

OWERRI RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF BROADCAST MEDIA PROGRAMMES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN (VAC) IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

On daily basis, child's rights are being violated despite extant laws on children's right and it seem the media have done little or nothing to report about it. The objectives of the study were to: find out Owerri residents level of awareness of the violence against children through broadcast media programmes; examine the major source of information about violence against children among Owerri residents; determine Owerri residents' perception of broadcast media programmes on violence against children; and ascertain the influence of broadcast media programmes on Owerri residents' behaviour towards violence against children. The study was anchored on perception theory and agenda setting theory. Survey research method was adopted for this study. A sample size of 385 was derived using Wimmer and Dominick calculator from the population of 908,109. Multistage sampling technique was used for this study and data were obtained using questionnaire. Findings revealed that Owerri residents' level of awareness about violence against children through broadcast media programmes is moderate at 40%; Radio was revealed to be the major source of information about violence against children at 68.7%; further analysis revealed that 75.3% of the residents in Owerri perceive broadcast media programmes to be effective in the dissemination of information on violence against children. Findings also showed that 71.3% of the respondents were of the view that broadcast media programmes had positively influenced Owerri residents' behaviour towards shunning violence against children. The result of test of hypothesis indicated that there is a significant relationship between Owerri resident's perception on violence against children and their demography (age and academic qualification). It was, therefore, recommended that more attention should be given to issues pertaining to violence against children by creating special programmes on radio and television, while more pages of newspapers should be dedicated to reports on violence against children from a point of view that discourages the crime. Also, there should be frequent broadcast media programmes as well as prominence given to issues regarding violence against children.

Keywords: Broadcast Media, Programmes, Violence Against Children (VAC)

Introduction

Children are regarded as precious gifts from God, leaders of tomorrow, man's ticket of continuity on earth and yet, these same children are subjected to different forms of abuse and neglect. Perhaps, it is in recognition of this fact that the United Nations in 1979 designated that year as the 'international year of the child' and went ahead to develop a list of children's rights. Among the rights as enunciated by the United Nations are that every child is entitled to the right to love and understanding; adequate food and health; free education, play, an identity and special attention of the handicapped regardless of colour, sex, religion and nation or social origin (Nwokedi, 2016).

Child violence in the 21st century has been described as a crime against humanity. As inhuman as it is, many Nigerians seems to be very much unconcerned about this menace. It is for these reasons that the concern of well-meaning organizations like United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) among others are concerned about the rights of the child. Violence against children ranges from abuse and neglect in the family, incest, sexual abuse, infanticide; bullying and other forms of violence in the school; corporal punishment; psychological aggression; child trafficking, sale of children, child sexual exploitation and other commercial sexual exploitation of children; child labour, etc. According to UNICEF (2010), over nine million children in Nigeria under the age of eighteen are exposed to sexual violence every year". It also noted this fate hits at least one out of every four girls and one out of every ten boys. Against their will, these children are taught and forced into sexual activities".

Globally, it is estimated that up to one billion children, aged 2–17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past years. The Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2011) monitored the situation of children and women and found that 90% of children, aged 2 to 14 years, were subjected to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by a household member during

the month before the survey. About 34% of children were subjected to severe physical punishment. The survey also found that 61% of caretakers believed that physical punishment was necessary in the raising of children. The 2007 Assessment of violence against children at the Basic Education Level in Nigeria revealed that there is low level of reporting cases of violence in the country.

World Health Organization (WHO), in June 2020 revealed Global Statistics against Children by indicating that “up to one billion children age 2-17 had experienced physical emotional or sexual violence or neglect in the past one year”. The further forms of violence against people perpetuated by parents or other care-givers, peers, romantic partners or strangers. According to the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention (2021), violence against children and youth is a common Global phenomenon. With over one billion children as victims of violence. About one or more than 80% of male and females age 13-24 years have experienced sexual or physical abuse as a child. It is also stated that between 11-26% of adolescent girls in Sub-Sahara Africa have experienced sexual violence in the past 12 months. Violence against children takes many forms including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and may involve neglect or deprivation. In fact, about one billion children age 1-14 years have experience one form of violence or the other (UNICEF, 2017).

