

**VIEWERSHIP OF BIG BROTHER AFRICA REALITY TV SHOW AND ITS
INFLUENCE ON THE MORAL CONDUCT OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN
EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *‘Big Brother Africa’ is a reality television show in which a group of persons are brought together in secluded large house, isolated from the outside world, and made to live together while being continuously watched by television cameras. According to Chikafa (2012), the concept was borrowed from George Orwell’s novel of 1984 titled ‘fictional dystopia of Oceania’ in which he described a world of never-ending surveillance. In the novel, the dictator who watched over the citizens of Oceania was called Big Brother; his terrifying slogan was ‘Big Brother is watching you’. In the Big Brother television show, contestants confined in the house compete to escape eviction in order to win the prize money. The reality TV show debuted on the African continent in 2003 and has remained an annual event till date. This study investigated the viewership of the programme and its influence on the moral conducts of undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki, Nigeria. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research designs, using a triangulation of data collected with survey questionnaire and oral interviews. A total of 350 copies of questionnaire were distributed to students of the four campuses of the university using cluster multi-stage and simple random sampling techniques. A structured 20 items questionnaire of the modified five-point Likert scale of very high, high, average, low and very low was used to generate data. Findings suggest that Big Brother Africa has wide viewership among Ebonyi state university undergraduate students and it influences their perception and attitude towards decency and morality. Some of them learn technical kidnapping skills while others learn to cohabit with the opposite sex in their off campus hostels, and this contributes to the many cases of rape, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion and abortion related deaths among this vulnerable group. The work recommends mass education on media ratings and encouraging producers of BBA to adhere to the principles, and calls for restructuring of the programme to reflect more indigenous way of life.*

KEYWORDS: Big Brother Africa, Viewership, Influence, Moral Conducts, EBSU Undergradua Students.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on television influence on viewers have been extensively discussed in the last decades. Many of the studies have focused on how television programmes that appear to be “real” such as news, documentaries, soap operas and daytime dramas alter viewers’ perception of reality.

Recently, a new fad in television has surfaced - reality television shows, a genre of television programming that documents unscripted situations and actual occurrences, and often features a previously unknown cast (Wikipedia, n.d.). It often highlights personal drama and conflict to a much greater extent than other unscripted television shows (Laitto, 2015).

Reality television show has in recent time significantly proved to be a favourite among the youth – particularly those who fall within the range of ages 18-25 (Chikafe & Mateveke 2012). Among these programmes is the Big Brother Africa which is the focus of this study and hereafter referred to as BBA. Other common ones here in Nigeria include: MTN Project Fame, Gulder Ultimate Search, Nigerian Idol, Maltina Dance all, Glo Naija Sings, etc. BBA, with an estimated viewership of more than forty million across Africa is a reality television programme in which contestants are selected from different countries located in Africa and placed in an isolation from the outside world, and made to live together while being continuously watched by television cameras (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Brother_TV_series). Chikafa & Mateveke (2012) write that the concept was borrowed from George Orwell's novel of 1984 titled 'fictional dystopia of Oceania' in which he described a world of never-ending surveillance. In the novel, the dictator who watched over the citizens of Oceania was called Big Brother, and his terrifying slogan was 'Big Brother is watching you'. In the Big Brother television show, contestants confined in the house compete to escape eviction in order to win the prize money. The reality TV show debuted on the African continent in 2003, and has since then, with the aid of the growth of satellite television in Africa, roused African audience interest and has remained an annual event till date (see: Chikafa & Mateveke 2012).

In the Seasons one to three of the show, only twelve contestants featured from twelve countries, but season number four was quite different, bigger and better in a number of ways. Firstly, the edition saw the addition of two more countries - Mozambique and Ethiopia and was dubbed 'BBA Revolution'. It had two houses, two winners, 'celebrity' participants and for the first time in Africa, a reality show gave away a total whooping money prize of US\$400,000 (see Chikafa & Mateveke 2012).

Chikafa & Mateveke (2012) went on to observe that BBA Amplified was amplified because, as stated on the BBA website, it aimed to be bolder than before. The producers proverbially thought outside the box so as to maintain interest. The season saw the introduction of the Amplified crew, a dance group that sizzled audiences at every live eviction show. The cameras were increased to fifty four and there were one hundred and twenty microphones.

The fifth season was christened 'BBA All Stars' and featured fourteen former BBA contestants. Since then, BBA has continued to thrive and at the same time wax stronger mostly among the African youth; although, the show, over the years, has been criticized for its display of obscene and vulgar scene which is considered not to be part of the Nigeria culture and that of Africa in general. Reasoning along this line, Ojoko (2013) writes that Big Brother Africa has no doubt generated a lot of controversies in recent times, and worthy of note is that the fact that the sponsors or organizers are near-faceless, and the show exhibits low moral values and falls short of what is expected in these days where clamour for the good days when cultural and good moral values was at its peak (p. 1) (see also (see <http://www.bigbrotherafrica.com>)).

