Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5 No.3 September, 2022; p.g. 41 – 49; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF INDECENCY ON TELEVISION REALITY SHOW (BIG BROTHER NAIJA BBNAIJA)

EZEAKOLAM AMARACHI AGATHA
Department of Mass Communication
Redeemer's University
Ede, Osun State
agatex4u@gmail.com/ezeakolam6565@run.edu.ng
+234-8132775555

&
DR. AWOFADEJU PETER OLAYINKA
Department of Mass Communication
Joseph Ayo Babalola University
Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State
poawofadeju@jabu.edu.ng
+234-8052158355

ABSTRACT

This study examined audience perception of indecency on television reality show using Big Brother Naija as a study focus. This reality show has raised so much controversial opinions by many people within the normal social circle with the claim that they do not understand the purpose of the show due to the open acts of immoral behaviour amongst the housemates. The objectives of the study are to ascertain the audience perceptions of the level of indecency displayed on the reality show and to understand if exposure to the show has in anyway affected moral standard in the society. The study, anchored on the preposition of cultivation theory and social learning theory, employed quantitative research method using survey to gather data from a sample population of 200 respondents. The instrument that was used for gathering data for the study was the questionnaire. The study used the convenience sampling technique to reach respondents. Data collected from the research were statistically analyzed using simple percentages and frequency distributions presented in tables. Findings revealed that respondents who frequently watch the Big Brother Naija reality programme were mainly young people and their perception of the programme differs as most of them find it entertaining and engaging. Findings also revealed that the respondents find the show indecent to a large extent though it is strictly for adults. The study concluded that Big Brother Naija an unscripted and unedited reality show should be controlled by the broadcast regulatory body over the wide exposure to indecent lifestyle to the pubic

Keywords: Audience, Perception, indecency, Television, Reality Show.

Introduction

Audience are recipients or receivers of the messages delivered through the process of Mass communication (Mathias, 2018). Many scholars have described media audience to be listeners, spectators and consumers of media messages. Mass media audiences are often heterogeneous

and anonymous people, not personally identified, not necessary accessible to each other at the same time but are consumers of media contents (Nightingale, 2011; Fairbrother, 2015). The media audience lack uniform self-awareness and cannot act in an organised way to secure objectives (Arowolo, 2019). Mass Communication as a concept entails the transmission of messages to a large, diverse and heterogeneous people who are anonymous.

The media transmits their messages through various medium such as Newspapers, Magazines, billboards, radio and television (Nordquist, 2020) . Since the advent of visual medium, television remains the giant and the most potentially powerful medium in the world that can reach and impact people faster than any other medium (Wilmarth, 2019). Television has the function to inform, entertain, educate, persuade (adverts) and capable of transmitting social and cultural values to its audience through the power of visual effect. Television programmes can make viewers addictive and have false representation of real life (Sussman and Moran, 2022). Following this line of thoughts Apuke and Dogari, (2017) opine that television influences range of attitudes and behaviours among viewers and audience. In the same vein Baran (2009) asserts that television technology acts like a double edge sword which has the power of influencing rightly or wrongly those exposed to it. Chari (2005) further affirms that the people build their world by the stories they hear, see and tell especially the young ones. It is therefore convenient to state that television messages have influence on viewers and in the behaviour of people who consumes or expose themselves to media contents depending on how long the audience is exposed to these contents.

Television reality show is a new trend in show business and many television stations are following this trend. One of the characteristics of some reality show is that they can be addictive as they sometimes have the newness it takes to sustain the audience (Rodrigues, 2021). It has become a common attitude for people especially the young ones to watch one reality programme or another on television stations. The attraction to reality shows comes from the portrayal of live unscripted and unedited motion pictures which have made it gain large popularity.

It is on this note that Amakiri, Barigbon, and Harcourtwhyte, (2020) opine that reality TV as a genre of television programming has grown over the years and has become an addiction of some sort for many viewers especially youth and female segment of the society. BBN as a reality show, has been on for the past fifteen years, the show which commonly attracts the youths is one that showcase and create opportunities for its participants in the world of entertainment as many who go in to participate for the show quickly become stars. Participants of this reality show are mainly young Nigerians who go through audition and after selection they are housed for three months with different tasks assigned to them. They exit the house through eviction on weekly basis after which a winner emerged.

