

## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF SATELLITE TELEVISION MOVIES ON ADOLESCENTS' SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN HARARE

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### ABSTRACT

This article sought to investigate the influence of satellite television movies on adolescents' sexual behavior. This motivated the researchers to conduct a study exploring impacts and extent of television movies on teenagers aged between 13 and 17. Extracting information required questionnaires formatted in a manner that would provide description of circumstances, accord the interviewee the opportunity to explain and volunteer background information on the behavior pattern. To ensure the collection of quality data, the researchers employed face to face interviews to assist the interviewees provide the correct information and explanation required. The research lasted three months and took place in Harare and strictly targeting secondary school students.

The results of the study showed that most adolescents were heavily exposed to television movies of sexual nature; aimed for people aged above 18 years. Key findings of the study showed that students exposed to heavy viewing of sexual-inclined movies tend to lose focus on their education and become addicted to following the new movies on the market. They easily remember the titles of the movies, the story-lines and the actors. Some students indicated they felt their favourite actors were their role models while others said they did not envisage any harm in watching explicitly sexual movies because of their capacity to know what is right and wrong; and ability to only choose the good they can benefit from the movies.

Most parents were concerned about their children adopting alien cultures that might cause them to indulge in sex and bad behavior. However some felt a lot of good can also come from the movies if viewing is properly managed. A significant number of parents indicated they noticed with concern certain behavioural traits, which included use of foul language, drinking and smoking, ignoring their parents' rules and suspected that their children were having relationships and could be having sex.

**KEYWORDS:** Satellite Television, sexual behavior, teenagers, entertainment

### INTRODUCTION

A boom in the installation of satellite television facilities in Zimbabwe has changed the television viewership of many families. In the 80s and 90s, many families solely relied on the Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) channel for both news and entertainment. The programming was fairly controlled,

and the nature of movies featured to a certain extent well selected. While having one television station controlled by the Government of Zimbabwe had its own limitations, such as lack of diversity in news and programmes, the increase and over reliance on satellite television programmes, and in particular in the cities, is also presenting a new set of risks. This situation is particularly affecting young people (teenagers).

With many parents spending long hours at work, teenagers below the age of 18 are at liberty to watch movies of their choice, including those meant for adults (18 years and above). In the absence of adults to at least ensure parental guidance, messages comprising those of sexual and violent natures are communicated to the children and to the detriment of their traditional values and morals. It is a fact that for many years television has been generally and gradually eroding the Zimbabwean society's cultural norms and values. In the past these values were imparted to children as a way to prepare them for responsible adulthood. With busy schedules characterizing the lives of many working parents, television seem to have taken over the role played by parents, and the extended family who were bestowed with the wisdom of moulding the children to become the country's pride and future. Osborn (1991) puts it as follows: "Television takes our children across the globe before parents give them permission to cross the street."

Today, many adolescents rely on television to gain life skills. The danger is there are not well prepared to understand the implications of the messages portrayed in the movies, especially when they decide to adopt some of the lessons learned. They risk becoming victims of what they are exposed to as many fail to separate fiction from reality. Owing to their convincing nature, pictures are a powerful communication weapon. The continuing developments in the world of pictures (television), has indeed altered the behavior of teenagers Williams (1977:9) "Television has altered our world". Changes in the social order are well-informed by the new television role models that have since replaced those once recognized by the older generations. More pronounced in this new social order is how teenagers relate to one another and with adults. Their sexual behavior and how they deal with the current social, political and economical challenges is what will either make or break them during this crucial age when they are on their way to graduating into adulthood.

The story-lines of many movies screened on television channels such as M-Net Action, M-Net Movies 1 and 2, SABC 2 and 3, True Movies 1 and 2 and TCM are that of love, sex, drugs, violence and crime. One movie can have a combination of all these elements, depicted in a foreign setting and contrary to the African and in particular Zimbabwean traditional values. Zimbabwe is one of the countries affected by HIV, a deadly virus that causes AIDS. As a result, HIV-related adverts are regularly screened on the Zimbabwe Television as a reminder of the dangers of indulging in unprotected sex. This is not the case on the stations that show movies, some of them throughout the day and depicting a lifestyle devoid of morals and values, and also tolerant to all the ills that are unhealthy for a teenager.

