

# TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF TELEVISION SCREEN TIME AS AN INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA EDUCATIONAL ZONE NIGERIA

By

Charles Chukwuemeka Okika  
Department of Mass Communication,  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka,  
Anambra State, Nigeria  
Tel: +2348036358647  
[cc.okika@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:cc.okika@unizik.edu.ng)

Agbasi Jennifer Chinwe  
Department of Mass Communication,  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka,  
Anambra State, Nigeria  
Tel; +2348066465857  
[agbasijennifer@gmail.com](mailto:agbasijennifer@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated teachers' perception of television screen time as an influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone, one of the six educational zones in Anambra State, Nigeria established for the effective and efficient supervision, management and coordination of public (government) and private post primary/secondary schools in Awka North, Awka South, Anaocha, Dunukofia and Njikoka Local government areas in South-East Nigeria. This study intended the following; To determine teachers perception of the amount of time spent on television by secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone, to examine the level of awareness among teachers on the influence of television screen time on these secondary school students, to find out teachers opinion about any influence television screen time may have on these student's behavior and to ascertain if teachers think television screen time influences the student's academic performance. A survey of 600 secondary school teachers sampled from selected government and private secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone was carried out. The findings of the study indicated that teachers perceived students as addicts of television screens which had a potential for negative impact on their academic performance and overall behavior. Teachers observed that students exhibited at school and home harmful behavior learnt on television. The study recommended sensitization of teachers to evaluate television screen time of their students, teachers working with parents to implement screen time recommendations and regulators enforcing educational and informational programming for children across all television platforms.*

**Keywords:** Television screen time; Influence; Academic performance; Secondary School Students; Teachers perception;

## INTRODUCTION

The digital media, ranging from the television to the new media, are a compelling force in the lives of adolescents. This situation has encouraged many

children, especially those in their early adolescence, to engage in activities that affect their life, attitude and behaviour either positively or negatively especially in their academics. Television is a very common and widespread medium, containing audio-visual information ranging from awe-inspiring to irrelevant. Most individuals spend so much time and rely heavily on Television for educational, behavioural and social contents which could influence their behavioural pattern, academics as well as shape their opinions (Bellet, 2005).

The television has the capacity to inform or misinform and adolescents of school age who are exposed to these TV programmes may be unaware that they can be influenced by such contents. Thus, how teachers perceive the relationship between television viewership time and academic performance among secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone consisting of Awka North, Awka South, Anaocha, Dunukofia and Njikoka Local government areas is the focus of this study.

## **BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

Television is an important tool for most people, young or old, as today most information are delivered to the public via this technology. It can now be assessed easily via cables or satellite, which could provide consumers with every type of information that they need, either for work, leisure, interest, and so forth. With the emergent of this media and the production of various programs, television has caught the attention of most people. According to Burton (2005), comparable to other media, television is the most accessible media to most people, including young adults, where television is their most favourite form of media. The use of television by young adults particularly has raised debates and concerns to many organizations and researchers (Anderson & Pempek, 2005; Griffiths & Machin, 2003) due to the boundless access to various types of information which could affect their development, behaviour, health and learning.

Despite the fact that the various mass media such as radio, TV, internet, etc., were not invented at ago, they have a powerful influence on the repositioning of man's idea, beliefs and actions. The Television characterized by attractive visuals, colour, elements of light and sound, picture and video appeals to

audience of all ages. We get to know new things and ideas when we watch Television every day and this could affect us either positively or negatively. In recent times, adolescents tend to rely on the media, especially the Television, to tell them how to act, how not to act, to educate, inform and entertain them. According to Matos (2012), there is a continuous march towards a world entirely dependent on the mass media for communication and other functions, which have thus made the mass media a very powerful and influential tool created by man.

Himmelweite (1989) was of the opinion that television's appeal for children consisted of giving them a chance to be in the know, going behind the scenes and learning about the world and about people. On the emotional side, television offers security and reassurance through the familiar format and themes of many of its programmes, notably the family serials and the Westerns. It offers constant change, excitement, and suspense. It provides escape from everyday demands with light heartedness, glamour and romance and permits the child to identify himself with different romantic heroes.

Although Television contains an enormous variety of contents, its influence on adolescents' academic performance usually depend on the programmes viewed, the contents of such programmes and the amount of time spent on the TV screen. Parents may not be able to monitor the Television usage and the amount of time the children spend on Television viewing than other activities such as reading, interacting with other children, hobbies etc. Young ones are highly attracted to television programmes and do not always have enough judgements in distinguishing TV contents from reality (Slider, 2000). Television and its quality of programmes, is becoming a major concern to parents, guardians and many others. This resulted in the creation of technologies by Tim Collings, such as the "V-CHIP" which enables parents block out Television programmes they think are not proper for their children as well as lock in and remove the cards in the decoder. (Price,1998).

Violence, sexuality, race and gender stereotypes, drug and alcohol abuse, are common themes of TV programmes which could lead to behaviours and attitudes that may be overwhelming and difficult to comprehend by young viewers. What

place does the Television hold in the academic lives of young adolescents? This research would highlight more on this interlocking relationship.

## **PRESENT PROBLEM**

Since school age adolescents are at a very active development stage, they are open to absorb information from anywhere and everywhere, which sometimes could affect their attitudes, beliefs and ideas about the world in general. Amount of hours spent viewing the television, has made it a powerful and dominant source of information and attitude change (Bellet, 2006).

Furthermore, many TV channels or stations sometimes broadcast content that might be inappropriate for young viewers. Due to excessive exposure to such inappropriate TV programmes, young viewers might be affected negatively emotionally, psychologically, educationally and otherwise, without being fully aware of the influence it will have on their academics. These may also lead to low academic standard level among adolescents (Rideout, 2011).