Statement of the Problem

DeVolld (2019) assert that reality television is a popular and profitable programme that dominates most of other programmes on broadcast and cable television. It generates six billion dollars revenue annually. Reality television has become the toast of many TV stations because many advertisers and brands sponsor these shows due to the numbers of audience it attracts. Other study on BBN reality show looked at areas such as the utility of BBN for Nigeria foreign policy, the effects of the show on youths, undergraduate students of a particular university or

environment in terms of distraction and copy of the immorality displayed on the show and other immorality criticism about the reality show. (Iyorza, (2021), Akinlolu and Ogunnubi, (2020), Nwafor, and Onyekachi (2015). Despite all the criticism the BBN reality show still attract more ardent viewers. No work has been done to know why this show keeps gaining more audiences not just young audience but reasonable older folks. This study therefore seeks to ascertain from the audience if they perceive this BBN reality show to be indecent and why the show attracts much audiences.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To understand the essence of the reality show to the society.
- To investigate viewers preference to the reality show.
- To determine if BBN reality show portray indecency to the public view.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- How frequently do you watch the BBN show?
- What are the audience reasons for watching BBN?
- How does the content of BBN depict value to you the audience?
- How does the BBN show portray indecent actions that might influence audience negatively?

Literature Review

Concept of Reality Television Show

The reality television show gained prominence in the early 21st century and captured the attention of many viewers. In Nigeria, the beginning of reality television was in 2004 when the Guilder Ultimate Search aired its first episode. Allen, (2017) refers reality television to mean a style of television programming that shows the unscripted, unedited actions of ordinary people instead of prepared scripts delivered by actors.

Reality television shows make personal thoughts, behaviour and interactions of their characters the main hub of the audience's attention (Folayan, Folayan and Oyetayo, 2019). Reiss and Wiltz (2004) in their research assessed why people appeal to reality TV and they discovered that people who watched reality TV, had the trait motive to feel important and that people love TV shows that will match with what they value most. Supporting the above opinion Iyorza, (2021) assert that reality TV shows involve ordinary people who allowed themselves to be filmed as they go about living their normal life with a group of others functioning as the same.

Folayan, et.al., (2019) affirms that reality television programmes influences the behaviour of people in the society, stating that people are easily impacted by reality television because over time they start imitating the behaviour portrayed on television and make use of them in real life.

Reality television has received critics from various angles for having addictive phenomenon that viewers use them as a measure to their personal lifestyle. Supporting the above assertion an article on *International Science Times* by Philip Rose stating that reality television has a

dexterous influence on audience views of the world. An observational study from University of Wisconsin on 145 students from the university who were surveyed based on consumptions of reality television reveals that reality television viewers have the opinion that the attitude and conniving behaviour portrayed on television show is considered normal in today's society.

There are several reality programmes aired on television in Nigeria, we have the guilder ultimate search, who wants to be a millionaire (MTN), Nigeria idol, Ultimate love and Big Brother Naija (BBN). DeVolld (2019) affirms that reality television is criticised for always causing heated confrontations, especially, the documentary soap forms, where cameras follow groups of people through their everyday lives. Other critics as cited by Amakiri, et.al, (2020) opine that reality programmes entertain lots of abnormalities which make it wrong for commercial television and target audience. According to Michael Tracey (2003) from the University of Colorado, reality TV was described to encourage moral and intellectual impoverishment in contemporary life.

Big Brother Naija Reality Show (BBN) and Criticism on Indecency

BBN is a reality television show that started in 2006 and it is a subset of a broader reality television programme Big Brother Africa (BBA). This reality show is exclusively aired by Multi choice cable television, DSTV and GOTV. Daniel, (2016) describes the ideology of Big Brother as a cocept that originated from George Orwell's novel *"Nineteen Eighty-Four"*. The novel was about a fictitious *Big Brother* who kept surveillance camera all over the county to get hidden facts and truths about residents of the vicinity.

