

Effects of Late Night Television Viewing on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Nigeria; A Case Study of Yabtom College, Lagos

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Abstract

The call for re-standardization of the falling educational standard across all levels in Nigeria comes with the obligation to look into possible way for this decline in academic excellence. It is highly likely that the problem's roots begin in the primary level and continues into the tertiary levels. Researchers have traced high exposure of the school-age children to the media most especially television and the new media, as a possible factor in the decline of academic performance. Studies have also found out that students spend more time watching television, browsing internet or chatting and playing on new media than studying either in class or at home or even combination of both. Prior research findings reflect how school-age children spend their day, and this study examines how they spend their night, which also has significant implications for their academic performance. Survey method was employed to examine to what extent school-age children watch television in the night and to measure their academic performance. The survey found out that the children under study spend a lot of time watching television late in the night. It also found out many of the children under study take advantage of parental negligence not monitoring their late-night television viewing, which has become an addictive behavior even among students at higher levels of education.

Keywords: Television, Student, Late-night Viewing, Academic Performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The mass media, most especially television has gradually become a part of our daily lives and means of information, education and entertainment. These roles are considered as the primary

functions of the media. According to Dale (2014) teaching media literacy is a way of showing how to interpret and educate children against media messages as the key to overcoming the problems of media effects. George (2013) argues that one of the most important features of childhood and adolescent age is the development of an identity. As children shape their behaviour and values, they may look to heroes and role models they may wish to emulate based on possession of certain skills or attributes.

Jennings & Dorina (2015) writes that the media are created for pleasure and entertainment without considering the consequences. They also reiterate that there are unintentional and intentional influences that result from the media, the unplanned ones come from content that is produced in an effort to attract and retain large audience. The records of the American Academy of Pediatric show that children and teenagers are exposed to entertainment media for an average of seven hours per day, at an age where fitting seems important and finding identity is essential, teens are more vulnerable than ever to media messages. With all these on the airwaves, a lot of teenagers also want to have a feel of what is shown on television, which evidently most of them cannot afford it, this leads them to engage in crimes, prostitution and other forms of immorality.

Teenage age is a point at which children are just starting to seriously break dependence on their parents, at least as far as their own identity is concerned. The media gives them a more neutral and less threatening frame of reference from which to relate to their peers (Ohadebeh,2012). This is because the media is something that most teenagers see the same way. Unfortunately, because most teens are still looking for their own identities, they are a lot more susceptible to suggestion and all the perceived peer pressure from the media which can overwhelm what they have already formed of their own identities based on someone else's opinions, what they should think and feel. Without realizing it, they can start picking up someone else's opinions instead of forming their own with the way the media is today (Okechukwu, 2014).

However, it cannot be over-emphasized that television has taken a centre stage in our daily activities especially in the 21st Century with the emergence and consolidation of different television stations and service providers in Nigeria. It has been observed in cities that satellite and cable televisions have a greater amount of audience than the local television stations.

Ademuyiwa (2019)

However, this study examines the effect of late-night television viewing among students in secondary school. It is evident through previous researches that with television stations at their fingertips, teenagers spend a whole lot of their time watching television. A conservative estimate has been given of an average American teenager who spends 2.5 hours per day watching television. The teenagers spend an average of 16 – 18 hours watching television per week, starting from 13 – 19 years old, watching most often the most popular rated movies as evidenced from previous research outputs teenagers. It has been discovered that most of the programmes teenagers watch are entertainment related, for instance, movies, musical videos, soap operas etc.

Olorogun (2013) asserts that the influence of these programmes on teenagers may not be immediate or effective due to some other variables like family, social groups, peer groups etc. Nevertheless, the influence might lead the teenagers to false ideal and negative social behaviours. However, the more they expose themselves to entertainment television with reference to the amount of time some of them put into watching entertainment programmes, the greater the chance for them to develop a world view and a perception of reality similar to what they watch over time on television.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Television as an electronic medium has transformed the mass media and its main traditional functions of information, education and entertainment. There is no gainsaying that in the 20th and the 21st centuries, it has become one of the hottest media with its potentials of sight and sound it has dramatic and demonstrative powers which has made it able to hold its audience spellbound and take them on a ‘roller coaster’ into its world (Wemimo, 2014).

