

The Influence of Television Viewing on Adolescent, Behaviour among Public Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor LGA in Rivers State

Okpala, Imaobong M^{1*}, Awujo, C.G.¹ and Okpala, Alexander N²

1. Institute of Education, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

E-mail of the corresponding Author: okpalaim@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research work studied the influence of television viewing on adolescent, behaviour among public secondary school students in Obio Akpor Local Government area. The research was carried out sequel to the need to determine the extent to which television can influence adolescents' career choice, violent behaviour, dressing, drinking and sexuality. A questionnaire was drawn consisting of 25 questions covering the five research questions. This instrument was selected after subjecting it to a test-retest procedure that yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72 when correlated with Pearson Product Moment. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 1000 respondents in 10 schools in Obio Akpor LGA of Rivers State. The respondents were classified into those with positive and those with negative attitudes. The five hypotheses emanating from the research questions were further subjected to Chi-square analysis, while the degree of association or significance was determined by applying Pearson's Coefficient of Contingency. The results obtained indicate that television viewing can impact both positively and negatively on the behaviour of most adolescents. It was therefore recommended that television operators should give more airtime to programmes that will impact positively on adolescents such as career and moral guidance and less airtime to those with negative impact such as most home video depicting violence.

1.0 Introduction

The influence of the media on the psychological development of the child is profound. It has become something of a cliché to observe that despite many decades of research and hundreds of studies, the connection between people's consumption of the mass media and their subsequent behaviour has remained elusive.

The television is a system of communication where the image of the scene can be transmitted and produced to another place without the viewer having any problem in recording the information. It is the transmission of information accompanied with sound.

According to Mowers (2006) in 1927, congress introduced the US broadcasting system to "help to serve the public's interest". The television set has two main purposes, one is to provide a voice for those communities who haven't been heard, and the other is to increase the understanding of the world.

In Nigeria, television started in Ibadan in 1959, it was called western Nigerian television (WNTV) now Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Ibadan, the Benue Plateau television now NTA Jos in 1974 was the first television station to transmit coloured pictures to the homes of Nigerian (NBC 2009). Today, almost every state capital has at least one television station. In 1993, licences were issued for the transmission of cable signals to many homes in Nigeria (NBC, 2006).

In Rivers State, NTA Port Harcourt was the first station to commence transmission of signals. Over the years, other stations e.g. Rivers State Television (RSTV), Africa Independent Television (AIT) and most recently cable networks – Multichoice Nigeria (DSTV), communication Trends limited (CTL), Cable Mission television (CMTV) amongst others. These cable networks provide 24 hours of programming.

Television stations the world over are established to serve the interest of both the people and the government of the day. Television in Nigeria plays a vital role of informing as well as entertaining thus, helping in nation building.

When television was first introduced in Nigeria, it was the entertainment programmes that caught and held the attention of the audiences. These programmes as was observed had very low educational content; this perhaps had a lot to do with the literacy level in the country then.

The word “Adolescence” comes from the Latin word *adolescere* meaning “to grow into maturity”. It is the span of years between childhood and adulthood, it covers the period from age 12 till the early 20. Unachukwu and Ebenebe (1997) noted that the common denominator in all adolescent experiences irrespective of cultural variations is the biological changes from childhood into mature adults’ status capable of reproduction. It is also a time of enormous physiological changes; adolescence is also marked by changes in behaviour and expectations. It is regarded as a prelude to and preparation for adulthood, a transitional period of life between immaturity and maturity as well as having to deal with the question “who am I”. The adolescent must also deal with the question “who will I be” (Gross and Mc Illveen, 1998).

Since most adolescents belong to secondary school age, they seem to be easily influenced by what they see and or hear (environment) they are a very mobile group gaining access to several television stations and programmes. By their use of television, there is every likelihood for an increase in their knowledge, career choices, and behaviour through the programmes they watch.

Television has been used to provide information which makes viewers to be in closer touch with places far and near. It provides entertainment and education to the viewers, it familiarises the school child with an entirely new world of facts and fictions.

