Role of Mass Media in Childhood Socialization and Academic Achievement: Implication for Stakeholders

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ABSTRACT

Mass media is any devices either Visual (print), Audio (sound) or Audio-visual (sound and print) like Television, cable TV, Video and Cinema films that are used in disseminating information to the populace. These media have a lot of influence on schooling children especially the electronics. The media dictate the turn of civilization and social life of the people either in childhood or adulthood. Hence, this study examines the roles of mass media in childhood socialization and achievement using Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria as a case study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. In this study, Electronics Media were considered. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the population because children of schooling age are the target population. Respondents were 300 children of 155 males and 145 females. The questionnaire was validated and tested for reliability which yielded 0.85. Four research questions were raised for the study. Simple percentages were used to represent the responses from the respondents. The researcher designed questionnaire was distributed among the children to elicit response for data collection. The findings show the electronic media especially the television was a powerful device in the lives of children. It enlightens them on how to interact with people, improve their performance in school and also a means where they cultivate violent attitudes towards people. The findings concluded that the electronic media content effect on children depends on the child being exposed as not all children are influenced in the same way. It was therefore recommended among others that schooling children should be monitored by their teachers and parents on the type of contents of electronic media their children exposed to in other not to be influenced negatively.

Keywords: Mass Media, Socialization, Achievement, Schooling Children, Attitude

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Early childhood was a time when child become aware of television and movie characters. Throughout history, familiar characters have appealed to children from an early age. The expansion of children's media in recent years through sources such as cable TV and video games has greatly increased the number and variety of such characters and their related toys. The electronic media are designed to expand children's knowledge of society and the larger world, develop creativity, encourage problem solving, role-playing, socialization, and improve literacy and vocabulary.

The entire study of mass communication was based on the assumption that the media have significant effects, yet there was little agreement on the nature and extent of these assumed effects, McQuail (2007). This uncertainty was more surprising since everyday experience provides countless examples of influence. For example, we dress for the weather as was forecast, buy something because of an advert, go for a film mentioned in a newspaper, react to media news, films, music etc. There are many cases of negative media publicity for instance food contamination leading to significant changes in food consumption behaviour, acts of violence or suicide appear to be copied or stimulated by media portrayals. McQuail further asserts that our minds are full of media derived information and impressions as we live in a world saturated by media sounds and images. A typical example of this is flipped classroom. The flipped classroom is a classroom where homework is done at school and school work is done at home. The school work is the recorded lessons' videos adopted or adapted by the teachers on all the topics in any subject or course of interest. The students will need to watch the video at home online or offline though electronic media like internet, TV with DVD player in the absence of the teacher. Then, do the homework (assignments) in the class in the presence of the teacher who will render assistance in the area of difficulties and monitor the learning progress (Yusuf, Makinde & Malik, 2017).

Paediatricians, educators, researchers and policymakers have raised concerns about electronic media use among very young children. The Centre on Media and Child Health (2005) agrees that children are the most vulnerable between birth and school age to certain negative effects of media use such as obesity, aggression, fear and sleep disorders. Slater (2003) suggests that weak bonds between a child and his family increase the likelihood of bounding with peer group that have deviant norms. There is a convergence of fairly substantial evidence on short run causation of aggression among children by viewing violence and the much less certain evidence from field studies that violence viewing precedes some long-run manifestation of aggressive behaviour (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). In today's society, electronic media are thoroughly integrated into the fabric of life with television, movies, video, music, and videogames central to both work and play. Recent studies indicate that young children in Nigeria and in Lagos which is the limited area of this work use a wide variety of screen media. The media are increasingly part of children's environment as television programmes are being made for infants, toddlers and teenagers. On the positive side of the ledger, there is evidence that thoughtfully designed TV used at the appropriate developmental stage can be educational. At the same time, the electronic media can contribute to aggressive behaviour, anxiety and obesity in children.