Other scholars contend that BBA, just like many other reality TV shows has raised a lot of moral panics among parents teachers and guardians especially on issues relating to sex, nudity, violence, cheating and voting unfairness. The level of immorality being celebrated by the Big Brother Africa reality show is adjudged short of programmes intended for education (Laitto, 2015). Yet, many African audience especially the youth have continued to imbibe the damaging style of the programme and the actors have turned to celebrities (see Oluwakayode, 2013; para 11). This has led to several calls demanding for its ban and censorship. For instance in 2007, the Nigeria House of Representatives issued a directive to the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission to discontinue the airing of any clip or debate on Big Brother Africa (Ralvy, 2007). Despite these outcries and the moral panics, the reality show has neither improved in moral tone nor viewership level reduced. Number of viewers has rather increased from over forty million in 2012 to seventy million in 2014 (see: <http://www.bigbrotherafrica.com>).

Statement of the Problem

The viewership of BBA since its debut in 2003 has grown tremendously to an estimate of more than forty million persons across Africa (see: www.bigbrotherafrica.com). According to Lengnan (2013), BBA is unarguably one of the most watched/followed indigenous TV reality shows on the African continent. Here in Nigeria the viewership interest was heightened following the emergence of Nigerian Uti Nwachukwu and Karen Igho as winner and co-winner of the programme in 2010 and the 2013 respectively. Till date, the show has remained one of the most watched reality shows in Nigeria especially among the youth of the elite and middle class families who use or have access to DSTV, a cable network owned by Multi-Choice Nigeria, a consortium of Multi-Choice, South Africa and owns the exclusive broadcast right of the BBA programme.

While since its debut was seen as a platform for Nigeria and Africa in general to showcase their culture to brother countries and to the outside world, and boost brotherliness and cohesion in the continent, the BBA programme has also been heavily criticized of promoting immorality through its display of obscene scene and use of inordinate languages hitherto seen to be alien to the rudiments of the cultures of Africa as a people. This according to critics such as the Nigerian noble laureate Wole Soyinka cited in Lengnan (2013), is not part of the Nigerian culture and that of Africa in general. Soyinka and fellow critics describe it as “pervasive and debasing” (Lengnan, 2013). Lengnan (2013) in his own words portrays it this way:

The BBA now displays uninhibited sexual frolics on open cameras, accusations STDs being passed around, shameless smooching by hormonal charged housemates and ear-tingling swear words are the predominant values being shown...which lamely try to project positive African cultures and traditions; which is ironical because such modern franchises like BBA are neo-imperialist means of eroding the very essence of Africanism...

This indeed, calls for real academic debates and scholarly studies. Meanwhile, whereas many of such studies have been done on media effect in general and in rare cases on influence of reality TV shows on audiences, not many of such studies have focused on the influence of BBA on youths and specifically undergraduate students of Nigerian universities and Ebonyi state university undergraduate students in particular. This knowledge gap the study sought to fill.

Research Objectives

The study set out to:

1. Determine the level of viewership of BBA Reality TV Show among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakailiki, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the gratifications the students derive from viewing BBA.
3. Determine the influence of the viewership on the moral conducts of the students.

Research Questions

1. What is the viewership level of BBA Reality TV Show among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakailiki, Nigeria?
2. What gratifications do the students derive from viewing BBA?
3. What is the influence of the viewership on the moral conducts of the students?

Research Hypotheses

1. H₀: The level of viewership of BBA among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakailiki is independent of the amount of gratifications they derive from it.
2. H₀: There is no significant relationship between the viewership of BBA and the moral conduct of undergraduate students of EBSU.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**Reality TV Show: Meaning and Overview**

Reality TV shows definitions by various scholars such as Roscoe (2001) and Malekoff (2005) reflect that they are programmes where real people are often placed in extraordinary situations where their every moment is recorded as they react to their surroundings. (see https://www.academia.edu/2103540/The_Africa_in_Big_Brother_Africa_Reality_TV_and_African_identity_by_Rosemary_Chikafa_and_Pauline_Mateveke). It is a genre of television programme in which real-life occurrences are transmitted unscripted. Usually TV cast used for such programmes are unknown to the public. It is a type of “television programme that document unscripted situations and actual occurrences, and often feature a previously public unknown cast (Wikipedia n.d.). Roscoe (2001) notes that in reality TV shows, the conventional boundaries between fact and fiction, drama and documentary and between the audience and the text are blurred (see: Chikafa & Mateveke 2012). This genre of entertainment has become the latest fan favourite especially among youths world over (sack, 2003; Frisby, 2004; Howley, 2004) cited in (Chikafa & Mateveke 2012), and has gradually made inroads in Africa. Andrejevic, (2004), 2005; and Kilborn, 2003) cited in Biltreyst (2004) agree that reality television is an umbrella term that encompasses “various factual television formats with a high reality claim, it stresses the actions and emotions of real people (non-actors), often using a combinations of ‘authentic’ (e.g police, security or surveillance images), and staged images (e.g. fictionalised reconstructions, post-fiction interviews)” (see: Chikafa & Mateveke 2012).