At the age of 13, many children already have knowledge of where babies come from. At this age, some girls are already menstruating and therefore conscious of how they relate with boys. Watching satellite television movies is the fastest and easiest way of getting to know much about dating patterns (love affairs/ relationships) as they are portrayed on the foreign television movies. Despite the dangers of HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, many teenagers

whose curiosity is mainly triggered by what they see in the movies, end up succumbing to unsafe sex. However, other factors leading to teenagers decisions to have protected or unprotected sex are influenced by factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family structure, age and educational aspirations.

The paper further goes on to say that approximately two-thirds of TV programmes contain content of sexual nature.

The study also found that teenagers who spend an average of three hours per day watching television now see an average of six sexual scenes per hour during prime time. That is more than 4.4 scenes per hour teenagers watched when a similar study was conducted in 2002. In a 2005 study the number of sexual scenes contained in about 1,000 films sampled nearly doubled from 1,930 in 1998 to 3,780. The study included programmes on cable and broadcast television.

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

According to WebMD (2006), teenagers who are often exposed to sex either through television or discussions with their peers may be more than twice as likely to have early sexual intercourse as those rarely exposed to sexual content. The study shows that 12 to 14 year olds exposed to the most sexual content in television films and other programmes, music and magazines are 2.2 times more likely to have had sexual intercourse when re-interviewed two years later than their peers who were not exposed to explicit sexual content.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The constant viewing of satellite television movies contribute to sexually active behavior

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This section is concerned with methods of collecting data. The main data collection method used in this research will be descriptive survey, which will describe certain variables about the population and showing the relationship among them. This chapter also discusses the instruments and data analysis methods that will be used.

#### **Research Design**

According to Jeneses and Janowski (1991) the advantage of using the descriptive survey is that it enables the researcher to describe the problem and identify certain unique variables about a population. It also shows the relationship among the variables. The descriptive Survey will be used in combination with other methods of collecting data. The historical method of data collection will also be used.

According to McNeil (1980) the historical survey uses past or previous records to collect information. The historical method is therefore important because it uses past documents which provide a historical background of a problem. The researcher will look at the work of others on the same study. The information will be used as a basis for formulating questionnaires. The observation method will be used for the researcher to narrate what will be taking place in schools and at home.

### **Pilot Study**

Hathaway (1995) defines pilot interviews as small-scale explanatory interviews undertaken to develop questionnaires and to probe the researcher for the language of the research topic. The researcher will conduct the pilot study at Girls High and Allan Wilson Schools in Harare. Through the interviews the researcher aims to construct questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires and interviews will be pre-tested using the pilot study sample.

### **Research Instruments**

Standardised questionnaires and interviews will be used. According to Patton (1990), the advantage of using questionnaires is that they probe further beyond the surface and also they are impersonal. Patton defines a questionnaire as a written or printed paper comprising a series of questions submitted to a number of persons in order to obtain data for a survey or report.

A questionnaire is therefore a document containing questions designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis. McNiel (1980) argues that the advantage of using questionnaires is that they help to reveal attitudes and reduce subjectivity. However, they are vulnerable to misinterpretation as data gathering instruments since respondents can give answers that were never intended.

The researchers designed questions that have a covering statement to ensure the informants that their names and other personal data will not be published and also to assure them that the information required will be purely for academic purposes. The purpose of this statement is to help informants feel secure and not fear victimization. The designed questionnaire will be short with about 90 percent multiple choice questions and 10 percent of the questions requiring more detail. Most of the detail will be covered in the interviews.

According to Haralambos (1985) interviews are widely used techniques in research to get data. Hathaway (1995) states that there are many types of interviews and these include structured, unstructured and semi-structured. In this study, the researcher will use semi-structured interviews because they allow the researcher to seek clarification.

The researchers interviewed school teachers, parents and secondary school children. The advantage of carrying such interviews is to provide an overview of the effects of sex-oriented television movies on the targeted population. The researcher will also be able to rephrase the questions. The disadvantage though is that some parents might not be certain on questions concerning the behavior of their children in terms of sexual activities.

### **The Sample**

According to Dammowski (1980:169) a sample is a subset from a population chosen for study. The population being a set of cases: the set of cases include just anything that can be studied; that is people, animals, trees or houses. Deducing from this definition, sampling therefore becomes a selection of subjects from a whole population of these subjects. Hathaway (1995) argues that sampling still remains the only way of studying a large population because it is time consuming, expensive and difficult to study the entire population.

