

# Television Exposure and Its Influence on Children's Behaviour and Academic Performance: Akure Metropolis as a case study.

Ayokunmi Olayinka Johnson

Department of Communication and Media Studies,  
University of Johannesburg,

Johannesburg, South Africa

DOI: [0009-0007-7870-797X](https://doi.org/10.009-0007-7870-797X)

**Abstract:** In many Nigerian households, television has become a dominant medium of communication and entertainment, significantly shaping children's daily experiences. However, increasing exposure to television content has raised concerns about its influence on children's behaviour and academic performance. This study investigates the extent to which television exposure affects children in Akure metropolis, Ondo State. A quantitative survey design was adopted, using structured questionnaires administered to 110 children, out of which 55 valid responses were analysed. The findings reveal that children are highly exposed to television, with many engaging in daily viewing for extended hours. Results show that television significantly influences children's behaviour, particularly in areas such as imitation of characters, aggressive tendencies, and reduced participation in social and outdoor activities. The study also found that children predominantly consume entertainment-based content, especially cartoons, while educational programmes receive comparatively lower attention. Furthermore, excessive television viewing negatively affects academic performance by reducing time allocated to reading, homework, and other educational activities. The study concludes that television's impact depends on viewing patterns, content type, and parental guidance, highlighting the need for effective monitoring and educational content promotion.

**Keywords:** Television, Children, Behaviour, Academic Performance, Media Effects

## Introduction

Television has remained one of the most pervasive and influential forms of mass media, particularly in shaping the cognitive, behavioural, and social development of children. As a dominant medium within households, especially in developing countries, television serves as a primary source of information, entertainment, and informal education. In Nigeria, where access to digital media is still uneven across socio-economic groups, television continues to play a central role in children's everyday experiences, influencing how they perceive the world and interact with their environment (Nirman I.A.P., 2025). Despite its educational potential, the increasing exposure of children to television has generated growing concern among scholars, educators, and policymakers. Children today spend a significant portion of their leisure time watching television, often with minimal supervision. This prolonged exposure raises critical questions about the nature of the content consumed and its implications for children's behaviour, attitudes, and academic performance.

One of the major concerns surrounding children's television consumption is its influence on behaviour. Television programmes, particularly entertainment content such as cartoons and action films, often portray violence, aggression, and unrealistic lifestyles. Studies have shown that children exposed to such content may imitate behaviours, adopt inappropriate language, and develop distorted perceptions of social reality (Prithviraj et al., 2024). Because children are still developing cognitively, they are more likely to internalize what they watch without critically evaluating it.

In addition to behavioural concerns, television exposure has also been linked to academic outcomes. Excessive television viewing reduces the time available for educational activities such as reading, homework, and classroom engagement. As a result, children who spend more time watching television than studying are more likely to experience poor academic performance (Muppalla et al., 2023). Evidence from this study indicates that children often neglect school responsibilities due to television viewing, further reinforcing concerns about its negative academic implications. Furthermore, the type of content consumed plays a crucial role in determining the impact of television on children. While educational programmes have the potential to support learning and cognitive development, children tend to prefer entertainment-based content. The dominance of cartoons and similar programmes among children's viewing preferences limits the educational benefits of television and increases exposure to non-educational material (Lillard & Peterson, 2011).

The Nigerian context presents additional challenges. Limited parental supervision, weak media regulation, and increased access to cable television have expanded children's exposure to diverse and often unfiltered content. In many households, television is used as a substitute for parental engagement, thereby increasing children's vulnerability to inappropriate media content (Swider-Cios et al., 2023). Despite these concerns, there is limited empirical research examining the impact of television on children within localized

Nigerian contexts. Most existing studies are largely Western-oriented, with minimal attention given to socio-cultural realities in African settings. This creates a gap in understanding how television influences children's behaviour and academic performance within specific communities such as Akure metropolis.

Thus, this study seeks to examine the impact of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance in Akure, Ondo State. The study focuses on children's viewing patterns, content preferences, and behavioural outcomes, with the aim of providing context-specific insights into the role of television in child development within Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the widespread presence and growing accessibility of television in many households, concerns persist regarding its impact on children's behaviour and academic performance. Television, while often perceived as a tool for education and entertainment, has increasingly become a dominant part of children's daily routines. In many homes, children spend several hours watching television with little or no supervision, exposing them to a wide range of content that may not always be appropriate for their developmental stage.

These concerns are primarily driven by excessive viewing habits, exposure to entertainment-driven content such as cartoons and action programmes, and limited parental control over what children watch. As a result, many children are increasingly influenced by the behaviours, language, and lifestyles portrayed on television. This influence often manifests in the imitation of television characters, adoption of aggressive behaviour, and reduced engagement in productive activities such as reading, homework, and social interaction.

