



## INFLUENCE OF WATCHING “ZEE WORLD” ON SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG FAMILIES IN UYO METROPOLITAN AREA

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between television viewing and social interaction among families in Uyo metropolitan area. It sought to ascertain whether viewing television was associated with teens and young adults' lost of interest for face-to-face communication with family using Zee World as the channel under study. The study used the time-displacement theoretical framework. The findings of this study were based on statistical analyses of 384 valid returns of self-administered questionnaire from family representatives including fathers (14.84%), mothers (27.80%), and children above 18 years (57.29%) in Uyo metropolis, who were selected through a purposive sampling. The study found out from respondents' opinion survey that there was a high level of viewership of Zee World (77.86%, see table 2). It also revealed that watching Zee World is seen as a family activity by just a handful of the respondents (24.48%, see table 2). Families in Uyo perceive Zee World to be filled with out of reality emotions (40.51% see table 3) as well as plots with so much rivalry (24.05%, see table 3). As such, using the problem solving approaches implied on the series are greatly frowned at (35.86%, see table 4, entry 13). This study recommends that Nigerian producers of television programmes should produce programmes that are geared towards promoting families' social interactions and harnessing and promoting family relationships.

**Keywords:** Television, social interaction, families, Zee World, Uyo.

## **Introduction**

Basically, the fact that television viewing is still affecting the way people interact and communicate is phenomenal. It is axiomatic that television viewing affects the way people communicate with others especially in their families (Morley, 2000). It would have been expected that the effect of television on social interactions would have worn off at the face of the social media. But, in 2013, Villegas, one of such scholars who believe in the persistent relevance of television, reiterated that television viewing is still altering how, if, and when people talk to each other within social systems and even within the privacy of homes.

This persistent influence of television viewing on human communication raises a justifiable question: Is television viewing still displacing or unseating interpersonal and face-to-face communication, most especially, among family members and friends? Although this question has been extensively examined, taking into consideration the significance of face-to-face communication in social life; it is inimical to reconsider this question because of prevalence of the new media. The crux of this study is simply to revalidate the stance in the face of the new media. It assesses whether television viewing can still be linkable (to a substantial level) to the possible decrease in interest of teenager and young adults for face-to-face communication with others, especially family members and friends; even with the existence of the new media.

This study is based on the time-displacement theory. In brief, time-displacement theory states that people have the same amount of time to spend, and thus, if they start a new activity, they will have to decrease other activities (Putman, 1995). A reasonable extension of this theory may be that when people begin viewing television programmes such as Zee World, consistently and persistently as these teenagers do, they will have to reduce other activities, which may include face-to-face social interaction with peer, friends and family.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Since television has become so entrenched in modern families’ day-to-day routines, there has to be some kind of influence, right? If this is the case, is it strengthening or damaging family relationships? Is it bringing the family together or sending them their separate ways? Several studies have examined whether television viewing is a solitary activity or conversely a shared and communal activity among peers, family and friends. Some studies have argued that television reinforces sociability and social bonds. However, others have conducted researches indicating that television watching reduces social involvement (Rideout et al., 2010). This study seeks to ascertain whether or not the social interaction of families in Uyo has been affected, positively or negatively, by family members watching Zee World.

## **Research questions**

The following questions were formulated to guide the execution of the study to meet its objective:

- i. What is the level of viewership of Zee World among families in Uyo metropolitan area?
- ii. How do families in Uyo metropolitan area perceive Zee World?
- iii. Is Zee World watched independently by family members or watched collectively as a family?
- iv. How does watching Zee World influence social interaction among families in Uyo metropolitan area?

## **Television viewership in context**

With the proliferation of new ways to consume television (TV) content, this medium continues to be the leading choice for young people to spend their time with, averaging a total of four and a half hours a day. It is interesting that despite the development of numerous new media technologies, television consumption continues to be the favourite media activity and the medium they spend the most time with. With all of the possibilities that go along with the computer and the television viewing, why would the TV dominate their media diets? It could have something to do with the number of TVs in the home or the consumption habits of their parents. The number of TVs in the home has increased over the past ten years, with 71% of 8- to 18-year-olds containing TVs in their bedrooms (Rideout et al., 2010).

It is believed that a typical family spends a great deal of time around a television set, for which it is important to examine the potential effects it could be having on socialization. The average time spent viewing TV in 2009 was 4.5 hours (Nielsen Media Research [NMR], 2009). Media can be used in a variety of different ways and for many purposes. These include entertainment, communication and, as we discovered in the preceding section, social interaction. A vast majority of individuals use media devices as a means of communicating or connecting with others. As pointed out before, it is important to recognize how and what media is used for, as it can be an important resource for upholding family relationships and a platform for socialization with physically distant family members.