The electronic media plays important role in socialization through learning which it does by providing important sources of information. It also plays an important role in the transmission of attitudes, perception and beliefs. Dominick (2002) highlights specifically that television was an influential force when the following factors are operative:
1. The same ideas, people or behaviours recur consistently from programme to programme and are presented in a stereotyped manner.
2. A child was heavily exposed to TV content
3. A child has limited interaction with parents and other socializing agents and lacks an alternative set of beliefs to serve as a standard against which to assess media portrayals.

The need to develop scientifically based practical answers to important questions about media effects on the physical, mental and social health of children was now greater than ever.

2.   STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The electronic media, air programmes for children's consumption is to fulfil their social responsibility theory. But electronic media pose a problem of showing tricks and exaggeration which creates a false impression on the minds of the young ones. It difficult for children to make concrete decisions for themselves concerning their academics, total well-being and future because of what they get from the electronic media usually leads them to puzzlement and misery. Hence, this study looked into the reasons why the electronic media at times justifies children's unfriendly and friendly behaviour towards their friends and people around them. It will also find out if a child's academic performance is being affected when exposed to the electronic media.

3.   OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of this research was to study the roles of mass media in childhood socialization and academic achievement using Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria as a case study. The specific objectives of this study were to:
1.   Examine if electronic media affects the socialization process of children residing in Agege, Lagos State.
2.   Determine whether children in Lagos metropolis derive enjoyment from exposure to the electronic media.
3.   Observe if electronic media exposure influence schooling children academic achievement in Agege, Lagos state.

4.   METHODOLOGY

4.1. The Research Design
The research design that was adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. A descriptive research design is a scientific method which enable researcher to observes and describes the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. Therefore, the descriptive survey which allows for the use of questionnaire was considered as being appropriate for this research which aimed at finding out relevant media effect on childhood socialization and academic achievement as well as giving accurate and dependable results.

4.2. Research Population
The population for this study consists of schooling children residing in Agege, Lagos. This category of children understands and fully aware of the independent variable, mass media and be able to answer questions when they asked.

4.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques
Purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. In deciding on a sample size, the sizes of the population were also considered. According to the figures gotten from the National Population Commission (NPC), Agege children who were 0-5 years of age are Six hundred and ninety-six thousand, seven hundred and eighty-seven (696,787) in number, children who are 6-11 years of age were Five hundred and seventy-three thousand, nine hundred and two (573,902) in number while those aged 12-18 are Five hundred thousand, Eight hundred and Forty-three (500,843) in number. Citing Nwana in Okoro (2011) if a population is of several thousands, a 5% or fewer samples will do. Therefore, the researchers used a sample size of Three hundred schooling children of age range 6-11, 11-13 and 14-18 years drawn from Agege, Lagos metropolis because it was a fair representation.

4.4. Instruments for Data Collection

The researchers used the researcher designed questionnaire titled "Mass Media for Children's Socialization & Achievement (MMCSA). The instrument comprises of section A for demographic data and section B of segments A – C of 19 items to elicit information from the respondents on their views and feelings about the issues, 'mass media role on schooling children social life and academic achievement'.

4.5. Validation of Research Instrument

The researchers and three other experts in the area of study validated the instrument for face and content validity. The research questionnaire titled "Mass Media for Children's Socialization & Achievement (MMCSA) questionnaire was critically scrutinized and necessary corrections were made based on the clarity, structure and contents. The reliability coefficient for the research instrument was established. The virtuousness of the questionnaire items that was employed was measured with the inter-item consistency reliability test.

The pilot test of the research instrument was carried out on other 100 schooling children other than the sampled one for the research to determine the Cronbach alpha value of the instrument at 0.05 level of significant which yielded 0.85. The value was compared with the suggested criteria as mentioned by Ogunkola and Archer-Bradshaw (2013), that a benchmark of 0.7 is acceptable. Therefore, the research questionnaire is reliable based on the test-retest reliability value of the instrument which yielded 0.85.

