**Parents’ Perception and Attitude towards Contemporary Children’s Habit of Viewing Television: the Case of Pankshin, Plateau, Nigeria**

**Abstract**

Television viewing has positive and negative effects on viewers. Considering its negative effects, this study examines parents’ perception and attitude towards contemporary children’s television viewing habit, drawing insights from Pankshin parents. The study is anchored on Vygotsky’s Social Learning Theory, which postulates that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. Questionnaire, and library and internet materials are the data sources relied on. Descriptive survey design and mixed method are employed. Descriptive and inferential statistics are employed for the analysis of the data gathered from 300 parent respondents. The results show that parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children is negative; their attitude towards children’s viewing of television is moderate; and location influences parents’ perception and attitude. The study concludes that consistent viewing of television exerts adverse effects on children’s reading habit, cognition, behaviour, performance and mental health. To save children from the dark sides of television viewing, parents and other stakeholders must act proactively and consistently to prevent the adverse effects of television viewing on children.

**Keywords: Parents, Perception, Attitude, Children, Television viewing habit**

**Introduction**

Television is a very interesting and helpful device, which combines the appealing features of movies and radio. It serves as the most popular amusement device for human entertainment especially during childhood. It appears to have the capacity to keep human beings, including a naughty child, occupied while the parents go about their businesses. Television is a means of listening to and watching news, advertisement and entertainment programmes. It is an electronic device for transmitting and receiving visual broadcasts. Television is a telecommunication medium used for transmitting moving images in monochrome (black and white) or in coloured form which may be in two or three dimensions together with sound (Ezgibeyza, 2018). However, generally, contemporary children often seem to spend their whole time in front of television screen as long as there is power supply. Ngwoke television viewing has become a pervasive and ubiquitous pass-time in the home.

With the trend of digitalisation, there is a plethora of television channels which offer greater choice and quality (both positive and negative) of programmes to mankind especially children who seem to be the major viewers of television programmes. Television programmes take away children time when they are viewing them. Such programmes include cartoons of different kinds like Tom & Jerry, Spider Man, and Ben Ten; music of different kinds, such as, Is a goal and Azonto; movie channels of different kinds, such as Zee World, and African Magic, among others. These television programmes appear to have strong force towards children which leads them to form television viewing as habit despite the efforts to control and moderate their viewing the programmes by parents, caregivers and some agencies that are fighting for the rights of children. It seems that what the children are viewing from the television appears more interesting to them than any other thing in life which has made them to make television viewing a habit. The time children spend on television viewing appears to have made some children to be achieving poorly in their studies. This seems to consume reasonable time, which they would have used to read their books (Olisaeke, 2020).

Hence, the habit of constant television viewing appears to have influenced children to the extent that many seem to find it difficult to study at home. Garba (2015) provides an explanatory analysis of time spent by children in viewing television across the world through surveys as follows: Nigerian children watch TV for four hours per day 28 hours per week, American children between the ages of 2 to 8 years old view television 14 hours per week while Australian children between the ages of 1 to 12 years old spend 7 hours per-week. Also, Latino children watch TV for 8 hours per week, while North American children watch TV for four and half hours daily thereby making it 311/2 hours per week. On the other hand, Japanese children watch TV for five hours per day that is 35 hours per week. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2012) stipulate that children in the United Kingdom watch television for an average of three to four hours per day; 21-28 hours per week (Garba, 2015).

According to Okodo (2014), children spend 45 minutes to 1hour per a day viewing any of these programmes: “documentary, docusoap, drama series, game shows, infomercial, sitcoms, news, quiz show, reality TV, soap opera, talk show, and some educative cartoons such as Barbie, Mr PEAboard and chaiMan, among others on television in order to have time for other activities and avoid neuro-ocular effects of television screen on their health. Although television may provide a child with some degree of learning, the disadvantages of giving a whole lot of attention to it by a growing child as these may impact negatively on education of the child. Ibiam and Yunusa (2015) note that it is the right of every child to be educated, since education seems to be one of the natural occurrences associated with human growth. The education of a child begins at home by the parents. Therefore, parents, caregivers and teachers need to work towards eliminating anything that might hinder the education of children.

In other words, television viewing may not be too healthy for a growing child when not controlled; and what children watch on the television on daily basis seems to have deep impression on them to the extent that their behaviours in all aspect of life are shaped by what they watch on the television, most especially when the television viewing becomes a habit and especially if not moderated. It is in view of the foregoing that this study sets out to explore parents’ perception and attitude towards contemporary children’s habit of viewing television, focusing on the case of Pankshin in Plateau State, North-Central Nigeria.

**Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore Pankshin parents’ perception and

The objectives of study are to determine:

1. Parents’ perceptions of television viewing habit of children.
2. The attitude of parents towards television viewing habit of children.
3. The influence of location on parents’ attitude towards television viewing habit of children.
4. The influence of location on parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions are designed to guide the study:

1. What are parents’ perceptions of television viewing habit of children?
2. What is the attitude of parents towards television viewing habit of children?
3. What is the influence of location on parents’ attitude towards television viewing habit of children?
4. How does location influence parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children?

**Conceptual Spadework**

Here, the concepts of television, children, perception, attitude and location are explained. Accordingly, Television is an electronic mass medium that brings the whole world to the viewer in a twinkle of an eye. Ezema (2006) sees television as a means of viewing a distance and as one of the wonders of the modern world. Ernie (2018) refers to television as an electronic communication medium that allows the transmission of real-time visual images and sounds. It appears to have the capacity to take someone round the whole world in a twinkle of eye, in terms of academic and social life in general. According to Ngwoke and Ngwoke (2011), television viewing is an act of spending time in front of television screen while participating actively or passively in what is being displayed. Television viewing habit may refer to the attitudes and actions of an individual towards television viewing.

It has to do with the age of a person and time spent viewing. For instance, if an individual spends more than 30 minutes on daily basis viewing television for one month, two months and so on, it becomes a habit as it may lead to unproductive lifestyle. Ngwoke and Ngwoke (2011) refer to television viewing habit as the amount of time children spend viewing television, the nature of programme and viewing pattern. Television viewing can be of general benefit to human beings especially children in bringing them into contact with other aspects of life that these children would not otherwise be aware of (Wartella et al., 2005).

Television viewing exposes children to a range of entertainment, drama and other learning experiences. However, television viewing appears to have the capacity that may take children away from other forms of play as it incorporates many activities, which require time to watch. The time children spend in viewing these television programmes appear to be a thing of concern to most parents and the society at large. A poor television viewing habit among children can be the cause of the prevalent negative behaviours among children, such as bad eating habits, eating cold food, eating while viewing television or not eating at all unless they are forced by putting off the television (El-Houfey & Elserogy, 2013). In most cases, they cry and refuse to eat the food which in turn may cause sickness for such children. Hence, television viewing habit can be healthy or unhealthy depending on what parents think and how they approach it.

Perception is defined as the process of integrating, organising, and interpreting sensory information to be aware of the things and events that happen around the environment and one’s attitude towards the events (Romanov, 2011). The perception of parents about children’s television viewing habit can promote or inhabit proper child development and efficient learning outcome. Parents are significant figures in their children’s live. They are solely responsible for their children’s character development. Parents’ perception regarding television viewing habit of children determines, largely the frequency of its use in the home. Their perception in this regard is of paramount importance. Perception is the natural ability to understand or notice things quickly. It is the way one thinks about something and one’s idea of what it is like. It is the way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted. Parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children appears to be diverse in nature. There are gender differences because the ways a father perceives the television viewing appear to defer from how a mother perceives it based on habits of children in terms of time spent and nature of programme viewed may appear to defer from how mother perceive it based on their individual differences and preferences.

Parents’ individual background may often determine how they perceive the television viewing habit of children which may make or mar their upbringing. The individual perception of parents determines their choice and how they bring up their children. Some parents easily perceive the mood of their children; even without being told they know when things are going well or wrong with them. Enlightened parents seem to sit and watch together what the children are watching on television, ask them questions based on what they are viewing, and entertain all their questions. They appear to code the television and allocate time they spend watching television vis-à-vis the time spent in studying their books. But other parents would switch off the television, shouting at the children to go and study their books. Whether the children are reading to learn or playing with books is none of the parents’ business. Additionally, there appears to be a general outcry by parents in Pankshin district about children’s general attitude towards life, especially as it affects their education (Olisaeke, 2020). This concern is generally linked to children’s attitude towards television viewing habit and how parents perceive this trend.

