

***TELEVISION INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING IN BAMBILI,
NORTH WEST REGION, CAMEROON***

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Abstract

The creation of the University of Bamenda in Bambili has attracted more population of both students, workers, and business people, a good number of whom live in Bambili. There is therefore a significant presence of both families and the student population than before. Also, there has been an increase in the number of households with television sets due the increase in purchasing power from income generating activities and more salary and wage earners living in Bambili. This paper seeks to examine the effects of television on children's upbringing in Bambili. The study which is a survey employed the simple random sampling and recruited 50 freely consented parents/guardians to respond to a well-structured questionnaire. The ensuing data was analyzed using SPSS version 21. The results revealed that the influence of television on children's upbringing is both negative and positive since television viewing also enhances the cognitive development of children. Besides, children also adopt deviant behavior from television. With a very low rate of television viewing between parents and their children, an average of 2 hours per day in a week, the study recommends that in addition to other regulatory mechanisms put in place, parents should educate children at home on the dangers of adult TV content.

Key words: *Television, Influence, Children upbringing, Bambili, North West Cameroon*

Introduction

The plurality and fragmentation of television programmes in Cameroon have exposed viewers to all sorts of content both positive and negative. Nkeng (2018) argued that if viewers spend more time watching educative and informative content such as news, documentaries, and talk shows, they would positively benefit from them but if they spend most of their time watching sexually inclined and violent contents, they are likely to become promiscuous and violent in their daily activities. Television, according to Kanwai (2011) is a major source of entertainment and learning for many individuals including

children as well. This means that individuals tend to watch television for educative and entertainment purposes. Similarly, Nkeng (2018) asserted that television as an electronic medium has transformed the mass media and its main traditional functions of information, education and entertainment. With its potential of sight and sound; television has dramatic and demonstrative powers which have made it able to hold its audience spellbound and take them on a ‘roller coaster’ into the world.

Ajuah (2017) revealed that the United States is the largest consumer of television programming. He furthered stated that in 1948, there were barely 100,000 television sets in the United States but by 1973, the number increased a great deal. Carter and Strickland (1975) asserted that 96% of homes in America had one or more television sets. It should be noted that television has brought numerous benefits to man. It has fostered socialization process, promoted the concept of global village, eased news comprehension and serves as a means of diversion. Communication scholars like Denis McQuail in 2005 disclosed that the media of which TV is part plays a great role in children’s socialization. This role has been described as an *early window*. This is because; it allows children to see the world well before they are capable of completely interacting with it (Nkeng, 2018). According to Nkeng (2018) the number of media products consumed by young people has drastically hiked allowing them to compose their own “media menu” with different preference. This is due to the advent of cable and satellite television in the world (Johnsson-Samaragdi, 1994).

According to Edgar and Edgar (2006), Mahesh, Nabi and Raslana (2013), television programmes can stimulate a child’s imagination and open up the infinite opportunities that life presents. Like good books, good television programmes can extend children’s understanding of their world. Children will watch good programmes repeatedly and keep watching them as they grow older, learning different things each time. Good children’s television programming comprises contents made especially for children that reflect the complexity of the emotional changes within the age group and honestly deal with conflicts that such diversity demonstrates.

Although the benefits of television abound, there are some shortcomings. Nkeng (2018) states that young people are mostly affected negatively by media products. This according

to Miles & Anderson (1999) is because they spend considerable amount of their time watching television than doing another activity. Sanders (1994) postulates that an average child between the age of six and eighteen would have spent 4,000 hours listening to radio and CDs, watched 16,000 hours of television and several thousands or more hours on movies. This implies that such children are likely to spend more time-consuming media products rather than spending it with their parents.

A lot of studies on the effects of television on children have been carried out in the western world. However, this is not the case in Africa especially Cameroon. Much is yet to be documented on the effects television has on children. Tanjong (2012) disclosed that Cameroon witnessed an increase in television channels especially ten years after the promulgation of the 1990 law on freedom of expression and mass communication. The increase in TV channels obviously led to an increase in TV viewership and of course among the youths.

In Cameroon in general and Bambili in particular, there is a corresponding increase between television viewership and the rising number of TV sets, cable distribution channels and satellite dishes. From the foregoing, it has been observed that the consumption of television contents by children between the ages of six and fifteen is on the rise in Bambili. These children are generally between class three to about form five. Although most television programmes always emphasize parental guidance, this is hardly respected as most kids often watch television in the afternoon when their parents are at their job sites or in the farms. The resultant consequence is that children are often exposed to all sorts of contents both good (educative and informative programmes) and bad contents such as sexually driven and violence.

