

Broadcast Media Sensitization on Violence Against Women and Children in Port Harcourt

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt. The broadcast media have been sensitizing the members of audience on violence against women and children that happens in form of rape, domestic violence, among others. The social cognitive theory and aggressive cues media violence theory were adopted for the study. Three objectives which include to determine the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt and to examine the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children and three research questions were adopted. Research methodology used was the survey design with the Taro Yamane formula used in deriving the sample size of 400 from the population size of 1,148,665. The convenience sampling technique was used and questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Simple frequency distribution tables and percentages were used in the interpretation of data. Findings revealed that reports and programmes on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt are not broadcast regularly. Findings also revealed that residents of Port Harcourt find reports on violence against women and children to be scary, unreal and far. In conclusion, the broadcast media -radio and tv are great tools to influence sensitization because of their audio and audio-visual qualities. The study recommended that members of the audience will appreciate the adequacy of sensitization on violence against women and children when perpetrators are made to face the full weight of the law to serve as deterrent to others.*

KEY WORDS: Broadcast media, violence against women, violence against children, sensitization

INTRODUCTION

Broadcast of violence against women and children featured in the news and other programmes have become veritable tools in the sensitization against such inhumanity. It has been established that broadcast media contents generally influence the attitudes and behavioural tendencies of members of audience exposed to those contents. The mode of perception of the content by the members of audience consolidates their level of acceptance or the impact of the broadcast reports on violence against women and children.

The broadcast media have been instrumental in reporting violence perpetrated against women and children yet the trend is still on the increase. Since the media have been the organ for projecting the dangers of violence against women and children, it is imperative for the broadcast media to inform, educate, entertain among other functions, to apply caution and be ethical in their report of violence to avoid misunderstanding from members of the public who interpret news stories according to their beliefs, religion, demography and geographical location.

The implication would be that a report on violence would be differently analysed and perceived by individuals who are exposed to the same report because of several reasons. The portrayal of violence against women and children could either attract sympathy or condemnation to the victim or victims, showing the level of acceptance of the programme and its impact on the members of the audience.

The magnanimous and ambiguous power of the broadcast media in setting the stage for discussion of violence against women and vulnerable children make it imperative for broadcast journalists to understand the dependence of the audience on news reports that will discourage perpetrators from unleashing physical, emotional, psychological and financial burden on victims of violence against women and children as well as helping the women and children not to become victims or targets of violence which could be rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, forced prostitution, forced labour, killings by ritualists, domestic violence by a spouse or ex-spouse, among others. (Sutherland et al, 2016).

Statement of the problem

Broadcast media contents and their impacts have been identified as strong areas in the fight against vices in the society as they complement each other which significantly shows the change that can occur when members of audience who are exposed to news reports and programmes tailored towards discouraging violence against women and children are given maximum preference. The broadcast media may have been presenting these messages in a manner that the public may perceive as not convincing enough to deter perpetrators while on the other hand casting aspersions and heaping blame on the victims of violence which make them hide their experiences and endure alone for fear of being seen as deserving the misbehaviour of seemingly irresponsible individuals who get violent with women and children.

One begins to wonder if broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children are less-broadcast, wrongly perceived or misinterpreted. This is the basis for the study which seeks to determine the influence of broadcast media on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt. The study aimed to uncover how reports on violence against women and children by the broadcast media influence residents of Port Harcourt and the possible solution to close the gap since views and perceptions of the audience are conceived based on media contents and their impact. The problem of this study therefore was to investigate broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt. The objectives were to:

1. determine the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt.
2. examine the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children.
3. analyse the adequacy of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children.

Research Questions

These questions guided the study:

1. What is the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children?
3. How adequate is the broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Broadcast Media and Violence against Women and Children

The broadcast media which traditionally comprise the radio and television are known for their audio and visual qualities. The difference is that television requires an audience that must pay attention to news reports, documentaries, dramas, interviews, advertisements, financial markets among others. Sensitization on violence against women and children can be produced and broadcast in any of the genres mentioned to clearly explain violence against women and children. Radio has the strength to reach illiterate and literate audience. It does not require rapt attention from the audience but lacks the demonstrative ability of the television (Hasan, 2013).

