

## **Media violence and its effects on children’s health and aggressive behaviour in osun state, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Over the years, media violence and its effects on children’s health and aggressive behaviour remain a puzzle to be solved in many urban centres of developing world. At different ages, children due to their exposure, watch, sight-see, read, play and understand videos, television, magazines, videogames and films in different ways and as such, mimic behaviour from media especially when such behaviour is presented in a simple and instructional manner. This paper examines the kind of media device parents acquired for their children. It also assesses factors responsible for children aggression, and identifies the causal connection between media violence and how children unconsciously translate it to behaviour, as well as its health implication.*

*The study adopts a survey research design where primary data were obtained through mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative techniques). The sample consists of 150 parents selected for questionnaire administration and two groups for Focus Group Discussion comprising of parents of both sexes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data were analyzed through thick description.*

*The findings reveal that media violence has a great effect on children aggressive behaviour in particular and countless impacts on their health and our society at large. The most often cited reasons were parental role, Government influence, societal influence and peer influence in the exposure of children to violence. It concludes that children’s aggression in the contemporary times have taken a worrisome and complex dimension that could not be curtailed as this disrupts the process of socializing the children into the norms and values of society. Hence, the ways of curbing children’s aggressive behaviour range from the government regulation, media censor, parental control and counseling in schools to religious control.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Media Violence, Children’s aggression, Imitation, Behaviour and Urban Centres*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Information is power and it is the key to knowledge that influences individual behaviour positively or negatively depending on the kind of information received. Without information an individual cannot exist or progress. Nowadays children are exposed to different agent of socialization, one of which is the media especially in the urban areas. The main source of information is through the media which tend to influence one’s behaviour either for good or bad depending on the perception of the society. Media includes films, television, videogames, video, televised sports, music and comic books et cetera. A form of assertion of this behavior is violence which has always played a role in entertainment. But there is a growing consensus that, in recent years something about media violence has changed.

At different ages, children watch, play, sight-see and understand videos, television, films, videogames in different ways depending on the span of their attention, the way they process the information, the amount of mental effort invested and their life experiences. It is evident that children often imitate behaviour from media especially when that behaviour is presented in a simple, neat and instructional manner. By the age of three, children will willingly watch a show or movie designed for them 95% of the time and will imitate someone on television as readily as they will imitate a live person (Parke and Kavanaugh, 1977).

As one of the agents of socialization, this has a lot of growing influence on their behaviour and their lives. Since children have a strong passion for video games, cartoons, wrestling, boxing, videos and other programmes that possess characters that move fast, there is a considerable likelihood that they will be exposed to large amounts of violence (Wendy, 1995).

Nevertheless, the overall mental effort they expend in their viewing will determine whether they will process the information obtained from the media deeply or merely react to it in an unfocused, superficial way or not. Whether or not exposure to media violence causes increased levels of aggression and violence in children is a question that requires an urgent attention in the urban centres. Some researchers often argue that exposure to media violence causes aggression. In a research carried out by Craig Anderson and Brad Bushman of Iowa State University reviewed dozens of studies of video games. In 2001, they reported that children and young peoples, who play violent videogames, even for short periods, are more likely to behave aggressively in the real world, and that both aggressive and non-aggressive children are negatively affected by playing videogames. Their research stand was that children who watch high levels of media violence are at increased risk of aggressive behaviour as adults.

On the other hand, other researcher says there is no causal connection between violence in the media and aggression. This can be seen in a study conducted by Jonathan Freedman (2008), of University of Toronto. He points out that Japanese television has some of the most violent imagery in the world, and yet Japan has a much lower murder rate than other countries including Canada and the United States, which have comparatively less violence on television. His research stand is that media violence stimulates fear in some children.

However, the lack of consensus about the relationship between media violence and children aggressive behaviour has led to the emergence of this study. Thus, this study seek to understand the impact or health effects of violence in the media on children's aggressive behaviour in Nigeria precisely in selected urban centres in Osun State.

### **Brief Literature Review**

Evidence is steadily accumulating that prolonged exposure to violent media programmes like, videogames, films among others during childhood is associated with subsequent aggression. In children's studies, children are categorized as those between the ages of 3 and 11 years, with those between 12 and 17 years old being defined as young people or adolescents. From the perspective of developmental psychology, it is when we are children that we develop behaviour patterns, attitudes, and value about social interaction (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). It is claimed that during these formative years, engagement with television violence can create distorted views of society and acceptability of certain behaviours. Substantially, children imitate what they see, view, hear or watch on the media. By watching aggression in the media, children learn how to be aggressive in new ways and they also draw conclusions about whether being aggressive to others will bring them positive rewards.

