

CORRELATION STUDY OF STUDENTS RESTIVENESS AND EXPOSURE TO MEDIA-AGGRESSIVENESS IN SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF SOUTH EAST-STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was designed to correlate student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts. The main focus was to see whether exposing students to media-based aggressive scripts has a predictive correlation with their tendency for restive behaviours. The population for the study comprised of students of university, polytechnic and colleges of education in South Eastern states of Nigeria. From these, five (5) institutions were randomly selected. Then, using cluster sampling technique, 484 students were sampled across the five institutions. The sampled students were further stratified on the bases of gender and Family Marital. Data were collected using a three-sectioned instrument titled Media and Restiveness Questionnaire (MRQ). The Section 'A' elicited biographical data. The Section 'B' elicited data on respondents' frequency of exposure to media-based aggressive scripts while the Section 'C' tested their tendencies for restive behaviours. Collected data were analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics (r). From the analysis, significant relationship was found between exposure to media-based aggressive scripts and restiveness among male students ($0.57 > 0.35 @ p. 0.05$); among students from non-compacted family ($0.55 > 0.35 @ p. 0.05$) and among students from separated family ($0.56 > 0.35 @ p. 0.05$). However, significant relationship was not found between exposure to media-based aggressive scripts and restiveness among female students ($0.24 < 0.35 @ p. 0.05$) and among students from compacted family ($0.21 < 0.35 @ p. 0.05$). Based on the findings, it was concluded that exposure to media-based aggressive scripts can be a predictor of male students' restiveness and as predictor of restiveness among students from non-compacted and separated families. It was therefore recommended that parents and institutionalized caregivers should intensify policies and efforts to mediate in the exposure of students to media-based aggressive scripts, particularly among male students and students from non-compacted and separated families.

Key Words: Restiveness, media, behaviour, correlation, aggressiveness, scripts, development

Introduction

In recent time, Information Communication Technology (ICT) has become a media phenomenon that dominates every facet of human life. It is a development that has components of technological adventures which young and old members of society now explore to advance their educational, social and economic interests and endeavours. With the advent of social media, societies seem to have been networked to interact for social and education purposes across cultural and moral boundaries. Certainly, many socioeconomic

changes must have resulted from this. Consequently, in countries around the world, there have been series of national and international policies that are directed at not just towards advancing, popularizing but also moderating the production, distribution, consumption and effects of ICT facilities on people (Gidden, 2001, Adidi, 2014). Just as in any other nation, in almost all ICT sales outlets in Nigeria, we can find media items readily available for almost every category of human needs. Today, such facilities are packaged as entertainment, instructional and security devices

for individual and group consumptions. In fact, with the advancement of social media, virtually every aspect of human life are codified, disseminated and appreciated within and across geographical and social boundaries of the country.

In advanced and developing nations, televisions and internet services have become the most popular and most versatile passages to ICT accessibility and utilization (Maccionis, 2007; Adidi, 2014). More specifically, television stations seem to be the most common and available media outlets for persons of varied social and economic backgrounds. Television stations can be classified into educational stations whose programs are designed primarily to enlighten and equip people with various classes of knowledge. There are also entertainment stations that broadcast programs which are basically meant for relaxation and recreation. No doubt, television has been a traditional means of news broadcast and accessibility that government and private individuals promoted (Adidi, 2014). It is one media channel that is found in homes of persons of different socio-economic orientations. However, with the advent of internet services, the scope and coverage of media components changed. No doubt, with the popularity of the internet services, technologists have utilized internet to make ICT facilities more compacted, mobile, accessible and available to almost everybody that desire communicative links with persons within and without their immediate socio-economic environment (Giddens, 2001). Today, the facility of Information Communication Technology comprises all forms of electronic soft and hardware devices ranging from the cumbersome television set in the living room of a rural dweller to the microchip that empowers data encrypting and analysis in the possession of multinational organizations.

