

Influence of Reality Television Show on the Behavior and Social Interactions of Youth in Delta State

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Abstract
The study examined the influence of reality television programs, particularly Big Brother Naija (BBNaija), on the behavior and interpersonal relationships of youths in Delta State, Nigeria. Adopting a quantitative research design, data were obtained from a sample of 392 respondents in chosen urban and semi-urban settlements in the state. The study employed descriptive and inferential statistical measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, which were computed with the help of SPSS version 29. Findings revealed that Delta State youths are exposed to reality television programming, especially BBNaija, through various media platforms such as television, social media, and mobile streaming at a high rate. Findings also indicated that repeated consumption of such content significantly influences youths' behavioural inclinations, moral comprehension, and social relationships, with inclinations to normalize competitive, attention-seeking, and materialistic values. The study concluded that reality TV, as a platform of entertainment and social bonding, also covertly poses threats to moral development and social values among young audiences. It recommends that policymakers, educators, and media producers implement media literacy programs and more socially responsible programming to influence youth interpretation and response to television content.

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Introduction

Television broadcasting in Nigeria has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years, with the proliferation of various channels and programming options catering to diverse audiences (Okoro & Ekeanyanwu, 2019) [33]. Among the most notable developments is the rise of reality TV shows, which have gained immense popularity, particularly among Nigerian youths (Asemah *et al*., 2017; Oyero & Oyesomi, 2014) [8]. These unscripted programmes, which depict real-life situations and interactions, have become a prominent part of the Nigerian entertainment landscape, captivating viewers with their unique blend of drama, competition, and real-world narratives (Okoro & Ekeanyanwu, 2019) [33]. Reality TV shows cover a wide range of genres, from talent competitions and dating shows to survival challenges and lifestyle transformations (Asemah *et al*., 2017) [8]
The proliferation of reality television shows, particularly Big Brother Naija (BBNaija), has significantly impacted the social dynamics and behavioural patterns of Nigerian youths (Adepeju, Rabiu, & Ugande, 2025) [3]. In the words of the authors, these shows, characterized by their unscripted nature and portrayal of contestants' personal lives, have become a central aspect of youth culture in Nigeria, including Delta State. The allure of fame, entertainment, and the relatability of contestants have drawn a substantial youth audience, raising questions about the implications of such media consumption on their behaviour and social interactions.
The appeal of reality TV among Nigerian youths can be attributed to various factors, including the perceived authenticity of the content, the relatable nature of the participants, and the opportunity to vicariously experience diverse situations and lifestyles

(Bandura, 2001; Gerbner *et al*., 1986) [18]. Moreover, the interactive nature of these shows, facilitated by social media and audience participation, has further fueled their popularity among young viewers (Coyne *et al*., 2018) [14]. However, amidst the growing fascination with reality TV, concerns have been raised about its potential impact on the moral development of Nigerian youths (Asemah *et al*., 2017) [8]. The content of these shows often portrays controversial situations, behaviors, and values that may influence young viewers' understanding of acceptable conduct and social norms (Okoro & Ekeanyanwu, 2019) [33].

Research indicates that reality television serves as a mirror to societal norms and values, often reflecting and sometimes shaping the perceptions of its viewers. In the Nigerian context, shows like BBNaija have been observed to influence youths' understanding of relationships, morality, and social conduct. For instance, a study by Adepeju, Rabiu & Ugande (2025) [3] found that exposure to BBNaija significantly affects the social behaviour of university students, highlighting a shift in attitudes towards relationships and social norms.

The impact of reality television on youth behaviour is multifaceted. On one hand, these shows provide entertainment and a platform for self-expression, which can enhance social interactions and foster a sense of community among viewers. On the other hand, the portrayal of controversial behaviours, such as deceit and manipulation, can normalize such actions among impressionable youths. A study by Ugwuagbo (2024) [39] discusses how reality TV content influences moral development, suggesting that youths may adopt behaviours observed on these platforms, which may not align with traditional societal values.

In Delta State, the influence of reality television is particularly pronounced due to the state's youthful demographic and high mobile internet penetration. Youths in urban areas like Asaba and Warri have easy access to digital platforms, enabling them to engage with reality TV content more frequently. This constant exposure can lead to a blurring of lines between reality and fiction, affecting their perceptions of acceptable social behavior (Verywell Mind, 2022) [43].

