Age, Television Viewing and Students' Academic Achievement in Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria: Implications for Social Welfare Counselling Practice

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Abstract
This study investigated the impact of age and television viewing as correlates of academic achievement among some selected secondary school students in Sagamu Ogun State. The study adopted correlational research design using 5 public schools randomly selected from each of the two Local Government Areas. A total of 600 participants with 60 students (32 boys and 28 girls) were randomly selected from each school, from both the J.S.S and S.S.S classes. Age Television viewing Assessment Scale, ATBAS α = 0.67 and well-structured English and Mathematics achievement tests were used. Three research questions were answered at 0.01 level of significance while data were analysed using Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings revealed that age and television viewing have significant influence on academic performance of the students (p<0.01). It was recommended that, television viewing of the adolescents should be under parental scrutiny to prevent its negative consequences on learners' academic achievement.

Keywords: Age, Television viewing, Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students.

Introduction

Every race in the whole world is conscious of development and education is a means to this end. Since 2009 education for all has been the slogan round the globe. Education for every citizen of every country. Education has become the right of the citizenry and up till date, no one is exempted and no one is left behind. Academic achievement is one of the tools in which the quality of education can be rated and evaluated. Education is seen as the bedrock of a nation's development; hence its quality should be well enhanced and ascertained (Taiyese, 2013). Television viewing has become a controversial issue in education. Television has been viewed as hindrance to effective learning making the efforts of education share-holders worthless. While some researchers found television viewing contributing negatively to academic achievement, some see it as an added advantage to learning, contributing positively to academic performance. Television is regarded to be one of the most social and environmental factors that influences child development. Studies (American Academy of Pediatrics in Morris, 2011) have found both positive and negative relationships between television viewing and age, and they impact on learners' academic performance. In having good academic performance in schools, the developmental changes in student's experiences as a result of age need to be analysed. For instance, pre-school experiences are more protective and caring than higher school students even though television viewing is of great help at this developmental level, but more importantly, they are under the surveillance of caregivers who control their behaviour. Moses (2009) in his study found that children who watched informative educational programmes as preschoolers, are getting ready to solve future challenges as they get older and use television as a complement to school work. Elementary school is more of a social unit with more intense interactions between teacher and pupils, and among peers while academic at this level is more stable.

In high school, the entire school, rather than a particular classroom becomes the social context. Social relationships assume considerable importance, and social behavior becomes the standard of acceptance. Extra-curricular activities now are greater and more significant part of a student's life. This is fairly consistent with Desimone (2006) who found that the students GPA decreases as a result of their age due to the labour force participation common among high school students. At this stage of life, the individual learner is now responsible for his own actions. Milliman (2005) pointed out in his study that excessive sleeping which may characterize this age changes in late adolescents which lead to poor academic performance. The activities the adolescents are involved with, tend to affect their academic achievement due to their physical and chemical changes. The appetite for watching television at this level is very high.

Some studies have systematically explored variation in the correlates of television viewing depending on the age of the child (Rideout, Vandewater & Watella 2003; Skouteris & MacHardy, 2009). However, most studies have not compared various age groups to one another. In some studies toddlers, pre adolescents and adolescents were combined for analysis while other studies examine only a single age. March (2005) in his study on effect of age on achievement found that the higher the age group of the students in particular grade the higher the scores. Maturity comes into play which makes up for those whose age commensurate with their development and academic level.

However, many researches have been carried out on television viewing, that is, the rate at which an individual watches television and it has been found to have consequences that can be summarized into psychosocial, psychological, health issues and academic decadence resulting to low achievement (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger & Wright, 2001; Robinson, Wilde, Nauracruz, Haydel & Varaday, 2001; Zimmerman, Christatus, 2005; Daniels 2008). Television viewing was also found to have cultural, moral and social implications on those addicted to it. Some of the programmes are foreign, they may negate moral values of the indigens and make them antisocial.

