

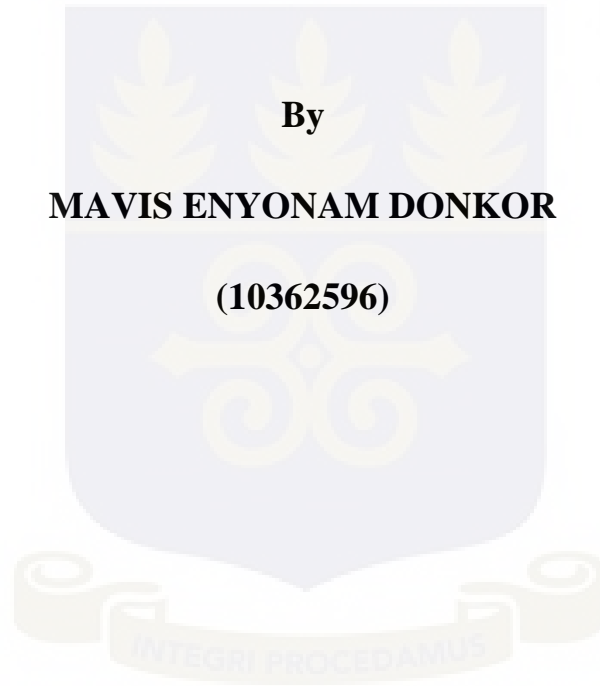
TEENAGERS, TELEVISION SERIALS, AND REALITY:

A STUDY OF MADINA (GHANA)

By

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**THIS THESIS/DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
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REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MA COMMUNICATION
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DECLARATION

I, **Mavis Enyonam Donkor** hereby declare that except for references to other works which have been duly cited and acknowledged, this work is entirely mine and was conducted under the supervision of Ms. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoop of the School Of Communication Studies, University Of Ghana, Legon.

Mavis Enyonam Donkor

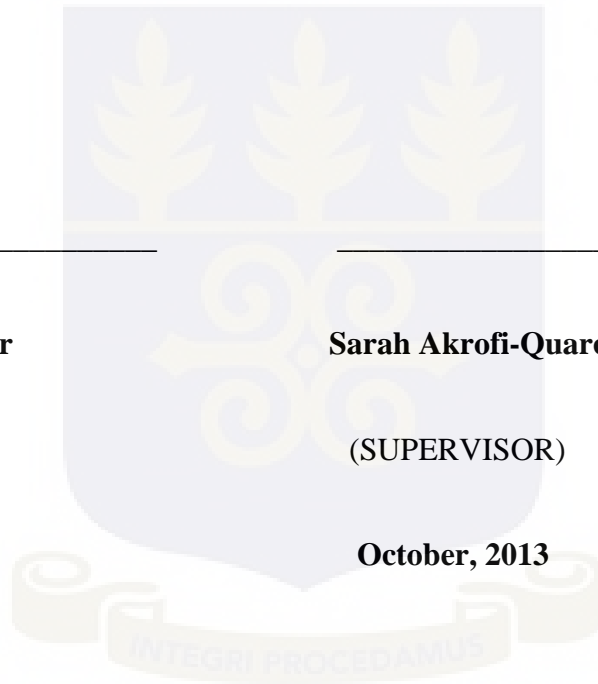
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October, 2013



DEDICATION

To Evelyn Dela Kornu,

Friend, sister, mother,

How could I have done it without you?



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am thankful to God for His grace and providence throughout my studies.

This project would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of my supervisor, Ms. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo, and Prof. Ansu Kyeremeh.

To Adolf Kofi Awua, your support was timely and God-sent; I thank God for you.

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Togbe Ekar, Charles Donkor and Prince Dzahini, your support is valued.

And to Theo Asare, James, Ese, and all who have in various ways supported and encouraged me; I appreciate you all.

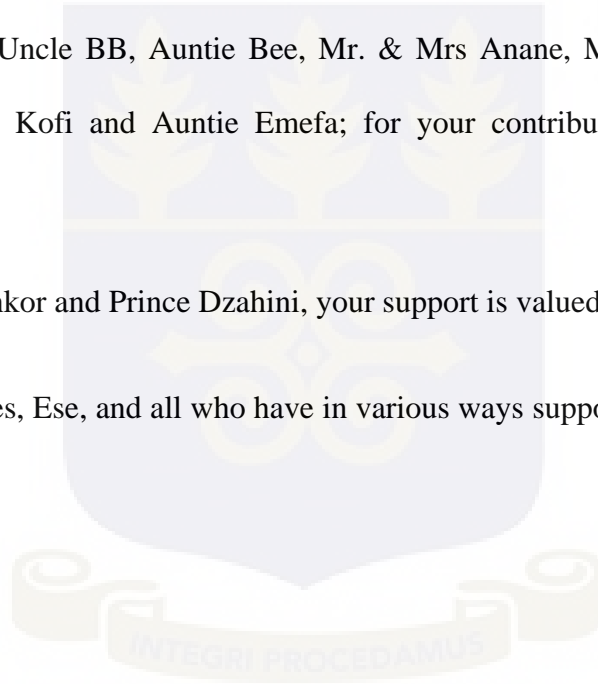


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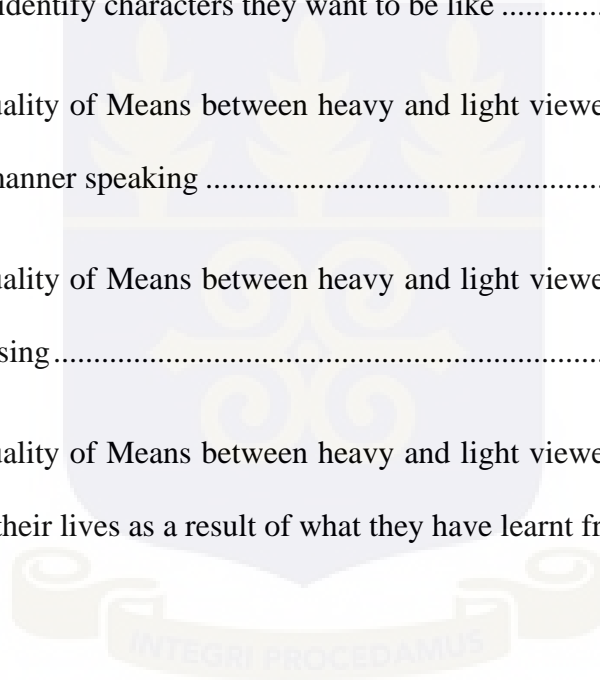
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ABSTRACT

The contents of television programmes have different meanings for teenagers. In order to obtain an understanding of the meanings of such content for teenagers within the Madina municipality, this study examined why teenagers watched television serials, what lessons they learnt and whether they equated situations in the serials with their own real lives. The study employed a quantitative research design that surveyed 120 teenagers selected from the following areas of the Madina Municipality: Madina New Road, Madina Estate and ARS. Data was obtained with a structured questionnaire and analysed. It was found that the intent to learn from the experiences of the characters (79 times, 58.1%) and to entertain themselves (33 times, 24.3%) were the most common reasons the teenagers gave for watching serials. Most of the teenagers (n = 55, 48.2%) preferred to watch drama serials. A very small percentage of them (n = 20, 17.5%) said specific things they watched from serials made them discontented. Conversely, most (64.9% n = 74) of the respondents stated that they were content with their lives as a result of some themes in the serials they watched, which resulted in self-acceptance. There was no difference between heavy and light viewers with regards to identifying with characters and imitating them. There was no difference either with regards to the improvement of speech of respondents, and respondents' state of being content or discontent with their lives. However, heavy viewers (teenagers who watched serials for three or more hours) were more adoptive of dressing codes than the light viewers (those who watched serials for two hours or less).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Serials are series of television programmes (and radio programmes) that rely on a continuing plot that unfolds in a sequential episode by episode fashion. Serials typically follow main story arcs that span entire television seasons or even the full run of the series, which distinguishes them from traditional episodic television that relies on more stand-alone episodes. Worldwide, the soap opera is the most prominent form of serial programming. More and more television networks produce serials currently. In Ghana, most of the television stations show increasing numbers of serials; allowing teenagers to watch more hours of serials a day than before.

In British television, "serial" is also synonymous with the American term "mini-series" – a short-run series with one title and plot. The conclusion of the serial is sometimes, but not necessarily, the end of the television programme as a whole, as sequel serials will sometimes be made.

Serialized storytelling can also be seen in other dramas. Some serialized dramas include '24', 'Prison Break', and 'Lost'. Serials such as 'Alias', 'Ghost Whisperer', 'Grey's Anatomy', 'CSI', 'Angel', the 'X-Files' feature a new case each week that is solved by the end of the episode, but also having an over-arching mystery that receives focus in many episodes. 'Desperate Housewives' also falls into this category.

"Reality television", a type of "format television", is a genre that has become increasingly popular because of its low cost. 'Who Wants To Be a Millionaire' ('Who Wants To Be Rich' in

Ghana), 'Survivor', 'Big Brother' and the 'Idol' series franchise ('Pop Idol' in the UK, 'American Idol' in America, 'Indian Idol' in India, 'Nigerian Idol' in Nigeria and 'Idols West Africa') are some of the adapted programmes.

According to von Feilitzen (2003), young people, especially teenagers, are getting more and more hooked or addicted to serials. She further noted that soap operas, telenovelas and drama serials have also become increasingly daring; sometimes showing a single or a few episodes more about sex, divorce, deceit, revenge, power struggles, shady economic transactions, crime, etc., than a person experiences in her or his whole life.

Baran and Davis (1995) contend that television creates a worldview that, although possibly inaccurate, becomes the reality simply because people believe it to be the reality and base their judgments about their own, everyday worlds on that reality. In view of this, it might be argued that television ultimately helps us construct a type of social reality dependent upon the reality portrayed by media content (cited in Obregon, 2005). From the assertion of Baran and Davis (1995), it was expected that Ghanaian teenagers would believe the serial worldview to be real and were likely to base their assessment and judgment of their own everyday reality on that.

The degree to which children and young people watch soap operas, telenovelas, drama serials and reality television will, naturally, differ from one country to another. The kind of programmes for both children and adults existing television channels offer and the times at which these programmes are telecast may differ from one country to the other. Likewise, such factors as gender, socio-cultural backgrounds, interests, experiences, and reception contexts, may result in differences in children's television viewing from one geographical area to the other.

In Ghana, for example, serials are mainly telecast during the time when young people are presumed to be home (after school hours); between 14:30 GMT and 18:00 GMT. This is a period when parents are mostly not at home and young people have control over the television. Since the available programmes at the time when most Ghanaian teenagers can watch television are basically serials; this influences their viewing habits.

1.1 Television and Serial Programmes in Ghana

Serials currently being broadcast on Ghanaian television include 'The Miser', 'Oforiwaa', 'Efiewura', 'Trotro', 'Barber and Shoeshine', 'Opha K', 'CSI', 'Grey's Anatomy', 'Ghost Whisperer', 'Friends', 'Disclosure', 'The Favourite', 'A Woman of Steel', 'Living with Trisha', 'Illusions', 'How I met your Mother', 'Rhythm City', 'Scandal', 'Tinsel', 'Clinic Matters' and 'Home Sweet Home'.