With the audio characteristic of the radio and the audio-visual characteristic of the television, they are veritable organs to sensitize the public on violence against women and children. According to

the United Nations (1993), violence against women is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

On the other hand, UN (2006) sees violence against children as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. It is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity”. Violence against women and children can affect them psychologically, emotionally, physically and mentally. In worse scenarios, some have permanent physical scars that constantly remind them of the pain they suffered while others become psychiatric patients. (Sutherland et al, 2016).

Stigmatization of Victims of Violence

As much as the broadcast media will assiduously play an important role in the sensitization on violence against women and children, the mode of reportage may give credence to stigmatization of victims and absorb perpetrators of any blame of wrong-doing. Protecting victims of violence may be very challenging, especially when the perpetrator is a family member or lives in the same house with the victim which is the reason maximum care must be employed by the broadcast media to ensure that the participation of victims in interview programmes or hard news report will not cause them to be stigmatized by the members of the audience to avoid any form of discrimination against victims of violence (WHO, 2009).

Broadcast journalists need to build confidence in the minds of victims of violence so that they can open up to them without reservation or fear of being stigmatized. In the sensitization of members of the audience by the broadcast media, victims of violence whether women or children deserve to be treated with uttermost respect especially during interview sessions with the broadcast media and avoid any thing that could lead to the public recognizing them which might lead to stigmatization.

According to Adeosun (2015), there could be various psychological and mental health challenges resulting from victims of violence whose cases are reported in the broadcast media due to stigmatization as the disclosure of their experiences are disbelieved. Little wonder, most victims bear their burden and shame in solitude which is where the broadcast media must help to eradicate stigmatization, encourage sex education especially in rape cases, assist in the re-integration of victims into the society as well as presenting available legal aid to help victims regain self-confidence.

Theoretical framework

The study is hinged on the Aggressive cues media violence theory and the social cognitive theory.

Aggressive cues media violence theory

The theory also known as the stimulating effect theory was developed by Leonard Berkowitz, a professor of psychology in 1962 who clarified that exposure to violence on the media will cause a stimulation to take place thereby, making members of audience who are exposed to certain aggressive media content to be violent in their dealings with people. Berkowitz opines that there is a link between frustration and aggression where the higher the level of frustration, the higher the possibility of being violent if exposed to violence in the media. According to Ukaegbu (2022), the proponent of this theory also opined that it is possible for members of the audience who have been exposed to violent content on the media not to exhibit aggressive and violent tendencies rather, they improve on their behavioural pattern. This is the reason the aggressive cues theory is said to be derived from the individual differences theory.

The major assumptions of the aggressive cues media violence theory according to Zahid (2022) and Ukaegbu (2022) are:

- environment and social learning can influence violence
- when individuals are exposed to violence in the media, an increase in their psychological stimulation occurs which might make them aggressive.
- exposure to violence on television members of the audience can be a source of aggression
- response to violence on television could be as a result of frustration that the individuals are going through at the time of exposure to media violence.

Aggressive cues media violence theory helped the study to determine the behavioural tendencies residents of Port Harcourt exhibit when they are exposed to content with violence against women and children on the broadcast media.

Social cognitive theory

The theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in the 1960s. It started off as the social learning theory and advanced to be the social cognitive theory in 1986. It looks at how members of the audience receive and react to media messages or content based on their geographic and social positions meaning that learning takes place in a social environment. Ukaegbu (2022), opines that social and physical environment make up the geographic category with friends, family, acquaintances, and colleagues taking up the social category whereas, shelter and food supply make up the physical category.