According to studies by Rideout (2011); Zimmerman and Christakis (2005) and Hamilton (2016) students performing poorly in academics has been linked to too much time spent on the television screen. Studies like those of Calvert and Kotler (2003) have also highlighted the beneficial effects of commercial educational and informational children's television programs on children.

Multiple researches have documented the beneficial effects of television programs with academic and prosocial messages. Preschool children who consume academically oriented television programs are often better prepared for school (Linebarger, Eskrootchi, Doku, Larsen, & Kosanic, 2001; Wright, Huston, Murphy, St. Peters, Pinon, Scantlin, & Kotler, 2001), and usually turn out better students when they attend high school.

Teachers are always an essential part of the educational formation and development of children and adolescent students from nursery through kindergarten and primary school up to the secondary school. Although teachers around the globe use the television as an instructional tool for children, it

appears that their place in the relationship between television screen time and academic performance of children is often a subject of little investigation especially in the developing world. Could teachers perceive television screen time and academics performance of school children in the same manner as mainstream perceptions backed by research findings or are there factors that may encourage them having different perceptions?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perception of the influence of television screen time on academic performance of secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone in the light of established mainstream perceptions backed by research findings. Particularly the study sought answers to the following questions:

- What are teachers' perception of the amount of time spent on television by secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone?
- What is the level of awareness among teachers on the influence of television on secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone?
- What are teachers' opinion on any influence television screen time may have on the secondary school student's behaviour in Awka Educational Zone?
- Do teachers think television screen time influences the secondary school student's academic performances in Awka Educational Zone?

## **MEDIA USEAGE**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, broadcast media are universally present in the lives of young ones and children who are regular and often active users of that media (Thorn, 2008; Addlington, 2010). Media use in the early years of adolescence's development is critical, in that media patterns established in this period have long-term implications for cognitive development and future media use. This makes the focus on the patterns of media use and the content of media consumed in the early years of adolescence all the more important.

Television viewing has become one of the major activities that occupy young viewers' time. Television is commonly seen in almost every urban household,

available even in the bedroom of some children. Television viewing among young children has raised issues and concerns to many researchers and professionals. As television series can be affectionate to watch, it could glue children on the couch; continuously watching one program after another. Many studies have found that children who live in 'heavy' TV-viewing households are more likely to have poor academic performance, violence and health problems (Ni Chang, 2000; Razel, 2001; Christakis, 2006). The geometric spread of television and its impact on young viewers is having a turn on their behaviours, attitudes and academic performance.

### **TELEVISION AS A POWERFUL MEDIUM**

Television is an inescapable part of modern culture. One depends on television for entertainment, news, education, culture, weather sports and even music, since the advent of music videos. With the recent explosion in satellite and digital specialty channels, there is now access to a plethora of both good quality and inappropriate television content. Television is an electronic device which transmits picture and sound. It is used for entertainment, information and commercials. Not since man first learned to put his ideas down in writing has any new techniques for transmitting ideas has such impact on civilization. Television changes the way children think. The television young adults' watch may influence their behaviour as adolescents (Swing,2012).

Television combines the appealing feature of the movies and radio and is one of the most popular amusements during the childhood's years. It lures children away from other forms of play. Many babies are introduced to television while they are still in their cribs. For them, television is a built-in baby sitter because it keeps them amused when no one is available to act in this role. For the preschool child and even the older child, television watching is an added play activity, though, not a substitute for active play and other forms of passive play, but for many children it is more popular and more consuming of their play time than all other play activities. Television is still an important medium for children and they use it actively. However, while children regard it primarily as a source of entertainment (Livingstone, 2002), many parents often see it, particularly for young children, as an important educational tool that can assist children

intellectual development but also having far more negative impact resulting in delinquencies (Ullah, Ali, Nisar, Farid, Ali, Alam, 2014).

Television can be of benefit to children. It can bring them into contact with aspects of life they would not otherwise become aware of. It can provide a valuable tool in the home and at school not simply to get children occupied but also as a constructive way to use their time. It is a channel through which a range of entertainment, drama and learning can be obtained and experienced and increasingly these days it is under the control of the viewer (Gunter and McAleer, 1997).

According to Signorielli and Morgan (1990), television is still the most popular medium, occupying a significant proportion of children's time, up to 13.9 hours a week, with higher viewing for those from ethnic minority (15.2 hours) and low income groups (15.5 hours). Parents, educators, law enforcing officers and the clergymen have shown a great concern about its effects on the child. The effect on reading, leisure time activities, and moral behaviour has been alarming. Some of the studies conducted on television have concluded that it is a good influence; other said it was damaging (Ward, 2002).

## **TELEVISION IN NIGERIA**

On 11 October, 1959, the then Western Region sent out the first television signals in the whole of Nigeria and Africa. The main aim of establishing the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) as was claimed by the advocates was to serve as substitute teacher in improving the regional school systems that were handicapped by ill-qualified teachers or a shortage of them in certain subject areas. Following closely was the Eastern Regional Government who established its own station on October 1, 1960, the day Nigeria gained political independence from Britain. The aim was also for formal and non-formal education but later turned out to be fully commercial like that of the West. The Northern Regional Government established its own station and it came on air in April, 1962, as Radio-Television Kaduna (RTV Kaduna).

Television stations were established in Nigeria with the clear purpose of providing sufficient services in education, social and economic development. However, it became apparent that their purpose has deviated to commercial services and depended heavily on foreign programmes. The establishment and management of television stations were solely in the hands of federal and state governments until Decree No.38 of 1992 that deregulated broadcasting media and established the National Broadcasting Commission. This created the avenue for private ownership of the electronic media of radio and television stations especially in the southern parts of the country.