Reality television is significantly proving to be a favourite among the youth – particularly those who fall within the 18-25 age range (Chikafa & Mateveke 2012). The duo cite Baumgardner, (2003; Brasch, (2003) and Hiltbrand, (2004) as saying that such TV shows that hitherto exhibited in the United States and many Western countries have now flooded our TV stations as we now have the African versions of the American Fear Factor, The Biggest Loser and the American Idols.

Nigeria also has ‘The Gulder Ultimate Search, The MTN Project Fame, Nigeria Got Talents, Glo Naija Sings, Maltina Dance All, among others’. Other African countries also have versions of these shows under different names. One of the biggest and perhaps the most popular reality TV shows in the African continent is the Big Brother Africa with an estimated viewership of more than forty million across Africa (<http://www.bigbrotherafrica.com>). The subject has continued to gain scholarly attention in recent time. VanZoonen & Aslama (2006) had looked at the history of Big Brother, its significance to the media and how it derives strength from its generic hybridity. Andrejevic (2004) connects the technological innovations of Big Brother to the wider cultural work of ‘being watched’ and associates the surveillance culture to the popularity of Big Brother. Roscoe (2001) specifically notes that Big Brother is constructed around performance because cameras force the participants to perform for the audiences as well as the other housemates so as to avoid nomination. Roscoe also shows how Big Brother assumes its audience to be highly media literate and adolescents and young adults seem to fit this category of audiences. All these play a significant role in debating the localisation of Big Brother in Africa (see Chikafa & Mateveke 2012).

The above mentioned studies show the global thrust of the Big Brother format as if to affirm that its localisation to Africa is ill-fitting. Mano and Willems (2008, 2010) shed light on this aspect through the engagement of an identity debate in Big Brother by Diasporic audiences. Their study explores how diasporic communities are represented in mainstream media and how they interpret, accept or challenge and interact on representations of themselves. Their discussion of Mukhosi Musambasi, a Zimbabwean nurse in Britain who featured in the British Big Brother show, focuses on discussions on Zimbabweanness by Zimbabweans in the Diaspora on internet forums. Their study revealed that the identity tag is attached to representations of communities concerned and they respond to representations of themselves through that same paradigm. It is significant that the embodiment of the representation lives up to the set standards or faces rejection, as is reflected in the rejection of Musambasi after her raunchy sexual escapades which were then labelled un-Zimbabwean (see: Chikafa and Mateveke, 2012).

Origin of Big Brother and Big Brother Africa

Of all reality television shows, none has achieved the mythical status and proportion of Big Brother (Johnson-Wood 2002) cited in Raicheva-Stover (n.d). It is a ‘reality’ television show in which a group of people are brought together in a large house, isolated from the outside world, and made to live together while being continuously watched by television camera” (Chikafa and Mateveke, 2012). During this period, the ‘inmates’ are isolated from the outside world and are not commonly aware of outside event or have access to any electronic devices. Contestants are continuously monitored by in-house television cameras as well as personal audio microphones during their entire stay. To win the final cash prize, a contestant must survive periodic (usually weekly) evictions and be the last housemate or houseguest remaining in the compound by the series conclusion (Wikipedia).

Big Brother reality show was premiered in 1999 at Veronica in the Netherlands. This is to say that the reality TV show had been on air in other parts of the world for about five years before the show made its debut in 2003 in Africa (see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top_Gear%282002_TV_series%29). The first edition in Netherland attracted more than 15 million viewers

(see: Joshnson-woods, 2002). Since then, the Big Brother reality show has become a multi-billion dollar TV franchise with countries allowed to make her own adaptation of the show. Endemol.com as cited in Raicheva-Stover (n.d) writes that the show became so successful that so much so Endemol, the original right owner had sold out format to more than 30 countries as at 2009 (p.10). Today, we have Celebrity Big Brother for Netherland and Teen Big Brother for Britain. Others include: Big Brother Germany, Big Brother Switzerland, Big Brother Sweden, Big Brother Italy, and Big Brother Africa, among others. In most countries that have the reality show, the format is usually centered on four elements: 1. The environment in which contestants live; 2. The knock-out system by which the contestants are voted out of the house by the audience at home; 3. The task, set by the editorial team, which the contestants must complete on a weekly basis 4. The diary room, in which the contestants are required to record their feelings, frustrations, thoughts and their nominations” (Andrejevic 2004), p.72).

