

## **PROMOTING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH EDUTAINMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF YOLO TELEVISION SERIES**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study looks at how the media (television), through edutainment promotes social change amongst its viewers by analysing a television drama series YOLO which is an edutainment programme aimed at addressing adolescent reproductive health issues and generally everyday challenges faced by the youth of today, to see if it is achieving its aim.*

**KEYWORDS:** social change, edutainment, television series,

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) defines the media as ‘individuals and organisations that communicate with the public via print, radio, television and internet broadcast, and video and film production’. The media is also said to be one of the most prevalent and important arenas in which young people construct and interpret their lifestyles (Miles, 2000). The mass media affects our daily lives. The influence of mass media is not limited to the observed direct effects of messages from newspapers, television or internet but the accumulative consequences of these messages on human behaviour too (Hallahan, 1997).

To talk about media impact or effects is to investigate the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour that humans assume by using the media. Although they have little immediate influence on their attitudes, they may produce other important effects. Particularly, they seem to have great influence in defining what issues are important to people and their discussion terms (Hartmann & Husband, 1974). The right to press freedom warrants the media the right to determine the form which their programmes will assume, as well as the appropriate form of reporting (Jacobsen, 2008). With the core duty of the media though not obligatory being to inform, educate and entertain, it is also used to address a lot of issues such as political, social, economic, and cultural (Lustgarten and Debrix,

2005). By so doing the media will be helping to shape the negative issues going on by creating the awareness and helping the society to change positively.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Mass Media campaigns have been successfully employed to address a wide range of health attitudes and behaviour, such as eating healthily and exercising, stopping smoking, practising safe sex, reducing alcohol consumption and reducing drink-driving. A meta-analysis of 48 health behaviour campaigns reported that on average, 9% more people exhibited a healthy form of behaviour following a campaign than before.

Even when Internet offers a world of possibilities for subjects, TV is still a powerful, productive, and entertaining narrative machine. It tells stories about the political, cultural, and social environment. It uses people's wishes and magnifies them in order to attract such people. Even if it does not influence their behaviours directly, it creates an impact that affects the consumption systems, fashion, trends, etc. The impact of the media in society is tremendous (Herdís, 2003; Marsh and Melville cited in Wolferman, 2010).

In the sense of the subjects' normal routine to consume certain things, there is a remarkable relationship with rationality for selecting some TV shows according to their life stories. So, it can be seen that consumption of communication messages makes an impact in other areas of the audiences' lives, such as, fashion, eating habits, technology, etc.

### **Social Change**

Stories and mass media programmes have been widely used throughout the world as a powerful means to educate, inform and influence social and individual change. The field known as edutainment uses popular entertainment formats to tackle serious social issues in a bold and entertaining way. Stories can draw audiences into the centre of an issue, move people emotionally and catalyse discussion and debate. Media and popular culture influence us in many different ways. Edutainment is a way to harness its enormous potential to influence individuals and society in a positive way.

According to UNICEF, Social change is a deliberate and iterative process of public and private dialogue, debate, and negotiation that focuses on the community as the unit of change. It aims to change behaviours on a large scale, eliminate harmful social and cultural practices, and change social norms and structural inequalities. Social change thus focuses on the community as the unit of change. It is a process of transforming the distribution of power within social and political institutions. For behaviours to change, certain harmful cultural practices, societal norms and structural inequalities have to be considered and addressed.

Social change is the significant alteration of social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values and cultural products and symbols (Moore, 1968). It is understandable why social structure (the web of organized

relationships among individuals and groups that defines the mutual rights and responsibilities) is being emphasized in change.

Some mass media approaches use education entertainment methods edutainment, which seek to impart knowledge and bring about social change through television soap operas and other popular forms of entertainment. By achieving strong audience identification with television characters who are positive role models, edutainment can contribute to help improve cultural and social norms.

### **Edutainment**

Edutainment is a derived word that states a mixture of entertainment and education or marriage of education with entertainment. (Colace, et. al., 2006). The main purpose of this application is to support education with entertainment. Whether by using multimedia, TV dramas, radio talk shows, theatre, social media or on-the-ground community dialogues and advocacy, edutainment is any communication project that sets out to use popular culture to educate and challenge people to bring about individual and social change.

The advent of edutainment as a deliberate strategy for health promotion can be traced back to 1951, when the BBC developed a radio soap opera called *The Archers*, which wove agricultural issues into a popular radio drama.

Entertainment programmes featuring believable characters and storylines forge emotional ties with the audience that can influence values and behaviours more forcefully than purely cognitive information provided in documentaries. To put it another way, the viewer is “educated” by the entertainment media, often unwittingly. According to the University of Kent in the UK, “through edutainment, individual and collective curiosity can be stimulated... if information can be presented in an interesting manner, people would be more inclined to indulge in natural curiosity and further their knowledge. Parallels are evident between gaming and learning through the drive for self-development from a setting that encourages more interaction”.

Edutainment is stated as a place comprised with mixture of many items (such as sound, animation, video, writing and picture) and a place where learners both have fun and learn (Druin and Solomon, 1996). This is to say that, edutainment is the act of learning through a medium that at the same time or concurrently educates and entertains. Entertainment education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour. The purpose of entertainment education programming is to contribute to directed social change, defined as the process by which an alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. This change can occur at the level of individual, community, or some other system.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are organizations that are part of local, national and/or international social movements that have stretched their resources, combined creativity, intuition, indigenous wisdom, theoretical and methodological accuracy, built alliances with partner organizations and service providers, and leveraged their understanding of the social issues that concern them to design and implement edutainment strategies to foster social change.