### **ADOLESCENTS AND TELEVISION SCREEN TIME**

Adolescents, often times, have televisions in their bedrooms at the discretion of their parents. Parents often hand down an old set when they purchase a new one. Handing down televisions is not only convenient, it could also bring about perceived benefits such as conflict over program choices could be reduced, the noise and activity associated with children's programs, movies, and video games could be lessened, giving the pubescent the freedom to mess with any TV content of their choice at any point in time at the expense of their academics. Modern media offer young adolescents an increasingly varied array of media choices, yet television still accounts for the majority of adolescents' media use.

Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout (2005) found that the average amount of time young people spend viewing television programs remained constant between 1999 and 2004, at just more than 4 hours per day. Rather than reducing their television use as new media have become available, adolescents have increased their total daily media use. Television is also a required vehicle for viewing other primary screen media, including recorded movies and videos. The average amount of time 11- to 18-year-olds spend watching these television-dependent media (1hr., 11 min. daily) plus their average daily consumption of television programs (3 hr., 4 min.) sum to 4.25 hours daily. Thus, 65% of adolescents' total daily media use is attributable to television. (Roberts et al, 2005). The remaining 35% comprises primarily use of video games (another medium that often requires a television-linked game system).

Television has become one of the major activities that occupy young people's minds. Television which was majorly seen in households of urban cities is now rapidly spreading even to remote areas. It creates new worlds for adolescents, giving them the opportunity to travel round the globe, learn about varieties of cultures and gain exposure to ideas that could never have encountered in their own community (Boyse, 2010).

Young adolescents are most often preoccupied with the media than any other activity except for sleeping- an average of 7hours per day. Television impact is increasingly significant with the presence of TV in the bedroom, increasing TV viewing by 1 to 2hours per day. Television viewing is a kind of interaction or exchange between a person and the programme content. The content could contain elements that can sometimes be persuasive in a negative sense. Television viewing reduces the time that should be spent on other vital activities such as reading, engaging in physical and social growth or development, conversing with friends and family, etc. Adolescents in recent times are exposed to various TV programmes on some cable stations such as: Nickelodeon, Telemundo, M-net, Cartoon network, Disney channel, Universal, HBO, FOX, Sony, Zee-world, etc. which impacts their lives.

McLuhan (1984) with the view that the mass media, TV in particular, can change the very nature of behaviours, attitudes and beliefs, points out that TV viewing involves more senses than just visuals (eye) since images are projected not only at the viewer but on the viewer which causes a tactile sense of involvement with the play of lighted image that is clearly not present in reading. According to a Cologne study by Dworak, Schierl, Bruns, Strüder (2007) television viewing and video gaming had negative influence on young viewers learning, memory and sleep. Grabber (1980) remarks that heavy viewers of television envision the world as television portrays it and react to the world they believe to be rather than reality.

According to Nivangune (2010), channels like Disney world, Cartoon network, etc. are on the top chart of preference for TV viewing by young adolescents because these channels serve as a source of entertainment for them. However Nivangune also pointed out several side effects of television screen time on

children like loss of playtime, predisposition to laziness, obesity, restricted brain development and hampered social interaction, exhibition of aggressive and irritable behavioral changes, while in some children fearfulness and quietness and most importantly emulation of content such as sex, smoking, alcohol and drug usage .

In developed countries like Britain and United State of America, children watch an average of five to eight hours of television while in developing countries they watch average of three to five hours of television everyday and with every dose of screen time is an adverse effect as revealed by studies done by Hancox, Milne and Poulton (2004) in New Zealand which proved that Television viewing in childhood and adolescence was associated with overweight, poor fitness, smoking, and raised cholesterol in adulthood. While excessive viewing might have long-lasting adverse effects on health. Further studies by Hancox, Milne and Poulton (2005) showed that Television viewing in childhood and adolescence was associated with poor educational achievement by 26 years of age. Excessive television viewing in childhood may have long-lasting adverse consequences for educational achievement and subsequent socioeconomic status and well-being.

Excessive television screen time can have adverse affects, such as aggressive behavior, poor school academic performance, poor language acquisition, early sexual activity, and drug or alcohol use among other effects (Austin, 1992; Ahinda, Murundu, Okwara, Odongo, Okutoyi, 2014 ).

Hancox et al (2004) warned that by the end of high school, the average child in the United States and other developed countries will have seen 8,000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts on television. The world being a global village, children in Nigeria could equally have access to the same programs. Children's cartoons and action programs average more than 20 acts of violence per hour, compared with 5 acts per hour during prime-time hours in developed countries (Hancox et al, 2004). Given that these programs are aired on local television channels in Nigeria, there is a possibility our children are exposed to the same. More than \$3 billion of products related to war movies have been sold worldwide (Huston and Wright, 1983).

Children enjoy entertainment programmes for a variety of reasons which includes: differences in experience and expectations, in predispositions or temperament and in cognitive and emotional development (Vaskenburg & Jansen, 2005).

Electronic media, particularly TV, have long been criticized for their potential impact on young viewers. One criticism often tendered against the media is that they are contributing to the decay of morality. A recent national poll was conducted in the United States recounts that 70% of Americans are disturbed about popular culture as often portrayed on TV, as this is lowering the moral standards in the US. This concern is fuelled by the extremely large volume of time adolescents are spending with the media and by their easy access to explicit contents.

Television viewing by young viewers in particular, has raised debates and concerns to many organisations and researchers due to unlimited access to various kinds of information and contents which could influence their development, behaviour, health and learning. A large number of studies have reported deleterious effects of children's television viewing on outcomes such as obesity, inactivity, attentional problems, aggression, and sleep patterns (Christakis, Zimmerman, DiGiuseppe & McCarty, 2004; Robinson, 1999).