In Africa, the show is known as Big Brother Africa (BBA). With an estimated viewership of more than forty million across Africa (<http://www.bigbrotherafrica.com>), the BBA was first premiered to 42 African countries on Sunday May 25, 2003. It was the first time in the world that the internationally famous programme will be created using participants of different nationalities from one continent (Wikipedia). Just like the Big Brother in other nations, contestants of BBA are placed in an isolated building, where their activities are monitored by an unseen cameras. Each contestant competes not to be evicted. Last contestant at the end of the show becomes the winner. The power to select the eventual winner is determined by the audience who are allowed to vote for their preferred candidate.

Although the show debuted in Nigeria in 2003, interest among Nigerians was ignited in 2010 when Uti Nwachukwu, a Delta state born musician and actor emerged winner of the context and the coveted huge money prize. This was further reignited when another Nigerian Karen Igho emerging co-winner of the BBA Amplified version of 2013.

Globalization of BBA, African Identity and ‘Moral-Cultural’ Panic

With the expansion of satellite television in Africa, the popularity of BBA has continued to grow. As alluded earlier, BBA is now watched by an estimated over forty million people across Africa, and Nigerians constitute majority of the viewers. In spite of the popularities of the BBA reality TV programme, the show has continued to raise a lot of questions on morality and influence of the show on the indigenous culture. It has also forced a consideration of the manner in which the forces of globalization – of which television has become a most potent one – have come to affect the development and expression of ‘African culture’ in the twenty-first century (Oloka-Onyango, p.26). This, according to Endong (2014), has given birth to a plethora of forces that have, since the second half of the twentieth century, reshaped and redefined cultural models in numerous countries of the world (p.1). It has raised so many issues that arise within current debates about globalization: ideas about the loss of sovereignty and identity, of the deluge of the indigenous by the foreign.

One of such forces is the media/cultural imperialism which is suspiciously viewed by good number of conservatist critics as a predatory force to weaker cultures of the globe (Endong, 2014; p.1) Such force according to the critics is a sort of hypodermic needle effect in which the values

embedded in cultural products, although some other studies have debunked such awesome media powers (Christof, 2011).

Chikafa & Mateveke (2012) agree that many reviews of BBA are mainly castigations of the show as being un-African and peddling immoral values. Such critics make haste to point at issues such as sex, nudity, violence, cheating and voting unfairness. In Nigeria for instance, a multi-cultural society, the show (BBA) ever since its commencement has been criticized by pundits notably for its use of foul language and display of nude scene. These behaviours according to them are not part of the Nigeria culture. The African culture according to them is embedded with the ideas and beliefs about what is right or wrong, what is a good or bad character; it is embedded, furthermore, in the forms or patterns of behaviour that are considered by the members of the society to bring about social harmony and cooperative living, justice, and fairness (Oluwakayode, 2013).

Some of the literature on BBA by non-African descent such as Mehul Srivastava, (2008) are scathing in their criticism, reducing Africa to a biased stereotype. Srivastava in Chikafa & Mateveke (2012) views BBA as irrelevant in the African context especially because the continent is under the strains of disease, war and poverty. He observes that at the time of BBA II president Bush was touring five African countries and focusing on the above mentioned problems while African BBA fans were busy watching contestants 'flirt, quarrel, cook, shower, get bored, go to sleep.'

vanZoonen & Aslama, (2006) write that the reality show has been praised for establishing new bonds between otherwise disconnected people. Bignell (2005) argues that the appeal of BBA lies in its representation of an African originated programme whose agenda is not the usual wars and natural disasters represented in European news agendas. This is in agreement with the submissions of Chikafa & Mateveke (2012) who contend that the controversy behind BBA in the first place is largely due to lack of understanding of the 'Africa' in BBA and the implications it has on 'African identities'. This according to him is not to say that defining 'Africa' and 'African identities' is without complications. Many scholars ponder the meaning of 'Africa' and 'African identity', [kadiatu Kanneh (1998); Mudimbe (1988); Shahadah (2009), Appiah (1992) and Zeleza (2006)] and the conclusions have not exactly been straightforward. Mudimbe (1988) interrogates Eurocentric constructions of Africa, and concludes that African societies, cultures and bodies are heavily invested with Eurocentric representations. Mudimbe postulates that the only way to come up with a true African identity is to discard the Eurocentric way of looking at Africa which tends to stereotype Africans. (see: <http://tvn.sagepub.com/content/3/3/323.short?rss=1&ssource=mfc>)

