**Parental Perception and Attitudes toward Children’s Television Viewing Habit: A Case Study of Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria**

**Abstract**

Television viewing has positive and negative effects on viewers. Considering its negative effects, this study examines parents’ perception and attitude towards children’s television viewing habit, drawing insights from Pankshin parents in North-Central Nigeria. The study is anchored on Vygotsky’s Social Learning Theory, which postulates that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. A structured questionnaire was administered to 300 parents. Also, some library and internet materials were relied on for secondary data. Descriptive survey design and mixed method were employed. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the data analysis. The results show that parents perceive children’s regular television viewing habit as wrong and harmful to them; 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. Based on the findings, the study recommends proactive parental monitoring and policy interventions to mitigate the negative impacts of excessive television viewing on children.

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

**Introduction**

Television combines audio-visual features, which make it a widely used source of entertainment and information (Robert & Besong, 2016; Chikaan & Ahmad, 2011). It is particularly very appealing to children. This study investigates how parents perceive and respond to children’s television viewing habits in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. Television has the capacity to keep children occupied while their parents go about their businesses (Awofadeju et al., 2016). It is a means of listening to and watching news, advertisement and entertainment programmes (Khanna, 2016). It is an electronic device for transmitting and receiving visual broadcasts, with which moving images are transmitted in monochrome (black and white) or in coloured form that may be in two or three dimensions together with sound. In contemporary times, children often seem to spend their whole time in front of television screen, as long as there is power supply.

With the trend of digitalisation, there is a plethora of television channels offering greater choice and quality of programmes to mankind (Hill, 2017). Children seem to be the major viewers of television programmes. Television programmes take away children’s 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 programmes appear to have strong influence on children, for which most of them resist their parents’ and guardians’ advice against regular television viewing habit. Of course, 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 that children 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 on viewing television across the globe, indicating that: Nigerian children watch TV for four hours per day, 28 hours per week; American children between the ages of 2 and 8 years old view television 14 hours per week; Australian children of ages 1-12 spend 7 hours per-week on television viewing. Further, Latino children watch TV for 8 hours per week; North American children view TV for 41/2 hours daily, 311/2 hours per week; and Japanese children watch TV for 5 hours per day, 35 hours per week (Garba, 2015). Also, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) stipulate that children in the United Kingdom watch television for an average of 3-4 hours per day; 21-28 hours per week (AACAP, 2012).

In addition, Okodo (2014) points out that children spend 45 minutes to 1 hour per a day viewing any of the following programmes on television: “documentary, docusoap, drama series, game shows, infomercial, sitcoms, news, quiz show, reality TV, soap opera, talk show, and some educative cartoons like Barbie, Mr PEAboard and chaiMan, among others. Although television may provide a child with some degree of learning, it also impacts negatively on a growing child, who gives a whole lot of attention to viewing television or consuming what television provides viewers with. 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 (Robert & Besong, 2023; Olisaeke, 2020; Robert, 2017; Dibie & Robert, 2015). It is in view of the foregoing that this study sets out to explore parents’ perception and attitude towards children’s habit of viewing television, drawing insights from the case of Pankshin in Plateau State, North-Central Nigeria.

**Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore Pankshin parents’ perception of and attitude towards children’s television viewing habit.

The objectives of study are to determine:

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

**Research Questions**

The following research questions are designed to guide the study:

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

**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. Ernie (2018) refers to television as an electronic communication medium that allows the transmission of real-time visual images and sounds. It has the capacity to take someone round the whole world within the twinkle of an eye. It has social, literary and educational values and impacts (Akgun, 2023). 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. For this study, television viewing habit refers to the attitudes and actions of an individual towards television viewing, whereby the individual engages actively or passively in television viewing or does not engage in it at all.

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. Television viewing habit can be described as the amount of time spent on viewing television, the nature of programme and viewing pattern (Morowatisharifabad et al., 2015; Ngwoke & Ngwoke, 2011). Television viewing exposes children to a range of entertainment, drama and other learning experiences. Television viewing can be of general benefit to human beings, especially children in bringing them into contact with other aspects of life that they would not otherwise be aware of (Awofadeju et al., 2016; Wartella et al., 2005).

However, television viewing appears to have the capacity of keeping children away from other activities, including academic tasks and domestic chores (Ofosu-Brako, 2022) 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 (Yasin & Desie, 2023; El-Houfey & Elserogy, 2013). In most cases, children cry and refuse to eat the food, which in turn may lead to sickness. Hence, television viewing habit can be healthy or unhealthy (Covolo et al., 2021). This depends on how parents approach this habit among children and what parents think of it.

