

## THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN EDO STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This research work which examined the role of electronic media on childhood education in Edo state as a study was based on the research design called survey. Its sampling technique which happens to be the purposive sampling was used because of the specific population under research and children of schooling age. The questionnaire which served as a means of data collection was distributed amongst the children to elicit response. The total population of students in Esan West Local Government Area (Ekpoma) in Edo state was 16033 and a total of 100 primary school students were used for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used. The research work was set out to show that electronic media plays a significant role in the social orientation of children and that it is also seen as the primary and most important source of acquiring information. The findings showed that the electronic media especially the television was a powerful device in the lives of children. It enlightens them on how to interact with people and also a means where they cultivate violent attitudes towards people. The findings conclusively proved on the child being exposed as not all children are influenced by the electronic media in the same way.

**Keywords:** Electronic media, Childhood education.

### INTRODUCTION

Children in the contemporal time have opportunities to interact with other people beyond the members of their family and peers of like-minds. These are the functions of digital and media literacy which are tied to fundamental realities and active participation of children in their society. Engaging themselves with others helps them to clarify their own ideas and see the world from different perspectives. Through this process, their learning is deepened and they develop sense of connectively with other people around them. This is traced to the invention of electronic media which has become a powerful force in revolutionalizing man's ideas and actions. In realizing this fact about electronic media, it therefore serves as a means of communication which helps to create new set of common interests and loyalties which extends to the vast majority of children's learning. It is regarded as a powerful means of information dissemination.

Electronic media as a tool has new options of extending and enhancing education for the well being of the learner. Wilbur Schramin (2005) opined that young children learn by observation and imitation. Since eventually nearly every home in Nigeria has electronic media such as radio, television, computers, laptops, mobile phones, internet,` fax, CD-ROMS, DVD etc, the tendency for children to copy what they view in television or on their computers is inevitable. The role of electronic media on children education cannot be over emphasized in our present day society. Right from the time immemorial, children's learning is being influenced by their environment and not only what is taught in school.

With electronic media, children are influenced by what they hear and see, and then attempt to visualize their visual perception than what they learn in the school. This study is more of concern with the audio, visual and audio-visual media. With these concerns, education tends to develop towards communication in which the child can see and hear. This is so because in this contemporary times, man's life and existence, depends to a great extent on media for information or happenings in the society and the world at large. Also, the introduction of satellite communication has further reduced the world to a global village. This helps man to acquire education. The transformation of a child from childhood (which is a period between childhood to a self feeding), through the process of education. According to Farrant (2007), education is a process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of a society. He also sees education as the process by which a child acquires the culture, knowledge, skills, norms and values of his/her society.

Early childhood education therefore is a highly recognized and well promoted programme in which society gives her younger ones opportunities to learn phenomenal wealth of experiences at home school and the child's environment. Viewing this scenario, Heward (2009), obliged that children grow and developed in an orderly manner. That is they learn to move about their world, communicate and play. This automatically imbibes in them the ability to manipulate their environment and their level of independency increases.

In ministering to the needs of the helpless infants, parents established relationships with them which is most important in the future development of the children. Apart from the family, (the primary agent of the process of educating the child, other agents such as peer group, school and mass media is also worthy of note. The individual however is more than a mere bundle of habits and values, altitude and beliefs .they learned and are culturally patterned. This bundle of psychological elements is organized into a structure the "personality" in which the parts are related to others. A personality which possesses attribute that render it more than mere sum of its part. It is important to emphasize that education cannot be taken as a whole but an on-going process which extents development from childhood through adulthood to old age. For instance, norms such as basic rules about food and eating are transmitted to the individual child while norms such as courtship and marriage are postponed until later life. A great deal of education occurs in a deliberate form and also inadvertently without special instruction.

In developed societies, a greater except in the complex process of education has been taken over by mass media. At various stages in life, people learn some social norms from the media. This can reinforce the efforts of the family and schools or weaken and delute them in the educational process. Media may be deliberately utilized for education and indoctrination such as in educational television or in the exploitation of the people in authoritarian societies where the regime systematically tries to spread and sustain the values they approve. In a complex and heterogeneous society lacking "official" values and without a central direction and control, the influence of mass media is usually unplanned and uncertain potentially dysfunctional in relation to prevailing standards of some groups or to those of the whole society.