When children are exposed to violent contents, the chances that they may emulate what they have watched on television in real life situation is high. The exposure of children to violent contents can serve as a stimulus to express cavernous desires such as engaging in violence. particularly when they are repeatedly exposed to such contents. This predicament does not guarantee a healthy population that can positively influence or champion community developmental actions. Factors responsible for this increasing consumption of television contents by children include idleness, no parental control and availability of a television set at home. Thus, there is need to gauge the influence of

television contents on children upbringing, the level of parent co-viewership of television with children and how parents regulate the television contents that children watch

Television in Cameroon

Television broadcasting was introduced in the nation in 1985, 25 years after independence with the establishment of the government owned Cameroon Television, CTV, today known as Cameroon Radio Television, CRTV following a merger of both the radio and television. Late Pope John Paul II's first visit to Cameroon was also broadcast during the experimental phase in 1985 (Tanjong, Minnie & Bussiek, 2012). Initially, CRTV retained monopoly over broadcasting for several years. However, this ended with the publication of a Prime Ministerial Order No. 200/158 of April 3, 2000, which liberalized the audio-visual sector. Presently, the country has over 80 radio stations and a number of national television stations (Tanjong et al., 2012). The CRTV has evolved significantly and is much more bilingual than the other television stations. However, it has failed to adequately address the needs of the hearing impaired in its programmes, (Ako, 2013).

The audio-visual companies such as Canal 2 International, Spectrum Television 1, Spectrum Television 2, TV Max, Equinoxe TV and Ariane Television came to put an end to CRTV's longstanding monopoly in the audio-visual sector (Esambe, 2007). These stations and many others now constitute a serious challenge to CRTV which can no longer singlehandedly cater for the needs of the millions of television viewers especially as the country is now in a context which, according to Gnotuom (2009), is marked by a high demand from the viewers who are constantly on a search for more appealing television programmes. According to Tane (2008), this viewership is more interested in programmes which portray their daily lives. Despite the remarkable growth of Cameroon's audio-visual sector, broadcasting companies are still facing many difficulties. Tane (2010) points out that Cameroonian television channels, just like many West African channels, face problems especially at the level of content, professional management, procurement of programmes and satellite bandwidths, adaptation to new economic norms, and insufficient professional human resources.

The Multipurpose Functions of Television

Babaleye and Ajisafe (2016) assert that television popularly called 'Tee-Vee' is the most influential among media distribution channels. They define television as the transmission

of visual images of moving and stationary objects, generally with accompanying sound as electromagnetic waves and the reconversion of received waves into visual images. Ariyibi-Oke (2007) adds that television combines the use of light, colour, sound and motion. In other words, television is an audio-visual medium since it has the capacity to display contents on the screen as well as to release sounds that accompany the contents.

Although the technology was commercially available since the late 1920s (in very limited amounts and at a very high price), television has since become a common household good. It is also used in news broadcasting (Rooij, 2015). He further notes that as from 1950s onward, television has increasingly become the primary medium for shaping public opinion because of the saturation of television in society. Rodman (2006) on his part submits that television remains the most time-consuming activity, next to sleeping, and it is the world's main source of news and information. He further asserts that television is the medium through which politics is conducted, and it is humanity's main form of entertainment. It is also the world's most powerful sales tool. According to Petterson (2007), TV is by far the most relied upon medium for young adults.

Nwenfor (2017) on his part posits that television is probably the most cost-effective medium that informs, educates and entertains the general public around the world. The television receiver is certainly the most popular home electronic device in the world. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), at the end of 2000 disclosed that there were about 1.4 billion television sets in the world (Wu, Hirakawa, Ulrich and Whitaker, 2006). In 2009, approximately 78 per cent of the world's households owned at least one television set with 87 per cent of TVs sold being colour liquid crystal display–screen TVs, (Rooij, 2015). A study by Pew Research Centre (2009) reveals that a vast majority of Americans cite television as their source for both local (64%), national/international (71%) news.

Influence of Television on Child Development

Kanwai (2011) asserts that television is considered to be a major source of entertainment and learning for many especially the young. He further states that all television programmes especially the commercials, news, documentaries and cartoons affect people of all ages including children. Although they constitute a minority of television viewers across the globe, children spend most of their time watching the television screen. This

has been facilitated by the advent of low-cost television sets in the society. Moreover, some television contents are designed purposefully for children. Garrison and Christakis (2005) articulated that in the late 90s, the media industry began to target children as young as six months as prime viewers for television programmes such as *Teletubbies*, and video series such as *Baby Einstein*. Many producers claimed these programmes have educational or cognitive benefits for young children despite a lack of research to substantiate these claims.

As a result of the rise in the popularity of infant-directed media among families, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 1999, 2001) made recommendations against early screen media use for children less than 2 years of age based on the assumption that media use would displace important social interactions necessary for healthy development. The AAP (2016) recently amended their recommendation to no screen media for children aged 18 months and younger. For 18-to 24-month-old children, they recommend using high-quality media with caregiver supervision.

