HUMANUS DISCOURSE Vol. 4. NO 5. 2024
ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Influence of Television on the Social Behaviour of Undergraduates of University of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

The mass media, particularly television, has progressively merged into our everyday lives as a source of entertainment, education, and information. Most of the shows that undergraduates view are for their entertainment. However, the more they expose themselves to television entertainment concerning the amount of time spent watching entertainment programmes, the greater the chance to develop a worldview and a perception of reality like what they watch overtime on television. It is on this premise that this study seeks to investigate the influence of "Jenifa's diary" (TV series) on undergraduate at the University of Lagos, (UNILAG). This research adopted the survey method using a multi-staged sampling technique to select undergraduates from faculties in UNILAG. Participant responded to self-structured Questionnaires and descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions raised in the study. Results show that Television comedy programmes such as Jenifa's diary had significant influence on the undergraduates' way of dressing, talking, and patterns of relating with people. Also, that TV viewing influenced the undergraduates' choice of role models and perception of ideal social lifestyles. This study observed that a significant percentage of the population of the study were habitual TV viewers and that their TV contents had both exposed them to and influenced their preference for foreign

social lifestyles. It was concluded that exorbitant youthful lifestyle, high standard of living, and extravagant spending among some undergraduates in UNILAG is influenced by television role models. This study recommends that undergraduate TV viewers should be mindful of the contents of what they choose to watch on TV as such could have either positive or negative influence on their social behaviour.

Keywords: *Jenifa's diary*, Television, social behaviour, university undergraduates, Nigeria.

Introduction

More than ever before, the media shapes people's daily lives, political views, and cultural practices[1]. The mass media, particularly television, has progressively merged into our everyday lives as a source of entertainment, education, and information[2]. A functioning media is, however, crucial to the society's existence[3]. Broadly speaking, mass media is how various forms of news and information are distributed to the public via print and electronic sources[4].

Television is an electronic communication medium that allows the transmission of real-time images and sounds[5]. Watching television refers to the amount of time and focus an individual gives to watching television, such as how much time undergraduates spend watching television shows or content. One cannot stress enough how crucial television is to education and information distribution. It is a special kind of communication that uses a combination of color, motion, sound, picture, drama, and other components to provide information, education, advertisement, entertainment, publicity, and other services to the public[6]. Young people can learn valuable life lessons, social standards, and values from television shows.

The university period is a transition period in which students are just starting to seriously break their dependence on their parents, at least as far as their own identity is concerned. According to Festle[7], the media provides them with a less intimidating and more impartial perspective to relate to their peers. Unfortunately, due to the quest for self-identities by university students, they are a lot more susceptible to suggestions and all the perceived peer pressure

[1] Brady William, Jane Willis, Michael Burkart, John Jost and Van Bavel. *An ideological asymmetry in the diffusion of moralized content on social media among political leaders.* (Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 2019), p. 148 (10).
[2] Heiphetz, Larisa. *The development and consequences of moral essentialism*. (Advances in Child Development and Behavior, 2020), p. 59, 165–194.
[3] Shannon, C. *Effective Management Communication Strategies within an Organization.* Walden University, 2018
[4] Badrinathan, Sumitra. *Educative interventions to combat misinformation: evidence from a field experiment in India.* (American Political Science Review, 2021), p. 115
[5]Ernie, K. Television. https://www.learning-english-online.net/vocabulary/public-life/mediaand-communication/tv/list-1/ (2018.)
[6] Badrinathan, Sumitra. *Educative interventions to combat misinformation: evidence from a field experiment in India.* (American Political Science Review, 2021), p. 115
[7] Festle, Robert. *Social media literacy & adolescent social online behavior in Germany.* (Journal of Children and Media, 2020), p. 15

from the media which can overwhelm their opinions, and what they should think and feel without realizing it[8].

It has been found that most of the shows that undergraduates view are for their entertainment, such as musical videos, movies, soap operas, etc.[9] However, the influence of these programmes on undergraduate students may not be immediate or effective due to some other variables like family, social groups, peer groups, etc. Nevertheless, the influence might lead the students to false ideals and negative social behaviours[10]. However, the more they expose themselves to television entertainment concerning the amount of time spent to watch entertainment programmes, the greater the chance for them to develop a worldview and a perception of reality similar to what they watch overtime on television[11].