On this basis the researcher will carefully choose the sample using the random number table for the subjects of study. The target groups are secondary school students, their parents and teachers. The teachers will have to be qualified to ensure that the sample is of professionals.

The size of the sample for teachers will be eighty (80). The random sampling of schools will be as follows: Fifteen (15) schools in Harare will be given numbers on a slip. These slips will be put in a container where they will be ruffled. The slips will be drawn and recorded. The first five (5) slips picked will be chosen as a sample and the remaining ten (10) slips will be ruffled again and the first five (5) will be chosen as the sample. The procedure will be applied again bringing the total to fifteen (15).

The table below represents the sample of schools that will be picked randomly. Each school will be given a number, for example, as follows: ref ssch 5- Harare High School- Mbare.

Secondary Schools	Secondary Schools
Ref ssch 1- Kambuzuma	Ref ssch 9 –Roosevelt Girls
Ref ssch 2- Churchill	Ref ssch 10- Warren Park
Ref ssch 3- Vainona	Ref ssch 11- Allan Wilson
Ref ssch 4- Girls High	Ref ssch 12- Marlborough
Ref ssch 5- Harare High	Ref ssch 13- Mabelreign Girls
Ref ssch 6- Morgan	Ref ssch 14 Hatfield Girls
Ref ssch 7- Prince Edward	Ref ssch 15- Cranborne Boys
Ref ssch 8- Queen Elizabeth	

### **Data Analysis procedures**

The researcher will use the descriptive statistics method of data analysis. Statistics which involve measures of central tendency, variation and correlation will be used. Responses will be recorded on frequency tables from which the mean, media and mode will be calculated. Tables are preferred in this case to record data as they accommodate many variables. The graphics and the data capturing procedure will be done using the Microsoft Excel software applications.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

It is the hope of the researcher that the methodology suggested will be conducted well with the notion that little or no respondents will fail to return questionnaires. The descriptive survey and historical survey will be mainly used and the instruments used will be questionnaires, interviews and observations. The information gathered will be analysed and stored on a flash and computer hard disk drive.

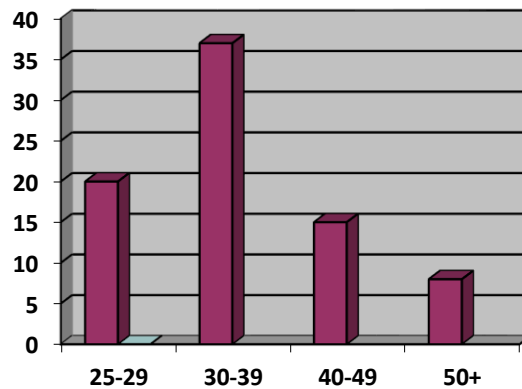
### **DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

This section discusses the findings of the study. The data collecting instruments used were the questionnaires and interviews. The data and graphics will be analysed using the Microsoft Word and Excel software applications and will be presented in the form of frequency tables. This was designed to reveal certain outstanding trends and other salient features.

### **Questionnaire Data**

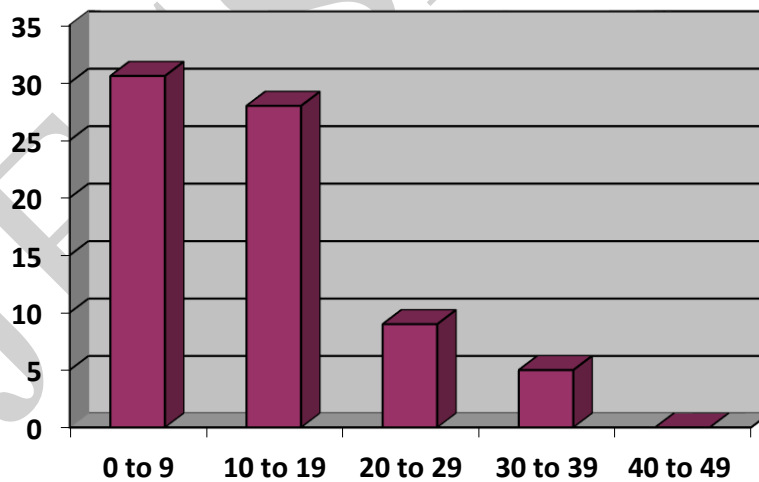
The data collected through the questionnaire provided evidence for teachers' observations on

students' behavior in connection with watching television movies. However, some of the information from the interviews will be used in the analysis of the data. The researcher sent out 90 questionnaires and out of which 80 were returned. These were used in the presentation of data. The questionnaires were filled in by qualified teachers.