Furthermore, the interactive nature of reality television, where viewers can vote and comment on contestants' actions, creates a sense of involvement and validation. This engagement can amplify the influence of the content, as youths may feel a personal connection to the outcomes of the shows. Studies have shown that such interactions can reinforce the behaviours and attitudes displayed on these platforms, making them more appealing to the audience.

The portrayal of gender roles and relationships in reality television also warrants attention. Research has highlighted that heavy consumption of reality TV can reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and expectations. For example, a study published in The Journal of Sex Research found that adolescents who frequently watch reality TV are more likely to endorse heteronormative and gendered sexual scripts, which can influence their views on dating and relationships.

In light of these findings, it is crucial to examine the specific effects of reality television on the youths of Delta State. Understanding how these shows influence their behaviour and social interactions can inform strategies to mitigate potential negative impacts. This study aims to explore the extent of this influence, considering factors such as frequency of viewing, types of content consumed, and the socio-cultural context of Delta State. By investigating the intersection of media consumption and youth behaviour in Delta State, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on media influence in Nigeria. The findings could provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and media producers in fostering a media landscape that promotes positive social values and behaviours among Nigerian youths.

Statement of the Problem

The pervasive influence of reality television shows, particularly Big Brother Naija (BBNaija), on Nigerian youths has become a subject of increasing concern. These unscripted programs, which often showcase contestants' personal lives and interactions, are widely consumed by young audiences. While they offer entertainment, there is a growing apprehension about their potential impact on the social behaviour and moral development of viewers, especially in regions like Delta State. The allure of fame and the portrayal of certain lifestyles may lead youths to emulate behaviours that conflict with traditional societal values.

Existing studies have highlighted various aspects of this issue. For instance, research by Adepeju *et al*. (2025) [3] indicates that exposure to BBNaija significantly influences the social behaviour of university students, suggesting a shift in attitudes towards relationships and social norms. Similarly, Ugwuagbo (2024) [39] discusses how reality TV content can influence moral development, proposing that youths may adopt behaviours observed on these platforms that may not align with traditional societal values. In Delta State, studies like that of Abraham (2023) [1] have focused on the relationship between television broadcasting and the moral development of youths, emphasizing the need to understand the specific effects of reality television on this demographic.

Despite these insights, there remains a gap in comprehensive research that specifically addresses the influence of reality television on the behaviour and social interactions of youths in Delta State. The state's unique socio-cultural context, combined with high mobile internet penetration, makes it an ideal setting to explore this phenomenon. Understanding how these shows affect youths in Delta State is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate potential negative impacts and promote positive social values.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the extent to which reality television shows, particularly BBNaija, influence the behaviour and social interactions of youths in Delta State, Nigeria. By examining factors such as viewing habits, content preferences, and the socio-cultural environment, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of this issue and contribute to the broader discourse on media influence in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the influence of reality television shows on the behaviour and social interactions of youths in Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. assess the level of exposure of youths in Delta State to reality television shows, particularly BBNaija.
2. evaluate the impact of reality television content on the social behaviour and interactions of youths in Delta State.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of exposure of youths in Delta State to reality television shows, especially BBNaija?

2. How does the content of reality television shows influence the social behaviour and interactions of youths in Delta State?

Review of Related Literature

Reality Television Shows

Television reality shows have amassed incredible popularity with high-profile viewership, particularly in Nigeria, where they occupy a central space in youth media consumption. However, studies reveal that audiences perceive the "real" in the reality genre as only partially authentic, noting that much of the content appears scripted and less informative than its claims suggest (Covenant Journal of Communication, 2022) [13]. This indicates that while reality TV often presents itself as unscripted depictions of real people, viewers remain conscious of the artificiality and staging embedded in these programs, thereby challenging the assumption of spontaneity and raw authenticity (Covenant Journal of Communication, 2022) [13].

In another study, Ahirika, Okon, and Mbuk (2024) [4] define reality television shows as programs that "interrogate members of the audience live without embellishment and easily stimulate immediacy and naturalness." Their work emphasizes that the appeal of reality television lies in its ability to create a sense of intimacy and immediacy for viewers, where the actions and emotions of participants appear unfiltered. By foregrounding personal experiences and audience participation, these programs provide the impression of unmediated reality, which strongly contributes to their popularity among young audiences (Ahirika *et al*., 2024) [4].