The increasing preference for television over academic and outdoor activities has further raised questions about its impact on children's educational development. Evidence suggests that children who spend more time watching television tend to neglect their academic responsibilities, leading to poor performance in school. In many cases, television viewing competes directly with study time, resulting in reduced concentration, incomplete assignments, and declining academic outcomes.

In addition, the type of content consumed by children plays a significant role in shaping these outcomes. While educational programmes have the potential to enhance learning, many children are more inclined towards entertainment content that offers little or no academic value. This imbalance limits the positive contributions of television and amplifies its negative effects on both behaviour and academic performance.

Furthermore, the situation is compounded by weak parental monitoring and limited media regulation. In many households, television is used as a substitute for parental engagement, allowing children unrestricted access to various programmes. This lack of supervision increases children's vulnerability to inappropriate content, including violence and unrealistic social behaviours, which may influence their perception of reality and interpersonal relationships.

These challenges create a cycle in which excessive television exposure contributes to behavioural changes and poor academic performance, which in turn affect children's overall development. Despite the growing concerns surrounding this issue, there remains limited empirical research examining the specific impact of television on children within localized Nigerian contexts such as Akure metropolis.

Given this context, it becomes imperative to critically examine how television exposure influences children's behaviour and academic performance. This study therefore seeks to investigate the extent to which television affects children in Akure, focusing on their viewing patterns, content preferences, and the resulting behavioural and academic outcomes. By doing so, the study aims to provide insights that can inform parents, educators, and policymakers on how to manage television exposure and promote healthier media consumption among children.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to critically examine the influence of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance in Akure metropolis. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To examine the extent to which television exposure influences children's behavioural patterns.
2. To identify and analyse the types of television content predominantly consumed by children.
3. To determine the level and patterns of television exposure among children.
4. To assess the impact of television viewing on children's academic performance.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does television exposure influence children's behaviour?
2. What types of television content are most frequently consumed by children?

3. What is the level and pattern of television exposure among children?
4. How does television viewing affect children's academic performance?

### **The Concept of Television**

Television, as a medium of mass communication, has evolved significantly over time to become one of the most influential platforms for information dissemination, education, and entertainment. Traditionally, television is defined as an electronic system for transmitting visual images and sound over a distance, enabling the communication of messages to large and heterogeneous audiences simultaneously without direct interpersonal interaction (Nirmani I.A.P., 2025). Its unique combination of audio and visual elements distinguishes it from other media forms and enhances its ability to capture attention and shape audience perception.

Historically, television emerged in the early twentieth century as a technological innovation aimed at improving communication beyond the limitations of radio and print media. Over time, it developed into a central component of modern society, playing a critical role in shaping public opinion, cultural values, and social behaviour. As noted by Marshall McLuhan, "the medium is the message," emphasizing that the form of media itself influences how messages are perceived and internalized. Television, due to its visual immediacy and emotional appeal, has a profound capacity to influence viewers, particularly children.

In contemporary society, television has undergone a transformation driven by technological advancements such as cable broadcasting, satellite transmission, and digital streaming. These developments have expanded the accessibility and diversity of television content, allowing audiences to access both local and international programmes. According to (Ercegovic & Ercegovic, 2023), modern television is no longer limited to traditional broadcasting but now operates within a broader digital ecosystem that includes on-demand viewing and multi-platform distribution.

Television continues to play a vital role in education and socialization. It serves as a medium through which individuals acquire knowledge, learn social norms, and develop attitudes toward various aspects of life. Recent studies highlight that television can enhance cognitive development and learning outcomes when used appropriately, particularly through educational programming (Swider-Cios et al., 2023). However, its impact is largely dependent on the type of content consumed and the context in which it is viewed.

Despite its benefits, television has also been criticized for its potential negative effects, especially on children. The increasing availability of entertainment-driven content, including cartoons, action films, and reality shows, has raised concerns about its influence on behaviour and perception. Contemporary research indicates that prolonged exposure to television content may shape children's understanding of reality, social relationships, and acceptable behaviour patterns ("Impact of Media Use on Children and Youth," 2003).

In developing countries such as Nigeria, television remains a dominant medium of communication due to its accessibility and affordability compared to other digital platforms. The expansion of cable networks and foreign programming has further increased children's exposure to diverse content. While this provides opportunities for learning and cultural exchange, it also raises concerns about the regulation of content and its suitability for young audiences.

Thus, television can be understood not merely as a technological device but as a powerful social institution that shapes knowledge, behaviour, and cultural orientation. Its influence is particularly significant among children, who are still in their formative stages and are more susceptible to media messages. This underscores the need to critically examine how television content and exposure patterns affect children's development, particularly in relation to behaviour and academic performance.