### **TELEVISION SCREEN TIME AND RISKY BEHAVIOUR**

Various programmes such as dramas, musicals and cultural events are watched on television by young viewers. Although there can be many benefits of viewing certain programmes on Television, there have been many drawbacks noted that needs close consideration and supervision as these affects our reality of the world. These effects are as follows:

#### *i) Violence and Aggression*

There is an increase in the promotion of violent and aggressive content in today's media. By the age of 18, an average adolescent will have seen an estimated 200,000 acts of violence on television. Violence shown on television are usually presented in a sanitized and glamorized manner, making it seem

humorous and funny. Recent studies of video games reveal that more than half of all games contain violence, including 90% considered as appropriate for young adolescents (Federman, 1998). Researchers believe that constant and repeated exposure to mediated violence can lead to anxiety and fear, acceptance of violence as an appropriate channel of resolving conflict and crisis and desensitization, results in increase in aggression and decrease in morality (Robertson, McAnally, Hancox, 2012).

The American Academy of Pediatrics has warned that results of more than 2000 studies and reviews have found out that significant exposure to violent media content increases the risk of aggression in certain children and young adults, desensitizes them to violence and deceives them with the extreme illusion that the world is a meaner and scarier place than it is. It particularly stressed that nearly two-thirds of all Television content contain violence including so-called children's programs, it is well documented that children imitate violent and dangerous behavior seen on television (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009).

#### *ii) Substance Use*

Several researches have shown that millions of dollars are spent daily on marketing and advertising drugs and these have had a significant effect on adolescents' use (Wilson, 2002). Early adolescents are also exposed to considerable alcohol and drug content in movies they watch. Smoking and heavy drinking are rarely associated with negative health outcomes. Thus, young viewers who associate themselves with favourite actors, tend to emulate such smoking habits and consume greater alcoholic contents as portrayed by TV programmes.

#### *iii) Obesity and Eating disorders*

High calorie, low nutrition, junk and fast foods are constantly advertised on television. These TV contents impacts on the food beliefs and preferences of young adolescents, thus leading sometimes to weight increase. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, there is a vast amount of food related content on TV with the potential to significantly expand and deepen adolescents' exposure to

food marketing messages. Also, eating while viewing TV leads to greater food consumption and less engagement in physical activity.

Eating disorders sometimes occur when young adolescents watch fashion and beauty oriented programmes on TV and seek to emulate what they watch. Thus, they suffer from a distorted body image because these programmes not only encourage disordered eating habit but offer specific advice on purging, severely restricting caloric intake and exercising excessively for a slim fit body (Anderson, 2000).

#### *iv) School performance and Learning*

More time spent in watching television leads to lesser time spent on reading, doing homework, pursuing hobbies, getting enough sleep and other learning activities. This results in children participating less in school activities which leads to low school performance. Heavy television viewing also affects the learning capacity of young viewers because they believe only what is shown to them and view the world just as the television portrays it.

#### *v) Other Health Effects*

Heavy TV viewing has been associated with hypercholesterolemia (due to heavy intake of junk foods during TV viewing), hypertension, an increased prevalence of asthma, sleep disorders, mood disorders, psychological distress and depression, etc (Wijga, Scholtens & Bemelmans, 2010).

#### *vi) Pro-social Effects*

Despite the prevalence of the negative effects of TV viewing as discussed above, there are still other positive effects. Young adolescents learn anti-violence attitudes, empathy, tolerance towards people of other races and ethnicities through educational and informational programmes they watch. According to Jessen (2009), video games improve compliance with chemo-therapy regimes in adolescents with cancer.

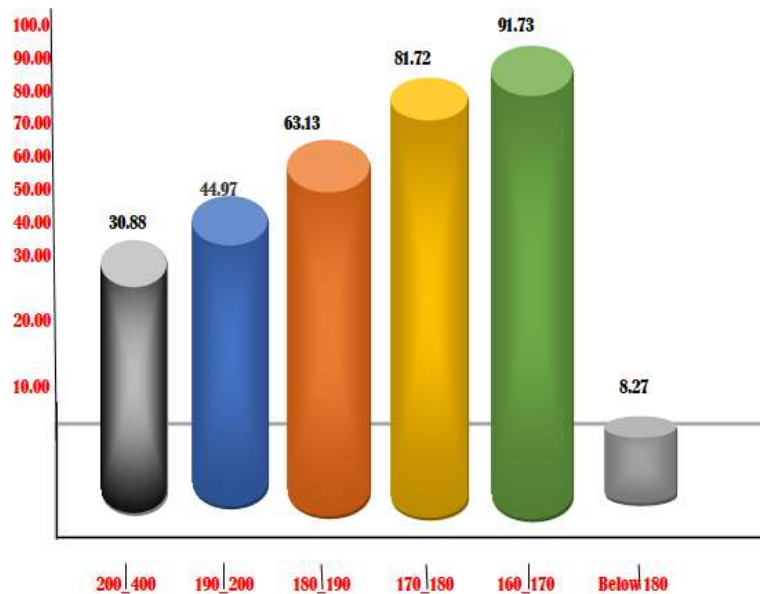
## **TELEVISION SCREEN TIME AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS**

Few developments in society over the last 40 years have had a greater impact on children than television. The persuasion capabilities of television are staggering (Calvert, 1999a). According to Calvert, Jordan and Cocking (2002) some teachers said television was responsible for either gain or overall loss in school performance as against sleeplessness and in-attention.