The geographical location, the people and their behavioural patterns are the major factors in the social cognitive theory and in line with Onwubere (2012), these factors affect the reaction

elicited from members of the audience when they are exposed to media content since social environment and physical location shape behavioural tendencies. Some of its limitations are:

- It posits that changes in the social environment can lead to changes in an individual and this is not always the case.
- The theory does not consider biological changes in individuals.
- It did not pay attention to emotions and motivation that may affect behaviour, the theory just focused on learning.
- The theory does not also clarify whether it is the individual, the behaviour or the environment that is supreme. LaMorte (2019).

The social cognitive theory therefore, is significant to this study as it shows how members of the audience receive and react to broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt.

Research methodology

The study adopted the survey method using questionnaire to elicit responses from respondents in order to measure the outcome of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt. The Port Harcourt urban area population for 2006 according to the National Population Census gives the population of Port Harcourt as 1,148,665. The convenience sampling technique was used to elicit information. For this study, the Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 400 which is represented as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where, n = sample size; N = population size; 1 = fixed numerical factor; e = margin of error usually 5% or (0.05) to derive the optional sample size.

$$N = 1,148,665$$

$$e = (0.05)^2$$

$$n = \frac{1148665}{1+1148665(0.05)^2}$$

$$1+1148665(0.05)^2$$

$$n = \frac{1148665}{1+1148665(0.05)^2}$$

$$1+1148665(0.05 \times 0.05) = 1+1148665 \times 0.0025$$

$n = 1148665$

$1+2871.6625 = 2871.6626$ $n = 399.99 = 400$ respondents (approximately).

The convenience sampling technique was used to elicit information from participants who represent the select residents of Port Harcourt. The choice of convenience purposive sampling technique for this study was to ensure that all the strata in the population were represented in order to elicit the information needed to arrive at the required result. The questionnaire was used to sample the opinions of 400 respondents drawn from ten select wards in Port Harcourt. Each ward had 40 copies of the questionnaire. Simple frequency distribution tables and percentages were used in the interpretation of data.

The items on the questionnaire were structured using a four-point likert rating scale which consists of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Mean and criterion mean were used for the data. Any mean below the criterion mean of 2.5 was rejected while mean from 2.5 and above was accepted. The criterion mean is calculated as: $\text{criterion mean} = 4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.5$.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

400 copies of the instrument were administered, only 359 copies were retrieved.

Table 1: Distribution and retrieval of questionnaire

S/N	Name of Community	Questionnaire distributed	Distribution rate %	Questionnaire retrieval
1	Borikiri	40	10.00%	34
2	Old GRA	40	10.00%	36
3	Mile 1	40	10.00%	34
4	Eastern bye-pass	40	10.00%	38
5	Nkpogu	40	10.00%	34
6	Rainbow town	40	10.00%	36
7	D/line	40	10.00%	40
8	Amadi flat	40	10.00%	37
9	Eagle Island	40	10.00%	40
10	Abuloma	40	10.00%	30
	Total	400	100%	359

Table 1 shows the distribution of 40 copies of the questionnaire each to ten select communities in Port Harcourt out of which only 359 were retrieved and used for data analysis. 40 copies each distributed to respondents at D/Line and Eagle Island were completely retrieved in variant to the remaining 8 that the copies of the questionnaire were not totally retrieved.

Research Question 1: What is the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt?

Table 2: Mean (x) analysis of the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (x)	Remark
1	Reports and programmes on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt are broadcast regularly.	59 236	76 228	110 220	114 114	798	2.2	Rejected
2	I cannot remember seeing any report on violence against women and children on the broadcast media in a very long time.	67 268	83 249	109 218	100 100	835	2.3	Rejected

Table 2 shows the mean (x) analysis of the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children with 114 responses to item 1 strongly disagree, 110 disagree, 76 agree while 59 strongly agree. Item 2 shows that 109 respondents disagree, 100 strongly disagree, 83 agree while 67 strongly agree.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children?

Table 3: Mean (x) analysis of the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children.

