

Evaluation of Nigerian Television Authority's Drama Programmes on child Abuse Among Residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council Federal Capital Territory Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Emotional abuse is a behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-esteem. It may include threats, constant criticism as well as withholding love, support or guidance. Child prostitution is not only a cause of death and high morbidity of millions of children, but a gross violation of their rights. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the perception and exposure of the residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council, on Nigerian Television Authority Drama Programmes on Child Abuse. A survey research design was adopted which was carried out in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, Abuja. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire that was distributed to 385 participants within the Abuja Municipal Area Council. Descriptive analysis of simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment of Correlation (PPMC) were adopted for analysis. The findings revealed that a very limited number of the residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council were aware of Nigerian Television Authority drama programmes on child abuse with about 52.5%, however, 60% have good perception of the programme and the level of exposure to the programme is very low, with about 60% of the resident not exposed to the Nigerian Television Authority programme. It was further revealed that the Nigerian Television Authority Drama programmes in influencing your behaviour on issues of Child Abuse was effective. In conclusion, despite how the Nigerian Television Authority programme. It was further revealed that the Nigerian Television Authority Drama programmes in influencing your behaviour on issues of Child Abuse, the level of awareness and exposure among the residents was low. It was therefore, recommended that a multi-faceted approach to address the discrepancies be identified. This involves promotional campaigns to enhance awareness, ensuring broader accessibility to the programs, among others. This approach will the impact of Nigerian Television Authority drama programs and contribute to change in addressing child abuse concerns.

Keywords: Nigerian Television Authority drama programs, Emotional abuse, Development Communication, child abuse

INTRODUCTION

"Development Communication plays a major role in information distribution in developing countries and other parts of the world. Communication does not only inform but also influence the behaviour of the receiver of information. Effective development Communication should motivate people to participate in planned activities, and the mass media are channels through which communication is made easier and effective". [1] "As a matter of fact, the mass media play an essential role in society and represents what and how society operates" [2, 3]. "It is clear that as a socialisation agent the Mass media fulfill a very essential socializing function. In the first place, the media supply individuals with information" [41,42,43]. "People use this information to build the image on which they will base their reality, and they do so by applying it. Individuals can use the reality they have made to model and show the necessary behaviour, and as a result, they become part of the information with which people construct the image of reality under which they deploy their actions" [4, 2]. "Also, the media provide

people with ideals, norms, models, and symbols that they can utilize to build their own personal and communal cohesion and identity" [2].

"Television for instance is a medium through which viewers are influenced on different subject areas" [5]. "Due to its universal accessibility, television is regarded as an important channel of communication compared to other media of communication" [6]. As observed by Oyero[7]:

Issues affecting children have greater implications than the present development issues call for more media involvement since issues affecting them are intergenerational which makes their rights crucial. Any development that is not sustainable is not development since children form the future of any society, their issues must be seen in that perspective.

"Several studies have shown how the media, including television influence issues relating to abuses including the child abuse" [8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. "Television has the role of performing social responsibilities such as directing its viewers towards a more purposeful and development-oriented objective in the society. Today's Generation) has made the functions of television go beyond information, education, and entertainment. It is equally used for shaping and influencing the opinion and behaviour of people to build good relationships with others to avoid abuses of all kinds". [2]

Drama as stated by Anaeto and Anaeto[14] is recognized as "a traditional communication technique that can be used to communicate development-oriented messages. This is based on the fact that it is built on the people's cultural heritage using traditional channels and knowledge". According to [15], "the issue of child Abuse is an issue of serious concern globally". Explaining further Olusegun and Idowu [16] says, "section 277 of child's Right Act of 2003, defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of 18 years. Child Abuse is any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death serious physical or emotional harm and sexual abuse or exploitation. In Nigeria abuse against children is rampant although it is largely under-reported. Under-reporting stems from cultural justification of certain forms of abuse associated with cultural practices and the reluctance of children to speak about prior abusive experiences. Fear of their assailant's threats of their Parents reaction may be the cause of their reluctance. Also some children may be either too young to understand their experience or unable to speak for themselves".

