National Interest, Identity and Press Freedom: A study of the *Big Brother Nigeria TV Programme*:

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges of fostering national interest side-by-side the need to promote the constitutionally-guaranteed press freedom, – using a popular Nigerian reality TV show, Big Brother Naija as referent point. The media's basic functions include surveillance of the environment, correlation of the components of the society in relation to the environment and transmission of social heritage. The surveillance function alludes to the propensity of the media to scout for news and tell people what is happening around the world. Correlation refers to the ability of the media to shape and influence their audience; while the transmission function refers to the role the media plays in the transference of experience, culture and tradition. The BBN has been very controversial from inception several years ago. Among others, it was widely accused of having more of negative impact on the society. The researchers sampled 200 youths purposively in Lagos and Ede purposively to be sure they were regular viewers of the programme. They sought answers to the following questions: What are the demographic characteristics (age, sex, education, social class, etc.) of the BBN audience? Why do viewers like or dislike the BBN programme?What gratifications, if any, do viewers who like the programme derive from watching it?Is the BBN, as a media programme, functional or dysfunctional to the society? To what extent does the programme promote national identity and What gratifications do viewers of the programme enjoy? Leisure accounts for 32 per cent (n=61), escape 17 per cent (n=9) and learning 16 per cent (n=8). The respondents who gratified "groupthink/status" viewed the programme to seen as sociable , trendy or wanting "to belong". Many of those who watch BBN are youths, students in both urban and sub-urban settlements.The most-watched aspects of the show are 'eviction', tasks/games' and 'diary sessions' in that order of preference. The researchers found that majority of the BBN audience like that the programme majorly because serves as a source of entertainment, education and promotion of the Nigerian identity.

KEYWORDS: Media Functions, Media Dysfunctions, Gratifications, Edutainment

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the social media) perform key roles in the development of a society. Nwosu (1999) distilled these roles in the following perspectives:

Politicisation- the media are to ensure that people are continuously reminded of their fundamental rights, that they are informed of various happenings in the government at all levels, during elections, census and policy discussions. The media are also expected to fight and expose bad law, decree and policy that are bad with a view of forcing or persuading the government to jettison it.

Democratisation – this is related to politicisation. It has to do with the fundamental human rights of all human beings. The democratic culture should be entrenched by the media as a fundamental imperative in a developing nation.

Forum for Debate, Discussions, Rebuttals and Feedback: the mass media are required to engage in adequate programming and content development that would help to cater for salient and controversial issues.

Rural Development: The mass media are to give rural areas access to its facilities. The media are to order their programming in a way that the activities, hopes and aspirations, limitations, defaults and problems of rural communities are highlighted.

Re-Orientation: the media are to reduce problems facing the country such as regionalism, ethnicity, prostitution, fraud and arson. There must be a deliberate, quickened strategy of re- orientation through films, videos, columns, and pages of the print media.

Mobilisation for Government: the media are to ensure that the masses are made aware of their duty in implementing policies and programmes centred at self- development. However, where government does something that is counterproductive, the media should mobilise the people to denounce such anomalies through view-points.

Each mass media type varies in the effectiveness with which it performs the foregoing functions.

According to Moemeka (2016), "a single communication message is capable of performing different functions (eliciting different consequences) in society- manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions". The manifest function connotes the media achieving its intended purpose; the latent function refers to the unintended positive outcome the message achieves while dysfunction refers to the inability of a message to achieve its intended purpose and doing something directly against or opposite the intention of the message.

According to Daramola (2001) c.f (www.akinwalere.com), the mass media has primarily one function: to inform; however, the mass media, aside from informing the public serve other ancillary purpose some of which could either be functional or dysfunctional. The functions of the mass media inter-relate with the consequence or impact of the message which is mainly determinant on the predisposition of the audience and contexts in which they perform their duties. Most of each function of the media has an element in another function or are as a result of an attempt to reduce the dysfunction of the media (Moemeka 2016).

Numerous communication scholars have explained the functions the media serve in the society. Recurrent in these publications are the verity that the media inform, educate and entertain. This function could furthermore be referred to as the traditional duties of the press (Oloyede, 2008). In addition to this, the media serves other functions in the society today. Various scholars differ in their classification of the

functions of the media. Whilst Moemeka (2016) classifies the functions of the media in five categories: surveillance (information), Correlation (interpretation), socialisation (education and transmission of culture), entertainment (relaxation) and advertising (sales and services), Nwosu (1999) categorises the functions of the media into eight: educational function, information function, entertainment function, socialisation function, opinion vehicle-ing, mobilisation- propaganda function, agitation/crusading function and Ombudsman. He goes further to add the concept of feedback as a consequential aspect to the functions of the media.

The functions of the media refer to the assigned role or purpose the media are expected to perform in the society while dysfunctions of the media allude to the unproductive role the media serves in the society. Dysfunction is ineffectiveness plus counter action (Moemeka, 2016). The function of the media could be equated with the advantages of the media whilst the dysfunction could be associated with the disadvantages of the media in the society. Many experts have said that television tends to corrupt its viewers especially if what is shown is negative. For instance, television has been said to waste productive time and energy. This implies that the time viewers spend watching television could be spent doing activities that are more productive. It is not deniable that television programmes are a source of entertainment, however, some of its contents comprise of violent acts, pornographic contents which have adverse effect on its audience. Media effects are the intentional or unintentional reverberations or outcome of what the mass do

(McQuail, 2010).