5. DATA PRESENTATION

Completed questionnaire were numbered for easy coding and to prevent missing questionnaire from the respondents. Out of the 300 questionnaires administered only 275 were well filled and returned given 91.7% return rate. Data were entered into excel sheet and saved into a computer to prevent loss of data. Analysis is carried out using descriptive statistics, that is, social demographics of the respondents and other appropriate statistical tools.

Table 1: Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of The Respondents

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	145	52.7
Female	130	47.3
Total	**275**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork: 2018

Table 1 illustrates that 145(52.7%) of the respondents are male while 130(47.3%) are female. The researchers try as much as possible not to be gender bias in selection of sample and sampling technique for the study.
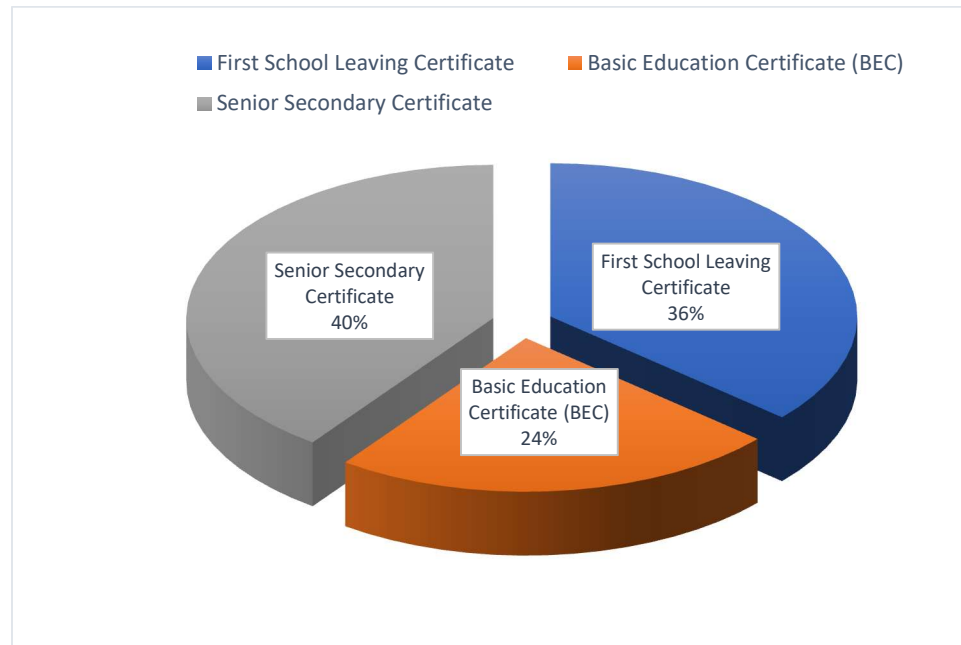
Figure 1: Educational Qualifications of the Respondents
Source: Fieldwork: 2018

Figure 1 reveals that 36% children were holders of first school leaving certificate, 24% of them were holder of basic education certificate (BEC) while 40% were of senior secondary school certificate (SSC).
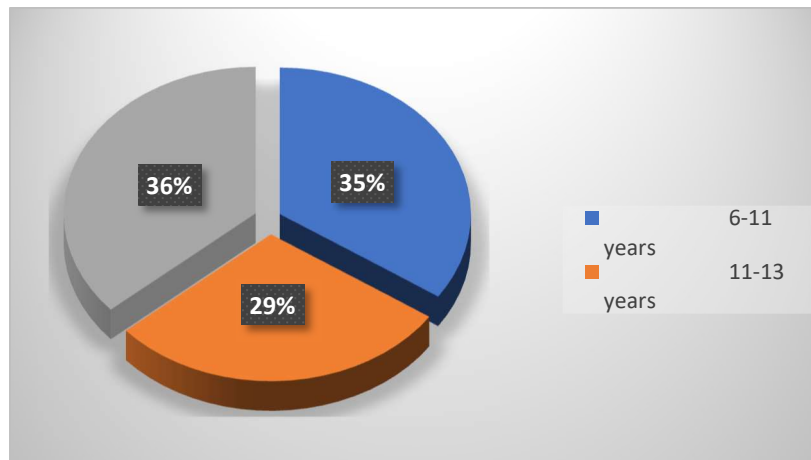