### **The Concept of Children/Childhood**

Childhood is a fundamental stage of human development characterized by continuous physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth. The concept of childhood has been widely examined across disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education, with varying interpretations based on cultural, social, and historical contexts. According to the (United Nations, 2025), a child is defined as any individual below the age of eighteen years, emphasizing the need for protection, development, and participation rights during this critical stage of life.

From a developmental perspective, childhood is often viewed as a period of gradual maturation in which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours necessary for functioning in society. (Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022) conceptualizes childhood as a series of cognitive developmental stages, including the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages. Each stage reflects a child's increasing ability to think, reason, and interpret their environment. During the early stages, children are more likely to process information concretely and may find it difficult to distinguish between imagination and reality.

Similarly, (Fernyhough & Borghi, 2023) emphasizes the social nature of childhood development, arguing that children learn through interaction with their environment and through guidance from more knowledgeable individuals. This perspective highlights the

importance of external influences such as family, school, and broader social systems in shaping children's understanding of the world.

The concept of childhood is not only biological but also socially constructed. Sociologists argue that childhood varies across cultures and historical periods, meaning that what is considered appropriate behaviour, responsibility, and exposure for children differs from one society to another (Ali Norozi & Moen, 2016). In contemporary societies, childhood is increasingly influenced by technological and media environments, which play a growing role in shaping children's experiences and interactions.

Children are generally regarded as a vulnerable and impressionable group due to their developmental stage. Their limited cognitive maturity affects their ability to critically evaluate information and experiences, making them more susceptible to external influences. This vulnerability underscores the importance of providing supportive environments that promote healthy development and protect children from harmful exposures.

At the same time, children are not merely passive recipients of external influences. Modern perspectives recognize children as active participants in their own development, capable of interpreting and responding to their environment in meaningful ways. As noted by (Eckhoff, 2026), children actively construct their social realities through interaction, negotiation, and engagement with their surroundings.

In many developing contexts, including Nigeria, childhood is shaped by a combination of socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors. Access to education, family structure, and exposure to social institutions all contribute to how childhood is experienced. Increasingly, access to media technologies has become a significant component of children's environment, influencing their daily routines and developmental processes.

Thus, childhood can be understood as a dynamic and multifaceted stage of life in which individuals develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally within a broader socio-cultural context. Understanding the concept of childhood is essential for examining how external factors, such as media exposure, influence children's behaviour and academic outcomes.

### **Television and Children's Behavioural Development**

Television has been widely identified as a significant agent influencing children's behavioural development, particularly due to its pervasive presence and the amount of time children spend engaging with it. During childhood, individuals are in a critical stage of cognitive and social development, making them highly impressionable and more likely to internalize behaviours observed in their environment, including those presented through television programmes (Telzer et al., 2018).

A substantial body of research has linked television exposure especially to violent and aggressive content with increased aggressive tendencies among children. Programmes such as cartoons, action films, and superhero narratives often depict exaggerated forms of conflict resolution, where violence is presented as effective, justified, or even rewarding. Over time, repeated exposure to such portrayals can normalize aggression and reduce children's sensitivity to its real-life consequences. (Huesmann, 2007) observes that children exposed to violent television content are more likely to display aggressive behaviour, particularly when they identify with characters perceived as heroes. Similarly, (Huesmann et al., 2003) argue that early exposure to media violence is a strong predictor of later aggressive behaviour, suggesting long-term behavioural implications.

Beyond aggression, television also influences other dimensions of children's behaviour, including language acquisition, social interaction, and emotional development. Children frequently adopt communication styles, expressions, and gestures observed on television, which may not always align with socially acceptable norms. For instance, exposure to inappropriate language or disrespectful interactions on television may be replicated in children's real-life interactions with peers, parents, and authority figures (Martins & Wilson, 2012). This process of behavioural imitation highlights the role of television as an informal socialization agent.

Television exposure can also shape children's emotional responses and attitudes toward social situations. Repeated exposure to dramatized or exaggerated content may lead to distorted perceptions of reality, including fear, anxiety, or unrealistic expectations about relationships and social life (Martí-García et al., 2025). For example, children who are frequently exposed to conflict-driven narratives may develop heightened perceptions of hostility in their environment.

Moreover, excessive television viewing has been associated with reduced participation in physical and social activities. Instead of engaging in outdoor play, peer interaction, or family communication, children may increasingly prefer passive media consumption. This shift can negatively affect social skills development, physical health, and overall well-being. According to (Ponti et al., 2017) increased screen time among children is linked to decreased face-to-face interaction and lower levels of physical activity, which are essential for holistic development.