Programmes like *Soul City* in South Africa, *N'weti* in Mozambique and *Breakthrough* in India have had a measurable impact on both individual and social change improving the quality of people's lives in a meaningful and sustained way (Soul City Institute, 2013).

A study also conducted by Singhal, Sood, Rogers, Law and Vaughan (1998) on a programmed aired on All Indian Radio (AIR) which broadcast an entertainment education soap opera called *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (Happiness Lies in Small Things), indicated a high level of involvement with the storyline and its characters by the listeners. Despite the volumes of research conducted on mass media effects, the issue about mass media messages having a detriment effects on the audiences or viewers exposed to them is unanswered. (Livingstone, 1996). To illustrate this, McDonald (2004) explains that even the term 'media effect' simply produces complications as mass media may affect behaviour, attitude, opinions and knowledge of individuals either immediately or delayed. There is the need to find out what influenced the production of the programme, identify the contents before finding out if it is helping promote social change.

Many studies conducted on television broadcast programmes, dwell on why the audience or viewers consume the programme, and the parasocial relationship the youth or adolescents have with the character in the programmes (Arda, 2006; Arnett, 1995; Biskup and Pfister 1999; Botta and Nathanson, 2003, Brown and Marin, 2009; Van den Bulck and Claessens, 2014; etc.). However, only a hand full of them (Singhal et al., 1997; 1998; and 2008; and Janicke, 2013) are centred on an in-depth analysis of television broadcast programmes in Europe, Asia and Southern Africa to find out the possibility of such programmes having an implicit or in-depth treatment of social change.

In Ghana, quite a lot of these television programmes run on television with its intention to effect social change. Primarily, such efforts from such television programmes are intended to inform and educate the youth on how certain situations in life are handled (peer pressure, abortion, malaria, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS awareness etc.) Many of these programmes have received good response from its viewers. However, actual studies to find out the real impact of these programmes are missing in efforts. This study picks on one of these programmes (*You Only Live Once, YOLO*), a television drama series and undertakes an in-depth analysis to examine how the contents of the programme is helping promote social change.

### **Significance of the Study**

The investigation of the promotion of social change through edutainment is important particularly to stakeholders in the entertainment industry in Ghana and also the funders of the *YOLO* TV series. This assist the stakeholders know and understand what the content of the entertainment programme is and how it is helping create a positive or negative change in the society.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Sabido Methodology forms the framework and analytical foundation for this study. The Sabido Methodology is an approach to development of mass media serial drama (Barker, 2007). The Sabido Methodology is named after the man who pioneered edutainment in television serial in 1969, Miguel Sabido of Mexico (Singhal & Obregon, 1999) and it has proven to be highly effective in motivating positive behaviour change in the numerous countries where it has been used. Miguel Sabido was vice president for research at Televisa (Mexican television) during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. While at Televisa, Sabido developed a theoretical model for eliciting prosocial attitudinal, informational, and behavioural change through commercial television programming. He called this model *entertainment with proven social benefit*. Between 1973 and 1981, Sabido produced six social-content serial dramas in Mexico. During the decade when many of these Mexican soap operas were on the air, the country underwent a 34% decline in its population growth rate. As a result, the United Nations Population Prize was awarded to Mexico as the foremost population success story in the world.

The Sabido methodology is adaptable to the individual values and cultures of each country where it is used. The process of formative research, which was developed by Miguel Sabido and Ana Cristina Covarrubias in 1974, provides culture-specific information to assist the writing and production team to design characters, settings, and story lines that are specific to each audience.

The Sabido methodology is also a replicable methodology that, although formularized, is still adaptable to the individual values and cultures of each country where it is used. Successful use of the Sabido methodology hinges on two key factors: (1) use of the serial drama format and (2) rigorous adherence to the theories underlying the methodology.

Research over the past 30 years has repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of the methodology. Since its inception in the 1970s and 1980s, the approach has been used in more than 200 health intervention programs in more than 50 countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, dealing mainly with reproductive health issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, environmental health, teenage pregnancy prevention, and gender equality (Singhal et al., 2004). It would be very prudent to use this methodology as a gauge to analyse *YOLO* which is an adolescent health reproduction programme in Ghana, to find out if it is actually an edutainment programme that is promoting social change and creating the necessary effect.

According to the Centre for Communication Programmes at Johns Hopkins University (centre for Communication Programmes 2002), strategic health communication has the following specific characteristics: *Results-oriented* (requires both on-going monitoring and summative (impact) evaluation. The summative evaluation is based on a number of criteria related to the design and goals of the communication project and is based on measurable changes in knowledge, attitude, and behaviour among audience members (Okigbo, 2014)., *Science-based* (developed using elements of communication and behavioural theories to reinforce specific prosocial values, attitudes, and behaviours, Client-centred, Participatory, Benefit-oriented, Service-linked, Multi-channelled, Technically High quality, Advocacy-related, Expanded to scale, Programmatically sustainable, and Cost-effective. The Sabido Methodology seeks to address each of these principles associated with the strategic health communication.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to imperatively understand the rationale for the production of *YOLO*, its contents and how the contents help promote social change; the qualitative research approach is adopted for their study. Creswell (2014) postulates that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The qualitative approach to research seeks to identify and explore in depth phenomena such as reasons, attitudes etc.