Those children who see television characters getting what they want by hitting their opponent are more likely to strike out themselves in imitation. Even if the television character has a so-called good reason for acting violently (as when a police officer is shown shooting down a criminal to protect others), this does not make young people less likely to imitate the aggressive act than when there is no good reason for the violence (Josephson, 1995). In an important study carried out in Canada, children were found to have become significantly more aggressive two years after television was introduced to their community for the first time (Kimball and Zabrack, 1986). Children who prefer violent television shows when they were young have been found to be more aggressive later in life and this may be associated with trouble with the law in adulthood (Huesmann, 1986).

Strong identification with a violent television character and believing that the media situation is realistic are both associated with greater aggressiveness (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006). In general, boys are more affected by violent shows than girls (Anderson, et al, (2003). Imitating media violence is seen as portraying negative effect on the children but not always a negative influence. There is strong evidence that children's shows that were developed to teach academic and social skills can help children learn effectively. In fact, research suggests that the positive effects of educational shows probably outweigh the negative effects of exposure to violence in the media (Freedman, 2008). There are forms of violence to which young people are exposed. Study (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006) has demonstrated that 15% of music videos contain interpersonal violence. Still another new source of violent exposure is access to the Internet and video games. There is little data on the incidence of violence on the Internet; however, there is concern about sites that may advocate violence, provide information on the creation of explosive devices, or reveal how to acquire firearms (Freedman, 2008.).

Okoye (1993) conducted a research on the video in the lives of Nigerian children focusing mainly on Lagos. He concluded that an analysis of some of the favourite video films in vogue shows that they are foreign, mostly American. Popular two-hour films with little to offer for the proper development of the Nigerian child. Heavy viewership of video may create a Nigerian child who may be more individualistic and more ignorant about Nigeria than his father, and who may have low moral standards and acquire elevated taste which his resources cannot support. In other words, a more frustrated and alienated citizen.

In a similar vein, Talabi (1989) carried out a study on the viewing behaviour of families in Kwara State Nigeria. A total of 600 households heads, dispersed over the 12 local government areas were surveyed. Questionnaire with items designed to measure the social and spatial television view behaviour of each household were used. The result showed that opinions of respondents tends towards a consensus that television viewing affects the educational planning, moral reformation, policy making and the dissemination, adoption and diffusion of innovations in society.

### **Research Methodology**

This study was carried out in Ile-Ife one of the major urban centres in Osun State. Ife Central and Ife East Local Government were selected for this study. The methodology involved the use of two different but complementary instruments of data collection, which were the questionnaire survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The focus group discussion comprise of two different group of opposite sexes. Each group included 12 members, which were selected randomly. The questionnaire was designed to collect data relating to the subject of study from the targeted respondents. For the purpose of the study, one hundred and fifty respondents were selected through the non-probability sampling techniques; the accidental and purposive sampling methods respectively.

### **Population and Sample Size**

The target populations of this research are parents with children or a child of school age. Both male and female staff of O.A.U (academic and non academic), teachers in secondary and primary school and Uneducated parents in Ife central local government shall be the focus of this study from which sample size of 150 would be drawn in all.

The questionnaire would be distributed to the respondents using a non-probability sampling technique i.e accidental and purposive non – probability sampling techniques. Accidental was used because not all lecturers are usually in the office, therefore they were given as they are been met and it is purposive because, it is only meant for parents with at least a child of 3year old. However, the questionnaire cut across all the faculties in O .A.U. Among the secondary and primary school teachers, respondents were selected randomly to ensure equality.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The required information for the purpose of this study was collected using both quantitative and qualitative research instrument. The semi-structured questionnaire was used under quantitative method. The questionnaire was divided in to four sections. Section A consists of Socio-demography data of the respondents, the motives of buying violent toys and films for children are measured in Section B, Section C would measure the effects of media violence on children's aggressive behavior and lastly, section D measure ways of curbing the effect of media violence on children's behaviour.

Also, Focus Group Discussion was used under qualitative techniques where the group was divided, in to homogenous groups, that is, each groups sharing the same features.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of data was done in three stages. Firstly, the information obtained from the field was edited; the questionnaires was thoroughly checked and read through to correct all inconsistencies response by the respondents. This could be inform of field editing, that is, checking for mistakes and omissions in recording of information while on the field, and inform of Central editing, that is , Undertaken after the questionnaire might have been received.