Students at universities are exposed to a variety of drama, entertainment, and educational opportunities through television. However, because watching television involves a lot of activities that take time to complete, it can divert students from other types of activities[12]. This thereby makes them struggle to focus on homework, lessons, and other activities that can aid in their cognitive development.[13]Most parents, educators, and members of the public seem concerned about the amount of time students spend watching these television shows.[14]

Students have been found to watch a variety of television shows for 45 minutes to an hour every day. This explains why students are performing poorly in school.[15] According to Chukwueke and Onuoha,[16] children in Nigeria watch television an average of 4 hours a day, or 28 hours a week; children in the United States watch television an average of fourteen hours a week, according

[8]Cho Hyunyi, Li William, and Shen L. *social media and attitude toward e-cigarette use among adolescents: motivations, mediators and moderators.* (Journal of Medical Internet Research, 2019), p. 21

[9] Roman Klinger and Svensson. *The end of media logics? On algorithms and agency.* (New Media & Society, 2018), p. 20.

[10] Festle, Robert. *Social media literacy & adolescent social online behavior in Germany.* (Journal of Children and Media, 2020), p. 15

[11] Roman Klinger and Svensson. *The end of media logics? On algorithms and agency.* (New Media & Society, 2018), p. 20.

[12] Amy Orben and Przybylski. *Screens, teens, and psychological well-being: evidence from three time-use diary studies.* (Psychological Science, 2019), p. 30(5): 682–696.

[13] Chukwuemeka Chukwueke and Onuoha, J. *Availability and Utilization of Audio-Visual Resources for Teaching and Learning in Government Day Secondary School, Nukkai, Jalingo, Taraba State.* (IJKD, 2020), p. 1 (2)

[14] Joseph Gona, Newton, C., Hartley, S., and Bunning, K. *Persons with disabilities as experts-by experience: Using personal narratives to affect community attitudes in Kilifi, Kenya. (*BMC International Health and Human Rights, 2020), p. 18(1) https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-018-0158-2

[15] Flayelle M., Maurage P., Vögele C., Karila L., and Billieux J. *Time for a plot twist: Beyond confirmatory approaches to binge-watching research.* Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 2018.

[16] Amy Orben and Przybylski. *Screens, teens, and psychological well-being: evidence from three time-use diary studies.* (Psychological Science, 2019), p. 30(5): 682–696.

to Janicke-Bowles et al.[17] and children in Australia watch television an average of seven hours a week.[18]

The way university students consume media has changed because of advancements in technology and the growth of the Internet. This change has transferred to streaming services on the internet[5]. Viewers can now enjoy their favorite shows whenever and wherever they choose and no longer need to adhere to a planned broadcast.[19] Since there are no commercial breaks in between episodes, viewers can watch full seasons and episodes of a variety of TV shows, making the use of television viewing portals a more valuable method to watch TV.[20]

It is on this premise that this study seeks to investigate the influence of *Jenifa's diary* on undergraduate university students at the University of Lagos. *Jenifa's Diary* is a Nigerian television comedy series, created by Funke Akindele. The series is part of the Jenifa franchise, based on a naive and funny character of the same name. *Jenifa's Diary* has twenty-four seasons and is currently active and ongoing. Jenifa as a movie character portrayed as being unsuccessful with her education but she gets a job. This current study also aims to find out the role of television in shaping social behaviour among undergraduate students at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria. To this end the objectives of this study include to examine the influence of *Jenifa's diary* on social behaviour among undergraduate of university students of Lagos (UNILAG); to ascertain if undergraduate students' preferences for *Jenifa's diary* influence their social behaviour. Also, this study aims to explore if the time spent watching *Jenifa's diary* influences their social behaviour; and if the education level of the participants influences their viewership pattern of *Jenifa's diary*. Finally, to investigate the consequences of entertainment programmes (*Jenifa's diary*) on university undergraduates' social behaviour.

Research Questions

What is the influence of Jenifa's diary on social behaviour among undergraduates in UNILAG?

How do UNILAG undergraduates' preferences for *Jenifa's diary* influence their social behaviour?

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[17] Janicke-Bowles, Raney, A., Oliver, M., Dale, K., Jones, P. and Cox, D. *"Exploring the spirit in US audiences: the role of the virtue of transcendence in inspiring media consumption".* (Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 2021), Vol. 98 No. 2, pp. 428-450, doi: 10.1177/1077699019894927.