Nigeria has a large population of children who are orphans, who engage in child labour, and/or who do not attend school. Global evidence shows that these children are particularly vulnerable to violence. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013 estimated that 9% of children are orphans or are vulnerable owing to illnesses among adult household members. The National Bureau of Statistics conducted a study on child labour in 2006 and found that 29% of all children aged 5 to 14 years were engaged in child labour, one in five (21%) were engaged in family business while 9% were working outside the family unpaid. According to Findings from a National Survey (2014), a Nigerian study, found that nearly 78% of 350 employed girls reported being sexually assaulted, with girls less than 12 years old at a higher risk of assault. Other studies conducted in various locations in Nigeria have found that rape among youth is often preceded by coercive acts and other forms of abuse and those perpetrators are most frequently known to the child experiencing the violence.

According to Niger Delta Partnership Initiative (2020), over 90 incidents of violence affecting women and girls were reported in Imo state between March 2016 and March 2020. In February 2020, a 2-year-old girl was reportedly defiled by a man, a director in a government agency, in his office in Owerri. Also in April 2020, a 15-year-old girl was reported to have been serially raped by her 44-year-old father and three of his friends in Orji community, Owerri North LGA.

The media have a very crucial role to play in the promotion of human rights in any country. The media, according to Asemah (2011), are agents of social change that can bring about positive attitudinal change in the audience; they set agenda for the people to follow in any society. The mass media are crucial to opinion formulation and eventual outcomes of events. The media are champions of human rights. They act as the eyes, ears and voices of the public, drawing attention to abuses of power and human rights, often at considerable personal risk. Through their work, they can encourage governments and civil society organizations to effect changes that will improve the quality of people's lives. Journalists, photographers and programme-producers frequently expose the plight of children caught up in circumstances beyond their control or abused or exploited by adults. It is equally important to consider the children's angle in more conventional news coverage. A good way of testing the value of changes in the law or fiscal policy, for example, is to consider the extent to which children will benefit or suffer a consequence. The way in which the media represent or even ignore children can influence decisions taken on their behalf and how the rest of society regards them. The media often depict children merely as silent 'victims' or charming 'innocents'. By providing children and young people with opportunities to speak for themselves about their hopes and fears, their achievements and the impact of adult behaviour on their lives, media professionals can remind the public that children deserve to be respected as individual human beings.

Media professionals have an obligation to respect children's human rights, in how they operate and how they represent them (Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2013). According to report, the media play a significant role in forming and influencing people's attitudes and behaviour (Goddard & Sauders, 2001 cited in Nwokedi 2016). It has been known that media stories influence public perceptions and play a substantial role in how people understand certain societal problems, including crime. The essential tasks of news media are to inform, educate as well as entertain. Through these functions, they sensitise, enlighten and persuade members of the public to actively take part in developmental activities and other causes. The information distributed by the news media could be damaging or useful to the society. News journalists have a lot of influence. What they write can persuade decisions, help form public opinions of people and add to the general mind-set of readers and life in general.

This is why the need for broadcast media programmes on the issue of violence against children cannot be over emphasized. This study therefore sought to examine Owerri resident's perception on broadcast media programmes on violence against children in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of violence is not far away from home. According to Alozie (2019), citing Alliance for Africa (AFA), Imo is the most hostile and unsafe state for children and women. They argue that one in every 20 children has experienced one form of violence or the other. There is need for the government to embark on community awareness outreaches in the councils of the state to advocate for an end of violence against children and women.