According to Hancox (2005), young adults who watched the least television especially between the age of 11 and 16, had the highest probability of graduating from the university by the age of 26, regardless of intelligent Quotient or socio-economic status, while those who watched the television, more than 3 hours per day had the highest chance of dropping out of school without qualifications. Furthermore the effects seemed to be strongest for those who had a median intelligent quotient level, probably because the outcomes for the children at neither intelligent quotient extreme are less likely to be affected by television watching.

Zimmerman and Christakis (2005) found that children who watched the most television before the age of 3 performed poorest on reading and mathematics test at ages 6 and 7. Many children spend more time on television than on their studies. This is certain to have some effects on the child, even though the television time might not have been spent studying, especially if the child is not interested in school or is not motivated to do school work.

According to the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) Nigeria's university entrance exams regulatory body, records showed a steady decline in academic performance by secondary school students especially in the yearly Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) which must be sat for by the graduating class or senior secondary school students in order to gain university admission. From the statics below is could be seen that only 30.88% of all the jamb candidates in Nigeria had 200-400 jamb score in the year 2015.



**Figure 1;** Graphical Representation of 2015 UTME Cumulative Performance Statistics

**Source:** jambonline.org

The audio-visual prowess of the television is at the core of the danger it poses because it presents content to school age children in such a captivating and crystal clear format that text books can hardly outwit it for the school child's interest and attention. Numerous television content consumers soon progress to become addicts of this captivation and as a result they begin to resent school work and lose interest in academic materials (Hastings, 2003).

According to Butterfield (1990) young adults in the twenty-first century are the most exposed to information overload and unfortunately according to research the more time children spent consuming television content, the poorer their performance. The average television screen time during childhood has a strong relationship with dropping out of school, not attaining higher education, poor social economic status and health. Excessive television screen time adversely affected a child's school performance with the situation worsening with every extra screen time dosage (Choat, 2004).

According to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), in 2015 a total of 1,552,758 candidates registered for the examination. Out of which 1,544,234 candidates, consisting of 825,650 male representing 53.5% & 718,585 female

representing 46.5% candidates sat the exam. 1,438,679 candidates, representing 93.16% obtained credits and above in two (2) subjects. 1,370,049 candidates, representing 88.72% obtained credits and above in three (3) subjects. 1,282,204 candidates, representing 83.03% obtained credits and above in four (4) subjects. 878,040 candidates, representing 52.97%, obtained credits in five subjects only. The percentage of candidates that got 5 credits & above including Eng Lang & Maths in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) for School Candidates in 2015 was 38.68%.

A research by Roberts (2011) revealed that children's TV screen time decreases their reading behaviour, increases their propensity to engage in sex stereotyping, reduces their overall physical activity and promotes excessive materialism. These results were calculated over a period of two years after children between ages 11-17 years who were randomly selected in USA and periodically exposed to various TV contents to test their behavioural pattern.

In another research conducted by Krcmar and Curtis (2003), students between the ages of 10 to 16 years in the USA, were selected randomly and assigned to 2 different groups. One group watched different television programmes during school days while the other group did not watch any television programme. The result of the experiment showed that the students who watched different television programmes performed badly during the final exams while those who did not watch the television programmes had an incredible performance.

UNESCO, surveyed children in 23 countries around the world in 1998, it was discovered that 94 % of children had a TV in their homes and not just in the U.S, Nigeria, Canada and Europe, but also in the Arab states, Latin America, Asia and Africa. More than half (51 %) of boys living in war zones and high-crime areas chose action heroes as role models, ahead of any other images; and a remarkable 88 % of the children surveyed could identify the Arnold Schwarzenegger character from the film Terminator. To this effect in the long run affects the academic performance of the children (UNESCO, 1999).

Another study by Nigerian researchers Anatsui and Adekanye (2014) using a sample of 250 students aged 9-17 from the Command Secondary School Ikeja

Military Cantonmen, Lagos Nigeria (2014) found out that that TV viewing hours had significant effects on the students' academic performance. The finding implied that staying in front of the TV set for too many hours does not allow students to bring out their full potentials in their academics

A survey conducted in 1954 by the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development in Accra and Kumasi, Ghana showed that children between 8 and 16 years, sometimes missed school to attend to movies and often stooped to begging or stealing money to gain entry to theatres. These affected their behaviour because they do not often understand the film dialogue and thus experienced the film only as a visual experience. The dangerous aspect of their behaviour was that they watched the movies secretly without their parents' consent, thus partaking out of the "forbidden fruit". The most regrettable part of it all is the students then to miss out from class activities which affect their academic performance in general (Clarkson, 1963).

Riley (2013) conducted a survey that showed that students tend to emulate the life style of media celebrities and usually take as their role models. The survey also showed that the celebrities in question are school dropouts who ventured into the music industry. A survey of 210 students was conducted, 97 students wants to be exactly like these celebrities while 113 wants to make their own future. These result indicated that the 97 students if given the chance would also drop out of school on the long run affecting their academic performance and future as a whole.

A greater percentage of reviewed literature reviewed pointed to a negative and destructive relationship between television screen time and academic performance of children and young adults. According to Bar-on (1999) more than 4,000 studies have been published on measuring the effect of television on children. The most reoccurring findings suggest a correlation between excessive television screen time and antisocial behavior among research subjects such as aggression and violence and poor academic performance. However there are some exceptions like the work by Fujita Kimiko.