[18] Salaudeen, M., and Onyechi, N. *Digital media vs mainstream media: Exploring the influences of media exposure and information preference as correlates of media credibility.* (Cogent Arts & Humanities, 2020), pp. 7(1), 1837461. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1837461

[19] Chukwuemeka Chukwueke and Onuoha, J. *Availability and Utilization of Audio-Visual Resources for Teaching and Learning in Government Day Secondary School, Nukkai, Jalingo, Taraba State.* (IJKD, 2020), p. 1 (2)

[20] Lin, W., Liu, C. and Yi, C. *Exposure to Sexually Explicit Media in Early Adolescence Is Related to Risky Sexual Behavior in Emerging Adulthood.* (PLOS ONE, 2020), pp. 15. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0230242

Does the time spent watching *Jenifa's diary* influence social behaviour of undergraduates of UNILAG?

Does the undergraduates' level of education influence the viewership pattern of *Jenifa's diary*?

What are the consequences of the entertainment program (*Jenifa's diary*) on social behaviour of undergraduates in UNILAG?

Materials and Method

This research adopts the survey method. This entails the use of a quantitative research approach to data gathering and analysis to draw inferences and logical conclusions.

Population of the study

The study population is undergraduate students the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

Sampling technique

In this study, multi-staged sampling technique was adopted. Specifically, the study divided the sampling into four stages. At the first stage, the study used simple random sampling to select five faculties (Social Sciences, Business Administration, Sciences, Arts, and Faculty of Education). Secondly, Simple random sampling was used to select two Departments across the selected faculties. At the third Stage, in each department selected, simple random sampling was used to select 2 levels (200 and 300 level). At the fourth stage a simple random sampling to select 100 respondents across selected faculty, departments, and levels at the University of Lagos

Instruments

Structured Questionnaires was used to gather data for this study. The questionnaires were divided into two sections, Section A contained items on the demography of respondents, while the items in Section B focused on eliciting answers for the research questions of this study.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1: Presentation of Demographic variables

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	60	60.0
Female	40	40.0
Total	100	100.0
Age		
≤ 16-17 years	30	30.0

≥18-19 years	70	70.0
Total	100	100.0
Faculty		
Social Sciences	20	20.0
Education	20	20.0
Arts	20	20.0
Sciences	20	20.0
Business administration	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0
Department		
Education economics	10	10.0
Education administration	10	10.0
Sociology	10	10.0
Geography	10	10.0
Actuarial science	10	10.0
Insurance	10	10.0
Botany	10	10.0
Fishery	10	10.0
Philosophy	10	10.0
History	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0
Level of Study		
200 level	60	60.0
300 level	40	40.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: *researchers' field work*

As shown in Table 1, the gender distribution of respondents revealed that 60% of the respondents were males while 40% of the respondents were females. This shows that most of the respondents were males. The implication from the findings of this study is that males were well represented than females. Table1 also showed that 30% of the respondents were aged ≤ 16-17 years while 70% of the respondents were aged ≥18-19 years (mean age = 17.1±1.30). This implies that most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-19. Also, Table 1 revealed that all respondents were selected equally across the ten departments. Finally, 60% of the respondents are in the 200 level while 40% are in the 300 level. This implies that most of the respondents are currently in the 200 level in the academic session.

Analysis of Research Questions

Table 2: Watch *Jenifa's Diary* on Television

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	64	64.0
No	36	36.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: *researchers' field work*

Table 2 shows that out of the respondents in this distribution 64% watch entertainment programs on television and 36% do not watch entertainment programs on television. This implies that most respondents love watching *Jenifa's diary* on Television.

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Table 3: Reason for Preferred Content in *Jenifa's Diary*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Comedy	18	18.0
Current happenings & social media	44	44.0
Talk/interactive drama	6	6.0
Drama/soap opera character	8	8.0
Drama series	24	24.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: *researchers' field work*

Table 3 shows that out of the respondents, 18% prefer *Jenifa's diary* because of comedy, 44% current happenings and social media happenings, 6% talk/interactive drama, 8% drama/soap opera characters, and 24% drama series. This implies that a large proportion of the respondents prefer *Jenifa's diary* because of current happening and social media content.

Table 4: What *Jenifa's diary* television series has influenced about you

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
My way of dressing	12	12.0
My way of talking	10	10.0
The way I relate with people	16	16.0
My role models	18	18.0
My ideal social life	24	24.0
No influence	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

Source*: researchers' field work*

The Table 4 shows that out of the respondents, *Jenifa's diary* has influenced 12% way of dressing, 10% of their way of talking, their way of relating with people 16%, their choice of role model 18%, 24% of ideal social life, while 20% indicated it has no influence.

Table 5: Frequency of Watching *Jenifa's Diary*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	18	18.0
Very often	38	38.0
Often	24	24.0
Sometimes	12	12.0
Rarely	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source*: researchers' field work*

Table 5 shows that out of the respondents, 18% watch *Jenifa's diary* always, 38% very often, 24% often, 12% sometimes, and 8% rarely. This implies that the majority of the respondents watch *Jenifa's diary* very often.