The television is such a powerful medium that changes the attitudes of children and adolescents in particular and forms habit that reflects those represented in various television programmes. Some people see the television as something that waste people’s time and corrupt while others see it as an effective teaching aid.

Against the above, the influence of television viewing on adolescents’ behaviour among secondary schools students in Obio Akpor Local Government Area will be studied. This research will identify the behavioural changes prevalent in our adolescents as a result of time spent in viewing television programmes, the type of programmes they prefer to watch and the influences of viewing these programmes on the behaviour of the adolescents. This research will expose to the public behaviours and attitudes of adolescents which comes from imitating TV characters.

The finding will encourage parents to monitor the type of programmes their children are exposed to and advise them to adopt healthy life styles. It is hopes that findings will help students know the implications of imitating scenes from movies. School counsellors and principals will know how to better handle some adolescents’ issues as they occur in schools.

It is hoped that the study will be helpful to those responsible for planning TV programmes as it will expose them to some of the problems arising from the programmes televised. It is also hoped that the study will be helpful to other students who might want to consult it for further studies.

1.1 Statement of Problem

A lot of people claim there is no observable impact of television on adolescents, yet parents and teachers have shown much concern about the effect of television on our young people. In the light of which Maduewusi (2005) called for utmost caution in TV programme production.

TV has the potentials to generate both positive and negative effects. Dietz and Strasburger (1991). It is therefore unfortunate that great deals of TV shows which adolescents have devoted their time to view are not educational. The high rates of moral decadences of our adolescents have attracted the attention of members of the public. A study carried out in America and published in 1989 in *Journalism quarterly* revealed that in sixty six hours of prime time network TV, there were in all, 722 instances of sexual behaviours ranging from verbal expression, erotic touching to intercourse, masturbation, homosexuality and incest.

Studies by Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen and brook (1999), show that the average adolescent spends more time watching television than in the classroom. The time spent watching television, has been attributed to being one of the causes of the fallen standard of education in developing countries like Nigeria. The time spent viewing TV frequently limits the time for vital activities like playing, reading, spending time with family and friends, developing other necessary physical, mental and social skills.

It is against this background that the researcher is carrying out this study designed to identify the effect of television viewing habits on adolescents’ behaviour among secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government area.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered to meet the objectives of the study.

- 1) Does TV viewing influence the career choices of adolescents?
- 2) Does TV viewing influence violent behaviour in adolescents?
- 3) Does TV viewing influence adolescents dressing?
- 4) Does TV viewing influence adolescents drinking?
- 5) Does TV viewing influence adolescents' sexual behaviour?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses testable at 5% level of significance are formulated to guide this study.

- 1) There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and career choices.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and violent behaviour.
- 3) There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and their mode of dressing.
- 4) There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and drinking.
- 5) There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing habits and their sexuality.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Area of the Study:

The area of study is obio/Akpor Local government area of Rivers state. Obio Akpor comprises of three clans namely: Akpor, Evo and Apará kingdoms. each of the three clans is made up of many communities, it is located within the urban area of Port Harcourt city. Its capital is Rumuodomaya which is along the Igwuruta airport road, close to Rumuokoro roundabout. The researcher decided to use Obio Akpor LGA for the study due to its central location within the state coupled with regular power supply which residence of this area enjoy.

2.2 Research Design

The design used in this study is a descriptive survey. The interest of the researcher was to investigate the influence of TV viewing habits on adolescents' behaviour among secondary school students in Obio Akpor LGA

2.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study is made up of all the students in senior secondary classes two and three in Obio Akpor LGA of Rivers State. The total number of public secondary schools in the area is sixteen with a total population of about fourteen thousand seven hundred and five students (14,705) students in the senior secondary classes.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The stratified random sampling technique was used to select ten schools in the area, the simple random sampling was used to select 100 students in each of the school thus giving a total of 1000 students as total number sampled.