However, it is important to acknowledge that television does not solely produce negative behavioural outcomes. When appropriately guided, it can also promote positive behaviours such as empathy, cooperation, and prosocial attitudes. Educational and value-based programmes have been shown to encourage positive social behaviours and moral development among children (Scholz-Kuhn et al.,

2025). Therefore, the behavioural impact of television is not inherently negative but is largely dependent on content type, viewing context, and parental mediation.

### **Television and Academic Performance**

The relationship between television viewing and children's academic performance has been extensively examined in media and educational research. One of the central concerns is the displacement effect, whereby time spent watching television reduces the time available for academic activities such as reading, homework, and cognitive engagement ((Supper et al., 2021)

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a negative association between excessive television viewing and academic achievement. Early studies by (Johnson et al., 2007) found that children who watched television for extended periods tended to perform poorly in school compared to those who allocated more time to academic activities. More recent studies support these findings, indicating that prolonged screen time is associated with lower academic performance, reduced attention span, and decreased academic motivation (Feng et al., 2025)

One of the key mechanisms through which television affects academic performance is reduced concentration and cognitive engagement. Children who spend long hours watching fast-paced and visually stimulating content may develop shorter attention spans, making it difficult to focus on academic tasks that require sustained mental effort. Additionally, late-night television viewing can interfere with sleep patterns, leading to fatigue and reduced classroom performance.

Another important factor is the type of content consumed. While entertainment programmes dominate children's viewing preferences, educational programmes have been shown to produce positive academic outcomes. (Swider-Cios et al., 2023) found that children who regularly watched educational television programmes demonstrated improved language skills, problem-solving abilities, and school readiness. Similarly, recent research suggests that well-designed educational content can support literacy and numeracy development, particularly among younger children (Krisdianti et al., 2025).

However, despite the potential benefits of educational programming, children often prioritize entertainment content over instructional material. This preference significantly limits the positive contributions of television to academic development. As a result, the overall impact of television on academic performance tends to be negative, particularly in cases of excessive and unsupervised viewing.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural context plays a critical role in shaping these outcomes. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, limited parental supervision and weak media regulation allow children unrestricted access to television content. This increases the likelihood of exposure to non-educational and potentially harmful content, further exacerbating its negative impact on academic performance.

In summary, while television has the potential to support academic development through educational programming, its overall impact is largely determined by viewing habits, content type, and the level of parental involvement. Excessive viewing of entertainment content, combined with poor supervision, contributes significantly to declining academic performance among children.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employs two theoretical frameworks: Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory to examine the influence of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance in Akure metropolis.

#### **1. Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory was developed by Albert Bandura in 1977 and remains one of the most influential frameworks for understanding how individuals acquire behaviour through observation and imitation. The theory posits that learning does not occur solely through direct experience but also through observing others, particularly role models, and replicating their actions. According to (Bandura Albert, 1977) individuals are more likely to imitate behaviours that are rewarded or portrayed positively.

The theory identifies key processes involved in observational learning, including attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. For children, these processes are particularly significant because they are still in their developmental stages and are more likely to pay attention to visually engaging stimuli such as television content. Characters portrayed in television programmes often serve as role models, especially when they are attractive, powerful, or portrayed as successful.

In the context of television, children are exposed to various behaviours through cartoons, movies, and other programmes. These behaviours may include aggression, social interaction patterns, language use, and problem-solving strategies. When children observe such behaviours repeatedly, they may internalize and reproduce them in real-life situations. Studies have shown that children who are exposed to violent television content are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour, supporting the assumptions of Social Learning Theory (Ybarra et al., 2022) .

Thus, Social Learning Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how television influences children's behaviour through imitation and modelling.

## 2. Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory was developed by George Gerbner in the late 1960s and further expanded in subsequent decades. The theory explains how prolonged exposure to television shapes viewers' perceptions of reality. According to (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), television is not merely a source of entertainment but a powerful tool that cultivates a particular view of the world over time.

The theory suggests that heavy viewers of television are more likely to perceive reality in ways that reflect the messages and images consistently portrayed on television. One of the key concepts associated with this theory is the "mean world syndrome," which refers to the tendency of heavy viewers to perceive the world as more dangerous and hostile than it actually is due to repeated exposure to violent content.

For children, the implications of cultivation theory are particularly significant. Because children are still developing cognitively, they may find it difficult to distinguish between reality and fictional representations. Continuous exposure to television content can therefore shape their beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about the world. For instance, children who frequently watch programmes that depict violence or exaggerated lifestyles may come to view such behaviours as normal or acceptable.

In addition, cultivation theory highlights the cumulative effect of media exposure. It is not a single programme but repeated and prolonged viewing that gradually shapes perceptions and attitudes. This makes television a powerful influence on children's worldview and behavioural orientation.

### Application of Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory to the Study

Both Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory provide complementary perspectives for understanding the influence of television on children's behaviour and academic performance.