Obasi and Ekon (2001) in their study posited that children may take abnormal behaviour as a result of imitation and creating fun out of such delinquency. Shejwal (2006), Zimmerman and Christakis (2005) also revealed in their studies that indulging in television viewing has made many high school students to lose concentration in their studies to develop interest in watching television. Such students develop procrastination until they are no longer interested in schooling, as a result, they drop out of school.

Josh (2009) asserted that adolescents who watch a lot of television can easily be addicted to it and it takes the upper hand leading to academic under achievement. He confirmed that the researchers have discovered that too much of television viewing can jeopardize academic achievement and equally found that there is a large and significant relationship between television viewing and academic achievement (Thompson & Austin, 2003). Shin (2004) also corroborates the assertion that television viewing disallows an individual to lose focus and engage in unprofitable venture, which results into poor academic achievement. Shin went further to say that watching television does not engage the brain to be tasked or involve in critical thinking, it makes the brain underutilised and dormant, hence no room for creativity. Regular television viewing does not encourage intellectual exercise which is an integral part of mental well-being that can aid academic achievement.

Shejwal (2006) is in support of Josh's assertion. In his study he found that television viewing had significant negative correlation with academic achievement of students. Heavy viewers in their academic achievement perform low in mathematic reasoning, which may account for the low achievement of high school students in mathematics. In contrary, we cannot rule out the outcome of other studies that assert that some types of programming are associated with developmental outcomes (Wright, Huston, Murphy, St. Peters, Pinon, Scantlin, Kotler, 2001). James-Potter (2006) in his study indicated that television viewing does not adversely affect achievement until viewing exceeds about ten hours per week, which also depends on the age of the viewer. Landhuis, Pouto and Welch (2007) pointed out in their study that childhood television viewing was associated with attention problems in adolescence, they asserted that childhood television viewing may contribute to the development of attention problems, and suggested that the effects may be long lasting. Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen and Brook (2002) found a significant association between the amount of time spent watching television during adolescence and early childhood and the likelihood of reflecting any abnormal behaviour that have been unconsciously learned in the process of too much television viewing.

The office of National Research Council (2005) also reported that students were found spending four times as many hours each week watching television as doing homework. In another study, it was found that children who watch cartoons and other more entertaining television programmes were less likely to spend time with books (Wright, Huston, et.al. 2001). Watching television on the background interferes with the retention of skills and information during homework time. Anene (2006) found that heavy viewing of television hinder reading, retard problem solving, expressive language and listening skills, blunt imagination and contribute to laziness. Adolescents who watch a lot of television consistently score lower on academic achievement tests. Researchers have found that high levels of television viewing have a negative impact on school achievement (McDo-Well, 2009). In a long term of higher schoolers, researchers found that viewing educational television programmes as preschoolers was associated with high grades, more reading, less aggression and more value placed on academics than when those children reached high school (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger & Wright, 2001).

Despite the wide use of many social media out of which some are in vogue, such as internet, Instagram, face book, WhatsApp, it is still more convenient and easy to carry out the above investigation through television because it is affordable even to the less privileged, illiterates can manage it. Also, many people can watch it at a time. adolescents easily fall into the trap of this behaviour gradually and unconsciously. It can be very difficult to save adolescents who are already addicted to it, hence the increase in problem of low academic achievement or under-achievement

Statement of the Problem

In the last two decades, academic achievement of secondary school students has been worrisome and gradually extending into the higher institutions. All hands are on deck to rescue the educational ship from capsizing. There are many factors struggling with academic achievement of the students. One of such factors is television viewing among the adolescents, so also, the age at which they are admitted into the high school. Some parents are too much in a hurry to see their children finishing school at under age, even when they are not ready. Unfortunately, some of them end up not being able to cope academically. Such students fall into the category of heavy television viewers. Some studies have found television viewing and age having negative influence on students' academic achievement. Unfortunately, the poor academic achievement of these students will later plunge them into unemployment if not solved. There is also the need to know how and to what extent these variables have been influencing students' academic achievement to elicit appropriate solutions to the problem.

Research Questions

1. Are there significant relationships among the independent variables on academic achievement of selected secondary students in

Sagamu and Remo North Local Government Areas of Sagamu?