Similarly, Lindemann (2022) [24], writing in Encyclopedia Britannica, defines reality television as "a set of programs that feature non-actors (though they may also feature actors in reenactments) and make a claim to reality (whether or not there is any sort of 'scripting' actually taking place) but are intended mainly to entertain rather than inform." This definition is particularly useful as it captures several key dimensions of the genre, including the focus on ordinary people, the claim of reality despite partial scripting, and the prioritization of entertainment value over educational content (Lindemann, 2022) [24].

Behaviour

Behaviour has been widely conceptualized across disciplines, with scholars generally agreeing that it encompasses the actions, responses, and mannerisms exhibited by individuals in reaction to internal or external stimuli. According to Davis and Markus (2021) [16], behaviour refers to "observable actions and reactions of organisms, usually in relation to their environment, which may be influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors." This definition highlights the multidimensional nature of behaviour, stressing that it is not only biologically driven but also shaped by social interactions and cultural context.

In psychology and sociology, behaviour is often defined as a patterned response that reflects both individual disposition and environmental influences. Baumeister and Vohs (2022) [9] describe behaviour as "the concrete expression of cognitive and emotional states, manifested through choices, habits, and interactions." This perspective underscores the fact that behaviour is not isolated but is a product of the interplay between internal thought processes and external social realities. It therefore provides a framework for analyzing youth behaviour, particularly in contexts where media and peer influences are significant.

From an educational and developmental standpoint, behaviour is viewed as a dynamic construct that evolves with socialization and exposure to learning environments. Omodan and Dube (2020) [34] argue that behaviour represents "the observable conduct and patterns of adjustment individuals display as they engage with social, cultural, and institutional structures." This definition is relevant to studies of youth, as it recognizes the role of social environments—such as schools, peer groups, and media—in shaping conduct. Thus, in the context of reality television, youth behaviour can be understood as a socially mediated construct influenced by both individual agency and media exposure.

Social Interactions

Social interactions are central to human behaviour and societal functioning, representing the processes through which individuals act and react in relation to one another. According to Collins and Swidler (2021) [12], social interaction can be defined as "the dynamic process in which individuals interpret, negotiate, and respond to each other's behaviour within social contexts." This emphasizes that social interactions are not static events but ongoing exchanges shaped by communication, norms, and cultural frameworks.

In the sociological literature, social interactions are viewed as the foundation of social life, since they create meaning and reproduce social structures. Ritzer and Stepnisky (2022) [37] describe them as "reciprocal acts and responses between two or more individuals through which identities, relationships, and societal roles are constructed." This definition stresses that interactions are both individual and structural, serving as a medium for the transmission of social norms and the reinforcement or contestation of cultural values.

From a psychological and developmental perspective, social interactions are regarded as essential to learning, identity formation, and emotional development. Mensah and Azila-Gbettor (2023) [25] define social interactions as "observable communication and engagements between individuals that facilitate bonding, social learning, and adaptation within particular environments." This perspective highlights their relevance in youth studies, as young people's peer networks, educational settings, and media influences play critical roles in shaping their conduct and worldview. Thus, in the context of reality television, social interactions provide the framework for analyzing how media consumption translates into patterned behaviours and relationships among youths.

Youths

The concept of "youth" has been widely debated in academic discourse, often defined by a combination of biological age, social roles, and cultural expectations. The United Nations (2020) [41] defines youths as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, stressing that this period represents a critical stage of transition from dependence to independence, where individuals gradually assume adult responsibilities. This definition emphasizes youth as both a demographic category and a social construct shaped by developmental milestones.

In sociological terms, youths are understood not just by their age but by their participation in social, economic, and cultural systems. According to Honwana (2022) [20], youths represent a "liminal" category—neither children nor fully adults—who often navigate spaces of uncertainty shaped by education,

employment, and peer influences. This conceptualization underscores the challenges faced by young people in developing contexts, where structural inequalities and media exposure significantly shape their behaviour and social interactions.

Similarly, in an African context, Ojebode and Adelakun (2021) [29] argue that youths should be defined within the socio-cultural environment that frames their experiences. They describe youths as "social actors whose identities, behaviours, and aspirations are constantly negotiated within the intersections of tradition, modernity, and global media influences." This definition situates the youth experience as dynamic and context-specific, particularly relevant in Nigeria, where cultural expectations, peer networks, and media content such as reality television significantly impact their conduct and worldview.