This study focuses on the contents of *YOLO* and how the contents help promote social change. The research design for this study is Content Analysis based on the nature of the research problem or the issues to be addressed. Content Analysis is a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages (Cole, 1988). Visual communication messages include television drama series as used in this study. Flick, Kardorff and Steinke (2004) asserts that, the goal of content analysis is the systematic examination of communicative material (originally from the mass media in particular). This in effect does not have to consist exclusively of texts: musical, pictorial, plastic or other similar material may also be treated.

Interview data was also significant for the study. The producer (Ivan Quarshiga) who also doubles as the director for the programme was interviewed to find out how the series is received by the public to ascertain the inputs (comments) given by viewers on social media networks created by the producer. Cyber ethnography was utilized on the official Facebook and YouTube handles of *YOLO* to find out if it is indeed promoting social change based on the feedback from consumers of the television drama series. According to Ward (1999), cyber ethnographic is a helpful research tool for gaining knowledge about virtual communities (social media platform). In cyber ethnography, the researcher becomes a participant in the virtual place of study and make observations as an outsider. It offers an expansive and accurate description of a virtual place of study. These are the main sources of data collection used in this study.

Yolo's Facebook page, (Yolo Ghana) and YouTube Channel (Farmhouse Productions) were the direct source of data provision for this study. These platforms (data sources)

were chosen to find out the responses and comments viewers of the programme were giving in relation to questions that were being posted on the platform to be discussed. Since the episodes were uploaded on these two official social media pages and comments allowed by viewers, they were the strongest means of finding out if indeed those episodes were making a positive or negative impact on the consumers. The two social media handles also had many people subscribed (YouTube) and likes (Facebook) as compared to the others. YouTube had 25,277,722 subscribers and Facebook had 180,000-page likes.

Whilst there are no clearly defined rules for sample size (Miles and Huberman, 2002), sampling in a qualitative research usually relies on small numbers with the aim of studying in-depth details (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). 20 episodes were purposively sampled out of the 5 seasons of *YOLO*. Thus, 4 from each season. Sequentially, Season 1 (episode 1-4), Season 2 (episode 4-7), Season 3 (episode 7-10), Season 4 (episode 10-13) and Season 5 (episode 13-16).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The qualitative research approach adopted uses content analysis of some selected *YOLO* episodes across all seasons to find out if it actually talks about issues that have a bearing on social change. We examined the themes that the programme talks about, with respect to everyday social issues that confront the target audience of *YOLO*.

### **Synopsis of YOLO**

Cyril is an SHS graduate living in a lower to middle income residential area. Compared to the other guys, he is the darling of the neighbourhood but pulling his strings are his friends in the neighbourhood especially the main influencer, Drogba. Drogba assumes the role of Cyril's relationship 'coach', feeding him with such confidence that it is just a matter of time before Cyril takes a free fall from a good example to a bad one. Emily is a newcomer in the area whose looks make her a hugely popular target. Cyril is all set to take his newly acquired expertise to the next level but winning the heart of Emily won't be just a walk in the park. With the help of the swashbuckling Drogba and the schemes of another area friend, George, Cyril seems poised to go all out in a desperate pursuit of love and adventure. As Cyril's life continues with one adventure after another, his mother, Enyonam (Jackie Appiah from *Things We Do for Love*), begins to take notice, blaming it on his struggling father, Pusher (Adjetey Annan also from *Things We Do for Love*), fearing that his own escapades of yesterday may be affecting Cyril presently. For the most part, the parents remain clueless or half-informed as the neighbourhood bad boy band marches on. But punishment looms, harsh and heavy, with cases of pregnancy, STIs and abortions beginning to make the rounds. At the end of each episode, questions are posed to trigger discussions on the issues at home and also on the social media platforms. In Season three (3), the production made use of the cast of *YOLO* in posting the questions and raising varying angles to the issues and encouraged the audience to discuss them while imploring them to live the Good Life.

In answering the question, how do you know whether the public absorb your messages and change their behaviour? Mr. Ivan Quarshigah, the producer and director of *YOLO* television drama series said:

*“What we do is that, because we have strong social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, we often receive information from young people. From time to time, we also post questions on issues. We also do post implementation survey to see whether we were able to hit the right messages and also to see if the messages are actually working. We also post questionnaires for people to fill out. We posted a questionnaire and within a few minutes we had thousands of people saying that they learn a lot.”*

In view of this, the researcher decided to also get on their social media platform to ascertain whether the content was helping to promote social change. The research chose Facebook and YouTube ahead of *YOLO*'s Instagram and Twitter sites because according to Ivan, the *YOLO* Facebook page and Youtube channel are the most active of all their platforms. He said:

*“YouTube and Facebook channels were the ones that were recording high viewers. You load YOLO and in less than an hour, you will find that more than twenty-eight thousand people have watched and within two days, you have over two hundred thousand people watching. As at the time that we finished season three, we had discovered that it was watched by more than thirty-five million times on social media. We had also recorded thousands of subscribers on YouTube.”*

*YOLO* Facebook page was used to engage followers on the issues raised in each episode and the series were well patronized on YouTube. This means it will be possible to see how the contents were actually promoting social change. Two of the factors of a good edutainment drama series as approved by Miguel Sabido, are that, they should be advocacy-related and benefit-oriented. This can only be assessed from the view of the viewers. After carefully analysing the contents of the selected episodes of *YOLO*, themes derived from them included; Peer pressure which is when the characters in most cases influenced others negatively.