The study by Kimiko (2005) on the effects of extracurricular activities (television watching inclusive) on the academic performance of 98 junior high school students in Walnut Creek Christian Academy, California, United States revealed that participation in extracurricular activities such as playing sports, community service etc. affected academic performance positively. It also found out that watching television improved academic performance contrary to most research findings. While most studies ascertained the effect of television screen time on children and young adults, the present study focused on how teachers who often used educational television perceived television screen time as influence on academic performance among secondary school students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was designed as a survey. The area of study was Awka Educational Zone in Anambra state, which covered five local government areas: Awka North, Awka South, Anaocha, Dunukofia and Njikoka which are all in the south east geo-political region of Nigeria. This study focused on teachers in the public and private secondary schools in the Awka Educational Zone. The total number of recognized secondary schools in the zone was 61 while the population of teachers in the secondary schools was 2,520 according to the 2014 records of the Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) and Post Primary Schools Services Commission. A sample size of 600 was determined for the study.

Multi-stage sampling was used. 40 schools were randomly sampled from 61 secondary/post-primary schools. This sample consisted of 30 government secondary schools and 10 private secondary schools: 6 government secondary schools and 2 private secondary schools were selected from all the Local Government Areas under Awka Educational Zone.

Government schools selected in Awka North LGA were Community Secondary School Achalla, Community Secondary School Amansea, Community Secondary School Urum, Community Secondary School Ebenebe, Community Secondary school Amanuke, Community Secondary School Isuaniocha. Private schools

selected in Awka North LGA were Favour of Grace International School, Ebenebe, and Handmaids Girls secondary school Amansea.

Government schools selected in Awka South LGA were Capital City Secondary School Awka, Community Secondary School Agulu Awka, Community Secondary School Amawbia, Community Secondary School Isiagu, Community Secondary School Mbaukwu, Community Secondary School Okpuno. Private schools selected in Awka South LGA were St. John of God Girls' Secondary School Awka and British Spring College Awka.

Government schools selected in Anaocha LGA were Community High School Aguluzigbo, Community High School Akwaeze, Community Secondary School Agulu, Community Secondary School Ichida, Community Secondary School Obeledu, Flora Azikiwe Model Comprehensive Secondary School Neni. Private schools selected in Anaocha LGA were Loretto Secondary School, Adazi and Bubendorff Memorial Grammar School, Adazi Nnukwu.

Government schools selected in Dunukofia LGA were Community High School Nawgu, Community Secondary School Ukpo, Community Secondary School Ukwulu, Community Secondary School Umunachi, Nneamaka Girls Secondary school Ifitedunu, Walter Eze Memorial Secondary School (BSS) Ukpo. Private schools selected in Dunukofia LGA were St. Mary's High School, Ifitedunu and Edwin Spring Comprehensive Secondary School Ukpo.

Government schools selected in Njikoka LGA were Community Secondary School Abba, Community Secondary School Enugwu Agidi (GSS), Community Secondary School Nimo (GSS), Ide Secondary School Enugu-Ukwu, Nawfia Community Secondary School Nawfia, Nnamdi Azikiwe Secondary School Abagana. Private schools selected in Njikoka LGA were St. Michael's Model Comprehensive Secondary School, Nimo and St. Joseph Girls Secondary School, Nimo.

15 teachers were then selected from each of the sampled government and private secondary schools. On the whole 600 respondents were selected. In the process of collection of the required data for the research, the questionnaire was administered.

## **FINDINGS**

Quantitative data extracted from the surveys was analyzed and interpreted; All the teachers surveyed perceived students as users who spent excessive amount of time watching television screens and playing video games, etc. rather than focusing on their academics. This correlated with the study by Mistry, Minkovitz, Strobino, & Borzekowski, (2007) which found out that most students were addicted to electronics such as television and wouldn't give them up for a day.

Further data from the surveys for this study showed that there was a high level of awareness among teachers on the influence of TV screen time on the secondary school students as much as 90% admitted television influences on their student even to the point of being alarmed.

45% of the teachers revealed that students exhibited in their actions at home or in school a lot of harmful stuffs learnt from the TV like violent and criminal acts, sexual acts, vulgar and disrespectful words, gang and cult behavior, lewd behavior, indecent fashion, drug usage etc , buttressing findings from studies by Strasburger,2009; Ward, 2008; Federman, 1998). These revelations also supported findings from Ferguson (2011) who conducted a study on the effect of violent television programmes on the attitude of adolescents towards violence.

The data from the teachers surveyed showed that students who spent so much time on the television performed poorly in the term had a very high probability of performing very badly academically especially during pre-university exams such as SSCE, and UTME examinations. Many of the students who were noted by the teachers to be film and television fanatics failed term exams and in some cases repeated classes. These findings correlated with studies already done by Hancox et al (2005); Pagani, Fitzpatrick, Barnett, Dubow, (2010); Christakis et al (2004); Robertson et al (2012).

## **CONCLUSION**

Television screen time has an undeniably immense influence on modern school children and adolescents. Unfortunately parents and teachers cannot confidently expect the television industry to provide consistent, harmless, educational and

prosocial fine-quality programming. Parents and teachers must work simultaneously with the media and regulators especially in the broadcast television industry, to create and use resources for educating children that facilitates the best outcomes for the better development of children. This work is a clarion call for all stakeholders.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study recommends the following:

1. Sensitization of school teachers in urban and rural areas to constantly evaluate television screen time dosage of their pupils or students and relay feedbacks to parents so as to enable corrective action usually in the line of encouraging non-screen based activities at home.
2. Teachers should work with parents to implement screen time recommendations/ guidelines for their children and as well recommend educational television to parents for children's home consumption.
3. Key regulatory people in television broadcasting should implement broadcasting standards across all television platforms; satellite, cable, digital terrestrial that put into consideration The Children's Television Act of 1990 which enforces educational and informational programming for children.

