Entertainment Media Outlets as Predictors of Sexualization among Female Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract  Adolescents’ use of media has been on the increase and most homes have televisions. The increased sexualization of women and girls in the media outlets in the 21st century has become a source of concern to counsellors and academics in Nigerian Secondary Schools. The study investigated the predictive power of entertainment media outlets on sexualization of female senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, of Rivers State, Nigeria. The population comprised all female senior secondary class 3 students in the area of the study. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses tested at 0.05 alpha levels guided the study. A sample of 312 female adolescents in senior secondary school 3 from 10 public schools was purposively and randomly drawn. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured three sub-sections questionnaire titled: Media Outlets and Sexualization Questionnaire (MOSQ). The instrument yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.82, 0.87, and 0.88 for the three subsections respectively using Cronbach-Alpha Method. The instrument was administered and data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Multiple regression coefficients were used to answer research question one, while research questions two and three were answered using beta value associated with multiple regression. For the three hypotheses, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for hypothesis one while hypotheses two and three were tested using t-values associated with multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that entertainment outlets significantly have a joint prediction on sexualization of female senior secondary school students. It is recommended that media industries should be checked and guided by government to know the type of programmes they showcase for the adolescents. Counsellors and parents should pay close attention to sexualization risk of female students.

Keywords: entertainment media, outlets, sexualization and self-objectification


1. Introduction

The use of media among adolescents has exacerbated. Most households in Nigeria have television and families in the urban areas have 83.7% ownership [1], coupled with sharp increase of cable network such as; entertainment music channels and reality shows on various television channels. Unfortunately these entertainment media outlets are characterized with array of messages and shows on sexualization. For instance in United States, Toy Industries are in business of manufacturing and advertising on televisions dolls that wear black leather miniskirts, feather boas and thigh-high boots for 8 – 12 years old girls [2] and during beauty contest, children are made to wear long and artificially fixed hair extensions, heavy makeup and are encouraged to flirt on the stage [3].

Sexualization is characterized by increased permissiveness that allows sexual revelations and exposure with sexuality on the increase as part of individuals’ identities [4]. According to [5], sexualization occurs when individuals are regarded as sex objects and evaluated in terms of their physical characteristics and sexiness. The American Psychological Association ([6]:1) reported that:

Sexualization occurs when a person’s value comes only from his/her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics. A person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness with being sexy. A person is made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making. Sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person.

These definitions show that sexualization is an act of valuing a person only as a sexual object with little or no relevance to the individuals’ other capacities and standard. Sexualization may result to sexual harassment on the girl-child who is provocatively dressed in sexualized adult clothing and accessories. It may occur through conversation, glances, sensual touches from others and
sexiness of a female character [7]. These activities pose problems to the girl-child when one is seen only as a sexual object while neglecting ones other valuable characteristics [8]. Sexualization poses a plethora of social and psychological problems to the adolescent girls. It may not be out of place to state that the recent greater value placed on physical attractiveness has increased the rate of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders among female adolescents. A lot of young female adolescents in a bid to look thin and model after some female artists they watch on television suffer bulimia a type of eating disorder.

According to Gapinski, Brownell and Lafrance, [9] chronic attention to physical appearance and comparing it to sexualized idols that are usually seen on television disrupts cognitive ability and reduces mathematical ability and makes them more depressed. For example, analyses of cartoons marketed for children’s delight on television usually showcased female characters wearing tight cloths that reveals the thin waists and big breasts [10,11]. They also produce thong underwear with provocative phrases inorder to attract and make them marketable to pre-adolescent girls. The rate of plastic surgery among girls under eighteen (18) years in a bid to increase their breast size has continued to be on the increase in recent years [12]. However, if sexualization becomes a popular culture on media it may continue to affect girls’ behaviour. Moreover, researchers have observed that media has replaced the portrayal of women of intellectual achievements as role models with the portrayal of sexualized female celebrities, who adorn themselves with provocative dresses, cosmetically modified body and seductive postures as role models to be emulated by the adolescents. It is an unhealthy practice when girls are made to accept being sexy as a means of gaining social acceptance and power.