Secondly, the information was later coded numerically on computer sheet with coding instrument. The third stage was frequency cross tabulation and the application of the appropriate statistical techniques. The statistical package that used for the analysis is the statistical Package for social scientist under which influential statistics was adopted

## **Results**

### **Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

#### **Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Sex**

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	63	42.0
Female	87	58.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that most of the respondents were female, 58% against 42% for male. This is because of the sampling method adopted (purposive and accidental non-probability sampling technique). However, it can be said to be an even gender distribution of the respondents.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age**

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
21 – 25	6	4.0
26 – 30	37	24.7
31 – 35	41	27.3
36 – 40	27	18
41 – 45	25	16.7
46 – 50	8	5.3
51 – 55	6	4.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table demonstrates that out of 150 respondents who responded to the question on age, the percentage of those who fall between 26-30 is 24.7%, followed by 27.4% of the age group 31-35, 18% for the age group 36-40, 16.7% for the age group 41-50. The least proportion of respondents was those of the lowest and highest age group: those in the age groups 21-25 comprised 4.0% and those in the age groups 51-55 were 4.0% of the total respondents. Also, since most of the respondents were above age 30, it is clear that they are people with parenting experiences and their responses are expected to be qualitative.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status**

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Married	134	89.3
Divorced	4	2.7
Separated	3	2.0
Widowed	9	6.0
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table shows that 89.3% of the total number of the respondents are married, 2.7% are divorced while separated and widowed accounts for 2.0% and 6.0% respectively.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Religion**

RELIGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Christianity	106	70.7%
Islam	39	26.0
Traditional	5	3.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that majority of the respondents are Christians constituting about 70.7% of the total respondents. Next on the table is Muslim with 26.0%, followed by the traditionalist accounting for the least percentage of 3.3.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Educational Attainment**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
None	0	0.0
Primary	9	6.0
Secondary	37	24.7
Tertiary	104	69.5
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table shows that majority of the respondents are literate. Only 6.0% of their respondents are primary school certificate holder, 24.7% have completed secondary education and the vast majority with tertiary education constitutes 69.3%.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Occupation**

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Lecturing	11	7.4
Civil Servant	33	22.3
Teaching	32	21.6
Trading	32	21.6
Artisan	23	15.5
Professionals	17	11.5
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates the percentage of respondents who engaged in lecturing job to be 7.4%, civil servant 22.3%, teaching 21.6%, trading 21.6%, artisan 15.5% and professionals to be 11.5%.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Family Income**

FAMILY INCOME (₦)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Below 10,000	36	24.0
10,000 – 29,999	36	24.0
30,000 – 49, 999	40	26.7
50,000 above	38	25.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that those whose family income falls below 10,000 – 29,999 accounts for 24.0% respectively, those that falls between 30,000 – 49,999 accounts for 26.7% while 50,000 and above accounts for 25.3% of the total population.

**Motives for buying violent films, toys, videogames**

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents by whether they have the Following**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Television	145	23.3
Computer	78	13.6
Videogame	93	16.2
VCD/DVD	140	24.4
Video Cassette Player	118	20.6
Total	*574*	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Multiple responses were received. It shows that 25.3% of the respondents have television, 13.6% have computer, 16.2% have video game, 24.4% have VCD/DVD and 20.6% have video cassette player out of the total respondents of 574 that picked each of the options. This implies that sizeable proportion of the children will have access to television, VCD/DVD as well as Video Cassette Player.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents who Allow their Children to Watch Media**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	140	93.3
No	8	5.3
None	2	1.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 93.3% of the respondents allow their children to watch television and other media device with them, 5.3% deprived their children the right to watch with them while 1.3% of the respondent did not have any of the appliance. This implies that majority of the respondents do not restrict their children from watching television and other media device with them since they have the electronics.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents on How Often their Children Watch TV in a Day**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Less than 2 hours	64	43.5
2 – 3 hours	69	46.9
4 – 6 hours	8	5.4
7 hours and above	6	4.1
Total	147	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 147 of the respondents responded to this question of which 43.5% of them allow their children to watch television for less than 2 hours, 46.9% of the respondent allows their children to watch between 2-3 hours, 5.4% of the respondents opted from 4-6 hours while 4.1% of the respondent allows 7 hours and above for their children to watch television. This shows that the majority of the respondents allow their children to watch television for at most 3 hours a day; these expose children to so many things on the television since there was no restriction to their access to television.