"The African Charter of the Rights and welfare of the child of 1999 provides that children must be protected from all forms of treatments, physical, mental or sexual abuse and neglect or maltreatment" [17]. "The Child Right Act of 2003 also provides that children must be protected from: child marriage, Child betrothal, tattoos and skin marks, exposure and use of narcotic drugs, abduction, removal and transfer of the child from lawful custody, Child labour and unlawful sexual intercourse" [18]. "However, situation of children in Nigeria is not too palatable. A report by UNICEF disclosed that 852,298 under-five children died in Nigeria in 2021. Similarly, 64 percent of children between the ages of 12 and 23 months lacked access to prescribed vaccines, stated the WHO. Another report says six million of Nigeria's 17 million food-insecure persons are children aged under five, and living mostly in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara states. About 20.5 million children are out-of-school nationwide, with the highest prevalence in the North-East and North-West. A 2021 report by the United Nations stated that 60 percent of internally displaced persons in the country are children. With this media contribution to stem the menace is imperative" [19].

"It was ascertained that the broadcast media including the television is a potent tool that is capable of setting agenda on burning issues and able to persuade the audience and make them take necessary action when and where needed" [20]. Consequently, studying how the television through drama programme is faring in promoting child rights and prevention abuses of all kinds among the residents of Abuja Municipal Area remains imperative. Hence, the need to evaluate how Nigerian Television

Authority's Drama Programmes are used to address the issue of child abuse among Residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council Federal Capital Territory Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

"Despite the joy associated with the birth of Children, many remain victims of Abuse, Violence and exploitation. They are easy victims of violence because they are weaker in size Stature and mental capabilities" [21]. Drama can serve as both an educational tool and a learning process. As a learning process it can be used to identify, analyse and discuss community problem as well as seek solutions to them with the participation of community member. As an educational tool, it can be used to communicate information on different issues to bring about attitudinal and behavioural change [14].

Interestingly there have been several scholarly endeavours on the broadcast, media including the role television plays using drama in mitigating child abuse in Nigeria [22, 23, 24], none of these specifically investigated "Evaluation of Nigerian Television Authority Drama Programmes in Curbing Child Abuse among residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria". This is the gap which this study seeks to fill.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of awareness of Nigerian Television Authority Drama Programmes on Child Abuse among residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council?
2. What is the perception on Nigerian Television Authority Drama Programmes on Child Abuse among residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council?
3. What is the level of exposure of Nigerian Television Authority Drama Programmes on Child abuse Among Residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council?
4. How effective are Nigerian Television Authority Drama Programmes in influencing Abuja Municipal Area Council Residents behaviour on issues of Child Abuse.

Literature Review

Who is a child?

A child according to [25] defines a child as a recently born human being or a young person of either six between infancy and youth. Oyero [26] made a clarification on different categories of a child. A very young child under the age of about 18 months is a baby or (more formally) an infant. A child who has just learned how to walk is a toddler. A child up to the age of 9 or 10 is sometimes a little girl or a boy can be anyone up to the age about 20. However, someone aged between 13 and 19 may prefer to be called a teenager or a young or a young woman or young man.

Child Abuse

In his own contribution Ejiofor et al [27] said “child Abuse is a form of Child abuse or molestation which includes any sexual activity between an adult and a minor. A Child due to his or her low maturity and sense of reasoning cannot wisely consent to any form of sexual activity. To this effect, when a perpetrator takes advantage of the low sense maturity of the child, and engages him or her into sex or related event, he is considered to have either deceived or forced the minor into having sexual activity with him. And the calamity associated with this abominable act may be lasting effects on the victims for years if proper care is not taken. Child sexual abuse does not imply to only when the predator engages in a physical contact with the child, sometime it can be in words, signs or even by exposure”.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Laws on Child Abuse in Nigeria

Despite all the national and international legal instruments put in place for the protection of children [16] says many still suffer various forms of child abuse. This implies that the laws created to protect them are not effective. There are multiple factors responsible for the ineffectiveness of such laws and policies in Nigeria ranging from:

- i. Poor enforcement mechanism
- ii. Lack of awareness
- iii. Poverty
- iv. Non adoption of the Child Rights Act of 2003
- v. Inefficient judicial power.
- vi. Corruption
- vii. Negative attitude of parents.