2.5 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for this study was a questionnaire titled Students Television Viewing Habit Questionnaire (STVHQ) developed by the researcher. It consists of two sections. Section A was designed to elicit personal information from the respondents such as age, sex, name of school, number of hours television is viewed daily etc. section B contains 25 items which focuses on the different behaviour to be tested which were not made known to the respondents. The response scale was structured according to the five point listed below:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Strongly Agree (SA)- | 5 |
| 2. Agree (A) - | 4 |
| 3. Undecided (U) - | 3 |
| 4. Disagree (D) - | 2 |
| 5. Strongly Disagree - | 1 |

2.6 Reliability of Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined through a test re-test method. Copies of the instrument were administered to a randomly drawn sample of 50 students. There was a retest of the same instrument on the same sample after two weeks. The initial and retest scores of the sample were correlated using Pearson's product Moment. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained.

2.7 Data Analysis Technique

The data collected was analysed using simple percentage method for the five research questions while chi-square (χ^2) statistics method at 5% probability level was used to analyse the hypotheses. The hypotheses will be rejected if the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical table value

3.0 Data Presentation and Result

This section deals with the presentation of analysed data and the result with respect to the research questions and hypotheses stated in the study. The data and results of the research questions are presented first followed by those of the hypotheses.

3.1 Research Question 1

Does TV viewing influence the career choices of adolescents?

Table 3.1: television viewing influence on adolescents' career

| Attitude | Number of responses | percentage |
|----------|---------------------|------------|
| Positive | 594 | 59.4 |
| Negative | 406 | 40.6 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

The table showed that 59.4% of respondents agreed that TV viewing influenced their career choices while 40.6% disagreed. The result shows that TV viewing has some degree of influence on the career choices of adolescents.

3.2 Research Question 2

Does TV viewing influence violence in adolescents?

Table 3.2: TV viewing influence on adolescent's violent behaviour

| Attitude | Number of responses | percentage |
|----------|---------------------|------------|
| Positive | 634 | 63.4 |
| Negative | 366 | 36.6 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

Table 3.2 shows that 63.4% of the students agreed while 36.6% disagreed that television viewing has influence over violent behaviour exhibited by adolescents.

3.3 Research Question 3

Does television viewing influence adolescents dressing?

Table 3.3: TV viewing influence on adolescents dressing

| Attitude | Number of responses | percentage |
|----------|---------------------|------------|
| Positive | 732 | 73.2 |
| Negative | 268 | 26.8 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

Table 3.3 shows that 73.2% of the students agree while 26.8% disagreed that television viewing influences adolescents dressing. The result shows that television does influence the way the adolescents dress.

3.4 Research Question 4

Does television viewing influence adolescents drinking?

Table 3.4: TV viewing influence on adolescents drinking

| Attitude | Number of responses | percentage |
|----------|---------------------|------------|
| Positive | 776 | 77.6 |
| Negative | 224 | 22.4 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

In table 3.4, it is observed that out of the 1000 students sampled, 77.6% agreed while 22.4% disagreed that television viewing influences their drinking behaviour. The result shows that majority of adolescent drinking has been influenced by what they watch on television.

3.5 Research Question 5

Does television viewing influence adolescents' sexual behaviour?

Table 3.5: TV viewing influence on adolescents' sexuality

| Attitude | Number of responses | percentage |
|----------|---------------------|------------|
| Positive | 672 | 67.2 |
| Negative | 328 | 32.8 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

The table 3.5 shows that out of the 1000 students sampled, 67.2% agreed while 32.8% disagreed that TV viewing influenced their sexual behaviour.

3.6 Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): There is no significant relationship between adolescents' TV viewing and their career choices.