Throughout the process of examining each medium and the role it plays within the context of family life, it has been observed that many technologies, specifically the television can create a paradox (Hughes and Hans, 2001). This is because television can be a social device used to connect and communicate on one hand; and, it can also be linked with hindering social involvement with those in close physical proximity on the other hand.

## **Empirical Study**

Villegas (2013) analyzed how constant immersion in the “media bubble” of television affects the foundation of a family. To examine the possible influence of media on family relationships, he looked at the effects of television among other media on the way a family interacts. It was apparent that media does affect the way a family unit socializes and, as a result, their relationships. Ultimately, the results demonstrated that media, without a doubt, cannot be tucked into a precise group of positive or negative since different media devices serve diverse purposes within family life as well as within individual families.

Another study by Wright, Huston, Murphy, Michelle, Piñon, Scantlin, and Kotler, discovered that children with good skills at age 5 selected more child-audience informative TV programmes and fewer cartoons in their early elementary years. Whereas, children with lower skills at age 3 shift to viewing more general-audience programs by ages 4 and 5 progressively as they continue engaging with television contents. The results affirm the relationship between television viewership to early academic skills depending on the primary content of the programmes viewed by kids.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Time-Displacement Hypothesis**

The time-displacement hypothesis, propounded by Robert Putnam in 1995, posits that television is the dynamic vigour behind the decline in social capital in America. It is his argument that leads to the

claim that when people begin a new activity, they will have to reduce their time spent with other activities (Moy *et al.*, 1999). Putman argued that television viewing has privatized our leisure time, increasing the speculation that people cannot begin a new activity without decreasing time devoted to prior activities (Moy *et al.*, 1999; Nie and Erbring, 2000). This theory is relevant to this study because it shares the assumption of the study that people watching Zee World consistently have to decrease the time devoted to interactions with family member as at the time being.

### **Uses and gratifications theory**

This theory was first introduced by Elihu Katz in the early 1970s. Katz and his two colleagues, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch unrelentingly expanded the idea. He noted that people use the media to their benefit (Katz *et al.*, 1974). According to McQuail (2010) the driving question of Uses and gratification theory is: *Why* do people use media and what do they use them for? Uses and gratification theory discusses how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interactions/companionship, diversion, or escape (West, Richard; Turner and Lynn 2007). This theory suits this study as it presents the needed volition that underpins this study – choosing to watch Zee World or interact with family members. It sets the pace for this study find out how people deliberately use Zee World in relationship to family interactions either for it or against it.

### **Methodological consideration**

This study adopted the survey research. Its population was residents of Uyo metropolitan area. According to the 2012 projected population in Directorate of Statistics, (2013, p.2) was 373,929 in number. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents were selected as sample for the study using Meyer’s statistical guide for sample size. The cluster sampling technique was used to sample areas as well as select participants for the study for the study. Uyo was divided into groups using the major roads/streets in the metropolis as clutters. Data for this study were collected personally by the researchers using a structured questionnaire. It took the researchers ten (10) working days to go round the various prominent streets and locations within Uyo metropolis to distribute copies of the questionnaire. Data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using simple percentage and the frequency distribution table.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section is designed to present, analyze and interpret the primary data obtained via the questionnaire which was administered to the respondents. These are shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents**

| S/N | OPTIONS         | RESPONSES          | FREQUENCY  | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1   | Gender          | Male               | 158        | 41.15          |
|     |                 | Female             | 226        | 58.85          |
|     |                 | <b>Total</b>       | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b>     |
| 2   | Age             | Below 18 years     | 45         | 11.72          |
|     |                 | 19 – 25 years      | 175        | 45.57          |
|     |                 | 26 – 35 years      | 90         | 23.44          |
|     |                 | 36 to 45 years     | 40         | 10.42          |
|     |                 | 46 years and above | 34         | 8.85           |
|     |                 | <b>Total</b>       | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b>     |
| 3   | Family Position | Father             | 57         | 14.84          |
|     |                 | Mother             | 107        | 27.86          |
|     |                 | Children           | 220        | 57.29          |
|     |                 | <b>Total</b>       | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b>     |

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

The Table 1 above presents the demographic data of respondents who filled out the questionnaire. The rationale for this table is to establish the family information that might have a causal relationship on the result of our findings. The table shows that a majority of the respondents were female (58.85%). Also, the majority of respondents were between the age range of 19 – 25 years (45.57%) and the minority was age bracket 46 years and above, (8.85%). So, the participants included fathers (14.84%), mothers (27.86%) and children (57.29%). This implies that we had respondents that were both parents and children.