**Fig.1 Age Sample of teachers**

Figure 1 show that out of the sample of 80 teachers, 37 were within the age range of 30-39 years and 20 were within the age range of 40-49 years and 8 fell within the age range of 50 and above years. The figures show that the majority of the teachers in the sample, that is, 71.2 percent were teachers between the age ranges of 30-39. The age will be used later in the discussion to show the relationship that exists between attitudes and age.



**Fig.2 working experience of the sample showing service period of teachers and the number of teachers**

The graph shows that the sample largely consisted of teachers within the range of 0-9 years working

experience. According to the graph, 30 teachers out of 80 had 0-9 years working experience. A total of 28 out of 80 teachers had 10-19 years working experience. Nine teachers had 20-29 years experience and 5 had 30-39 years experience. None had 40-49 years work experience. The results show that 72.5 percent of the teachers had little experience.

Question 1 asked the teachers whether dating (having love affairs) among students was high or low. The question was open to other descriptions.

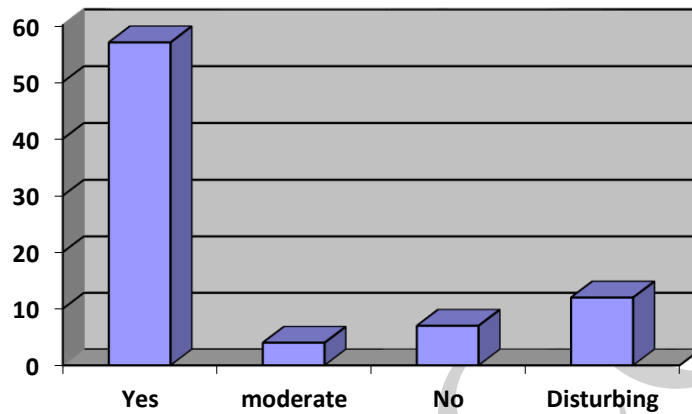
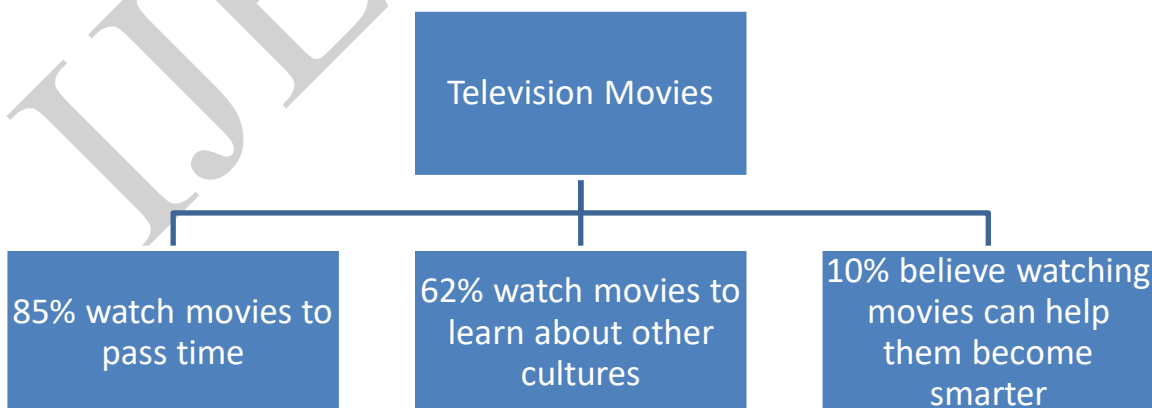


Fig. 3 above shows the response of the teachers. The results show that 57 out of the 80 teachers said Yes dating was high in schools while four teachers opted for a Moderate dating situation. Seven teachers indicated dating was not a problem and 12 said the situation was very bad and disturbing.

In response to whether counseling those found dating, which is against school regulations, there were any indications of television watching at home, 70 teachers said yes while 10 teachers said No.

Fig. 4 below shows approximately how many students confessed to their teachers that they spend a lot of time watching television movies at home and also explained why (question 4).