Table 3.6: Relationship between TV viewing and career choice.

| | Y | X | RT |
|----|----------|--------------|------------|
| | 3(6.50) | 12.23(8.73) | 15.23 |
| | 6(8.35) | 13.57(11.22) | 19.57 |
| | 9(7.58) | 8.75(10.17) | 17.75 |
| | 13(8.57) | 7.07(11.50) | 20.07 |
| CT | 31 | 41.62 | GT = 72.62 |

$$X^2 = 1.89 + 1.40 + 0.49 + 0.27 + 0.2 + 2.29 + 1.71 = 8.91$$

The degree of freedom for the 4x2 contingency table above is 3; hence from the chi-square table at 5% level of significance, the critical value X^2 value is 7.82. The X^2 value calculated from the table above $X^2 = 8.91$ is greater than the critical value of 7.82.

$X^2 = 8.91 > 7.82$ at 5% significant level, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. In effect, there is a significant relationship between adolescents' career choice and TV viewing.

The degree of association is determined by applying Pearson's coefficient of contingency to above data yield $C = 0.37$.

Hypothesis II (H₀₂): There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and violent behaviour

Table 3.7: Relationship between TV viewing and violent behaviour

| | Y | X | RT |
|----|----------|--------------|------------|
| | 3(6.27) | 11.67(9.40) | 14.67 |
| | 6(7.71) | 12.02(10.32) | 18.02 |
| | 9(9.30) | 12.74(12.44) | 21.74 |
| | 13(7.73) | 5.07(10.34) | 18.07 |
| CT | 31 | 41.5 | GT = 72.50 |

$$X^2 = 1.71 + 1.27 + 0.38 + 0.28 + 0.01 + 0.007 + 3.59 + 2.69 = 9.94$$

The degree of freedom for the 4x2 contingency table above is 3; hence from the chi-square table at 5% level of significance, the critical value X^2 value is 7.82. The X^2 value calculated from the table above $X^2 = 9.94$ is greater than the critical value of 7.82.

$X^2 = 9.94 > 7.82$ at 5% significant level, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. In effect, there is a significant relationship between adolescents' violent behaviour and TV viewing.

The degree of association is determined by applying Pearson's coefficient of contingency to above data yield $C = 0.41$.

Hypothesis iii (Ho₃): There is no significant relationship between adolescents' TV viewing and their dressing.

Table 3.8: Relationship between TV viewing and dressing.

| | Y | X | RT |
|----|----------|--------------|------------|
| | 3(6.97) | 11.52(8.56) | 15.52 |
| | 6(7.74) | 11.25(9.51) | 17.25 |
| | 9(8.86) | 10.74(10.17) | 19.74 |
| | 13(7.44) | 3.57(9.13) | 16.57 |
| CT | 31 | 38.08 | GT = 69.08 |

$$X^2 = 2.26 + 1.83 + 0.39 + 0.32 + 0.002 + 0.002 + 4.16 + 3.39 = 12.35$$

The degree of freedom for the 4 x 2 contingency table above is 3; hence from the chi-square table at 5% level of significance, the critical value X^2 value is 7.82. The X^2 value calculated from the table above $X^2 = 12.35$ is greater than the critical value of 7.82.

$X^2 = 12.35 > 7.82$ at 5% significant level, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. There is therefore a significant relationship between adolescents' dressing and TV viewing.

The degree of association is determined by applying Pearson's coefficient of contingency to above data yield $C = 0.484$.

Hypothesis IV (Ho₄): There is no significant relationship between adolescents' drinking and TV viewing.

Table 3.9: Relationship between TV viewing and drinking.

| | Y | X | RT |
|----|----------|--------------|------------|
| | 3(7.35) | 13.78(9.44) | 16.78 |
| | 6(8.66) | 13.78(11.12) | 19.78 |
| | 9(7.03) | 7.05(9.02) | 16.05 |
| | 13(7.97) | 5.21(10.24) | 18.21 |
| CT | 31 | 39.82 | GT = 70.82 |

$$X^2 = 2.58 + 2.00 + 0.82 + 0.64 + 0.55 + 0.43 + 3.18 + 2.47 = 12.67$$

The degree of freedom for the 4 x 2 contingency table above is 3; hence from the chi-square table at 5% level of significance, the critical value X^2 value is 7.82. The X^2 value calculated from the table is $X^2 = 12.67$, it is greater than the critical value of 7.82.