Television has become a part of everyday life which was not so between the 1920s when it was invented and the 1960s when it lost its novelty. It became commercial and there is no doubt that the number of TV stations have greatly increased, so also the number of TV sets available in homes. Reliable statistics have it that more than 95 per cent of households in America own at least one television set and on an average, television is playing about seven hours a day in those households which translates into 2,400 hours per year- the most consuming activity besides sleep

Ademuyiwa (2019)

(Wilson & Wilson, 2001). The medium has been of tremendous influence whether positive or negative as it has changed the way we socialize with our peers, the way teachers teach, governments govern, and religious leaders preach. It has changed the way we organize the furniture in our homes and our world view about our immediate environment (Baran, 2009). Also, Bender (2011) comments that television is “a moulder of the soul’s geography. It builds up incrementally a psychic structure of expectations. It does so in much the same way that school lessons slowly, over the years, tutor the unformed mind and teach it how to think.” Debola (2014) is also of the view that television has become an unavoidable and unremitting factor in shaping what we are and what we will become. Unsupervised leisure has almost always been considered a major source of trouble and has posed a threat to young people’s moral development (Muncie, 2014).

Therefore, this shows the necessity for the development of entertainment programming on television and in contemporary times, television stations or channels that are dedicated to entertainment round the clock, every day of the week.

Moreover, some previous researches in this area were reviewed using the social learning theory and cultivation theory as theoretical framework. Some researches that were carried out in areas that are related or connected to entertainment programmes and their potential influences or effects on teenagers were reviewed. The first major research efforts that attempted to study media effects on the audience was a series of 12 studies on the impact of motion pictures on the society sponsored by the Payne Fund, which began in 1929. The studies examined how motion picture morals compared with American moral standards. It also looked at whether there was a link between films depicting crime and actual crime and delinquency reported in the society, and how motion pictures affected the behaviour of teenagers.

Although the studies did not come up with conclusive proof that motion pictures were actually damaging to the American culture, the results however, concluded that teenagers had been greatly influenced by the movies (Wilson & Wilson, 2001). Following the Payne studies several other researches were carried out in order to examine television and social behaviour of teenagers, but the reports were politically controversial. However, a less controversial research by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker as cited in Wilson& Wilson (2001) found that violence did affect children but the

Ademuyiwa (2019)

process was not a simplistic action-reaction activity; rather it was a complex phenomenon that had different reactions created among different groups of teenagers under different and similar situations.

For some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful, but to other children, under the same conditions, it may be beneficial. For most children, under most conditions, most television is probably neither harmful nor particularly beneficial (Wilson & Wilson, 2001). Some studies on media effects examine selected genres of entertainment and their likely effects on certain patterns of behaviour of teenagers. An attempt was therefore made to briefly review some researches on how music and movies affect teenagers' sexual behaviour.

Therefore, listening or watching music with degrading sexual lyrics is related to advances in a range of sexual activities among adolescents, whereas this does not seem to be true of other sexual lyrics. The result is consistent with sexual-script theory and suggests that cultural messages about expected sexual behaviour among males and females may underlie the effect. Reducing the amount of degrading sexual content in popular music or reducing young people's exposure to music with this type of content could help delay the onset of sexual behaviour.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION IN NIGERIA

The emergence of entertainment predates the history of humans. In pre-historic times around camp fires, there was music and this was discovered from the Neolithic animal hide drums that archaeologists unearthed. Also, record goes back to paintings on cave walls by cave dwellers who had stories to tell, this was said to be the beginning of visual arts (Vivian, 2009).

Archaeologists have records that elites of ancient civilizations enjoyed lavished banquets that included performing entertainers, e.g. acrobats, musicians and dancers. In ancient Greece, sports and athletics became institutionalized entertainment with the Olympic Games and large stadiums. Ancient Rome evolved athletics and competition on a large scale. For instance, Circus Maximus in Rome could hold 170,000 spectators for chariot races and gladiator games. Indices of entertainment such as music, literature, sports and sex have survived through the ages (Vivian, 2009; Munice2004).