Among youths and particularly among tertiary students, ICT remains a gigantic web of content of knowledge in which different experiences abound. Information Communication Technology facilities allow exposure to series of audio-visual experiences

that can go a long way to shape the perceptions and behaviour of individuals. Experts in the field of behavioural studies have claimed that the contents of ICT are two dimensional; one side is very likely to project positive behaviour and the other side is very likely to project negative behaviour (Horowitz & Borden, 1995; Cherry, 2007; Adidi, 2014; Giddens, 2001). Specifically, Sociologists of Education and Social Psychologists technically refer to contents in the latter category as 'aggressive scripts'. Aggressive Scripts in media facilities are ICT contents that promote or present negative behaviours such as violence, gangsterism, murder, war, sex, drug abuse, betrayal, infidelity and conspiracy as normal ways of life (Currie & Siner, 1999).

Horowitz and Borden (1995), describe aggressive scripts as what can be obtained in audio-visual models/contents. They are contents that are capable of encouraging users of ICT facilities to develop and internalize attitudes that initiate, interpret and carry out social interactions aggressively. Such scripts are believed to be capable of shaping media users' perception of life issues, negatively. They are capable of structuring individuals' inbuilt view or idea of how things should happen (Horowitz & Borden, 1995; Macionis, 2007). For example, a student who experienced scarcity of water supply on campus and who already has been exposed to aggressive script via the media may believe the best way to address the situation is to apply violence. But a student with similar experience but who has not been exposed to aggressive script may believe in non-violence approach to solving the issue of scarcity of water supply on campus. Certainly, aggressive scripts can instigate negative behaviours that are obstructions to educational and social developments. Aggressive scripts are what educational programs should work against.

Exposure to aggressive script can result in the development of restive attitude (Horowitz and Borden, 1995). Restiveness as used in this study means attitude of being on the verge of resisting control or guide. It includes attitudes of refusing to operate within the rules and regulations of parents, school authority and

security agencies. Restiveness includes displaying aggression towards fellow students, school staff and security personnel. It includes tendency to cause crises within the school system and society at large. Researches already confirm that a restive youth is prone to life of delinquency, crime and aggression (George & Haron, 2017). A restive person can perpetrate delinquency such as truancy, drug abuse, disobeying parents and constituted authorities; keeping bad companionship, participating in premature sex or immoral conduct, using profanity and becoming violent. Further still, a restive person can advance to more violent crimes such as assault, rape, robbery and murder or get engaged in property crimes such as burglary, theft and arson as adult (Steinberg, 2002). These behaviours disorganize society. They obstruct peaceful co-existence and in most cases render organized activities such as in school unproductive.

However, many have argued that behavioural development in youths can be influenced by a lot of things ranging from nature and nature experiences. Many researchers claimed that misconduct can be a product of biological and sociological attributes such as gender, family socioeconomic status and Family marital history (Siegal, Welsh & Senna, 2003). Family marital history includes growing up in compacted homes (homes under the control of both parents), non-compacted homes (homes under the control of only one parent), or separated homes (homes experiencing divorce). Huesmann and Malamuth (2015) maintain that youths' behaviour could vary in line with these various home and socioeconomic experiences. These researchers claim that different patterns of behaviour are accessible and incorporated into youth's psyche through negative socialization processes. Most time, many of these involve parents, peers and institutions. For example, Eron and Farant; (1991) opine that aggression or restiveness develops through negative parenting. They maintain that parents can model the behaviour of their children as they use physical and verbal aggression. Mednick, Baker and Carothers (1990) also link conduct disorder and the subsequent delinquency to family disruption. They point to family disruption such

as the one caused by acrimonious divorce as capable of making youth develop criminal intent and behaviours.