- **Unprotected sex** that could be described as having sex without condom, also emerged out of the analysis. Condom is seen as protective ‘kit ‘to prevent the three major issues under unprotected sex. These major issues are, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), unplanned/unwanted/teenage pregnancy and unsafe abortion.

In season one (1) episode two (2), Drogba after luring Serwaa to have sex with him, did not see the need to use condom when Serwaa asked him if he had one. He rather said he was clean and therefore didn't have to use one. Drogba said; “Condom, see, me I be clean like clean sheet.” They ended up having unprotected sex. Drogba again, had unprotected sex with Jane, a lady he met not too long ago and as a result of that, she became pregnant. Rubby also had unprotected sex with her boyfriend and she became pregnant. In season three (3) episode (12), Naa in a confrontation with Jane, who was



pregnant for Drogba said she is careful with her life and her health unlike Jane, because Jane had had unprotected sex with Drogba and had gotten pregnant.

From the tele-drama series, YOLO had three strong subsets under unprotected sex, which were Unwanted/unplanned/teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Some of the stories were woven around having protected sex or abstaining in order to prevent the three major social issues under having unprotected sex. Edwina Nana Eshun, is one of the followers of the YOLO Ghana page, who had been positively influenced by this message. She typed that,

*“I love this series because, it is very educative. It makes me learn more about abstaining from sexual intercourse.*

In a piece of others for her colleague, she said;

*“also protect yourself when you and your partner want to meet.”*

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) is one of the major social issues under unprotected sex that is being addressed by YOLO. Serwaa was also virtually having sex with everybody in the beginning; she ended up with STI, had to be thrown out of the house, went back to the village, got treated, came back and decided to go to church with Mrs Wiafe. Drogba also ended up with STI because he was having unprotected sex. He said “condom? Me? I be clean like clean sheet”. That was his reason for not having protected sex. Serwaa unaware of having STI infected Kelly when they had unprotected sex. The message was clear and ran through the episode that one could be infected with STI when he/she has unprotected sex.

Unwanted/unplanned/ teenage pregnancy is also a major issue that falls under unprotected sex. Jane became pregnant after she had unprotected sex with Drogba. Rubby also became pregnant but aborted it. Kelly in season three (3) episode ten (10) also witnessed a teenage pregnancy scene. He went to visit Serwaa but was greeted with Serwaa’s teenage friend in labour so he had to rush in to get a cab and take the girl to the hospital. Kelly had some advice for the viewers.

“My fellow guys, this is a common issue but not something to laugh about. It is serious, it endangers the future of the mother and the child and it is all because of our reckless behaviour guys, you can do better than put young girls in harm ways and girls, you can do better than allowing a man or a boy to have his way with you especially without protection. The future is ours to grab as young people. What is the rush? Guys, let us be be careful about our sexual behaviour for a better future.”

In episode eleven (11) of season three (3), Jane’s grandmother in an advice to Antoinette said, she should be careful and not bring any unwanted pregnancy upon herself. She went on to say, a man who cares about your future will use a condom during sexual intercourse but the one who does not care about your future will have unprotected sex with you.

On how YOLO is using this message to promote social change, Kaakyire Kojo Arhin on the YOLO Facebook page, YOLO Ghana, posted that;

*“It has really helped me how to live with my friends and also stay away from sex. Bra Charles (Drogba) suffered a lot when he didn’t stay away and also didn’t use a condom.”*

In effect Kaakyire saw how Drogba went through hard times after he did not abstain from sex but rather had unprotected sex with Jane and she became pregnant. This clearly shows that, the tele-drama series, and the messages it had on unwanted/teenage/unplanned pregnancy, had affected him positively to stay away from sex. Opoku Samuel had also drawn some inspiration from the positive effects YOLO is having on youth especially with regards to teenage pregnancy. His post was that; *“YOLO is not only entertaining but very educative as well. It teaches the youth how to go about their sexual lives every day. Concentrate on their studies and more importantly, prevent teenage pregnancy so that they can become good adults in future.”*

This could be traced to when Jane’s grandmother was advising Antoinette and said a man who cares about the future will put on a condom during sexual intercourse. The third issue under unprotected sex that is addressed through YOLO is unsafe abortion.

Rubby was persuaded by her boyfriend to abort an unwanted pregnancy. This made her scared of the fact that it might have an effect on her. In view of that, she went in for help by going to see the doctor. Emily’s friend Maame Yaa then made a strong case that, abortion could happen to anyone. She said; “once you are in a relationship, anything can happen. You can’t be too careful.”

These issues were well played out in episode eight (8) of season two (2). Albert Amarah Amartey also made the claim on the YOLO Facebook page that;

*“I think the showbiz brought YOLO GH Tv Series into existence. It has always been educative to me and somewhat my girlfriend because we both make time to watch and learn more although we already know how to abstain from certain relationship activities. YOLO GH Series has made a lot of positive mind sets and it has been enjoyable as well. I will like to use this opportunity to inform my brothers and sisters out there to be serious with some decisions they make with their partners when there is problem just like that of our brothers and sisters who are educating the less knowledgeable ones, especially Drogba and Jane who my girlfriend resembles so much.”*

In this vein, Albert seemed to like the fact that Drogba and Jane decided to keep the baby and not go in for an abortion when they were faced with pregnancy issue. In our society we would find people getting rid of such pregnancies but the fact that Jane kept hers was something that he picked up and was also advising his fellow brothers and sisters to do same.