This study is an investigation of the functional or dysfunctional role of the mass media – using broadcasting (television network) and a popular Nigerian reality TV show, *Big Brother Naija* as a case study.

History of Reality Shows in Nigeria

Reality television shows are entertainment programmes aired on television which capture how people behave in their everyday life. It features ordinary people in real life situations. The main purpose of reality television programme is to entertain.

According to Reiss and Wiltz (2004), cited by Hall,(2009:512), reality programmes "help viewers to feel important because seeing ordinary people on the shows allows them to fantasise that they could gain celebrity status by being on TV".

Reality shows gained popularity in Nigeria in the year 2003, when Bayo Okoh, an indigene of Nigeria, featured in the first season of *Big Brother Africa* (BBA) which is an adaptation of the international Big Brother series. BBA is a reality show which showcases 12 housemates from 12 different African countries living in an enclosed house for a stipulated period of time. The winner usually ends up with a cash prize coupled with fame. It however stopped transmission after nine seasons.(Wikipedia 2018).

It was widely speculated that the reason for BBA's popularity in Nigeria is the fact that Nigerians were eager and excited to be represented in an international/African programme as it was the first time that the reality show would be created using participants of different personalities from a continent. However, this did not last long as halfway to the show, he was evicted. After he was evicted, Nigerians gradually stopped watching it.

The increased viewership of *Big Brother Africa* by Nigerians resulted in the birth of the first reality show in Nigeria called *Gulder Ultimate Search* (GUS). The show was set up and sponsored by Nigerian Breweries Plc. in the year 2004 in order to promote the Gulder Lager Beer. (Wikipedia 2018)

The creation of GUS is very significant in the history of reality TV programmes in Nigeria because it is the first reality programme comprising of 100 percent local content. The show preaches survival as it arrays how 30 persons compete for a hidden treasure coupled with other cash prizes and undertake strenuous tasks which would serve as a criterion for eviction. It also depicts how contestants relate with one another and nature. The eviction of each contestant is solely dependent on the contestant and his ability to perform excellently in the tasks presented to him (Wikipedia 2018).

GUS also paved the way for more reality programmes. Since the introduction of the show, more Nigerian reality TV programmes have sprung up. Some of them include: *MTN Project Fame West Africa*, *Glo's Naija Sings*, *Maltina Dance Hall*, *Star Quest* produced by Nigerian Breweries and *Big Brother Naija*.

"*Big Brother Naija*" (BBN)

The history of *Big Brother Naija* is synonymous to *Big Brother Africa* as the former is an adaptation of the latter. Generally "Big Brother originates from the novel written by George Orwell in 1949 titled 'Nineteen Eighty Four'. Big Brother was first introduced in the Netherlands; however, it was not until 2003 that Africa started its commencement of the show. It was termed Big Brother Africa and it lasted for nine seasons before it abruptly came to an end (Wikipedia 2018).

The first season of the programme was launched on March 5 2006 and lasted for 91 days. It was formerly known as '*Big Brother Nigeria*'. This season comprised of 12 housemates initially. However, two new housemates were added during the course of the show. Viewers were given the opportunity to vote for the housemates they wanted to remain in the house as evictions were carried out weekly. Katung Aduwak emerged the winner of this season and recipient of a cash prize of N35, 900,000. Francisca, Ify and Sandy also emerged as winners respectively (Wikipedia 2018).

The second season aired on January 22 2017, 11 years after the first season aired and lasted for 78 days. It was tagged "See Gobe" and had high ratings as there was a drastic increase in its viewership. The winner of the second season was Efe Ajaba who was awarded the cash prize of N25 million and a brand new SUV. Bisola and T- boss emerged first and second runners up respectively. However, after the show, Bisola gained more fame and popularity more than any other housemate after the season came to an end. (Wikipedia, 2018).

The third and most recent season at the time of this study, was launched on January 28 2018 and lasted for 85 days. This season was tagged 'Double Wahala' and it consisted of 20 housemates. It was recorded as the season with the highest number of viewership and ratings as over 170 million votes were recorded from viewers across the platforms. Housemates from this season also attained more fame than other housemates of precursory seasons.A season lasts for a period of three months and is exclusively available for viewers of Multi choice cable television, DSTV and GOTV.

A large number of people have expressed their stand on *Big Brother Naija* programme. Whilst some have said the programme is a mere symbol of unity and source of entertainment, others have argued that it depicts indecent acts which clearly contradicts the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (NBC, 2017) such as nudity, vulgarism, alcoholism, sex, among others. (www.pulse.ng). This study is restricted largely to the 2018 edition of the BBN programme to aid adequate recall by respondents. Also, samples of respondents were drawn from Lagos and Ede cities, to reflect urban and sub-urban settings.