**Percentage Distribution of Respondents Who Buy Toy(s) for their Children?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	130	88.4
No	17	11.6
Total	147	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table shows that 88.4% of the respondents said they buy toys for their children while 11.6% said they did not buy toys for their children at all.

**Percentage Distribution of the Type of Toy(s) the Respondents buy Most for their Children**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Toy games	85	38.8
Toy guns	10	4.6
Soldier(s)	1	0.5
Teddy	60	27.4
Vehicles	55	26.1
Others	8	3.7
Total	*219*	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates a multiple response case where 38.8% of the respondent claimed that they buy toy games for their children, 4.6% boys toy games, 0.5% buys soldiers 27.4 buys teddy bear, 26.1% claimed they buy try vehicles and 3.7% claimed they buy other toys for their children to play. Since it is a multiple response case, the respondents picked more than one option and this resulted into the total number of the frequency on the table i.e. 219.

**Percentage Distribution on do you Buy Video/Computer Games for your Children?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	94	66.7
No	47	33.3
Total	141	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 66.7% of the respondents do buy video or computer games for their children whole 33.8% of the respondent did not.

**If Yes, which type?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Educative films	27	38.6
Violence	1	1.4
Puzzle	4	5.7
Computer Games	38	54.3
Total	70	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 38.6% of the respondents buys educative films for their children, only 1.4% buys violence film for their children, 5.7% buys puzzle for their children and 54.3% buys computer game toy for their children.

**If No, Why?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
They are grown up	7	18.9
They are still kids	13	35.1
Not Relevant	15	40.5
No Money	2	5.4
Total	37	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 18.9% of the respondents said their children are grown up, 35.1% said they are still kids, 40.5% said it is not relevant while 5.4% said they do not have money to buy it.

**Which of the Following are your Motives of Buying Toys for your Children?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Educational Purposes	91	31.0
To develop their Intelligence Quotient	89	30.3
Far from and leisure	71	24.1
To keep them busy	43	14.6
Total	*292*	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 31.0% of the respondents buy toys for their children for educational purpose, 30.3% buy toys for their children to develop their intelligence quotient, 24.1 said far from and leisure of their children while 14.6% said to keep them busy. This implies that different parent buy toys far different reasons for their children.

**Effect of Violence in the Media on Children's Aggressive Behaviour**

**Do you Allow your Children to Watch Films or Play Video Games with You**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	134	89.3
No	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 89.3% of the respondents allow their children to watch films or play video game(s) with them while only 10.7% of the respondent said they did not allow their children to watch or play video game(s) with them. This implies that parents influence whatever their children watch or play with them.

**Percentage Distribution of the Television show or games Watched or Played by the Parents**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Any film	2	0.9
Educating Film	94	42.0
Cartoons	60	26.8
Talk Shows	19	8.5
Drama	41	18.3
Others	8	3.6

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 0.9% of the respondents watch any films, 42.0% watch educating film, 26.8% watch cartoons, 8.5% watch talk shows while 18.3% of the respondents watch drama and 3.6% watch other programmes. It should be noted that this is a multiple response case where respondent can watch two or more programmes as indicated on the table.

**Do you Guide or Control them While Watching Films or Playing Games with You?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	134	91.8
No	12	8.2
Total	146	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 91.8% of the respondents guide or control their children while watch films or playing games with them while only 8.2% of the respondents carefree about their children while watching or playing games with them. This implies that sizeable proportion of parent control their children while watching films or playing games with them.

**Do you buy Films, toys, Video Games, and others for them on Request?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	110	75.8
No	36	24.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 75.3% of the respondents buys toys, video games and others for their children on request while 24.7% of the respondent buys out of their own will. This implies that parent encourage the interest of the children toys and videogames for them on request.

**Do you think buying Toys, Videogames, for Children have Positive Effects on Children Behavioural**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	111	87.4
No	16	12.6
Total	146	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 87.4% of the respondent was of the opinion that buying toys, video games and films for their children have positive effect on their children behavioural development while 12.6% of the respondents were to the opinion that it has negative effects on children behavioural development.

**If Yes How?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Improve their knowledge	42	43.8
Make them to be creative	22	22.9
To be self-reliant	3	3.1
Develop their I.Q.	29	30.2

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 43.8% of the respondent were of the opinion that it help to improve children knowledge, 22.9% said it makes them to be creature, 3.1% said it makes them to be self-relevant while 30.2% of the respondent said it develop their IQ.