**Table 2: Assessment of Television Viewership among Family Members**

| S/N | OPTIONS                                    | RESPONSES    | FREQUENCY  | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|--|--------------|------------|------------|
| 4   | Do you watch TV together with your family? | Yes          | 299        | 77.86      |
|     |  | No           | 85         | 22.14      |
|     |  | <b>Total</b> | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b> |

|   |   |  |            |            |
|---|---|--|------------|------------|
| 5 | How often do you watch TV together with your family?  | Always   | 94         | 24.48      |
|   |   | Sometimes                                      | 232        | 60.42      |
|   |   | Never  | 58         | 15.10      |
|   |   | <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 6 | If your answer to question 4 is Yes, How do you feel? | Excited  | 56         | 18.73      |
|   |   | Bored  | 45         | 15.05      |
|   |   | Tensed   | 108        | 36.12      |
|   |   | Can't Say                                      | 90         | 30.10      |
|   |   | <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>299</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 7 | If your answer to question 4 is No, How do you feel?  | I don't enjoy watching TV with them.           | 34         | 40         |
|   |   | I enjoy watching Zee World clips from Facebook | 28         | 33.33      |
|   |   | We don't have a TV set at home                 | 6          | 6.67       |
|   |   | I can't say                                    | 17         | 20         |
|   |   | <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>85</b>  | <b>100</b> |

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

The Table 2 above presents an assessment of television viewing among respondents. It shows that most of the respondents (77.86%) watch TV together with your family. A majority of them (36.12%) did not have a good time watching TV with their family. Remember that our respondents had more youths than adults, this might have accounted for most of them who watch TV with their family (36.12%) stating that they are always tensed. On the other hand, it was a popular opinion among those who do not watch TV with their families (33.33%), that they enjoyed watching TV alone. Trying to avoid parental prying and censorship, as well as sibling disturbances might have accounted for this opinion among younger respondents (45.57%, *table 1*).

**Table 3: Respondents Awareness, Perception and Frequency of Zee World Family Programmes**

| S/N | OPTIONS                                 | RESPONSES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 8   | Do you watch Zee World programme on TV? | Yes       | 237       | 61.72      |
|     |   | No        | 147       | 38.28      |

|    |   |                                  |            |            |
|----|---|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
|    |   | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 9  | If your answer to question 8 is Yes, How often do you watch the programme?                              | Always                           | 164        | 69.20      |
|    |   | Sometimes                        | 73         | 30.80      |
|    |   | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 10 | If your answer to question 8 is Yes, how do you perceive the programme?                                 | Too Emotional                    | 96         | 40.51      |
|    |   | Just Comical                     | 11         | 4.64       |
|    |   | Teaches Morals                   | 45         | 18.99      |
|    |   | Can help families                | 28         | 11.81      |
|    |   | Portrays rivalry                 | 57         | 24.05      |
|    |   | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 11 | If your answer to question 8 is No, Why don't you watch the channel?                                    | Never heard of it                | 30         | 20.41      |
|    |   | I don't like the channel         | 62         | 42.18      |
|    |   | We do not have a decoder at home | 55         | 37.41      |
|    |   | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>147</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 12 | Do you think programmes on the channel can encourage family interaction and face-to-face communication? | Yes                              | 22         | 52.38      |
|    |   | No                               | 13         | 30.95      |
|    |   | Sometimes                        | 7          | 16.67      |
|    |   | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>384</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source:** *Field survey, 2019*

This table 3 shows an assessment of respondents' awareness, frequency and perception of Zee World programmes. Sixty-one point seven two per cent of the respondents (237 respondents) watch Zee World at home. Out of this number, 164 of them watch the programme always. They perceived the programmes on the channel to be too emotional (40.51%) and that it also portrays rivalry (24.05%). Nonetheless, a little above half of our respondents (52.38%) are of the opinion that it can encourage family to interact. It is possible that the portrayal of rivalry or the excess emotions on the programmes can serve as case studies for families to discuss about thereby encouraging social interaction among them (52.38%). Be that as it may be, a minority of the respondents do not watch the programme (38.28%), only a few respondents had not heard of the channel (20.41%).

