

# Television Exposure and its Influence on Children's Behaviour and Academic Performance: Akure Metropolis as a Case Study

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## 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 remains one of the most pervasive mass media, particularly in shaping children's cognitive, behavioural, and social development. In developing countries such as Nigeria, where access to digital media remains uneven across socio-economic groups, television serves as a primary source of information, entertainment, and informal education (Nirmani, 2025). Despite its educational potential, growing concern has emerged among scholars, educators, and policymakers regarding children's increasing television exposure, often with minimal supervision, and its implications for behaviour, attitudes, and academic performance.

A central concern is television's influence on behaviour. Programmes such as cartoons and action films frequently portray violence, aggression, and unrealistic lifestyles. Children exposed to such content may imitate behaviours, adopt inappropriate language, and develop distorted social perceptions (Prithviraj et al., 2024). Because children are still cognitively developing, they are more likely to internalize what they watch without critical evaluation.

Television exposure also affects academic outcomes. Excessive viewing displaces time for reading, homework, and classroom engagement, increasing the risk of poor academic performance (Muppalla et al., 2023). The type of content consumed moderates this relationship: educational programmes can support learning, but children predominantly prefer entertainment-based content such as cartoons, which limits educational benefits and heightens exposure to non-educational material (Lillard & Peterson, 2011).

The Nigerian context introduces additional challenges. Limited parental supervision, weak media regulation, and expanded cable television access expose children to diverse, often unfiltered content. In many households,

television substitutes for parental engagement, increasing children's vulnerability to inappropriate media (Swider-Cios et al., 2023). Despite these concerns, empirical research within localized Nigerian settings remains scant. Most existing studies are Western-oriented, with minimal attention to the socio-cultural realities of African communities. This gap is particularly pronounced in mid-sized urban centres such as Akure metropolis.

Accordingly, this study examines the impact of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance in Akure, Ondo State. Specifically, it investigates children's viewing patterns, content preferences, and behavioural outcomes, providing context-specific insights into television's role in child development within Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the documented presence of television in Nigerian households and its potential educational value, a critical problem persists: the gap between children's actual viewing habits and the supervised, content-appropriate media consumption necessary for healthy development. In Akure metropolis, as in many urban Nigerian centres, children spend substantial daily hours watching television, often with minimal parental oversight. Their strong preference for entertainment-driven content, primarily cartoons and action programmes, over educational material limits television's developmental benefits while amplifying risks such as behavioural imitation, aggression, and displacement of academic activities.

The consequences are observable: neglected homework, reduced reading time, declining concentration, and poorer school performance. These negative outcomes are exacerbated by weak media regulation and the common practice of using television as a substitute for parental engagement. However, empirical research examining these dynamics specifically within Akure metropolis is lacking. Most existing studies are either Western-centred or aggregated at national levels, obscuring local contextual factors that may influence television's impact.

Therefore, the problem this study addresses is the unexamined influence of television exposure on children's behaviour and academic performance within the specific socio-cultural and media environment of Akure metropolis. Without localized evidence, interventions by parents, educators, and policymakers remain untargeted and potentially ineffective.

### **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?

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## 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 (Nirman, 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 (Ercegovac & Ercegovac, 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 & BORGI, 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**

### **Research Design**

This 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, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was appropriate because it allowed for the systematic collection of quantitative data from a defined population and facilitated the analysis of patterns, relationships, and trends in children’s television viewing habits and their associated behavioural and academic outcomes.

### **Study Area and Population**

The study was conducted in Akure metropolis, the capital city of Ondo State, Nigeria. Akure is an urban centre with diverse socio-economic characteristics and widespread access to electronic media, making it suitable for investigating television exposure among children.

The target population comprised children aged 10–15 years residing in Akure metropolis who have access to television and actively watch television programmes. This age group was selected because children in this developmental stage are highly receptive to media content, capable of articulating their viewing habits, and are at a critical phase for behavioural formation and academic engagement.

## Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents:

1. **Stage 1 (Geographic clustering):** Akure metropolis was divided into three residential zones (North, Central, South). One neighbourhood was randomly selected from each zone.
2. **Stage 2 (Household screening):** Within each neighbourhood, households with children aged 10–15 years who own a functional television set were identified with the assistance of local community leaders.
3. **Stage 3 (Convenience sampling):** From each eligible household, one child who watches television at least once per week was selected based on availability and willingness to participate.

A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed to children across the selected households. After data cleaning, 55 questionnaires were fully completed and returned, giving a response rate of 50%. This sample size, while modest, is sufficient for descriptive analysis and provides preliminary empirical evidence on television exposure patterns in an urban Nigerian context.

## Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire titled *Television Exposure and Child Outcomes Questionnaire (TECO-Q)*. The questionnaire was divided into four sections corresponding to the research questions:

- **Section A: Demographic information** – age, sex, class level (not tabulated in results but collected for characterisation).
- **Section B: Television viewing patterns** – access to television at home, frequency of viewing (daily, twice a week, etc.), and hours spent watching per day (see Table 3).
- **Section C: Types of television content consumed** – cartoons, educational programmes, movies/films, advertisements, and others (see Table 2).
- **Section D: Behavioural and academic impact items** – measured on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Behavioural items included ignoring family activities, neglecting homework, preferring TV to outdoor activities, staying up late for TV, imitating TV characters, and TV encouraging aggression (see Table 1). Academic items included TV improving academic performance, TV negatively affecting academic performance, and spending more time watching TV than reading (see Table 4).

## Validity and Reliability

**Validity:** The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts: two senior lecturers in Child Psychology and one in Mass Communication from Lead City University. The experts assessed the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of each item. Based on their feedback, ambiguous wording was revised and two redundant items were removed.

**Reliability:** A pilot test was conducted with 15 children (not included in the final sample) from a non-participating school in Akure. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients were:

- Behavioural items (6 items):  $\alpha = 0.82$
- Academic impact items (3 items):  $\alpha = 0.76$

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These values indicate acceptable reliability for the instrument.

## Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, written informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians, and verbal assent was obtained from each child. Questionnaires were administered in quiet settings (e.g., after school hours at community centres or in respondents' homes) to minimise distractions. A research assistant was present to explain any ambiguous items. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to maximise the response rate. Data collection took place over a two-week period (March 10–24, 2024).

## Data Analysis

Data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 26.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and cumulative percentages were computed for all items. Results were organised into tables (Tables 1–4) to present:

- Behavioural effects of television exposure (Table 1),
- Types of television content consumed (Table 2),
- Television exposure and viewing patterns (Table 3),
- Academic impact of television viewing (Table 4).

All tables present raw frequencies and percentages. No inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square, correlation) were performed due to the modest sample size and the purely descriptive, exploratory nature of the study. This is acknowledged as a limitation.

## Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles for research involving minors. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. No personal identifiers (names, addresses, or school names) were collected to ensure anonymity. Data were used solely for academic research purposes. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Lead City University Ethics Committee.

## Limitations of the Study

Three main limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample size ( $n=55$ ) is relatively small, which limits the generalisability of the results beyond Akure metropolis. Second, the use of convenience sampling within purposively selected households may introduce selection bias. Third, the study relied exclusively on quantitative data; qualitative methods (e.g., interviews with parents or teachers) would have provided deeper contextual insights into television's influence on behaviour and academic performance. Future studies should address these limitations by using larger, more diverse samples and adopting mixed-methods approaches.

## 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.

## Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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