Perception can be 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 (Topper, 2017). The perception of parents about children’s television viewing habit can promote or inhibit proper child development and efficient learning outcome. Parents are significant figures in their children’s lives, as they are solely responsible for their children’s character development (Ubong, 2021; Besong & Robert, 2019; Robert & Dibie, 2017).

Parents’ perception regarding television viewing habit of children largely determines the extent to which the television is used in various homes (Ugochukwu et al., 2022). Parents’ individual background may often determine how they perceive the television viewing habit of their children, which may make or mar their upbringing. The individual perception of parents determines their choice and how they bring up their children. While some parents easily perceive the mood of their children, others do not. Also, while some parents prevail on their children to leave television viewing for reading of books, others do no. There appears to be a general outcry by parents in Pankshin education zone about children’s regular viewing of television (Olisaeke, 2020).

Attitude can be seen as someone’s disposition or state of mind (Varma, 2015). It refers to opinions and feelings that someone usually has about something. Attitude reflects someone’s perception of something. Attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Hayes, 2010). Thus, parents’ attitudes toward children’s television viewing habit appear to be related on the basis of their perception. Their attitude and perception determine their in/actions against or for their children television viewing habit. Children may be seen as young individuals who are under the age of maturation. They may usually be unable to take right decisions in life on their own.

Children are human persons between the stages of infancy and adolescence. They are groups of young human beings who solely depend on their parents, caregivers and any other adults around them for survival. Thus, it suffices to say that children are at the mercy of what their families 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 In Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (2014), the Federal Government of Nigeria defines the concept of pupil as referring to someone who is aged 6-12 years or above, and found in primary schools. To that end, a child is a pupil and vice versa. 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 both rural and urban areas. It is where people live and where things happen(ed). 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 likely regulate the nature of programmes and the time children spend on viewing television programmes, because there is the possibility of having constant power supply. Most of them also have generators for alternative power supply.

On the other hand, parents in rural areas seldom do so, because of irregular or complete absence of power supply. Besides, most of them do not have generators, solar power and other alternative power supply. Following the lack, parents in rural areas rarely deter their children from watching television, when there is power supply. Yet, they do so when their children leave home chores or assignments (take-home school tasks) for television viewing. Thus, location plays a role in parents’ perception of and attitudes toward their children’s television viewing habit.

**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 (Merdin, 2025). 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 its postulations reflect the concerns of the present study.

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, especially children in their early ages of life. These two variables may make or mar a person, because of their impacts on a person’s social life, cognitive development, intelligence quotient (IQ) and mental health (Sarmen, 2023). Finally, if parents continue to allow their younger children to view television programmes consistently, they should be blamed for aiding children in causing harms to their cognitive and social development, intelligence, behaviour, and language skills. Children learn and put to practice ill-behaviours displayed in movies, cartoons, and other television programmes (Oduwobi & Oduwobi, 2019). Since parents have greater time to spend with their children than teachers, they have greater responsibility in children’s education, training, psycho-motive development and mental health wellbeing.

**Review of Empirical Studies**

In “Theoretical framework of parental media mediation in early childhood,” Merdin (2025) engages with several theories that ground parental control of children’s utilisation of the media in their early ages of life. The theories it engages with are Vygotsky’s socio-cultural development theory, technology subsystem theory, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, and Bandura’s social learning theory. It shows that each of these theories provides valuable insights into how parents get involved in children’s use of the media to ensure effectiveness in the utilisation of the media. It concludes that parental involvement in children’s use of media leads to the realisation of a balanced relationship with media and technologies among children. It recommends an exploration of theories grounding media use for insights into the practice of media use. The study relates to the present in terms of its advocacy for parental control of children’s use of the media. It also justifies the present study’s reliance on Vygotsky’s socio-cultural development theory. The present study differs from it in terms of its focus on television use among children of Pankshin and their parents’ perception of and attitude towards the habit television viewing among the children.