Under whatever socioeconomic experiences, youths are known to be more susceptible to mechanisms of behavioral modification than the older members of the society. This is because, youths are vibrant and conscious of their social attributes and interactions with others, particularly with others in their age group (Steinberg, 2002). Thus, since media facilities promote social interaction, youths are easily drawn to utilizing the facilities. This is likely why some researchers reported that youth use and fall victim of media miss-training more than older members of society (Horowitz & Borden, 1995; Steinberg, 2002; Tell Newspaper, June 11, 2012). Siegal, Welsh and Senna, (2003) write that the present generation of adolescents is cynical and preoccupied with material acquisitions. They maintain that by age 18, American youth have spent more time in front of a television set than in the classroom. This phenomenon is universal. A research article in the June 11, 2012 Tell Newspaper publication succinctly established the fact that in a country like the United States of America (USA), a Consumer Report (CR) revealed that in 2011 alone, 7.5 million American youths under age 13 joined *Facebook*, and that an average of 3,400 text messages are texted per month by American youths. The same report also identified Nigeria along with South Africa, Egypt and Morocco, as one of the African countries where there is heavy usage of ICT facilities among the youths (Tell Newspaper, June 11, 2012, p14). With the current spate of developments in ICT such usages among Nigerian youth in 2019 would have increased appreciably.

Thus, since literature conscientiously established the presence of aggressive script in media, the fact that students will access the scripts effortlessly is indisputable. However, there is yet to be adequate research report pointing to the possible effects of acquiring aggressive scripts via media on students' behavioral development or on whether such exposure correlates with students' aggression and restiveness. Many of the available researches only emphasize media as potent

agent of behavioural change among youths without being specific on the dynamics of the change (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Macionis, 2007; George & Haron, 2017). A research gap is created with this inadequate research on ICT and behavioral development of students. Thus, there is need to bridge the research gap through more researches. Such researches should focus on establishing relationship between antisocial behaviour and ICT contents. This is the scope of this study. This study is designed to find out the causative relationship between exposure to ICT-based aggressive scripts and youth restiveness among tertiary students in selected South-East states of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically framed on Albert Bandura's *Social Learning Theory*. The theory was propounded in 1973. It posits that antisocial behaviours are learned much like other human behaviours. The theory opposes the biological explanation for misbehaviour which maintains that antisocial behaviour results from functions of the brain and hormonal activities. Contrary to this, *Social Learning Theory* identifies observational learning or modelling as core source and shaper of human behavior. The theory maintains that human being quickly learns misbehaviour by directly or indirectly watching others misbehave (Horowitz & Borden, 1995). This sort of observation or modelling can result from interactions with electronic or non-electronic medium, such as watching television or interacting via social media facilities. Proponents of Social Learning Theory claims that the influence of a watched misbehaviour in shaping the attitude of the watcher is more potent if such watched misbehaviour pays off or provides some social incentives to the perpetrators of the misbehaviour (Horowitz & Borden, 1995). Bandura (1973) proves this theoretical position by showing that children who watch an aggressive script via media such as television can learn new behaviour and may display the learnt behaviour if given the opportunity. This study is built on this theory. It is assumed that

exposure to media components such as media-based aggressiveness could have impacts on tertiary students' behavioural formation.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and transformed to hypotheses in the study.

1. Is there any relationship between male student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts?
2. Is there relationship between female student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts?
3. Is there relationship between restiveness of students from compacted family and exposure to media aggressive scripts?
4. Is there relationship between restiveness of students from non-compacted family and exposure to media aggressive scripts?
5. Is there relationship between restiveness of students from separated family and exposure to media aggressive scripts?

