

Influence of the Electronic Media on the Behaviour of Children/ Teenagers in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT The study focused on the influences of the electronic media on the behavior of children and teenagers in Gweru Urban in Zimbabwe. It brought to light both positive and negative influences of the electronic media, paying particular attention to the television (TV). The study went further to mention some of the theories that link the media and society. Among other research designs, the descriptive survey was considered most appropriate because of its investigative nature. Three instruments, the questionnaire, interview and the observation technique were used. The questionnaire was administered to teenagers at one secondary school in Gweru Urban and to parents in South Downs Suburb where the researcher resides. Forty houses were selected using the random sampling procedure. The data collected was analysed and presented in tables. The main findings of the research were that the electronic media do influence the way children and teenagers behave because those children who are not exposed to the media, for example, most of the children and teenagers in rural areas behave differently from those in the urban areas and also that some African cultures have lost their originality. The study therefore recommends that teenagers be educated on the role of the media and their effects.

INTRODUCTION

Today people wonder why teenagers/children behave the way they do. Behaviour in children is caused by a number of factors. Some researchers concluded that culture and the media are some of the factors that today affect the way teenagers dress, talk, walk or even influence the type of music or the food they want. For the purpose of this study the researchers looked at the television. Since the teenagers are the backbone of any society in terms of them being the future generation, the researchers were prompted to investigate the influence of the media on their behavior. The media today play a crucial role in our lives. It is very important to note that the media have two primary functions, that is:

- First, to make money,
- Second, to put a particular coherent worldview or ideology, thus their aim is to influence behavior or the way people act.

The media are believed to cause intended change, unintended change, minor change, facilitate change, reinforce what already exist or prevent change (McQuail 1994). Already from the above statement it is clear that the media have influence on what we do. According to Heap et al. (1995), the rate of social change is increasing as a result of the Information Technology (IT)

whose vehicle is the media. The social changes referred to here are some of the effects of the media that the authors are going to look at. This social change is apparent in many aspects of our daily lives that is at home, work, shops, schools, bank etc. A lot of people are wondering what will happen to them and their children as a result of this technology. It is also important to note that there are also different forms of electronic media available. The writers are going to cite some of these forms of electronic media but much concentration will be on the T.V. The other forms of electronic media include: The Home Computer, Internet, E-mail, Radio and the Walkman.

Looking at the home computer, Heap et al. (1995:269) assert, "*Home computers are not just commodities that are traded for a price in the market but are also the site of a continual cultural struggle*". Therefore, computers have an influence on culture. However, a home computer is also educational as well as a form of association. Looking at the internet we see that it is a combination of thousands of computer networks sending and receiving data from all over the world. Hence children have access to a lot of information. They are exposed all the time to information meant for adults. They can also access information on drugs or sex in a medium inaccessible to many parents or teachers. This becomes a big problem. The fact that no Government or commercial entity owns the net that there are no rules or regulations that govern its

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operations shows lack of control meaning that children have access to anything. However, the internet has many positive effects too. It is also an educational tool. The electronic mail on the other hand shows that the children can send and receive messages to and from anybody in any part of the world within a matter of second. They no longer have to find a pen, paper, envelope and stamp. It has become cheaper for the children especially with the fact that they are not the one who pay the bill.

The effects of the electronic media have also been seen in the early stages of the development of a child, for example, in children between the ages of 2-5 years (Shetty 2010). The researchers believe that too much exposure to the media influences the way children behave. They also believe that action-packed movies have greatly impacted on the behavior of children, for example, films like "Martial Law", "Walker Texas Ranger", "Wrestling", "The Rangers" etc. Sometimes you hear them say, I am the *Blue, White, Red Ranger or Robocop*. Most of the children try to imitate the characters from the movies. They want to be closely associated with the characters that they view as superior. They are seen acting like movies stars, wrestle with their friends in the streets etc. this makes their day.

Recently, one of the researchers visited her doctor and what she saw there really puzzled her. She saw a five year old boy who was badly injured. He had bandages all over his body including the head. The little boy was in great pain. She asked the woman who was in the company of the boy what had happened to the little boy. She was shocked to learn that the boy had jumped out of a moving truck. It was an open truck and the boy was sitting at the back. The little boy was imitating a movie star.