Social Learning Theory explains how children acquire behaviours through imitation of television characters. It highlights the role of television as a source of behavioural models, particularly in shaping actions such as aggression, communication styles, and social interactions. On the other hand, Cultivation Theory explains how prolonged exposure to television shapes children's perception of reality. It emphasizes the long-term effects of media consumption, including the normalization of behaviours and the development of certain beliefs about the world.

In the context of this study, Social Learning Theory helps to explain why children imitate behaviours observed on television, while Cultivation Theory provides insight into how continuous exposure influences their attitudes and worldview. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for analysing the impact of television on children's behaviour and academic performance.

By applying these theoretical perspectives, this study is able to examine not only the immediate behavioural effects of television exposure but also its long-term influence on children's development and academic engagement.

### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance in Akure metropolis, Ondo State. This design was considered appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection of data from a defined population and facilitates the analysis of patterns, relationships, and trends in children's television viewing habits and their associated effects.

The population of the study comprised children within the age range of 10–15 years residing in Akure metropolis. This age group was selected due to their active engagement with television content and their developmental susceptibility to media influence. Although there is no precise official figure for the number of children within this age bracket in Akure, the population is considered sufficiently large and representative of an urban Nigerian setting.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of respondents across the study area. In the first stage, selected residential areas within Akure metropolis were identified. In the second stage, households with children who have access to television were purposively selected. Finally, respondents were chosen using convenience sampling, focusing on children who actively engage in television viewing.

The study utilized a sample size of 110 respondents, out of which 55 questionnaires were successfully completed and returned, representing a 50% response rate. This response rate is considered adequate for descriptive survey analysis.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was designed to capture relevant information on children's television exposure, viewing patterns, types of content consumed, behavioural tendencies, and academic engagement. The questionnaire consisted mainly of close-ended questions and Likert-scale items to allow for quantitative analysis.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical tools, including frequencies and percentages. The results were presented in tabular form to enhance clarity, facilitate interpretation, and support the discussion of findings.

## Results and Findings

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

A total of 110 copies of the questionnaire were administered to children in Akure metropolis who are exposed to television. Out of this number, 55 questionnaires were successfully completed and returned, representing a 50% response rate, which is considered adequate for analysis.

**Table One and Research Question One:** To what extent does television exposure influence children's behaviour?

**Table 1: Behavioural Effects of Television on Children (N = 55)**

Items	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Ignore family activities due to TV	21.8	27.3	9.1	23.6	18.2
Ignore homework/chores for TV	27.3	21.8	10.9	21.8	18.2
Prefer TV to outdoor activities	36.4	18.2	9.1	29.1	7.3
Stay up late/wake early for TV	45.5	18.2	3.6	14.5	18.2
Imitate TV characters	45.5	18.2	9.1	18.2	9.1
TV encourages aggression	45.5	18.2	9.1	18.2	9.1

Data in Table 1 reveal a strong and multifaceted influence of television exposure on children's behaviour. A substantial proportion of respondents reported behavioural changes associated with television viewing. For instance, 49.1% of respondents (21.8% strongly agreed, 27.3% agreed) indicated that they ignore family activities due to television, suggesting that television competes significantly with family interaction and social engagement. Similarly, 49.1% acknowledged neglecting homework and household responsibilities, highlighting the extent to which television interferes with children's daily obligations.

Preference for television over outdoor activities was also notable, with 54.6% of respondents (36.4% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed) indicating a shift from physical and social engagement toward passive media consumption. This trend suggests a growing reliance on television as a primary leisure activity, which may have implications for children's social and physical development.

More critically, behavioural imitation and aggression emerged as key concerns. A combined 63.7% of respondents (45.5% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed) admitted to imitating television characters, while the same proportion agreed that television encourages aggressive behaviour. This indicates that television content plays a significant role in shaping children's behavioural patterns, particularly in terms of learned responses and social conduct.

Additionally, 63.7% of respondents reported staying up late or waking early to watch television, reflecting the extent of engagement and possible disruption to daily routines such as sleep and study schedules.

Overall, these findings suggest that television exposure has a considerable influence on children's behaviour, particularly in areas of imitation, aggression, time management, and social interaction. The high levels of agreement across multiple behavioural indicators highlight television as a dominant factor in shaping children's everyday conduct.

**Table Two and Research Question Two:** What types of television content are most frequently consumed by children?

**Table 2: Types of Television Content Watched**

Programme Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cartoons	20	36.4
Educational Programmes	10	18.2
Movies/Films	10	18.2
Advertisements	7	12.7
Others	8	14.5

Data in Table 2 indicate clear preferences in the types of television content consumed by children. Cartoons emerged as the most frequently watched content, accounting for 36.4% of responses, significantly higher than any other category. This highlights children's strong attraction to visually engaging and entertainment-driven programming.