Attitude is seen as someone’s disposition or state of mind. It is the opinions and feelings that someone usually has about something. Research has shown that attitude is based on someone’s perception of something. Allport in Hayes (2010) sees attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related. In the same vein, Rokeach in Hayes (2010) sees attitude as a learned orientation or disposition which provides a tendency to respond favourably or unfavourably to the object or situation. In the context of this study, attitude is what guides someone’s perception of things around oneself, thus regulating one’s reactions. Therefore, parents’ attitude tends to be related towards their children’s habit based on their perception. This further determines their action and inaction towards their children television viewing habit.

Children may be seen as young individuals who are under the age of maturation. They often may not be able to take right decisions in life on their own; children are between the stages of infancy and adolescence. They are groups of young human beings solely dependent on their parents, caregivers and any other adults around them for survival. Thus, children are at the mercy of what the family and the environments bestow on them. Obinauju and Ibiam (2012) have stated that children are young persons, especially between infancy and youth. According to UNESCO (2007) and the 2007 Convention on the right of the Child, a child is a human being below the age of eighteen years. According to The Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), pupil is someone who is aged six to twelve years plus, and found in primary schools. At this stage providing television and exposing children to television programmes appears to be the utmost priority of parents.

Location refers to all places where structures and objects are found in the rural or urban areas. It is where people live or where things happened. Location, according to Unamma (2003) is a place or places where things, buildings, schools, markets, among others, are situated. Location is a critical demographic factor. It determines how children behave either in the rural or urban areas. Parents of children in rural areas behave differently from those in the urban areas. Locations exert a great influence on the perception of parents. Parents located in the urban areas have the possibility of regulating the nature of programmes and the time children spend viewing television programmes because there is the possibility of having constant power supply, while parents in the rural areas with low power supply may not do the same, rather, the parents seem to view adult programmes with children without perceiving the influence of such programmes on their children.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on Lev Vygotsky’s (1962) Social Learning Theory (SLT). Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist. Vygotsky’s (1962) posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling. SLT increasingly inspires the practices of early childhood professionals. Vygotsky’s theory of development is particularly useful in describing children’s mental, language and social development. His theory also has many implications for how children’s play promotes language and social development. Vygotsky believed children’s mental, language and social development is supported and enhanced by others through social interaction. For Vygotsky, development is supported by social interaction and “learning awakens a variety of developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in collaboration with his peers. Once these processes are internalised, they become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement.

Vygotsky postulates that beginning from birth, children seek out adults for social interaction, and development occurs through these interactions. Vygotsky places emphasis on interaction and play activities of children, as the activities play uncompromised roles in the cognitive and social development of children. According to him, children develop cognitive ability as they talk to themselves and others during play, and it has been observed that private or social speech can help in the development of inner thoughts, self-direction and actions. The theory is relevant to the present study because, from every indication, it is pointing accusing finger to parents of younger children in primary school as this level is the fundamental basis of education in human life.

The television viewing habits of these children may be stealing away quality time for these two important factors “interaction and play” that are essential in cognitive and social development of human beings. And, these two variables are what may make or mar a person; because any person with poor social life or that have poor cognitive intelligence quotient (IQ) is not healthy. Finally, if parents continue to allow their younger children to view television programmes consistently, they should be blamed for aiding the harms the viewing caused to the children’s cognitive and social development, intelligence, behaviour and language skills. Since parents have greater time to spend with their children than teachers, they have greater responsibility of their children’s education and training lies with them.

**Review of Empirical Studies**

Ben-Joseph (2016) carried out a study entitled “Healthy Habits for TV, Video Games, and the Internet”. The research is of the view that TV, interactive video games, and the Internet can be excellent sources of education and entertainment for kids. But too much screen time can have unhealthy side effects. That is why it is wise to monitor and limit the time kids spend playing video games, watching TV, and using the Internet. Contained in the study are the following recommendations and guidelines by The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for screen time: Babies and toddlers up to 18 months old: No screen time, with the exception of video-chatting with family and friends. Toddlers 18 months to 24 months: Some screen time with a parent or caregiver. Preschoolers: No more than 1 hour a day of educational programming, together with a parent or other caregiver who can help them understand what they're seeing. Kids and teens 5 to 18 years: Parents should place consistent limits on screen time, which includes TV, social media, and video games. Media should not take the place of getting enough sleep and being physically active.