This may result in a gap in what it was intended and the result achieved, with unanticipated and unwanted consequences flowing from both the content and techniques of the media.

With these happenings, various government, Nigeria government in particular have of recent recognized the roles of mass media in childhood education and has broadly reflected in their

programme and planning such as free education programme, radio and television programmes like “seasame street” USA television children programmes, screen for kids, in Nigeria. Other media programme for children like tales by moonlight on Nigeria Television Authority [NTA] Benin stations, Junior opinion from NTA Enugu, Binta and friends from independent television [ITV] Benin, children on the move and ITV programmes and Kiddies corner on Edo Broadcasting station [EBS] radio e.t.c. These media programme help the children to ask for clarification about cultural heritages and ways of life, school challenges, radio programme, music from other state for children and host of others are all subtle attempts towards educating the children. The vital question which arises in this case is, how much dose electronic media contribute to the education of the child?

### **Statement of the problem**

In recent years, it has been discovered that the explosion in electronic media has been marketed directly at the very young children in the society, yet very little knowledge about how the influence of these changes have played out in young peoples’ lives. Watching television, video, computer games and internet constitute a significant part of children’s leisure time. High media exposure however, increased the risk of psychological systems in children, such as aggressions, difficulties of behavioral regulations and concentration in particular media. Violence is thought to be harmful for children’s wellbeing. Although the risks associated with media exposure may at least partly reflect the accumulation of social risk factors, they also seem to have an independent role as a factor increasing the symptoms. It may suffice to know that the adverse effect of media can be lessened or eradicated by providing guidance by parents and teachers. With these, one may ask this question “since people are becoming affluent and mass media can be found in every home, could the use of electronics sets generally contribute to the wellbeing of the people (children) when it is well planned and has an organized system of education (school) and be of benefits to the children? Therefore this study, on the basis of this, carried out the role of electronic media in childhood education.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study aimed at determining the roles of electronic media in childhood education. Based on the topic, the study has the following specific objectives:

1. Examine the behavioral patterns of children in schools in Esan west local government area of Edo state.
2. Investigate which organ of the media is more influential to children.
3. Determine the important roles played by the agents of educational process of children and their orientation.
4. Ascertain the value acquisition of children in the society.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. Does electronic media has any influence on the lives of children?
2. What organ of mass media has more influence on children’s education?
3. To what extent does the role played by agents of education process influence children and their orientation?
4. To what extent has electronic media been of value to the education process of a child in the society?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a survey research design. Odo (2005), defines a survey design in which group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire population. That is to say that survey sampling involves a method of selection and observation of a sample of a population in order to draw a valid conclusion of the entire population. The scope of this study was limited to Esan West Local Government Area of Edo state. It focused on some selected pre-primary and primary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo state, Nigeria. A total sum of 16,033 students formed the population of the study. The schools are located within the five villages in Ekpoma, the headquarter of Esan West Local Government Area in Edo state. There are twenty three (23) primary schools scattered all over Ekpoma area. These schools comprise; Eguare primary school, Ihumudumu primary school, Ujemen primary school, Iruokpen primary school and ujoelen primary school. All these kindergarten schools are within these various schools also. The sample size used for this study was 125 nursery/primary school pupils. 25 pupils were selected from each of the five schools through simple random sampling techniques.

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was cautiously designed and administered to the 125 pupils to elicit their views and feeling about the use of electronic media on their education with the help of trained apprentices (their teachers). The instrument was face validated by experts in teachers' education and measurement and evaluation in Faculty of Education in Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma Edo State. The reliability of the instrument was done through test-retest on 10 pupils different from the sampled pupils. Using the Pearsoo Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in result of 0.78, which signifies that the instrument was highly reliable. The data collected was analysed by using simple percentages.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Classification of respondents according to behavioiural pattern as influenced by electronic media.

Do you like the programme you watch or listen on electronic media?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	125	100
No	-	-
Total	125	100

In Table 1 above, 100% of the respondents agreed that they watch and listen to electronic media.

This is in agreement with Slater (2003) and Vivian (1999) findings. they were of the opinion that nobody is born knowing how to fit into the society. This was learned through a process that begins at home. Children imitate their parents and siblings. Through observation and listening, they learn value. Gradually the cultural and social processes which are learned from home extend to include peers from neighborhood, schools and electronic media. Electronic media plays significant roles in children's life.