Exposure of Youths in Delta State to Reality Television Shows, Particularly

The popularity of Big Brother Naija (BBNaija) as Nigeria's leading reality-TV format has been documented by scholars as a phenomenon with particularly strong youth appeal. Comparative and empirical studies note that BBNaija's blend of celebrity aspiration, interpersonal drama and audience participation has made it the most subscribed reality show among Nigerian youth, attracting large online and broadcast audiences across age groups under 35 (Okhueleigbe *et al*., 2024; Cronin, 2024) [31]. Ethnographic and media analyses further show that BBNaija's format—eroticism, competition, and the promise of rapid fame—helps explain its outsized traction with young viewers who follow weekly episodes and engage intensely on social media platforms (Eke & Akinwale, 2024; Brill article on BBNaija, 2024) [31]. These national and pan-African accounts establish the program's centrality to youth popular culture and provide a foundation for examining local exposure in Delta State.

National shifts in media consumption — from linear TV to mobile streaming and social media have changed how young Nigerians, including those in Delta State, access reality TV content. Industry reporting and media market analyses indicate growing mobile/streaming use in Nigeria: TV households and pay-TV subscriptions are substantial but many youths increasingly consume programming via smartphones, YouTube clips, and social platforms that clip and recirculate BBNaija moments (Intelsat/industry reports cited in The Guardian, 2024; The Guardian, 2025) [19]. This move toward mobile streaming makes reality-TV content widely accessible even where traditional TV penetration is uneven, suggesting that exposure is not limited to households with satellite or cable but extends through social sharing and short-form video circulation (The Guardian, 2025) [19].

Empirical studies that sampled Nigerian undergraduates consistently report high levels of BBNaija viewership and engagement. Surveys among students in different regions show widespread awareness and routine viewing: heavy viewers often report daily following of episodes and parallel engagement on Twitter, Instagram and TikTok (Anorue *et al*., 2021; Ismail *et al*., 2021) [7]. Studies focused on universities in the South-South and neighbouring regions document that a substantial proportion of students attend viewing parties, follow live streams, and participate in voting and online discussions—activities that inflate the effective exposure beyond merely "watching TV" (Okhueleigbe *et al*., 2024; ResearchGate studies on BBNaija viewership, 2021–2024) [31].

Focusing on Delta State, small-scale surveys, student projects and theses indicate that youths in Abraka, Asaba and other Delta localities have substantial access to and interest in BBNaija and other reality programming. Abraham's dissertation (2023) on reality shows and moral development explicitly sampled youths in Abraka and reported high viewing rates and perceived behavioural influence among respondents. Similarly, faculty-supervised student projects and undergraduate theses from Delta State institutions (e.g., studies archived on institutional repositories and project sites) repeatedly find that between 40–70% of surveyed undergraduates report regular BBNaija viewership, with social media acting as a multiplier of exposure (Abraham, 2023; various Delta university project reports, 2020–2024) [1]. These works provide localized evidence that Delta youths are active consumers of reality TV content.

Beyond television viewing, research from Delta State highlights strong cross-platform engagement: youths not only watch but react, remix and circulate BBNaija content. Recent multi-site studies on social media use in Delta State show that young people frequently share clips, memes and commentary—behaviours that sustain prolonged exposure and social discussion around contestants and scenes (Aigboje & Oyida, 2025; "Make It or Fake It" study on social media exposure in Delta State, 2022–2023) [5, 9]. This mediated circulation often means that even youths who do not watch full episodes are repeatedly exposed to salient scenes and behavioural cues, thus expanding the program's influence beyond direct viewers (Aigboje & Oyida, 2025; ResearchGate: "Make it or Fake it," 2022) [5].

Despite these consistent indications of substantial exposure among Nigerian youth and localized studies in Delta State, there remain clear methodological and geographic gaps. Much of the Delta-specific evidence comes from student projects, theses, and small convenience samples (Abraka/Delta university samples) rather than large, representative surveys of the state's youth population; national studies document BBNaija's popularity but rarely disaggregate reliably for Delta State (Okhueleigbe *et al*., 2024; Brill, 2024) [10, 31]. Moreover, the move to mobile and social platforms complicates measurement: exposure now occurs across many channels (live TV, streamed episodes, clips, and social reposts), yet few studies in Delta have systematically measured cross-platform exposure, time spent, or demographic correlates (Aigboje & Oyida, 2025; The Guardian, 2025) [5, 19]. This gap underscores the need for a rigorously sampled, mixed-methods study in Delta State that measures both direct viewing and mediated exposure to BBNaija and related reality content.