Appiah (1992) on the other hand embraces that Africa is diverse and African identities are hybrid due to the contact of Africa with Europe. He, unlike other scholars and critics does not consider race as an important factor in defining African identity. But Mazrui (1986) rather argues that the African world is constituted by the existence of three civilisations - traditional Africa, Christian Africa and Islamic Africa. His argument is that there are diverse sources of African identities and cultures. What these scholars have agreed upon is however that, those labels as 'Africa' and 'African' have a deep social and historical meaning on modern history and the contemporary moment. (see Chikafa & Mateveke 2012) and <http://tvn.sagepub.com/content/3/3/323.short?rss=1&ssource=mfc>

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Few studies empirical studies exist in relation to Big Brother and Big Brother Africa. Among them is the study by Maria Raicheva-Stover (n.d), titled “You’ll see, you’ll watch: The success of Big Brother in post communist Bulgaria”. The study looked at the extent of development and growth of reality television genre in a post communist setting. The Big Brother reality TV show was selected as a case study. The aim was to investigate the social, technological and economic implication of the programme for the media industry, a post communist country. It offered an overview of the dynamic of the reality television format in a post communist country. The study found out that Big Brother’s formula for success, with its emphasis on convergent media and unique opportunities for participation and interactivity does work across culture. “The show not only revived the inert television market in Bulgaria by drawing unprecedented numbers of viewers but also became responsible for penetrating a national discussion of taboo topics” (see: Raicheva-Stover, n.d; p.24).

Again, Ugwanga in 2014 led an empirical study to ascertain the influence of reality TV shows on youth of Windhoek capital city of Namibia. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs using a triangulation of data collection methods. A total of 90 copies of questionnaire were distributed to three selected tertiary institutions in Windhoek, namely: University of Namibia main campus, Polytechnic of Namibia and International University of Management, Namibia. The main research question was: ‘To what extent do reality TV shows influence youth in positive and negative manners?’

The research findings suggest that majority of youth spend most of the time watching TV and most of them watch popular reality TV programmes such as ‘American Idols’, “Survivors”, “Big Brother Africa” and “Star Performers.” And that since the 2013 BBA winner was a Namibian, Delish Matthew, it seems this inspired many youth in Windhoek and they are well motivated to keep watching BBA. Contrary to the widely held negative views about reality TV shows, the study argues that they are important social phenomenon. It does not suggest that there are no problems with reality TV shows, but indicates that there are positive and negative influences that reality TV shows impose on youths of Windhoek.

At the home front, Laitto (2015) investigated influence of MTN Project Fame reality TV show on the brand image of MTN. Among his objectives was to find out the effect of reality television shows on viewers’ perception of reality. One result of his hypotheses showed a correlation between the perceived reality of the show and the brand image of the product. This finding corroborates that of Kilborn (1994) which suggests that reality television programmes have certain attributes that: (1) record events in the lives of individuals or groups (2) attempt to simulate these real-life events by means of dramatised reconstruction, and (3) Package this material into an attractive programme with entertainment value that can be marketed on the strengths of its ‘reality’ credentials (see <https://laittosproject.wordpress.com/2015/02/26/influence-of-reality-tv-show-on-brand-image-a-case-study-of-mtn-project-fame>).

THEORETICAL SUPPORT

The study is supported by cultivation media theory. The theory is associated with the works of George Gerbner, L. Gross, M. Morgan, and N. Signorielli in 1996 (Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso 2008). It is a social theory which examines the long-term effect of television (Wikipedia, n.d). The theory states that the more time people spend 'living' in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television (Cohen and Weimann 2000). It assumes that mass media gradually cultivate messages into audience mind and consciousness; and steady viewing will make the audience perceive reality according to what is portrayed on television.

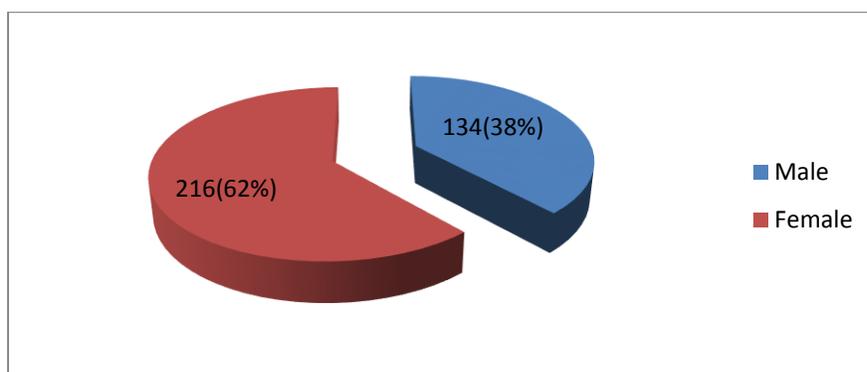
Applied to this study, the theory suggests that constant viewership of BBA reality TV could gradually build mental images and increase physiological arousals that decrease positive moral values among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and quantitative research designs were employed, using a triangulation of data collected with survey questionnaire and oral interviews. A total of 350 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students of the four campuses of the university. This size was determined from the 23,437 total population of the institution using the Australian calculator. The cluster multi-stage and simple random sampling techniques were used to select respondents. A structured 20 items questionnaire of the modified five-point Likert scale of very high, high, average, low and very low was used to generate data. The instrument was face validated by three experts. Ten copies of the questionnaire were used in a test-re-test reliability study, which gave a coefficient of 0.95. The interviews that supplemented the survey were conducted with one member of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC), two staff of Multi Choice Nigeria (owners of DSTV, the cable television that shows the programme), and one professor of psychology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