Priyanka (2016) conducted a study on parents’ perception of influence of television advertisement on children. The study investigated the Indian parents’ perception about television advertisements. The research design for the study was exploratory and descriptive. Data was collected from 480 parents of children aged 8-14 using questionnaire as an instrument. An 18-item list of opinion/statements regarding the influence of television advertising on children were presented to 480 parents (240 urban and 240 rural) from selected schools at Ludhiana, Moga, and Barnala district for urban responses and Sidhwabet, Nihalsinghwall, and Barnala block for rural responses. The method of data analysis was frequencies and basic descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, for each of the attitude and opinion statements, and t-test was used to test the hypothesis formulated.

The result revealed that overall parents hold negative attitude towards television advertising. They have strong doubts about honesty of advertisement to children and displayed a strong degree of cynicism about its perceived misleading aspects. This study is relevant to the present one in that it examines similar variables such as parents’ perception of influence of television advertisement on children aged 8-14 which are in similar category of the children in this study. The difference is that the previous study is restricted to television advertisements and it was conducted in different location from the current study while the present one examines the parents’ perception and attitudes towards television viewing habit of their children.

Adeniyi (2015) investigated the television viewing patterns and its implications for students in selected secondary schools in Lagos State, using a government-owned senior secondary school located at an Afromedia area of Okokomaiko Lagos. A survey research design was used and questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents, while additional information was collected using an interview schedule targeted at the Vice Principals (Academics) of the two schools. The findings revealed that quite a large number of students inadvertently followed in a specific pattern in viewing television. The study debunked the general belief that television viewing wastes students’ time and results in poor academic performance.

The findings of the study also revealed that patterned television viewing can be rewarding and can enhance chances of students performing excellently. The study as well revealed that many students spend more time on their study than on viewing television. The study, therefore recommended that the students be made aware of the need for specific patterns on their television viewing. This study is relevant to the present one in the sense that both of focused on television viewing but differ in the sense that the former specified on the academic performance while the present study is concerned about the parents’ perception and attitude towards television viewing habit of children.

Garba (2015) carried out a study on the influence of home television viewing on academic achievement of children in upper basic education in Kaduna State. The research design adopted for the study was ex-post factor survey design. The study had four research questions and four null hypotheses. A sample of 320 pupils was randomly selected through multi-stage and stratified random sampling techniques from the population of all the children in the upper basic level of education in schools in Kaduna State. The instrument for data collected was a designed questionnaire called ‘Pupils Television Viewing Identification Questionnaire’ (PTVIQ). The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation and t-test was used to test the research hypothesis.

The findings of the study revealed that home television viewers scored higher in Basic English continuous assessment test than non-television viewers; the home television viewers also scored higher than the non-television viewers on basic Mathematics, at p<0.05, there was a significant difference between the mean score of home television viewers and non-television viewers on Social Studies tests. This study is relevant to the present study in the sense that both of them focused on television viewing but differ in the sense that the previous examined the influence of television in the upper primary. The present study examined parents’ perception and attitudes towards television viewing habit of children. The previous study was carried out in Kaduna State while the present study was carried out in Pankshin District of Plateau State.

Chan and McNeal (2014) carried out a study on the parental concern about television viewing and children advertising in China. The study has four research objectives and four research questions and research design adopted survey design. A sample size of 1,665 respondents comprising of parents of primary school children aged six to fourteen in Beijing, Nanjing, and Chengdu were sampled for the study. Parental Perception and Attitudes Questionnaire [PPAQ] and interviews schedule were instruments used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using percentage, mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation was also used to analyze parents’ attitudes toward advertising and parental mediation of television viewing.

The findings indicated that, parents’ attitudes toward television advertising in general and toward children’s advertising specifically had no significant correlation with parental control of television viewing. Co-viewing and discussion of commercials were negatively correlated with attitudes, indicating that parents who hold more negative attitudes towards television advertising were less likely to watch television with their children and were also less likely to discuss commercial with them. Parents with more negative attitudes toward television advertising and children advertising, however, perceived that they have greater influence on their children attitudes toward television advertising. This study is relevant to the present one in the sense that it examines similar variables such as parental attitudes towards television viewing habits of children. The difference is that the previous study restricted to commercial advertisements, while the present one examines the parents’ perception and attitudes towards television viewing habit of their children.