Movies and educational programmes each accounted for 18.2% of viewership, suggesting a moderate level of engagement with both entertainment and informative content. However, the relatively equal distribution between these categories indicates that educational programming does not dominate children’s viewing habits despite its potential benefits.

Advertisements accounted for 12.7% of responses, reflecting children’s exposure to commercial messaging, which may influence their consumption patterns and preferences. Other categories collectively accounted for 14.5%, indicating limited engagement with alternative forms of television content such as news or documentaries.

Overall, the findings suggest that children predominantly consume entertainment-oriented content, with limited preference for educational programming. This imbalance may reduce the developmental benefits of television and increase exposure to content that may not contribute positively to learning outcomes.

**Table Three and Research Question Three:** What is the level and pattern of television exposure among children?

**Table 3: Television Exposure and Viewing Pattern (N = 55)**

Items	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Access to television at home	Yes	45	81.8
	No	10	18.2
Frequency of watching television	Daily	20	36.4
	Twice a week	13	23.6
	Thrice a week	11	20.0
	Weekends only	9	16.4
	Occasionally	2	3.6
Hours spent watching television daily	1–2 hours	15	27.3
	3–4 hours	20	36.4
	5–6 hours	13	23.6
	7 hours and above	5	9.1
	None	2	3.6

Data in Table 3 reveal a high level of television exposure among children. A significant majority of respondents, 81.8%, reported having access to television at home, indicating widespread availability and accessibility. Only 18.2% reported no access, suggesting that television is a common feature in most households within the study area.

In terms of viewing frequency, 36.4% of respondents indicated that they watch television daily, while 23.6% watch twice a week and 20.0% watch three times a week. This shows that a large proportion of children engage with television regularly, with only a small percentage (3.6%) watching occasionally.

The pattern of time spent watching television further reinforces this high level of exposure. The majority of respondents, 36.4%, reported watching television for 3–4 hours daily, while 23.6% spend 5–6 hours, and 9.1% watch for 7 hours or more. In contrast, only 27.3% reported watching for 1–2 hours, and a minimal 3.6% reported no daily viewing.

These findings indicate that television occupies a substantial portion of children’s daily time, with many children engaging in prolonged viewing. The high frequency and duration of exposure suggest that television is deeply integrated into children’s routines, increasing its potential influence on behaviour and academic activities.

**Table Four and Research Question Four:** How does television viewing affect children’s academic performance?

**Table 4: Academic Impact of Television Viewing**

Items	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
TV improves academic performance	27.3	27.3	9.1	18.1	18.1
TV negatively affects academic performance	36.4	18.1	3.6	18.1	23.6
Spend more time watching TV than reading	27.3	18.1	12.7	23.6	18.1

Data in Table 4 present a mixed but largely negative perception of the impact of television on academic performance. While 54.6% of respondents (27.3% strongly agreed, 27.3% agreed) indicated that television can improve academic performance, a slightly higher proportion, 54.5% (36.4% strongly agreed, 18.1% agreed), reported that television negatively affects their academic outcomes. This suggests a divided perception, with negative effects slightly outweighing positive ones.

A key factor influencing this outcome is the displacement of study time. A combined 45.4% of respondents (27.3% strongly agreed, 18.1% agreed) admitted to spending more time watching television than reading, while 41.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that for a significant proportion of children, television competes directly with academic activities.

The relatively high proportion of neutral responses across the items suggests some level of uncertainty among respondents, possibly reflecting differences in viewing habits or content types consumed.

Overall, the findings indicate that while television has the potential to support academic development, its negative effects particularly through excessive viewing and reduced study time are more pronounced. This underscores the importance of regulating viewing habits and promoting educational content to enhance academic outcomes.

### Discussion of Findings

This study examined the influence of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance in Akure metropolis. The findings reveal that children are significantly exposed to television and that this exposure plays a critical role in shaping their behavioural patterns, content preferences, and academic engagement. The results further indicate that television is not merely a source of entertainment but a dominant socialization agent influencing children's daily lives.

In relation to the first research question, *"To what extent does television exposure influence children's behaviour?"* the study found that television has a strong and observable impact on children's behaviour. A significant proportion of respondents reported imitating television characters, displaying aggressive tendencies, and prioritizing television over family and social activities. These findings indicate that children do not passively consume television content but actively internalize and replicate behaviours observed on screen. This aligns with existing literature that identifies media as a powerful behavioural influence, particularly among children who are still in their developmental stages.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that television exposure affects not only aggressive tendencies but also children's social interactions and time management. Many respondents indicated that they neglect household responsibilities and engage less in outdoor activities due to television viewing. This suggests a shift in children's lifestyle patterns from active social engagement to passive media consumption, reinforcing concerns about the broader social implications of excessive television exposure.