- **Abstinence** is also another theme that appeared from the analysis. It is seen as the act of staying away from sexual intercourse. Abstinence is also a key message that YOLO also addresses. This is linked with unprotected sex in the sense that, by abstinence, the tele-drama sends the message that it would be better for one to abstain

than to have unprotected sex that would lead him/her into the three social issues tackled under unprotected sex. All issues that are raised about unprotected sex, is tight together with abstinence. Obed Kyei Baffour affirms this is benefit oriented by sharing his view on Facebook what he had gathered from the programme. He specified that,

*“I think the best solution to all these social vices is abstinence. YOLO is also educative, informative and entertaining.”*

Cyril and Emily were the characters who were channelling the path of abstinence. They had in one time of their lives had sex before they decided to abstain from sex until they get married. There were times when Drogba tried to negatively influence Cyril to have sex with Emily but Cyril stood firm and did not give in. Hak Cess is an individual who seem to have taken note of this aspect of the tele-drama. He typed that, “very educative. The life of Cyril, even though hangs around with bad friends but still keeps his life in line.”

Adatsi Prudential, in his comment seemed to have grasped all the major themes under unprotected sex, also commented that, through *YOLO*, he has become sober and has now avoided sex in order not to get gonorrhoea like Drogba as he wanted the programme to be aired every day. He posted on the Facebook platform of *YOLO*,

*“pls pls pls I will like you guys to show this series every day because it teaches more and it has made me a gentle boy and now, I avoid sex not to get gonorrhoea like Drogba”*

Yeboah Deborah, with her review also showed how benefit-oriented *YOLO* is. She jotted that,

*“YOLO is an informative, educative and effective programme. It is really educating us on how to live and love our life, how to protect ourselves during sexual intercourse to prevent all kinds of illness especially STDs.”*

- **Parental Guidance** – Where parents make sure their children remain on the right track and do not go wayward by keeping an eye on them, punishing them for wrong doing to serve as a deterrent and praising or rewarding them for doing something praiseworthy, also arose from the analysis.

- Enyonam (Jackie Appiah), who was acting as the single parent taking care of her son Cyril tried her best to make sure her son, was always on the right path. Even when she saw Cyril use his father’s picture as his wallpaper, she became angry as she felt her son would end up trying to see his father as a role model, which she was not in support of. She said “why do you have that picture on your phone? Please do me a favour and take it off right now” Cyril was actually born out of unprotected sex and rape, when his father Pusher raped his mom Enyonam. Enyonma therefore didn’t want her son to have anything to do with his father because he raped her. She was afraid his father would influence him negatively as Pusher was the Drogba type when he was young.

In season one (1) episodes three (3) and four (4), Enyonam caught her son sneaking in with the intention of going to have sex with Nana Adwoa (Enyonam's sales girl), who had spent the night over at their place. Being a victim of rape herself, she became very furious.

In season two (2) episodes five (5) Enyonam's brother caught her son in bed naked with Antoinette after they had had sex. In view of this, Enyonam decided to take him to the village to serve as a deterrent and also move him away from Drogba whose peer pressure on Cyril was becoming stronger. Even when Drogba managed to get Cyril away from the village, she went in search of her son to bring him back home because she really cared about him and Cyril received the prodigal son treatment from his mom when he returned. In our societies and communities, most parents would leave their children to their fate when they see them go wayward and that was the issue YOLO was tackling. What Cyril's mother went through as an adolescent was undoubtedly the reason for her sever restrictions on Cyril as she didn't want him to end up making any mistakes.

Jane's grandmother took charge of all her responsibilities when her granddaughter Jane came home with an unwanted/unplanned pregnancy. She did not reject her or send her packing when she came to her in the village. In season three (3) episode nine (9) when Drogba and his Sister met with Jane's family she welcomed them openheartedly but did not rebuke them as the deed had already been done and they needed to find a suitable solution, the family unlike what is normally the norm in our societies did not agree to let Jane move in with Drogba. They rather decided to make Jane stay in the village with her grandmother in order for the baby to be taken care of properly.

Naa's father also chased Drogba and Psycho away when they went to his house in search of his daughter. The man felt his daughter was not old enough to be seen around guys in the name of them being her friends. This is an issue that takes place in most societies, that if parents neglect their duties of taking control of their children, the possibility of them going wayward becomes paramount. The scene was to send the message across that, parent should be careful with the kind of friends their children keep around. Especially if it is with the opposite sex. Chioma Chikezirim got this message clear and in his review captured that,

*"for the few times I have watched YOLO, I have learned a lot. Adolescent, peer group and teenage exuberant is really a challenge. If not properly handled by parents, a lot will go wrong."*

Undoubtedly, what Chioma gathered was that, parents should take good care of their children to prevent any unwanted cases. The shows that YOLO is benefit oriented as explained in the Sabido Methodology. Eunice Swat Jonathan after watching the programme said in her review that,

*"as a matter of fact, YOLO should be watched not just by adolescents but adults also to enlighten them on better child upbringing."*

This indicates that she had seen how parental guidance plays out in the tele-drama series and was therefore advocating for adults to watch. Another advocacy took place when Onare Oluwasegun also indicated that;

*“it is a movie that every adolescent needs to watch. It is educative and it also helps in social life. It also talks about relationship between parents and their wards. Kudos to the director.”*

- **Good Life** which is also a thematic campaign message emerged out of the analysis. Leading a good life in *YOLO* meant eating well (balanced diets and fruits) as well as exercising and staying fit.