Atumba (2013) conducted a study on the effect of violent television programmes on the attitude of children aged seven to fifteen years old towards violence. The research design was s descriptive survey research design. The sample size for the study was three hundred (300) made up of children, parents and teachers randomly selected. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire with 30 question items for the children and 20 items questionnaire for parents and teachers. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentages were used to identify the perception of the respondents. The finding of the study showed that 74.1% of the parents and 76.6% of teachers agreed that violent television programmes have a positive effect on the attitude of these children towards violence. The study is relevant to the present one in that both focused on television programmes. But a previous study focused on effect of television viewing on children’s attitude towards violence while the present one focuses on parents’ perception and attitude of parents towards television viewing habit of children.

Syed (2013) conducted a study on impact of television watching on academic achievement of adolescents with special reference to their socioeconomic status. The study has two objectives and one hypothesis. The sample size for the study was 240 selected randomly from secondary school adolescents of 15 to 17 years of age, from secondary schools run by government in District Srinagar (J&K). The tools for data collection were television viewing information blank, academic achievement and socio-economic status scale. The academic achievement assessed the basic aggregate marks in all the subjects secured by the students in their two consecutive examinations, conducted by the J&K State Board of School Education. The statistics applied for data analysis comprises of percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD) and t- test.

Also, charts were plotted to further describe the data collected. The study found that the heavy and low television viewer adolescents differ significantly in their academic achievement. The mean difference favors low television viewer adolescents. It indicates that low TV viewer adolescents exhibit a higher scholastic achievement than the heavy TV viewer group of adolescents. This study is relevant to the present study in the sense that both of them focused on television viewing but differ in the sense that the former specified on the impact of television watching on academic performance while the later examine the parents’ perception and attitude towards television viewing habit of the children habit.

Ngwoke and Ibiam (2012) carried out a study on the impact of television viewing habit on development of basic verbal reasoning skills among primary school children in Nsukka urban, Enugu State. A sample of 429 pupils which comprises of the following groups: intense viewers- 187, moderate viewers- 128, and low viewers- 114 were used. One research question and one null hypothesis were used. An ex-post facto research design with a 20-item multiple choice test of Acquisition of Basic Verbal Reasoning Skills (TABVRS) was used for collection. Data collected were analysed using means, standard deviation, and one-way analysis of variance while Scheffé test was done to determine the direction of the significant difference.

The findings of the study showed that, there were significant mean differences in the Test of Acquisition of Basic Verbal Reasoning Skills [TABVRS] scores among the three-study group in favour of the moderate television viewing group, followed by the low and then the intense viewing groups. This study is related to the present study in the sense that, it examines similar variables such as the television viewing habit of primary school children; and the difference is that, the previous study was on impact of television viewing habit on development of basic verbal reasoning skills by children, while the present study focuses on parents’ perception and attitude towards the television viewing habits of these children. Also while the present study is a descriptive survey, the study under review was an expo-facto.

Ngwoke (2011) conducted a study on impact of television viewing habit on development of basic cognitive and social skills among primary school children in Nsukka urban, Enugu State, Nigeria. The design of the study was Ex post facto. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The sample for the study was 429 primary five pupils purposively drawn from six public and four Government-approved privately owned primary schools in Nsukka Urban. The instruments used for study– Personal Television Viewing Profile (PTVP), Test of Acquisition of Basic Verbal Reasoning Skills (TABVRS), Test of Acquisition of Basic Arithmetic Skills (TABAS) and Scale of Acquisition of Basic Social Skills (SABSS), were developed by the researcher. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics and the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of variance statistics (ANOVA). Findings of the study indicated that moderate television viewing habit engendered the development of basic verbal reasoning, arithmetic and social skills among primary school children. Intense television viewing habit was found to be detrimental to the development of basic verbal reasoning, arithmetic and social skills among children. Low television habit did not promote the development of basic cognitive and social skills among primary school children.

Comparatively, moderate television habit was found to have significant positive impact while intense television habit had significant negative impact on children. Based on these findings, researcher concluded that, encouraging children to develop moderate television viewing habit may enhance their development of basic verbal reasoning, arithmetic and social skills. Also that complete denial or low access to television viewing may limit the children’s world of experience thereby hampering their basic cognitive and social skills development. Among the educational implications are that viewing time to expand their experiential base on global issues, adult and peer language, as well as social etiquette and nuances, routine processes, life skills and social display rules exhibited by models and stars in television which otherwise would not be accessible on routine activities in the home or school. It also implies that children will not only view television, they need help from significant adults to adequately appropriate prime time to academic activities, physical activities, interactions with people, events and objects in their social environment as well as getting enough sleep.

**Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The area of the study is Pankshin District of Plateau State Nigeria. Pankshin town is the headquarters of the LGA and Plateau Central Educational Zone. The population of the study consisted of 8,234 parents within Pankshin District, who were within 25 to 45 years old, who are most likely to be having primary school children in their houses.

The sample size for the study comprised 300 participants. These were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling technique from 5 out of 8 areas that make up Pankshin district which is the headquarter of Pankshin Educational Zone Area were randomly sampled. From each of the sampled communities, hundred (100) parents comprising father and mother were sampled through simple random technique and the sampled parents were visited at their various houses by the researcher and research assistants. The instrument for data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher titled Parents’ Perception of Children Television Viewing Habit questionnaire (PPCTVHQ). The questionnaire comprises demographic and thematic data.

The instrument was validated by three experts: one from Measurement and Evaluation unit; one from Childhood Education unit; and the third from Library Studies unit. They are all from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instruments a trail testing was conducted on 20 parents outside the area of the study. The instrument was trial-tested in Chip, Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. The data collected were subjected to reliability test using Cronbach Alpha method. The rationale for using Cronbach Alpha was on the basis that the items were not dichotomously scored right or wrong but rather placed on a four-point rating scales of SA, A, D, and SD. From the data analysis, the reliability coefficients of 0.83 and 0.79 were obtained, an indication that the instrument was reliable to measure what it supposed to measure consistently. The data collected were analysed using mean and the standard deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The significance level is proven to be 0.05. A decision point of 2.50 was set in the study in order to accept or reject each item of the questionnaire.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Research Question 1: What are parents’ perceptions of television viewing habit of children?**

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Items Statement | N | Mean | SD | Remark |
| 1 | Television viewing can be educative for children | 300 | 3.66 | .65 | Agree |
| 2 | Constant television viewing for children if not controlled can become a habit | 300 | 3.47 | .65 | Agree |
| 3 | Television viewing can make children to form some negative habit based on what they view | 300 | 3.57 | .57 | Agree |
| 4 | Television viewing provides relaxation for children but it should be controlled against becoming a habit | 300 | 3.20 | .68 | Agree |
| 5 | Some television programmes if over viewed can mislead children towards wrong life styles | 300 | 3.32 | .64 | Agree |
| 6 | I perceived that television viewing habit can isolate a child from others | 300 | 3.37 | .69 | Agree |
| 7 | Television viewing habit makes children at times to be lazy in performing other house chores | 300 | 3.37 | .85 | Agree |
| 8 | Moderate television viewing for children is good and encouraging in child development | 300 | 3.26 | .93 | Agree |
| 9 | Excessive television viewing for children may lead to lack of concentration | 300 | 3.41 | .91 | Agree |
| 10 | Some television programmes for children help in language development and understanding | 300 | 3.19 | .71 | Agree |
| 11 | Viewing violent television programme can make children to be violent as well | 300 | 3.24 | .89 | Agree |
|  | **Cluster Mean** |  | **3.37** | **.37** | **Agree** |

Result on Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of parents’ perception of the television viewing habit of children in Pankshin area of Plateau state. The result shows that the respondents agreed to all the items (1-11) as their perceptions of television viewing habit of children. The decision was based on the fact that all the items recorded a minimum mean value of 2.50 and above set for decision rule. The standard deviations of the 11 items ranged from .57-.93; indicating that the respondents were homogenous in their response. The cluster mean value of 3.37 implies that parents’ perception about the television viewing habit of their children was high.

**Research Question 2: What is attitude of parents towards television viewing habit of children?**

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of parents’ attitude towards television viewing habit of children**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/No | Item Statement | N | Mean | SD | Remark |
| **1** | My children view only what I put for them to view on television at the time I want them to view it | 300 | 3.40 | .81 | Agree |
| **2** | My children view any kind of television programmes, especially when I am not at home | 300 | 3.57 | .55 | Agree |
| **3** | Satellite television has provided opportunity for my children to view whatever they want to view any time of the day | 300 | 3.40 | .71 | Agree |
| **4** | My children go to other neighbourhood to view television so I do not know the nature of programmes they view | 300 | 3.49 | .60 | Agree |
| **5** | My children view television whenever there is light | 300 | 3.44 | .66 | Agree |
| **6** | My children view television programmes only at night | 300 | 3.49 | .68 | Agree |
| **7** | My children often go to their friend’s houses to view television | 300 | 3.51 | .64 | Agree |
| **8** | My children always take advantage of constant light in my area to view television | 300 | 2.08 | .94 | Disagree |
| **9** | My children take advantage of my long absence from the house to view television unregulated | 300 | 2.38 | .94 | Disagree |
| **10** | My children view whatever programmes that is shown in the regular television due to absence of satellite televisions | 300 | 2.18 | .92 | Disagree |
|  | **Cluster Mean** |  | **3.10** | **.32** | **Agree** |

