All media of communication are intended for providing easy means of disseminating information to people, they can neither be adjudged good nor bad for children's or adults' use. Television is meant to transmit motion pictures for the purpose of entertainment and to meet the information needs of people, it cannot be adjudged good or bad for children because some educative programmes and enlightening programmes, which have been made to be entertaining, are transmitted via television, of which if children are allowed to view them, may boost academic performances and better their upbringing.

Contrary to the perception of some people that mass media do not have positive effects on children but rather teach them moral decadence, mass media is indeed a means of reaching out to heterogeneous people at a specific point in time to disseminate vital information that may be of great benefit to them. Children could learn a lot of things from the mass media, especially from watching educative television programmes that will benefit.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 4.1 Conclusion

The influential power of mass media cannot be over emphasized as information can be disseminated to a large number of people per time. It is arguable that some individuals still believe that TV viewing and other mass media technology have negative impacts on the upbringing and social behaviour of children, as what are being watched and consumed leave lasting impression on their fragile minds and memories.

By this investigation, it can thus be deduced that the children living in Ikosi Community Area, Ilaro, are not also immune to the social vices they may adopt from indiscriminate TV viewing and other mass media technology use but these can be curbed if the situation is properly managed and handled.

### 4.2 Recommendations

Parents, guardians and media regulatory authorities only need to join hands to make sure that children are not exposed to media contents that could have negative effects on their reasoning and attitudes and interactions socially. Parents, in particular, should be saddled with the huge responsibility of parental/adult supervision (not necessarily strict) on the TV viewing length, programmes rating, and other mass media technology use by their children. They could also guide them by telling them that some programmes are for the purpose of entertainment and not to be actually mimicked or practised in real life.

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