In addressing the second research question, *"What types of television content are most frequently consumed by children?"* the study found that children predominantly consume entertainment-driven content, particularly cartoons and movies. Educational programmes recorded significantly lower viewership, indicating that children's preferences are largely influenced by entertainment value rather than instructional content. This finding highlights a critical gap in the potential use of television as an educational tool, as the dominance of entertainment content limits its developmental benefits.

The findings also suggest that children's content preferences may contribute to behavioural outcomes. The high consumption of cartoons and action-based programming, which often depict exaggerated conflict and unrealistic scenarios, may reinforce patterns of imitation and aggression observed among respondents. This underscores the importance of content regulation and parental guidance in shaping children's viewing habits.

With regard to the third research question, *"What is the level and pattern of television exposure among children?"* the study revealed a high level of television exposure among respondents. The majority of children reported having access to television at home and engaging in regular viewing, with many spending between three to four hours daily watching television. This indicates that television forms a central part of children's daily routines, increasing its potential influence on both behaviour and academic activities.

The pattern of exposure also suggests that television viewing is not occasional but habitual. The high frequency and duration of viewing highlight the extent to which television is embedded in children's lifestyles. This level of engagement amplifies the cumulative effects of television content, making its influence more pronounced over time.

In response to the fourth research question, *"How does television viewing affect children's academic performance?"* the study found that television has a mixed but predominantly negative impact on academic outcomes. While some respondents acknowledged that television can contribute to learning, particularly through educational programmes, a larger proportion reported negative effects, including reduced study time, poor concentration, and declining academic performance.

The findings indicate that excessive television viewing often displaces time that would otherwise be allocated to academic activities such as reading and homework. This supports the argument that television competes directly with educational engagement, thereby affecting academic achievement. Additionally, the preference for entertainment content further limits the potential academic benefits of television, as children are less likely to engage with educational programming.

Overall, the study demonstrates that television exposure significantly influences children's behaviour and academic performance. While television has the potential to serve as a valuable educational resource, its current patterns of use among children in the study area are largely dominated by entertainment content and excessive viewing habits, which contribute to negative developmental outcomes.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Television remains a powerful medium with significant influence on children's behaviour and academic performance. The findings of this study demonstrate that children are highly exposed to television, with many engaging in prolonged viewing on a daily basis. This high level of exposure has both behavioural and academic implications.

The study concludes that television exposure contributes significantly to behavioural changes among children, particularly in the areas of imitation, aggression, and social interaction. Children tend to replicate behaviours observed on television, which may not always align with societal expectations. Additionally, excessive television viewing reduces participation in social and physical activities, further affecting children's overall development.

In terms of academic performance, the study reveals that television has a predominantly negative impact due to excessive viewing and the displacement of study time. Although educational programmes have the potential to enhance learning, their limited consumption reduces their overall effectiveness. This highlights a critical imbalance between entertainment and educational content in children's viewing habits.

To address these challenges, several recommendations are proposed. First, parents and guardians should actively monitor and regulate children's television viewing habits to ensure exposure to age-appropriate and educational content. Second, there is a need for increased production and promotion of educational television programmes that are engaging and appealing to children. Third, policymakers and regulatory bodies should enforce stricter content regulations to limit children's exposure to inappropriate programming. Fourth, schools should incorporate media literacy education to help children develop critical thinking skills when engaging with media content.

In conclusion, while television offers opportunities for learning and entertainment, its impact on children largely depends on how it is used. Effective parental supervision, appropriate content selection, and balanced viewing habits are essential to maximizing its benefits and minimizing its negative effects.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on media effects by providing empirical evidence on the influence of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance within a Nigerian context. It highlights the dual role of television as both a developmental tool and a potential source of behavioural and academic challenges.

The study advances understanding by demonstrating how television exposure shapes children's behaviour through imitation and influences academic outcomes through time displacement and content preferences. By linking specific viewing patterns to measurable behavioural and academic effects, the research provides valuable insights for scholars, educators, and policymakers.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of contextualizing media research within local environments, particularly in developing countries where media access and regulation differ significantly from Western contexts. The findings provide a framework for future research on media influence and offer practical recommendations for improving children's media engagement.

### **Data Availability**

Data available on request from the author.

### **Declaration of Interest Statement**

The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this study.