Result on Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of parents’ attitude towards television viewing habit of children in Pankshin area of Plateau state. Ten item statements were presented to the respondents in the study, seven of the items (1-7) were agreed based on 2.50 decision point and three items (8-10) were disagreed to. The cluster mean value of 3.10 indicates that parents’ attitude towards television viewing habit of their children was moderate.

**Research Question 3: What is the influence of location on parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children?**

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of location on parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/No | Items Statement | location | Mean | SD | Remark |
| **1** | Television viewing can be education for children | Urban | 3.78 | .44 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.52 | .80 | Agree |
| **2** | Constant television viewing for children if not control can become habit | Urban | 3.44 | .69 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.51 | .59 | Agree |
| **3** | Television viewing can make children to form some negative habit based on what they view | Urban | 3.64 | .48 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.48 | .64 | Agree |
| **4** | Television viewing provides relaxation for children but it should be controlled against becoming a habit | Urban | 3.18 | .69 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.22 | .66 | Agree |
| **5** | Some television programmes if over viewed can mislead children towards wrong life styles | Urban | 3.31 | .63 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.34 | .65 | Agree |
| **6** | I perceived that television viewing habit can isolate a child from others | Urban | 3.43 | .61 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.31 | .77 | Agree |
| **7** | Television viewing habit make children at times to be lazy in performing other house chores | Urban | 3.27 | .87 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.48 | .82 | Agree |
| **8** | Moderate television viewing for children is good and encouraging in child development | Urban | 3.23 | .95 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.29 | .90 | Agree |
| **9** | Excessive television viewing for children may lead to lack of concentration | Urban | 3.52 | .77 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.28 | 1.02 | Agree |
| **10** | Some television programmes for children helps in language development and understanding | Urban | 3.15 | .73 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.24 | .69 | Agree |
| **11** | Viewing violent television programme can make children to be violent as well | Urban | 3.24 | .79 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.24 | 1.00 | Agree |
|  | **Cluster Mean** | **Urban** | **3.38** | **.35** | **Agree** |
|  |  | **Rural** | **3.35** | **.39** | **Agree** |

Result in Table 3 shows that parents in urban areas had a cluster mean value of 3.38 and standard deviation of .35 while their counterparts in rural area had a cluster mean value of 3.35 and standard deviation of .39. The result implies that location may influence parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children.

**Research Question 4:** What is the influence of location on parents’ attitude towards children’s television viewing habit?

**Table 4:** Mean and standard deviation of the influence of location on parents’ attitude towards children’s television viewing habit

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/No | Item Statement | Location | Mean | SD | Remark |
| 1 | My children view only what I put for them to view on television at the time I want them to view it | Urban | 3.69 | .49 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.15 | .99 | Agree |
| 2 | My children view any kind of television programmes, especially when I am not at home | Urban | 3.55 | .55 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.59 | .55 | Agree |
| 3 | Satellite television has provided opportunity for my children to view whatever they want to view any time of the day | Urban | 3.43 | .69 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.37 | .73 | Agree |
| 4 | My children go to other neighbourhood to view television so I do not know the nature of programmes they view | Urban | 3.50 | .61 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.49 | .60 | Agree |
| 5 | My children view television whenever there is light | Urban | 3.43 | .66 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.45 | .66 | Agree |
| 6 | My children view television programmes only at night | Urban | 3.47 | .70 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.52 | .66 | Agree |
| 7 | My children often go to their friend’s houses to view television | Urban | 3.52 | .64 | Agree |
| Rural | 3.50 | .65 | Agree |
| 8 | My children always take advantage of constant light in my area to view television | Urban | 2.19 | .93 | Disagree |
| Rural | 1.97 | .95 | Disagree |
| 9 | My children take advantage of my long absence from the house to view television unregulated | Urban | 2.30 | .91 | Disagree |
| Rural | 2.46 | .98 | Disagree |
| 10 | My children view whatever programmes that is shown in the regular television due to absence of satellite televisions | Urban | 2.25 | .82 | Disagree |
| Rural | 2.09 | 1.02 | Disagree |
|  | **Overall mean** | Urban | **3.13** | **.31** | **Agree** |
| Rural | **3.06** | **.32** | **Agree** |

Result in Table 4 shows that parents in urban areas had a cluster mean value of 3.13 and standard deviation of .31 while their counterparts in rural area had a cluster mean value of 3.06 and standard deviation of .32. The result indicates that location may influence parents’ attitude towards children’s television viewing habit.