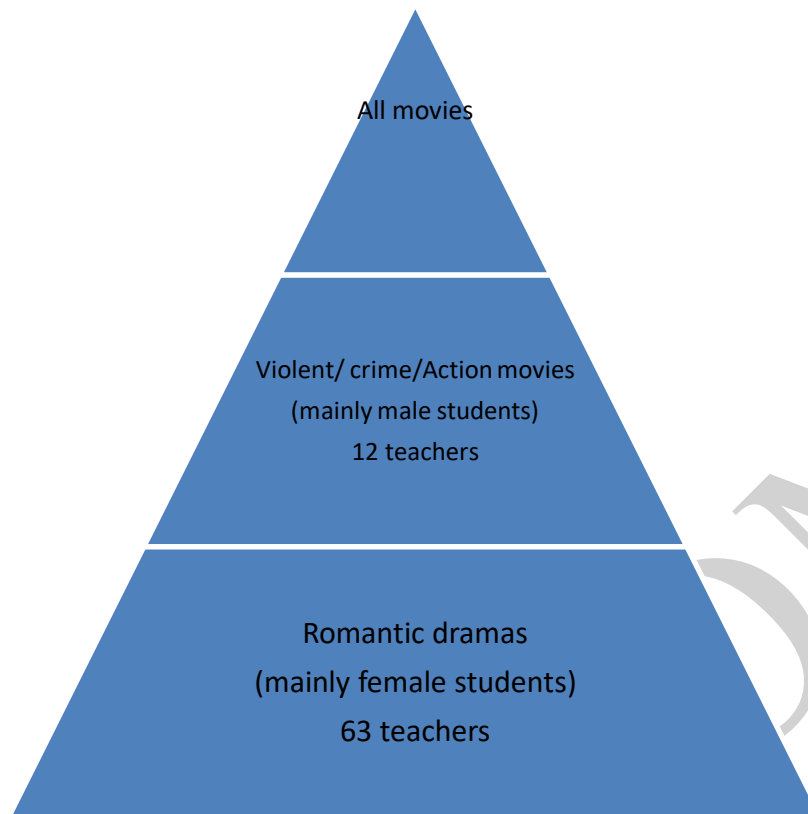
In response to question 6 on whether teachers think dating students and their sexual behavior could be influenced by the television movies they watch, 73 teachers said Yes television movies had a greater capacity to make students want to experiment with sex, five said students' sexual behavior is influenced by a combination of factors including peer pressure and watching television. They said peer pressure could also have something to do with friends learning from television movies. Two teachers said dating in schools is a natural phenomenon and has little to do with watching sexual oriented television movies.

Question 8 sought to establish if teachers have noted high level of interest among students when they teach something related to television and programmes. All 80 teachers said most students participate lively and are quick to share information on which movies they have watched and their favourite actors. Compared to mastering their academic studies, the teachers said favourite characters and fascinating story-lines seem to stick permanently in the students' minds. This, they said show the impact that television movies have and the significant role they play in the way they view the world and in their lives.

The general feeling among teachers was that if students can learn faster through television, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation should tap into this opportunity and produce entertaining dramas or local movies that can still tell real stories but also show the consequences of, for example, indulging in protected or unprotected sex before marriage. In addition, 69 teachers said more than half of the students' lack of focus on their education could be linked to heavy viewing of television. Question 13 asked whether students during class discussions show that they are inclined to romantic or violent/crime/Action movies. Fig. 5 below shows a total of 63 teachers said female students have shown interest in romantic movies in which actors such as Julia Roberts, Catherine Zeta Jones, Denzel Washington, Pierce Brosnan and Sandra Bullock feature. Twelve teachers said male students have largely shown interest in actors such as Sylvester stallone, Bruce Willis, Jean Claude Vandamme, Steven Seagal and

**Fig. 5 shows what teachers gathered most students like watching on TV.**





Question 15 sought to establish whether there were female students who got pregnant. Teachers were asked to approximate the extent of the problem. All teachers said they have come across such incidences although in most cases it does not necessarily involve a fellow male student but more mature men. Most teachers who have been teaching for more than 20 years said in the recent years, the number of female students who fall pregnant in schools has declined. However they were quick to point out that this does not necessarily mean that there are less students indulging in sex, but could mean an improvement in awareness on the dangers of having unprotected sex.