Figure 2: Age Range of Respondents
Source: Fieldwork: 2018

Figure 2 indicated that 35% respondents were between the ages of 6-11, 29% respondents were between 11-13 while 36% respondents were between the ages of 14-18.
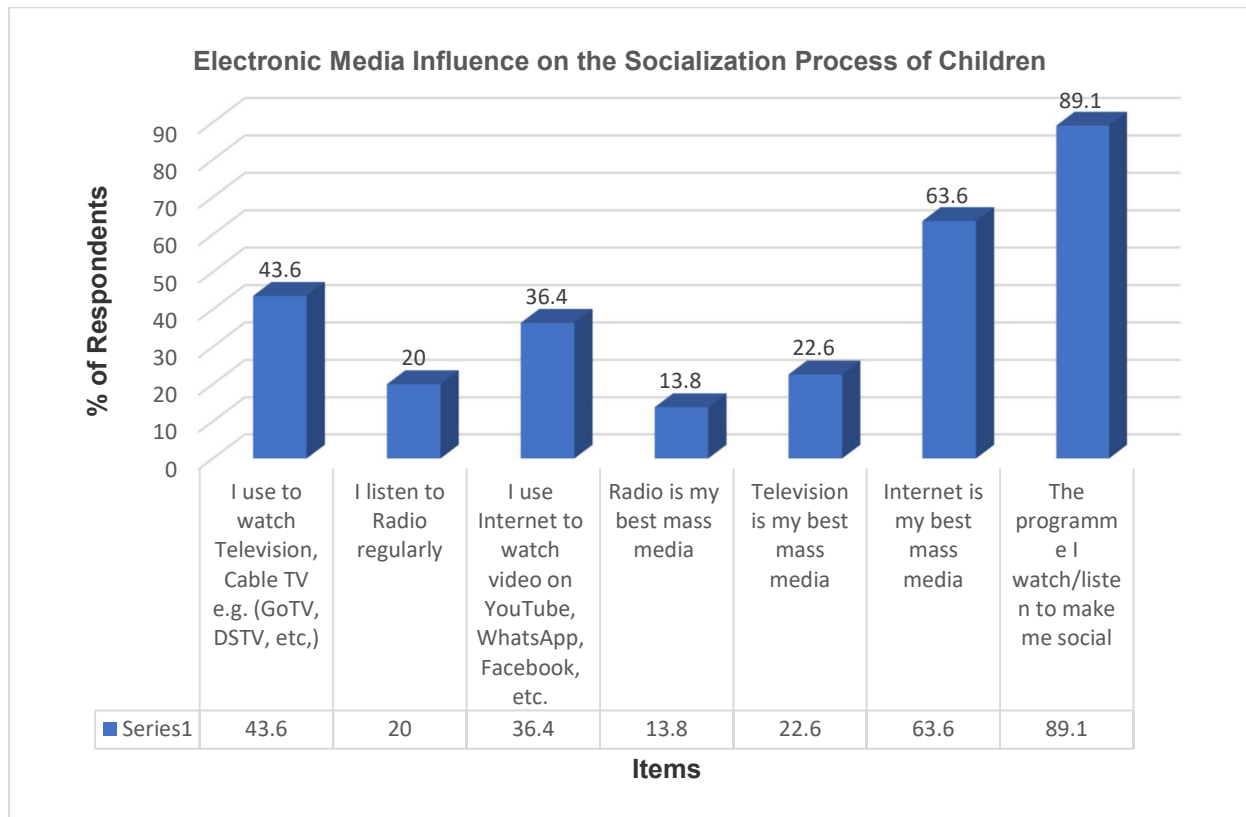
Electronic Media Influence on the Socialization Process of Children