To curb this issue of violence, the Imo State Ministry of Gender Affairs and Social Development with the aid of the State Government in 2019 setup the Imo State Committee on “Violence against Women” to carryout awareness and media campaigns on violence against children. Both government and non-governmental organization has floated different programmes in the broadcast media to help create awareness on the dangers of violence against children. One of these programmes is the Darling FM 107.3FM and titled “The Consequence” and “The Parent Submit Africa”. Although, some other programmes on violence against children are embedded on public affairs programmes like the “People's Assembly” on Hot FM 99.5. Other cases of violence are floated as news and discussion programmes. Despite all these efforts, cases of violence in the media continued to be on the rise as if the media programmes and awareness creation on violence against children are not creating the desire change in perception. Could it be that these media programmes and awareness are not properly targeted to the audience or that the audience are not properly exposed to it.

It is against this backdrop that this study sought to examine broadcast media programmes on violence against children in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What is Owerri residents' level of awareness of violence against children through broadcast media programmes?
2. What is the major source of information about violence against children among Owerri residents?
3. What is Owerri residents' perception of broadcast media programmes on violence against children?
4. What is the influence of broadcast media programmes on Owerri residents' behaviour towards violence against children?

Research Hypothesis

H₁: The perception of Owerri residents on broadcast media programmes on violence against children is dependent on the demography (age and academic qualification) of the respondents.

H₀: The perception of Owerri residents on broadcast media programmes on violence against children is not dependent on the demography (age and academic qualification) of the respondents.

Review of Related Literature

Violence Against Children: The Nigerian Examples

Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under eighteen (18) years old, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, romantic partners, or strangers. For infants and younger children, violence mainly involves maltreatment at the hands of both parents and other authority figures. Violence against children can be prevented and it requires that efforts systematically address risk and protective factors at all four interrelated levels of risk (individual, relationship, community and society), (WHO, 2021).

Violence against children occurs in various contexts. It could be seen in the family, at school, in public, in armed conflict situations and even across borders. Examples of Violence against children (VAC) according to UNODC 2019 includes abuse and neglect in the family, sexual abuse, incest, infanticide, bullying and other forms of violence in the school, corporal punishment, psychological aggression, child trafficking, sale of children, child exploitation and other commercial sexual exploitation of children, child labour, various forms of online and cyber violence, recruitment of child soldiers, children recruited and exploited by terrorists, and violent extremist groups and many others.

Media as instrument for the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights in Nigeria

Communication is central to development; the media of mass communication play active role in that process because of their efficiency in information spread. The mass media play the role of a catalyst to bring about change in development process. They are fundamental to development. The mass media enable people to

learn about issues as well as make their voices heard. They can exert a powerful influence, for good or for ill. Free, independent press are important to ensure freedom of speech (guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), promote democracy, good governance, peace and human rights, combat poverty and crime, inform people about issues and enable them to participate in public debate (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Deane et al, 2002, cited in Oyero, 2009).

In addition to news stories, feature articles and investigative journalism, sporadic mass media education and prevention campaigns could be launched. These campaigns will broaden community's knowledge of child abuse and neglect, influence people's attitudes towards children and young people and change behaviours that contribute to, or precipitate the problem of child abuse and neglect in our communities. Though it has been argued that complex attitudinal or behavioural change requires more direct forms of citizen contact and intervention, the media at least are effective in building citizen awareness of an issue (McDevitt, 1996; O'Keefe, and Reed, 1990; Saunders and Goddard, 2002; Reger, Wootan and Booth-Butterfield, 2000; Freimuth, Cole and Kirby 2001 cited in Oyero, 2009).

Parajuli (2004) also notes that the media can bring forth children's issues by allowing children who have been working (in the worst form) as domestic servants, lithe streets, in factories and mines/quarries as well as those rehabilitated from organization to participate in their media programme. He adds that children, 'being the future of a country, must be provided with education, socialized, motivated and equipped with all the basic necessities for their personality development. In this connection, the rights of the children like education, health, communication, participation, physical and moral support are some of the major components for their well-being. So, the media have to raise the awareness of children's situation to the concerned NGOs or government. In other words, mass media education and child rights campaigns present one means of breaking the cycles of suppression and denial.