From the data collected, of significance was the revelation by 73 out of 80 teachers who agreed that television movies had a greater capacity to make students want to experiment with sex, whether protected or unprotected. A total of 69 teachers said more than half of the students' lack of focus on their studies could be linked to heavy viewing of television. This shows the direct, profound and spectacular impact that television movies have on secondary school students' sexual behavior and attitude towards academic education. Although most teachers could not definitely provide concrete figures of students indulging in sex and directly link that to television movies, the pattern reflected was that many students date in schools. A total of 57 out of the 80 teachers said dating in schools was high while 12 teachers said the situation was disturbing (very bad).

#### **INTERVIEW DATA (PARENTS)**

Twenty parents (15 female and five male) were interviewed in order to extract information on their children's level of television viewing and the type of programmes they are interested to watch. In response to questions 1 and 2, a total of 14 parents said their children both male and female spend a

lot of time watching television. The 14 parents work and are not at home when the children return from school. They all own satellite facilities, and the children can access all the channels, including those that show movies throughout the day and all night. The parents said it was difficult and impractical for them to bar their children from watching television, saying at least it kept them indoors and away from roaming the streets. Of the 14 parents, 10 said their children enjoyed watching channels that screened movies such as Mnet Action and Mnet Movies 1 and 2. The children are all below 17 years.

Six parents said their children can only watch television during prime time in their presence. However, the children can still watch what they want when both parents are not at home, which seldom happens.

In response to question 6, which sought to establish if parents can link their children's behavior to what they watch on TV, 16 parents 'Yes' while four said they were not sure.

A total of 10 parents responding to question 7 said they were aware their children aged between 15 and 17 had dated before or were actually dating (having love affairs). Six parents said they had not observed anything peculiar to warrant suspicion that their children could be having relationships (love affairs) while four said they were not sure (they cannot say yes or no).

Responding to question 10, all parents agreed that their children portrayed certain behaviours, they could have learnt either from school through their peers or from television and other forms of media such as internet and magazines.

**Fig. 6 lists the nature of behaviours described by the parents.**

Arguing with parents and accusing them of abusing their rights	Use of foul language
Suspicious that children could be having sex (Four parents confirmed they saw some condoms in their sons' school bags and bedrooms)	Opting not to respond or ignoring parents' regulations such as coming home late
Secretive and always on the defensive	Having many friends of the opposite sex
Serial dating	Drinking and smoking
Aggressive	Fussy when it comes to what clothes parents should buy them.

A total of 11 parents, most of them mothers indicated their children were secretive about their activities and are usually on the defensive when quizzed about their whereabouts during weekends for example. Ten parents confirmed they were aware that their children aged between 15 and 17 have dated more than three times while parents of six male teenagers confirmed their sons smoked and drank alcohol. Three of the six parents confirmed they knew their sons were having relationships with girls but could not confirm whether they were having sex.

Question 13 tried to establish if the parents thought implementing stringent measures to control what their children watched on television could help shape them into becoming responsible adults. A total

of 17 parents said although controls are needed, parents and teachers should educate the students for them to understand the difference between fiction and reality. They explained that such education can help develop the students' interest to watch other television programmes such as documentaries, which can impart knowledge key to growing their understanding of the world. Three parents said they have a responsibility to ensure they protect their children from bad influences adding that, if there is evidence that television movies and other programmes could badly influence their children's behavior then stringent measures should be taken. They said actions should include stringent controls that include paying only for the channels that show movies that are sensitive to children.

Question 15 asked if the parents thought by watching television movies their children were learning something positive. Sixteen parents said they believed the television movies exposed their children to learning about other countries and cultures. While this could influence the children's behavior negatively, they said the children have an opportunity to have a general picture of what the world is like. They said importantly, they should enhance life skills education to help their children make good decisions. Two parents said not all movies shown on television are bad and other actors who play good roles can be a source of inspiration to their children. Two other parents said the movies help to ensure the children stayed at home and away from peer pressure.

### STUDENTS INTERVIEW

Twenty students (10 male and 10 female) were interviewed in order to gain insight into the type of movies they prefer to watch. Question one asked the students the type of movies they preferred to watch on television and 12 (10 female and two male) said they enjoyed romantic movies while eight males said they enjoyed action thriller movies.

In response to Question 2, which asked whether their parents allowed them access to watch movies they are too young to watch, 12 students said their parents did not permit them but they can watch when they are at work or asleep. Two students said their parents did not mind what they watched while four students said their parents were strict and only watch the movies they are not supposed to watch when their parents are not at home. Two students said despite their parents' strictness when it comes to watching adult television movies, they can always watch them at their friends' houses and at times on their peers' laptop computers.