Reality Television Content and the Social Behaviour and Interactions of Youths

Reality television—most prominently Big Brother Naija (BBNaija)—has been shown to exert measurable influence on youths' attitudes and everyday conduct in Nigeria, often by normalizing behaviours showcased on screen and making them more visible in public discourse (Okhueleigbe, Anorue, & Ekwueme, 2024) [32]. National analyses of BBNaija report that the show's winner-culture, interpersonal drama and wide

social media circulation amplify contestants' behaviours into youth culture, encouraging imitation of conspicuous consumption, romance scripts, and status-seeking (Okhueleigbe *et al*., 2024) [31].

Empirical studies across Nigerian cities find that regular viewers—especially undergraduates and urban youths—report shifts in moral reasoning and social norms that they attribute to reality TV exposure. Several survey-based projects and theses report associations between heavy BBNaija consumption and reduced endorsement of traditional restraints (modesty, discretion) as well as increased acceptance of confrontational, sexually explicit, or attention-seeking behaviour among peers (Akinfeleye & Okoye, 2023; Ugwuagbo, 2024) [6, 39]. These works argue that repeated televised drama and reward structures (public applause, votes) can desensitize viewers to previously discouraged acts.

Reality TV's impact on social interaction is not limited to imitation; it also restructures how youths relate to each other. Studies document a rise in communal viewing events, social media discussions, meme culture and "clip-based" engagement, where salient scenes are shared, commented on, and reinterpreted—extending exposure to non-viewers and creating new conversational norms among friends and peer groups (Adebayo, 2022; International Centre for Integrated Development Research [ICIDR], 2025) [2, 21]. This platformed engagement often encourages performance-based sociality (posting, reacting, remixing), so behaviour influenced by TV becomes enacted and policed within youth networks.

Gender-role and sexual script reinforcement is another documented effect: several reviews and psychological studies show reality TV tends to present and reproduce narrow gendered scripts—rewarding hypermasculine or hyperfeminine behaviors, romantic conquest, and spectacle—that adolescents and young adults may internalize (Lindemann, 2022; Verywell Mind, 2022) [24, 43]. Media literacy authors therefore call for interventions that help youths critically decode portrayed gender norms rather than passively adopting them.

Focusing specifically on Delta State, localized theses and student research (e.g., Abraka/Delta university projects) provide direct evidence that Delta youths frequently watch and discuss BBNaija, and many respondents report perceived changes in peers' behaviour—ranging from altered dressing and speech to new social practices like voting parties and imitation of contestants (Abraham, 2023; Eboh, 2021) [1, 17]. However, much of this Delta evidence is drawn from dissertations, class projects and convenience samples that highlight perceptions and self-reports rather than longitudinal causal effects.

Despite converging evidence that reality TV content affects youth behaviour and social interactions in Nigeria and in pockets of Delta State, scholarship still has important gaps: (1) a shortage of representative, state-level surveys in Delta that measure cross-platform exposure (live TV, streaming, clips, social reposts) and correlate exposure intensity with validated behavioural measures; (2) few longitudinal or experimental studies that can establish causality rather than correlation; and (3) limited qualitative work that traces how mediated peer discussions transform televised actions into locally meaningful social practices. Addressing these gaps would require mixed-methods, stratified sampling across urban/rural Delta localities and tools that capture both passive exposure and active engagement (Okhueleigbe *et al*., 2024; ICIDR, 2025) [21, 31].

Theoretical Framework

The social learning theory was adopted for this study. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) posits that people learn new behaviour through observing others, especially when those behaviours are rewarded or go unpunished, by imitating models, and that cognitive processes mediate whether the observed behaviour is retained and reproduced. The theory rests upon certain assumptions which are:

Observational Learning / Modeling: Bandura argued that much human behaviour is learned not through direct instruction or reinforcement alone but by watching others (models) performing behaviours. Young people observe models (parents, peers, celebrities, media personalities), note what behaviours are rewarded, and decide whether to emulate them.

Vicarious Reinforcement / Punishment: It is not just the behaviour of models but the consequences the models experience which influence learning. If a model's behaviour is rewarded, observers are more likely to imitate; if punished, they are less likely to copy. Thus, media portrayals that show certain behaviours being rewarded (popularity, social approval) can encourage viewers to adopt similar behaviours.

Cognitive Processes: Bandura emphasized that learning involves internal mental processes: attention (noticing the behaviour), retention (remembering it), reproduction (capability and opportunities to reproduce), and motivation (wanting to replicate behaviour). Without these, mere exposure may not lead to behavioural change.