Items	% of Respondents
I use to watch Television, Cable TV e.g. (GoTV, DSTV, etc,)	43.6
I listen to Radio regularly	20
I use Internet to watch video on YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.	36.4
Radio is my best mass media	13.8
Television is my best mass media	22.6
Internet is my best mass media	63.6
The programme I watch/listen to make me social	89.1

	I use to watch Television, Cable TV e.g. (GoTV, DSTV, etc,)	I listen to Radio regularly	I use Internet to watch video on YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.	Radio is my best mass media	Television is my best mass media	Internet is my best mass media	The programme I watch/listen to make me social
■ Series1	43.6	20	36.4	13.8	22.6	63.6	89.1

Items

Figure 3: Effect of Electronic Media on Children's Socialization
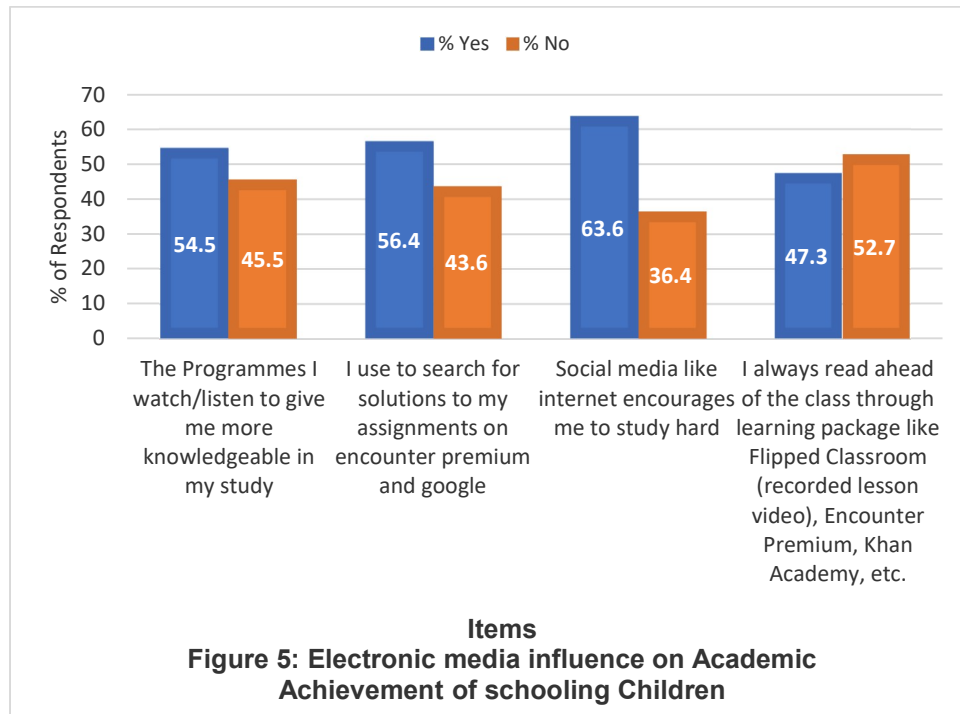Source: Fieldwork: 2018

Figure 3 above revealed that, 43.6% of the respondents used to watch TV, 20% listen to radio and 36.4% use internet to watch video on YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc. Also, 13.8% of the respondents choose radio as their best electronic media, 22.6% picked internet while TV/Cable TV is the best for 63.6% of the respondents. In addition, 89.1% of the responded confirmed that the programme they watch/listen to make them interact with people well.