Empirical Review

Ejiolor, Ojiakor and Nwaozor (2017) in their study which aimed to identify the role of film in the prevention and reduction of child sexual abuse in Nigeria as well carry out an assessment of the performance of the Nigerian film industry in sensitizing the public, and creating awareness on the issue. Survey research method was used for the study. The researchers concluded that despite the fact that the rate of child sexual abuse in Nigeria is increasing tremendously, the Nigerian film industry in conjunction with the law enforcement agencies are competent enough to fight the ugly situation; bridge the increase or eradicate it entirely from Nigeria.

Nwodu and Ezeoka (2014) which aimed at finding out the frequency of coverage of the women's and children's rights issues in the Nigeria press found that: enough mentions were not given to the twin rights issues in the little coverage given to them; most stories on the rights issues were buried in the inside pages thereby giving very minimal prominence to the issues, news items are more than other forms of media contents and dominated the forms of coverage given to the issues; survival rights received greater mention in the press more than other form of women and children's rights, and that International Organizations, NGOs/CBOs and women's groups championed most of the news and other publications concerning women and children's rights.

Olube (2015) tried to find out the causes of child labour and women trafficking; ascertain whether the press played any role in stopping child labour and women trafficking. The researcher revealed that: the causes of child trafficking include greed, illiteracy, poverty, and ignorance among others. Hence, the press has a role to play in putting an end to child labour and women trafficking through programmes of sensitization and surveillance. The researcher concluded that poor circulation, scanty coverage and illiteracy affect the role of the press in the fight against child labour and women trafficking. Government agencies, the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are identified to be involved in the fight against child labour and women trafficking.

Okugo, Onurukwe, Ihechu, and Onwuka (2014) sought to determine journalists' views on child trafficking as "survival mechanism" in an economy in dire straits and ascertain what areas or directions framing can be employed to encounter the rising trend in child-trafficking. The mix-methods approach was used for the study. A survey of journalists in South-East Nigeria was conducted and a case study technique used to deal a wide spectrum of evidence, documents, journals and the like. The findings indicate that there was a causative relationship between media framing of child trafficking and policy formulation on the issue. However, the study further showed that despite, evidence of enough media framing influencing child trafficking policies, the trends in the crime were on the increase.

Nlewem and Amodu (2016), sought to access the knowledge and perception on sexual abuse among female secondary school students in Abia State, Nigeria, to raise awareness. The study employed a cross sectional design where 350 students between the ages of 13-17 years from six secondary schools were

interviewed using a validated semi-structured questionnaire to collect information on knowledge and perception on child sexual abuse. This study showed that most respondents were knowledgeable about sexual abuse and teachers were the highest source of information. The fact that school played a significant role in the knowledge of sexual abuse in this study, poses a need to focus attention on increasing the awareness of students by integrating topics on sexual abuse in primary and secondary school curriculum.

The study carried out by Agbo and Chukwuma (2015) sought to: find out the extent to which South-East residents are exposed to NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking; determine the extent to which NTA's programmes and reports have been able to raise public knowledge on child trafficking in South-East Nigeria and find out whether NTA's programmes and reports have been able to raise public knowledge on child trafficking in South-East Nigeria and find out whether NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking are persuasive enough to discourage child trafficking in South-East Nigeria. The study was anchored on social responsibility and individual differences theories. Survey research method was used to execute the study with the questionnaire as measuring instrument. A sample size of 400 was drawn from the population 16,395,555 using Taro Yamane formula. Multi stage sampling technique was used. Tables and percentages were used as fix data presentation and analysis. The researchers found that: the residents of South-East Nigeria are to a large extent exposed to NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking; NTA's reports and programmes on child trafficking have to a little extent, raised the knowledge of most respondents and majority of the respondents believe that NTA's programmes and reports are not persuasive enough to discourage the practice of child trafficking in South-East Nigeria.