Statement of the Problem

As Harold Lasswell (1948) c.f. (https://study.com) postulated, the mass media have three basic functions which include surveillance of the environment, correlation of the components of the society in relation to the environment and transmission of social heritage. To what extent does the media perform these functions? In particular, how do these functions play out regarding TV reality shows: are they functional or dysfunctional, or both regarding the Nigerian identity? The surveillance function alludes to the propensity of the media to scout for news and tell people what is happening around the world. How does Big Brother Naija fair in terms of this role? The correlation function refers to the ability of the media to shape and influence their audience; while the transmission function refers to the role the media plays in the transference of experience, culture and tradition.

This study provides reliable data on the demographic characteristics of the BBN audience, the reason why the programme is liked or disliked by its viewers, the gratifications viewers derive from watching the programme and as well as ascertain if the programme is functional or dysfunctional to the society.

Objectives

The following comprise of the objectives of this study:

- To find out the demographic characteristics (age, sex, location, gender, social class, etc.) of the BBN audience in Nigeria?
- To investigate why viewers like or dislike the BBN programme?

- To find out the gratifications, if any, that viewers who like the programme derive from watching it?
- To determine if the BBN, as a media programme, is functional or dysfunctional to the Nigerian identity?

Research Questions

- What are the demographic characteristics (age, sex, education, social class, etc.) of the BBN audience?
- Why do viewers like or dislike the BBN programme?
- What gratifications, if any, do viewers who like the programme derive from watching it?
- Is the BBN, as a media programme, functional or dysfunctional to the Nigerian identity?

Use of Terms

Function- The positive and traditional purpose of media usage.

Dysfunction – The ineffective or negative use of the media

Mass Media – A collection of the print (newspapers, magazines), broadcast (television, radio, film) and digital media (encompassing Internet and mobile mass communication) which disperse information simultaneously to a large heterogeneous group of people.

Big Brother Naija- a 24/7 reality television programme produced by Africa Magic.

Reality TV Programme – Television programme in which people are filmed continuously as they carry out their day- to- day activities for the purpose of entertainment.

Gratifications – The satisfaction derived from the fulfilment or achievement of a desire

Edutainment (Education and Entertainment) –Contents or programmes that are both educational and a source of entertainment.

*Media impact-*This term refers to the effect or influence the media has over people in the society as the most dominant intervening variable.

Nigerian identity – (also national identity), values, norms, culture that are common to most ethnic groups in Nigeria

Press Freedom – right of every individual or organization to hold opinions and express them freely without interference.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kilborn (1994) put forth an early definition for reality-based programming that does not fit with the established conventions of the genre. More specifically, Kilborn's definition hubs on how reality television is created rather than the content shown on the screen. He states that there are three criteria which unite to comprehensively define what entails reality programming. These include:

- Recording 'on the wing' and frequently events in the lives of individuals and groups through the aid of lightweight video equipment.
- The attempt to simulate such real-life events through various forms of dramatised reconstruction;
- The incorporation of this recording in suitably edited form into an attractively packaged television programme which can be sponsored on the strength of its reality credentials.

Wei and Tootle (2002:6) define reality television as

> TV shows that simulate real-world, real-life psychologically, mentally or emotionally challenging situations, involving reward-motivated, self-selected contestants from the audience. The contestants act spontaneously, improvise, and showcase their real emotions in meeting the challenges they encounter in real settings.

Barton defines reality programming as:

> (1) non-actors (2) in unscripted situations (3) where the contestants are behaving spontaneously (4) with some level of producer involvement in the show (5) and the documentation of their experiences is not limited to particular moments, but is comprehensive in its capturing of events. The two subgenres of reality-based programming that meet these criteria include competition-based shows and voyeur-based shows. And while there is a limit to how reality-based programs can be planned out (either as competition-based or voyeur-based), there is no limit on what can and has been the thematic subject of some sort of reality-based programme (Barton, 2007:28)

Effects/impacts of reality TV impact.
The examinations of experts on television effect have been in three phases in the past several decades. Phase 1- Bullet or Hypodermic Needle effect (direct impact – post- 1945); Phase 2- Limited effect (mostly indirect effect –mid 1970s) and Phase 3- (the current phase), back to Bullet Effect but with intervening factors. (McQuail, 2005).

The permeating impact of the media is also referred to as "cultivation". According to Gerbner and Gross (1976), television impact depends primarily on the extent of viewing. Television is the prevailing force in impacting the society and the messages conveyed through television reach large, heterogeneous audiences that traditional media were unable to. Second, audience consumption of television is ritualistic, and not based on viewers watching some particular programmes; that is, viewers watch more by the clock than by the programme (Gerbner, et al., 1986). Third, the authors' claim that television as a whole influences and cultivates perspectives in viewers and that individual contents and programmes are not as significant. Fourth, and as a direct correlation with the third assumption, individual tastes and preferences in television content are not an important factor in cultivation research, or at least not as imperative a factor as viewing patterns associated with time. Fifth, television conveys viewers with knowledge even when they do not want it or realise they are gaining it.

Reality television, according to Brad Gorham of Syracuse University, has a denouement on the behaviour of people in society. He asserts that people are easily impacted by reality television because they eventually facsimile the behaviour portrayed on television and make use of them in real life (Iscience.com 2018).