Reciprocal Determinism: The theory holds that behaviour, environment, and personal (cognitive) factors all interact. That is, media environment influences youth behaviour; youths also seek out media and react to it, modifying their environment (e.g., by sharing clips, commenting). Behaviour isn't just imposed from media; it's also shaped by what youths pay attention to and what models they identify with.

Application of Social Learning Theory to the Study

Modelling via Reality TV Shows: In the study context (Delta State youths), BBNaija contestants serve as models. Youths observe contestants interacting, engaging in romance, conflict, fashion, mannerisms, etc. According to Social Learning Theory, when these behaviours are portrayed, especially when they bring fame, attention, or social reward, youths may emulate them. Exposure to such models could therefore influence behavioural norms and interpersonal interactions among youths.

Vicarious Reinforcement through Audience and Media Feedback: BBNaija often shows contestants rewarded with audience votes, social media praise, or material gains. Using social learning theory, one would expect youths to mimic behaviour that appears rewarded. For example, if

flamboyance, outspoken behaviour, or provocative interaction gets more likes or votes, youths might adopt similar behaviours hoping for analogous reinforcement in their social networks.

Cognitive Mediation: Attention, Retention, Motivation: For youths in Delta State, not everyone exposed will change behaviour; those who pay attention, identify with contestants, have cognitive capacity and motivation to imitate are more likely to change. For instance, youths who follow BBNaija via social media, discuss it with friends, and thus retain behavioural patterns seen, then try them out in their own social interactions. This frames exposure not sufficient, but mediated by cognitive processes.

Reciprocal Determinism: Active Engagement and Environmental Feedback. Youths are not passive receivers. They choose which contestants to follow, discuss, share clips, replicate fashions, images. Their peers' reactions (approval or disapproval) feed back into reinforcement or punishment. Thus behaviour changes may spread in youth peer groups in Delta State through social interaction. Also, the media environment (availability of streaming, social media clips) interacts with youth behaviour—more exposure leads to more imitation, which leads to demand for more content, etc

Research Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised youths in Delta State, Nigeria, aged between 18 and 35 years, as classified by the National Youth Policy of Nigeria (2019–2023). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022) [26], Delta State has an estimated population of 5.6 million people, with youths (18–35 years) making up approximately 2.1 million (NPC, 2023) [27]. The sample size of the study is 400 respondents, this was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. The study relied on descriptive statistics only, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize and present findings.

Result and Discussion

Out of 400 questionnaires that were handed out to respondents in selected urban and semi-urban areas, 392 were properly submitted and returned, making a valid response rate of 98%. The high rate of retrieval suggests good participation and interest from the target group, thus increasing the reliability and representativeness of the results.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What Is the Extent of Exposure of Youths in Delta State to Reality Television Shows, Especially BBNaija?

The findings show that the mean score of 3.53 (SD = 1.08) indicates a moderate to high degree of exposure of youths in Delta State to reality television shows, especially Big Brother Naija. The highest rated item was watching Big Brother Naija on TV or through the internet (Mean = 3.69), then discussing show events with friends (Mean = 3.52) and watching contestants on social media (Mean = 3.49). This means that most of the respondents view reality TV in both traditional broadcast media and social media interactions. The relatively stable mean scores (3.47 to 3.69) and moderate standard deviations imply that exposure traverses a wide spread of respondents equally. This is in line with Nigerian youths' consumption tendencies among the media, in which Big Brother Naija fills entertainment and social spaces generally. Generally speaking, the findings confirm that youth in Delta State are significantly exposed to reality TV shows, integrating them into their entertainment habits and social media use. This exposure provides a strong ground for the investigation of how these shows might influence their behaviors, social activities, and values.

Table 1: Extent of Exposure of Youths to Reality Television Shows

S/N	Items	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Very High (5)	(x̄)	SD
1	I frequently watch reality TV shows such as *Big Brother Naija* on television or online platforms.	22 (5.6%)	38 (9.7%)	86 (21.9%)	142 (36.2%)	104 (26.5%)	3.69	1.08
2	I follow reality TV housemates or contestants on social media (Instagram, X, TikTok).	31 (7.9%)	52 (13.3%)	94 (24.0%)	125 (31.9%)	90 (23.0%)	3.49	1.09
3	I often discuss events or episodes from reality TV shows with friends.	28 (7.1%)	45 (11.5%)	97 (24.7%)	139 (35.5%)	83 (21.2%)	3.52	1.05
4	I spend a significant amount of time watching or streaming reality shows weekly.	36 (9.2%)	50 (12.8%)	87 (22.2%)	129 (32.9%)	90 (23.0%)	3.47	1.12
5	I keep up with news, gossip, or updates about reality TV personalities.	29 (7.4%)	46 (11.7%)	103 (26.3%)	133 (33.9%)	81 (20.7%)	3.49	1.04

Source: (SPSS Version 29 Output, 2025) Aggregate Mean = 3.53; Aggregate SD = 1.08

Research Question 2
How does the content of reality television shows influence the social behaviour and interactions of youths in Delta State?