Okoye (2011) study sought to find out if residents of Nsukka town in Enugu state are aware of the Child's Rights Acts and also what knowledge they have about the Act. 294 residents of Nsukka town were chosen for the study using systematic and simple random sampling. Findings show that only about 32% of respondents are aware of the existence of Child's Rights Act while 19% have knowledge of the contents of the Act. Also there appears to be a relationship between marital status and knowledge of the contents of the Act; level of education and awareness of the Act. One major implication of the findings is the need for more public enlightenment about the Act since findings indicate that residents of Nsukka town are neither aware of the existence nor the contents of the Act. There is need for policy makers to lay emphasis on educating the people so that the aim of enacting the Act will be realized. Social workers can help in this sensitization because by the nature of their training they are well equipped to do so.

Ojiakor, Iheanacho, Nkwam-Uwaoma and Dibia (2019) conducted a study which sought to ascertain the frequency, depth, direction and prominence of coverage of reports on child rights in Nigeria. Content analysis research method was used to analyse the manifest contents of two major newspapers in Nigeria namely Daily Sun and Punch (January-April, 2017). The findings showed that the select newspapers did not give adequate coverage of reports on child rights abuse issues in Nigeria. Both newspapers did not give prominence to the stories reported as almost all were buried in the inside pages.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on perception and agenda setting theories.

Perception Theory (Yale attitude change model)

The Yale attitude change approach (also known as the Yale attitude change model) is the study of the conditions under which people are most likely to change their attitudes in response to [persuasive messages](#). This approach to persuasive communications was first studied by [Carl Hovland](#) and his colleagues at [Yale University](#) during [World War II](#). The basic model of this approach can be described as "who said what to whom": the source of the communication, the nature of the communication and the nature of the audience. According to this approach, many factors affect each component of a persuasive communication. The credibility and attractiveness of the communicator (source), the quality and sincerity of the message (nature of the communication), and the attention, intelligence and age of the audience (nature of the audience) can influence an audience's attitude change with a persuasive communication. Independent variables include the source, message, medium and audience, with the dependent variable the effect (or impact) of the persuasion. The relevance of the Yale attitude change approach to this study is that since the media has the capacity to influence how the society perceive societal issues, constant airing of programmes bordering on the safety and well-being of every child in the media will improve the attitude of the society towards the rights of children.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory was formally developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in a study on the 1968 American presidential election. McCombs and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determine public opinion. Since the 1968 study, published in a 1972 edition of *Public Opinion Quarterly*,

more than 400 studies have been published on the agenda-setting function of the mass media and the theory continues to be regarded as relevant. The theory was therefore proposed by McCombs and Shaw in 1972/1973. Agenda-setting theory as noted by Ikpe (2012) metamorphosed from hypothesis to a theory and the rule has changed from agenda-setting to agenda building. The theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issues we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to or think about certain issues, they make us to think or feel that certain issues are more important than others in our society.

Research Methodology

The survey research method is apt and suitable for this study considering the fact that opinion, views, feelings and thought of residents of Owerri concerning broadcast media programmes on violence against children was in focus. According to the World Population Review (2021), the current population of Owerri is 908,109. This population figure comprises all the residents in the state capital and within the three LGAs of Owerri Municipal, Owerri North and Owerri West LGAs. To determine the sample size of respondents, the researcher used the Wimmer and Dominick calculator which gave 385. In order to arrive at the proper respondent for the study and to ensure representativeness, the multistage sampling technique was adopted.