BBN is a reality television programme currently in its seventh season and mostly viewed by the youths in the society because the participants of the show fall within the age bracket of the audiences. Each year, many young people struggle to become participants in the house because of the fame and attractive prices that winners get to go home with. This reality show hold thousands of audiences glued for weeks to the television broadcasts of all the happenings inside the BBN house. These housemates are exposed to all sorts of events inside the house which revolves around playing of games, carrying out given tasks, incessant conflicts between housemates, all night long parties, and discussion sessions with the unseen host, romance and eviction series.

This popular reality show has received lot of backlash from different critics (Nwafor and Onyekachi 2015; Opree and Kuhne 2016) who are of the opinion that the programme impact negatively to the viewing audience because of consistence show of inappropriate scenes which are permitted and encouraged in the house. This has become a source of worry to many critic of the reality show because larger populations of the audience to this programme are the younger ones. The uncensored portrayals of sex and nudity scenes are mainly the source of worry to right-thinking members of the public. There is a general question on the issue of morality of the programme especially with regards to the explicit naked body exposure.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Uses and Gratification Theory and Social Learning Theory.

Uses and Gratification Theory

The study aims to elicit if the audience perceives indecency from BBNaija television show hence the reason for underpinning the study with Uses and Gratification Theory.

The Uses and Gratification Theory propounded by E. Katz, J.G. Blumler and M., Gurevitch in 1973, posits that television audiences are active, that is they are goal oriented and tend to achieve their goals through the media. What this means is that television audiences seek for programmes in the media that suit and satisfy their needs. Relating this assumption to the BBNaija reality show, audience who expose themselves to this show do so to satisfy their personal gratification and needs. This assumption of the theory looks at what people do with the mass media and not what the mass media do to people.

The uses and gratification theory assumes that the consumption of media contents comes from an immediate need of the audience which is usually backed up by one's believe that the need will be met by using such media. The theory tries to elicit why people deliberately choose media and how the chosen media fulfils their needs for information, relaxation, entertainment or socialization. West and Turner, (2004) gave the summary of the basic postulation of Uses and Gratifications Theory into the following:

- The audience is active and its media use is goal oriented.
- People have various uses (needs) they seek to attain through media.
- Audience members take initiative to connect need gratification to a specific media.
- The media compete with other sources for need satisfaction.
- People have enough self-awareness of their own media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with a precise picture of that use.
- Value judgments of media content can only be evaluated by the audience.

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory by Albert Bandura, Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross in 1964 suggests that learning takes place through observing how others behave. This theory highlighted reinforcement as a motivation for learning, that is people learn faster when there is a reward to gain. People tend to keep behaviour that they get rewarded for and leave out the ones with punishment. The social learning theory is therefore linked to this study as most researchers believe that television influences audience. This is related what Apuke and Dogari (2017) said that television influence a range of attitudes and behaviours among viewers and audience.

Ike, (2005) also supports this idea by stating that television programmes influenced people's attitudes by gaining their attention, retaining those attention and motivation.

Social learning theory therefore is relevant to this study as the television reality show BBN rewards participants who finally emerge winners with cars, cash prices and other mouth watering gifts. This will further influence viewers to imitate those indecent actions the show is being criticized for. The theory recognises that people can acquire behaviours by observation and storing the observation as a guide to future behaviour.

Methodology

The survey method was adopted for this study to investigate audience perception of indecency in BBN reality TV show. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The

population of this study primarily comprises of audience of BBNaija in Nigeria. Population as described by Awokemi (2006) refers to a set of participants that qualify for a study.

Non- probability sampling design also known as purposive sampling techniques was used for this study. Purposive sampling methods meant that items for sampling were selected deliberately by the researcher to save time and cost effect. The sample size used to achieve the objectives of this study comprised of 200 correspondents. Aside age, no variable was considered for the selection in as much as the country was represented fairly. Data analysis was done using simple frequency and percentages presented on tables.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data gathered from questionnaires sent to respondents are analysed thus:

Table 1. Questionnaire Respondents' Distribution Rate.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed questionnaires	200	100%
Retrieved questionnaires	188	94%
Useful questionnaires	178	89%

The above table analysed the number of questionnaires distributed which was 200 and only 178 could be used to gather data from the 188 questionnaires retrieved.