Hypotheses

The following five null hypotheses were raised and tested in the study:

- H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between male student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts
- H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between female student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts
- H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between restiveness of students from compacted family and exposure to media aggressive scripts
- H₀₄ There is no significant relationship between restiveness of students from non-compacted Family and exposure to media aggressive script
- H₀₅ There is no significant relationship between restiveness of students from separated family and exposure to media aggressive script

Methodology

The study is a correlation research. Correlation researches are designed to find out likely relationships between or among variables without necessarily establishing a cause-effect link; between or among the variables. In this study, the researches correlated exposure to media aggressive scripts and student restiveness. The sampling procedures were in stages. At the first stage, the researchers randomly selected five tertiary institutions including Imo State University, Federal University of Technology Owerri, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Federal College of Education Technical, Nsugbe, and Alvan-Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, from those located within South-Eastern states of Nigeria. At the second stage of sampling, the researcher used cluster sampling technique to sample a

total of 484 tertiary students across three faculties (Faculties of Art, Science and Business Administration) in the selected universities. In the case of colleges of education, the researcher selected School of Education and School of Arts. All the sampled respondents were in the second year level of their respective institutions. To ensure that the sampled respondents were actually students of the selected institutions, the researchers administered the questionnaire to the respondents while their lectures were on. This was done after taking permission from the appropriate authorities. The sampled respondents were further stratified on the basis of gender and Family Marital History (FMH). The numeric descriptions of the sampled respondents are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Numeric description of the sampled respondents on the basis of stratification variables

Gender		Family marital history							
Male		female		compactd		non-compactd		separated	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
244	50.41	240	49.58	196	40.49	153	31.61	135	27.89

As shown in Table 1, 50.41% of the sampled respondents were male and 49.58% were female. Also 40.49% of the respondents were students living with both parents in the same apartment; 31.61% of the respondents lived in single parent-homes and 27.89% of the respondents were students whose parents have divorced.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was developed to collect data from the sampled respondents. The instrument was titled: Media and Restiveness Questionnaire (MRQ). The questionnaire has three sections. The section ‘A’ elicited respondents’ biographic data which were used in stratifying the respondents to the categories illustrated in Table 1. Section B of the instrument consisted 20 items testing respondent’s exposure to ICT-based aggressive scripts. Section C also has 20 items testing respondent’s tendency for restiveness. This means that the instruments used in collecting

data on the two correlated variables were combined and administered in single session. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistic (r). The decision rule of 0.35 as established by Walllen & Fraenkel (2000) was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the pairs of tested variables. The decision rule was interpreted as following: r-calculated > 0.35 @ p. 0.05 = H0 rejection and r-calculated < 0.35 @ p. 0.05 = H0 acceptance. As suggested by Wallen & Fraenkel (2000), the meaning of a given correlation coefficient depends on how it is applied. Correlation coefficients below 0.35 show only a slight relationship between variables. However, such relationships have almost no value in predictive sense. Thus, for the purpose of this study, a correlation below this 0.35 would be taken to have no predictive value.

Result

The following tables show the analyses of the collected data in relation to each of the raised null hypotheses.

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between male student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts

Table 2: Test of correlation between youth restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts

Variables	n	x	Sd	df.	r.cal	r.crit preferred
Restiveness	49.31	11.5	2 244	242	0.57	0.35
Media Aggressive Script		50.66	12.01			

Data in Table 2 show that the r-calculated is 0.57 and it is higher than the r-critical preferred (0.35). Thus, hypothesis 1 was rejected on this statistical base of $0.57 > 0.35 @ p. 0.05$. It was therefore concluded that there was a significant

relationship between male student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between female student restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts

Table 3: Test of correlation between youth restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts

Variables	n	x	Sd	df.	r.cal	r.crit preferred
Restiveness	35.27	12.41	240	238	0.24	0.35
Media Aggressive Script		56.14	10.25			

The data analysis in Table 3 indicates a negative relationship between female students' restiveness and exposure to ICT-based aggressive scripts. This is because the r-calculated (0.24) is less than the r-critical preferred. Therefore on the basis of the statistical summary ($0.24 < 0.35 @ p. 0.05$.) hypothesis 2 was accepted and it was concluded

that there was no significant relationship between female students' restiveness and media aggressive scripts.