**Do you allow your Children to Watch Films or Play Games with your Neighbours?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	45	34.6
No	85	65.4
Total	130	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that only 34.6% of the respondents allow their children to watch films or play games with their neighbour while 65.4% of the respondent objects this view.

**Do your Children Like Watching War Films, Chinese Films, and other Violent Films and/or Adventure Games**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	69	53.9
No	59	46.1
Total	128	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 53.9% of the respondents expressed their view that their children love watching war films, Chinese films and other violent films while 46.1% of the respondents said their children do not like watching violent films. This implies that majority of the children like watching violent films which expose them to violence in the media.

**Do you Give them Freedom to Watch Films or Play Games on their Own?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	70	54.3
No	59	45.7
Total	129	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table shows that 54.3% of the respondents allow their children to watch films or play games on their own while 45.7% of the respondents do not allow their children to watch films or play games on their own. The implication of this is that children were given freedom to watch films or play games on their own. It is evidence from table 5.3.8 that when allow to watch films on their own most children prefer to watch war films, Chinese films and other violent films and even play adventure games.

**If Yes, Why?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
To help them make informed decision	23	38.3
They are grown up	21	35.0
Violent-free Film	7	11.7
To Relief me of Stress	9	15.0
Total	60	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that out of 150 total respondents used only 60 of the respondents respond to this question out of which 38.3 said it is for their children to make informed decision, 35.0% said they are grown up, 11.7% said violent free film while 15.0% said to relief them of stress.

**If No, Why?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Inability to Control What they watch	16	30.2
To restrict them from watching violence films	35	66.0
Total freedom is not good	2	3.8
Total	53	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that only 53 respondents out of 150 respondents respond to this question, 30.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that the children will not be able to control what they watch, 66.0% said to restrict them from watching violent films while only 3.8% said total freedom is not good. The implication of this is that large number of respondents does not want their children to go violent by preventing them from watching violent films.

**How Much Violence do you Think there is on Television**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
None	23	16.1
Little Amount	51	35.7
Medium Amount	37	25.9
Large Amount	32	22.4
Total	143	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table indicates that 16.1% of the respondents of the opinion that television has no violence effect at all, 35.7% said it has little amount of violence effects, 25.9% said it has a medium effects while 22.4% it has a larger amount of effects. This implies that violence no matter how small it is present on television and children are exposed to violence one way or the other.

**Do you think Media has Violent Effect on Children?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	100	69.4
No	44	30.6
Total	144	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that majority of the respondents said media has violent effect on children (69.4%) while 30.6% of the respondent object to this. The implication is that, media has violent effect on children. Since most children likes violent films. Evidence from the FGD reveals that children learn faster from what they see of the screen especially when the films watched or game played contains violent content.

**Has there Been a Situation your Children Mimic What they Watch or See on the Season**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	102	72.3
No	39	27.7
Total	141	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 72.3% of the respondents claimed that there has been a situation where their children mimic what they watch on the screen while only 27.7% of the respondents claimed that there has not be a situation where their children mimic what they watch on the screen. This implies that children learn faster from what they see and in a way imitate those things they see on the screen.

**If Yes, State the Instance**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Act Aggressively	59	76.6
Acting out the Character in a Film	15	19.5
Copy Dancing Steps from Musical Video	3	3.9
Total	77	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that few people responded to this question. 76.6% states that their children act aggressively, 19.5% said the children imitate the character in a film while 3.9% said they copy dancing steps in a musical video. The implication of this is that children imitate what they watch on the screen and in most cases according to this table they imitate aggressive behaviour on the screen and this make them act aggressively in the process of imitating what they have watched.

**Do you Think Violence in the Media will Make Children Act Violently After Watching it?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	110	77.5
No	32	22.5
Total	142	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 77.5% of the respondents claimed that violence in the media will make children act violently after watching it while only 22.5% of the respondents claimed that it will not make children act violently, this implies that larger percentage of the respondents subscribed to the fact that violent in the media will make children act violently.

**Do you Notice any Changes in your Children after Watching or Playing Films or Games**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	113	79.6
No	29	20.4
Total	142	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 79.6% of the respondent claimed that they noticed changes in their children after watching or playing films while only 20.4% of the respondents claimed they do not notice any changes in their children after Watching for Playing films and/or games. This table stands to support table 5.3.13 and 5.3.15.