BACKGROUND

The aim of this study was to try and look into what other authors said about the influence of the T.V. on the behavior of children. The authors cited both the positive and negative effective of the T.V.

The Television

T.V. came on the scene in the 1950s (Kibakaya 2011). It came in as a new medium with more power of attraction and seemingly more social

effects than print and film. Therefore T.V has a great part to play in influencing behavior. According to Shirley (1999), 1 500 T. V. stations operate in the USA. Already the extent of the influence by this form of media is very high. Shirley goes on to say that on average, Americans watch 7 hours of T.V. a day. These people are now addicted to it. As a result, this medium has attracted much attention from parents, educators, social scientists, religious leaders and all those who are concerned with society's habits and values. This means that all the above mentioned people are concerned with the effects of the T.V. It has also been blamed for everything, from declines in literacy to rises in violent crime. However, once in a while it is praised, too, for giving viewers instant access to world events and uniting audiences in times of national crisis.

Shirley further postulates that: "T.V. is bound to affect the way people live" because someone who is watching T.V. is not doing other things, for example, farming, going to museum, reading, studying etc, thus affecting the way people live. However, it is also important to look at the other side of the coin because T. V. can bring a person to a museum which he/she might never visit or to a basketball game which he/she cannot attend. Therefore, there are both negative and positive effects. According to Barnouw (2000), a T.V. screen is referred to as a "tube of plenty" where one can see all kinds of people, murderers, public officials, foreign leaders, reporters, soldiers, entertainers, sportsmen, detectives, doctors, hooligans, pastors etc. We cannot run away from the fact that each of the above-listed people will be represented in society. In this society we have children and teenagers who are bound to take up from any of the above-listed characters. The advertisements that are screened on T.V. have greatly influenced the way teenagers behave. Because of the persuasive attractive language, the teenagers are stimulated to try new things/products that they do not know. Advertisers do a lot of research before their adverts are out. They try to make them very attractive in order to win the hearts of their targeted audiences.

In the Financial Gazette of September 6-12, 2001, an article by Nzumara a journalist, writer and social commentator in New York, is clearly a good example of what the teenagers call fashion these days and this type of fashion is being advertised everywhere, everyday. In this article she is trying to show the world the type of dress

that is popular with teenagers these days. She goes on to say, "you do not have to get a front row seat at fashion shows to determine the fashion trends, just a walk through the streets of major towns is fashion parade enough."

You hear teenagers shouting "*Yo What Up!*" at each other, which is their type of language. They now wear what some call super low jeans, ultra low or waist jeans. These are jeans that come below the waist, Heap-stars, paddle-pushers, a craze that has grabbed teenagers. "*You gotta have this look*" is the catch phrase the advertisers use and it is really catching like wild fire. They wear these with Halter Tops, spaghetti or body tops etc. Because of advertising, today's fashion scene has recycled, reinterpreted, redesigned and rejuvenated the 1970s. As long as the things are properly advertised using proper media, of which the electronic is the best, they gain popularity. This is the main reason of carrying out this study, to find out the effects of the electronic media which the researchers view as very powerful for convincing people. For example, the "Afro" is back, the bell-bottoms and platform shoes have become popular with teenagers again.

The fact that in 1922 Will Hays, the first president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA) in America wrote a code of conduct to govern the T.V. industry and to oversee movies content shows that the T.V. can influence the way people behave. On 17 February, 1930, the MPPDA adopted a production code, which began by stating standard principles. These were:

- Only correct standards of life shall be presented.
- Sex: Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures are not to be shown.
- Obscenity if forbidden.
- Dancing costumes intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements on the dance are forbidden (Shetty 2010).

He was afraid of public reaction against such images. This would reduce business and profits. Therefore, it is clear that he was aware of the effects of T.V. We wish this had continued because it would have put some form of boundaries and would not expose children to some indecent things. With satellite and DSTV today, children now have access to anything.