The liberalisation of the media and de-regulation of telecommunications in Ghana in the 1990s has opened up the space for flow of media products. This has led to the expansion of television and the establishment of several private television networks. In Ghana today, there are about ten free-to-air television stations and several pay-television stations as well.

Media de-regulation has led to an increase in the flow of cultural products, including television programme formats and music. The global-local cultural interaction is leading to a hybrid culture, one, it has been argued, which blurs the boundaries between the modern and the traditional, the high and low culture and the national and the global culture. Robertson (1992) called such a phenomenon 'glocalisation', characterised by the adaptation of western media genres to suit local languages, styles and cultural conventions, using new communication

technologies. Glocalisation has led to the crafting of local serial plots around the hybrid global culture, for example 'Living with Trisha' and 'Desperation'.

The globalisation of the mass media has promoted the exchange of cultures from different parts of the world: dissemination of popular culture, especially movies and television programme genres such as soap operas, action serials, dramedies (a combination of drama and comedy) and other forms of serialized programming. Ghana imports a lot of media products including serials.

In Ghana, foreign content has taken over the larger percentage of the screen, though recently, an attempt has been made at producing and introducing local serials. Most of these serials, however, are just a reproduction of some of the foreign serials, albeit in local settings and with local actors and actresses. Serials like 'Desperation' and 'Living with Trisha' are some local productions that are foreign in terms of culture. These glocalised serials basically have the same cultural values as the foreign ones; this leads to a reinforcement of foreign culture and values.

Audience preference for local programmes in their own language and set in their own cultural environment also amounts to buying rights to imported television serials or films and adapting them to the local language and culture. The formats and production values are imported while the cast and crew are local. However, there is also the dubbing of voices in soap operas from other languages such as Spanish and Portuguese to English.

The presence of foreign culture in our television content was of interest to this researcher. This is because exposing teenagers to some of the cultural practices in these programmes is likely to lead to adoption of some foreign behaviour; which may not be conducive to the environment, or culturally acceptable. Some forms of dressing and speaking, foreign to Ghanaian culture, may be

adopted by some teenagers who are exposed to such foreign content. The researcher is concerned about behaviours such as dressing, speech or manner of speaking, and sexual adventurism, that are likely to be cultivated by teenagers as a result of their exposure to foreign and globalised television content, especially serials.

In order to confirm or otherwise the assumption that a significant proportion of Ghanaian television programmes were serials, this researcher observed programme formats of four free-to-air Ghanaian television stations in July, 2012. These stations were chosen because they were free and easily accessible to anyone who has a television. The study looked at the serials shown on these stations and the average number of serial hours a viewer was exposed to in a day. It was realised that TV3 showed thirty hours of serials a week, which worked out to over four hours of serials a day. Of the thirty hours, five and a half hours of local Ghanaian serials were shown. Viasat1, which showed the most hours of serials, had sixty-nine hours of serials per week; which was approximately ten hours per day. Six hours out of the sixty-nine were local serials. Ghana Television (GTV) showed ten hours of serials in a week; this worked out to an hour and a half a day. One and a half hours of local serials were shown per week out of the ten hours, while etv Ghana showed twenty-four hours of serials in a week. This worked out to three and a half hours a day; two hours of local serials were shown per week on etv Ghana.

From these four television channels surveyed, an average of thirty-three hours a week of serials was telecast; amounting for about twenty-five percent (25%) of television programming.

1.2 Problem Statement

The content of television programming has different meanings for teenagers. According to Mensa-Bonsu (2011), teenagers made serials part of their day and did not normally allow

anything to engage them during the period when serials were broadcast. This indicates how important serials were to them. It is assumed then that teenagers who were exposed to some content of television programming were likely to adopt behaviours and attitudes based on the kind of content they were exposed to.

The research aimed at finding out why teenagers watched television serials, whether they compared situations in the serials with their own real lives, what lessons they learnt and whether the lessons and situations in the serials they watched had any influence on their behaviour. The study looked at the effects of television serials on the behaviours of teenagers.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- i. to explore why teenagers watched television serials
- ii. to find out the category of serials teenagers preferred
- iii. to identify what learning experiences teenagers derived from the serials they watched
- iv. to find out which cultural practices (speech, conduct/manners, and dressing patterns) teenagers learn from the serials they watched
- v. to find out whether teenagers identified with particular characters and wanted or did not want to be like them
- vi. to determine whether teenagers were heavy or light serial viewers (how many hours of serials they watched)

vii. to determine whether teenagers equated the scenes in the serials they watched with reality

1.4 Hypotheses

This research set out to discuss the following hypotheses:

H₁: Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them than light serial viewers.

The hypothesis is based on the cultivation theory where theorists argue on the effects television viewing has on behaviours. Cultivation theorists argue that the more hours of television one watches, the more likely that person is to be influenced by television. Most teenagers spend more of their time with the television, even more than they do with their peers and their books; thereby relegating the traditional agents of socialization. The 2005 World Youth Report indicates that there is a shift from traditional and controlled processes of socialization to more contemporary, two-directional socialization on a global scale (World Youth Report 2005). Rubin and Perse (1987) argued on the affective dimension in audience parasocial interaction. Affective parasocial interaction primarily refers to the level of identification with or rejection of a media character. The more positive identification between viewers and media characters exists, the more likely it is that a character, at the attitudinal and behavioural level, will positively influence viewers. Thus, heavy viewers are likely to identify with characters in serials.

H₂: Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their speech than light serial viewers.

The hypothesis is based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory which posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modelling. The theory emphasises the importance of social learning; that people learn through observing others' behaviours, attitudes,

and outcomes of those behaviours. The study was therefore interested in finding out whether teenagers imitated speech patterns from the serials they watch.

H₃: Heavy serial viewers were more likely to be influenced in their dressing than light viewers.

The social learning theory emphasises the importance of social learning; that people learn through observing others' behaviours. The study is therefore interested in finding out whether teenagers imitated dressing codes and patterns from characters in the serials they watch.

H₄: Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives than light serial viewers.

The hypothesis was built on the social learning theory and the assertion that “people’s conceptions of social reality depend heavily on vicarious experiences, by what they see and hear” (Adoni and Mane, 1984; Signorielli and Morgan 1990; cited in Bandura 1996). Baran & Davis (1995, cited in Obregon, 2005) also assert that television creates a worldview that, although possibly inaccurate, becomes the reality simply because we, as a people, believe it to be the reality and base our judgments about our own, everyday worlds on that reality. From these assertions, it was assumed that teenagers were likely to compare situations in serials with the situations in their own real lives, leading to dissatisfaction with their lives.

1.5 Significance

Television serials have increasingly become popular in Ghana. In the last decade, the adaption and production of serialised television fiction has become a major feature in television programming. This has resulted in an increase in its role in society. The research therefore looked at the genre of television serials and provided information on the role these serials play in the character formation of Ghanaian teenagers, and in shaping their conception of reality.

As cited in Obregon (2005), research has shown that cultivation effects are stronger when television exposure is conceptualized in terms of genre viewing. For instance, heavy viewers of violent television programming might hold stronger perceptions of a violent world than heavy viewers of other type of programming do although the latter might be heavy television viewers as well.

Recent research on media effects in Ghana in particular respect of television and children have been on the genre of the telenovela and soap operas. This research looked at the broad genre of serials, noting that cultivation effects might be programme-specific as opposed to the traditional approach of total television viewing.

This research also provided information on teenagers, their serial viewing habits and the influence of media content on their behaviour and habit formation.

1.6 Operationalisation

For the purpose of this research, the following terms may be explained as follows:

- ❖ Addiction (to serials) – the condition of spending all your free time watching serials because you are so interested in it.
- ❖ Contentment – the state of being happy and satisfied with your situation or what you have
- ❖ Dissatisfaction – not happy or pleased because you do not have something or because something that you would have wanted to happen has not happened
- ❖ Episode – each of the parts of a serial story or broadcast.
- ❖ Heavy viewers – teenagers who view 3 hours or more of serials in a day.

- ❖ Influence – the effect that somebody/something(a serial or a character) has on the way a person(teenager) thinks, behaves or develops
- ❖ Light viewers – teenagers who view less than 3 hours of serials in a day.
- ❖ Madina – area in the Adentan Municipality spanning from ARS. to Madina Estate and New Road.
- ❖ Promiscuous- having many casual (not regular or permanent) sexual relationships
- ❖ Reality – the life of actual people in the community, not fiction.
- ❖ Sadistic-obtaining pleasure from inflicting pain on others, or from being cruel to or hurting another person
- ❖ Serial(s) – story that is broadcast or shown in instalments; series of television programmes that rely on a continuing plot that unfolds in a sequential episode by episode fashion. Serials include telenovelas, soap operas, drama, comedy and action serials.
- ❖ Strong-willed – not giving up easily; determined to do something, even if the odds are against you
- ❖ Teenagers – people between the ages of 14 and 19.

1.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the television genre of serials and their global roots. Also, the contents and format of serials, and some serials that were currently being telecast on Ghanaian television were listed. The significance of the study was also indicated in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This literature review sought to examine the theoretical foundation of studies on media acculturation effects, with emphasis on George Gerbner's (1973) cultivation theory and Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. It also looked at related studies on serials, especially those on telenovelas, in Ghana and other countries.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is concerned with the effects television has on its audiences. The cultivation theory of George Gerbner (1973) and the social learning theory of Albert Bandura (1977) are of specific interest because both theories are about how people learn from watching television and from the things going on in their environments. These theories explain how people learn behaviours, habits, or adopt attitudes or ideas from what they watch on television. Studies on television effects have used the cultivation theory and the social learning theory as basis for research thus, informing the choice of these theories for this research.

2.2 Cultivation Theory

The cultivation theory, sometimes referred to as cultivation hypothesis or cultivation analysis, was developed by Gerbner in the 1960's. Cultivation theorists posit that television has become the main source of storytelling in today's society. Gerbner and Gross (1976) labelled those who watched four or more hours a day as heavy television viewers; those who watched between two

and four hours as moderate viewers, and those who watched less than two hours per day, as light viewers. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and therefore are affected by the “Mean World Syndrome” - an idea that the world is worse than it actually is. The central claim of cultivation theory is that "Television makes specific and measurable contributions to viewers' conceptions of reality" (Gerbner *et al.*, 1980:10). According to Gerbner, the overuse of television is creating a homogeneous and fearful populace.

Gerbner *et al* (1980: 14) started with the argument that television had become the central cultural arm of American society. “The television set has become a key member of the family, the one who tells most of the stories most of the time”. According to them, an average viewer watched television four hours a day and a heavy viewer watches even more. They argued that for heavy viewers, television virtually monopolises and subsumes other sources of information, ideas and consciousness. The effect of all this exposure to the same messages produced what these researchers called cultivation, or the teaching of a common worldview, common roles, and common values.

According to Neuman (1985), by the time a child reaches the end of his or her high school years, he or she would have spent more hours watching television than attending school. He propositioned that most children and adolescents spent more time watching television than they spent playing with or talking to friends and family.