Table 2: Do you respond to what you watch/listen to?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	80	64
No	45	36
Total	125	100

In Table 2, 64% of the respondents agreed that they respond to what they watch and see, while 36% do not respond.

This is in line with the findings of Willbur Schramm (2005), who observed that media used among children vary with intelligent quotient, age, creativeness and socio-economic background of children.

Table 3: Does media change the way you do things at home and in school?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	80	64
No	45	36
Total	125	100

80 (64%) respondents indicated that the programme they watch/listen to changed the way they do things at home and in schools, while 45 (36%) respondents indicated that the programme they watch/ listen to, do not change their behavior at home and in school.

This agreed with the opinion of Schramm (2005), which said that since young children learn through observation and imitation, one may then argue that there is the tendency for children to copy violent acts and imitate celebrities, but the exhibition of these behaviours in their inter-personal relations depend on many factors. The reason being that every individual is capable of exhibiting different behavior learnt when occasion demands.

Table 4: Classification of respondents by the electronic media they prefer most.

Do you watch/listen to any of these media?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Television	69	55.20
Radio	20	16.00
Internet	36	28.80
Total	125	100.00

From Table 4, the numbers of respondents who watch television were 69 (55.20%), those who listen to radio were 20 (16%), while those who watch internet were 36 (28.8%).

This is in conformity with the findings of Okafor et al (2013), that mass media especially the pictorial media to which the child has access to very early, exposes him to the world far beyond the limit of his immediate environment.

Television is the medium with the greatest socialization effect, surpassing all the other media by far in its influence on young children, Gonzalez-Mena et al (2010).

Table 5: Which of the following programme do you prefer watching on Television?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Entertainment TV	45	36
Sport programme	20	16
Educational programmes	60	48
Total	125	100

Table 5 showed that 45 (36%) of the respondents watch entertainment programmes on television, 20 (16%) respondents watch sports while 60(48%) watch educational programmes on television.

This is in line with the findings of Kagitcibasi et al (2009), and Sylva et al (2008), that the early childhood intervention programmes around the world have been found to enhance children's cognitive and social competences.

Before the intervention of the electronic media, there were books, magazines and news papers which required reading skills that were learned in schools. However, with modern technology, television became omnipresent from cradle. The use of television programmes have become access into culture for children. It has made them to appreciate norms and value of the society.

Table 6: Do you behave like the character you listen to?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	54	43.20
No	71	56.80
Total	125	100

From table 6, the number of respondents who copy the characters they watch/listen to were 54 (43.2%) while those who do not behave like the characters they watch/listen to were 71 (56.8%).

With the view of Slater (2003), when weak bounds between a child and his family increases, there is the likelihood of the child being bound with peer groups/behavior that possess deviant characters or norms.

Table 7: Classification of respondents by roles played by agents of educational process on children and their orientation?

Does electronic media change the way you do things at home and in school?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	75	60
No	50	40
Total	125	100

In table 7, 75 (60%) of respondents indicated that the programmes they watch/listen to, change the way they do thing at home and in school while 50 (40%) of the respondent indicated that programmes they watch/listen to do not change the ways they do things at

home. This finding negate the works of David Chinoy (2016), that there are other persons or groups that are participating in the educational process of children since farming alone cannot train children for many adult roles in a complex industrial society. In this realm the view of Chinoy brings in other agents such as the school, the peer groups, the church and the media. He described them as the secondary agent while the family remains the primary agent and also the most important. This is why the home has a vital role to play in the use of electronic media in educating their children and wards.

Table 8: Does it change the way you relate with your teachers and other people?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	83	66.40
No	42	33.60
Total	125	100

Out of the 125 repondents, 83 (66.4%) admitted that the programme they watch influenced their behaviours towards their teachers and other person while 42 (33.6%) respondents said that the programmes they watch have no influence on them towards their teachers or others.

With Schramme (2007), findings, show that the influence of television on children are difficult to study because of the relationship between the encoder and the decoder. This therefore means that children's perception on television programmes is capable of so many interpretations which may influence their attitude towards their teachers or other people since they take their personal decisions. This goes to say that they decide, when and what they will accept, interpret attention or dispose to inordinacy with their personal abilities and needs which might be contrary to the teachers' opinions.