H0₃: There is no significant relationship between restiveness of students from compacted family and exposure to media aggressive script

Table 4: Test of correlation between youth restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts

Variables	n	x	Sd	df.	r.cal	r.crit preferred
Restiveness	39.48	11.1	1 196	194	0.21	0.35
Media Aggressive Script		59.11	12.41			

As shown in Table 4, $r-cal = 0.21 < 0.35 @ p. 0.05$, therefore, hypothesis 3 was accepted and

from compacted family and exposure to media aggressive scripts.

it was concluded that there was no significant relationship between restiveness of students

H0₄: There is no significant relationship between restiveness of students from non-

compacted family and exposure to media aggressive script

Table 5: Test of correlation between youth restiveness and exposure to media aggressive scripts

Variables	n	x	Sd	df.	r.cal	r.crit preferred
Restiveness	52.66	12.3	153	151	0.55	0.35
Media Aggressive Script		57.37	12.52			

Data in Table 5 also show that the $r\text{-cal} = 0.55 > 0.35$ @ $p. 0.05$, therefore hypothesis 4 was rejected and it was concluded that there was significant relationship between restiveness of students from non-compacted family and exposure to media aggressive scripts.

$H0_5$: There is no significant relationship between restiveness of students from separated family and exposure to media aggressive script

Table 6: Test of correlation between youth restiveness and exposure to Media based aggressive scripts

Variables	n	x	Sd	df.	r.cal	r.crit preferred
Restiveness		61.34	11.22			
	135			133	0.56	0.35
Media Aggressive Script		54.10	12.64			

Data on Table 6 indicates that the $r\text{-cal} = 0.56 > 0.35$ @ $p. 0.05$, therefore hypothesis 5 was rejected and it was concluded that there was significant relationship between restiveness of students from separated family and exposure to media aggressive scripts.

Discussion

Media are certainly social facilities that are endowed with varied component of experiences which could have impacts on human behaviours. Media are today available almost everywhere and to almost every category of human beings. This study finds out the relationship between contents of mass media and human restiveness. Restiveness is a conduct problem. It often manifests as misbehaviour. Restiveness can be classified as a crime or juvenile delinquency depending on the gravity and legal interpretations relating to the misbehaviour. Under whatever category, restiveness is mainly attitude of disobedience. It is all about not being ready to accept directives or control from constituted authority. Restiveness can manifest in students’ behaviour in form of

antisocial, destructive and gangsterism. A restive student can engage in misconduct putting school authority and fellow students in danger (Siegel, Welsh & Senna, 2003). With the new trend of insecurity in the country and the research-based facts that posits that insecurity thrives better among restless youths than among disciplined youths (Steinberg, 2002), there is need to provide adequate information on the dynamics of students restiveness in Nigeria particularly in the area of identifying restiveness social predictors.

This study for example was designed to find out the nature of predictive relationship between students’ restiveness and exposure to ICT-based aggressive scripts. It was designed to find out whether exposing male and female students and students from compacted, non-compacted and separated families to ICT-based aggressive scripts (contents) correlates with students’ tendencies for restive behaviours. The findings however show that such exposure does not always mean that students of all categories will behave restively. For example it was discovered that such media exposure only correlate with

restiveness among male students, students from non-compacted families and those from separated families. It was not found to correlate with the behaviours of female students and neither with those from compacted families. Invariably, exposure to media aggressive scripts could have more impacts on the negative formation of behaviour among male students than among female students.

Past researches have established that behavioural development is a factor depending on many parental, educational and economic variables other than just the content of what a child is exposed to (Horowitz & Bordens, 1995; Black, & Larson 1999; Douglas, & Webster, 1999). In fact, Johnson, Su- Gerstein, Shin and Hoffman (1995) found out in a related study that problem behaviours are products of social, personal and environmental factors such as family dysfunction, educational underachievement, early sexual experiences, sensation seeking, exposure to poverty, living in high crime and disorganized environment and substance abuse. Thus, becoming restless may also be a product of other socio-economic variables other than exposure to media aggressive scripts. This is found to be true with the fact that in this study, no relationship was seen among restiveness and exposure of female students and students from compacted homes to media aggressiveness. If exposure to media aggressiveness is the main initiator of restiveness among tertiary students, it should not have been found to discriminate on the bases of gender and family backgrounds as found in this study.