Table 2. Respondents Age Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-28	120	67.42%
29-39	42	23.26%
40-50	16	8.98%
Total	**178**	**100%**

The above table shows the age bracket of respondents, it shows that the BBN reality show is mainly viewed by teenagers within the age brackets of 18-28 which make up to the 67.42% of the total study population.

Table 3. Research Question 1: How frequently do you watch BBN reality show?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	78	43.82%
Weekly reviews	68	38.20%
Once in a while	32	17.98%
Total	**178**	**100%**

The table above shows the level of viewership from the respondents, about 43.82% of the respondents expose themselves daily to BBN reality show. This means that a lot of people enjoy the show.

Table 4. Research Question 2: What is the Audience Reason for Watching the Show?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Education	23	12.92%
Entertainment	99	55.62%
While away time.	56	31.46%
Total	**178**	**100%**

The above data gathered show that the BBN show is mainly for entertainment as 55.62% of respondents agreed to that fact.

Table 5. Research Question 3: Does the content of BBN depict Value to the viewing audience?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	40	22.47%
Strongly agree	-	-
Disagree	28	15.73%
Strongly disagree	110	61.80%
Total	178	100%

The analysis of the above table shows that majority of respondents 61.80% strongly disagree that BBN adds any special value to them aside entertainment values.

Table 6. Research Question4: How does the BBN Show portray indecent actions that might influence audience negatively?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	128	71.9%
No	38	21.4%
I do not know	12	6.7%
Total	**178**	**100%**

The table above shows audience perception on portrayal of indecent actions on the show. Majority from the data presented 71.9% agreed that the BBN show portray indecent actions that can influence audience negatively. Some researchers opine that many people learn from television programmes and try to imitate characters/actors they like.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the data of 178 respondents audience shows that teenagers are ardent viewers of the reality show and some of them daily expose themselves to the show purposely for fun and entertainment which the respondents agreed as the main value of the reality show. Those who expose themselves to the show, do so willfully though they agreed that there are lots indecent actions from the housemates who engage in an open sex, romance and exposure of sensitive parts of the body while on the show. Audience uses the show to satisfy their entertainment needs, this justifies the Uses and Gratification theory idea of audience using television programmes to satisfy their needs. Meaning that the audiences are active participants to what programme they expose themselves to. The study also revealed that most

audiences strongly disagree that the reality show depicts value to them aside for entertainment, the show according to the respondents is indecent for public viewing. The BBN reality programme do not reflects the Nigerian cultural heritage as most of the actions portrayed in the show ccan negatively influence the young audience who constantly expose themselves to the television show. To validate this Folayan,et.al., (2019) opine that reality television programmes influences the behaviour of people in the society, stating that people are easily impacted by reality television because over time they start imitating the behaviour portrayed on television and make use of them in real life.

Findings also revealed that the reality show is one of those other television programmes that contributes to encourage airing of indecency on Nigerian Television.

Conclusion

The Big Brother Naija reality show is a controversial reality programme shown on DSTV and GOTV television stations. Many critics, researchers and findings from this current study have shown that BBN reality show lacks moral values, filled with indecent views and lack educational value to the society. The benefits many argued are only for few housemates who emerged winners. Most audience of BBN show agrees that the show has only entertainment values and less value educationally and morally. This then calls for the broadcasting censorship board and the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) to review the contents of the show, package the whole show in a particular channel without spill over or weekly reviews to other channels. This will help put moderation and control as to enable those who desire to expose themselves to such level of indecency to subscribe to it.