Following Neuman's (1985) assertion and the outcome of this study, it can be summarised that teenagers today spend more time watching television. Some teenagers do not only watch children's programmes and channels; some watch adult programmes, supervised or unsupervised. This goes a long way to influence their perception of the world as television has

been clearly shown to have an impact on the social learning of children, adolescents, and adults (Brocks, Armstrong, & Goldberg, 1988).

Most teenagers spend more of their time with the television, even more than they do with their peers and their books. Thus, the traditional agents of socialisation: the home (family), church, school and society have lost their dominant role in the character formation process of the young generation, especially in the urban areas.

McQuail and Windhal (1993:100) note that cultivation theory presents television as “not a window on or a reflection of the world, but a world in itself”. They continue to say this means that the television creates a world that is realistic in terms of geography and plot, but is skewed in other ways, such as occupations, economic situations, and in love and family situations.

This “television world” gives teens an ideal of how the world should be and they tend to be discontent about their lives and situations, if their world does not match. Their skewed representation of the world may be a deviation of the reality of the situations around them and the environment or community within which they find themselves. Teenagers tend to equate situations in the serials they watch with their real lives and develop a desire to ‘belong’, thinking that being like or trying to be like television characters will make them ‘belong’ or feel like part of their world. Some of them develop ‘fake characters and identities’ in their pursuit of belongingness.

A survey undertaken by Gerbner *et al* (1980) showed that heavy television viewers often give answers that are closer to the way the world is portrayed on television; they tend to believe that a great percentage of the world’s population lives in America and that a greater percentage are

involved in law enforcement, based on the way they are portrayed on television. These researchers realized that the relationship between television viewing and different views of the world could actually be caused by other important variables, including age, education, news reading, and gender (Gerbner and Gross, 1976a), and they attempted to control for those variables.

Within cultivation theory, Gerbner et al. (1980) noticed two main occurrences that illustrate and augment the theory which he termed “mainstreaming” and “resonance”. “Mainstreaming” is when heavy viewers among different demographic groups share a commonality of outlooks cultivated by television that are not shared by light viewers from these different groups (Gerbner et al., 1980). “Resonance” occurs when what is seen on television is similar to one’s life experience and creates a “double dose” of the message which greatly enhances cultivation (Gerbner et al., 1980:15). Gerbner et al. gave an example of what resonance would be if someone was walking home late at night in the city and was mugged. If a few weeks later that same person watched someone on television get mugged, that person would be getting a “double dose” of the message that it is common for people to get mugged.

Thus the experience in real life and of watching television would resonate and create a more intense cultivation of this belief in reality. This person would then believe that being mugged is much more common than it truly is (Cited in Jocelyn McDonnel, 2006). Rivadeneyra, Ward, (2005) posit that:

... TV portrayals contribute directly and indirectly to shaping adolescents’ notions of social reality. In every image, line of dialogue, and behaviour enacted, television conveys important messages about cultural norms and belief systems, providing information about what is valued, expected, and possible.

This leads to the differing worldview and belief systems of teenagers, and people who watch a lot of television. Norms and mores are learnt and adopted from these television programmes, especially, serials.

Rubin and Perse (1987) argued that there are three audience dimensions in parasocial interaction: affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. Affective parasocial interaction primarily refers to the level of identification with or rejection of a media character. The more positive identification between viewers and media characters exists, the more likely it is that a character, at the attitudinal and behavioural level, will positively influence viewers. At the cognitive level, parasocial interaction occurs when viewers not only identify with characters but also process and rationalize a character's specific behaviour in light of his or her own behaviour. Finally, at the behavioural level parasocial interaction may occur when viewers interact with media characters either at the site of reception or outside of it (Cited in Obregon, 2005).

2.3 Criticisms of the Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory has been criticised on the grounds that influence is difficult to measure, especially where there are other media channels aside television like new media, for instance. The multiple media environment makes it difficult to measure the effects and influences of television alone, taking into account the fact that other media may be contributing to certain effects.

Although Gerbner and Gross (1976) acknowledge regular reading of newspapers made a difference in the responses of college educated respondents, they also identify that people under 30 years were more likely to show cultivation effects than older respondents; even though those under 30 years tend to be more educated than those above 30 years.

Gerbner and Gross (1976) feel that this has to do with the fact that the younger ones grew up with the television, while those above 30 years started watching television as adults. The younger ones were likely to have more cultivation effects because they watched television within their identity formation years, while the older ones would have watched television post identity formation. Gerbner and Gross (1976) also indicate that:

...heavy viewing is part and parcel of a complex syndrome which also includes lower education, lower mobility, lower aspirations, higher anxieties and other class, age and sex-related characteristics.

It is possible that people with lower education believe most of the situations portrayed on television, while those with higher education may rationalise some of the situations. People with low education are likely to indulge in low elaboration and vice versa. Research also supports that lower socio-economic groups tend to rely more on television for information than do other groups.

Cultivation theorists also tend to lump television programme content together in assessing television viewing. This method of assessment is not dependable because audiences are selective of television programmes and genre. Content of television programming varies. Audiences tend to practice selective attention and retention in television viewing as well. Obregon (2005) also believes that programme choice affects the perceptions and viewpoints of audiences.

Chandler (1995) opined that the degree to which viewers identify with television characters may influence the level of cultivation effect, rather than just the amount of television one watches.

Also, Potter (1993) identified important areas that needed to be revised in cultivation theory: conceptualization of cultivation indicators and conceptualization of exposure. Potter (1993: 589)

emphasised the need to re-conceptualise cultivation indicators and argued that “there has been a startling lack of attention to the context of frequently occurring actions. For the viewer, the meaning of action lies in its narrative contexts as much as it lies in its frequency”. In other words, he argued for a qualitative approach to imply cultivation effects. Potter also argues that conceptualisation of exposure in cultivation studies has focused on the definition of television exposure in global terms (Cited in Obregon, 2005).

2.4 Research Conducted on the Cultivation Theory

In a study by Obregon (2005), 18 focus group discussions were conducted with groups of 8-10 participants in each session in two Colombian cities. Participants were selected from a high school and a public community college, and provided information about their media and soap opera viewing habits. Participants indicated that they had changed their attitudes toward sex and their sexual behaviour due, in part, to portrayals of HIV/AIDS and related issues in ‘Perro Amor’, a Colombian soap opera.

Male respondents said they had become more faithful to their partners or girlfriends, and reported that they had become more careful regarding their sex life, particularly through the use of condoms and by engaging in monogamous relationships reportedly as a result of what they had seen in ‘Perro Amor’.

Most female respondents indicated that ‘Perro Amor’ had helped them better understand the disease and its content reinforced certain messages taught by their parents such as having stable relationships and avoiding sexual relations before marriage. Several respondents also indicated that ‘Perro Amor’ had helped them approach their love relationships in a different manner and

that the type of situations portrayed in it encouraged them to pursue open discussions of the various aspects of the disease with their boyfriends, friends and relatives (Obregon, 2005).

Signorielli and Lears (1992) examined the relationship between television viewing and sex role attitudes/behaviours from the perspective of cultivation theory. For both the boys and girls, there were moderate to strong statistically significant relationships which increased with television viewing; between attitudes about who should do certain chores, and about whether or not the children said they did chores typically associated with the other sex.

2.5 Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modelling. The theory has sometimes been called a bridge between behaviourist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. The theory emphasizes the importance of social learning. Bandura opines that people learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours. He notes:

Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling; from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977: 22).

Teenagers, who 'socialise' more with television characters than the traditional agents of socialisation tend to observe the behaviours of these characters they 'socialise' with, learn from their attitudes and the outcomes of their behaviours. They observe these characters and learn from them; this possibly serves as a guide for their actions.

Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. The television becomes an environment for the teenager, influencing his or her behaviours and actions. From Bandura's social learning theory, it can be understood that the modern roles of the family have made it difficult for parents and extended family to spend time with children and teach them in their formative years. Most parents are away from the home longer than they are around and teens tend to spend more time with the television. After school, most teens are home alone or with house-helps who have other things to do than to monitor them. Thus, they have the leeway to watch more hours of television and end up learning more about life from the sets than they do from the traditional agents of socialisation. They tend to bond with television characters and pick up lifestyles and attitudes from them. These television characters then become a more present agent in their character formation. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) made the following observation:

People's conceptions of social reality depend heavily on vicarious experiences, by what they see and hear (cited in Bandura 1996).

The more their images of reality rely upon the media's symbolic environment, the greater the social impact. Thus the teen-television interaction is at the fore of the teenager's conception of reality, and this goes a long way to affect their perceptions of reality.

Social cognitive theory, an offshoot of social learning theory emphasizes personal growth through mastery and other enabling experiences as the more normative developmental process (Bandura, 2006). The World Youth Report (2005:85) notes that:

Social institutions can have an important impact on children during the formative period of their lives. Peer interaction has a surreptitious impact on socialization as young people experiment, investigate and test

the principles, rules, customs, and habits of adult cultures outside the realm of adult influence. The shift from traditional and controlled processes of socialization to more contemporary, two-directional socialization on a global scale has brought about a massive increase in the number of hybrid youth cultures. As mentioned previously, this process challenges and breaks down traditions and weakens the succession of generations; presently, the impact of these changes is most apparent in developing countries, where traditional socialization has maintained a strong foothold.

Also, Bandura (2006:16) notes that:

Many of the habits that build the foundation for a healthful life or jeopardize it are formed during childhood and adolescence. For example, unless youngsters take up the smoking habit in their teens, they rarely become smokers in adulthood. Adolescence is a time of experimentation with activities that can compromise the adolescent's future health.

People who smoke or drink heavily are more likely to have picked the habit during their teens, rather than later on in life. Most teenagers, especially at the senior high level tend to experiment with smoking and drinking as part of the adventures of this stage. Some of such teens develop these habits and are unable to stop, thereby taking them on into their adulthood.

While the mass media serve up a heavy dose of sprightly sexual activity, mainly by unmarried partners in uncommitted relationships, societal practices largely foster sexual ignorance and unpreparedness (Brown, Childers, & Waszak, 1990, cited in Bandura 2006). Unlike most other activities, sexual unpreparedness does not dissuade sexual ventures. Teenagers engage in a high rate of sexual activity and are initiating it at a younger age.

According to Koch (1991), our society has always had difficulty providing comprehensive sex education and contraceptive services for its youth; neither is much sexual guidance provided in the home. Because many parents do a poor job of it, most youngsters pick up their sex

information and a good deal of misinformation late in their development primarily from peers and, to a lesser extent, from the media and from the adverse consequences of uninformed sexual experimentation (Cited in Bandura, 2006).

Most teenagers learn about sex from the media; and with the increasingly daring content of television, showing more and more incidences of kissing and sex, more and more teenagers are learning and experimenting with sex and other sexual behaviours.

Jessor (1984, cited in Bandura, 2006) argues that with growing independence during adolescence, some experimentation with risky behaviour is not at all that uncommon. According to Bandura, adolescence is often a period of psychosocial turmoil and people are likely to identify with and practice or adopt behaviours and attitudes they experience within this stage. Young people form identities within this growth stage.