According to Hanson (2017), the recommendations provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics is not respected as infants and toddlers still spend significant amounts of time with screen media. In a typical day, children under 2 years of age watch about 1 hour of television per day. In comparison, infants and toddlers only spend about 19 minutes with books each day. Moreover, 36% of young children live in households where the television is on most or all of the time (Common Sense Media, 2013). On their part, Anderson and Pempek (2005) assert that a number of correlation-based studies suggest that the amount of early media exposure is negatively related to developmental outcomes, namely poorer attention and language skills. Recent studies corroborated these findings, demonstrating that the presence of television directly reduces the quality of children's play behaviours and attention (Courage et al., 2010; Schmidt et al. 2008; Setliff & Courage, 2011)

Anderson and Evans (2001) in Hanson (2017) posit that the effects of television on children depend upon the degree to which children attend to and can comprehend the media contents. Such contents are broadly divided into two categories; background and foreground television Contents. Background television (BTV) refers to young children's

exposure to programmes that are designed for older children and adults. Here, television is on in the background because young children do not actively pay attention to it and most likely do not understand the content. In contrast, foreground television (FTV) refers to children's exposure to programmes designed for them, to which they will attend and presumably understand. When television programs are planned and designed to teach, children can learn academic skills, information and social values from it (Huston et al., 1992).

Hanson (2017) investigated the influence of early media exposure on children's development and learning. The researcher argued that television's constant presence at home could lead to potentially serious consequences for infants and toddlers. However, hypotheses attributing long-term negative outcomes to the direct effects of television on children are limited and the indirect influences of television on children remain entirely unexplored. Hanson (2017) further stated that television's impact can have a potentially greater indirect effect on young children by directly influencing parents' behaviours, which in turn, disrupt the quality of their interactions with their children.

Guru and Raslana (2013) examined the role of television in child development in India. The authors argued that a new generation of children has grown up with television exposure in modern society. According to them, this necessitated studies to be carried out to find out the influence of television of children's development. They stated that children spend a sizeable chunk of their time on watching television programmes and are greatly influenced by television programmes. They further observed that according to some behavioural scientists, too much of television viewing by children would result in the exclusion of other healthy activities, thereby negatively affecting the psychological growth of the child. To avoid the negative influence of television programmes on children, they recommended that parents and caregivers have a great responsibility of providing the right kind of orientation to the children regarding the cultivation of television habits, choice of television programmes and impact of television on children.

Barr et al. (2010) investigated the early influence of foreground and background television at 1 and 4 years of age on cognitive outcomes. According to parents' reports, children who were exposed to high levels of background television at 1 year of age were more likely to exhibit poorer global executive functioning skills, inhibitory self-control,

and emergent metacognition at age 4. There was no association found for foreground television. The researchers posit that early exposure to adult television programming has the potential to interfere with developmental processes related to the development of executive functions, such as attention regulation, by acting as a source of constant distraction for children.

Schmidt et al. (2008) compared 12-, 24-, and 36-month-old children's attention and play behaviours in the presence and absence of an adult-directed television programme. Although the children paid little attention to the television programme, their overall play was still disrupted. Specifically, the proportion of time spent in play, average play length, and focused attention during play were reduced when the television was on. Another study by Setliff and Courage (2011) also found similar results with children who were observed at 6, 12, and 24 months of age. These young infants were more distracted from their play while the television was on, and were more distracted, the longer that it was on. This latter finding is particularly important given that about one third of infants and toddlers live in homes when the television is on most of the time, regardless of whether or not someone is watching (Common Sense Media, 2013).

Zimmerman, Christakis, & Meltzoff (2007), for example, found a significant negative association between watching baby videos at 8 to 16 months and language abilities, such that for each hour of viewing baby videos, there was a 16.99-point decrement (i.e. 6-8 words) on the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI), a standardized language assessment measure. Interestingly, this association was not found for infants 17 to 24 months

Linebarger and Walker (2005) assessed the effects of television exposure on language outcomes of 6-30-month-old babies. Findings indicated that outcomes were programme specific. Programmes that had a strong narrative, such as Dora, the Explorer and Dragon Tales, were positively associated with greater vocabulary and expressive language, whereas, programmes that had little narrative structure and spoken language, such as Teletubbies, were negatively associated with vocabulary and expressive language. Together, the studies suggest that not only does the amount of television exposure

influence language development, but also there are other important factors to consider such as age and content differences.

Theoretical Framework

Mindful of the topic under study, this paper has adopted the Media Dependency theory and the Cultivation theory to analyse parent and children viewership pattern and the possible implication for children upbringing. The Media Dependency Theory was proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. Media Dependency theory is one of the theories which regards audience as an active part in the communication process. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1976) described dependency as the correlating relationship between media content, the nature of society, and the behaviour of audiences. It examines both macro and micro factors influencing motives, information-seeking strategies, media and functional alternative use, and dependency on certain media (Rubin & Windahl, 1982). The theory states that the more a person becomes dependent on the media to fulfil his or her needs, the media will become very significant to that individual. The media will also have much more influence and power over that individual. In other words, if someone is so dependent on the media for information, and the media is that person's only source for information, then it is easy to set the agenda, (Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976).