Question four sought to establish the names of the movies the students have watched, the table below provides their responses.

From Paris with Love	American Pie
What dream may come (main actor Robin Williams)	Enchanted
The Titanic (main actor Leonardo Dicaprio)	The 40-year-old virgin
The Notebook (main actor Ryan Gosling)	Rambo (main actor Sylvester Stallone)
Maid in Manhattan (Main actor Jennifer Lopez)	Die Hard (main actor Bruce Willis)
Wet hot American summer	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Twilight (Main actor Kristen Stewart)	James Bond movie series
Bridesmaid	The adventures of Robin Hood
Clueless (Main actor Alicia Silverstone)	Pirates of the Carribean

The table above shows some of the favourite movies the students said they have watched and enjoyed on television. The age rate of the majority of these movies is 18 years and above.

Question six sought to establish how many of the students watched news. Three students (two female and one male) said they religiously watch news with the rest of their families, six students said they sometimes watched news while 11 students said they were not interested in watching news. In response to question eight, which asked what the students benefitted from watching movies, 12 said they watched purely for entertainment since their parents do not permit them to go to the public cinemas, five said they watched to pass time while three said for purposes of learning what happens in other countries.

Question 10 enquired whether the students adopt some of the behaviours they watch in the movies, especially the romantic movies. Eight students said the movies helped them to have a diverse understanding of other people and their dating practices. They adopted skills they thought would help them to overcome similar challenges portrayed in the movies. Five students said the movies helped them to understand the general thinking of the opposite sex and learn from the solutions to can deal with various situations. Seven students said although they are aware that movies are fiction, they adopt practices that can make them better at solving current and future challenges.

In response to Question 11 that asked if what they see in the movies have inspired them to be involved in a love affair and tempted them to have sex, 13 students said the movies helped them to understand that despite their school regulations and what their parents' stance against dating, having a relationship in teens was normal and universal. Two students confirmed some movies tempted them to have sex with their partners. The students could not reveal whether they ended up indulging in sex. Five students (male) said the movies helped them with skills on how to propose love to girls and all the tricks that comes with relationships. Three of the five students said although they did not have sex with their partners, they make love occasionally.

Question 12 asked if the students believed they should be protected from movies that can change or influence their sexual behavior. A total of 16 students said denying them access to television movies will only make them more curious and devise other ways of watching the same movies. Four students said they should not be allowed to watch movies that can disturb their studies and influence them to have sex before marriage. They said teenagers should only watch television movies with minimal sexual content and in the presence of their parents or other adults to provide some guidance. In response to Question 14, which asked if the students think their parents and teachers were doing enough to provide the kind of sexual education they needed, 17 students said 'No' while three students said 'Yes'.

## **DISCUSSION DATA**

Evidence in the study provides sufficient evidence that secondary school students are watching television movies that influence their behavior in general and in particular how they relate to the opposite sex. A number of reasons drive the students to watch adult television movies that are of

romantic, thriller and action in nature. The students are hungry for entertainment and the only source which is easily accessible and free is the television. The students are curious to learn more about what happens around them and because they are growing up, they are also interested to learn about the dating practices they can employ. The danger is that some of the students seem not interested in the ages of the people they see having relationships in most of the adult romantic movies. Most students do not see anything wrong in them watching adult movies as they feel they can discern fiction from reality and select what information and practices to adopt.

On the other hand, the parents suspect the messages being communicated through the adult movies could be changing their children's behavior. The major challenge, it emerged, was how to manage the situation when their children can easily watch movies of their choice when they are not at home and at friends' homes. The parents are aware their children know more than what they pretend to know. However, the majority of parents believe there are good things their children can learn from the movies and all they need to do is strengthen education on the realities of the world vis a vis what they watch in the movies.

The majority of teachers agreed that television movies had a greater capacity to make students want to experiment with sex. A total of 76 teachers said more than half of the students' lack of focus on their studies could be linked to heavy viewing of television. This shows the direct, profound and spectacular impact that television movies have on secondary school students' sexual behavior. Although most teachers could not definitely provide concrete figures of students indulging in sex and directly link that to television movies, the pattern reflected was that many students date in schools. More than half of the interviewed teachers confirmed dating in their secondary schools was high while 12 teachers said the situation was disturbing.