The study by Fitzpatrick et al. (2024), entitled “Do parent media habits contribute to child global development?,” relates to the present study. The study examines the extent to which the use of screen by parents contributes to the global development of their pre-school children a year afterwards. Using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), data were gathered from 315 parents and children Nova Scotia, Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. The children involved were pre-schoolers. The results show the parents spending an average of 6.35 hours per day on viewing screen media outside work time, while the children spent an average of 3.43 hours each day on using screens. The child’s communication, personal, social, cognitive and motor skills were measured at 4.5, with 79% retained. The multivariate linear regression recorded indicated that each 1 hour per day spent by parents on screen media corresponded to a 1.25 decrease in child global development scores (B = -1.25 p < 0.05, 95% CI between -2.37 and -0.13) in the aforementioned skills. The study concludes that the use of screen media by parents may represent a major component of the media ecology of children. It suggests that parents’ use of screen media habits should be moderate in order ensure wellness. The study reflects the present one in several regards. It shows time spent on screen media by the case study parents and children, determines the effects of viewing screen media, and correlates the impact on child’s development skills. The present study differs from it in terms of location, and parents’ perception of and attitude towards children’s habit of viewing screen media.

Howard and Akhund’s (2024) “Parents’ knowledge, perceptions and support around appropriate physical activity, screen time and sleep time levels for children” is another empirical study. The study explores parents’ knowledge and agreement with the levels of guidelines on children’s screen time, physical activity and sleep time along with parents’ support for these sets of behaviours. The survey for data involved parents of children aged 5–12 years in General Practitioner (GP) office in New South Wales. The results show parents’ perceived ideal levels for children’s physical activity and screen time were more striving than government levels of guidelines and consistent with sleep time guidelines. Parent support levels and children’s actual or perceived ideal levels of the behaviours were found to associate at some extent. The study submits that parental perception of ideal levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviour may not hinder the adherence to government guidelines. It calls for interventions that address ineffective or inconsistent support strategies capable of hindering adherence. The study reflects the present study’s screen media viewing and parental perception thematic concerns. It differs considerably from the other preoccupations of the present research, which parental attitude and children’s television viewing habit.

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.

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 Pankshin Local Government Area (LGA) and Plateau Central Educational Zone. The parental 8,234 population of the LGA was estimated to be 8,234. The sample size for the study comprised 300 participants, who are parents of between 25 and 45 years of age. They all have several primary school children in their houses. These were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling technique from 5 out of 8 areas that make up Pankshin District. They were selected randomly.

From each of the sampled communities, hundred (100) parents comprising father and mother were sampled using the noted techniques. The sampled parents were visited at their various houses by the researcher along with 2 research assistants. The instrument for data collection for this study is a structured questionnaire, designed by the researcher and entitled “Parents’ Perception of Children Television Viewing Habit Questionnaire (PPCTVHQ)”. The questionnaire comprises demographic and thematic data. The data considered for analysis are the thematic data. The demographic data were meant for respondent categorisation and criteria, personal assessment, and considerations for data reliability.

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 children’s television viewing habit?**

**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 | If not controlled, constant television viewing for children can become a habit | 300 | 3.47 | .65 | Agree |
| 3 | Television viewing can make children to form some negative habits 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 | If over viewed, some television programmes can mislead children and expose them to 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**  |

**Source: Authors, 2025**

The results in Table 1 show the mean and standard deviation of parents’ perception of the television viewing habit of children in Pankshin, Plateau State of Nigeria. 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 children’s television viewing habit?**

**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**  |

**Source: Authors, 2025**

Results in Table 2 show 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 children’s television viewing habit?**

**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** |

**Source: Authors, 2025**

Results in Table 3 show 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**  |

**Source: Authors, 2025**

The results in Table 4 show 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 over-emphasised. As a source of information and communication medium, which informs and educates simultaneously, television plays important role in the building of a society. Television basically informs, educates, and entertains viewers. Additionally, it serves as a means for teaching 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. 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. 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.

Children are not only impressed by what they view or watch on television daily, but also get influenced positively or negative by the content. For example, it is realised that majority of children in Pankshin today do not have clearly articulated speech pattern, as they 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, thereby endangering their lives. Another complaint among parents in Pankshin is about their children’s changed eating manners following their viewing of television. It is commonly observed that uncontrolled television leads to children exhibiting negative attitude and antisocial behaviour. The habits, which are antisocial behaviours, may have some link to what children copy from television programmes.

It is in consideration of the adverse effects of consistent television viewing that parents have mixed feelings about the habit of television viewing, perceive it as a wrong habit, and exhibit unreceptive attitude towards the habit. The adverse effects manifest 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 and guardians 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.
7. School, mass media and religious organisations should engage in sensitising children against consistent television viewing.

**Consent**

As per international standards or university standards, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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