Ademuyiwa (2019)

Through the development of technology in Mass Communication, some of these forms of entertainment have evolved into television and its programming contents and can be mass produced thereby finding their way in easily accessible and compact form to the living rooms of the audience, in this case mostly teenagers.

Television broadcasting started in Nigeria in 1959, first as a regional affairs and later as a national instrument for mass communication, mass mobilization and as a tool of national development. The first television station was first established in Ibadan, western region of Nigeria by the former action party leader "Chief ObafemiAwolowo". He was the premier of the region at that time, Chief ObafemiAwolowo's background was rich, he was a journalist, then a lawyer and later a famous politician and statesman. In his government was an equally brilliant Nigerian journalist, Chief Anthony Enahoro from the Midwestern part of Nigeria, he served in the action group government of the late fifties as minister for information, when his region (Midwest) was still an integral part of the old western region of Nigeria.

The emergence of television in Nigeria could be attributed to the combination of political thoughts of Chief Awolowo and Chief Enahoro and their astute political leadership. The first television station was born in Nigeria in November, 1959 in Ibadan capital of old western region of Nigeria known as WMTV and its full name is "Western Nigeria Television, first in Africa. The television remained a regional affair until the Federal Authorities established the Nigerian Television Service (NTS) in February 28, 1963 in which the most important channel of the station which was "NTA 10" was formally launched in April 1962. Transmission of programs began in Lagos on that day. The federal television later changed its name to NBC-TV and again changed to NTA (Nigeria Television Authority).

By the first week of April 1976, the federal authority had taken over all television services in Nigeria, this ultimately put an end to state autonomy in television ownership, temporarily. Few years after, the states were permitted to start operating their television stations but with a sort of technical linkage with the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA). Under this arrangement, all state television stations must link up with a National Network News at 9.pm daily for nationwide news dissemination. However, NTA as one of the Nigerian television station, has played a major role in

Ademuyiwa (2019)

shaping some of the Nigeria teenagers with its various programmes both in education and culture with programs such as *AM Express*, *News at nine*, *Newsline*, *weekend file*, *Super Story*, *Binta and friends*, *News Panorama*, *News Extra* and lots of others. These programs can be viewed online via Africast as well as Telefric television. The NTA educational television (ETV) is the specialized NTA station with the mandate to promote learning in all its ramifications through formal and non-formal methods. The educational television located at "Tejuosho", Yaba area of Lagos provides a veritable platform for broadcasting all educative contents on the network service of NTA like documentary, special report, purpose built programs for all cadre of audience in Nigeria and Africa.

THE SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

The Social Learning Theory was propounded by Albert Bandura who was a psychologist at Stanford University. The theory suggests that much learning takes place through observing the behaviour of others (Anaeto, et al, 2008).

Bandura (2009) observes, "Children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modelling." Therefore, he placed a caution that TV viewing might create a violent reality, which has to be feared for its capacity to influence the way we deal with people every day. His theory can be summarized as follows:

1. He stressed the fact that we learn by observing others.
2. He placed his focus on the power of examples and the importance of role models.
3. He stresses the importance of vicarious behaviour as a means of modifying behaviour.

The social learning theory has a general application to socializing effects of media and the adoption of various models of action as it applies to many everyday matters such as clothing, appearance, style, eating and drinking, modes of interaction and personal consumption. Television is rarely the only source of social learning and its influence depends on other sources such as parents, friends, and teachers.

Ademuyiwa (2019)

From the discussion, it can be reliably argued that this theory appropriately addresses how entertainment TV helps in shaping the social behaviour of teenagers. This is because as they are exposed to the entertainment programmes, they engage in a form of social learning process through some of the attributes as portrayed on TV. It is important to note that several researchers and organizations apply social learning in their educational entertainment programmes. They have created long-running serial dramas aimed at reducing the spread of HIV, slowing population growth, preventing unwanted pregnancies, promoting literacy, and empowering women. For instance, the Population Communications International (PCI), a non-profit group according to American Psychological Association airs serial dramas in countries as diverse as Bolivia, China, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Tanzania. PCI also uses controlled studies to monitor the success of these programmes in changing audience's behaviours. In Mexico and Kenya for instance, serialized dramas that highlighted family planning heralded 32% and 58% increases in new contraceptive users respectively. In Tanzania, serialized drama that addressed the spread of AIDS was associated with a reduction in reported numbers of sexual partners.