Littlejohn (2002) also explained that people will become more dependent on media organs that meet a number of their needs than on media organs that provide only a few. If a person finds a medium that provides them with several functions that are central to their desires, they will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future (Rossi, 2002). The intensity of media dependency depends on how much people perceive that the media they choose are meeting their goals. These goals were categorized by DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) into three dimensions which cover a wide range of individual objectives: (1) social and self-understanding (e.g., learning about oneself, knowing about the world); (2) interaction and action orientation (e.g., deciding what to buy, getting hints on how to handle news or difficult situation, etc.); (3) social and solitary play (e.g., relaxing when alone, going to a movie with family or friends). DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) also suggested that more than one kind of goal can be activated (and satisfied) by the same medium.

In connection with this research therefore, and in the light of the foregoing theory, children would normally watch television programmes that are captivating and self-gratifying. Such captivating programmes such as cartoons can keep children in front of a television set for hours. Due to the ability of cartoons to hold children spellbound for hours, it has a significant influence on their development. For instance, children will easily replay violent moves in reality after watching them on television cartoons such as Tom and Jerry. Thus, the television contents that children depend on have an influence on their development. This is also linked to the Cultivation theory by George Gerbner which relates to heavy television. More specifically, the Cultivation theory examines the long-term effects of television viewing on viewers' conception of social reality. The central hypothesis of the Cultivation theory is that, people who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in a way as most commonly depicted in television messages, as compared to those who watch less television but are otherwise comparable in major demographic features (Gerbner, 1969)

Methodology

This study which is carried out in Bambili, Tubah Sub-Division, Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon adopted the survey research method. Survey is rated very effective in measuring people's attitudes and behaviour. In terms of research design, the quantitative approach was adopted because it is good for measuring influences, relationship and for making generalization of findings to a wider population. The convenient sampling technique was adopted. A sample size of 50 parents/guardians in Bambili participated in this research. A self-administered questionnaire was the instrument of data collection. However, in cases where the respondents could neither read nor write, face to face administration was done. Out of a total of 50 questionnaires distributed to parents, 50 questionnaires were returned completely filled, making a total of 100% response rate. The data collected from the field was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

Table 1 below presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Out of a total sample size of 50, the majority, 36% ($n = 18$) reported to be between the age range

of 21-30years. These were closely followed by 30% (n = 15) of the respondents that reported to be between the age range of 41years and above. With respect to gender, there was a 1:1 distribution of males and females, with each scoring a percentage score of 50% (n = 25). With regard to marital status 23 respondent, that is 46% are married while 19, 38% are single. Only 4% (n = 2) are divorced, while 6% (n = 3) are widows. With respect to the educational level of the study respondents, 34% (n = 17) were holders of a first degree, followed by 24% (n = 12) that reported to have a master's degree. First school leaving certificate (FSLC) holders then came third with 16% (n = 8).

Table 4. 1: Descriptive characteristics of respondents

VARIABLE	CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Age range (years)	Less than 20yrs	4	8.0
	21 - 30yrs	18	36.0
	31 - 40yrs	13	26.0
	41+yrs	15	30.0
Total		50	100.0
Gender	Female	25	50.0
	Male	25	50.0
Total		50	100.0
Marital status	Single	19	38.0
	Cohabit	3	6.0
	Married	23	46.0
	Divorced	2	4.0
	Widowed	3	6.0
Total		50	100.0
Educational level	FSLC	8	16.0
	O/L	6	12.0
	A/L	6	12.0
	First degree	17	34.0
	Masters	12	24.0
	PhD	1	2.0
Total		50	100.0

Meanwhile, Figure 1 below presents the occupation of the respondents. A majority of 22% ($n = 11$) reported to be teachers, followed by 20% ($n = 10$) who reported to be into business. 8% ($n = 4$) were police officers. Those that scored 6% ($n = 3$) each were respondents that reported to have as occupation, electrician, house wife, student, bike rider or taxi driver. Each of these respondents scored 6%, while credit officers came with a percentage score of 4% ($n = 2$).