O'Donnell (1994) says T.V. can influence the behavior of children. Researches were carried out

and it was found out that children who watch television have a certain view of life different from those who do not watch T.V. Patterns of behavior do appear to be more uniform generally as a result of this exposure. Moral standards are then affected. For example, O'Donnell goes on to say that there is a link between T.V./Video violence and aggressive behaviour by young people. Thus programmes containing violence are likely to have cumulative impact on younger children. T.V. promotes values which stand in contrast to the values entrenched in our existing society (social institutions), for example, the family, church, school etc. The new values are more tolerant of deviant behavior, for example, a programme that came out on DSTV about a hospital in U.K. where abortions are carried out and have been legalized.

If teenagers are exposed to such type of information they may end up taking abortion as legal and very normal or as something that is not bad at all. This is why most Governments agreed to introduce legislation to further restrict the sale of violent videos to children. T.V. is also to have resulted in what is called the 'drip effect' meaning constant repetition tends to familiarize viewers with the idea that certain types of behaviours are normal, for example, violence, sex and promiscuity because of the constant repetition. At the end of the day, because they are so much used to it, young people may end up viewing it as normal. Mowlana (1998: 23) says this about the negative influence of the T.V. "high use of T.V. was indeed correlated with poor social adjustments by children and in adults it was associated empirically with other indicators of social marginality especially sickness, old age, unemployment and poverty." Therefore, addiction to T.V. can be viewed as failure to develop or connect with reality.

However, T.V. also has positive effects. It informs, entertains and educates through the variety of programmes that are broadcast. For example, documentary programmes on health, farming, education, mining, etc. are very useful in our daily lives. T.V. viewing also broadens the outlook of the younger generation making them aware not only of their family circle, neighborhood or school but also of the wider community and other societies. It has also been proved that children who are exposed to the media do better in schools than those not exposed. It is because they are greatly exposed to the use of English

language which is the official language in Zimbabwe, that is, it is the language of education, business, law, communication etc. As a result, these children tend to be faster in acquiring the English language skills like, writing, speaking and reading than those not exposed. However such children are very poor at their own languages.

Because of the negative influences of television, some parents ration T. V. viewing in an effort to encourage their children to spend more time on other things that they refer to as improving activities. As said by one parent, "I do restrict how long they watch T.V. because some the things I consider as not very worthwhile" This statement clearly shows that the parent is afraid of the effects of the television, hence the parent tries to limit and monitor the children. Other parents are resorting to more stringent measures such as packing the machine away. Parents are trying to exercise control over their children. The influence of television on the behavior of children is confirmed by Masuku (1999) when he says in his book that "T. V. clearly and undoubtedly has influence, or millions of dollars would not be spent in media advertising." The adverts we watch on T. V. have an influence on what we do.

Media Theories

There are theories that have proved the fact that the media have some effects on the ways their audiences behave. The major assumption underpinning these theories is that the media have a role to play in society to set the norms that society lives on. The theories try to explore the link between media and society. The theories that are going to be looked at are:

- The Hypodermic or Bullet Theory
- The Cultivation Theory
- The Modeling Theory

Hypodermic Theory

In this theory the media is regarded as all-powerful having strong effects over a passive and powerless audience. Kwaramba (2002) says this theory was credited with considerable power to shape opinion and belief, to change habits of life and to mould behavior according to the will of those in control of the media and their contents. This means it presumed a direct behavioural effect on an individual in line with the intended

goal of the communicator. For example, if the communicator intends to make the audience change their behavior towards an issue, the theory was that this would be achieved.

This theory can be associated with campaigns. Some politicians may use propaganda to try and win support or to undermine the opposition side. For example, if the audiences are constantly bombarded with information on the evils or benefits of imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe, they would end up disliking or liking the idea.

The researchers have seen this theory working very well with teenagers. For example, they are constantly bombarded with ideas on the goodness of the western culture and in response they have taken this to be their culture, viewing it as superior to theirs. They no longer want to be associated with their culture that they now view as inferior. This is seen in the type of music they want, they are into Rhythm and Blues (B 'n B) and Ragga, the way dress, they like heap-stars, spaghetti-tops etc. They do not eat things like *derere*, *madora muboora*, *matumbu*, *guru* etc. They are now imitating the American popular culture portrayed on T.V called "Ape Culture".