$X^2 = 12.67 > 7.82$ at 5% significant level, we reject the null hypothesis as it shows a significant relationship between adolescents' TV viewing and drinking.

The degree of association is determined by applying Pearson's coefficient of contingency to above data yield $C = 0.493$.

Hypothesis v (Ho₅): There is no significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and sexuality.

Table 3.10: Relationship between TV viewing and sexuality

| | Y | X | RT |
|----|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | 3(6.44) | 12.41(8.98) | 15.41 |
| | 6(8.08) | 13.34(13.26) | 19.34 |
| | 9(9.33) | 13.35(13.02) | 22.35 |
| | 13(7.160) | 4.14(9.98) | 17.14 |
| CT | 31 | 43.24 | GT = 74.24 |

$$X^2 = 1.84 + 1.31 + 0.54 + 0.38 + 0.01 + 0.008 + 4.76 + 3.42 = 12.27$$

The degree of freedom for the 4 x 2 contingency table above is 3; hence from the chi-square table at 5% level of significance, the critical value X^2 value is 7.82. The X^2 value calculated from the table above is $X^2 = 12.27$, it is greater than the critical value of 7.82.

$X^2 = 12.27 > 7.82$ at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected as it shows a significant relationship between adolescents' sexuality and TV viewing.

The degree of association is determined by applying Pearson's coefficient of contingency to above data yield $C = 0.48$.

Table 3.11: Table of Pearson's coefficient versus behaviour

| Behaviour Type | Pearson's Coefficient |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Violence | 0.41 |
| Career | 0.37 |
| Drinking | 0.493 |
| Sexuality | 0.480 |
| Dressing | 0.484 |

4.0 Summary of Results

There is a positive relationship between TV viewing and adolescents' career choice, the relationship is statistically significant. About 63.4% of all the respondents agree that TV viewing influences violent behaviour. This shows a positive relationship between TV viewing and violent behaviour in adolescents.

There is a strong relationship between television viewing and adolescents' behaviour. This relationship is significant as 73.2% of students agreed that TV influences their dressing there is also a strong relationship between adolescents' drinking and TV viewing among secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The relationship is statistically significant.

There is a positive relationship between adolescents' sexuality and TV viewing as 67.2% of respondents agreed with this statement.

4.1 Discussion of Results

Research question 1: does television viewing influence the career choices of adolescents?

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): there is no significant relationship between adolescents' TV viewing and career choice.

The result shows that 59.4% of respondents agreed that TV viewing introduces them to different career opportunities thus influencing their career choice while 40.6% disagreed that their career interest is influenced by TV viewing.

The hypothesis result shows that there is a significant relationship between adolescents' TV viewing and career choice. The result of the analysis shows that calculated X^2 value of 8.91 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 at

5% level of significance. The calculated value being greater than the table value, we therefore reject the null hypothesis.

This result shows that there is a significant relationship between TV viewing and career choice of adolescents in Obio /Akpor Local Government Area. This result may be so as most students in these classes have not finally made up their minds as to what their future career is. The captivating and attractive way most TV programmes are presented can equally attract adolescents desire to be identified with any career opportunities presented.

Research question 2: Does TV viewing influence violence in adolescents?

Hypothesis ii (Ho₂): there is no significant relationship between adolescent TV viewing and violent behaviour.

The result shows that of the sampled population, 63.4% agreed that TV viewing influences then to violent behaviour whereas 36.6% disagreed. The result shows that a higher percentage of adolescents responded positively. The calculated value of 9.94 is greater than the table value of 7.82. The null hypothesis is rejected as it shows a positive relationship between TV viewing and violence in adolescents.

This result may be so due to the fact that adolescents are much more likely than younger children to doubt the reality of TV content. Sixty-one percent of TV programmes contains violence and this violence is often glamorised [Villiani (2001)].

Research question 3: Does TV viewing influence adolescents dressing?