The point is, findings of this study established the fact that the effects of being exposed to media aggressive scripts could be more potent on character development of male students and on those from separated or non-compacted families than it could be on the character development of female students and students from compacted families. The idea that male can be more aggressive than female when brought up in an aggressive environment has been established in other past researches. For example, Archer, Pearson and Westerman (2000) and Hyde (2004) specifically found out

in different researches that male, particularly young males rather than adult males are prone to aggression and are more likely to be the target of physical aggression than their female counterparts. Another related research established that male proneness to aggression is both in humans and animals (Vallortigara, 1992). This implied that restiveness or aggression could be biological (hormonal) and sociological (environmental) – as Ethological and Social Learning Theories claim (Lorenz, 1963). Thus, male students that are exposed to media aggressiveness are more likely to misbehave than female students even when exposed to the same aggressive scripts.

The variable of Family Marital History (FMH) is controlled in this study to see how the variables moderate between student's character and exposure to media aggressive scripts. Thus, the sampled respondents were categorized on the basis of their FMH and the findings revealed that the possible effects of media exposure on student's restive tendencies can vary on the basis of student's family marital history. As established in past researches, findings here confirm that exposure to media aggressive script correlates with the restiveness among students from problem family backgrounds. Thus, hypothetically, it can be inferred that the possible absence or inadequate parental control in separated and non-compacted homes could account for why exposure to media aggressive scripts will have effects on the behavioural development of students from such family background than on students from organized and intact family backgrounds.

In our societies today, ICT facilities, including social media have infiltrated the socialization efforts of traditional agencies such as family, peer groups, religious institutions and school. In fact, it is believed that social media has stronger coverage and impacts on youth than those traditional agencies (Giddens, 2001; Seigel, Wlsh & Senna, 2003). Internet facilities for example are said to have the potential of presenting to youths series of violent orientations that parents at home and teachers in school may never be aware of. Thus, in situation of no family control, the effects of

negative media content may get to students uncensored and thereby affects their behavioural dispositions.

No doubt, exposing youths to aggressive models requires parental or caregivers' moderation. This is important as youths get socialized through the three phases of assimilating media contents. At the first stage, the youths acquired and encoded the scripts into their memories; thus becoming part of their sensory registered experience. Horowitz and Bordens (1995) claimed that negative scripts would be most easily encoded into memory if the child believes the script-related behaviour is socially acceptable and rewarding in society. At the second stage, the youths weigh the appropriateness of the encoded scripts as they watch or get exposed to more of such scripts. At this stage, the youth expands and eventually maintains his readiness to be aggressive or not aggressive. Then at the third stage, there is retrieval and emission of acquired scripts/behaviours. Here, youths act out their aggression when faced with situations that warrant responses. However, this study opines that passing through these stages may alter students' behaviours depending on the gender and the family marital histories of the students.

Conclusion

The predictive power of exposure to media aggressive scripts on the development of restiveness among students of tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria depended on the gender and Family Marital History of the students. The tendencies to become restive when exposed to media aggressive scripts are predictable among male students than among female students and among students from separated and non-compacted families than among students from compacted families.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. There is need for adequate policies and actions to moderate the process of designing and dissemination the contents of media to Nigerian youths so as to avert their development of problem behaviours

that can affect the nation's educational and social development.

2. Students from separated and non-compacted families should be adequately oriented to guide their use of media facilities.
3. More researches should be conducted to elaborate further on the effects of media and ICT generally on behavioural development.

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