Figure 4: Enjoyment Derived by Schooling Children on Exposure to Mass Media
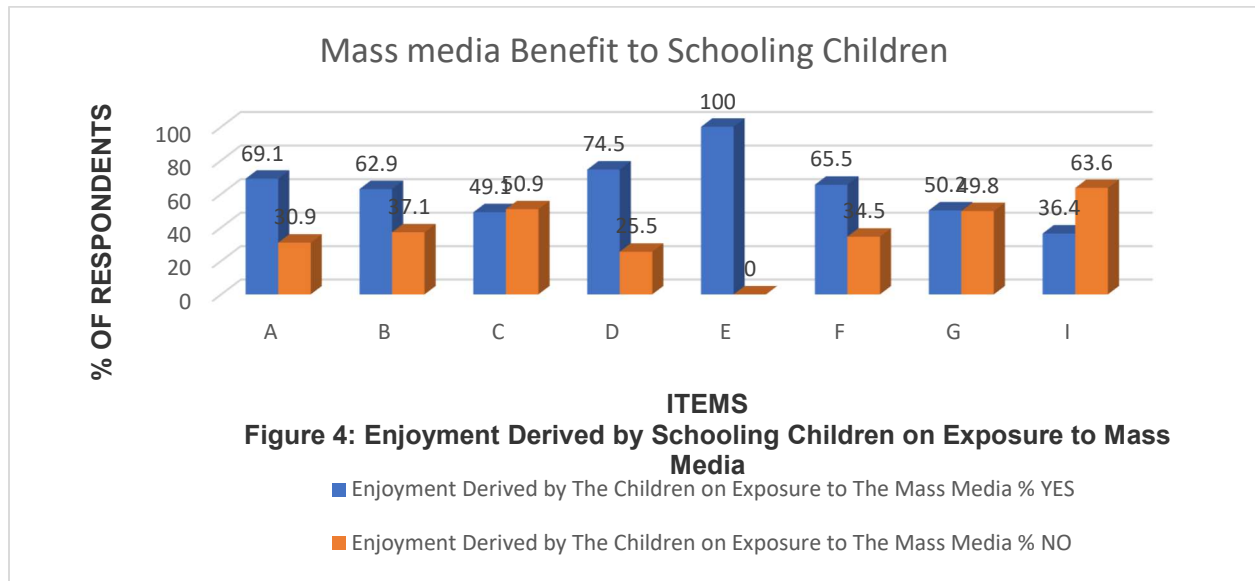
Source: Fieldwork: 2018

The Figure 4 indicated that 69.1% respondents respond to the programmes they watch/listen to while 30.9% respondents do not respond to the programmes they watch/listen to. 62.9% respondents indicated that the programmes they watch/listen to change the way they do things both at home and in the school while 37.1% respondents indicated that the programmes they watch/listen to does not change the way they do things both at home and in school. Using 50% as the benchmark, it can be inferred that children responses to the characters they watch/listen to and as a result reflects in their behaviours both at home and in the school.

Furthermore, the figure illustrated that 49.1% respondents are of the view that the programmes they watch/listen to change the way they relate with their parents and other people while 50.9% respondents are of the view that the programmes they watch /listen to does not change the way they relate with their parents and other people. Also, 74.5% said that they like to dress like the character they watch while the remaining 25.5% respondents did not. All the 100% respondents like the programmes they watch/listen to. Also, 65.5% of the respondents watch/listen to programmes on violence while 34.5% of the respondents do not. Similarly, out of 275 respondents who watch/listen to programmes on violence, 50.2% of the respondents practiced the violent programmes they watch/listen to while 49.8% of the respondents do not. Also 36.4% of the respondents do ease their tension when they listen to or watch music on radio and TV/Cable TV while 63.6% of the respondents do not. Considering 50% as the benchmark, it can be inferred that mass media serve as both good and bad agent of socialization for children because their relationship with people under the influence of bad character they watch/listen to may be negative. Also, there may be good influences if they emulate the good once. Although, all Children like the programmes they watch/listen to on electronic media.