**Summary of Findings**

The following major findings are established:

1. Parents’ perception about the television viewing habit of their children is high.
2. Parents’ attitude towards television viewing habit of their children is proven to be moderate.
3. Location can influence parents’ perception of television viewing habit of children.
4. Location can influence parents’ attitude towards children’s television viewing habit.

**Conclusion**

The importance of television in education and provision of information to people is quite established and cannot be overemphasised. Television plays important role in the building of a society as a source of information and communication media which informs and educates simultaneously, though the major functions of television are to inform, educate, and entertain viewers. Television shows can also be used to teach young people important values, norms and life lessons. It brings to every doorstep a live coverage of any event in any part of the world. It can keep one informed of all current happenings in the world like terrorist attack, where war is being fought and why. Events shown through television are more vivid than those communicated through newspaper, books radio and magazines, as there are both visual and audio effects in television, which are lacking in the other media.

What children see in television on daily basis have deep impression on them to the extent that their behaviours in all aspect of living are dictated by them. It was especially noticed in their way of speech whereby majority of children in Pankshin today do not have clearly articulated speech pattern. Children speak through their nose trying to emulate the favourite cartoon speeches of the Western world. Also, as regards the kind of play they engaged in, these children usually engaged in gun shooting and rough plays, thus endangering their lives. Television viewing has been of immense benefit to every individual, including children. It helps them to be more knowledgeable about things around them and the world at large.

Although, television seems to have it all in terms of entertaining as well as educating someone at the same time, it equally appears to have the capacity to lure someone to viewing it as long as it is on without minding the situation at hand. Television viewing is the act of watching television programmes actively or passively for the purposes of acquiring knowledge and for entertainment. In other words, it is a process of viewing television programmes with interest to learn and to entertain oneself. In their way of thinking, majority of Pankshin children appear to always be absent-minded in the class or at home especially when they are alone and the television is not on, as they ponder over what they have watched over the television. Another complain of parents in Pankshin was their children’s eating manners.

It is commonly observed that uncontrolled television leads to children exhibiting negative attitude and antisocial behaviour. Thus, for the present study, the habits, which are antisocial behaviours, may have some link to what children copy from television programmes. This may be a reflection of the perception and attitude of parents towards television viewing habit of children. Therefore, the research engages with parents’ perception of and attitudes toward television viewing habit among children in Pankshin District of Plateau State. There are thousands of programmes on the television and these include: entertainment, commercials, films of all categories and types, fantasy, educational programmes, drama series, instructional television programmes, soap operas, detectives, public affairs programmes, variety shows, family life situation, wild life of animals, adventures, sports, space travels, cartoons, puppet shows, sitcom, documentary, travel or holidays kids/children, make over, cookery, shopping, Diy and many others. And, these programmes are teaching different things that can influence someone’s life positively or negatively depending on the perception of the viewer. Examples include sports, sitcom, documentary, soap opera, cookery, and cartoon.

So far, the implications of children’s uncontrolled viewing of television are investigated and established. These include the adverse effects of television viewing on children’s psychology, physical and mental health, reading habit, academic performance, behaviour, and social interaction. These effects raise serious concerns among many parents, educators and other stakeholders. The concerns call for consistent monitoring and evaluation of children’s habit of viewing television consistently. Taking various preventive measures can avert the adverse effects of consistent television viewing.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should be exemplary to their children in terms of television viewing, by engaging in moderate viewing of the television.
2. Parents should be diplomatic in monitoring their children’s movement regarding television viewing habit.
3. Parents and guardians should adequately control the time their children/wards spend on viewing television.
4. Television programmes and location should be examined thoroughly by parents.
5. Children should be taught the implications of extreme or consistent viewing of television.
6. Federal and State Ministries of Education, Universal Basic Education Board (UBE), Institutions and other non-governmental organisations should organise conferences, workshops, seminars and enlightenment programmes for parents and guardians on how to effectively use television in the home.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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