Stage 1: Owerri Metropolis consist of three local governments namely; Owerri Metropolis, Owerri North, and Owerri West. These three local governments has several communities namely; Owerri Municipal (Umuronjo, Awawom, Umuonyeche, Umuodu and Umuoyima), Owerri North (Egbu, Emekuku, Emii, Ihite/Ogada/Oha, Naza and Orji Aut) and Owerri West (Umuguma, Avu, Okuku, Oforola, Obinze, Nekede, Ihiagwa and Eziobodo)

Stage 2: From each of the local governments, three communities were selected and they are; Owerri Municipal (Umuodu, Umuoyeche and Umuoyima), Owerri North (Emii, Emekuku and Orji Aut) and Owerri West (Obinze, Nekede and Umuguma).

Stage 3: In order to ascertain the the respondents for each community, the sampling size of 385 was divided by the nine selected communities (385/9 = 43), which gave 43 respondents per community.

Stage 4: The researcher used purposive sampling to ensure that the 43 persons selected in each of the community were suitable respondents. The questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 385 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to three hundred and eighty-five (385) respondents, three hundred and seventy-seven (377) copies were found usable while the remaining eight (8) copies were not returned.

Research Question One: What is Owerri residents' level of awareness of violence against children through broadcast media programmes?

Table 1: Respondents' level of awareness about violence against children through their exposure to broadcast media programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Largely	83	22%
Moderately	149	40%
Low	39	10%
Very low	37	10%
Can't say	69	18%
Total	377	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the table above, it is clear that majority of the respondents at 40% believed that their exposure to broadcast media programmes had increased their level of awareness about violence against children moderately.

Research Question Two: What is the major source of information about violence against children among Owerri residents?

In responding to the above stated research question, item 10 was relied on for this aim.

Table 2: Respondents' view on their major source of information about violence against children

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Television	118	31.3%
Radio	259	68.7%
Total	377	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the table above, all the respondents at 68.7% agreed that radio is their major source of information about violence against children. The radio is the source that provides the respondents opportunity to know ugly ways children are being treated.

Research Question Three: What is Owerri residents' perception of broadcast media programmes on violence against children?

With reference to the research question above, items 11, 12, 13 and 14 were used to proffer answer respectively.

Table 3: Respondents' view on whether broadcast media programmes got them well informed and educated of all forms of violence against children prevalent in the society

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	124	33
Agree	137	36.3
Not sure	71	18.8
Disagree	28	7.4
Strongly disagree	17	4.5
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the table above that majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they got well informed and educated of all forms of child abuse prevalent in the society through exposure to broadcast media programmes at 69%.

Research Question Four: What is the influence of broadcast media programmes on Owerri residents' behaviour towards violence against children?

In responding to the research question above, item 15 was used for this purpose.

Table 4: Respondents' view on what the influence of broadcast media programmes on their behaviour towards violence against children

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Positive influence	269	71.3
Negative influence	21	5.6
Partial influence	44	11.7
Not sure	43	11.4
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table indicates that 71.3% of the respondents agreed that broadcast media programmes have positively influenced their behaviour towards violence against children. This points to the fact that broadcast media programmes are effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents on ending violence against children.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀: The perception of Owerri residents on broadcast media programmes on violence against children is not dependent on the demography (age and academic qualification) of the respondents.

The calculated hypothesis gave 258. When the calculated value is higher than table value, the alternate hypothesis is accepted while null is rejected. In this case, the calculated value of 258 is higher than the table value of 7.815, therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that “the perception of Owerri residents on broadcast media programmes on violence against children is dependent on the age demography”. The implication of this findings is that the older one gets, the more is perception towards child violence differs. In essence, the people of the different age bracket stipulated in the study do not have the same perception of violence towards children.