## REFERENCES

- Addlington, K. (2010). *Sleep disturbance in a young child: A case report and literature review*. Australian Family Physician. 35, 9, 711-715.
- Ahinda, AA, Murundu, ZO, Okwara, MO, Odongo, BC, Okutoyi, J. (2014) Effects of television on academic performance and languages acquisition of pre-school children. International Journal of Education and Research Vol. 2 No. 11 November 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.ijern.com/journal/2014/November-2014/40.pdf>
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Public Education. Media violence. *Pediatrics*. 2001; 108 (5):1222-1226.
- American Academy of Pediatrics (2009) From the American Academy of Pediatrics: Policy statement-Media violence. 2009 Nov; 124 (5):1495-503. doi: 10.1542/peds.2009-2146
- Anatsui, TC & Adekanye, EA (2014). Television and Academic Performance of Nigerian Youths: Implications for National Development. Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development. Vol.5, No.10, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEDS/article/viewFile/13127/13541>
- Anderson, J. (2000). *Human Aggression*. Annual review of Psychology.
- Anderson, DR & Pempek, TA. (2005). Television and Very Young Children. The American Behavioral Scientist, 48(5), 505-522.
- Austin, EW. (1992). Parent-Child Television Interaction: The Importance of Perspective. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 36, 359-361.
- Bar-on, ME. (1999, April). Turning off the television. British Medical Journal, 318, 1152.
- Bellet, S. (2005). *Children reliance on the Mass media for Behavioural and Social Change*. Retrieved from [www.bell.nlm.org](http://www.bell.nlm.org).
- Boyse, K. (Aug.2010) *Television and Children*. Retrieved from <http://www.S7.addthis.com>
- Burton, L. (2005) What Is this Media Literacy Thing? The Australian Children's Television Foundation. Screen education, 38, 93-98.

- Butterfield, D. (1990). *The Mediating Role of Cognition*. Newbury Park: Sage publication.
- Calvert, SL. (1999a). *Children's journeys through the information age*. Boston: McGraw Hill
- Calvert SL, Jordan AB & Cocking RR .(2002) *Children in the digital age: Influences of electronic media on development* ( pp. 123 – 144). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Calvert SL, & Kotler, JA. (2003) *Lessons from children's television: The impact of the Children's Television Act on children's learning*. *Applied Developmental Psychology* 24 (2003) 275–335. doi:10.1016/S0193-3973(03)00060-1
- Choat, E. (2004). *Children, Television and Learning in Nursery and Infants' Schools*. *Educational Studies*, 14, 9-21.
- Christakis DA, Zimmerman FJ, DiGiuseppe, DL & Mc Carty CA. (2004) *Early television exposure and subsequent attentional problems in children*. *Pediatrics* 2004;113708- 713
- Christakis, DA. (2006, April). *The Hidden and Potent Effects of Television Advertising*. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 295(14), 1698-1699.
- Clarkson, ML. (1963). *A Report on an Enquiry into Cinema Going among Juveniles Undertaken by the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development in Accra and Kumasi*. Accra: Dept. of SocialWelfare and Community Development (1954). Reprinted as "Children and the Cinema," *Advance*, No. 39, July (1963), 4.
- Dworak, M, Schierl, T, Bruns, T, Strüder, HK. *Impact of Singular Excessive Computer Game and Television Exposure on Sleep Patterns and Memory Performance of School-aged Children*. *Pediatrics*, Nov 2007, 120 (5) 978-985. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2007-0476
- Federman, J. (1998). *National TV Violence Study*, Vol. 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Federman, J (1998) *Media rating systems: A comparative review*. In: Price ME (ed.) *The V-Chip Debate: Content Filtering from Television to the Internet*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 99–132
- Ferguson, CJ. (2011). *Media violence: Miscast causality*. *American Psychologist*, 57 (6–7), 446–447.

- Gerbner, W. (2002). "Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective" in M. Morgan (Ed.). *Against the mainstream: The selected works of George Gerbner* (pp.193-213). New York: Peter Lang.
- Grabber, J. (1980) *The Antecedents of Menarcheal age: Heredity Family environment, and stressful life events*. *Child Development*, 66, 346-359.
- Griffiths, M & Machin, D. (2003). Television and Playfound Games as Part of children's Symbolic Culture. *Social Semantics*, 13(2), 147-160.
- Gunter, B & McAleer, JL. (1997) *Children and Television*. Psychology Press. Pp 1-260.
- Hancox RJ, Milne BJ & Poulton R. (2004) Association between child and adolescent television viewing and adult health: a longitudinal birth cohort study. *Lancet*. 2004 Jul 17-23;364(9430):257-62.  
DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(04)16675-0
- Hancox RJ, Milne BJ & Poulton R. (2005) Association of television viewing during childhood with poor educational achievement. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*. 2005 Jul;159(7):614-8.  
DOI:10.1001/archpedi.159.7.614
- Hastings, M. (2003). Pasting the grade. *Newsweek* August 25-1 September 1, pp.47.
- Himmelweit, HT. (1989). *Children and Television*. In E. E. Dennis and E. Wartella (Eds.) (1996). *American Communication Research - The Remembered History*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Huston, AC & Wright, JC. (1983). Children's processing of television: The informative functions of formal features. In J. Bryant, & D. R. Anderson (Eds.), *Children's understanding of television: Research on attention and comprehension* ( pp. 35 - 68). New York: Academic Press.
- Jessen, H. (2009). *Sex differences in epigenetic mechanisms may underline risk and resilience for mental health disorders*. *Epigenetics*. 6, 857-861.
- Kaiser Family Foundation. (2008). *Parents, children and media*. Retrieved from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia061907pkg.cfm>