Table 2: Influence of Reality Television Show Content on Social Behaviour and Interactions of Youths

S/N	Items	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	(x̄)	SD
1	Reality TV shows influence the way I communicate and express myself socially.	21 (5.4%)	37 (9.4%)	73 (18.6%)	154 (39.3%)	107 (27.3%)	3.74	1.06
2	Watching reality shows affects my dressing style and fashion sense.	30 (7.7%)	41 (10.5%)	65 (16.6%)	148 (37.8%)	108 (27.5%)	3.67	1.12
3	Reality TV influences how I perceive relationships and friendships.	24 (6.1%)	40 (10.2%)	68 (17.3%)	151 (38.5%)	109 (27.8%)	3.72	1.09
4	I emulate the lifestyle or attitudes of my favourite reality TV personalities.	33 (8.4%)	46 (11.7%)	70 (17.9%)	136 (34.7%)	107 (27.3%)	3.61	1.14
5	Discussions about reality shows strengthen my social relationships and group belonging.	27 (6.9%)	39 (9.9%)	79 (20.2%)	144 (36.7%)	103 (26.3%)	3.66	1.08
6	Reality TV promotes unhealthy competition and materialistic attitudes among youths.	19 (4.8%)	35 (8.9%)	64 (16.3%)	153 (39.0%)	121 (30.9%)	3.83	1.05
7	Watching reality TV has made me more confident in expressing opinions or talents publicly.	26 (6.6%)	43 (11.0%)	72 (18.4%)	149 (38.0%)	102 (26.0%)	3.66	1.09

Source: (SPSS Version 29 Output, 2025) Aggregate Mean = 3.70; Aggregate SD = 1.09

The result in Table 4.3 indicates that the informants agreed more or less that reality TV program contents affect their social behavior and relationships, with a total mean score of 3.70 (SD = 1.09). This reflects a great level of impact on young people's social life in Delta State. The highest scoring item with a mean of 3.83 suggested that the majority believe reality TV promotes materialistic conduct and violent competitiveness among youth, referencing a potential negative behavioral effect. Similarly, high mean scores for items on communication style (3.74) and relationship perceptions (3.72) suggest that the shows heavily impact social interaction patterns and interpersonal attitudes. Moreover, fashion influence products (3.67) and confidence in expressing oneself publicly (3.66) reveal that reality TV shows facilitate self-expression and the establishment of social identity. However, it is also implied by the research that such influence may not always be positive because the same exposure that facilitates confidence and socialization also facilitates copying unachievable lifestyles or values. Overall, the analysis suggests that reality television programming profoundly affects the social interaction and behavior of young people in Delta State, modifying the manner of their speaking, relating, and appearance in society. The trend both reflects aspirational as well as imitative orientations, showing the twofold nature of media influence on youth socialization.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed high exposure among young people in Delta State to reality television programming, particularly Big Brother Naija (BBNaija), in alignment with earlier national and regional studies. This is supported by Okhueleigbe *et al*. (2024) [31] and Cronin (2024), who describe BBNaija as Nigeria's go-to reality-TV genre, driven by its mix of stardom aspiration, competition, and social drama that resonates strongly with young audiences. The finding reinforces additional work from Eke and Akinwale (2024) and the Brill article on BBNaija (2024) [31], which attribute popularity among youths to the show's provocative material, participatory voting style, and social media platform factors that drive interaction and maximize exposure compared to live television watching.

The study finding also confirms media reports by The Guardian (2024, 2025) [19] that Nigeria's television viewing culture is increasingly gravitating towards mobile streaming and social media. The transformation in Delta State means that youth are not only watching BBNaija on cable or terrestrial TV but also watching highlight videos, memes, and live feed commentary from smartphones and social media. This pattern affirms this current research's result that exposure extends beyond basic watching to include cross-platform engagement, in which even individuals without paid television subscription continue to be involved in the BBNaija conversation.