## **CONCLUSION**

In general there is reason for greater concern with regards to the messages that television movies communicate to children below the age of 18. The challenging component is how to control what the students watch on television while on the other hand, students claim they are not getting sufficient sexual education from both the teachers and parents. The students enjoy watching the forbidden movies and strongly believe they can adopt what is good for them, the question is - who can best define what is good and bad for them if they watch the movies without parental guidance. The fact that the students know some of the best romantic and thriller movies produced and can vividly remember the story-lines reflect the importance they place on fiction as compared to the reality of the importance of their education. This also goes to show how the messages are stored permanently in their minds and influence their day to day activities and decision making.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The major objective of the study was to investigate the possible impact of satellite television movies on adolescents' sexual behavior in Harare. These were investigated and the findings seem to point to the fact that movies shown on satellite television and on channels that focus mainly on screening only movies, including those only meant for adults (18 years and above) indeed have an influence on the students aged between 13 and 17. This chapter will summarise the findings and provide some recommendations.

## **SUMMARY**

The results from the study indicate the targeted group is heavily exposed to television movies aimed for people aged above 18 years and also movies for younger viewership such as 13 and above, which they watch in most cases without parental guidance.

It came to light that the impact of such movies is great as students lose focus on their education and become addicted to watching the new movies on the market. They easily remember the titles of the movies, the story-lines and the actors. This could mean some students feel the actors are a source of inspiration and their role models. Teachers interviewed expressed great concern, particularly with regards to the students' high dating pattern.

The teachers and parents strongly feel there is need to put in place mechanisms that can help the students to become realistic about life and understand that their education is key. On the other hand the students feel they have the capacity to know what is right and wrong and can choose and adopt what is good for them from the movies. They also feel that compared to the movies that provides all the information they need and do not hide anything, their teachers and parents are not doing a good job in providing all the information they need on how to grow up and sex.

Although most parents were concerned about their children adopting alien cultures that might cause them to indulge in sex and bad behavior, some felt a lot of good can also come from the movies if viewing is properly managed. They however noticed with concern certain traits of behavior, which included use of foul language, drinking and smoking, ignoring their parents' house rules, suspicions that their children were having sex and having relationships (love affairs).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are based on the findings relating to the impact of satellite television movies on secondary school students' sexual behaviour. In view of the findings of the research the study would be incomplete without making the recommendations. It is hoped that the recommendations will assist in coming up with measures that will help nurture or raise responsible future leaders of Zimbabwe.

- i) The Government can amend the Censorship Control Act, which imposes restrictions on the dissemination of undesirable or offensive material that can compromise the decency of adolescents. Explicit sex scenes should not be screened in order to protect adolescents and other young children who might suffer irreparable mental damage, such as becoming motivated to rape or to kill if one thinks there is a valid reason to take such an action.
- ii) Parents should get their priorities right and do more to protect their children from alien messages that have no way of telling there are children watching. Getting more involved in what their children enjoy watching or doing, can provide an opportunity for them to discuss with their children issues regarding relationships and sex.
- iii) Parents can also limit the channels that can be watched on satellite television by paying for only the basic programmes. This can help limit accessibility to adult movies, which show heavy sex scenes.



- iv) Teachers should prioritise life skills education and openly teach about relationships, sex and how to avoid risks such as sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy and the importance of maintaining decency and virginity.
- v) The traditional extended family structures should be revived and elders such as the grandparents, uncles and aunts should play their roles of taking the children away from the lights, glitter and television to teach them about culture and traditions in the rural areas.
- vi) The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) as an important role to play in making their programmes more attractive and friendly to adolescents. It is a fact that young people like spending time watching television because it entertains them and they are curious to learn about other people's cultures. ZBC can invest in coming up with good programming that can expose adolescents to content that can help them to graduate into adulthood as responsible people. By packaging stories that show the beauty of our culture and traditions, they can help to instil pride in young people and also help them to understand that they don't have to adopt other cultures to look 'cool'. What is making many households opt for satellite television, and in a way ending up promoting alien cultures at the expense of our own, is the poor programming by ZBC, which lacks innovation and a sense of business.
- vii) Introducing children to good and friendly local television movies, dramas and programmes should start early for them to be able to first understand who they are as a people before learning alien cultures. This can help to build a strong sense of identity. ZBC can invest in the production of local cartoon programmes to catch the children's attention while they are much younger. A good example, although it was a radio programme, is the popular Mbuya Mlambo's children programme, which significantly groomed the children who were growing up in the 80s and early 90s to be well behaved.

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