The last two editions of the BBN show have received a lot of negative publicity. Analysts say there are primary and secondary objectives of sponsoring these TV reality shows. The primary objectives are to build awareness, develop customer loyalty and improve brands' perception. The secondary reasons are more controversial, but generally, they could be seen to attract new users, support dealers and other intermediaries and act as a form of staff motivation and moral boosting.

A study carried out in the United States showed that reality television shows make personal thoughts, behaviour and interactions of their characters the main hub of the audience's attention.

Below is an opinion feature in *The Guardian* on the show:

the on-going Big Brother Nigeria, now Big Brother Naija (BBNaija) has stolen the hearts of most Nigerians, especially the youth.

It has created and still creates a buzz, particularly in the social media space, with high level of engagement in voting and followership among the Nigerian youth in particular, who devote their time and resources to follow the show religiously throughout the 85 days it features on MultiChoice'sDStv and GOtv platforms.

Besides its entertainment value, the show has raised several cogent debates about morality and the essence of hard work, as the winner walks away with N25 million prize and N20 million worth of SUV, amounting to a total package of N45 million.

Investigations revealed that during the (Season 2, See Gobe), 11 million votes were recorded at the last eviction before the grand finale. This increased as the frenetic campaigns on social media got heightened, putting the final vote tally at over 26 million, which was almost the 28.5 million votes recorded in the 2015 general election.

*(*Guardian.ng, 2018. https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/the -moral-economic-values-of-reality-television-shows)

In other countries, similar programmes have been criticised for not being an accurate reality event. For instance, in 2012, Mike Fleiss, the creator and executive producer of "*The Bachelor*"; a reality TV show, told the "*Today*" show that 70 to 80 percent of what people see on reality television is fake.

They're loosely scripted. Things are planted. Things are salted into the environment so things seem more shocking. What we're seeing isn't actually real. It's dramatised reality where contestants are goaded into the most dramatic reactions, and storylines are set up well in advance, Fleiss said. (www.today.com).

Rubin (1983) who had discovered secondary analysis of television viewing motivations and patterns located two television user types: (1) users of the television medium for time consumption and entertainment; and (2) users of television content for non-escapist, information seeking.

Similar Studies

Philip Ross of International Science Times posits that reality television has a deterius influence on our views of the world based on an observational study from University of Wisconsin. In this study, 145 students from the university were surveyed based on reality television consumption. This study concluded that reality television viewers have the opinion that the argumentative and conniving behaviour portrayed on television shows is considered normal in today's society. (Isciencetime.com, 2018)

Based on another study from Lisa K. Lundy in 2008, researchers garnered 34 participants and categorized them into four groups to canvass the social effects of reality television. As a result, there were mixed

comments on the term 'reality TV'. Most of the participants however viewed reality television as an escape from reality, an immoral or irresistible phenomenon. Similar to Lundy, Jaime Riccio, a student at Syracuse University organised focus groups. In this study, Riccio concluded that reality TV induces problematic behaviours in people, especially towards the younger generation. By collocating three of these studies from Ross, Lundy, and Ciccio, it would additionally demonstrate that reality TV viewers have diversified opinions on what is moral or not for society when it comes to reality television. (Isciencetime.com, 2018)

Research further shows that reality television is an addicting phenomenon, and analysts have claimed that society is so addicted to shows, such as *American Idol, Keeping Up With the Kardashians and The Real World*, because it is interactive, entertaining and relatable with its audiences. A reality Television show is often addictive due to what occurs on the show. Producers deliberately modifies the shows for the viewers' pleasure. Michelle Crouch of Reader's Digest presumes that producers alter scenes for their show to showcase conflicts between different cast members. In addition, cast members' behaviour is portrayed differently, enabling the audience to decide who is likable and who is not. (Isciencetime.com, 2018)

Based on the variety of studies, observations, and views from researchers, the correspondence between reality television and societal behaviour is vague. It is onerous to ascertain whether reality television has a good or bad effect on people in society because not all reality television series are bad.

One of the earliest works to address the socio-economic significance of the most recent wave of reality television was by Bignell. It comprises of interviews with producers, fans and cast members makes use of a critical theory to argue that it is necessary to expose media's promises of the democratising powers of interactivity for what they are, and to reveal how we are all labourers in the surveillance economy. (Bignell 2005).Biressi and Nunn's study offers a wide-ranging history and analysis of reality television as well as a discussion of the genre's relationship to fictional and other type of factual programming. (Biressi and Nunn, 2005)

Another study by Brenton and Cohen reviewed case studies that deal with connections and disconnections between other forms of British nonfiction television—particularly documentary film. (Brenton, 2003)

Barton has also studied competition-based reality television shows and how they effected perceptions of society. Participants (607) provided data to test six hypotheses. Findings indicated that increased consumption of competition-based reality programming was positively correlated with increased perceptions of lying and manipulation in society. No significant relationships were found between these shows and increased perceptions of ruthlessness or increased perceptions of antisocial behaviour and television consumption in general.