2. What is the composite contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?

Methodology

The descriptive research design of correlational type was adopted for the study because the study established relationships among the variables. The target population for the study consists of both Senior Secondary School students and Junior Secondary School students from 10 randomly selected public schools from two Local Government Areas (Sagamu & Remo North) of Sagamu. Sixty students (32 boys and 28 girls) were randomly selected from each of the schools, making a total of 600 students.

A self- structured achievement test by the researcher in English, Mathematics and one science subject for the S.S.II students and Integrated science for the J.S II were used. These three subjects are the core subjects at this level that cut across the students. Those questions were structured from their syllabus for both J.S II and S.S.II respectively. Students were chosen from J.S and S.S to have good representation of adolescents. Their teachers helped in the smooth running of the achievement test. Also, Age Television viewing Assessment Scale (r=0.76) was used in collecting data. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: Are there significant correlations among the independent variables on academic achievement of selected secondary school students?

Table 1: Summary of Test of Significant Correlations among age and television viewing of the Respondents on Academic achievement.

Variable	X	SD	AP(r)	Sig.P
Age	16.74	7.791	0.826	0.000
Television Viewing.	21.72	6.116	0.799	0.000
Academic Achievement	43.71	15.949	1.000	0.000

The result from Table 1 showed that academic achievement had significant correlations with the two independent variables viz: age ($r = 0.826$, $p<0.01$), and television viewing ($r=0.799$, $p<0.01$) of the respondents.

The study investigates whether age and television viewing would significantly predict academic performance among selected secondary school students, multiple regression analysis was resorted to, with academic achievement as a dependent variable which regressed on age and television viewing as independent variables. The result is as shown in table 2.

Research Question 2: What is the composite contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of the Combined Prediction of Academic achievement by the two Independent Variables.

R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the		
0.980	0.961	0.961	0.77006		
Sources of Variation	**Sum of Square**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig**
Regression	8724.367	2	4362.184	7356.193	0.000
Residual	354.018	597	0.593		
Total	9078.385	599			

Table 2 shows the prediction of the two independent variables to the dependent variable. That is, age and television viewing among secondary school students correlated positively with the two-predictor variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.980, and a multiple R square of 0.961. This means that 96.1% of the variance in the academic achievement among students is accounted for by two predictor variables, when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution or the prediction was tested at $p < 0.01$ using the F-ratio at the degrees of freedom (df=2,597). The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded an F-ratio of 7356.193 (significant at 0.01 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Research Question 3: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?

Table 3: Contribution of the Independent Variables to the Dependent variable (Test of significance of the Regression Coefficients)

Variable	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	2.111	0.518	-	4.071	0.000
Age	1.021	0.013	0.648	76.076	0.000
Television viewing	0.735	0.011	0.557	65.398	0.000

Table 3 reveals the relative contribution of the two independent variables to the dependent variables, expressed as beta weights. The positive value of the effects of age and television viewing implies that the academic achievement among secondary school students was influenced by the two variables. Using the standardized regression coefficients to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables to the explanation of the dependent variable, age ($B = 1.021, t = 76.076, P < 0.01$) was more potent contributor to the prediction and followed by television viewing ($B=0.735$, $t=65.398$, $p > 0.01$) in that order. In a nutshell, the academic achievement among selected secondary school students is influenced by the two variables as arranged above in the order in which they contributed to the academic achievement of the secondary school students.

Discussion

From the results of the study the age of the students who are basically adolescents showed the level of their desire for entertainment. At this age, the students have the tendency to be lazy because they are just crossing from childhood to another stage of life which is more complex. Due to this reason they need to be trained to think critically to explore their environment in the right channel. If care is not taken, they can watch television till day break, their academics eventually suffers for it. This is in support of Thompson and Austin (2003) who found in their study that television takes time away from more educational activities. A lot of them do their assignments while watching televisions, they even find it difficult to pick their books and read on their own. This corroborates the assertion of Gosline (2005) that too much time in front of the television reduces student's learning abilities, academic achievement, and even the likelihood of their graduating from university. Adolescent believe they are in their own world and they can do anything with their time. As a result, they have too much freedom, they are being left alone even to watch any programme at the detriment of their academic work. They do not take interest in educative programmes. At this age, they are very adventurous in which they also learn wrong motives from the television. The parents who should sensor what they watch are not available because they believe they are matured enough to do the right thing. Unfortunately, they actually need a lot of assistance at this age to achieve their set goals because many things easily beset them such as peer pressure, environment they find themselves, family issues, which affect their academic achievement adversely.