The Cultivation Theory

This theory specifically focused on the effects of the T.V on the audiences according to Pfukwa (2001). The theory propounds that if the viewer is greatly exposed to television, the effect is the cultivation of a certain social perception and world-view. Awujo (2012) also points out that the theory holds that T. V., among modern media, has acquired such a central place in daily life that it dominates our symbolic environment, substituting its (distorted) message about reality for personal experience and other means of knowing about the world. Therefore, television-viewing gradually leads to the adoption of beliefs about the nature of the social world which conform to the stereotyped, distorted and very selective view of reality as portrayed in a systematic way in T.V. fiction. This is why we see teenagers imitating what they see on television. For example, they are always wrestling and playing cricket on the streets. They associate more to the things they watch on television. Cricket has been screened heavily on T. V. so much that it has become very popular with teenagers. Even if one may ask the teenagers about their favourite sport, you will hear them say cricket. But how did they

come to know about such a game called cricket? It is of the television.

Cultivation theory differs from the hypodermic theory mainly because of its gradual and cumulative character. It involves first, learning and secondly, the construction of a view of social reality dependent on personal circumstances and experiences. It is also an interactive process between messages and audiences unlike the hypodermic theory that is one way. Those who watch increasing amounts are predicted to show increasing divergence of perceptions of reality away from the known picture of the world.

Modeling Process

According to Pfukwa (2001), the modeling process is the application of the general social learning theory to the acquisition of new behavior from media presentations. The media are said to be readily accessible and attractive sources of models. They give symbolic modeling of almost every conceivable form of behavior. Young people acquire attitudes and emotional responses and new styles of conduct from television, for example, from the films they watch. They acquire new types of behavior from exposure to multimedia communications. Teenagers usually want to identify with models whom they view as attractive and with of imitation. For example, they may emulate the T.V. character Walker Texas Ranger as a role model. Teenagers may emulate an international popular musician or the way a T.V. character dresses, behaves and the kind of food they eat.

Also a lot of teenage girls are dieting to try to maintain what they call a super figure. Zimbabwean youths want to imitate the Western models they see on T.V. for example, Super Model, Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss Malaika. They want to look like these beauty queens. Therefore, it is very clear from this theory that television has great powers to shape the way children/teenagers behave. To sum it up Kwaramba (2002) says, three kinds of effects are generally identified. These are:

- cognitive, to do with knowledge and feelings,
- affective, to do with attitude and feelings, and finally,
- behavior, which is the main focus of the duty to do the with behavioral change.

According to Pfukwa (2001), theories around media effect have been grouped into two, that is,

effects resulting in short-term change and those resulting in long-term change.

Short-term Change: Pfukwa (2000), short-term change regards communication as a stimulus and response process. Examples of such effects include: dressing appropriately because of the weather forecast predictions through the media, attending a certain function after it has been advertised through the media or buying something because it has advertised. The effects are associated with the hypodermic theory. These do not have defined pattern or directions' in the behavior, attitudes and actions of receivers.

Long-term Effects: According to Macquail (1999), these are believed to have more to do with attitudes and behavior than the cognitive aspects, for example, the promotion of Western ideas from the developed to the developing countries through the media. For example, if we look at teenagers, the way they dress, they type of music and the food they want are all western.

The Effects of the Electronic Media on the African Continent

According to Mowlana (1998), media industries are owned by great developed countries. Developing countries depend on developed countries both economically and technologically. As a result, Western Europe and the US receive the greater amount of coverage in the media while third world countries receive the least. Hence, there is a domination and subjection of the third world countries by those of the developed countries. This is why the cultivation theory cited above is taking its toll. The African identity is now lost, their culture has been eroded. African cultures have been homogenized that is becoming more alike to those of the developed countries. They have become less distinctive. In other words, the media have led to the denigration of the African culture. It is also very important to note that whatever, coverage Third World Countries receive is negative. This makes Third World youth despise their culture.