RESULTS:

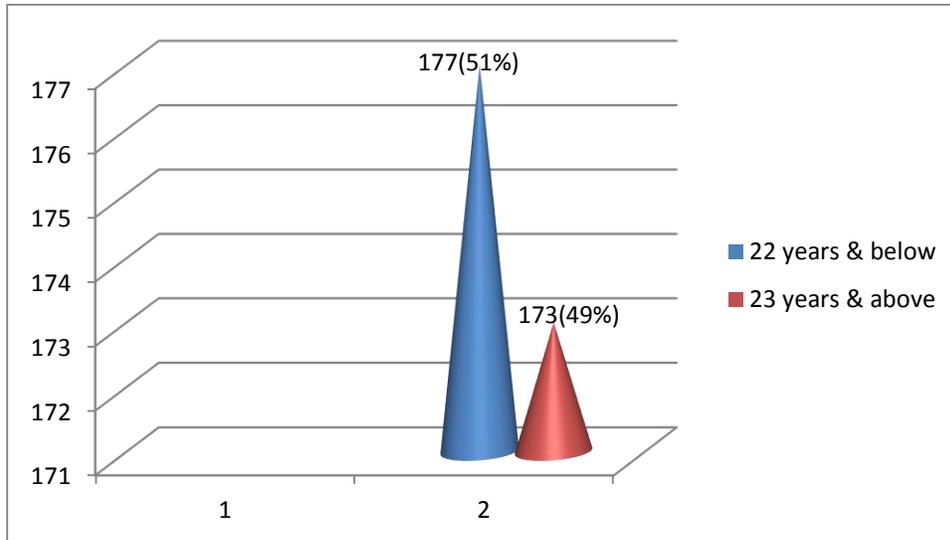
Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field survey 2015

Table 1 above shows that 216(62%) respondents were female while 134(38%) were male.

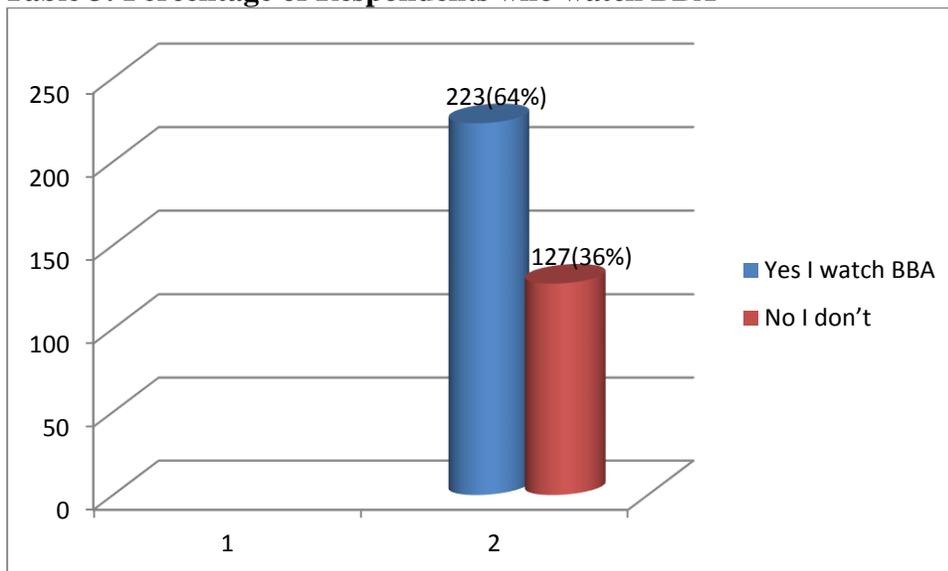
Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field survey 2015

Table 2 shows that 177(51%) respondents were 22 years and below while 173(49%) were 23 years and above.