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (x)	Remark
		4	3	2	1			
3	I perceive that reports on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt heap the blame on the victims of such violence.	118 472	108 324	89 178	44 44	1018	2.8	Accepted
4	Reports on the broadcast media on violence against women and children sound scary, unreal and far from residents of Port Harcourt.	98 392	92 276	76 152	93 93	913	2.5	Accepted

Table 3 with the mean (x) analysis of the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children shows item 3 having 118 respondents who strongly agree, 108 respondents agree, 89 disagree while 44 strongly disagree while item 4 shows 98 respondents strongly agree, 93 strongly disagree, 92 agree and 76 disagree.

Research Question 3: How adequate is the broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt?

Table 4: Mean (x) analysis of how adequate the broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt is.

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (x)	Remark
		4	3	2	1			
5	Broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children is not adequate because perpetrators do not always face legal consequences.	156 624	96 288	73 146	34 34	1092	3.0	Accepted
6	Broadcast media sensitization is adequate it's just that perpetrators keep deaf ears to reports on violence against women and children.	98 392	87 261	102 204	72 72	929	2.6	Accepted

Research question 3 with 2 questions drafted from it were answered on table 4 showing the mean (x) analysis of how adequate the broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and

children in Port Harcourt is. Item 5 has 156 respondents saying they strongly agree, 96 agree, 73 disagree and 34 strongly disagree while item 6 shows that 102 respondents disagree, 98 strongly agree, 87 agree and 72 strongly disagree.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Analyses were carried out to determine the influence of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt based on the responses shown on the tables which were derived from the three research questions.

Research Question 1: What is the frequency of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt?

Responses from item 1 with the mean 2.2 and item 2 with the mean 2.3 were rejected because they fell below the mean criterion of 2.5 as respondents did not accept that reports and programmes on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt are broadcast regularly and they cannot remember seeing any report on violence against women and children on the broadcast media in a very long time.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of residents of Port Harcourt towards broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children?

From the research question, respondents agreed with the perception that reports on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt heap the blame on the victims of such violence as seen with the mean 2.8 on item 3. Item 4 shows that respondents agree that reports on the broadcast media on violence against women and children sound scary, unreal and far from residents of Port Harcourt with the mean 2.5. This corroborates Hasan (2013) that "...their underlying emotional reaction most influences their evaluation. Even a logical, educational presentation evokes – for better or worse an emotional response." (p.307).

Research Question 3: How adequate is the broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children in Port Harcourt?

Item 5 and 6 on table 4 show an agreement that broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children is not adequate because perpetrators do not always face legal consequences with the mean of 3.0; while broadcast media sensitization is adequate just that perpetrators keep deaf ears to reports on violence against women and children with the mean 2.6. This is in agreement with Okeke & Nwosu (cited in Okunna 2020) that the broadcast media have strong control on the audience more than other media and that control makes them to uphold societal values.

CONCLUSION

The broadcast media which are known to perform such functions as information, education, entertainment, propaganda, surveillance have used news reports, interviews, special programmes to reach their members of audience by way of sensitizing them on how to identify perpetrators of violence against women and children, speak up in the event of suspicion or violation while the broadcast media should protect victims of violence especially children to avoid any form of stigmatization.

The influence of broadcast media sensitization on violence against women and children is achievable because the broadcast media – radio is an audio medium while the television is an audio-visual medium – using pictures, sound effect, voice and graphics can actualize and sensitize the members of audience.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The broadcast media should increase the frequency of their reports on violence against women and children so that the vulnerable and gullible ones will be armed with the right information to avoid falling victim of violence.
2. The wrong perception of the audience should be changed by the broadcast media so that victims of violence will not be blamed for their plight and the reports should not be presented in a scary manner.
3. Members of the audience will appreciate the adequacy of sensitization on violence against women and children when perpetrators are made to face the full weight of the law, to serve as deterrent to others.

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