Social learning is a continuous process in which acquired standards are elaborated and modified, and new ones are adopted.

2.6 Criticisms of Social Learning Theory

Because social learning theory posits a dynamic interaction between the environment and the individual, it supposes that one is largely determined by one's situation and that changes in that situation will thus change behaviour. However, it has been argued that for many people, behaviour is much more consistent regardless of situation and that simple changes in environment do not always lead to changes in behaviour.

It has also been argued that because social learning theory places emphasis on cognitive abilities such as modelling and forming expectations, it ignores biological or hormonal determinants.

Some psychologists argue that biological or hormonal processes can largely shape the way people reason and make decisions regardless of past experiences or cognition.

Again, it has been argued that social learning theory ignores innate genetic differences and differences in learning ability. For instance, it has been argued that some people may be innately better at learning some skills than others. Additionally, some people with learning deficiencies may not be as good at observing and modelling behaviour. Social learning theory has been criticized for ignoring these differences.

2.7 Empirical studies on the Social Learning/Cognitive Theory

In a study by Van Zundert, Nijhof and Engels (2009), of smoking habits of adolescents aged 15 to 20 years, 138 adolescents who were highly motivated to quit were surveyed. The purpose of the study was to provide information on the effects of cognitions on smoking to test social cognitive theory as a theoretical framework to predict smoking relapse among daily smoking adolescents. Participants were recruited through advertisements and articles about the study that were published and displayed in newspapers, on websites, and in community centres.

Participants were asked to complete a baseline questionnaire one week prior to starting the 'diary period' during which they were monitored daily for a total of 4 weeks. During the first week of monitoring, participants were instructed to smoke ad lib.

Participants indicated that their willingness to resist smoking was lessened in tempting situations. "When you are watching television", and "When you feel angry", were measured as such tempting situations using a scale. 'Self-efficacy' represented adolescents' perceived ability to resist smoking in tempting situations and was measured using a scale that had been developed for adolescents specifically (Kremers, Mudde, & De Vries, 2001). To the question: "When you

have quit smoking, how easy or difficult would it be for you not to smoke in the following situations?”, respondents could answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult).

Obregon (2005) analyzed how young viewers related to health messages dealing with HIV/AIDS and sexuality issues in two commercial Colombian soap operas. Following a variety of theoretical elements that included social learning theory, parasocial interaction, cultivation analysis, and cultural studies, this research studied the present message effects at attitudinal and behavioural levels and active construction of meaning among young viewers (Obregon, 2005).

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioural patterns, for example smoking. The cognitive factors, outcome expectations, self-efficacy, and intentions are important determinants of behaviour according to SCT (Bandura, 1986).

2.8 Studies on Serials in Ghana

Tella (2004) conducted a study on patronage of foreign soap operas by University of Ghana students. Respondents indicated that they get informed on “very important issues concerning love and family relationships”. Tella (2004) recommends television producers in Ghana to show soaps that reflect positive things about love and family relationships that are beneficial to Ghanaians. Watching of foreign soaps was an important activity in the lives of the sampled students. About 50% of respondents in Tella’s (2004) study stated that they watched foreign soaps because they wanted to learn from the experiences of the characters. She indicated that the respondents appreciated the realism of foreign soaps in general.

A study by Asante (2006), surveyed 260 adolescents (between the ages of 13 and 19), living in two areas (West Tanokrom and Adiembra) within Takoradi, using a 23-item questionnaire as the research instrument. ‘Sun City’ and ‘Cuando Seas Mia’ were the serials that informed the study. In Asante’s (2006) study, audiences in Takoradi gave reasons for patronising soaps, which included: ‘to gain information about life’, ‘identify with characters’ and to ‘give a sense of belonging’. “Watching to gain information about life” was the most frequent reason respondents gave for watching soaps. Respondents believed that soap operas enabled them understand themselves and others better, and the characters served as role models. They also stated that they gain self-education through these soaps. Findings from the study indicated that viewers perceived the soap opera world as a true representation of the world and society; they perceive the soaps as real.

In another study, Ampofo (2009) surveyed fifty female students from the Diploma Two class of the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), using purposive sampling. Ampofo (2009) sought to find out what the respondents perception of telenovelas was, and the impact it had had on their relationships. In this study, 74% of respondents said that telenovelas influenced what ladies expected in their relationships. Findings showed that education on relationships, education in terms of language, fashion, vocabulary, cultural exposure, and shaping the lives of individuals are some positive impacts respondents gained from telenovelas. The study also stated issues including violence, nudity, obscenity, wrong cultural exposure, use of strong language, bad dressing habits, and others as negative impacts telenovelas have on ladies, the youth and society as a whole. The study also showed that most ladies perceived telenovelas as quite real and thus applied whatever they saw while watching to their relationships. This study revealed that majority of ladies are influenced by the luxury, uncommon love and favour, mischievous acts,

and dressing exhibited in telenovelas. Based on the findings, Ampofo (2009) concluded that it was evident that the perception ladies have of telenovelas really influence them in their relationships.

Atuahene (2009) also did a survey of forty young people at Madina Estate, Accra; to find out the impact of soap operas on the youth. 65% of respondents in this study indicated that soap operas introduced them to new fashion trends; 27.5% said it helped them to deal with their relationships; and 7.5% said it helped them to improve on their language skills.

In Mensa-Bonsu's (2011) study on how audiences perceived the influence of foreign soap operas on the Ghanaian urban society in Madina Zongo, respondents indicated how they made time to watch soaps. In Mensa-Bonsu's (2011) study, young people aged between 15 and 24 years said they made time for soaps by finishing chores quickly and while others said they fix it in their personal schedules. Again, while some of the respondents also indicated their willingness to go to any length to watch soaps, others watched it during leisure times as compared to those aged 24 and above.

The 15 to 24 age bracket was found out to be the group that made the most effort to fit soaps into their daily schedules. The most popular reasons why respondents liked their favourite soaps are that soaps are realistic and educative and that, respondents loved the personalities of some of the characters and how they acted in certain difficult circumstances. 50% or more of respondents said that soaps influence their perception of values, love, sex, parenting and estrangement/divorce. They believed that the soaps influence them in these areas.

The highest percentage of respondents who indicated that they were influenced by soaps fall within the 15-24 age bracket; 63% of respondents within this group felt soaps affected their values, 86.9% indicated it influenced their perceptions of love and romance, 63% indicated it influenced their sexual attitudes and taught them about sex.

On the possible negative influences of soaps, Mensa-Bonsu (2011) looked at how respondents perceived soaps to influence the attitudes of young viewers with regards to violence, sexual promiscuity and indecent dressing. Respondents indicated that soaps can influence violence (40.5%), sexual adventurism (66.1%) and dressing (45.3%).

Respondents indicated that soaps affect their dressing in these aspects: to be more fashionable/fashion-conscious, increased their awareness of colour combinations, increased their confidence to wear revealing clothes, dress decently and appropriately, and imitate favourite characters dressing.

2.9 Summary

This chapter discussed Gerbner's (1973) cultivation theory and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (and the social cognitive theory, an offshoot of the social learning theory); as the effects theories underpinning the study. Bandura's (1977) opinion that human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling; and from observing others, supports the hypotheses that teenagers learn from the serials they watch. The cultivation theory also explains how television shapes the teenager's worldview, also contributing to the concept of modelling and learning from serial characters. It also looked at studies conducted on young people and television using these effects theories.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methods used in the study. The chapter outlines the research design, population and sample size for the study and the sampling method. The data collection instrument and techniques have also been discussed. Finally, the chapter described the mode of analysing data collected from the research.

3.1 Research Design

The study was a quantitative research and the survey method was used. This method allowed all members of the population an equal opportunity to be selected. Surveys are used to study vastly populated areas where the entire population cannot be studied. The survey method is the best research approach to be adopted in studying the Madina Township, which has an estimated population of 137,162. The survey method is also suitable for collection of data and the analysis of different variables such as demographic, lifestyle information, attitudes, views and perceptions on life.

3.1.1 Population and Sample Size

The population for the study was teenagers between the ages of 14 and 19, living and or schooling in Madina. Madina is a suburb in the Ga East Municipality, of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana with a population estimate for 2012 standing at 137,162. Its location coordinates are 5°41'0"N 0°10'0"W.

A sample size of 120 was drawn from the population. This consisted of forty (40) respondents each from three (3) randomly-selected communities in the Madina municipality namely: Madina New Road, Estate and ARS. The researcher interviewed teenagers between the ages of 14 and 19 in the areas indicated.

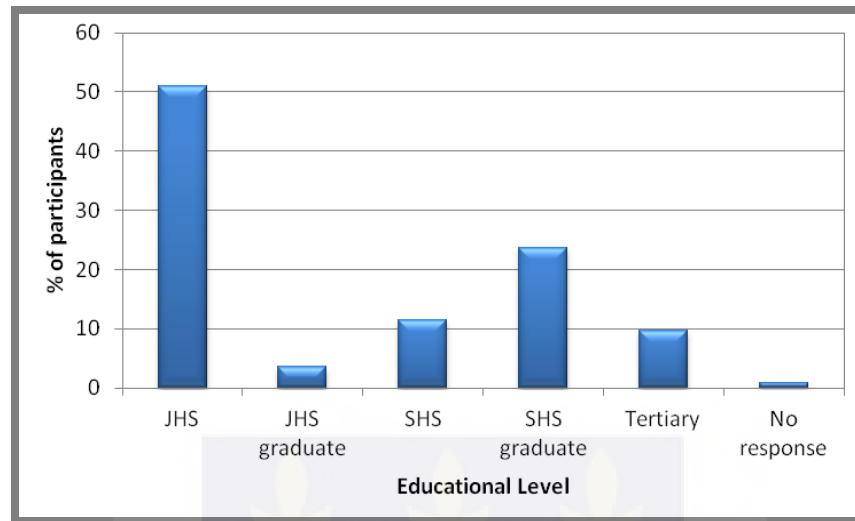
Madina was selected because it is the largest municipality closest to the University of Ghana, where the researcher is studying. The population of Madina can be described as heterogeneous because it has a people of different tribes, religions, educational, and socio-economic levels. This is advantageous to the study because it will provide variety and make the study representative enough to be generalised.

This researcher was interested in this teenage group for this study because their current stage can be described a period of character formation; hence, habits picked up at this stage are likely to be maintained.

3.1.2 Demographic Information

The age distribution of the respondents was categorised as young teenagers (14-16years) and older teenagers (17-19 years). Most of the respondents (62.3%) were older teenagers. On the other hand, the distribution of the gender of the respondents was almost evenly distributed. However, there were slightly more females (51.8%, n = 61) than males (46.5%, n = 57).

Figure 4. 1 Distribution of the Educational Level of the Respondents



With respect to educational status, the data showed that there was a high representation of respondents at the Junior High School (JHS) level, accounting for 50.9 percent ($n = 58$) of the respondents (Figure 4.1). However, JHS graduates were the least represented in this study, constituting 3.5 percent ($n = 4$) of the respondents. Graduates of Senior High Schools (SHS) constituted 23.7 percent ($n = 27$) of the respondents. The complete distributions of the educational levels of the respondents are shown in figure 4.1.