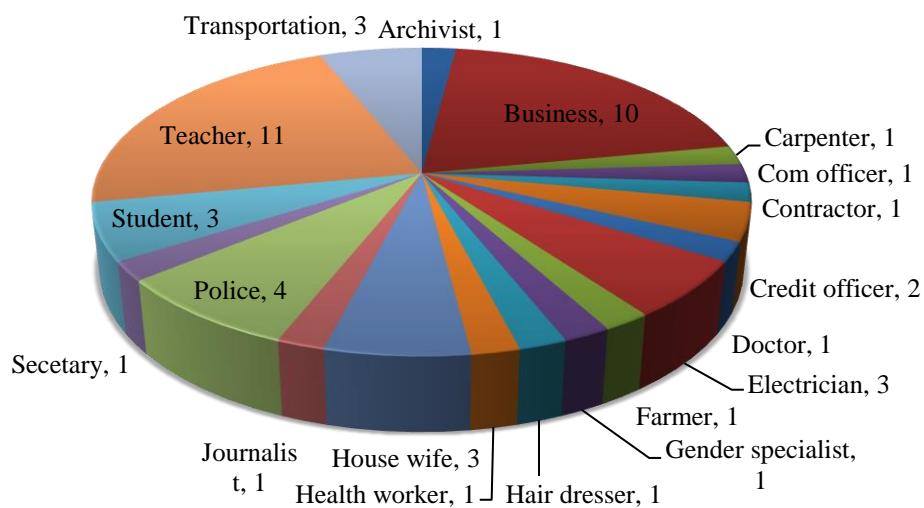
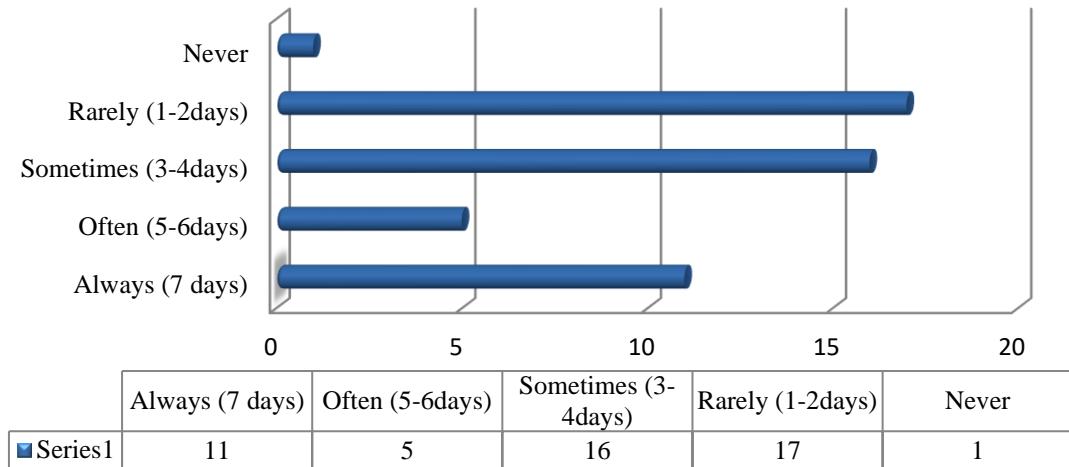


Figure 1: Occupation of respondents

Parent co-viewership of television with children

Figure 2 below presents the responses on how often parents/guardians watch TV on a weekly basis with children. A majority of 34% ($n = 17$) reported to rarely (1 – 2 days) watch TV with their children. 32% ($n = 16$) however reported to sometimes (3-4days) watch TV with their children. Interestingly, 22% ($n = 11$) reported to always (7days) watch TV with their children. Only 10% ($n = 5$) reported to often (5-6days) watch TV with their children. 2% ($n = 1$) reported to never watch TV with children.

**Figure 2: Parent- Children TV Co-viewership**

With respect to the type of programme watched with children, a majority of 34% ($n = 17$) in this study reported that they watch news with their children. 20% ($n = 10$) reported to watch cartoons. While 14% ($n = 7$) reported to watch documentary, 10% ($n = 5$) reported to watch Nigeria films. This is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Type of TV Co-viewership Programmes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
News	17	34.0	34.0	34.0
Documentary	7	14.0	14.0	48.0
Nigerian films	5	10.0	10.0	58.0
Romantic series	2	4.0	4.0	62.0
Cartoons	10	20.0	20.0	82.0
Music	2	4.0	4.0	86.0
Sports	2	4.0	4.0	90.0
Educative programs	2	4.0	4.0	94.0
Philippine movies	2	4.0	4.0	98.0
None	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When asked how many hours parents spend watching TV with their children, their responses were as follows. On a daily basis, 46% ($n = 23$) reported that they spend 2 –

4hrs watching TV with their children. These were however followed by 42% (n = 21) of respondents who stated that they rather spend less than 2hrs watching TV with their children on a daily basis. Only 12% (n = 6) reported that they spend 5 – 7hrs daily watching TV with their children.

Table 3 below presents the responses from the respondents in the field on what time they prefer watching TV with their children. 30% (n = 15) reported that they would prefer their children to watch TV in the evening after school hours (5 – 7pm). 30% (n = 15) also reported that they would prefer their children to watch TV in the evening (7 – 9pm) before they start studying. 12% (n = 6) each however preferred weekends and late nights.

With respect to the attention span of children when watching TV, a majority of 46% (n = 23) responded on an attention span of less than 2hrs. These were followed by 40% (n = 20) that reported on 2 – 4hrs.