The good life campaign in *YOLO* is about exercise and fitness as well as hygiene. Antoinette and Naa visited Jane in the village and shared some of the things going on in Accra with her. They told her about washing your hands with soap under running water before eating and after using the toilet. This was how the messages were weaved into the tele-drama to give the target audience some education on personal hygiene. They talked about some of the effects of doing otherwise and said one could easily get cholera or diarrhoea if personal hygiene is not taken seriously.

Exercise and fitness, in all the selected episodes of season three (3), eating fruits and exercising was a key message that runs through. Drogba and George in season three (3) episode eleven (11) were seen eating lots of fruits. When Naa came in, she said “you people are living a good life” which in effect placed emphasis on the fruits they were eating. Drogba in responding said, “yeah, you no sey every morning, you for chop fruits and in the afternoon, you chop vegetables. Ego make you fit. Then you for exercise.” Talking about *YOLO* sending the message across for people to live a good life, Opong Douglas under a post on living a good life said;

*“George and Drogba have taught me that eating fruit and vegetables early morning before breakfast is very very good. It is helping me a lot. You can try that and see. Good health waaaa”.*

Douglass with this post was making a strong point that through the message on good life by George and Drogba, he was living healthy. Also, on the good life campaign, Amoah K. Mejer from his Facebook post indicated;

*“It is amazing and I urge every youth to take it serious and learn a lesson from it, even though it is sometimes funny, you have to live a good life because good life is an everyday thing. Brothers and sisters, You Only Live Once (YOLO).”*

- **Positive role model** again, is another theme that emerged from the analysis of *YOLO*. Some of the characters in the tele-drama series were portrayed as positive role models for the viewers. They showed behaviours which were seen as accepted in the society.

Often, kids in communities, areas or environments with people as vibrant as Drogba around, tend to see them as role models that they the kids pattern their lives after. In season three (3) episode eleven (11), two kids in the area, Nana Kwame and Harry Potter were patterning their lives after psycho and Drogba.

Harry Potter said; “me am bold, am like Drogba. I am not shy of any girl” Nana Kwame on the other hand also said “me, am like Psyc. All the girls are afraid of me” Harry Potter then countered by saying “Ah, Psyc paa, the one who is even afraid to talk to girls” this conversation came up because the two boys of the not more than fourteen (14), saw Debbie, who is also within the same age bracket approaching and Harry Potter was telling Nana Kwame he can call her and make advances towards her.

Mrs Wiafe, who happened to be at the scene, advised the boys to see Cyril as a role model and not Drogba and Psyc. This was because Cyril had excelled in the WASSCE and was bound to go to school abroad.

In affirming that YOLO is benefit oriented, Kofi Emmanuel also wrote on the YOLO Facebook page that;

*“I really like the way Cyril carries himself. He has thought me a lot of things. I like watching the programme because I want to follow his life and be successful.”*

- **Malaria** – prevention and treatment also arose from the analysis. In such instances, the tele-drama series addressed the preventive measures to prevent malaria and also the steps to undertake when one is hit by the disease.

Monster in season three (3) episode (12) was caught down with malaria and had to seek medical care. Betty asked him about his health and he said “I made sure I completed the malaria treatment so am fully fit. Now I sleep under a treated net, so I don’t catch malaria again.” This was clearly to send a message across about malaria treatment and prevention. When Monster took ill, his friends took him to the hospital for a malaria test and not the pharmacy to get some drug, which is often the situation in most societies. The message was that, one should rather go to the hospital when ill than to rush go get medicines from the pharmacy at the least sign of sickness for undiagnosed diseases. Nana Gyamfi said, “Monster, get well soon okay. Next time sleep under a mosquito net. I started sleeping under one when I saw one in Drogba’s room.”

- **Adolescent health** corner also stood out as a theme in the analysis. Theses youth corners were places that viewers could go when they were faced with any challenge about the adolescent reproductive health.

In episodes seven (7) and eight (8), Rubby was bold enough to go and see the gynaecologist in relation to an attempted abortion she had.

In season three (3) episode 12, Maame Yaa took her sister to see the health expert in order to answer all her sister Maame Fosua, who was starting her menstrual cycle’s questions. The Doctor also welcomed them by saying “Maame Yaa, am so proud of you for bringing your sister in. Maame Fosua, you’ve entered a very exciting chapter of your life with the start of your menstrual cycle. Please know that we are all here for you.” This was sending a strong message that; it is best for the adolescents to talk to

health experts when they start experiencing their menstrual cycle in order to be advised and also have all their questions concerning that chapter in their lives answered. The doctor also emphasized on the fact that there are youth corners in the major hospitals all over the country and it was therefore a step in the right direction and easy for the youth to just walk in and ask any of the health professionals any question on adolescent reproductive health issues. This is in line again with the points under the Sabido Methodology that talks about Service-Linked.

One aspect of *YOLO* being service-linked are the epilogues, which are a special characteristic of the Sabido-style programmes, that inform the audience about available services (such as clinic, locations, phone numbers, addresses and hot lines.) in this instance, the service-linked was the doctor telling Maame Fosuah about major health centres having youth corners where she can go to. Some individuals did not even know about the adolescent health corner. Jennifer said “Oh really, I didn’t know major hospitals in Ghana have youth corners. I will visit there soon. *YOLO!!*” Jennifer in this case has also benefited from the programme because she has been introduced to something she did not know.