**If Yes, What Changes do you Notice?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
They feel Relaxed	7	8.1
Behave Aggressively	63	72.4
Demonstrate What they Watch	15	17.2
Improves their Academic	2	2.3
Total	87	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 8.0% of the respondents claimed that their children feel relaxed, 72.4% claimed they behave aggressively, 17.2% said they demonstrate whatever they watch while only 2.3% claimed that it improves their academic performance. This confirmed that children act violently after watching violent films.

**Ways of Curbing the Effect of Media Violence**

**Distribution of the Aspect of the Media that Causes Children's Aggressive Behaviour**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Action Films	102	63.8
Video/Computer Games	24	15.0
Violent Toys	19	11.9
Comic Books	3	1.9
Others	12	7.5
Total	*160*	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 63.8% of the respondents believe that action film causes children aggressive behaviour, 15.0% said video/computer game cause children aggressive behaviour, 11.9% said it is violent toys, 1.9% said comic books and 7.5% said other films like pornographic films and other factors causes children aggressive behaviour. The implication of this is that majority of the respondents believe children aggressive behaviour is caused by action films and this is due to the fact that children imitate what they watch or see on the screen.

**How Can Children be Prevented from Being Aggressive Through Media?**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Control What they Watch	96	78.0
Give them Adequate Supervision	27	22.0
Total	123	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table indicates that 78.0% of the respondents agrees that the best measure of preventing children from being aggressive through media is to control what they watch while 22.0% of the respondents said adequate supervision is the best measure to prevent them from been aggressive through media. Evidence from the FGD also reveals the importance of religious teaching in molding or shaping the lifter especially the behaviour of children.

**How can we Correct Children who have Became Aggressive through Media**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Counseling	37	29.4
Restriction to some Programme	89	70.6
Total	126	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 29.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that through counseling we can correct the behaviour of children who have become aggressive through media while 70.6% of the respondents claimed that through restriction to some programmes, we can correct the behaviour of children who have become aggressive through media. Evidence from the FGD reveals that parents have a very great task in counseling, guiding and advising their children on the types of films to watch and the types of videogames and toys play with.

### **Analysis of Focus Group Discussion**

The analysis of the Focus Group Discussion shall be done under the following heading:

- Respondents' understanding of violence
- Parent attitude to toys, films and videogames
- Effect of media violence on children's aggressive behaviour
- Ways of curbing the effect of media violence.

The focus group discussion was conducted among the female and male non-educated parents in Ile-Ife to know the effect of violence in the media on children's aggressive behaviour. The discussion will be done under each of the themes above.

### **Respondents' Understanding of Violence**

Most male in the FGD group conceived violence as using force to attack or hurt other people. A violent child is a troublesome child that causes trouble all the time and those behaviours that are not meant for a responsible human being while most female participants are of the opinion that violence in children is traceable to their exposure and accessibility to television as well as the programme of events on it.

### **Parent Attitude to Toys, Films and Videogames**

The parent attitude to toys, games, films was expressed with a diverse view of male and female participants. The male participants were indifferent to the types of toys or films they buy. This establish the fact that they love buying toys, films and videogames for their children while the female participants object strongly to the buying of guns as toy but in support of buying other toys for their children. In addition, a female participant state the implication of buying gun as toy as a way of training a child to become violent.

### **Effect of Media Violence on Children's Aggressive Behaviour**

From the male and female groups the participants were of the opinion that children learn faster from what they see on the screen thereby imitate or mimic what they watch. Majority of the participants believed that media has violent effect on children's aggressive behaviour especially when the film watched or game played contain violent content. In another opinion or view expressed by a participant that most of the films or game shown do not conform with our cultural ties and this will change our traditional settings. However, programmes that are educational were seen as contributing positively to the behaviour of children by participants in both groups. Quoting a participant in male group in support of this fact "Didinrin ki n bani lagba kekere ni ti n bani lo". Literarily it means, he who will be dull would not just be dull when he is an adult but develop the trait from childhood.