The increased sexualization of women and girls in the media in the 21st century has become a source of concern to psychologists, counsellors and educationist. The increased negative impact of entertainment media on adolescent impression of seeing their worth only in sexual attractiveness rather than in their personal worth and academic achievements has continued to exacerbate [6]. The researchers are of the view that since American Culture has become sexualized [4,6] that the act of sexualization and its’ consequences may not only be experienced in the United States of America because we live in a global world. For instance most Nigerian adolescent girls’ model after American popular musicians, watch and listen to American music and television shows which may likely influence sexualization among them.

1.1. Entertainment Media Outlets and Sexualization

Entertainment media outlets are channels through which music video, lyrics reality shows and promotional messages are disseminated. Entertainment media outlets in this study are musical video/lyrics and televisions. These entertainment media outlets have strong influence on how adolescent girl’s physical attractiveness should look because music plays a significant role in our lives and most adolescents spend hours on listening to music and watching television [13]. Zurbriggen and Morgan [14] reported that more regular viewing of reality TV shows was correlated with a stronger belief in the importance of appearance greater in importance to sexiness and beauty among young adolescent girls. As sexualization becomes part and parcel of adolescents’ life the music industry and advertisement promotions have continued to objectify women as sexual objects. Many women are constantly battling with their body appearances not minding the negative association of self-objectification such as anxiety, shame and diminished sexual health it has on the adolescent girl.

Vincent, Davis and Boruskowski [15], reported that 57% of music videos featured on internet usually portray a woman as an exclusive decorative object. Most women dancers shown on television are provocatively dressed in miniskirts, revealing dancing attires and are expected to wriggle their waist, breast and buttocks in sexual alluring manner as they dance to the beating of the music [16,17]. This is not far-fetched as one of the researchers in this study witnessed it live among the female dancers, who entertained during a 2014 Gender Conference in Ghana. Where women were made to dance with bare breasts and the male dancers were all properly dressed.

Ward [18] reported that in the analysis of Black Entertainment Television, music videos analyzed showed that 84% of the music videos were characterized with sexual imageries, sexually induced dancing steps and high self-objectification. Ward, Merriwether and Caruthers [19] reported that undergraduate women who constantly watch music videos, have high realism attribution to media content and identify strongly with popular TV characters and are more readily accepting to sexual objectification of women. In other words stronger identification with one’s favourite TV character involving more objectifying music artists is associated with greater support of stereotypes of viewing women as sex objects. Furthermore, in an analysis of forty (40) music television videos a crossed gender role based content, 44% objectifications were found within 30 seconds of the recording period [20]. A study of 911 adolescent boys on how exposure to sexualizing prime television programmes and music television men’s magazine in a structural equation model reported a direct relationship between exposure to self-objectification on television and pornographic websites [21]. Self-objectification is also an act of primarily viewing a woman as an object of male sexual desire rather than as a whole human entity. The music industries portrayal of sexualized women is not only through the imageries and storyline of the movies rather the young artists go to the extent of exploiting their sexuality in a bid to show the extent of their popularity by dehumanizing themselves. This act of dehumanizing one’s self is evident in the case of Britney Spear a music icon who showcased her popularitity in a nude body at 2001 Music Television Awards.

The discussion of her music was clearly centered on her nudity and not the music. This same act of female artists showcasing nudity in music and other event have become a popular show among Nigerian female celebrities especially Nollywood actresses. A Nigerian singer, Eniola Akinbo better known as Niyola in an instagram post shared a nude photo in which she covered her breast with bare hands. These acts go a long way to buttress the fact
that objectification is a yardstick of showing success and popularity in the music industry [6]. Evidence abound that most current popular songs objectify women in high degrading manner such as; “Summer Body” sung by a young male Nigerian artist popularly called Olamide Baddo. Where his female dancers were all dressed in half naked Bikini pants and are being praised for their beautiful bodies.

Tolman, Impett, Tracy, and Michael [22] found out that girls who had more objectified relationship with their body were more likely to experience depression and low-self-esteem. In the same vein both white and black adolescent girls involved in self-objectification showed a significant predictive validity of depression, body shame and disordered eating [23].

The availability of television in most homes shows that majority of the children may have unlimited access to television viewing. Most of the entertainment media contents that children view are in the absence of parental guidance [24]. There are high frequency of sexualized messages that dominate the television programmes and often times misleading and inaccurate; however, these messages are frequently accepted as truth by the adolescents.