Hypothesis 3 (Ho₃): There is no significant relationship between TV viewing and adolescents' dressing. Of the 1000 students sampled, 73.2% agreed while 26.8% disagreed that their style of dressing is influenced by what they see on TV.

The research hypothesis also shows a significant relationship between adolescent dressing and TV viewing. The data collected and analysed rejected the null hypothesis as the calculated x^2 value of 12.354 is greater than the table value of 7.82 at 5% level of significance.

This result could be, because most adolescent's creativity borrows the clothing styles of popular musicians and movie stars who dress to suit the image they want to portray. Certain TV programmes show case the different fashion show, highlighting the latest trends in fashion and what celebrities are wearing. Another factor might be that respondents like to see themselves as fashionable and will not disagree with questionnaire item.

Research question 4: Does TV viewing influence adolescents to drink?

Hypothesis 4 (Ho₄): there is no significant difference between TV viewing and drinking in adolescents. The result of the research shows that 77.6% of respondents agreed while 22.4% disagreed that TV can influence adolescents to consume alcohol.

The result of the hypothesis shows there is a significant relationship between viewing TV programmes and drinking in adolescents. The data collected and analysed shows that the calculated x^2 value at 5% significant level of 12.67 to be greater than the table value of 7.82. the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

This result is true as according to Wallack and Grube (1994) children and adolescents with increased exposure to mass media portrayal of alcohol have more favourable belief about drinking and increased intension to actually drink.

The attractive advert that portrays alcohol consumption as being for attractive, successful and influential people influences the adolescents desire to practice what they view.

Research question 5: Does TV viewing influence adolescents' sexual behaviour?

Hypothesis 5 (Ho₅): there is no significant relationship between TV viewing and adolescents' sexuality.

The hypothesis result shows that there is a significant relationship between adolescents TV viewing and their sexuality. The data collected and analysed shows that the calculated x^2 value of 12.27 at 5% significant level to be greater than the table value of 7.82. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

4.2 Implication of the Results

Results of this study indicate that TV does have an impact on adolescents' behaviour and it can alter the behaviour of most adolescents. TV viewing with its high content of positive alcohol portrayal and advertisement are particularly strong risk factor for the onset of drinking in most adolescents. This study also shows that watching sex on TV may hasten adolescents' sexual initiation.

This study has implication for students, parents, school counsellors, media organisation, the government and the society as a whole. The results have shown that prolonged TV viewing influences the behaviour of adolescents in

Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Various forms of behaviour associated with this as identified by this study include; career, violence, sexual behaviour, drinking and dressing.

There is need for the education of students, parents, media organisations, government and the entire society on the negative effects TV has on adolescents. This awareness will help in understanding of the problems as it affects the adolescents.

5.0 Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, reduced exposure to positive portrayal of sex and alcohol use on TV will delay and even decrease adolescent's sexual activities and drinking substantially.

There should be reduced amount of sexual content in entertainment programmes. Reducing adolescent's exposure to this content has the possibility of reducing sexual indulgence when they include depiction of sexual risk (such as the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases or becoming pregnant). Abstinence or the need for sexual safety should be depicted.

Writers and directors in terms of programming should portray realistic highlights of both positive and negative effects of the programmes. The school guidance and counselling units should hold workshops and seminars for the adolescents explaining the pros and cons of certain behaviours they imitate from the TV programmes they view. The introduction of dress code in most institutions of higher learning should be encouraged by all.

6.0 Conclusion

Private and public places are now littered with different types and sizes of TV set because of this, children, children and youth are often seen clustering around TV sets to entertain them and or gather information displayed on the screen. As a captivating electronic system, information displayed on its screen are quickly absorbed and put into practice by its viewers.

Television as essential household equipment, entertains, educates and informs the viewers. This can both positive and negative, the result of these research shows that TV influences the adolescents' drinking most with a coefficient level of 0.493; dressing has a coefficient of 0.484, sexuality 0.41 while career is least with a coefficient of 0.37.

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