- Kimiko, F. (2005). The Effects of Extracurricular Activities on the Academic Performance of Junior High Students. Retrieved from: <https://www.kon.org/urc/v5/fujita.html>
- Krcmar, M and Curtis, S (2003). Mental Models: Understanding the Impact of Fantasy Violence on Children's Moral Reasoning. *Journal of Communication* 53, no. 3 (2003): 460-78.
- Linebarger, DL, Eskrootchi, P, Doku, NS, Larsen, R, & Kosanic, A. (2001, April). Summative evaluation of "Between the Lions:" A new educational TV show for young children. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development: Minneapolis, MN.
- Livingstone, S. (2002) *Young People and New Media*, London: Sage publications. MacKay, N. L., & Covell, K. (1997). The impact of media on the attitudes of women, 36, 573-583
- Marina, K. & Stephen, C. (2003). *Mental Models: Understanding the Impact of Fantasy Violence on Children's Moral Reasoning*. Cited in Wilson (2008), *Journal of Communication* 53, no. 3: 460-78.
- Matos, C. (2012). Globalization and the mass media. In: *Encyclopedia of Globalization*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470670590.wbeog369>
- McLuhan, M. (1984). *The medium is in the message*. Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press.
- Mistry, KB, Minkovitz, CS, Strobino, DM & Borzekowski, DLG. (2007). Children's television exposure and behavioral and social outcomes at 5.5 years: Does timing of exposure matter? *Pediatrics*, 120, pp. 762-769.
- Ni Chang. (2000). Reasoning with children About Violent Television Shows and Related Toys. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 28(2), 85-89.
- Nivangune, G. (2010) *The Bond between Children and Television*. Retrieved from: [http://www.medimanager.com/my-kids-health/articles/the-bond-children-and-television.aspx?page\\_no=2](http://www.medimanager.com/my-kids-health/articles/the-bond-children-and-television.aspx?page_no=2)
- Pagani, LS, Fitzpatrick, C, Barnett, TA, Dubow, E. (2010). Prospective Associations Between Early Childhood Television Exposure and Academic, Psychosocial, and Physical Well-being by Middle

- Childhood. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 2010;164 (5): 425 DOI: 10.1001/archpediatrics.2010.50
- Price, ME. (1998). *The V-Chip Debate: Content Filtering From Television to the Internet*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Razel, M. (2001). The Complex Model of Television Viewing and Educational Achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 94, 6.
- Rideout, VJ, Foehr, UG, & Roberts, DF. (2010). *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, 2.
- Riley, A. (2013) *Adolescent Gender Diversity Assessment: An In-depth Collaborative Conversation*. *Journal of Child Adolescent Behaviour* 3:241. doi:10.4172/2375-4494.1000241
- Roberts, DF, Foehr, UG, & Rideout, V. (2005). *Generation M: Media in the lives of 8–18 year-olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.
- Roberts, G. (2011). *The health behaviour in school-aged children (HBSC) study: Methodological developments and current tensions*. *International journal of Public health*, 54, 140-150.
- Robertson, LA, McAnally, HM, Hancox, RJ. (2012) Childhood and Adolescent Television Viewing and Antisocial Behavior in Early Adulthood. *Pediatrics*. 2013 Mar; 131(3): 439–446. doi: 10.1542/peds.2012-1582
- Robinson, TN. (1999) Reducing children's television viewing to prevent obesity: a randomized controlled trial. *JAMA* 1999;282:1561- 1567.
- Signorielli, N & Morgan, M. (Eds). (1990). *Cultivation analysis: New directions in media effects research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Slider, V. (2000). *New Vistas to comprehend and digest the mass media*. New York. A South African film and Production Board.
- Strasburger, V. (2009). *Adolescents, sex, and the media*. *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*, 13: 15-33.
- Swing, EL. ( 2012). *Plugged in: The effects of electronic media use on attention problems, cognitive control, visual attention, and aggression*. Iowa State University Digital Repository. Graduate

Theses and Dissertations. 12600.  
<http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/12600>

Thorn, W. (2008). *Explaining multiple patterns of offending across the life and course and across generations*. International Journal, 602:156-195.

Ullah, S. Ali, M. Nisar, M. Farid, T. Ali, I. Alam, S.( 2014) The Impacts of Electronic Media on Academic Performance of Female Student. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management. Vol.II, Issue 9 Retrieved from <http://ijecm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2922.pdf>

UNESCO (1999). UNESCO Global Study on Media Violence. *The Killing Screen: Violence on Television and its Impact on Children.A Public Hearing*. Retrieved from:  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001265/126566eo.pdf>

Vaskenburg, S. & Jansen, K. (2005). *The influence of sexually explicit material on sexual risk behaviours: A comparison of Adolescents and Adults*. Journal of Communication, 49, 56-70 .

Ward, L. (2008). *Does TV exposure affect emerging adults' attitudes and assumptions on sexual relationships? A correlation and experimental Confirmation*.

Wijga, AH, Scholtens, S. & Bemelmans, WJ. (2010). Diet, screen time, physical activity, and childhood overweight in the general population and in high risk subgroups: prospective analyses in the PIAMA birth cohort. *Journal of Obesity* 2010, Article ID 423296, 9. [http:// www.hindawi.com/journals/ jobes/2010/423296/](http://www.hindawi.com/journals/jobes/2010/423296/) (retrieved March 2, 2012).

Wilson, BJ. (2002). *Children, adolescents & the media*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Wright, JC, Huston, AC, Murphy, KC, St. Peters, M, Pinon, M, Scantlin, RM & Kotler, JA. (2001). The relations of early television viewing to school readiness and vocabulary of children from low-income families: The early window project. *Child Development*, 72 (5),1347-1366.

Zimmerman FJ & Christakis DA. (2005) Children's television viewing and cognitive outcomes - a longitudinal analysis of national data. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 2005; 159(7):619-625.