Table 9: Do you regard those you watch/listen to as role models?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	79	63.20
No	46	36.80
Total	125	100

Table 9 indicated that 79 (63.2%), of the respondent, take the character that they watch and listen to as their role models while 46 (38.8%) of the respondent, do not regard the characters they watch/listen to as their role models.

This is in line with Herzog (2010), study which suggested that people consciously or unconsciously refer to media as source of acquiring societal norms.

Table 10: Classification of Respondents by value acquisition of electronic media on the society.

Do you watch programmes on violence?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	80	64
No	45	36
Total	125	100

Table 10 revealed that out of the 125 respondents, 80 representing 64% watch programmes on violence while 45 (36%) respondents do not watch programmes on violence.

Himmelweit and associates (2003), in their study observed that television is not as bad as portrayed by the protagonist of the violence of television but rather it is a window on the world. It gives a view not different from that provided in books comic, films and radio programmes. In other words, television is capable of broadening a child's horizon. This can be personal matter which varies from individual to individual.

Table 11: If yes do you practice the violent programme you watch?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	82	65.60
No	43	34.40
Total	125	100.00

Table 11, shows that 82 (65.6%) of the total respondents practice the violent actions they watch on television programmes while the remaining 43 respondents representing 34.4% of the population do not practice the violent acts they watch.

The findings of Schramm (2005), which pointed out that since young children learn by observation and imitation, there is a tendency for children to copy these violent acts and imitate celebrities. This buttresses the findings of this study.

Table 12: Do these violent acts change the way you relate with other people?

Variables	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	78	62.40
No	47	37.60
Total	125	100.00

Out of the 125 respondents, 78 (62.4%) change the ways they relate to other people while 47 (37.6%) respondents said that the violent programmes they watch do not change the ways they relate with other people.

Electronic media enlightened children on how to interact among themselves and at the same time serve as a means of cultivating violent attitude towards others.

### Major findings of the study

From the data collected through the questionnaire that serves as a means of interviewing the children through the assistance of their teachers, the following findings emerge.

1. That television was the highest used electronic media and its programme content were real fun and educative to children.
2. Consequently, it changed the ways they do things at home and in school, the ways they relate with others and their relationship with parents and teachers.
3. Majority of the children were vulnerable to watching violent programmes, practice the violent acts and also regard the characters as their role models.
4. On the contrary, some of the children do not behave like the characters they watch/ listen to.



5. Some children viewed the influence of electronic media as being educative which helps to broaden their horizon and enable them to exercise their rights.
6. Electronic media can be creative, helps to model the characters of children under the auspices of parents, teachers and guidance. It can also be destructive when a child is exposed to anti-socio vices.

Summarily from the findings, it can be deduced that electronic media has positive and negative roles to play on childhood education in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. That is to say, it could be of valuable or detrimental benefits to children.

## CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study, was to investigate the role of electronic media on childhood education in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.

From the analysis and interpretation of data, it can be concluded that electronic media serves as a powerful device in the lives of children. Media influences on young children are not only strong and pervasive, but also potentially controllable especially in early childhood. The findings show that most children enjoy viewing violent programmes as well as practice them and the regard the characters they are exposed to as their role models. This can be brought under control because at this stage of life, parents are supposed to determine the majority of their children's media exposure.

However, there are certain things which they do not copy or imitate from the screen such as some behavioural patterns of the characters involved. The role of electronic media can be of great educational and other benefits to children by ensuring healthy media diet among children. It is very important how parents/teachers make decisions about their children/pupils media use so that effective interventions can be designed were necessary.

Some of these findings confirmed with the studies sighted in the data presentation and analysis. Children learn easily through electronic media than the print media as the latter does not attract their attention.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Mass literacy programme should be designed to enlighten parents, teachers and children on the implications of the negative aspects of the electronic media. This should be sponsored by the Government.
2. Parents/teachers should evaluate the means of regulating what their children/ wards and pupils view on air and listen to for their proper development.
3. The media practitioners have the challenge of providing children with healthier and educative programmes that call for interaction among children.
4. There should be a sensitization programme by health and church workers to the general public especially adults about the implications of exposing children to anti-socio media activities.
5. Parent-child interaction should be significantly more frequent in presence of background television programmes.

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