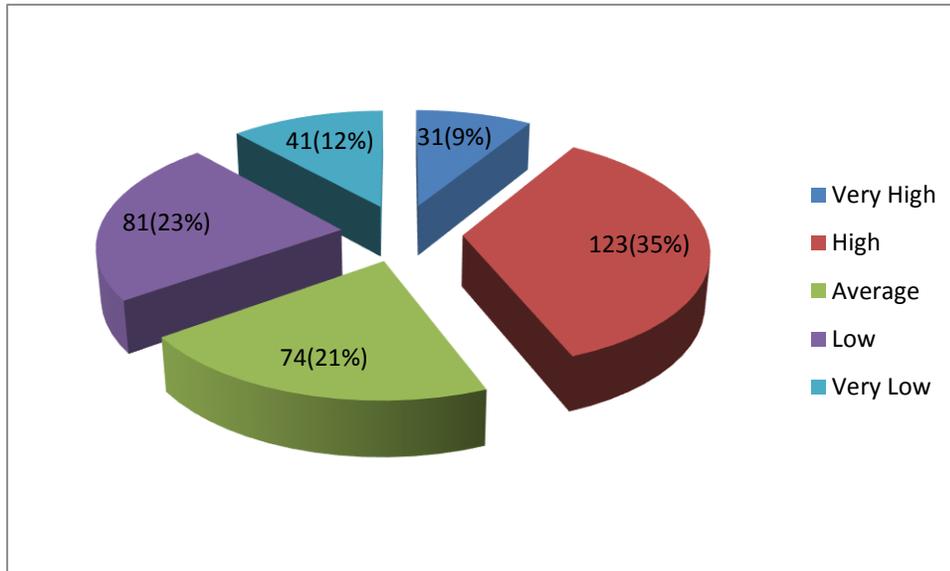
Table 3: Percentage of Respondents who watch BBA



Source: Field survey 2015

Data in table in table 3 above indicate that 223(64%) of the respondents watch BBA while 127(36%) do not.

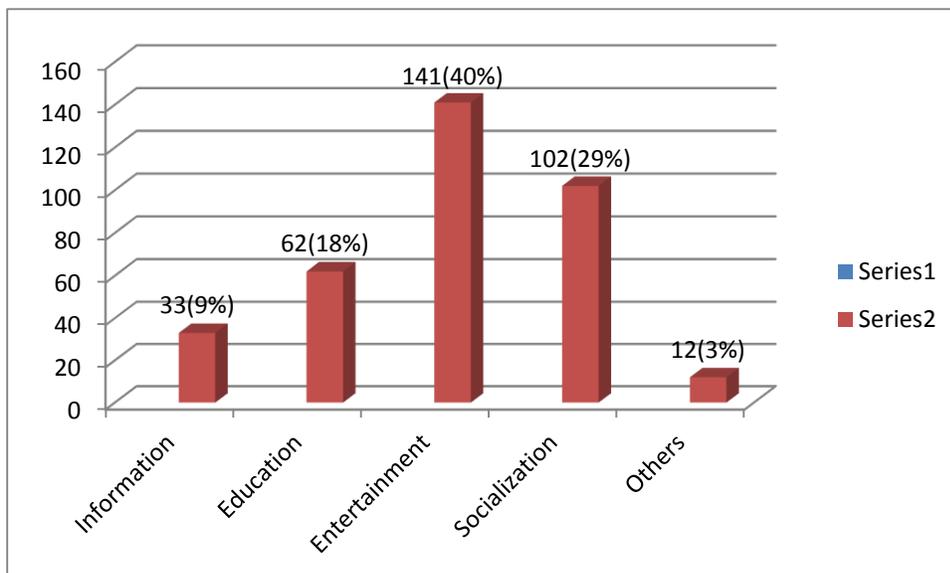
Table 4, Research Question 1: What is the viewership level of BBA Reality TV Show among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakailiki, Nigeria?



Source: Field survey 2015

Generated data from research question one as presented in table four above rate the level of BBA viewership among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakailiki as follows: very high 31(9%), high 123(35%), average 74(21%), low 81(23%) and very low 41(12%).

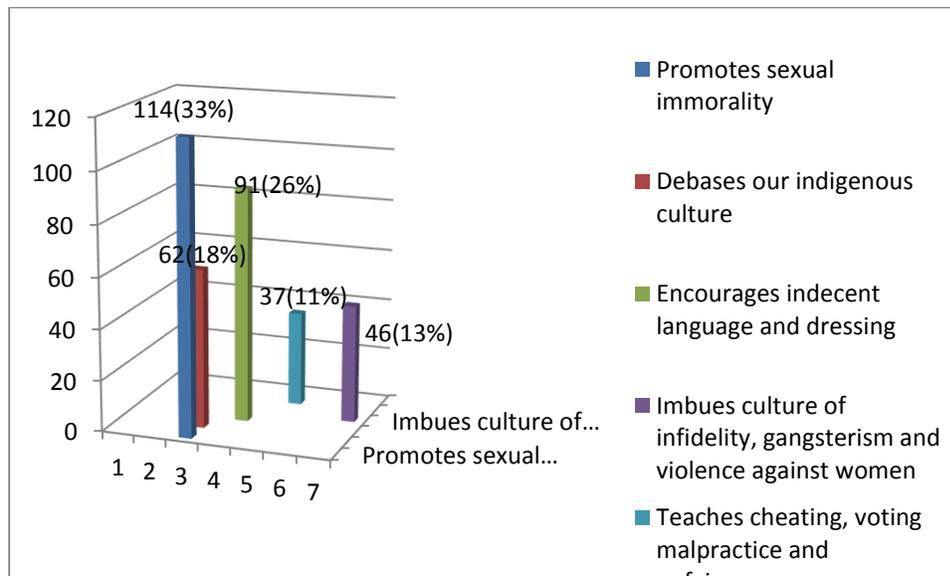
Table 5, Research Question 2: What gratifications do the students derive from viewing BBA?