Mowlana (1998:87) goes on to say, " News stereotyping and it's on the audience have been studied in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Middle East and a good number of writers and researchers view the Northern-dominated flow as distorting information on cultural, political and economic progress in the developing world". Such domination has led to a massive consumer cul-

ture eroding national identity and sovereignty in different parts of the world. As a result of this, quite a number of African states are now fighting hard to try and rebuild their culture. Here in Zimbabwe, for example, programmes like *Nhaka Yedu* and *National Ethos* presented by people like Dr. Chivaura, Dr. Mararike, Prof. Mupeperekwi and others are being screened on T.V to try and rebuild/rediscover African history and identity. I think this is also why the ZBC in its Vision 30 has now settled for 75% local content and 25% foreign content.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey model. It was considered to be the most appropriate because of its investigative nature. According to Borg and Gall (1989), the descriptive research model was developed by anthropologists and sociologists and it was mainly developed for social sciences. This type of research can also be referred to as the qualitative, naturalistic, ethnographic, subjective or post positivistic enquiry. Its purpose is usually to describe some situation or problem as it is, without altering anything. This makes this approach the best for this study in which the researchers seek to describe or highlight the influences of the electronic media on the behavior of children. In this study the researchers used three instruments. These were, questionnaires, interview schedule and the observation technique. The sampling technique used was random sampling. Random sampling is whereby each member of the population as shown in the sample frame has an equal chance of being selected. After the data was collected, the researchers analysed it for the sake of making interpretations. The researchers tried to present the data in a clearly laid out manner for easy understanding and used tables because of their clarity.

From the data collected, it is quite clear that teenagers are greatly exposed to the media; hence the media are now in control of their lives. For example 100% of the teenagers according to Table 1 have access to both radio and T.V. Even parents' questionnaire (Table 2) indicates that 100% own both radio and T.V. Table 1 also shows that seventy two percent (72%) of the teenagers have access to the international broadcast, that is, DSTV/satellite. However, comparing the teenagers' responses with those of the parents it

is clear that parents value their culture more than the teenagers. They are not easily carried away by media. For example, program like *Madzinza e Zimbabwe*, local music and other local documentary programs. Most of them are proud of their culture, they do not see anything wrong with it. May be it is because they are more mature and they not easily carried away like their children.

Table1: Responses from teenagers

	Males	Fe- males	Total	%
<i>1 Forms of Media They Have Access to</i>				
T.V	21	29	50	100%
Radio	21	29	50	100%
Computer	15	17	32	64%
Internet	18	10	28	56%
DSTV / Satellite	17	19	36	72%
<i>2 Favourite Radio Station</i>				
Sport FM	5	4	9	18%
Radio Zimbabwe	2	2	4	8%
3 FM	21	23	44	88%
National F.M	0	0	0	0%
<i>3 Favourite Type of Music</i>				
Local	3	5	8	16%
Foreign	21	25	46	92%
<i>4 Favourite T.V. Programme</i>				
Local	6	7	13	26%
Soap	17	19	36	72%
Action-packed western/ horror movies	28	9	37	74%
<i>5 Favourite Celebrities</i>				
Local	2	4	7	14%
International	23	20	43	86%
<i>6 Information Accessed on the Internet</i>				
Educational	15	20	10	20%
Famous People, for example, musicians	16	20	43	86%
<i>7 No. of Days They Watch T.V.</i>				
Once or twice a week	0	0	0	0%
Everyday	28	21	49	100%
<i>8 Media Coverage Should Be High on</i>				
Local	4	3	7	14%
International	21	21	42	84%

From the teenagers' questionnaire as reflected in Table 1, the researchers have noticed that most of them preferred the foreign way as compared to the African way. The majority of them stated that the programs were stupid and childish. They rated foreign programs as more organized, professional, advanced, full of action and interesting to watch. They also pointed out that they want to know what will be happening around the world. Even if you ask the teenagers something in *shona* they reply in English and we wonder what they do with their grandparents at home (in rural areas) because they do not understand English. The