Items
Figure 5: Electronic media influence on Academic Achievement of schooling Children
Source: Fieldwork: 2018

From Figure 5, 54.5% of the respondents claimed that the programme they watch/listen to give them more knowledge in their studies while 45.5% of them said no. also, 56.4% of the students use encounter premium and google to search for assistance in getting solution to school assignment while 43.6% do not search for solution on google and encounter premium. 63.6% of the respondents also confirmed that social media like internet encourages them to study hard while 36.4% of them do not internet as a social media that con contribute to their studies. However, only 47.3% of the respondent do read ahead of the class through the use of flipped classroom, encounter premium and Khan Academy while 52.7% of the respondent do not read ahead of the class through the use of flipped classroom, encounter premium ND Khan Academy. Using 50% as the benchmark, it can be deduced that electronic media like internet, Television/ Cable TV and educational apps like flipped classroom, Khan academy, encounter premium can improve student learning because majority of them use electronic media regularly.

6. DISCUSSIONS ON FINDINGS

The main purpose of the research was to examine the influence of the electronic media on children's socialization and their academic achievement using Agege Metropolis as a case study based on the research instrument. The research questions that piloted this purpose examined the influence of electronic media on children social life. From the analysis of data collected and its interpretation, it can be deduced that the electronic media serves as a powerful device in the lives of the children, even though its importance cannot be overemphasized. The observation so far shows that television was the highest used electronic media and its programme content was liked by the children.

It was found that children in the metropolis enjoy viewing violent programmes and puts it into practice as well. They even regarded the characters exposed to as their role models and also affect the way they relate with people. Though, for majority, it does not affect the relationship they have with their parents. The finding agreed with the earlier findings of Folarin (2012) which asserted that children tend to learn aggression from the mass media and to model their behaviour on that of the dramatis personae. However, there are certain things which they do not imitate from the screen like mode of dressing and some behavioural patterns of the characters involved.

The findings on electronic media role on children conform to the study of Nathanson (2014). Children learn easily from the electronic media than the print media as the later does not attract their attention. According to Nathanson (2014) children may especially use television to learn about social norms, as they have strong needs to fit in with their peers and society. Some of the children viewed the influence of the electronic media as being educative which helps to broaden their horizon and enables them to know their rights. They also included that it can create and destroy a child when being exposed to antisocial contents but at the same time can help model the character of a child. They also went further to say that the electronic media enlightened them on how to interact with people and equally served as a means where they cultivate violent attitudes towards people.

Conclusively, the findings so far illustrated that the electronic media have both positive and negative effects on children's socialization in Agege metropolis. As a result of this, it could be harmful or invaluable to them. Although, not all children exposed to electronic media are influenced in the same way.

Based on findings of the study, the following implications can be drawn. The findings of this research have strong implications for the upbringing and future security of children. This study offered an experimental foundation to institute that there would be a great improvement in the social lives and achievement of children if electronic media are monitored properly for the children's use.

7. CONCLUDING REMARK

Mass media are essential tools for social and academic achievement of children most especially the electronic media. In order to control the negative influence of the electronic media on children's socialization in Lagos metropolis, media literacy programmes should be designed to enlighten the children about the implications of the negative media content. The finding from this study confirmed that efficient use of electronic media will increase children's socialization and improves their performance as also supported by the study carried out by Nathanson (2014). This research has strong implications for the upbringing and future security of children. The study offered an experimental foundation to institute that there would be a great improvement in the social lives and academic achievement of schooling children if electronic media are monitored properly for children's use.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

From the literature reviewed and the research evidence, in order to appreciate the role of mass media on childhood socialization and academic achievement, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Parents should device a means of regulating what their children/wards view or listen to on electronic media.
- The media practitioners have the challenge of providing the children with healthier and educative programmes that will even enable them interact effectively with fellow children in Lagos and any part of the world since the world is now a 'global village'.
- Health institutions and missionaries in Lagos and other parts of the country should also help and sensitize the general public especially the adults about the implications of exposing children to antisocial media content.
- The government should, as a matter of necessity, supply adequate technological facilities that will encourage electronic media usage in schools to erase the negative influence of the device in children and sponsor some of the media literacy programmes on TV /cable TV.

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