Source: Field survey 2015

Table five above presents gratifications respondents derive from viewing BBA this way: information 33(9%), education 62(18%), entertainment 141(40%) and socialisation 102(29%) while others account for 12(3%).

Table 6, Research Question 3: What is the influence of viewership of BBA on the moral conducts of the students?



Source:

Field survey 2015

Table 6, Research Question 3 above presents the influence of viewership of BBA on the moral conducts of the students as follows: promotes sexual immorality 114(33%), debases indigenous culture 62(18%), encourages indecent language and dressing 91(26%), imbues culture of infidelity, gangsterism and violence against women 46(13%) and teaches cheating, voting malpractice and unfairness 37(11%).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What is the viewership level of BBA Reality TV Show among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakailiki, Nigeria?

Findings of research question one show high viewership level of BBA among the students studied. This finding is consistent with that of Oloka-Onyango (2011) which argues that only few programmes like BBA in the history of television viewership in the continent have attracted such extensive audience with estimates put at over thirty million. The finding however disagrees with that of Ozule and Mohammed (2013) which suggests that because BBA is not shown on terrestrial television but on selected cable channels, viewership of the programme is restricted to a selected elites and middle class audience who can afford the high subscription rate.

Research Question 2: What gratifications do the students derive from viewing BBA?

Data generated show that the students do not derive any 'special' benefits or gratifications from watching the BBA but such similar to barely every other media content. This suggests that BBA does not have any 'specialness' that makes it indispensable on our TV screen. This finding seems to agree with that of a *Daily Independent newspaper* editorial of June 23, 2013 which demands for its ban or strict censorship in so far as it does not offer anything new in the positive.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of viewership of BBA on the moral conducts of the students?

This research quest sought for the actual influence of BBA on the moral conducts of Ebonyi state university undergraduates. Generated data suggest that BBA reality TV show promotes sexual immorality 114(33%), debases their sense of indigenous culture 62(18%), encourages indecent language and dressing among them 91(26%), imbues in them culture of infidelity, gangsterism and violence against women 46(13%) and teaches those susceptible youths cheating and voting malpractice and unfairness 37(11%).

RESULT OF HYPOTHESES TESTING**Hypothesis One:**

H₀: The level of viewership of BBA among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki is independent of the amount of gratifications they derive from it.

The chi-square test of independence revealed that the level of viewership of BBA among undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki is dependent of the amount of gratifications they derive from it ($p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis Two:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the viewership of BBA and the moral conduct of undergraduate students of EBSU.

A Pearson Correlation test revealed that there is significant relationship between the viewership of BBA and the moral conduct of undergraduate students of EBSU ($p > 0.05$)

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the influence of viewership of BBA on the moral conduct of undergraduate students of Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki, Nigeria. In the course of the study, adequate data were generated and carefully analysed. From the findings, the study concludes that BBA reality TV show has the propensity of sloping the moral views and sense of judgement and attitude of young people towards decency, sexuality, morality, dressing, language, respect to elders and indigenous cultures, and perception about women and violence against them. BBA may also be teaching skills of kidnapping and inadvertently encouraging cohabitation among unmarried young people, and ensuing in the rising cases of rape, gangsterism and rascality in the society, as

well as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, spread of sexually transmitted diseases, abortion and youth mortality, among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings and conclusion, the study recommends:

1. Mass education on media ratings and encouraging producers of BBA to adhere to the principles of professional media scheduling, programming and content placement.
2. Campaign for restructuring and resuscitating of the programme to reflect more indigenous African cultures and serve as a window to showcase indigenous African culture to the outside world. This view is supported by the suggestions of the Nigerian noble Laureate Prof Wole Soyinka cited in the *Daily Independent newspaper* editorial of June 23, 2013, that “the incursion of the negative and dubious alien cultural values and tendencies in Big Brother Africa can be best countered by the strengthening and exposure of indigenous cultures, ideally in innovative ways.”

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