Table 3: Preferred TV Viewing Period with children

	Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
In the afternoon during break	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
In the evening after school hours	15	30.0	30.0	34.0
In the evening before they start studying	15	30.0	30.0	64.0
At night	6	12.0	12.0	76.0
During weekends	6	12.0	12.0	88.0
When they are free in the evening	5	10.0	10.0	98.0
We don't watch TV	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

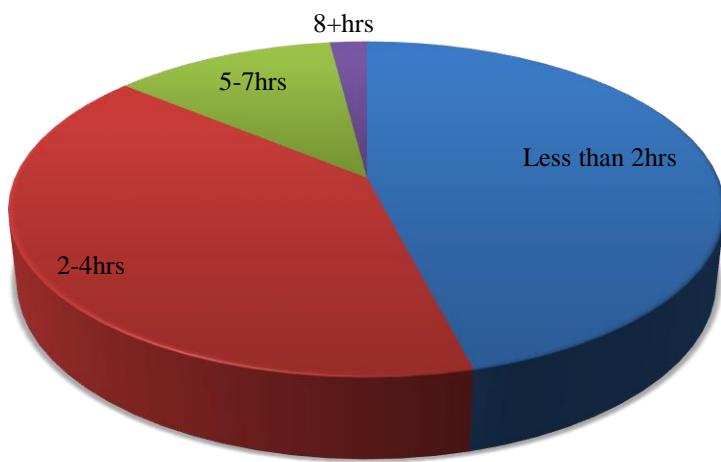


Figure 3: What is the attention span of children when watching TV?
Association Analyses

The analyses below only present the association between the variables that were statistically significant in this study. With P value considered statistically significant if $\alpha \leq 0.05$ at 95% Confidence Interval.

i) **Association between age of respondents and responses on how often they watch TV with children**

There was a statistically significant association between the age of respondents and responses on how often they watch TV with children ($P = 0.004$, $X^2 = 28.95$). Majority of the respondents who reported to always (7days) and sometimes (3-4days) watch TV with their children were between the age range of 21 – 30yrs. Those that reported to often (3 – 4days) watch TV with their children were mostly from 41yrs and above. Mostly, respondents that reported to rarely (1 – 2days) watch TV with their children were between 31 – 40years old. This is presented in figure 4 below.

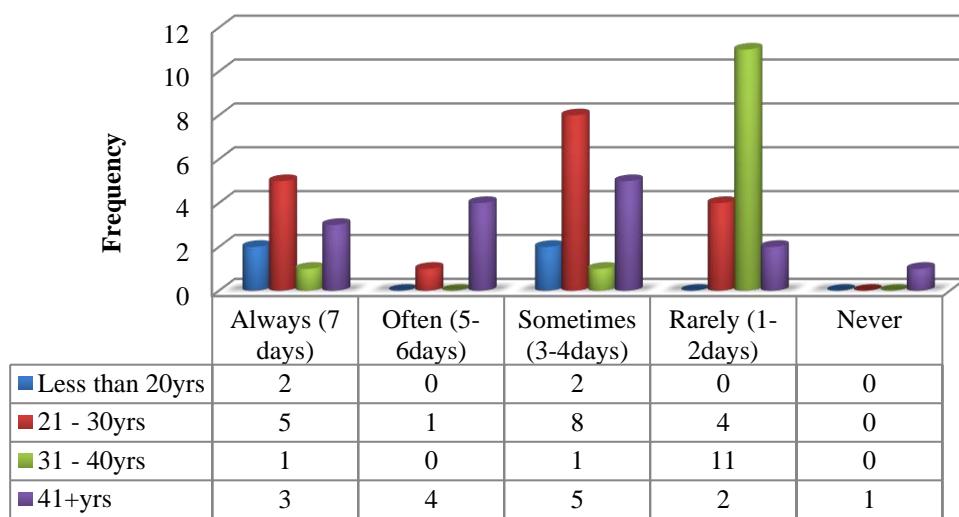


Figure 4. Age of respondents and responses on how often they watch TV with children

ii) Association between marital status of respondents and responses on how often they watch TV with children

There was also a statistically significant association between marital status of respondents and responses on how often they watch TV with children ($P = 0.002$, $\chi^2 = 37.22$). Majority of those who reported to always (7days) watch TV with their children were single. Mostly divorced respondents reported to often (5-6days) watch TV with their children. Married respondents on the other hand mostly exported to sometimes (3-4days) watch TV with their children. This is presented in Figure 5 below.