Participants (557) provided data to test three hypotheses. Ultimately, findings did not show any significant relationships between consumption of competition-based reality dating shows and increased perceptions of lying, manipulation, or ruthlessness in dating, or dating as a competition.

Sivakami et al. in their study of Bengalore youths found out that TV reality shows do have an impact on youth as follows:

• A lot of talk shows, news channels and reality shows have obtained increasing viewership. In India, shows like *SatyamevJayate*, *NachBaliye* have become well liked.

• Many young adults and youth enjoy watching reality shows and get addicted to it but at the same time many feel that Reality shows are scripted and not true. Few watch it just for discussion and often get into arguments in this regard.

• A majority of youth relates to the participants of the show and is motivated to improve on their skills to get a chance in the huge platform. They feel more reality shows should be encouraged in India.

• There is a good viewership for reality shows amongst the youth but they should be made less controversial and drama based and should focus on real talent hunt.

Ogunade (2018) in her study on "*Big Brother Naija and Brand Positioning among OAU students*" also examined Big Brother Naija and the brand behind its sponsorship. The findings of the research enlightened the positioning of the brand and its importance as it showed that programme had effectively positioned the brand behind its sponsorship.

The study also revealed that a high percentage of the respondents (90.83%) watch the *Big Brother Naija* reality TV show while 9.17% do not watch the reality TV show.

In their study of UGT in video games, Sherry, et al. found three perspectives of video game usage. The first is that a frequently stated reason for playing video games was to stimulate emotion as a result of fast action and high-quality graphics, also many respondents enjoy playing video games to push themselves to a higher level of skill or personal accomplishment. Some respondents said that the desire to solve the puzzles in order to get to the next level or beat the game can be addicting. Many of the players prefer to play a familiar set of games that they feel confident playing.

The second perspective is that one of the most frequently cited reasons for playing video games is the need for people to prove who has the best skills and can react or think the fastest. Typically, competition response came from male respondents who spoke of competing for pride or money. Hence, video game competition served the function of a dominance display among males most often seen in sports. This gratification derives its power from the reactions of others to the dominance shown by the player, establishing a relative position in the peer group's hierarchy.

The third perspective is that video games are mostly used as a diversion or to avoid stress or responsibilities. Respondents reported playing video games to fill time, relax, escape from stress, or because there is nothing else to do.

In her earlier study of Big Brother Nigeria, Lwahas found that Reality Television has made a grand entrance into the landscape of programming in the twenty first century. This is evidenced by the fact that Reality Television phenomenon has entered the mainstream of television programming, providing relatively cheap entertainment (using ordinary people, no scripts and replicated format).

Its growing popularity is exemplified by how accepted it has been in many countries. By adjusting the format, Reality Television Shows can be localised and made more likeable to local markets. In other words, the format can be reproduced or adapted to fit many countries with few modifications from originals which are already successful. Examples have been provided using, *"Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*?" with reference to the film "*Slumdog Millionaire*" and "*Big Brother"* to "*Big Brother Africa*" and "*Big Brother Nigeria*"

The increasing adaptation of such shows, the involvement and participation of people, especially youths, are indicative of the fact that Reality Television is a real part of present-day global popular culture in the emerging process of globalisation. The various forms of adaptations of Reality Shows will equally continue to provide a platform for a number of high profile debates on the authenticity of the performance of participants and appeal on the public.

Lwahas noted:

> Locally, the adaptation or cloning of television programmes promotes small and medium business development. There will be recognition of innovation, creativity and excellence by producers who want to provide local content to available markets both at international, regional and sub-regional levels. What poses a threat to this attempt in Africa are issues of poor infrastructure, limited capital and restrictive broadcast laws which do not advocate for competition in the international market (Lwahas, 2017).

Theoretical framework

There are several theories that explain reality TV impact. These include *Cultivation Theory* – television's impact on the viewer is heavily dependent on how long the viewer watches it (Gerbner and Gross, 1976); *Democratic Participant Theory* – all social categories should have fair access to the use of the media (McQuail, 2005) and the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* which seeks to understand why people seek out the media and what they use it for; not necessarily what media do to them, (Katz & Gurevitch, 1973). As a result of the fact that this study is more about TV effect from the audience perspective (rather than TV's direct influence, the Uses and Gratifications Theory was used as the theoretical base of this study.

Overview of the Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) approach has a long standing history in communication research and mass communication. Fundamental to the theory is the aim to understand how, why, and with what purpose people use the media in their everyday lives (Liu, 2015).

Learning theories.com has made a detailed summary of the meaning and history of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) which may be adapted for this section: "The theory is an audience-centered approach that focuses on what people do with media, as opposed to what media do to people. It builds off of a history of communication theories and research".

Jay Blumler and Denis McQuail laid the principal groundwork in 1969 with their categorization of audience motivations for viewing political programs during the period of the 1964 election in the United Kingdom. This ultimately led them to develop UGT later on with their colleagues.