**Table 4: Influence of Zee World Programmes on Social Interaction among Families**

Table 4 discusses the level of impact of Zee World on social interaction among families in Uyo. Only questionnaire from 237 respondents who watched Zee World was analysed for this section (*see Table 3, question 8*).

| S/N | OPTIONS  | RESPONSES       | FREQUENCY  | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|--|-----------------|------------|------------|
| 13  | Do the problems solving approach on Zee World serve as a model for families to solve their problems? | Yes             | 78         | 32.92      |
|     |  | No              | 85         | 35.86      |
|     |  | Sometimes       | 74         | 31.22      |
|     |  | <b>Total</b>    | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 14  | Communication among family members can be improved by watching Zee World family programme together.  | Always          | 140        | 59.07      |
|     |  | Sometimes       | 73         | 30.80      |
|     |  | Not at all      | 24         | 10.13      |
|     |  | <b>Total</b>    | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 15  | Families who constantly watch Zee World together tend to have fewer problems in their families.      | Strongly agree  | 38         | 16.03      |
|     |  | Agree           | 21         | 8.86       |
|     |  | Disagree        | 72         | 30.38      |
|     |  | Strong disagree | 106        | 44.73      |
|     |  | <b>Total</b>    | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 16  | There is no relationship with watching Zee World and real-life communication between family members. | Strongly agree  | 55         | 23.21      |
|     |  | Agree           | 100        | 42.19      |
|     |  | Disagree        | 58         | 24.47      |
|     |  | Strong disagree | 24         | 10.13      |
|     |  | <b>Total</b>    | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 17  | Family members can use the avenue of watching Zee World to communicate and interact                  | Yes             | 124        | 52.32      |
|     |  | No              | 73         | 30.80      |
|     |  | Sometimes       | 40         | 16.88      |
|     |  | <b>Total</b>    | <b>237</b> | <b>100</b> |

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

Table 4 debates the influence of watching Zee World on social interaction among families in Uyo. Although entry 14 on this table shows that communication and family interaction can be improved via watching Zee World (59.07%), the table on entry 13 explains that this does not mean that the problem solving approaches on Zee World can be used as a model for families in Uyo (35.86%). This might be due to often portrayal of rivalry (24.05%) or the display of excessive emotional on the channel (40.51%, *See table 3, entry 10*). However, there is a very little gap between options, showing possibilities that it might be used sometimes (31.22%). Respondents (44.73%) strong oppose the



claim that families who watch Zee World have lesser problems than those who do not. This is because, they do not believe that Zee World instances actually relates to real family life as applicable to families in Uyo (42.19%). Without prejudice to other entries on the table, entry 17 shows that family members can still use Zee World related issues, topics and characters to communicate and interact with each other.

## Findings

This study sought to ascertain the influence of watching Zee World on social interaction of families in Uyo metropolitan area. The study found out that there was a high level of viewership of Zee World (77.86%, *see table 2*) by family members in Uyo: fathers (14.84%), mothers (27.86%) and children (57.29%) alike (*see table 1*). This agrees with the opinion of Rideout et al. (2010) that television (TV) contents continue to be the leading choice for young people to spend their time with, averaging a total of four and a half hours a day.

Also, from the study, watching Zee World is seen as a family activity by just a handful of the respondents (24.48%, *see table 2*). Although minimal, this aligns with the belief held by Nielsen Media Research [NMR] (2009) that a typical family spends about 4.5 hours together around a television set. However, a majority of the respondents from this present study complain that watching Zee World with other family members happens sometimes. Nevertheless, some respondents out rightly oppose the idea of watching Zee World with other family members (36.12%, *see table 2*).

The study found out that families in Uyo greatly frowned at using the problem solving approaches presented on Zee World (35.86%, *see table 4, entry 13*) as the plots filled with out of reality emotions (40.51% *see table 3*) as well with so much rivalry (24.05%, *see table 3*). Nonetheless, this plot, characters, emotions and sarcasms among other things build up topics of interactions and communication among families' members and even friends at some point. This particular finding stretches the scope of the Time Displacement theory. Although it agrees that finding new activities robs the time off other activities; in the case of watching reality programmes such as Zee World, this time is recovered when families in the future use issues and topics of the programmes watched to form basis of interaction.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that as far as the media is concerned, no time is totally displaced. While things will be lost while simultaneously new things are gained in terms experience and topics that can foster health communication at a time in the future. Also, it is agreed that our family relationships and dynamics have been altered as well as reshaped too. It is axiomatic that watching TV does influence how we act and react during interactions with family and friends with shared experience that is people watching what we watch.

## Recommendations

It is as a result of its findings that this study recommends that:

- i. Nigerian producers of television programmes should produce programmes that are geared towards promoting families' social interactions and harnessing and promoting family relationships.

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