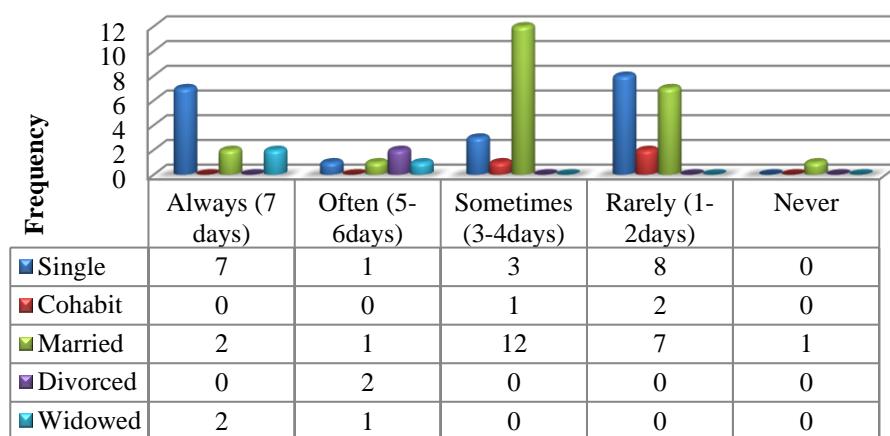


Figure 4: Marital status of respondents and responses on how often they watch TV with children

Influence of Television on Children's Upbringing

72% (n = 36) of the respondents in this study affirmed that the television has both the negative and positive influence on children upbringing. However, 12% (n = 6) reported that it only has a negative influence. 12% (n = 6) also reported that they don't know if the TV has a positive or negative influence. Only 4% (n = 2) reported that the TV has a positive influence on children upbringing.

Table 4 below presents the extend respondents agreed or disagreed that television produces certain effects on children. A majority of 60% (n = 30) agreed that the TV has exposed most children to immoral contents. While a majority of 52% (n = 26) reported to be neutral about the fact that the TV is responsible for the increase in promiscuity among teens in the nature, a majority of 62% (n = 31) agreed that children mostly learn abusive language from the TV. Even though 44% (n = 22) remained neutral about the fact that children copy indecent dressing from the TV, 62% (n = 31) agreed that the TV has broaden children's scope of knowledge. Interestingly, a majority of 60% (n = 30) reported that the TV has positively affected children's academics. In fact, 66% (n = 33) reported that the television makes children to be informed of societal activities. See table 4.4 below.

Table 4: To what extent can you agree or disagree that the television produces the following effects on children?

Variable	Agree n(%)	Neutral n(%)	Disagree n(%)
TV has exposed most children to immoral contents	30 (60)	10 (20)	10 (20)
TV is responsible for the increase in promiscuity among teens in the nature	13 (26)	26 (52)	11 (22)
Children mostly learn abusive language from the TV	31 (62)	14 (28)	5 (10)
Children copy indecent dressing from the TV	18 (36)	22 (44)	10 (20)
TV has broadened children's scope of knowledge	31 (62)	15 (30)	04 (08)
TV has positively affected children's academics	30 (60)	20 (40)	00 (00)
TV makes children to be informed of societal activities	33 (66)	10 (20)	07 (14)

Parental Regulation of Television Content

As shown in table 5 below, a majority (22%, n=11), of respondents in an attempt to regulate television contents from their children reported that they merely control the type of programmes they watch. 20% (n = 10) reported the use of TV lock and parental guides to restrict their children from accessing some channels. While 14% (n = 7) reported that they educate and discipline their children on what to watch and what not to watch and 12% (n = 6) reported that they do nothing to regulate what the children watch. These responses and other responses are presented below.

Table 5: As a parent/guardian; what do you do to ensure that your children do not watch abusive contents in your absence?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Control their programmes	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
Disconnect electricity	2	4.0	4.0	26.0
Educate and discipline them	7	14.0	14.0	40.0
Hide the remote	4	8.0	8.0	48.0
Keep them occupied with book work	2	4.0	4.0	52.0
No TV in their rooms	2	4.0	4.0	56.0
Not installing cable	4	8.0	8.0	64.0
Nothing	6	12.0	12.0	76.0
Use of video games	2	4.0	4.0	80.0
Use TV lock	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Discussion

In this study, we found out that majority of 32% (n = 17) reported to rarely (1 – 2 days) watch TV with their children. 32% (n = 16) reported to sometimes (3-4days) watch TV with their children. Interestingly, 22% (n = 11) reported to always (7days) watch TV with their children. These results tie with that of Huston (1983) who reported that children mostly get to watch TV for entertainment purposes and may be without the company of

parents because the parents may be occupied with work. However, a study carried out by Ebeke in 2020 on the association between television and social behavior of children explained that parents mostly watch TV with their children. This difference in the results obtained may be due to the effect of the COVID-19 crises that led to the lockdown in many countries, thereby giving parents more time to watch TV with their children.