- viii. Sex offender treatment programmes
- ix. Cultural and traditional influence.
- x. Lack of political will and
- xi. Domestic Violence against women

Categories of Child Abuse

There are four (4) main categories of Child Abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect, Sexual abuse and child labour [28].

a. Physical Abuse

“Studies from countries around the world suggest that a large number of children suffer physical punishment in their homes and it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged between 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect during the past years” [29, 30]. “Physical abuse can range from minor bruises to severe fractures or death as a result of punching, beating, hitting, shaking or otherwise” [31].

b. Emotional Abuse and Neglect

“Emotional abuse is a behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-esteem. It may include threats, constant criticism as well as withholding love, support or guidance. Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic physical and emotional needs. Neglect is a very common type of child abuse and according to child welfare information gateway, more children suffer from neglect than from physical and sexual abuse combined” [32].

c. Sexual Abuse and Child Prostitution

“Sexual abuse of a child is any sexual act between an adult and a child which may include sexual intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex, sodomy, inappropriate touching or kissing. "An overview of studies in 21 countries (mostly developed) found that 7-31% of women and 3-29% of men reported sexual victimisation during childhood and majority of studies found girls to be abused at 1.5-3 times the rate of males". [33] Most of the abuse occurred within the family circle [33] Child prostitution "involves offering

the sexual services of a child or inducing a child to perform sexual acts for a form of compensation, financial or otherwise" [34]. "Worldwide, approximately 1 million children are forced into prostitution but the adults who engaged in prostitution or offer a child's sexual services to others force them. It is estimated that at list One Million girls worldwide are lured or forced into this scandalous form of child exploitation. Child prostitution is more frequent in developing countries such as Brazil and Thailand where more than 200,000 children are exploited" [35].

Child prostitution is not only a cause of death and high morbidity of millions of children, but a gross violation of their rights. Prostitution negatively affects children's sexual health, causes psychological harm and puts them at risk for enduring increased violence.

- i. **Sexual Health:** "Child prostitutes are the risk of contracting HIV and other infections. HIV infection rates in prostituted children range from 5% in Vietnam to 17% in Thailand. Prostituted children are STDS" [35].
- ii. **Psychological Harm:** Child prostitution also causes serious long-term psychological harm, including anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders. Prostituted children are at a high risk of suicide and posttraumatic stress disorder.
- iii. **Violence:** Prostituted children are of a very of high risk of enduring injuries and violence. The children may be physically and emotionally abused into submission, while girls may be beaten to induce miscarriages.

d. Child Labour

"Child labour is a problem worldwide but it particularly affects children in developing countries. Child labour is characterized by full-time work at too early of an age, and too many hours spent working. The work often exerts undue physical, social or psychological stress, hampers access to education and may be detrimental to social and psychological development. The ILO's statistical information and monitoring programmes on child labour recently estimated that 211 million children or 18% of children aged 5-14 are economically active worldwide, 60% of those working children lives in Asia, and 23% live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most economically active children are employed in Agriculture. In Cambodia, the rate is 73% while in Morocco it is 84%" [36].

Empirical Review

In the study carried out by Olusegun and Idowu [16] on Child Abuse in Nigeria: “Dimension Reason for its persistence and probable solutions was established that laws put in place to protect children in Nigeria are not effective because so many other factors exist which inhibit their effective implementation. The study recommended among other that there should be public awareness on the laws relating to child abuse”.

In another study by Orlu-Orlu [37] on “perception of Nigeria Television Authority and channels Television Reportage of the Chibok School Girls Abduction among Residents of South-East Nigeria” it was found that, “the credibility of level of the Nigeria Television Authority’s reports on the abduction of the Chibok school girls was rated low while that of Channels Television was highly rated. It was recommended that the Federal Government (owner of the Nigerian Television Authority) must restrain itself from interfering with the activities of journalist in the stations”.

Egbo [38] evaluated newspaper coverage of “Sexual Violence Against Women and Children in Selected Nigeria Newspapers”. “The study aimed at ascertaining if Nigeria newspapers give prominence to sexual violence stories; determining how often Newspapers report sexual violence issues, ascertaining whether newspapers report sexual violence more as features than as straight news editorial or letters to the editors. Through content analysis, the researcher found that Nigeria Newspaper do not give prominence to sexual violence stories. This they have done by not placing them on the front pages, newspapers do not frequently report sexual violence, the selected newspapers do not amply utilise features in presenting sexual violence stories. The researcher recommended that women organisations should set up newspapers which would be their mouth piece against sexual violence”.