### **CROSSTABULATION OF RESPONDENTS BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND PARENTAL GUIDE OR CONTROL OF CHILDREN WHILE WATCHING FILMS OR PLAYING GAMES**

RELIGION	PARENTAL GUIDE OR CONTROL OF CHILDREN WHILE WATCHING FILMS OR PLAYING GAMES					
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Christianity	97	72.4	5	4.9	102	100
Islam	32	82.1	7	17.9	39	100
Traditionalist	5	100	0	0	5	100
Total	134	91.8	12	8.2	146	100

### **Chi-Square Tests**

	VALUE	DF	A SYMP. SIG. (2 SIDED)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.830	2	.033
Likelihood Ratio	6.340	2	.042
Linear-by—Linear Association	2.734	1	.098
Not Valid Cases	146		

Since the chi-square value from the above table shows that  $p < 0.05$ , it can be concluded that the relationship between religious belief and parental control on what children watch or games they play is statistically significant. It also means that religion of an individual influences their control or guide of children while watching or playing games, this also dictate the types of film the children will watch or game they play.

**CROSSTABULATION OF RESPONDENTS BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION BY PERCEPTION OF MEDIA VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN**

RELIGION	MEDIA VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN					
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Christianity	64	62.1	39	37.9	103	100
Islam	32	88.9	4	11.1	36	100
Traditionalist	4	80.0	1	20.0	5	100
Total	100	69.4	44	30.6	144	100

**Chi-Square Tests**

	VALUE	DF	A SYMP. SIG. (2 SIDED)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.270	2	.010
Likelihood Ratio	10.484	2	.005
Linear-by—Linear Association	7.352	1	.007
Not Valid Cases	144		

The chi-square value from the above table shows that  $p < 0.05$ , it can be concluded that the relationship between religious beliefs and individual perception of media violence and its effect on children is statistically significant. It shows that religion of individual affect their perception of media violence which means media has violent effect in children's behaviour.

**CROSSTABULATION OF THE VIOLENT FILMS WATCHED BY THE CHILDREN BY HOW THEY IMITATE VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA**

YOUR CHILDREN WATCH WAR FILMS, CHINESE-FILMS, AND OTHER VIOLENT FILMS ADVENTURE GAMES	CHILDREN IMITATE VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA					
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Yes	46	71.9	18	28.1	64	100
No	41	73.2	15	26.8	56	100
Total	87	72.5	33	27.5	120	100

**Chi-Square Tests**

	VALUE	DF	A SYMP. SIG. (2 SIDED)
Pearson Chi-Square	.027	1	.870
Likelihood Ratio	.027	1	.870
Linear-by—Linear Association	.027	1	.870
Not Valid Cases	120		

From the chi-square table above,  $P > 0.05$ , it can be concluded that the relationship between violence imitate by children in the media and children aggressiveness is not statistically significant. The implication of this is that there are other factors that contribute to the aggressive behaviour of children.

**CROSSTABULATION OF HOW CHILDREN IMITATE VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA BY THE EFFECT ON CHILDREN**

CHILDREN IMITATE VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA	MEDIA VIOLENCE AND EFFECT ON CHILDREN					
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Yes	84	77.1	25	22.9	109	100
No	16	57.1	12	42.9	28	100
Total	100	73.0	37	27.0	137	100

**Chi-Square Tests**

	VALUE	DF	A SYMP. SIG. (2 SIDED)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.485	1	.034
Likelihood Ratio	4.197	1	.040
Linear-by—Linear Association	4.452	1	0.035
Not Valid Cases	137		

In conclusion, the table of chi-square reveals that the  $p < 0.05$ , it can be infer that the relationship between how children imitate violence in the media and effect on children is statistically significant.

Furthermore, a part from the effects of media violence on children's aggressive behavior, participants in both groups were of the views that a number factors also contributes to children's aggressive behaviour. These are illustrated on the table below.

OTHER CAUSES OF CHILDREN'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR	MALE PARTICIPANTS	FEMALE PARTICIPANTS
Government Influence	++	++
Societal Influence	++	+
Parental Influence	+	++
Group/Peer Influence	-	++

Key:

- ++: Where the opinions were expressed by majority of the participants
- +: Where the opinions were expressed by at least one of the participants
- : Where the opinions were not expressed at all

### **Ways of Curbing the Effect of Media Violence**

Various ways of curbing violence in the media was suggested by both male and female participants of whom there are consensus in their views to curbing violence in the media ranging from the government regulation, parental control, and religious control or guidance. Both groups agreed on the fact that the government has key roles to play in regulating the films to be shown by the media houses and the programmes of events to be broadcast by then which should uphold the dignity of our culture. As regards parental control, participants in both groups were of the view that the parents have a very great task in counseling, guiding and advising their children on the types of films to watch and the types of videogames and toys to play with. As touching religious control both groups advocate for the importance of religious teaching in moulding or shaping the life especially behaviour of the children which may stem violence in the media.