Uses and gratification theory seeks to understand why people seek out the media that they do and what they use it for. UGT differs from other media effect theories in that it assumes that individuals have power over their media usage, rather than positioning individuals as passive consumers of media. UGT discovers how individuals intentionally seek out the media to fulfill certain needs or goals such as entertainment, relaxation, or socialising. The early stages of the theory were on studies of radio listeners in the 1940s. Other research at that time studied children's comics and the absence of newspapers during a newspaper strike. USG history can be categorised within a series of stages:

Stage 1

In 1944 Herta Hertzog interrogated people who watched soap operas and realised that they sought three varied types of gratification from this form of entertainment and they include: emotional, wishful thinking, and learning.

Wilbur Schramm in 1954 developed a formula for deducing the selection of media by individuals and this has helped to prepend to the fundamental principle for modern developments of this theory. This formula envisaged the amount of gratification an individual is estimated to get out of a specific form of media and the amount of effort the individual would have to exert to get it.

In 1970 Abraham Maslow presupposed that UGT was an augmentation of the needs he had himself categorised into his Hierarchy of Needs.

Stage 2

In 1969 Jay Blumler and Denis McQuail studied the United Kingdom 1964 election and categorised people's motives for watching some particular political programmes on television. These audience motivations laid the basis for their research in 1972 which eventually led to UGT.

In 1972 Jay Blumler, Joseph Brown, and Denis McQuail proferred four uses of media: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance.

In 1973-74 Blumler, Brown, and McQuail were joined by colleagues Michael Gurevitch, Hadassah Haas, and Elihu Katz. The six conducted collaborative research on how people viewed mass media.

Stage 3

Today, UGT researchers are studying predictive and explanatory prospects of the theory by linking media usage with individual factors. There is particular interest in the link between why media is used and the

gratification derived. Overall, UGT has been requisite to a shift that hubs on the media user and their agency in the field of mass media studies.

UGT serves as an important tool for understanding how individuals today connect with the technologies around them. These technologies encompass everything, from the Internet to video gaming to mobile phones. UGT research into mobile phone usage has also revealed that people seek a variety of gratifications from their phones, some of which comprise of entertainment, affection or sociability, and mobility, among others. As another example of a contemporary technology, when making use of social media, users can be stimulated by factors like a need to vent negative feelings, recognition, and cognitive needs. Animated news and entertainment media are just two additional examples of media technologies that UGT researchers continue to explore. (Learning theories.com, 2018)

Postulations of the Uses and Gratifications Theory
West and Turner have provided a simple but all-inclusive typology of the postulations of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. (West and Turner, 2004):
- The audience is active and its media use is goal oriented.
- People have variegated uses (needs) they seek to attain through media.
- Audience members take initiative to connect need gratification to a specific media.
- The media compete with other sources for need satisfaction.
- People have enough self-awareness of their own media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with a precise picture of that use.
- Value judgments of media content can only be evaluated by the audience.

The Audience is said to be active when it has the following under-listed meanings associated with it**:**

- **Utility:** media have uses for people and people can put media to those uses
- **Intentionality:** the initial motivations people have determine their consumption of media content.
- **Selectivity:** individual audience members' use of media may reflect their existing interests and preference.
- **Imperviousness to Influence:** media audience construct their own interpretation from content that then affects what they think and do. They can avoid certain types of media influence.(Blumler, 1979)

Uses and gratifications theory also make a distinction between activity and activeness for a better understanding of the audience.

Activity refers to what the media audience does.

Activeness refers to the freedom of the audience and autonomy in the mass communication situation.

Activeness is relative: some people are more active while others are more passive.

Activeness varies within individuals: activeness often varies by time of day and type of content

Typologies of Media Use (Consumer Needs)
The following comprise of the typologies of media use:

McQuail, Blumler& Brown's Typology of Needs (1972) c.f (R. West &L.H Turner): the under-listed are the typology of needs as postulated by McQuail, Blumler and Brown:

Diversion: This refers to the escape from daily routines or daily problems

Personal relationship: This can be described as substituting the media for companionship.

Personal identity/individual psychology: This refers to seeking media to reinforce an individual's values.

Surveillance: This is defined as seeking information to help an individual accomplish something.

Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) proposed the following as Need Categories:

- **Cognitive** (acquire information, knowledge)
- **Affective** (emotion, pleasure, feelings)
- **Personal Integrative** (enhance credibility, status)
- **Social Integrative** (interact with family & friends)
- **Tension Release** (escape & diversion)

According to Rubin (1981), the motivations for viewing television comprise of the following:

- For companionship
- To pass time
- For excitement
- For enjoyment
- To escape
- For relaxation
- For information
- To learn about specific content

Lull's (1995) Typology of Media Use comprise of two categories. They include:

- **Structural**

    Environmental (background, companionship)
    Regulative (punctuate time and talk)

- **Relational**

    Communication Facilitation (something to talk about)
    Affiliation/Avoidance (something to do together)
    Social Learning (aid in decisions, problems, models)
    Competence/Dominance (role aid, authorization)

Uses and Gratifications Theory and Reality TV shows
The foregoing analysis of UGT provides explanation to the subject of this study – reality TV show. Some viewers perceive the programme as an escape from daily routines or daily problems while to some others, watching it is just for media companionship. Yet, others would see it as just reinforcing their values. Using the needs category, it is possible that some viewers see the programme just as an avenue to seek knowledge and express emotions. Some viewers were so engrossed in the programme that they cried uncontrollably when their favourite housemate was evicted. It can thus be a programme for stress release. Also, as Rubin stressed, watching reality show could be to pass time, social interaction, enjoyment and excitement.