Abubakar&Okloho (2016) in Ojiakor et al [25], researched on the “Implication of Girl Child Abuse on Womanhood”. “The study focused on the informal sector where most of the children are involved in housemaid, manufacturing and maintenance activities. Nigeria has a staggering millions of under aged girls who are daily abused in one form or the other both in cities are rural areas. Many of these girls are sexually abused by their employer and his household. These forms of abuse constitute a threat to the girl child in the form of brain injury school dropout, teenage pregnancies among others. Recommendations

were given, among which include that there should be awareness Campaign on the evils of girl child abuse in the country and government should make girl child abuse a criminal offence”.

In a study by Ekuri [23] on “Influence of African Independent Television as A Watchdog Against Child Abuse and Labour with A Particular Focus to Child Trafficking: A Study of Gariki Residents of Abuja Metropolis” it was found that “the programmes aired on AIT helped in discouraging the practice of Child Abuse and Labour, which clearly indicates a positive relationship between television and Child Abuse prevention and control”.

According to a study conducted by Halima [20], it was revealed that “NAPTIP on air on broadcast media creates necessary awareness on fight against child abuse in Nigeria, this can be affirmed when 95% of the sampled population attested to this fact. Also, the study revealed that NAPTIP on air on broadcast media assists in combatting child abuse in Nigeria, when 75% of the total respondents affirmed this”.

Furthermore, a study by Omolayo and Moyinoluwa [2] on “Evaluation of the Influence of Ogun State Television’s Omo Ode Oni Programme on the Knowledge of Family Wellness among Residents of Abeokuta South” revealed that “the area was aware of Omo Ode Oni and have high knowledge of family wellness because of their exposure to the television programme on OGTV”.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research using questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The survey design was used here due its inherent advantages over other research designs which as Wimmer & Dominick (2011) cited in Kusugh and Kente [39] include: (i) It is relatively inexpensive when considered in terms of the amount of information it generates; (ii) using this research method, a large amount of information is gathered from different people with ease as compared with other research methods; (iii) it is not limited by geographic constraints or boundaries and can be conducted anywhere; (iv) Survey research is reasonably accurate especially when the sampling is correct; (v) results gotten from surveys can be generalized because the sample population is large and very representative of the entire research population; and (vi) survey can be used to

investigate problems in a realistic setting i.e. the problems can be examined where they exist or happen rather than in a laboratory or under an artificial condition.

The population of the study comprised residents of the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Federal Capital Territory, Abujawho were exposed to Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) which according to statistics obtained from Worldmeter (2021) was 925, 936 people. Out of the population size of 925936, a sample size of 385 was determined using calculator.net. under the confidence level of 95%, margin error of 5% and population proportion of 50% as shown below:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample size: **385**

This means 385 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within $\pm 5\%$ of the measured/surveyed value.

Confidence Level:

95%:

Margin of Error:

Population Proportion:

Use 50% if not sure

Population Size:

Leave blank if unlimited population size

(<https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html?>).

Respondents in the study were sampled using multistage sampling technique involving cluster sampling, purposive sampling, simple random sampling and proportionate sampling techniques, while the data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables and simple percentages.

Table 1: The extent of the participants awareness of NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY Drama programmes on abuse?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
To a very little extent	89	23.1	23.1
To a little extent	113	29.4	52.5
To a great extent	100	26.0	78.4
To very great extent	38	9.9	88.3
Difficult to say	45	11.7	100.0
Total	385	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 outlined the participants' level of awareness of Nigerian Television Authority drama programmes concerning abuse. The data revealed that 23.1% of the participants displayed very limited awareness of Nigerian Television Authority drama programs on child abuse, 29.4% had a somewhat limited awareness, 26% exhibited a substantial extent of awareness, 9.9% demonstrated a very high level of awareness, whereas 11.7% expressed uncertainty. Consequently, the results indicate that most of the respondents possess a limited extent of awareness regarding Nigerian Television Authority drama programmes on child abuse