3.1.3 Sampling

The study combined the convenience, quota, and systematic sampling methods to draw the 120 respondents from the population. The three communities of Madina involved in the study, New Road, Estate and A.R.S., were randomly selected and allotted a quota of forty (40) respondents each. The systematic sampling method was employed in identifying the respondents to administer the questionnaires to. For each community, an apparent central location was identified, from where ten teenagers each were selected along the directions of the four major

cardinal points (North, South, East and West). A sampling interval of two (2) was used to select every second person who fell within the age bracket, based on gender. A female was interviewed first, then the next respondent interviewed was a male, then another female till the expected 40 respondents were drawn from each area.

3.1.4 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used in collecting field data for the research. The items on the questionnaire were written in English. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The questionnaire comprised items on respondents' demographics as well as questions related to the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was pre-tested in the Ashaley-Botwe community resulting in a slight modification of the questions.

3.2 Data Analysis

The responses were coded and entered into a database. This database was analyzed using a combination of Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version 16.0 for windows. The demographic data was analysed by determining the distribution of the categories of each set, and presented as charts and tables. Responses to the questionnaires were grouped under the stated objectives of the study. The "Yes" and "No" responses of the questionnaire were coded as 1 and 2 respectively. Pie charts and tables were used to display the frequency distributions of these responses. All responses to open-ended questions were grouped into categories based on their similarities and differences, and the frequency of each category stated. The four hypotheses of the study were tested using the Student T-test at a confidence level of 95% and a two tailed test of significance. The complete T-test table for each hypothesis is presented in appendix B.

3.3 Summary

This chapter outlined the research design, population and sample size. It also outlined the sampling methods that were employed in the study and the data collection instrument, questionnaires. It also indicated Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS as the data analysis databases.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the data collected from teenagers in relation to the effects watching serials have on their behaviours. Frequencies of the responses were organised in relation to the objectives of the study and are presented as tables and charts.

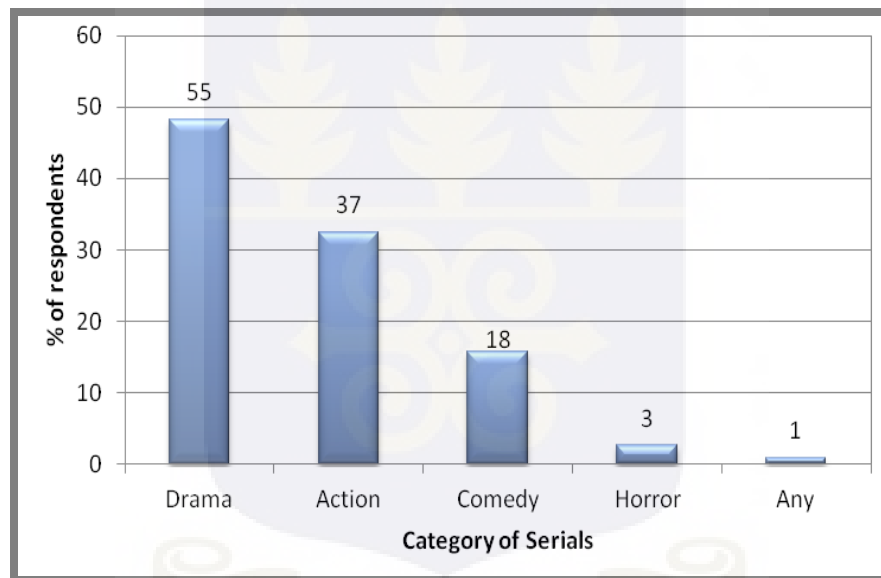
4.1 Why Teenagers Watched Television Serials

Among the reasons why teenagers watched serials, the intent to learn from the characters was the most stated reason; 79 teenagers (58.1%) in this study stated this reason either alone or in combination with another reason. Entertainment was the next most stated reason; mentioned by 33 of the teenagers (24.3%). The following are the other reasons the respondents gave for watching serials: serials are interesting, to learn more English, and to protect their lives. The third most stated reason was that they wanted to find something to talk to their friends about; this reason was stated by 11 respondents (8.1%). Also, 8 of the respondents stated “to while away time” as the reason why they watched television serials. A total of 19 respondents stated two or more of these three reasons as what made them watch television serials. While three (3) respondents stated other reasons, the remaining two (2) did not give any reason for watching television serials.

4.2 Category of Serials Teenagers Preferred

Of the four major categories of serials available to teenagers (drama, comedy, action, and horror), drama serials were the most preferred; by 48.2 percent (n = 55) of the respondents (figure 4.2). Action, comedy and horror serials followed in that order, being preferred by 32.5 percent (n =37), 15.8 percent (n = 18) and 2.6 percent (n = 3) respectively.

Figure 4. 2 Percentage distribution of the category of serials respondents preferred



Only one respondent did not show preference for any of the categories of serials.

4.3 Learning Experiences Teenagers Derived

The influence of serials on the lives of teenage viewers was assessed by the teenagers' disclosure of how discontent or content they were with their lives based on what they learnt watching these serials. From the data collected, 17.5 percent of the respondents (n = 20) were discontented with their lives, since they answered yes to the related question. Conversely, 78.1 percent (n = 89) of

the respondents answered 'No' to the question that enquired if they were discontented because of what they learnt watching these serials.

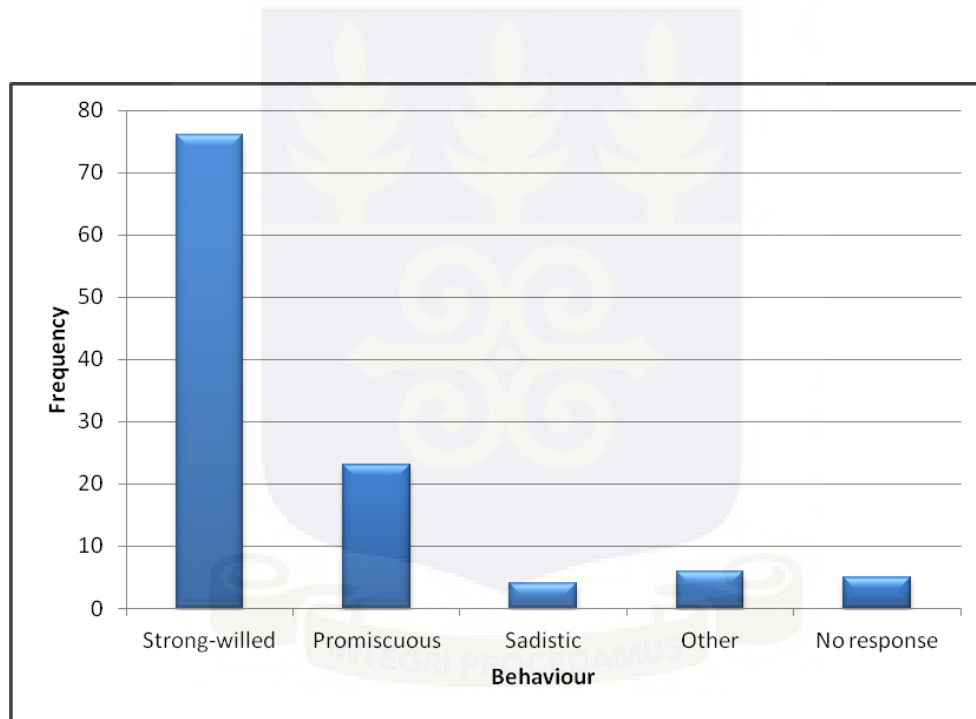
The specific lessons learnt that made these teenagers discontented with their lives included the following; fighting and killing acts; expressions of love; non-punishment for crimes committed; state of poverty; the lack of assistance during crisis and treatment of people; dishonesty; standard of living and wealth; attitudes of wicked characters; and the desire to be like the characters.

On the other hand, 64.9 percent ($n = 74$) of the respondents answered 'Yes' to indicate that they were content with their lives following what they learnt from watching serials. About a third of them, 29.8 percent ($n = 34$) responded with a 'No' to the question that enquired if they were content with their lives (indicating that they were not content). For this study, not being content was not interpreted to mean being discontent since being discontent was determined with a separate question. The differences show that some of the respondents were neither content nor discontent with their lives following what they learnt from the serials they watched.

The lessons that made the respondents content can be summarised primarily as the development of a positive attitude towards life. The respondents specifically stated these reasons as making them content with their lives: learning to stand against all odds and fighting on; the capability of making it through trials and difficulties; knowing that failure is not the end; learning to smile even during crisis; knowing that hard work pays; and the readiness to accept anything that happens. Other responses were summarised as: having hope in life; building faith or trust in God; knowing that the innocent and poor are always vindicated; and that the truth always comes out and prevails.

Respondents also indicated self-acceptance as a lesson that made them content. They stated that the knowledge that the poor characters could be content made them realise that money was not everything. They also learnt that no situation was permanent, to appreciate the opportunity of being educated, and developing the attitude of being patient, obedient, comforting and cheerful. Others also stated that being with their mothers (or parents), knowing people's experiences, the state of poverty and the situation of orphaned children made them satisfied with their lives.

Figure 4. 3 Behaviours learnt from watching serials



The study further investigated whether watching serials had taught the respondents to be promiscuous, strong-willed, and or sadistic (Figure 4.3). It was noted that most of the respondents 66.7 percent ($n = 76$) had learnt to be strong-willed as a result of watching serials. However, quite a portion, 20.1 percent ($n = 23$) of them had also learnt to be promiscuous and a few to be sadistic, 3.5 percent ($n = 4$). Figure 4.3 presents the complete distribution.

It was noted that the respondents stated that they learnt behaviours other than those specified in the questionnaire. These were summarised as self-related behaviours and behaviours in relating to others. Self-related behaviours included: being adventurous, confident, strong, cautious, vigilant, faithful, friendly, kind, respectful, determined, motivated, unpredictable, soft-spoken, obedient, generous, hard working, always being happy within oneself, being content with what one had, and not worrying about worldly things. Behaviours in relating to others also included: always looking presentable, informing people around them about their movements, accommodating others, loving other people, respecting the opinions of others, being good, how to talk to people, and how to choose the right friends.

4.4 Cultural Practices Teenagers Imitated From Serials

The study assessed the influence of watching serials on the dressing of respondents. From the data collected and analysed, 50.9 percent of the respondents (n = 58) said they had adopted a specific way of dressing or a dress code from watching serials. Conversely, 35.1 percent (n = 40) of the respondents stated that they had not picked up any form of dressing or dress code, 14.0 percent (n = 16) did not respond to the assessment.

Respondents, who stated that they had adopted a dressing code, indicated the adoption or appreciation of the wearing of formal ('office') clothes, which includes wearing suits, formal or office wear, petit-coat and trousers, and shirts. This was the commonest behaviour adopted, stated by 24 of the respondents. Also, observing decency in dressing was noted to have been adopted by 16 respondents. They stated that they had learnt to tuck in their shirts, wear ironed clothes, decent skirts, and long dresses, among others. Dressing with simple and casual clothes while looking nice and smart was adopted by 7 respondents. Also, 7 respondents stated that they

had adopted dressing with fashionable clothes and become conscious of colour combinations. Other respondents said they had adopted the wearing of skinny or slim fit clothes, short or indecent clothes, wearing clothes of other cultural origins and appreciation for African dressing or culture.