CULTIVATION THEORY

The Cultivation Theory was also chosen to give backing to the social learning theory in this study. In examining the relevance of this theory to the context of the study, our concerns recline on the volume of exposure to entertainment TV by teenagers and their perception of what constitutes reality and the acceptable forms of social behaviour.

The theory was designed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross of the University of Pennsylvania. Cultivation theory was derived from several large-scale projects "concerned with the effects of television programming (particularly violent programming) on the attitudes and behaviours of the American public" (Miller, 2005). According to Miller (2005), cultivation theory was not developed to study "targeted and specific effects (e.g. watching Superman will lead children to attempt to fly by jumping out of the window) rather in terms of the cumulative and overreaching impact television has on the way we see the world in which we live." Cultivation theory in its most basic form, then, suggests that exposure to television over time, subtly "cultivates" viewers' perceptions of reality. This cultivation can have an impact even on light viewers of TV, because

Ademuyiwa (2019)

the impact on heavy viewers has an impact on our entire culture. Gerbner & Gross (2002) opine that "television is a medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviours. Its function is in a word, *enculturation*". Stated most simply, the central hypothesis explored in cultivation research is that those who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurrent messages of the television world, compared with people who watch less television, but are otherwise comparable in terms of important demographic characteristics (Gerbner & Gross 2002). Anaeto, et al (2008) summarizes the assumptions and principles of the theory thus:

1. Cultivation analysis basically means that heavy TV viewers will cultivate the perception of reality portrayed by the TV.
2. People indicate their judgments- about and their actions in the world on the cultivated reality provided by television.
3. Television is essentially and fundamentally different from other mass media. It is the only medium in history with which people can interact.
4. The medium is the "central cultural arm" of society as typified by America. There, television is the "chief creator of synthetic cultural patterns" (entertainment and information).
5. The substance of the consciousness cultivated by television is not much specific attitudes and opinions as more basic assumptions about the 'facts' of life and standards of judgment on which consciousness is based.
6. Television's major cultural function is to stabilize social patterns; it is a medium of socialization and acculturation.
7. The observable, measurable, independent contributions of television to the culture are relatively small. Simply, though we cannot always see media effects, they do occur and eventually will change the culture in possible, profound ways.

Therefore, Gerbner *et al.* (2002) go on to argue that the impact of television on its viewers is not unidirectional; that the "use of the term cultivation for television's contribution to conception of

Ademuyiwa (2019)

social reality... (does not) necessarily imply a one-way, monolithic process. The effects of a pervasive medium upon the composition and structure of the symbolic environment are subtle, complex, and intermingled with other influences. This perspective, therefore, assumes an interaction between the medium and its publics.

Cultivation Theory is equally viewed as a top-down, linear, closed communication model regards audiences as passive, presenting ideas to society as a mass with meaning, open to little or no interpretation. The ideas presented to a passive audience are often accepted, therefore influencing large groups into conforming with ideas, meaning that the media exerts a significant influence over audiences. This audience is seen as very vulnerable and easily manipulated. Cultivation Theory looks at media as having a long term passive effect on audiences, which starts off small at first but has a compound effect, an example of this is body image and the bombardment of images (Morgan, 2009).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The data used in this research study was basically primary data of questionnaire analysis that were distributed to the Students of Yabtom College. However, the study population comprises 100 Students of the school and it is made up of both male and female Students of the School.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1

Age Distribution of the Respondents

Respondents' Age	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage
Between 11 to 13 years	14	14.0	14.00
Between 14 to 16 years	82	82.0	82.00
Age 17 years and above	4	4.00	4.00
TOTAL	100		100.0

The results above shows that 82 respondents are between 14-16 years of age and this represents 82% of the total respondents while 14 respondents are between 11-13 years of age and this gives

Ademuyiwa (2019)

14% of the total respondents. Only 4 respondents are within the age of 17 years and above and this constitutes only 4% of the total respondents. Therefore, from the above analysis, there is likelihood to deduce that respondents between 14-16 years of age dominate the respondents in the research study.