The amount of television exposure on sexualized objects that an adolescent girl receives can also affect the way she perceives her body and she may become dissatisfied and believes she needs to diet in order to improve her physical attractiveness. The television portrays an image that if you fit the thin ideal then you will be more popular, successful, outgoing, and satisfied, which are not achieved by those who do find it impossible to achieve thinness. Tiggermann and Slatter [25] investigated the impact of thin idealized images of women as presented in music television, a popular form of entertainment for young people in Adelaide. A sample of 84 women viewed a videotape containing either appearance music videos (which emphasized appearance and featured thin and attractive). The instructional set was manipulated to encourage or discourage social comparison. The result showed that viewing the appearance music videos featuring thin women led to increased social comparison and body dissatisfaction, showing that content of television programmes can have negative consequences for women’s body image.

Television programmes and advertisements are highly sexualized in their contents. Studies have shown that the more adolescents watch television programmes and advertisements that feature sexual contents, the more likely that adolescents are to initiate sexual activity. Adolescents exposed to high sexualized programmes were as twice likely to experience pregnancy within the next three years as compared to those adolescents who viewed less sexualized programmes [26].

At times exposure to television programmes may create the potential for consistent exposure to sexualized depictions of women and girls, which teaches children that women are sexual objects [27]. Moreso, in a television programme on music video on black audience, women were seldomly seen as equal with men rather the women’s primary role was their sexuality and physical attractiveness (Zubriggen and Roberts 2013). A report from the youths showed that television was the medium where they encounter sexualization contents and three quarters reported having viewed sexual activities and materials on television [21]. Therefore with much emphasis on entertainment media and negative consequences of sexualization, it becomes imperative to investigate on the predictive power of entertainment media outlets (music video/lyrics and television) on sexualization of senior female secondary school students in Ohio – Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

1.2. Theoretical Backing of Entertainment Media

The exponential use of media in homes has reshaped the attitude of adolescents and the influence of models they watch on televisions. As the influence of media exacerbates on adolescents’ patterns of behaviour in the 21st century, various theories have been discussed on modelling behaviours. Social learning theory propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977, reported that through watching others, observing their actions and behaviours, individuals tend to imitate and learn from their environment. Based on this fact Bandura [28] affirmed that social learning enables students to observe and through observation increase their understanding and skills quickly as a function of predisposed information acquired through the significant models within the environment. However, internalize the images and messages they see and interact within their environment.

Starr and Fergusson in agreement with Bandura’s 1977 social learning theory stated that children learn culturally appropriate gender roles by observing and modelling others and getting reinforcement from others. For example: when a young girl observes her mother rubbing lipstick and imitates her by rubbing hers and the mother approves it through verbal praise such as; “Oh you look pretty or Oh you look just like me, sexy girl” the girl systematically learns the approved gender behaviour which is being rewarded by her mother. The impact of media in modelling is extensive. In this regard a number of research have reported that children who are exposed to media are usually affected by what they see in areas of health behaviours including sexual activity, substance abuse, intercourse initiation, dating violence and sexual harassment among youths [7].

2. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which entertainment media (television viewing and music video/lyrics) jointly predict sexualization among female senior secondary school students in Ohio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

2.1. Research Questions

Three (3) research questions guided the study as shown below:

1. To what extent do television and music video/lyrics jointly predict sexualization among female senior secondary students in Ohio Akpor L.G.A.of Rivers State?
2. To what extent do music video/lyrics predict female senior secondary school students’ sexualization in Rivers State?

3. To what extent does television viewing predict sexualization among female senior secondary school students in Obio Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State?

2.2. Hypotheses

Three (3) hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Television and music video/lyrics do not have any significant joint prediction on female senior secondary students’ sexualization in Obio Akpor L.G.A. of Rivers State, Nigeria.