The findings further showed that academic performance had significant correlation with the two independent variables, age and television viewing. Age can influence the performance of the students, so also their mode of watching television can affect their performance academically. Adolescents are found to be preoccupied with more than what they can cope with because they want to impress their peers and parents. They become jack of all trades and master of none, they easily lose focus with a lot of distraction while their academic goals become unachievable. Some of them may watch television far into the night which makes them to dose off in the class. And once they do not have the initial understanding, it will be very difficult to acquire any knowledge in such situation, and each of these variables can independently lead to poor academic achievement.

However, television is a good teaching aid which makes learning permanent. More so, student can easily forget things when learning is cumbersome, but what they see cannot be easily forgotten because it goes to the long-term memory. This will in turn boost their academic achievement. This is well supported by the finding of Moses (2009), whose study showed that children who watched informative, educational programmes as they get older and use television as complementary to school work achieve maximally. Television is an extremely effective form of communication that has the potential to introduce children to much wider range of experiences and ideas than would otherwise be possible. It can take them to the level of creativity if well managed because they are in the age of exploration. Some writers (Anderson & Pempek, 2005; Eastman, 2001; Razel, 2001) have demonstrated that not all television programmes are harmful to children; television can yield positive as well as negative results. A small dose of the right kind of television at the proper age might be beneficial. Television viewing could be used to enhance academic achievement of students in their school subjects. It could also be used to augment teachers' efforts in teaching and learning process.

Implications of the findings for Social welfare counselling Practice

When looking into the poor academic

performance of students, social welfare counsellor should not overlook television viewing and age as contribution factors. Counsellors should look at these variables as among possible causes of students' poor academic achievement and alleviating them with some of the recommendations given in this study.

In counselling, age coupled with maturity should also be examined. If the age does not commensurate with the class of study, there is likelihood of poor academic achievement to be high. Parents can be cautioned in the area of rushing their children to perform tasks that are far above and higher than their intelligence age. The students can be encouraged and motivated to work harder to avoid being playful. The parents could also be counselled to watch and monitor their wards' television viewing bahaviour and control it to the barest minimum in other to have time for their study. If they are pushed above their coping ability, they can give up to lesser ventures such as television viewing.

The school counsellor can also create awareness on the negative consequences of television viewing behaviour on the academic achievement under group guidance forum, whereby the whole school or a group of people would assemble and such issue would be discussed emphasizing the negative consequences. Emphasis should also be laid on the educative programmes that can be watched on the television.

Parents and care givers should endeavour to sensor the programmes their wards engage in. These children should not be overrated thinking they can cope with life challenges thereby leaving them all alone, especially the ones in J.S.S are just migrating from childhood and very fast to explore their environment.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings, the following are being recommended to alleviate the problem associated with academic achievement:

- Age and maturity (readiness) should be considered when children are starting school.
- Watching educative programmes right from pre-school age should be encouraged for continuity when they get to adolescence period.
- The government and parents should always sensor the programme that will be aired and watched on the screen respectively.
- Assignments, tasks and projects should be encouraged from the primary level to make students always busy and challenged.
- Students should be motivated with good educative atmosphere both in the school and home.
- Students can also be safe guided with appropriate study habit skills through the help of guidance counsellors to be able to still give room for studies and little play.

In conclusion, television viewing is a medium of passing across information, it is not evil if well utilized, because of its positive contribution towards academic achievement. With the advent of technological innovations, there are several educative programmes on the television. There are programmes on news, weather forecast, education, politics, culture, music, sports and many of both good quality and appropriate contents. However, for television viewing to have such positive impact, age of the students should be well considered.

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