The influence of serials on the speech of the respondents was also assessed and presented. It was realised from the data that 63.2 percent (n = 72) of the respondents stated that their speech or manner of speaking have been influenced, while 34.2 percent (n = 39) stated that their speech was not affected. However, 2.6 percent of the respondents did not state whether or not there was any influence on their speech.

The specific areas of their speech that were influenced were coded to include four major categories. The first category included statements that indicated that watching serials had improved their vocabulary and choice of words. This was stated by five respondents (4.4%). The second category had to do with the manner of speaking to others. Here, 22 respondents (19.3%) indicated that the way they speak with others was positively influenced by watching serials. Some stated that they had learnt not to speak harshly, not to be rude, not to give cheeky answers, to say sorry, to say thank you and to talk humbly and politely, among others. Thirdly, 13 respondents (11.4%) stated that the quality of their spoken English had improved as a result of watching serials. The respondents specifically stated that they had learnt to speak good English, learnt the right way to pronounce words and use right grammatical expressions, among others. Finally, seven respondents (6.1%) also said their communication skills had improved; they stated that they had learnt to speak fast, learnt to speak well in public, learnt more styles of speaking

English, to compose their thoughts before speaking, to be more articulate and to always say positive things about themselves.

4.5 Identification With Characters

Teenagers who watched serials have the tendency to like some of the characters so much so that they would like to be like them. Table 4.1 shows that a majority, 75.4% (n = 86) of the respondents indicated that they had identified a character they wanted to be like while 23.7 percent (n = 27) had not.

Table 4. 1 Proportion of respondents who identified with characters in serials and wanted to be like them or otherwise

	Frequency	Percentage
Identified a character and wants to be like him/her	86	75.4
Have not identified any character	27	23.7
No response	1	0.9
Total	114	100

The respondents further stated what they liked about the characters they had identified and these were summarised into categories. Respondents stated personal traits of the characters as the most liked attributes (n = 38) by the respondents. They indicated that these characters were bold, brave, calm, cunning, cheerful, confident and straight-forward, disciplined, fast, happy and humble, intelligent, kind, of good character, obedient, patient, patriotic, respectful, sincere,

smart, strong, strong-willed and truthful. Character's belief in God and in His word was also stated.

The next most common attribute of the characters was stated by 14 respondents as the behaviour of the characters towards others which included statements such as 'the characters always seek the welfare of others first'. They also indicated attributes such as strictness, being caring, friendly, helpful to others, good to children, generous and forgiving. Also, they motivate others, play fair and do not discriminate. Some of the responses (n = 14) were not specific about the attributes of the character(s); they stated attitude, speech, behaviour, composure, performance and dressing. They also liked the way the characters carry themselves and express themselves. Seven (7) respondents indicated that they liked some characters for their promiscuity and the sexual acts they performed. The respondents stated that the way the characters were loved, the way they kissed, how romantic they were, their promiscuous nature, and how good they are at being players made them like them.

Some respondents also liked the attitude or approach to life of some characters. They stated that the characters were always thinking about new things, the way they handled situations, their high levels of determination, perseverance, flexibility, and how they handled change were attractive to them. The least common attribute of the characters, liked by 4 respondents, was their sense of humour.

Contrary to assumptions that teenagers generally imitate bad behaviours from characters, it was found that most {69.3% (n = 79)} respondents stated that characters they did not like were those who exhibited bad behaviours, traits and conducts. The respondents indicated things about the character(s) they do not like. These attributes of the characters, as stated by the respondents,

were also summarised into categories. The personal traits of the characters was the category most disliked. The 48 respondents (42.1%) whose statements were in this category stated that the characters were mostly arrogant, covetous, cowards, cruel, deceptive, disobedient, disrespectful, envious, gossips, greedy, angry, individualistic, jealous, liars, naïve, pretentious, rude, selfish, snitchers, lazy and wicked.

Nineteen (19) respondents (16.7%) did not like the conduct of the characters towards others. These conducts included lying, killing, cheating, always plotting evil, committing murder, cheating on friends, cheating on their girlfriends, always trying to discourage people, and trampling on others because of money or social status. Six of the respondents (5.3%) disliked the promiscuity and sexual acts of the characters. They particularly disliked too much kissing, profanity, vulgarity and sex or rape. Furthermore, 4 respondents did not like the sense of humour and attitudes to life of some characters, stating that the characters took serious matters lightly and 'like fooling most of the time'.

4.6 Time Spent Watching Serials

Regarding the time teenagers spent watching serials (Table 4.2), it was noted that a majority, 66.7 percent ($n = 76$) of them would only spend about an hour a day watching serials. Only a few of them, 21.1 percent ($n = 24$) spent two hours while even fewer, 12.3 percent ($n = 14$) spent three or more hours watching serials in a day. Thus, most of the teenagers surveyed in this study were light viewers.

Table 4. 2 Time spent watching serials in a day

Time	Frequency	Percentage
1 hour	76	66.7
2 hours	24	21.1
3 or more hours	14	12.3
Total	114	100

Also, the study further assessed whether respondents would prefer to spend time watching serials rather than with their family and friends. A greater proportion of the respondents, 57.0 percent ($n = 65$) stated that they would rather not watch serials relative to spending time with family and friends; meaning they would rather spend time with family and or friends. Also, 41.2 percent stated that they would rather watch serials than spend time with family and friends.

4.7 Test of Study Hypotheses

All the hypotheses of this study were tested using the student t-test at a confidence level of 95%. A p value of 0.05 or less indicates a statistically significant difference. For each hypothesis, a summary table of the analysis is presented.

Hypothesis One

H_1 Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them than light serial viewers.

This hypothesis is based on the cultivation theory where theorists argue on the effects television viewing has on behaviours. Cultivation theorists argue that the more hours of television one watches, the more likely that person is to be influenced by television. Thus, heavy viewers are

likely to have more parasocial interaction with television characters, leading to identification with these characters and the increased desire to be like them.

The level of significance set for this test was 0.05 and the null hypothesis was:

H₀ Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers and those who are light serial viewers are equally likely to identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them.

The t-test presented in Table 4.3 examines this research hypothesis.

Table 4.3: T-test for Equality of Means between heavy and light viewers of serials with respect to how likely they are to identify characters they want to be like.

Group Statistics – Independent Samples T-test						
	How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error	Sig. (p value)
Identify characters in serials and want to be like?	< 3.00 (light)	99	1.0714	0.26726	0.07143	0.118
	>= 3.00 (heavy)	14	1.2626	0.44230	0.04445	

According to the means, there is a difference of 0.1912 between heavy and light viewers with regard to how likely they were to identify characters they wanted to be like. As depicted in Table 4.3, teenagers who were heavy viewers were more likely to identify characters they wanted to be like (mean of 1.2626) than light viewers (mean of 1.0714). However, this difference was not statistically significant since the *p* value ($p = 0.118$) at a 95% confidence level was greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers and those who are light serial viewers were equally likely to identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them” was accepted. Consequently, the research hypothesis that “Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them than light serial viewers” is not supported by the data collected in this study.

Hypothesis Two

H₁: Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their speech than light viewers.

The hypothesis was based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which posits that people learn by observing and imitating others. The researcher wanted to find out the extent to which observations of characters' speech or manner of speaking in serials were imitated by teenagers.

The level of significance set for this test was 0.05 and the null hypothesis was:

H₀: Heavy and light serial viewers are equally likely to be influenced in their speech.

The t-test presented in Table 4.4 examines this research hypothesis.

Table 4.4: T-test for Equality of Means between heavy and light viewers of serials with respect to influence on speech/ manner speaking

Group Statistics - Independent Samples T-test						
	How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error	Sig. (p value)
Have serials influenced your speech/manner of speaking	< 3.00	97	1.3571	0.49725	0.13289	0.962
	>= 3.00	14	1.3505	0.47961	0.04870	

The closer the mean was to 2.00, the more influenced the speech/manner of speaking was.

As shown in Table 4.4 and regarding the influence of speech, heavy viewers recorded a mean of 1.3505 as compared to a mean of 1.3571 for light viewers. However, this difference was not statistically significant since the *p* value was 0.962 (> 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that "Heavy and light serial viewers are equally likely to be influenced in their speech" was accepted. This means that the research hypothesis that "Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their speech than light viewers is not supported by data".

Hypothesis Three

H₃: Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their dressing than light viewers.

This hypothesis was to determine whether teenagers also imitated dressing and fashion patterns as indicated by the social learning theory. This was based on the researcher’s assertion that teenagers learn from their environments, as young people both shape and are shaped by the society around them, they are likely to imitate things they observe including dress patterns and fashion modes.

The level of significance set for this test was 0.05 and the null hypothesis was:

H₀: Heavy and light serial viewers are equally likely to be influenced in their dressing.

The t-test presented in Table 4.5 examines this research hypothesis.

Table 4.5: T-test for Equality of Means between heavy and light viewers of serials with respect to influence on their dressing.

Group Statistics						
	How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error	Sig. (p value)
Has watching serials influenced your dressing?	< 3.00	98	1.2857	0.46881	0.12529	0.04
	>= 3.00	14	1.5714	0.49742	0.05025	

The closer the mean was to 2.00, the more influenced the dressing was.

Heavy viewers recorded a greater mean of 1.5714 as compared to the mean, 1.2857 of the light viewers with respect to the likelihood of their dressing being influenced (Table 4.5). This difference was shown to be statistically significant with a $p = 0.04$ (Table 4.5). Therefore, the null hypothesis that “Heavy and light serial viewers are equally influenced in their dressing” was rejected. Since the heavy viewers recorded a higher mean, it can be said that they were more

likely to be influenced in their dressing. In conclusion, the research hypothesis that “Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their dressing than light viewers” is accepted because it is supported by the data gathered in this study.

Hypothesis Four

H₄: Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives than light serial viewers.

This hypothesis was to test the assertion that “people’s conceptions of social reality depend heavily on vicarious experiences, by what they see and hear” (Adoni and Mane, 1984; Signorielli and Morgan 1990; cited in Bandura 1996). It also stems from the claim that television creates an ideal worldview that, although possibly inaccurate, becomes the reality simply because people believe it to be reality and base their judgments about their own, everyday worlds on that reality. Thus, there was the probability that teenagers in this study would base their conceptions of reality on the serial worldview, leading to dissatisfaction with their lives.

The level of significance set for this test was 0.05 and the null hypothesis was:

H₀: Heavy and light serial viewers are equally likely to be dissatisfied with their lives.

The t-test presented in Table 4.6 examines this research hypothesis.

Table 4.6: T-test for Equality of Means between heavy and light viewers of serials with respect to being discontent with their lives as a result of what they have learnt from watching serials.