Limitations and Criticisms of the Uses and Gratifications Theory
Criticisms of early U&G research centres on the fact that it: (a) relied heavily on self-reports, (b) was unsophisticated about the social origin of the needs that audiences bring to the media, (c) was too uncritical

of the possible dysfunction both for self and society of certain kinds of audience satisfaction, and (d) was too captivated by the inventive diversity of audiences used to pay attention to the constraints. (Ruggiero, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

The survey method was adopted for this study because it is an excellent vehicle for discovering the ideas, attitudes, perceptions, thoughts and dispositions of respondents on the subject of study (Bare, 2017). The instruments under the survey method are questionnaire and interview.

Population of the Study

Population refers to all conceivable elements, subjects or observation that are of interest to the research study. According to Avwokeni (2006), it is the "set of participants that qualify for a study". Wimmer & Dominick (2011) adds that population is a group of subjects, variables, concepts, or phenomena. The population of this study comprise of primarily youths in Nigeria.

Sampling method and procedure

The sampling design used for this study is the non- probability sampling design. This means that items for sampling were selected deliberately by the researcher. Non- probability sampling design can also be referred to as purposive sampling. Purposive sample design involves a collection of readily accessible subjects for a study, it is also time and cost effective (Lund Research, 2012). It would be adopted for this study because it would involve obtaining data from knowledgeable experts. Samples of respondents will be drawn purposively from Lagos and Ede cities, to reflect urban and sub-urban settings.

Sample size

To achieve the objectives of this study, the sample size comprised of 100 correspondents each from Lagos and Ede cities, making up 200 correspondents. About 100 correspondents are chosen from each city in order to represent the variety of perceptions of the correspondent. Lagos is selected because it has an urban setting and would therefore comprise of correspondents from different backgrounds hence resulting in different perceptions while Ede is selected because it is a sub-urban city and may reflect views from a particular background of respondents. The sample size is therefore 200.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Variables of BBN Viewers

A little less than half of the respondents were within the age group of 16 - 20 years while about one-third represented viewers between age 21-26. The rest were from 27 years and above. This means that most of the respondents were young people. (Fig. 1).

Table 1. Age of respondents

Age (years)	Frequency (%)
16-20	80 (40.8)
21-26	75 (38.3)
27-32	17 (13.8)
33 and above	14 (7.1)
	n=196 (100.00%)

In terms of gender, 78 of the respondents representing 39.8% were male and the remaining 118 (60.2%) were female. This correspondents with the researcher's plan to purposively have more of the female gender in the study population. (Table 2). The researchers shared out the questionnaires to the respondents in the two study locations almost equally: (Lagos 48 per cent; n=93, Ede 42 per cent; n=90). As presented in Table 2, eight of ever ten respondents were graduates or undergraduates. More than one-third of the respondents were single (n=147, 75%).

Table 2. Educational profile of respondents.

Highest educational qualification	Frequency (%)
Primary education	12 (6.1)
Secondary education	14 (7.1)
Tertiary education	164 (83.7_
No education	4 (2.0)
Total	192 (99.0%)

Likeness of the BBN programme

Table 3 shows the response of the respondents to the aspect of the programme they liked most. About one-quarter (n=49; 25%) affirmed that the eviction part of the programme was the aspect they like most, 32 (16.3%) of the respondents said they like the diary session, 30 (15.3%) of the respondents liked the game session and the remaining respondents did not like any of the listed programmes.

Table 3; Most preferred aspects of the programme

Aspects of the BBN Programme	Viewers' Preferences
Eviction session	49 (25.0%)
Diary session	52 (26.5%)
Games session	30 (15.3%)
Other (general play, guests scenes, Saturday party, etc.)	65 (33.4 %)
Total	**N=196 (100%)**

The three most popular segments of the programme were the 'Diary', 'Eviction' and 'Games' sessions. Most advertisements were placed during these segments. Other segments such as play, chats, guest appearances, Saturday party share the remaining viewer preferences.

Reasons for viewing
When reasons for viewing were analysed along gender lines, the female viewer was found to be the most attracted to the programme for its entertainment value while 'learning' and 'escape' came next. For the male viewer, the general entertainment value of the programme was also considered the most important reason for viewing the programme but most of the male respondents were not sure of the reason they watched the programme whereas the female respondents were more definitive. (Table 4)

But when the social class of respondents was compared with their reasons for viewing, data suggest that students watched the BBN Programme more because the programme provides them entertainment and knowledge. Those employed or self-employed seem to watch the programme more because of its entertainment and educational values. (n=40, 27%). Unemployed youths do not find the programme attractive, based on data generated from the two study locations. Only four viewers among those unemployed (5 per cent) watched the programme for its entertainment value. (Table 5)