Table 6: Consequences of Watching Entertainment Television Programs on Social Behavior

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Addiction to TV lifestyle	56	56.0
Exposure to western social lifestyle	24	24.0
Exorbitant youthful lifestyle	10	10.0
High standard of living	6	6.0
Extravagant spending	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: *researchers' field work*

Table 8 shows that out of the respondents, 56% are addicted to TV, 24% are exposed to a Western social lifestyle, 10% exorbitant youthful lifestyle, 6% high standard of living, and 4% have *extravagant* spending. This implies that majority of the respondents are addicted to the television lifestyle.

Discussions

First the finding of this study revealed that entertainment plays a vital role in shaping the social behaviour of university undergraduates. In the study conducted by Tsuladze,[21] 29% of television watchers do so for both leisure and education. This was affirmed by the study outcome which shows that out of the respondents in this distribution 64% watch entertainment programmes on television. Also, 70% of the respondents have learned social behaviour from entertainment programmes on television. In addition, 98% of the respondents have been influenced by what they see on entertainment television programs.

More so, 62% imitate the behaviour of their favorite act on entertainment television. The study also reveals that entertainment television has changed the way 44% of the respondents speak, the way 24% relate with friends, the fashion life of 14%, and how 18% use social media. Additionally, Ahmed,[22] observed diverse television-watching patterns among undergraduate students and identified the elements that influence social behavior in their study.

Secondly, the findings of the study showed that a large proportion of the university undergraduates prefer current happening and social media content in *Jenifa's diary*. The study also shows that out of the respondents, 18% prefer comedy, 44% prefer current happenings and social media happenings, 6% prefer talk/interactive shows, 8% prefer drama/soap operas, and 24% prefer reality TV shows. Also, 80% indicated that their choice of preferred entertainment content has influenced their social behaviour. Moreover, entertainment television programs help 56% decide on what to do in their daily social life. In addition, 70% of the respondents imitate the character of their favorite entertainment television programs in their day-to-day activities.

Thirdly, it was discovered from the findings that students' time spent watching *Jenifa's diary* influenced their social behaviour. These results are consistent with

[21] Tsuladze, L. *Qualitative methods of the sociological research.* Publishing House of the University, (2020).
[22] Ahmed, I. *Television and women's reproductive behavior: Evidence from Uganda.* Journal of Media Economics, 2022), pp. 34(3), 135–151. https://doi.org/10.1080/08997764.2022.2099874

previous research. According to research by Ahluwalia & Singh[23] and Kubrak,[24] students watch two hours or fewer of TV every day on average, and most of them watch it right before bed. They watched TV primarily for entertainment and learning. Students' most preferred program was music and reality shows/series, followed by sports programs. About 50% of the respondents watch television in the evening. This is because the respondents are students who receive lectures all through the early hours of the day. Also, 38% of respondents watch entertainment programs very often. 62% of the respondents watch their favorite program for one hour and thirty minutes. A large proportion of the respondents watch entertainment program shows on weekdays.

Fourthly, the Education levels of undergraduate students influence their viewership pattern of entertainment programs. Existing literature validates the findings of this study. The significant proportion of viewers who are second-year students is indicative of this. Long TV viewing sessions may be a sign of poor self-control or inaccurately estimating the long-term costs of TV usage, both of which can lower people's well-being.[25] It must also be noted that the 300-level students have less TV viewing time, this is because they have come to the realization of the effect on their primary goal as students. Watching TV is a major human activity because of its immediate benefits of engaging the mind and brain in mental exercise. It is for many people tempting to view TV rather than to pursue more engaging activities. Consequently, individuals with incomplete control over and foresight into their behaviour watch more TV than they consider optimal for themselves, and their well-being is lower than what could be achieved. This was affirmed by the findings which showed that out of the respondents; 60% are currently in the 200 level while 40% are in the 300 level.

Finally, it can be said that entertainment programs on television have some consequences on university students' social behaviour, some of which were revealed in this study. Existing literature affirms the findings of this study. Smith[26] in a study discovered that TV has a long-term effect on people's thinking. Therefore, instead of glamorization, portrayal of crime, and commercialization, positive trends need to be introduced on TV channels to preserve our values. This assertion is established in the study, out of the respondents, 56% are addicted to TV, 24% are exposed to a Western social lifestyle, 10% exorbitant youthful lifestyle, 6% high standard of living, and 4% have extravagant spending. This implies that the majority of the respondents are addicted to the television lifestyle. On this note, it is not out of place to say that, *Jenifa's diary* as an entertainment television program plays a significant role in shaping the behaviour of undergraduate students.