- **Peer pressure** - Drogba seemed to be leading the young guys in the area when it came to who was seemingly more knowledgeable and up to date about girls and was therefore showing the guys in the area the ropes in terms of chasing girls. Cyril seemed not to be of his own mind but was clearly under the influence of the more vibrant and adventurous friend, Drogba as he set out to chase Emily. Drogba made Cyril believe that it was actually a good idea to go about chasing girls. In season one episode one, Drogba pushed Cyril into going after Emily. Drogba said “charley, the girl come sef, you no fit move am, jon” that is to say that Cyril is a fool because he couldn’t talk to Emily when she came out.

- Drogba was even willing to convince Monster to take his mother’s car for Cyril to go and pose as a child from a rich home (Deebie). Cyril looked very naïve in all this but was being sort of guided by Drogba to peruse his idea of going after Emily. Drogba even told him exactly what to say to lure Emily into accepting him. Drogba pressed on and succeeded in getting Cyril to go to Emily’s house. Drogba was pushing the guys to be naughty and they fell for whatever he said because he is older than them and they looked up to him like an elder brother.

Even when Cyril’s mother saw some drafted love letters in his room and decided to bring him on track, Drogba told Cyril to ignore his mother and he approved and followed him to visit Jane, a lady Drogba had met a day before. Upon arrival, Drogba linked Cyril to Jane’s friend, Antoinette with the view for Cyril to have sex with her. Drogba again pushed Cyril into having sex with a ‘call girl’ after he managed to get him to escape from the village after his mother Enyonam took him there as a form of punishment for having sex with Antoinette. Cyril had gradually become rebellious due to the influence of Drogba.

In season three (3) episode nine (9), Drogba tried to influence George to call Betty and tell her he loves her and not to be sending her messages. After George has spoken to Betty over the phone, Drogba said “charley you be yawa boy pass. What this? So them dey ron woman? Bro, call am then tell am sey you dey love am. That be all” This time, Drogba’s sister, Diana was with George and Drogba and she told George not to allow Drogba influence him.

On peer pressure, Sly Faraday was also in support of *YOLO* as he felt it must be patronized by the youth. He said;

*“To me it’s a must watch movie for all the youth. It exposes the very negative characters and attitudes in our acquaintances that pose threat on our behaviours as youth.”*

Sly felt that *YOLO* was a channel for talking about all societal issues that need change. Exposing negative characters and attitudes meant the attitudes and behaviours must be worked on or changed. It is clear that Sly doesn’t just watch *YOLO* for watching sake, but rather he is able to decipher the education aspect from the entertainment, get to know the negative things that need to be changed because they have an effect on the behaviour of the youth.

Josephine Boadi also seemed to have been able to gain some level of education on the importance of doing away with bad company. Her post was;

*“I am very interested in YOLO series. Since this series came, I don’t go out again. This series is very educative. It enables we the adolescence to learn something better in our social lives. It has also helped us to avoid bad company.”*

It could be said that through *YOLO*, Josephine was able to deal with peer pressure, which is another strong theme that runs through the tele-drama series.

- **Positive role models**

Often, kids in communities, areas or environments with people as vibrant as Drogba around, tend to see them as role models that they the kids pattern their lives after. In season three (3) episode eleven (11), two kids in the area, Nana Kwame and Harry Potter were patterning their lives after psycho and Drogba.

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In affirming that *YOLO* is benefit oriented, Kofi Emmanuel also wrote on the *YOLO* Facebook page that;



*“I really like the way Cyril carries himself. He has thought me a lot of things. I like watching the programme because I want to follow his life and be successful.”*

- **Watching Pornography**

On the issue of watching pornography, Max caught Kelly and Abrantie watching pornography at the hospital in season three (3) episode (12). Max rebuked them and advised them to boycott pornography. Though he said he agreed to the fact that adolescent is the stage where by young people want to discover, explore and be adventurous, it was just a fraction of the whole stage. He said it was also the critical stage for young people to prioritize their good, physical and reproductive health. He also told them pornography could be very addictive and fill their minds with all sorts of fantasies they may lead them into unwanted pregnancies and all that. Kwame Kumi “The way Max caught Kelly and Abrantie watching pono de3 yawa o. Brothers and sisters let’s stop watching pono wai. Am deleting my 1gig pono koraa.” This indicated that Kwame has become remorseful and even felt some kind of shame for having pornographic videos on his machine and was as a form of advocacy, advising others to desist from watching pornography too.

- **Adolescents in Prostitution**

In season three (3) episode twelve (12), George discovered a prostitution ray with girls as young as thirteen involved. He was being introduced to these adolescents in prostitution by Kwame who was an agent for these prostitutes. George rebuked Kwame by saying “are you aware you are putting those kids in danger? Have you heard of STIs?” he then cautioned Kwame to put a stop to it or he will report him to the police. These things are happening in our communities, rural areas, urban areas, everywhere and that is what *YOLO* was seeking to address. After watching the programme on YouTube, Hans posted in the Facebook comment section that,

*“this child prostitution matter is very dominant here in Takoradi. Thanks to the scriptwriter for talking about this. I hope the police also pick this up.”*

After analysing the content of *YOLO* it was seen that the basically talked about adolescent reproductive health issues and how to live a good life. This was explained as eating good food, eating vegetables and fruits daily, washing your hands with soap under running water avoiding unprotected sex and alcohol abuse among others

Again, messages in the story were truly weaved around the characters as Ivan said during the interview. Clearly, by analysing the selected episodes, there was George, who does not really do it, but will talk as if he does it. Then Abrantie and Monster who are the people who want to be serious but because of the work they do (barbers) and the fact that they want to make some earns meet, they have to engage their friends around them. There are people like Kelly, who also wants to fit in. Almost every guy seen in the series really wants to fit in, come back and say that, “charley, I have conquered the girl.” There were also the “bad girls” as well as the “good girls”.