2. Music video/lyrics do not have any significant prediction on sexualization of female senior secondary students.

3. Television viewing does not have any significant prediction on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a correlational design, which investigated the relationship between entertainment media outlets (music videos/lyrics and television viewing) and sexualization of in-school female senior secondary school students in public schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The target population consisted of all female students at the senior secondary III levels. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 312 female senior secondary that gave their consent to fill the instrument and are in senior secondary III. The instrument used for data collection was a 45 item questionnaire titled: Media Outlets and Sexualization Questionnaire (MOSQ). The respondents were expected to indicate their level of agreement on a 4 point likert scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. The instrument was in three sections. Section A was to elicit information on sexualization with 20 items. Hence, the scale provided a minimum of 0 marks and a maximum of 80 marks. Section B on music video/lyrics with 15 items, hence the section provided a minimum of 15 marks and maximum of 60 marks and section C elicited information on television with 10 items given a minimum of 10 marks and maximum of 40 marks. Three experts from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling from the University of Port Harcourt established the face and content validity of the instrument. The experts were armed with the research questions and the hypotheses in order to examine the instrument for clarity of language and purpose of the study. Their corrections were effected which gave credence to the final version of the instrument. Twenty five copies of the questionnaire were trail tested on 25 students from Emuoha Local Government Area of Rivers State who were not part of the study. Their mean ratings of the items were collated using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient which yielded the reliability coefficients as follow: Section A = 0.82, Section B = 0.87 and Section C = 0.88 respectively. The administration and collection of the data were on the spot. The data collected were subjected to various statistical analyses using mean and standard deviation. Multiple regression coefficient was used to answer research question one, while research questions two and three were answered using beta value associated with multiple regression - for testing the three hypotheses, analyses of variance (ANOVA) associated with multiple regression was used to test hypotheses one, while hypotheses two and three were tested using t – values associated with multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Presentation of Results

The results of this study were presented in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4.

Research Question One: To what extent does television viewing and music video/lyrics jointly predict sexualization among female senior secondary school students?

To answer research question one, female adolescents scores for both the section on television and music video/lyrics were regressed on the responses provided on the sexualization scale. The result obtained is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple Regression of Joint Prediction of Television Viewing and Music Video/Lyrics on Sexualization of Female Senior Secondary School Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>Adj R^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexualization</td>
<td>43.85</td>
<td>11.81</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>0.513</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>0.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>25.73</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>312</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>25.35</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>312</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result in table one revealed that the mean and standard deviation of female senior secondary school students on the sexualization scale was 43.85 and 11.81 respectively. The mean score and standard deviation of the influence of music video/lyrics was 25.73 and 3.19 respectively, while the mean score of television viewing was 25.35 with a standard deviation of 3.81. Furthermore, table one indicates that the multiple regression coefficient (R) obtained from the combination of the music video/lyrics and television viewing on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization was 0.513, the squared multiple regression (R^2) coefficient was 0.263, while the adjusted multiple regression coefficient (adj R^2) was 0.258. From the R^2 value of 0.263, it therefore indicates that 26.3% of the variations in female senior secondary school student’ sexualization can be explained by the joint contributions of music video/lyrics and television viewing. Hence, the remaining 73.7% of the variations in their sexualization is explainable by other factors or variables.

Hypothesis One: Television viewing and music video/lyrics do not have any significant joint prediction on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization.

To test the null hypothesis postulated above, analysis of variance associated with the multiple regression was employed, with the result displayed in Table 2.
Table 2. Analysis of Variance Associated With Multiple Regression on the Joint Prediction of Music Videos/Lyrics and Television Viewing on Female Senior Secondary School Students’ Sexualization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>11393.634</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5696.817</td>
<td>55.086</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>31955.584</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>103.416</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43349.218</td>
<td>311</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: sexualization  
b. Predictors: (Constant), television, music.

In Table 2, it is shown that a calculated F-value of 55.086 obtained from the analysis of variance associated with multiple regression on the joint prediction of music videos/lyrics and television viewing on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization. This value was obtained at significant value of .000 level which was less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 at 2 and 309 degrees of freedom. This result therefore suggests that music videos/lyrics and television viewing significantly have a joint prediction on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does musical video/lyrics predict female senior secondary school students’ sexualization?

Hypothesis Two: Music video/lyrics do not have any significant prediction on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization.