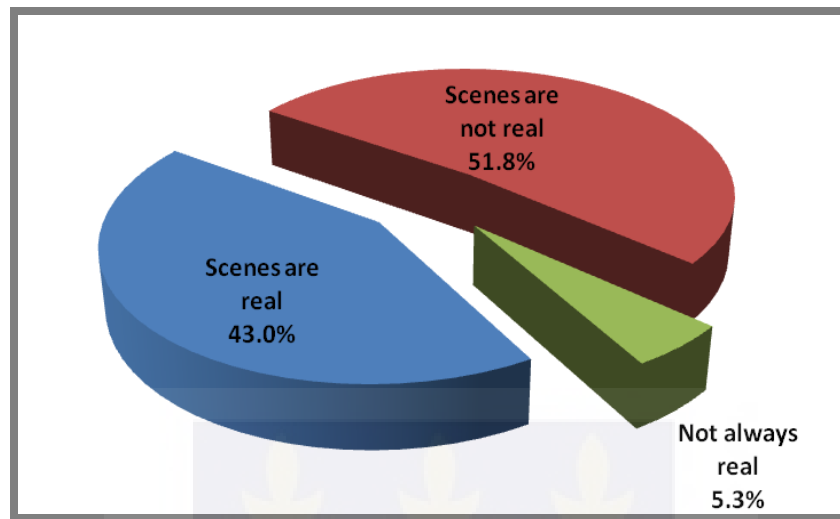
Group Statistics						
	How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error	Sig. (p value)
Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you discontent with your life?	>= 3.00	14	1.7143	.46881	.12529	0.294
	< 3.00	95	1.8316	.37623	.03860	

The heavy viewers recorded a slightly lower mean, 1.714 compared to the light viewers, who recorded a mean of 1.8316 (Table 4.6). However, this difference was not statistically significant (p value of 0.294). The null hypothesis that “Heavy and light serial viewers are both equally likely to be dissatisfied with their lives” was accepted. Consequently, the research hypothesis that “Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives than light serial viewers” was rejected because it was not supported by the data gathered in this study.

4.8 Associating Happenings In Serials With Reality

This study examined the proportion of the teenagers who believed that the scenes or happenings in the serials they watched were real or otherwise. The belief in the reality of situations in serials affects teenagers’ conception of the real world; it tends to give them a distorted perception of the world.

Figure 4.4 Proportion of respondents who believed the scenes in serials were real



From the data gathered, 51 respondents (51.8 %) were of the view that the scenes or happenings in the serials were not real (Figure 4.4). It was noted that 43.0 percent of respondents (n = 52) believed that the scenes or happenings were real. Only a small proportion of the respondents 5.3 percent (n = 6) did not respond to this assessment. Therefore, it can be said that the teenagers in this study were of the view that the scenes or happenings in the serials they watched cannot be said to be real to them.

4.9 Discussion

Based on the skewed distribution of the two age groups in this study, the findings of this study can be said to be representative of the views of older teenagers (17 -19 years) to a greater extent. Also, these views are largely of those currently at the JHS level of education, since they constituted half (Figure 4.1) the respondents of the study. However, the findings of this study are not biased by gender since there was an almost even representation of male and female

respondents. The over-representation of respondents at the JHS level was based on the fact that the recruitment point within the community was close to a basic school; furthermore, older teenagers who were expected to be at the SHS level of education were still at the JHS level.

Cultivation theorists argue on the effects television viewing has on behaviours. Television has become a source of education and entertainment. This view was confirmed by the findings of this study where 82.4 percent of respondents indicated that they watched serials to educate themselves with the experiences of the characters as well as for entertainment (Section 4.3). Also, and as discussed by Brocks, Armstrong, & Goldberg, 1988, watching television impacts on the social learning of children and adolescents, thus, television has become the ideal teacher for society, especially teenagers. Following this claim, it is therefore understandable that the type of serials most of the teenagers preferred to watch was drama, which is designed to portray different life experiences and therefore holds a high potential of having lessons for teenagers.

Respondents indicated the intent to learn from the characters the most times; 79 teenagers (58.1%). Since social learning was the utmost reason why teenagers watched serials (Section 4.3), it was important to find out how these learning experiences have influenced their lives. Most of the respondents (78.1 percent) were not discontented with their lives in this study; although McQuail and Windhal (1993; cited in Chandler 1995) have noted that watching television and for that matter serials in this case, presents teenagers with an ideal world view which tends to make them discontent with their lives. This finding was confirmed when the converse, being content, was separately analysed and 64.9 percent of the respondents said they were content with their lives.

A closer look at the reasons stated by the respondents showed that although they were presented an ideal worldview through watching serials, they are well aware that it takes considerable effort such as hard work, and persistence in achieving one's dream even in the face of difficulties for them to achieve that ideal world. This suggests or indicates that the content of recent serials as compared to television programmes in the early 90s have been improved such that the serials do not only portray the ideal world but also how they can achieve it; which will make viewers recognise their potential of being able to get to that ideal world. For example, watching a serial where a poor girl works through difficult situations and overcomes a wicked character to later become independent, rich, and powerful, is likely to encourage a teenager in a similar situation to think and hope that his or her life has a chance of becoming better.

The study investigated specifically if the respondents have learnt to be strong-willed (Marie Cruise in 'Wild at Heart'), promiscuous (Romina in 'In the Name of Love') and or sadistic (Evana in 'A Woman of Steel' and Carlota in 'In the Name of Love'), because the serials being aired on Ghanaian television have these characteristics obviously portrayed. The teenagers can be said to value strong-will more than the other two characteristics possibly because they think it is expected of them and it is possible for them to live their lives as such. As posited by Rivadeneyra, Ward (2005), television provides information about what is valued, expected, and possible, leading to the differing worldview and belief systems of teenagers, and people who watch a lot of television. Consequently, specific personal norms are learnt and adopted from these television programmes, especially, serials. Also, in a study by Obregon (2005), teenagers (high school and community college students) were shown to have adopted different new attitudes towards sex and their sexual behaviour due in part to watching 'Perro Amor', a Colombian soap opera on television. Signorielli and Lears (1992) have shown that teenagers

adopted roles or chores, thinking it was expected of them as a result of watching programmes that showed gender roles for boys and girls. A close look at the attributes they have learnt shows that the teenagers learnt more self-related attitudes than attitudes for relating to others.

More of the respondents (50.9%) said they had adopted specific dress codes compared to those who had not (35.1%). This reverse relationship suggests that teenagers within this study area tend to be selective of what they adopt from watching serials. The nature and distribution of the specific dress codes they stated that they had adopted indicates that they were more selective of formal or official dressing, which is not common among teenagers in Ghana and of decent dressing, as most teenagers today are said to dress indecently most often. Thus, it can be said that watching current serials has positively influenced teenagers in their dressing; contrary to earlier serials like 'Acapulco Bay' and 'Sunset Beach', which portrayed indecent dressing.

The observation regarding the influence on speech was different relative to that of dressing in that, majority of teenagers (63.2%) were influenced in their speech (Table 4.4). However, the selectivity of the nature of speech influenced was also noted, i.e. some teenagers stated an influence in their manner of speaking to other persons, their choice of words, and others stated an improvement in the quality of their spoken English. This selective adoption would, just as in the case of dressing, be purposive of their formation of their peculiar identity. Also, Obregon (2005) has shown that audiences tend to practice selective attention and retention in television viewing.

Observations in this study (Table 4.3) show that the affective parasocial interaction as discussed by Rubin and Perse (1987) was evident where a majority of the respondents indicated that they had identified characters they liked {75.4 percent (n = 86)} as well as those they did not like {69.3 percent (n = 79)}. With respect to the cognitive parasocial interaction between viewers of

serials and characters, the most common character-specific behaviours the respondents processed or rationalised in light of their own behaviour were the personal traits of the characters; examples of the personal traits they liked to imitate included being bold, brave, calm, cunning, cheerful, confident, straight-forward, disciplined, fast, happy and humble. Those that they did not like to imitate included being arrogant, covetous, cowards, cruel, deceptive, disobedient, disrespectful, envious, gossips, and greedy, among others. This confirms the assertion by Bandura (1977:22) that:

Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling; from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

Observations of this study as presented in section 4.8 indicate that only few (12.3%) of the respondents were heavy viewers, spending three or more hours a day watching serials while most of them (66.7%) were light viewers, spending an hour or two a day watching serials. This observation conforms to the other finding that most (57.0%) of the respondents would not rather spend time watching serials than spend time with family and friends. However, the 41.2 percent of the respondents who stated they would rather spend time watching serials is higher.

This implies that the explanations of the social cognitive theory that the traditional agents of socialisation: the home (family), church, school and society have lost their role in the character formation process of the young generation in the USA may not completely and conclusively apply with regards to the influence of watching serials among teenagers in the community of this study. It is possible that most of the parents and extended family of these teenagers are not mostly away from the home longer than they are around. Also, the roles most of these teenagers

are likely to play in maintaining the family in Ghana are likely to limit the time they get to spend watching television in general and serials in particular.

As against the statement of Gerbner *et al* (1980:14) that “The television set has become a key member of the family, the one who tells most of the stories most of the time”, it can be stated, based on the findings of this study, that the serials on Ghanaian televisions are gradually becoming an influential agent of socialisation for teenagers, almost equalling to the influence of family and friends.

The study further investigated whether there were differences in the responses made in this study with regards to the amount of time teenagers spent watching serials. The null hypothesis that heavy and light serial viewers equally identified characters they wanted to be like, was accepted since the p value at 95% confidence level was greater than 0.05 ($p = 0.118$). In other words, both heavy and light serial viewers identified characters they wanted to be like to the same extent. It can also be said that the identification of characters by these serial viewers is not influenced by how long they watched serials in a day. The findings show that teenagers identified with characters anyway, irrespective of their being light or heavy viewers.

The null hypothesis of hypothesis two was also accepted; it states that ‘heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their speech than light serial viewers’. The p value at a 95% confidence level was 0.96. This therefore implies that the influence on teenagers’ speech by serials does not depend on how long in a day the teenagers watch serials. Similar deductions hold true for the null hypotheses that heavy and light serial viewers are both equally content and discontent with their lives as a result of watching serials. The p values at 95% confidence level were both greater than 0.05. This implies that whether a teenager becomes content or discontent

as a result of watching serials is irrespective of how long in a day he or she watched the serial. As discussed earlier, the teenagers stated specific reasons why they identified characters and wanted to be like them, which part of their speech was influenced, why they were either content or discontent with their lives.

The study however rejected the null hypothesis that heavy viewers and light viewers were equally influenced in their dressing since the p value at 95% confidence was less than 0.05 ($p = 0.04$). This implies that the more time these teenagers spend watching serials a day, the more their dressing was likely to be influenced.

Although the central claim of the cultivation theory is that "Television makes specific and measurable contributions to viewers' conceptions of reality" (Gerbner *et al.*, 1980:10), in this study of teenagers and serials, most of the responses (Figure 4.4) indicated that the teenagers were aware that scenes/happenings in the serials were not real. Also, a chi-square analysis indicated that there was no significant association ($p > 0.05$) of reality with the happenings in serials by the teenagers studied. This implies that the skewed representation of the world in television programmes, in this case serials, was considered as a deviation from the reality of the situations around the teenagers and the environment or community within which they find themselves (McQuail and Windhal, 1993; cited in Chandler 1995).