Table 2: Responses from parents

	Total	%
1 <i>Forms of Media They Have Access to</i>		
T.V	25	100%
Radio	25	100%
Computer	15	60%
Internet	12	48%
DSTV / Satellite	16	64%
2 <i>How Much Media Access Do Your Children Have?</i>		
10-20%	0	0%
30-40%	0	0%
50-60%	2	8%
70-80%	3	12%
90-100%	20	80%
3 <i>Favourite T.V Music</i>		
Local	22	88%
Gospel	16	64%
Foreign	10	40%
4 <i>Favourite T.V Programme</i>		
Documentary / local programmes	24	96%
Foreign	10	40%
5 <i>Does The Media Influence the Behavior of Children?</i>		
Educate the children about the effects	10	40%
Limit the children from watching T.V	22	88%
Coverage	24	96%
More coverage should be on local programmes	15	60%

teenagers are not proud of their mother tongue. Even the way they dress is mostly Western and American. They are even embarrassed to be seen eating groundnuts or green mealies. The researchers really do not know what has got into them. We asked the two girls whether the food does not taste good but they all said they like food very much but not in public. They are too shy to be seen by their friends holding a cob of mealies.

This is really strange, the researchers think this may have forced Wilom Tight (musician) to record his song Ndinoda Wangu. The song talks about the teenagers of today who no longer want to be associated with their culture. The song goes:

Ndinokatyamadzwa ini, nevana vamazuva ano, Kutora tsika dzavamwe, dzavo mudondo tse Asi Chiiko Ah ya ya ya! Ndinoda wangu wekumaruzevha, handidi munose akarasa tsika

The song is translated into English as follows:

I get puzzled with what today's children do

They take other people's norms throwing away theirs

But what exactly is this oh no no no

I would rather marry a woman from the rural areas

Than to marry a city girl with no identity and norms

He is also astounded by the way these children now behave. They no longer value their culture. They have now taken the western way of life. This is why parents in their questionnaires (Table 2) were of the opinion that there be more coverage of local programmes to try and educate their children about their African tradition and culture, to value it and not view it as inferior. From the data collected by the researchers, a lot of teenagers do not want to hear or to be associated with the African tradition. Those who have DSTV / Satellite said they do not even watch ZBC because they say is a boring station. This is why 72% of the teenagers (Table 1) prefer DSTV / Satellite. They are trying to run away from the local things. This is why on the question of celebrities, only seven of forty-nine teenagers mentioned local people, the rest were international stars mainly on the music scene. Among them we saw names we have never heard in our lives, and we wonder how they came know about these people. Among them, there are names like, TOK, P'Didy, Wesley Snipes, Antonio Banderas etc.

Also 92% (Table 1) were for foreign or Western music as compared to 16% for local music. Their favourite type music was mainly R 'n' B, Ragga, Hip Hop, Soul a few mentioned Gospel. The trend was the same for the favourite. T. V. programmes. Most of them mentioned programmes like, Channel 'O', VIP Martial Law, G I JOE etc. It was evident that a large number of teenagers have access to the electronic media. Seventy-two (72%) have DSTV / Satellite in their homes thus exposing the children more to the international world. The data collected also revealed that quite a number of parents were not aware of the effects of the electronic media on the behavior of children. Those who were aware of the media effects only mentioned the negative effects like encouraging sex and bad behavior in children. For example, others pointed out that television adverts for Protector encourage sex in children. Parents were of the opinion that the adverts for condoms should be scrapped out. Instead of advertising condoms they were of the opinion that there should be more programmes to discourage the teenagers from having sex. Advertisements should be preaching abstinence instead of advertising condoms which promote sex among teenagers. Teenagers are now saying sex is okay as long as one uses a condom. They also felt that erotic (sex) films should not be screened at all on T.V saying they did not see

any purpose or reason for screening such films as they do not educate except to spoil their children. They also said adults do not need them either because they know everything about love and sex.