Table 3. Beta Values and t-values associated with Multiple Regression on the Independent Prediction of Music Videos/Lyrics and Female Senior Secondary School Students’ Sexualization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-9.227</td>
<td>-1.811</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1.451</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td>7.212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data analysis in Table 3, it is revealed that the beta value for music videos/lyrics was 0.392, while its associated t-value was 7.212 which was significant at 0.05 level of significant, because it was less than the chosen alpha of 0.05 (p<0.05). Therefore it is clear that music videos/lyrics had a significant independent prediction on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization in Rivers State.

Research Question Three: To what extent does television viewing predicts female senior secondary school students’ sexualization?

Hypothesis Three: Television viewing does not have any significant joint prediction on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization.

Table 4. Beta Values and t-values associated with Multiple Regression on the Independent Prediction of Television and Female Senior Secondary Students’ Sexualization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-9.227</td>
<td>-1.811</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>3.677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 also revealed that the beta value for television viewing prediction of female senior secondary school students’ sexualization yielded a beta value of 0.200 with an associated t-value of 3.67 which was significant at 0.05 level of significance because the p-value obtained was less than the chosen alpha of 0.05 (p<0.05). From this result, it is indicative that television viewing independently had a significant prediction on female senior secondary students’ sexualization.

5. Discussion of the Findings

The findings in Table 1 revealed that relationship between entertainment of media and sexualization among female students in senior secondary school III level was positive and strong with (R² = 0.263). This positive association indicates that increase in female students’ use of entertainment media will lead to increase in their sexualization. The finding is in line with the result in Shewmaker [27] who discovered that exposure to television programmes and music video create the potential for consistent exposure to sexualized depiction of women and girls, which teaches children that women are sexual objects.

Based on the findings of the hypotheses 1 as postulated in table II using Analysis of Variance associated with multiple regression on the joint prediction of music videos/lyrics and television viewing on female senior secondary school students’ sexualization was statistically significant thus null hypotheses was rejected.

The finding from Table 3 showed that music video/lyrics had a significant independent prediction on sexualization of female senior secondary school students’ in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the research work of Tiggemann and Slater [25] who investigated the impact of thin idealized images of women presented in a music video television programme usually popular with youths in Adelaide which emphasized appearance and featured thin and attractive women. The result showed that viewing the appearance music videos featuring thin women led to increase social comparison and body dissatisfaction showing that viewing music video can have negative consequence for women’s body. The associated t – value showed statistically significant difference and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

The data in Table 4 revealed that television viewing prediction of female senior secondary school students’ sexualization was significant. This finding is in agreement with Zurbriggen and Roberts, (2013) who reported that television programmes on music video on black, audience that women were seldom seen as equal with men rather that the women’s primary role was on their sexuality and physical attractiveness. Similarly, Zurbriggen and Morgan [14] reported that regular viewing of reality show on television was associated with a stronger belief in the importance of appearance, sexiness and beauty among adolescents.

Further to support this claim a report from the youth in a study carried by [21] which found out that youth reported that television was the medium where they encounter sexualization contents. The predictive power of entertainment media outlets and sexualization remains a source of concern.
5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study some of these recommendations were made:

- Parents, counselors and academics should pay close attention to sexualization risk among in-school female students.
- Families should be encouraged to have open conversation with their adolescents’ girls and educate them on issues about their self-worth and sexual identity.
- Parents should guide what adolescent girls watch on television.
- The government should control what entertainment media (video lyrics/music and television) feature in their programmes.
- Since most homes have televisions the use of parental guidance to monitor what children watch should be strictly adhered to in every home.
- Schools should teach media literacy and include sexualization topics on sex education.
- Schools and youth centres should promote and support extra curricula programmes that will help young people develop self-esteem.

5.2. Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between entertainment media outlets and sexualization of female senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Adolescents’ use of media has exacerbated and unfortunately these entertainment media outlets are characterized with array of messages and programmes on sexualization. Literature and theory supporting the role of media in sexualization of female adolescents were reviewed. The study was guided with three research questions and three hypotheses respectively. The result of the study showed that music videos/lyrics and television viewing significantly have a correlation with girls’ mental health. The result of the study showed that music videos/lyrics and television viewing significantly have a correlation with girls’ mental health. The result of the study showed that music videos/lyrics and television viewing significantly have a correlation with girls’ mental health. The result of the study showed that music videos/lyrics and television viewing significantly have a correlation with girls’ mental health.

References