Table 2

Class Distribution of the students

Respondents	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage
JSS 1-3	38	38.0	38.00
SSS 1-3	62	100.0	62.00
TOTAL	100		100.0

The result above shows that 38% of the respondents are in junior secondary school one to three while 62% of the respondents are in senior secondary school one to three. From the analysis, we can deduce that respondents between senior secondary school one to three are more in the research paper.

Table3.

Respondents' Gender Distribution

Responses	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage
Male Students	42	42.00	42.00
Female Students	58	100.00	58.00
Total	100		100.0

Table 3 above shows that 42 respondents are male students and this represents 42% of the total respondents while 58 respondents are in female students and this gives 58% of the whole respondents. Therefore, the research concludes that there are more female respondents.

4.0 OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Ademuyiwa (2019)

Base on the questionnaire findings 82% of the respondents responded that they prefer television to radio station. However, 72% of the total respondents also think that television give them more interesting programme while 28% are not of the same notion. All the respondents agree that televisions give them more educative programme while 96% think late television viewing affects their performance in school, while 4% of the respondents are not positive on this.

Furthermore, 52% of the total respondents agree that watching television late in the night reduces their reading ability at home while 42% of the respondents that watch television late in the night did not have any effect in their reading ability at home. 57% of the total respondents assert that they always watch violent film on television while 43% said they do not while 48% of the total respondents think television viewing does corrupt them as a teenager but 52% said television viewing does not corrupt them as a teenager.

In spite of the above, 85% support the school of thought that students should be prevented teenagers from watching late night television while 15% did not support. 51% think every teenager should be encouraged to watch late television programme in the night probably there may some re broadcast of interesting programmes in the night that might be educative, while 49% said no. In another development, 88% of the respondents spend more hours in watching TV during weekdays while 12% don't.

More so, 53% assert that excessive TV viewing affect their academic performance in school while 47% said excessive TV viewing does not affect their academic performance in school. Among 66% of the students it can be deduced that an 'epidemic' of attention deficit disorder, behavioural problems, language difficulties and weak problem solving skills are likely to occur as result of excessive exposure of media exposure. 81% think there is a relationship between television viewing and teenager's performance in Secondary School while 19 disagree with the notion. Finally, 64% conclude that late television viewing leads to poor performance of teenagers in School while 36% said no to the question.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Ademuyiwa (2019)

Attention has been drawn to the relationship between television viewing and teenagers' academic performance in Yabtom College. Late-night television viewing was established as a factor contributing to poor academic performance of teenagers in Nigeria. Number of hours spent watching television influences students' attention and level of assimilation in academics. Hence, it constitutes a factor in measuring academic performance of the school-age teenagers, as well as their potential. Though, some researchers argue that the content of what is being viewed should actually be the major cause for concern, while, others argue that once the programs are of good taste (educative and informative), time spent on watching television should not be an odd factor to students' academic performances. Whichever position, both programme contents and the number of hours children spent watching television (most especially in the late hours of the day) require measures to avoid addiction to indecent exposure such that it will have a negative effect in their academic performances as well as their moral upbringing.

Recommendations

Accommodating media education in the preparatory school curricular would be a welcome development towards guiding teenagers in media use and the danger in wrong use of mass media including social media. This will enable the teenagers to put media violence into perspective and perhaps diffuse some of its power. National film and Video Censor's Board [NFVCB] should ensure that there are strict rules and regulations on the films and TV programmes that contain violent, nudity, ritual killings and so on. Bans and penalties should be strictly levied on any TV station that deviate from the set down rules and regulations. The [NFVCB] should create more awareness about TV ratings and classifications so that children or the teenagers will be less vulnerable. All the stakeholders to this effect should become more active to ensure that the media become sensitive to the impact of violence on the Nigeria children.

Parents' participation in screening and scrutinizing the kind of TV programmes their children watch would limit inappropriate or excessive children exposure to television programmes. Adults can "mediate" viewing and making TV a learning experience by sitting with the child, discussing, asking questions, and helping with interpretation of the content.

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