From the teenagers' responses on the use of the internet, the researchers noticed that a lot of teenagers were not aware of the fact that the internet is also an educational tool. Most of the teenagers were only accessing information on foreign musicians biographs and lyrics. We were shocked to note that some teenagers mentioned in their questionnaire that they mainly access pornography because the internet is the only thing that can provide the information easily. This is really terrible, it will obviously have a negative influence on teenagers' behaviour. We think it is the duty of the teachers and parents to teach the teenagers to use the internet productively. The parents we interviewed indicated that they were going to do something about this. However, it was good to discover that some of the teenagers, though very few, are using the internet for educational purposes. A lot of parents were very pleased to learn that the internet is also an educational tool; some of them were not aware of it.

A number of solutions to the negative impact of the media were also given by parents. Ninety-six (96%) said coverage should be mainly educational, 88% thought that children should be restricted in watching T.T., 40% felt that there should be more coverage on local programmes rather than foreign, while 10% were of the opinion that the children should be educated about the effects of the media according to Table 2. Most of the views in this study are supported by Shetty (2010) who asserts that somehow all adults and children become slaves of the television box. One finds it hard to talk to children particularly without anything being mentioned about the television, which proves that much of their lives are dedicated to the television. She further articulates that TV is viewed by families while having their dinner, supper, or even spending their free time, instead of taking up something more creative or something that would have far more advantages. Considering that the television displays a lot of violence in the programs, children are being subject to a lot of brutality and somehow watching TV harms their development.

Awujo (2012) also concurs with the findings of this study by stating that when you come down to think on it, the time that the kid is spending on watching television is lesser time depleted on

homework or having interesting exchanges with grownups or other children. What is more is that watching TV late at night makes the children feel tired, which stops them from paying full attention in school during the day. In support Yemenia68 (2009) asserts that we see drugs, sex, nudity, and vulgar language portrayed on practically every show or program on television. According to him, these issues are portrayed as a source of entertainment for adults. Children, on the other hand, should not be exposed to this kind of entertainment, especially at an age in which they don't have the ability to make a distinction between reality and fantasy. Children seem to believe that whatever they see on television is a reflection of the ideal American family. Consequently, they start to imitate those less than perfect exhibits for the mere purpose of "fitting in" to this judgmental society. Children's preference of clothing is another example of how television influences them (Kadiri and Muhammed 2011). Young boys choose to wear clothes a couple sizes bigger than their own just to look like the "rappers" they see on television. The girls like wearing everything and anything that "Hannah Montana" or the "Cheetah Girls" are wearing. At school, if you wear anything outside of the latest fashion trends you are considered an outcast (Yemenia68 2009).

The findings of this study that television has negative effects on children's behavior are also supported by Kibakaya (2011). He agrees that violent scenes on television programmes and movies influence children's behaviour. Furthermore, Kibakaya postulates that "We have seen and heard young boys trying to bully younger girls. It could be possible that they might have seen such aggressive behaviours on TV. Violent scenes have greater influence on the younger generation because the young people hardly have time to analyse what they see. As a result they copy exactly what they see without minding its impact"

CONCLUSION

From the investigation carried out into the influences of the electronic media on the behavior of children, the researchers drew the following conclusions: The television has great powers to influence the way children and teenagers behave. Some of the things they are exposed to are not worthwhile, for example, the legalization of abortion cited in the preceding chapters re-

sults in the mass media promoting the erosion of traditional social values and creating confusion, particularly among young people about the standards of behavior. Great exposure to the media has also reduced the economic role of the family. Parents and children can now rarely work together. Children are less likely to hold them in awe or seek their advice because T. V. introduces other life styles thus increasing natural rebelliousness of youth to adult authority.

The electronic media are a potential threat to the value set by parents, educators, churches and other agents of social control because media are now regarded as continuously offering models and pictures of life and models of behavior. The electronic media has also moved Africa from its original platform, thus the African culture has been diluted, everything is now Euro-centric.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the finding of the study, the following recommendations were arrived at.

That the teenagers be educated on the role of the media and their effects

- That there be more coverage of local programmes to try and educate the teenagers about their culture.
- That erotic/sexually offensive films be barred from T. V screening.
- That the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture produce locally relevant films, documentaries etc.
- That ZBC procure African films from other countries and screen more of these than American films.

- That ZBC air more African than Euro-Centric music.
- That Shona and Ndebele be made compulsory entry requirements for College and University to make teenagers learn African languages and culture.

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