Also, other important variables not investigated in this study, such as socioeconomic background, exposure to news, and watching other teenager-centred educative or entertainment programmes, and other media like the internet, may have contributed to the observation. As indicated by Gerbner and Gross (1976), the relationship between television viewing and different views of the real world could actually be caused by other important variables and the attempts

teenagers make to control for those variables. In Gerbner's (1980) study, there was data to show that lower socio-economic groups tend to rely more on television for information than do other groups.

The data gathered and analysed in this study does not support the argument that heavy viewers are likely to adopt behaviours from television than light viewers. Teenagers in this study indicated they had been influenced by serials, irrespective of whether they were light or heavy viewers. Exposure to television, no matter how short or long, results in some sort of influence.

4.10 Summary

The chapter presented the findings of the study according to the objectives stated and hypotheses. It was evident that teenagers mainly watched television serials with the intention to learn from the experiences of the characters and preferred drama serials. While most of the respondents were not discontent but content with their lives following what they learnt, they also identified characters they wanted to be like.

The difference in the likelihood for identification of characters teenagers want to be like, the influence on the speech of respondents, and being content or discontent with life, among heavy viewers was not different compared to light viewers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Summary

The study investigated why teenagers watched television serials, whether they equated situations in the serials with their own real lives, what lessons they learnt from them and what traits or attitudes they picked from the serials they watched. To this end, the study identified the categories of serials teenagers preferred and the kind of practises such as living standards, speech, conduct, and dressing or dress codes teenagers try to adopt from these serials. Also, the study found out whether teenagers who watched serials identified particular characters that they either wanted to or did not want to be like, and whether they equated the scenes and happenings in these serials to reality. The study also tested hypotheses that the time teenagers spent watching serials influenced their identification with characters. Influences on speech, dressing, and whether they were content or discontent with their lives, were also tested.

Data was obtained by the use of questionnaires administered to a random sample of 120 teenagers within the age categories of 14 and 16 years, and 17 and 19 years. Analyses of frequencies were used to describe most of the responses and presented in the form of tables, pie and bar charts.

Of the 120 participants recruited for the study, 114 of them had their responses analysed. While the distribution of gender was almost balanced; females (51.8%) and males (46.5%), there were

more older teenagers (62.3 percent) than younger teenagers (33.3 percent). There was an over-representation of teenagers at the JHS educational level among the respondents.

Drama was the most watched type of serials (48.2 percent). Only a small proportion (17.5 percent) of the respondents said they were discontent. While most of the teenagers had their speech and dressing influenced and had identified characters they liked or disliked, the time they spent watching serials in a day did not significantly make a difference to these; except in the case of dressing.

Most (66.7%) of the respondents were noted to be light viewers of serials, spending an hour or two a day watching serials. Also, slightly more respondents (57.0%) spent time with family and friends relative to the time they spent watching serials. The difference in the proportion of respondents who were of the view that the scenes in the serials were real (51.8%) and those of the view that it was not (43.0%) was small.

5.1 Limitation of the Study

The study was limited by the extent to which the interview mode, which was applied in the data collection, prevented the participants from giving other responses, apart from those indicated in the questionnaire; and in expressing themselves as they would have wanted to. The structured questionnaire used did not give respondents the opportunity to express themselves as they would have wanted to with all the questions. The sample size of 120 used for this study was relatively small, which was as a result of constraints in the duration and the budget available for the study. With regards to the sample size, although 120 questionnaires were administered, the responses analysed were 114 (95.0%). This was due to the fact that though the inclusion criteria for the study was whether the respondents watched serials, six (6) respondents were disqualified at a

point in the administration process when their responses indicated that they did not devote enough time to serials to have their responses analysed. Some of those disqualified indicated that they watched just an hour or less of serials in a week, which did not qualify them even as light viewers. Further analyses were performed with the responses of the 114 participants.

The distribution of the age categories and educational level of teenagers was skewed towards the older teenagers and the JHS level respectively and therefore the conclusion of this study might not apply completely to teenagers in general. Other factors such as the exposure of these teenagers to other media such as the internet, which are likely to influence (confound) the effects of watching serials on the teenagers were not included in this study and as such the findings and conclusions of this study must be considered in context with less generalisation.

5.2 Conclusion

It was identified in this study that teenagers watched television serials mainly to learn from the characters as well as for entertainment. To achieve these, teenagers preferred to watch mostly drama serials; action was the second most preferred genre, then comedy and horror followed in that order. The living conditions identified by the teenagers did not make them discontent but rather made them content with their lives. They indicated they were not dissatisfied as a result of watching serials.

Respondents indicated that watching serials influenced their speech, particularly the manner in which they speak to others positively; although it did not influence their overall dressing patterns. However, they indicated that they imitated specific dress codes they see or observe from the serials they watch.

Teenagers who watched serials identified with particular characters that they either want or do not want to be like. They noted the specific personal traits of the characters that made them want to be or not want to be like them. However, the teenagers can be said not to often equate the scenes in the serials they watch with reality.

According to the cultivation theory, heavy viewers are more likely to develop television cultivation effects or be more influenced than light viewers. However, hypothesis one, which states that “Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them than light serial viewers” was not supported because from the data gathered, both heavy and light viewers indicated that they had identified with characters in serials. Hypothesis two, which states that “Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their speech than light viewers” was also not supported and the null hypothesis that “Heavy and light serial viewers are equally likely to be influenced in their speech” was accepted. The fourth hypothesis that “Teenagers who are heavy serial viewers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives than light serial viewers” was also not supported, thus the null hypothesis that “Heavy and light serial viewers are equally likely to be dissatisfied with their lives” was accepted. It can thus be concluded from this study that both light and heavy viewers are likely to develop cultivation effects.

However, with the third hypothesis, “Heavy serial viewers are more likely to be influenced in their dressing than light viewers” , the difference was shown to be statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “Heavy and light serial viewers are equally influenced in their dressing” was rejected. Since the heavy viewers recorded a higher mean, it can be said that they were more likely to be influenced in their dressing.

From the analysis, it can be concluded that the cultivation theory about heavy and light viewers may not work in every culture and situation. Furthermore, length of exposure to television may not necessarily lead to cultivation effects. There may be other factors, like use of other media and environment, that may account for some of the behavioural changes in teenagers.

The statistics on hypothesis one, that teenagers identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them and hypothesis two that serial viewers are likely to be influenced in their speech attest to the assertion by the social learning theory that people learn from their environments.

5.3 Recommendations

The study's findings revealed that teenagers were likely to learn from the characters and situations in serials; they also learn and imitate values from the serials they watched. The researcher recommends that television producers and programme directors be encouraged to produce and show more serials with values desirable for the teens to emulate in order to help in their social learning and identity formation.

This dissertation studied the characteristics teenagers adopt from serials, and other areas of influence like dressing and speech; a more in-depth study could be done to assess and observe other areas of influence. A longitudinal study could be done, with groups in both rural and urban settings on the subtle and long term influences on teenagers.

A rural population could also be studied to look at the influences on such teens and the results compared. Also, teenagers in other parts of Accra and other urban areas could be studied.

The researcher also recommends that future studies, focusing on Ghanaian serials (that is, serials produced in Ghana with Ghanaian themes, settings and values) be done to find out their influence.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A Questionnaire

Mavis Donkor is a student of the University of Ghana, Legon, conducting a research entitled, “**Teenagers, Television Serials, and Reality**” in the Madina area.

The information given will be used for strictly academic purposes.

1. Age 14-16 17-19
2. Sex Male Female
3. Are you in a relationship? Yes No
4. Level of education JHS JHS Graduate SHS SHS Graduate Tertiary
5. Do you watch serials? Yes No
6. Why do you watch serials?
 Entertainment To learn from experiences of characters To find something to talk to my friends about To while away the time Other.....
7. How many hours of serials do you watch in a day? 1hour 2hours 3hours+
8. Which category of serial do you prefer? Action Drama Comedy
 Horror
9. Do you think the serials you watch on television have affected your standards? Yes
 No

10. Do you believe the scenes/happenings in serials and take them to be real? Yes No

11. Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you discontent with your life?

Yes No

b. What made you discontent?

12. Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you content with your life?

Yes No

b. What made you content?

13. Do you identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them? Yes

No

14. What about the character do you like most?

15. Are there some characters you do not want to be like? Yes No

16. What about the character do you not like?

17. Has watching serials influenced your dressing? Yes No

18. Is there any dressing or dress code you have picked from the serials you have watched?

Yes No

b. What kind of dressing/dress code is that?

19. Have serials influenced your speech/manner of speaking? Yes No

b. If yes, how?

20. Has watching serials influenced you to be sexually adventurous? Yes No

21. Would you rather watch serials than spend time with family/friends? Yes No

22. Watching serials has taught you to be

Promiscuous Strong-willed Sadistic (wicked, enjoy cruelty to others)?

Others

THANK YOU



Appendix B Table of student T-test for testing hypotheses

Table A 1 Student T-test analysis of differences in the identification of characters by heavy and light viewers of serials

Group Statistics – hypothesis one

How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them? >= 3.00	14	1.0714	.26726	.07143
< 3.00	99	1.2626	.44230	.04445

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Do you identify with particular characters in serials and want to be like them?	Equal variances assumed	17.647	.000	-1.574	111	.118	-.19120	.12151	-.43197	.04957
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.273	24.532	.032	-.19120	.08413	-.36464	-.01776

Table A 2 Student T-test analysis of differences in the influence of speech among heavy and light viewers of serials

Group Statistics - Hypothesis 2

How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Have serials influenced your speech/manner of speaking >= 3.00	14	1.3571	.49725	.13289
< 3.00	97	1.3505	.47961	.04870

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Have serials influenced your speech/manner of speaking	.009	.925	.048	109	.962	.00663	.13773	-.26635	.27961
			.047	16.685	.963	.00663	.14154	-.29242	.30567

Table A 3 Student T-test analysis of differences in the influence of watching serials on the dressing of heavy and light viewers of serials

Group Statistics Hypothesis 3

How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Has watching serials influenced your dressing? ≥ 3.00	14	1.2857	.46881	.12529
< 3.00	98	1.5714	.49742	.05025

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Has watching serials influenced your dressing?	8.851	.004	-2.024	110	.045	-.28571	.14118	-.56549	-.00593

Table A 4 Student T-test analysis of differences in being discontent with once life by heavy and light viewers of serials

Group Statistics

How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you discontent with your life? >= 3.00	14	1.7143	.46881	.12529
< 3.00	95	1.8316	.37623	.03860

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you discontent with your life?	Equal variances assumed	3.358	.070	-1.054	107	.294	-.11729	.11126	-.33786	.10327
	Equal variances not assumed			-.895	15.565	.385	-.11729	.13111	-.39586	.16127

Table A 5 Student T-test analysis of differences in being content with once life by heavy and light viewers of serials

Group Statistics

How many hours of serials do you watch in a day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you content with your life? >= 3.00	74	1.3243	.47132	.05479
< 3.00	23	1.2609	.44898	.09362

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Has any of the things you learnt from serials made you content with your life?	1.532	.219	.570	95	.570	.06345	.11131	-.15751	.28442
			.585	38.297	.562	.06345	.10847	-.15608	.28299