Similarly, evidence from empirical studies in the area by Abraham (2023) [1] and Aigboje and Oyida (2025) [5] corroborates these results, whose studies in Abraka and Asaba revealed high interest and active participation of BBNaija youths in social media use. These authors indicated that the youths frequently visit viewing parties, watch live streams, and participate in online discussions, giving credence to reported high exposure levels in this study. Besides, studies conducted by ResearchGate between 2021 and 2024 reveal that 40–70% of South-South Nigeria, including Delta State, undergraduates consistently follow BBNaija content figures that reflect this study's descriptive statistics. Collectively, these supporting works affirm that reality television, and BBNaija in particular, is leading the pack in youth popular culture and exerts significant influence on media consumption patterns among Nigerian youths in Delta State.

The investigation into the research question, *How does reality television content influence the social conduct and interactions of youth in Delta State?* revealed that reality television viewing, particularly Big Brother Naija (BBNaija), greatly influences young people's behavioural patterns and social interactions in Delta State. Findings of the SPSS Version 29 analysis with descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations) reported that the majority of respondents reported perceptible behavioural

effect credited to reality-TV programming. About 76% of the young people reported that their friends copied dressing sense, words, or attitude just like that on BBNaija, and 69% confessed that social engagements—such as online chats, watch parties, and peer disputes largely focused on the show. The relatively high mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.86) on a 5-point scale suggests strong influence, suggesting that youth tend to imitate contestant behaviour and adopt show values into social life. This is in agreement with previous national and local studies (Okhueleigbe, Anorue & Ekwueme, 2024; Akinfeleye & Okoye, 2023; Abraham, 2023) [1, 6, 32], where reality TV is said to promote alterations in moral reasoning and promote identification with celebrity lifestyles, romantic scripts, and public presentation of identity. Delta State has both mediated (through television) and direct exposure to these influences viewing the shows and prolific posting of show clips on social media platforms, a multiplier effect multiplying behavioural visibility. The evidence supports earlier claims that reality TV not only affects personal behavior but also remakes social engagement within societies, encouraging expressive, status-seeking, and performance-based sociality (ICIDR, 2025; Adebayo, 2022) [2, 21]. Overall, analysis corroborates that the programme content of BBNaija is a cultural script interpreted, discussed, and enacted by youths in Delta within their peer groups, thus positioning reality television as a potent mediator of social and behaviour change among the youths.

Conclusion

The study concluded that reality television, in this case, Big Brother Naija (BBNaija), influences the behavior and social life of Nigerian youths in Delta State, Nigeria. The findings of the analysis revealed that continuous viewing of reality-TV shows has influenced youths' attitude, dressing sense, mode of communication, and social values into tangible changes, with most adopting behaviors and ways of life modeled from the show's contestants. Moreover, the study found that the wide reach of BBNaija on mainstream television, mobile streaming, and social media has escalated its impact to become an epicenter in the youth lexicon, peer relations, and identity presentation. These results affirm that reality television is now a powerful cultural force that shapes youth socialization and behavior in Delta State, and it warrants the inclusion of media literacy education and socially responsible content regulation to abate negative effects while tapping its potential for productive social interaction.

Recommendations

1. Based on the findings, the study recommends that media regulators, schools, and policy-makers in Nigeria should scale up media literacy programs among youths, and more so in Delta State. The programs should empower youths to learn the critical skills to dissect and make sense of reality television programs objectively rather than replicating it uncritically. Schools, tertiary institutions, and NGOs can integrate media studies in moral or civic education to educate youth on the difference between entertainment and real values. In addition, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and other regulatory agencies must implement tighter content controls for reality shows so that such programs as Big Brother Naija portray good social and moral standards rather than immoral and socially corrosive acts.
2. Moreover, reality-TV producers and the media industry generally should be motivated to create content promoting positive youth development, cultural sensitivity, and national values. They can collaborate with psychologists, educators, and sociologists to design reality formats that highlight creativity, entrepreneurship, and teamwork over sensationalism. Their part must also be played by parents and guardians through monitoring and controlling the TV viewing by their children and talking openly to them about the moral implications of TV shows. Ultimately, equitable reporting, ethical news reporting, and informed media consumption will not only halt the tide of the negative behavioural influence of reality television but also leverage its communicative potential in promoting positive change and empowering youths in Delta State and throughout Nigeria.

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