Table 2: Which of the following is your perception of NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY Drama programmes on Child Abuse?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Satisfactory	5	1.3	1.3
Very satisfactory	226	58.7	60.0
Unsure	2	.5	60.5
Very poor	1	.3	60.8
Weak	151	39.2	100.0
Total	385	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 revealed the participants perception on Nigerian Television Authority drama programmes on child abuse. The table showed that most of the respondents, 58.7%, had a very satisfactory perception of the programmes, 1.3% was satisfactory, 0.5% were unsure, 0.3% perception was very poor, while the perception 39.2% was weak.

Table 3: What is your level of exposure to Nigerian Television Authority Drama programmes on Child Abuse in your area?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Low	72	18.7	18.7
Low	127	33.0	51.7
High	97	25.2	76.9
Very High	23	6.0	82.9

Difficult to say	66	17.1	100.0
Total	385	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 showed the respondents level of exposure to Nigerian Television Authority drama programmes on child abuse. The table indicated that most of the respondents, 33%, level of exposure to the programme was low, 18.7% had very low exposure, 25.2% exposure was high, while 6% was very high and 17.1% find it difficult to say their level of exposure.

Table 4: How effective are Nigerian Television Authority Drama programmes in influencing your behaviour on issues of Child Abuse?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Ineffective	76	19.7	19.7
Effective	194	50.4	70.1
Very effective	91	23.6	93.8
Very ineffective	24	6.2	100.0
Total	385	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 showed the respondents view on how effective are Nigerian Television Authority drama programmes in influencing behaviour on issues concerning child abuse. it was indicated that most of the respondents, 50.4%, believed the programmes effectively influence their behaviour to issues on child abuse, while 19.7% were of the opinion that it was ineffective, 23.6% were of the opinion that it is very effective and 6.2% said it is very ineffective.

Conclusion And Recommendations

The findings from this indicated the analytical view of the participants' perception, awareness, exposure, and effectiveness of Nigerian Television Authority drama programs on child abuse. hence, it was indicated that, a significant number of the participants displays limited awareness of Nigerian Television Authority drama programs concerning child abuse. Nearly half of the respondents showed either very limited or somewhat limited awareness. This highlights the potential need for increased outreach or

promotional efforts to enhance awareness about these crucial programs. This finding corroborates with the finding of Nsude and Onu [40] on coverage of child abuse in online versions of Nigerian newspapers. Using content analysis to ascertain frequency of child abuse stories, their depths, frames, and tones as well as the prominence given to the stories, their findings indicated that child abuse stories were few with less-than-desired depths but having more of tones considered favourable to the interest of abuse victims and frames that tend towards advocacy. The findings gave an impression that more efforts need to be made by online newspapers to further ethically highlight the abuse of children by giving increased coverage to abuse stories, projecting them in the right frames and further improving on the existing advocacy skills of their reporters and online editors. However, Ojiakor, Anyanwu, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Duru [25] findings revealed a moderate level of awareness of radio programme on the campaign against child abuse.

Despite the limited awareness, the participants largely expressed a highly satisfactory or satisfactory perception of the programs. This seemingly contradictory situation between awareness and perception suggests that those who are aware of the programs have a positive view of them. However, expanding the understanding and reach of these programs is essential to ensure their impact is maximized across a broader audience. Additionally, the level of exposure to the programs varied among the participants, with a significant percentage reporting low or very low exposure. This emphasizes the importance of increasing the accessibility and visibility of these programs to the target audience, potentially through enhanced broadcasting or promotional activities.

However, half of the respondents believed that Nigerian Television Authority drama programs effectively influence their behavior on issues concerning child abuse. This highlights the potential of these programs in fostering positive behavioral changes, indicating their importance as a tool for awareness and education.

The findings, therefore, point to the need for a multi-faceted approach to address the discrepancies identified. This may involve targeted promotional campaigns to enhance awareness, ensuring broader accessibility to the programs, and further evaluating ways to enhance their effectiveness in influencing behaviors regarding child abuse issues. Such an approach could help maximize the impact of Nigerian

Television Authority drama programs and contribute to meaningful societal change in addressing child abuse concerns.

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