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[23] Ahluwalia, A. and Singh, R. *TV Viewing Habits amongst Urban Children, IUP* (Journal of Marketing Management, 2011), pp. Vol. 10(1), 45-62
[24] Kubrak, T. *Impact of films: changes in young people's attitudes after watching a movie.* Behavioral Sciences, 2020). pp. 10(5), 86.
[25] Ahluwalia, A. and Singh, R. *TV Viewing Habits amongst Urban Children, IUP* (Journal of Marketing Management, 2011), pp. Vol. 10(1), 45-62
[26] Smith, K., and Pollak, S. *Early life stress and perceived social isolation influence how children use value information to guide behavior.* (Child development, 2022), pp. 93(3), 804-814.

In addition, Croes & Bartels[27] this study opined that television as a medium has been of tremendous influence on teenager's behaviour whether positive or negative as it has changed the way we socialize with our peers, the way teachers teach, governments govern, and religious leaders preach. It has changed the way we organize the furniture in our homes and our world view of our immediate environment. Also, Ramšak[28], comments that television is a molder of the soul's geography. It builds up incrementally a psychic structure of expectations. It does so in much the same way that school lessons slowly, over the years, tutor the unformed mind and teach it how to think. Smith[29] is also of the view that television has become an unavoidable and unremitting factor in shaping what we are and what we will become. Kubrak,[30] study discovered that unsupervised leisure has almost always been considered a major source of trouble and has posed a threat to teenagers' or young people's moral development.

Croes & Bartels[31] found in their study which highlights the various reasons for Indian youth to watch television as a generation of knowledge and learning, a medium of relaxation (entertainment), and to pass the time. The media are one of the most powerful agents of socialization on the planet today and are widely believed to play a part in the early socialization of children and the long-term socialization of teenagers, adolescents, and adults.[32] Because socialization is such a long-term process and partly because any effect from the media interacts with other social background influences and variable modes of socialization within families. On this note, it is not out of place to say that television viewership pattern influences the social behavior of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it is concluded that among undergraduates, Television comedy programmes such as *Jenifa's diary* has influence on the way of dressing, talking, and patterns of relating with people. Also, Television viewing influence the undergraduates' choice of role models and what they see as an ideal social life. Also, this study concludes that a significant percentage of the population of the study are habitual TV viewers, and which has both exposed them to and influenced their preference for foreign /Western social lifestyle. Finally, it is also concluded that exorbitant youthful lifestyle, high

[27] Croes, E., and Bartels, J. *Young adults' motivations for following social influencers and their relationship to identification and buying behavior.* (Computers in Human Behavior, 2021), pp. 124, 106910.
[28] Ramšak, Mojca. *Brand Stretching and Popular Culture. In: Social Impact of Wine Marketing. Contributions to Management Science.* Springer, Cham (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89224-1_13
[29] Smith, K., and Pollak, S. *Early life stress and perceived social isolation influence how children use value information to guide behavior.* (Child development, 2022), pp. 93(3), 804-814.
[30] Kubrak, T. *Impact of films: changes in young people's attitudes after watching a movie.* Behavioral Sciences, 2020). pp. 10(5), 86.
[31] Croes, E., and Bartels, J. *Young adults' motivations for following social influencers and their relationship to identification and buying behavior.* (Computers in Human Behavior, 2021), pp. 124, 106910.
[32] Ma, Y. *Effects of Regional Creativity Factors on Regional Growths.* Journal of the Korea Academia-Industrial cooperation Society, 2018), pp. 19(2), 228-237.

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

standard of living, and extravagant spending among some undergraduates in UNILAG is influenced by television role models.

This study has thus shown that university undergraduates regularly view television programmes and that these programmes also socialize them into adopting to the behaviours and lifestyles of famous actors. TV is regarded as a valuable tool for entertainment, easing stress, and a medium of getting information which is widely adopted by a great number of students. There is no gainsaying that in the 20th and the 21st centuries, TV has become one of the hottest media with its potential for sight and sound. Hence, lots of viewers watch television for learning which according to behavioral psychologists, is a key influencer of behaviour. Therefore, it is pertinent to say that entertainment television plays a significant role in shaping the social behaviour of undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, Television viewers particularly undergraduates are advised to be mindful of the contents of TV programs they choose to view, because, in line with the social learning theory what they learn through TV contents will most likely modify their social behaviours either positively or negatively.