With respect to the type of programme watched with children, this study identified that a majority of 34% ($n = 17$) reported that they watch news with their children. 20% ($n = 10$) reported to watch cartoons. While 14% ($n = 7$) reported to watch documentary, 10% ($n = 5$) reported to watch Nigeria films. The role of television in child development is widely debated all over the world since the decade of 1950s. Several commissions and individuals have examined the effects of television programmes and commercials on particular segments of global population, specifically children. A substantial amount of research has been carried out in order to develop a considerable body of knowledge concerning the role of television in child development. Marshall McLuhan observes : “we need to know more about what elements in the television programmes influence children’s personality and what preventive measures are effective in molding the personality of children in future since television cultivates forms of thought that are fundamentally different from those used in processing print or some other media” This is preferably why most parents would prefer to watch news with their children so that they can be well informed and have updates on the current happenings around them. Apart from news, our results reported that parents would prefer to watch cartoons with children. Sharming (2012) states in his research that children are more attracted to cartoons than learning from traditional and academic sources, the main reason relying in cartoon scenarios, audiovisual effects, and color solutions. Scientists have proved that children not only learn from cartoons, but also memorize and imitate the behavior of cartoon characters due to their cognitive abilities (Sharming, 2012). Apart from the fact that cartoons are very educative and funny, parents may have chosen to watch cartoons with children in this study because changing the channel might make the children bored. If on a daily basis, majority of parents/guardians (46%, $n = 23$) reported that they spend 2 – 4hrs watching TV with their children, then they should actually be very busy so they need to make sure their children are well entertained while having a good TV time with them.

Edgar and Edgar (2006) observed that “television programs can stimulate a child’s imagination and open up the infinite opportunities that life presents. Like good books, good television

programmes can extend children's understanding of their world. Children will watch good programmes repeatedly and keep watching them as they grow older, learning different things each time. Good children's television comprises programmes made especially for children that reflect the complexity of the emotional changes within the age group and honestly deal with conflicts that such diversity demonstrates.

In this study, 30% ($n = 15$) reported that they would prefer their children to watch TV in the evening (5 -7pm) after school hours. Parents may have chosen this time because it is when the children must have finished doing all the house chores thus this is appropriate family time for parents to have a TV time with children at home. Friedrich and Stein (1975) have also stated that parent co-viewing and mediation would enhance the effectiveness of educational programming by drawing attention to the most important aspects of the programme and by extending lessons presented in the programme. According to them, co-viewing with a parent or other adult may increase a child's learning from educational television, particularly when the co-viewer actively mediates by explicitly drawing attention to the problem and by asking and answering questions.

In this study, 72% ($n = 36$) of the respondents affirmed that the television has both the negative and positive influence on children upbringing while, 12% ($n = 6$) reported that it only has a negative influence. Television has also become a prominent educational medium since it uses a language or a symbol system which differs in many ways from other communications media. It conveys more experiential meanings and provides useful educational packages to the children. The television programmes have the capacity to facilitate cognitive development in children if they are produced and broadcast in accordance with the specific needs of the children. Studies have revealed that children learn certain behavioral patterns through television programmes which are carefully planned, designed and broadcast to improve cognitive development of children. Investigations have also revealed that television programmes have produced positive and negative effects on children. Early exposure to age appropriate programmes designed around an educational curriculum is associated with cognitive and academic enhancement, whereas exposure to pure entertainment, and violent content in particular, is associated with poorer cognitive development and lower academic achievement (Heather et al., 2008). This is probably why a majority of 60% ($n = 30$) of respondents in this study agreed that the TV has exposed most children to immoral contents.

In this study, 44% ($n = 22$) remained neutral about the fact that children copy indecent dressing from the TV while 62% ($n = 31$) agreed that the TV has broaden children's scope of knowledge. Interestingly, a majority of 60% ($n = 30$) reported that the TV has positively affected children's academics. In fact, 66% ($n = 33$) reported that the television makes children to be informed of societal activities. Crawley (1999) found that television as a medium does not have an indiscriminate negative effect on attentional skills but can teach specific attentional skills and strategies if they are properly designed and presented. Studies have also revealed that educational television programmes which are designed around a curriculum with a specific goal to communicate academic or social skills teach their intended lessons to the children. Meanwhile, a majority of respondents in an attempt to regulate television contents from their children reported that they restrict the type of programmes they watch (22%, $n = 11$). Meanwhile, 20% ($n = 10$) reported the use of TV lock and parental guides to restrict their children from accessing some channels. While 14% ($n = 7$) reported that they educate and discipline their children on what to watch and what not to watch and 12% ($n = 6$) reported that they do nothing to regulate what their children watch on TV.

Conclusion

This study which assesses the influence of Television viewing of children upbringing has enabled the establishment of the fact that television has both negative and positive influence on children's upbringing. Part of the justification of the negative influence of TV on children's upbringing is the inadequate time parents spend with their children at home. In fact, the majority of parents or guardians reported that they rarely (1-2 days per week) watch TV with their children, and when they do, they mostly watch news or cartoons, mostly 2-4hrs on a daily basis. The findings also revealed that although some parents/guardians try to regulate the television content of their children through the use of modern technology in TVs to restrict children from watching adult contents even in their absence, or prohibiting children from watching particular types of programmes, these are only a partial solution. On the basis of the foregoing, the study recommends that parents should henceforth continue to monitor and caution the children not to watch adult programmes on the television. It further recommends that children should be guided to watch mostly educative contents during their TV viewing time. Parents and guardians are equally advised not to watch adult programmes on TV with their children.

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