The analysis of the data collected is presented below, the questionnaire were analyzed first while the analysis of the qualitative data follows.

### **Discussion**

This study focused on the effects of violence in the media on children's health and aggressive behaviour in a selected urban center of Osun State. Precisely, it investigated the types of violence found in the media, causes of children's aggressive behaviour and how children's aggression can be curbed.

Based on the results obtained from the analysis of data, action films, violent films and adventure games are more pronounced as the factors responsible for the aggressiveness in children. Other important inputs include: parental influence, government influence, peer influence and societal influence. Evidence from the questionnaire and Focused Group Discussion reveal religious affiliation of parents to their understanding of violence. The way parent perceived violence is determined by their religious beliefs which influence the way they guide or control their children while watching television or playing games with them.

This study also reveals that children who like watching action films and other violent films as well as adventure games tend to act more violently and aggressively than those who watches educational films and cartoons. Thus, media as one of the agents of socialization has negative influence on children's aggressive behaviour. The ways of curbing violence in the media includes: government regulation, parental control, and religious control or guidance. Government has key roles to play in regulating the films to be shown by the media houses and the programmes of events to be broadcast by then which should uphold the dignity of our culture. As regards parental control, parents have a very great task in counseling, guiding and advising their children on the types of films to watch and the types of videogames and toys to play with. As touching religious control, the importance of religious teaching in moulding or shaping their life especially behaviour of the children which may stem from violence in the media.

It was also reveal that aggressive behaviour as a result of what children are expose to has a great health implication in their later life.

### **Summary**

All the tables show the result of both the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the selected urban centre in Osun State. The tables represent the view of the respondents on the effects of violence in the media on children's aggressive behaviour and how to curb the aggression in children. When respondents were asked about the causes of children's aggressive behaviour, it is clear from table 1 that 54 percent of the respondents believed that violent films and adventure games causes the violent behaviour in children, this is also supported by the fact on table 5 that 64 percent of the respondent subscribed to action films as the causes of violent behaviour in children. This is also one of the emphases laid by the participants of the focus group discussion. Other factors emphasized by the participants of FGD include: government influence, societal influence, parental influence and group/peer influence on children's behaviour (Table 6).

Furthermore, the respondents added that the violence in the media will make children act violently and that media has violent effects on children's behaviour owing to the fact that the children mimic the violent content on the media. See table 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Evidence from the FGD revealed that children learn faster from what they see on the screen especially when the films watched or games played contain violent content. The implication is that, media has violent effect on children.

**Extract: Focus Group Discussion with both male and female group**

From the male and female groups, the participants were of the opinion that children learn faster from what they see on the screen thereby imitate or mimic what they watch. Majority of the participants believed that media has violent effect on children's health and aggressive behaviour especially when the film watched or game played contains violent content which can affect their life in the nearest future. In another opinion expressed by a participant, most of the films or games shown do not conform to our cultural beliefs and this will change and is changing Nigeria cultural settings which directly or indirectly affect our moral standard. However, programmes that are educational were seen as contributing positively to the good behaviour of children by participants in both groups. Quoting a participant in male group in support of this fact "Didirin ki n bani lagba, kekere ni ti n bani lo". Literarily means, he who will be dull would not just be dull when he is an adult but develop the trait from childhood. Finally, a part from the effects of media violence on children's aggressive behaviour, participants in both groups agreed that other factors also contribute to children's aggressive behaviour. Such as government influence, peer influence, societal influence and parental influence.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that without a proper check and control of children's exposure to violence in the media, children will continue to imitate whatever they watch on the screen or play with which always have negative impacts on the child's health and aggressive behaviour. In the light of this, this study made it clear that; the government has a key role of regulating films to be shown in media houses as well as regulating films, toys and games been produced or imported. The parent should also take an active role in curbing aggressive behaviour of their children as well as preventing their children from acting violently. This could be achieved through prayer, counseling and pieces of advice given to the children to shape and mould their life especially their behaviour. The parent active role should also include monitoring what the children watch (films, music) the type of games the children play, what they read and even the kind of friends they make and keep. Parent should therefore avoid buying of violent films, toys, videogames and any other material that could expose children to violence, since children grow to live with what they see and do. It was also discovered that children need to be adequately socialized and well institutionalized into the norms and values of the society they are in order to make proper child healthcare.

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