Each character was seen to have some kind of a life cycle or growth cycle whereby they grew from one point to another. You would realize that they moved from one point to the other in some kind of causes and effects. Drogba moved from being so bad, developed gonorrhoea, ended up having a baby and deciding to be a good person. Cyril also started following Drogba and because of Drogba, he ended up sleeping with Antoinette and was going wayward but somehow, when his mother caught him and the way she treated him, made him decide to come back on the right track. He took his education serious and even passed the WASSCE with distinction. He also decided to be an abstainer because of the pressure from his girlfriend. If you listen to Emily too, she also had sex before when she was abroad but has decided not to anymore. Serwaa was also virtually having sex with everybody in the beginning; she ended up with STI, had to be thrown out of the house, went back to the village, got treated, came back and decided to go to church with Mrs Wiafe. Jane also went around having unprotected sex, became pregnant for Drogba and decided to settle down and lead a good life. Kelly also started off as a young guy who wanted to explore, he ended up getting STI as well, got it treated and decided to either abstain or have protected sex. It is revealed through the analysis that, *YOLO* is benefit oriented and Advocacy-related. This was seen in instances where consumers of the programme in their preview made comments on their social media platforms in the affirmative.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the rationale behind the production of *YOLO* was indeed to help promote social change. It sought to do so by tackling adolescent reproductive health issues in the first two seasons before it went further to deal with other social issues and also talk more about how to live a good and health life.

It was also found out in the study that, most of the factors that made an edutainment programme effective per the Sabido Methodology were seen in the work. In terms of the programme being science-based, the producer and his team did a scientific research before coming out with messages that would address the problems they discovered. They actually chose a field that had adolescent sexual reproductive health issues dominating and went there to do the study. They had a communication model where they could also send information about the programme to their viewers and also receive messages or feedbacks from them. Their official social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter) played key roles in that.

This communication programme was also a client-centred one as it used a systematic examination and analysis of the audience and the cultural factors that form and affect it. This included the creating of story lines that did not in any way go against any cultural value of the viewers. The producer said they got some even the names and terms from the field of their study. This also affirms that in terms of participation, through the research, it was revealed that, the viewers were involved at every stage of the tele-drama series for identification of the issues to be addressed, to design the characters and also the story.

Through the study, it was again found out that, *YOLO* was a benefit-oriented programme. This is because the viewers notice a clear benefit in taking the message promoted by the tele-drama series. That is why those who watched could attest to the fact that they had learnt something from it in one way or the other. It was also a service-linked programme because it encouraged viewers to seek service or medical attention where necessary. This is very vital in the Sabido-Style drama. They also talked to the viewers about where they could get attention for the issues they raised. A lot of awareness was also raised in *YOLO*. They talked about Youth corners being in every major hospital among others. It also served as an avenue to bring experts on board where necessary. That is why it had doctors and nurses or generally speaking, health workers even as part of the performers or characters to give factual or accurate information.

It was also discovered that *YOLO* is multi-channelled, which is another factor of the Sabido Methodology on developing an effective edutainment programme. In this case, the production team used television and new media to get to its viewers. This is referred to as 'The Whole Society Strategy' which begins with a research to know the language, cultural, tribal and economic segment of the viewers as well as the media they utilize. Per the YouTube analytics of *YOLO*, they were preview to most of this information. Technically, *YOLO* is also of high quality and entertaining as well. It had most subscribers on YouTube and followers on Facebook. A communication programme must be of the highest possible quality to attract viewers and Sabido-style programmes must be entertaining to attract viewers. It also meant *YOLO* is expanded to scale in the sense that it reaches a greater number of viewers.

*YOLO* through the research was discovered to be advocacy related. This is because, as described by the Centre for Communication Programmes States, personal and social advocacy occurs when current change and new adopters of behaviour acknowledge their change and encourage family members and friends to adopt a similar behaviour. This was very clear in research question three. This is in line with the Sabido Methodology which creates change, motivate adoption and allow for these behaviours to be practiced.

It would be safe to say that *YOLO* is truly an edutainment programme that is promoting social change through edutainment and through that the viewers are also changing their behaviour and advocating for others to do same as well.

### **Recommendations**

Through this study, it has been revealed that lots of people watch *YOLO* and are learning from it. One sad thing that Mr. Ivan Quarshigah revealed was that, *YOLO* might be cut short because it has become expensive to produce. I recommend that for the good service it is doing for the nation by helping the adolescent or youth who form a large number of the population of Ghana to live a good life and also providing them with education on their adolescent reproductive health issues, it would be a step in the right direction for the Ministry of Health or Ministry of women and Children Affairs to

take up the role of providing the needed financial support to make the programme continue running.

Future studies could also look at a study from the angle of those who watch the programme and find out why they watch them or what influences them to watch the programme. They could also look at it from the side of the parents to see if they are also being influenced positively by this or better still, if their children that they saw to be going wayward have turned on a new leaf through this programme.

More discussions could be done as *YOLO* already paves the way through the little discussion topics it adds at the end of every episode. These topics could be discussed by adolescent peer groups when they hold their weekly meetings. Through discussions advocacy may come in and cause a positive change in behaviour or attitude. Other producers who would want to undertake an edutainment project of this nature should also consider watching *YOLO* or analysing it as it has most of the Characteristics Sabido ascribed to make an edutainment programme an effective one.

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