Discussion of Findings

Owerri residents' level of awareness of violence against children through broadcast media programmes

From the findings, it is clear that majority of the respondents at 40% believed that their exposure to broadcast media programmes had increased their level of awareness about violence against children moderately. Majority of the respondents at 81.7% agreed that they are aware of violence against children through the broadcast media. This implies that the broadcast media programmes about issues patterning to violence against children on daily basis. Through this, people became aware of issues relating to violence against children. Also, 100% of the respondents had access to broadcast media messages from the radio and television. It means that all the respondents at 100% agreed that the media report issues about child violence related issues. Moreso, Agbo, B.O and Chukwuma O's Audience assessment of the Nigerian Television Authority's contribution towards the eradication of child trafficking in South-East Nigeria says that residents of the South-East are to a large extent exposed to NTA's programmes on child trafficking (a form of violence against children) and that NTA's reports and programmes on child trafficking have to a little extent raised the awareness of the residents.

The major source of information about violence against children Owerri residents

From the table above, all the respondents agreed that the radio was the major sources of information about violence against children with radio being the major source at 68.7%. The implication is that broadcast media programmes have become sources of information on issues bothering on violence against children. The radio and television were key sources that provide the respondents opportunity to know ugly ways children are being treated while Nlewem C & Amodu O's Knowledge and perception on sexual abuse (a form of violence against children) amongst female secondary school found out that information on sexual were from teachers at 48.78%, mothers at 25.2% media at 23.8%, internet at 15.5% and friends at 15.2%. Also, Ojiakor C.I, Iheanacho O.C, Nkwam-Uwaoma A and Dibia N.P's Coverage of child right abuse in Nigerian newspapers with the manifest contents of Daily Sun and Punch (January-April, 2017) found out that both newspapers did not give prominence to stories on violation of children rights as almost all the stories seen in the papers were buried in the inside pages.

Owerri residents' perception of broadcast media programmes on violence against children

The above data indicated that (i) 89.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that broadcast media programmes have contributed in shaping their thought on violence against children and related issues; (ii) 69% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they got well informed and educated of all forms of child abuse prevalent in the society through exposure to broadcast media programmes and (ii) 77% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that media reportage can help them break the cycles of suppression and denial of children right. It means that greater number of the respondents were of the view that broadcast media programmes helped them to take active part in ending violence against children. This finding corroborates the Yale Perception theory used in this study to show that the media has the capacity to influence how the society perceive societal issues, constant airing of programmes bordering on the safety and well-being of every child in the media will improve the attitude of the society towards the rights of children.

The influence of broadcast media programmes on Owerri residents' behaviour towards violence against children

Finding indicated that 71.3% of the respondents agreed that broadcast media programmes have positively influenced their behaviour in terms of shunning violence against children. This points out to the fact that broadcast media programmes is effective in influencing the behaviour of the respondents towards shunning violence against children. Although, the findings of this study indicated that the residents in Owerri are influenced by broadcast media programmes, that of Agbo and Chukwuma (2015) revealed that reports on child trafficking in NTA's programmes are not persuasive enough to discourage the practice of child trafficking in Southeast, Nigeria. There are chances that between 2015 to 2021, broadcast media programmes might have increased to the point of influencing the people.

Conclusion

From the findings, it is evident that the broadcast media played and will continue to play significant role in creating awareness towards violence against children through their programmes. This is because the broadcast media empower the people information wise which shaped their opinion about violence against children. The broadcast media increase the people's level of awareness about all forms of violence against children. By these, the people get equipped and educated on what constitute violence against children and encourage them to take active decision towards protecting children's rights. Of all the sources of information, the broadcast media have remained vital sources of providing information to the people.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The broadcast media should continue to live up to expectation in accordance with the social responsibility philosophy by providing information about all forms of violence against children.
2. There is need to package and disseminate information about violence against children as they have been found to be a credible, reliable, trusted and authentic sources of information about violence against children.
3. More attention and prominence should be given to issues patterning to violence against children by creating special programmes in radio and television stations as well as pages of newspapers' in their reportage in order to give details and background information about it.
4. For broadcast media programmes to influence behaviour and attitude of the people, there should be frequent programmes as well as prominence given to issues regarding violence against children.

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