### **References**

- Ali Norozi, S., & Moen, T. (2016). Childhood as a Social Construction. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*.  
<https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2016.v6n2p75>
- Bandura Albert. (1977). *Bandura\_SocialLearningTheory*.
- Eckhoff, A. (2026). Participatory Approaches to Understanding Collaborative, Child-Initiated Play: Children's Agency, Social Negotiation, and Identity Construction on the Playground. *Early Childhood Education Journal*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-026-02169-w>

- Ercegovac, I., & Ercegovac, A. (2023). Exploring binge-watching, agenda setting and the transformation of video consumption: A comprehensive literature review. *Drustveni Horizonti*, 3(6), 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.5937/drushor2306049E>
- Feng, X., Ren, S., & Shi, P. (2025). The relationship and mechanism of screen time and academic performance among adolescents: an empirical study based on CEPS. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1533327>
- Fernyhough, C., & Borghi, A. M. (2023). Inner speech as language process and cognitive tool. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 27(12), 1180–1193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2023.08.014>
- Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with Television: The Violence Profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 172–199. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1976.tb01397.x>
- Huesmann, L. R. (2007). The Impact of Electronic Media Violence: Scientific Theory and Research. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(6), S6–S13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.09.005>
- Huesmann, L. R., Moise-Titus, J., Podolski, C.-L., & Eron, L. D. (2003). Longitudinal relations between children's exposure to TV violence and their aggressive and violent behavior in young adulthood: 1977-1992. *Developmental Psychology*, 39(2), 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.39.2.201>
- Impact of media use on children and youth. (2003). *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 8(5), 301–306. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/8.5.301>
- Johnson, J. G., Cohen, P., Kasen, S., & Brook, J. S. (2007). Extensive Television Viewing and the Development of Attention and Learning Difficulties During Adolescence. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 161(5), 480. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.161.5.480>
- Krisdianti, N., Hani, D., Raya, F., & Sukaisih, R. (2025). Developing Students' Literacy and Numeracy Skills in the School Environment. *PPSDP International Journal of Education*, 4(1), 36–51. <https://doi.org/10.59175/pijed.v4i1.373>
- Lillard, A. S., & Peterson, J. (2011). The Immediate Impact of Different Types of Television on Young Children's Executive Function. *Pediatrics*, 128(4), 644–649. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2010-1919>
- Martí-García, C., Quemada-González, C., Aguilera-Serrano, C., Mejías Martín, Y., & García-Caro, M. P. (2025). Changing the narrative: A qualitative study on the impact of media portrayals on people with schizophrenia. *PLOS One*, 20(10), e0335008. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0335008>
- Martins, N., & Wilson, B. J. (2012). Social Aggression on Television and Its Relationship to Children's Aggression in the Classroom. *Human Communication Research*, 38(1), 48–71. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2011.01417.x>
- Muppalla, S. K., Vuppalapati, S., Reddy Pulliahgaru, A., & Sreenivasulu, H. (2023). Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Child Development: An Updated Review and Strategies for Management. *Cureus*. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.40608>
- Nirmani I.A.P. (2025). Barriers to digital participation in developing countries: Identifying technological, social, and cultural obstacles to community involvement. *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews*, 23(2), 061–071. <https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2025.23.2.0130>
- Pakpahan, F. H., & Saragih, M. (2022). Theory Of Cognitive Development By Jean Piaget. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 55–60. <https://doi.org/10.52622/joal.v2i2.79>
- Ponti, M., Bélanger, S., Grimes, R., Heard, J., Johnson, M., Moreau, E., Norris, M., Shaw, A., Stanwick, R., Van Lankveld, J., & Williams, R. (2017). Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world. *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 22(8), 461–468. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/pxx123>
- Prithviraj, M. M., Alam, M. R., & Devi, N. (2024). The cartoon character syndrome: Navigating the impact on childhood development in the digital age. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 66(5), 463–465. [https://doi.org/10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry\\_201\\_24](https://doi.org/10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry_201_24)
- Scholz-Kuhn, R., Makarova, E., Bardi, A., Litzellachner, L. F., Benish-Weisman, M., & Döring, A. K. (2025). Children's personal values and their behavior in the classroom in the early elementary school years: mapping longitudinal trajectories. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 40(3), 75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-025-00966-2>
-

- Supper, W., Guay, F., & Talbot, D. (2021). The Relation Between Television Viewing Time and Reading Achievement in Elementary School Children: A Test of Substitution and Inhibition Hypotheses. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.580763>
- Swider-Cios, E., Vermeij, A., & Sitskoorn, M. M. (2023). Young children and screen-based media: The impact on cognitive and socioemotional development and the importance of parental mediation. *Cognitive Development, 66*, 101319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2023.101319>
- Telzer, E. H., van Hoorn, J., Rogers, C. R., & Do, K. T. (2018). *Social Influence on Positive Youth Development: A Developmental Neuroscience Perspective* (pp. 215–258). <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.acdb.2017.10.003>
- United Nations. (2025). *Children’s version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
- Ybarra, M. L., Mitchell, K. J., & Oppenheim, J. K. (2022). Violent Media in Childhood and Seriously Violent Behavior in Adolescence and Young Adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 71*(3), 285–292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2022.03.003>