Recommendations

The study further recommends that:

1. The Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) should place a total ban on any form of indecent public broadcast of programmes on television.
2. Sponsors of the reality show should put in rules and moral guidelines to the show, all housemates are to abide by these rules while in the house.
3. All agencies responsible for control on broadcasting should employ stricter penalities for offenders and possible withdrawals of licenses in cases of high level of indecent contents like BBN.
4. Producers and the BBN host should redirect the content of the show to reflect moral uprightness and integrity so as to encourage the audience into imitating what is right especially now that the country is stereotyped as a nation with the highest rate of fraud and corruption.

References

Akinlolu, A. E. and Ogunnubi, O. (2020). Soft Power or Wasteful Entertainment? Interrogating the Prospects of Big Brother Naija. The Round Table, Doi: https://10108000358533.2020.17.17088.

Allen, M. (2017). Reality Television. Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods. https://dx.doi.org.10.4135/9781483381411.n488.

Amakiri, C.A., Barigbon, G. N. and Harcourtwyte, D. (2020). Analysis of Rivers State University Students' Perception of Big Brother Naija Reality Television Programme.

Ebonyi State University Journal of Mass Communication. ISSN: 2449-0369 Vol.7 (7), Issue 1, pp.129-136.

Apuke, O. D. and Dogari, K. A. (2017). Influence of Television Programmes on Youth Dressing Pattern in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. International Journal of International Reletions, Media and Mass Communication Studies, Vol 3, No.2 pp. 32-45, www.eajournals.org.

Arowola, S.O. (2019). Media Audience: The Unending Swing of the Pendulum, School of Communication. Lagos State University. https://www.researchgate.net.

Awokemi, J. A. (2016). Research Methods: Process Evaluation and Critique. Port Harcourt: Unicampus Tutorial Services. https://nairaproject.com.

Baran, J. (2009). Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture. 5th ed. Newyork: McGraw Hills.

Chari, T, J. (2005). Media Analysis: Merit and Demerits of Media Regulation. Sunday Mirrior, 26.

Devolld, T, (2019). Five Myths About Reality Television. The Washington Post. www.washingtonpost.com.

Fairbrother, H. (2015). Audiences. Des Media Studies website.

Folayan, B. J., Folayan, T. T., Oyetayo, T. M. (2019). National Interest, Identity and Press Freedom: A Study of the Big Brother Nigeria TV Programme. Paper Delivered at the 6th (2019) annual Conference of Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Ike, N. (2005). Dictionary of Mass Communication. Owerri: Book- konzult.

International Science Times, (2018). Reality T-V-S Impact Viewers- Shows-real.htm.

Iyorza, S. (2021). Reality Television and Audience Dilemma for Big Brother Naija Survival in Nigeria. Predestinasi Vol. 14, No.1 Jumi 2021, Hal. 72-84 ISSN (print): 1978-9351.

Mathias, M. (2018). Mass Media Audience. Communication Studies and Notes on Mass Communication and Journalism. https://michellemathiasfsp.blogspot.com.

Nwafor, K. A. and Onyekachi, E. M. (2015). Viewership of Big Brother Africa Reality TV Show and Its Influence on the Moral Conduct of Undergraduate Students in Ebony State University, Abakiliki Nigeria. Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol. 3, No 5, pp. 1-15.

Nordquist, R. (2020). What does Medium Mean in the Communication Process? ThoughtCo.com/meduim-communication-term-1691314.

Opree, S. J. and Kuhre, R. (2016). Generation me in the Spotlight: Linking Reality TV to Materialism, Entitlement, and Narcissism. Mass Communication and society, 19:6,,800-819, Doi:1080115205436.2016.1199706.

Reiss, S. and Wiltz, J. (2004) Why People Watch Reality TV. Media Psychology 6(4),363-378. TandFonline.com.

Rodrigues, L. (2021). Why Is Reality TV So Addictive? The Psychological Reason You Watch. The Latch Journal. www.thelatch.com.au.

Sussman, S. and Moran, B. (2013). Hidden Addiction: Television. Journal of Behavioural Addictions. Akademial Kiado. Doi:10.1556/JBA.2.2013.008. www.ncbi.nih.gov.

Willmarth, A. (2019). Is Television Still King? ABA Banking Journal, Washinton, DC20036 www.aba.com.