Table 4 Viewing preferences across gender

Gender	Most important reason for viewing				
	Entertainment	Learning	Escape	Can't say	Total (%)
Male	48 (47 %)	10 (30 %)	12 (34%)	8 (31%)	78 (398
Female	54 (53%)	23 (70%)	23 (66%)	18 (69%	118 (60%)
Total	**102 (100%)**	**33 (100%)**	**35 (100%)**	**26 (100%)**	**196 (100%)**

Table 5 – Viewing preferences across social class

Social class	Most important reason for viewing				
	Entertainment	Learning	Escape	Can't say	Total (%)
Self-employed	19 (25.3` %)	5 (14.3 %)	20 (42.6%)	5 (16.1%)	69 (25.%)
Employed	21 (26%)	6 (17.1%)	13 (27.7%)	12 (38.7%	52 (22.5%)
Unemployed	4 (5.3%)	2 (5.7%)	-	-	16 (3.2%)
Students	31 (41.3%)	22 (62.9%)	14 (25.8%)	14 (45.1%)	81 (43.1%)
Total	**75(100%)**	**35 (100%)**	**47 (100%)**	**31 (100%)**	**88 (100%)**

Table 6: BBN and National Identity/Values

	National Identity/Values			
BBN as instrument of promotion	*Culture*	*History*	*Language*	*Unity/Tolerance*

Yes	94 (48%)	134 (68%)	40 (25%)	113 (58%)
No	102 (52%)	55 32%)	147 (75%)	76 (42%)
Total	*196 (100%)*	*196 (100%)*	*196 (100%)*	*196 (100%)*

Viewer gratifications
'Relaxation', 'social status' and 'escape' and the topmost gratifications derived by viewers from the programme. Further analysis shows that leisure accounts for 32 per cent (n=61), escape 17 per cent (n=9) and learning 16 per cent (n=8). The respondents who gratified "groupthink/status" viewed the programme to seen as sociable , trendy or wanting "to belong". (Table 7).

Table 7: Gratifications derived by BBN viewers

Gratifications derived	**Frequency (Percentage)**
Learning	16 (8)
Escape	17 (9)
Leisure	61 (32)
Status/Group think	97 (51)
Total	**196 (100)**

Functional and Dysfunctional Contributions to Nigerian Identity
Most viewers in the study sample believe the BBN programme contributes effectively to national and international identity of Nigeria. Well over half of the respondents agreed that the BBN has been an instrument of promoting Nigerian culture and identity, although they vary remarkably in terms of the specific areas of national identity promoted by the programme (Table 4) As Table 8 shows, 62.7 per cent said "yes" while 37.3 per cent said "no" while responding to the foregoing poser. The researchers specifically asked respondents it they supported or opposed the suggestion that the programme be banned from the Nigerian airwaves. Six out of every ten respondents said "no".

Table 8: BBN as reflective of National Identity

Viewer response of BBN as instrument	**Frequency (Percentage)**
Yes	123 (62.7)
No	76 (37.3)
Total	**196 (100%)**

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this research question was to find out the demographic characteristics of the BBN audience, likeness and dislike for the programme and reasons for such; gratifications of viewers of the programme and the extent to which the programme promotes Nigeria's national identity.
Findings reveal that the BBN has a huge viewership, despite the impression in a large section of the mass media that it is unwholesome. Majority of youths enjoy the programme for its entertainment value and believe it promotes national identity and values.
Data generated from the study suggest that females loved the programme and watched itmore than males but there was no sufficient evidence to make definitive conclusion on this. Perhaps the strongest point against proposals that the programme be banned is that BBN is only aired on cabled channels where viewers

have absolute right to censor it by themselves. As some respondents put it "if you do don't like it, just tune to other channels."

The dysfunctional aspects of the programme identified by viewers were immorality (n=99. 50.5%); addictiveness (and waste of time) n=31, 5.8%); and anti-religiosity n=17, 8.7%). Some "other" dysfunctions included promotion of laziness, get-rich-quick mentality and hatred/treachery or backstabbing. Yet, the respondents did not consider these negativities as sufficient enough for them to agree to its ban.

The researcher generated enough data to conclude from this investigation that:
- Many of those who watch BBN are youths, students in both urban and sub-urban settlements.
- The most-watched aspects of the show are 'eviction', tasks/games' and 'diary sessions' in that order of preference.
- Viewers gratify the need for prestige, leisure and escape watching the programme.
- Viewers regard the programme as function (rather than being dysfunctional) and that it helps to promote national identity and values.

Recommendations

Based on data generated from this investigation, the researchers recommend as follow:
- The BBN programme should be strengthened by its producers to continue to promote more of positive values, especially Nigeria's international identity which has received heavy criticism lately;
- The Federal Ministry of Information Culture (which licensed DStv the broadcaster of the programme) should suggest further ways through which the programme can promote the nation's values
- Negative and dysfunctional aspects such as sexual abuses and other immoralities of the programme should be removed or heavily reduced by the producers of the programme.
- The use of TV reality to shows should be explored and used more often by development communication programme as this study proved that it could be very effective in getting desired results (both heuristic benefits and financial benefits.)
- Further studies are required on how gratifications are derived from reality shows and communication researchers should concentrate more efforts in this direction.

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